

Gardens and Gardening in a fast-changing
urban environment:
Manchester 1750-1850

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Abstract

The profound changes which led to the social, physical and economic separation of the classes and changed Manchester from a small market town to a sprawling metropolis with a deeply damaged environment caused the loss of the town garden, the rise of the suburban villa and the demand for agreeable leisure surroundings. This story of gardens is an element of Manchester's history which has been neglected despite fundamentally reflecting the social and economic changes accompanying the industrial revolution.

Manchester was once renowned for its horticulture and floriculture. At one time it was able to host as many as eight flower shows each year and it lay at the very centre of the gooseberry-growers' world for more than a hundred years. Professional and amateur growers of plants were known – and their introductions disseminated – nationwide.

Examining the various ways in which the love of plants and gardens were experienced reveals how, as in many other areas of life, class divisions grew and were aggravated. The middle classes attempted to impose their values upon the workers, whether through fear or altruism. Leisure was indivisible from gardens and the wider appreciation of nature, whether this was the private grounds of the wealthier, the public gardens with their range of activities, or places visited by the poor during Whit Week. Such activities also led to friction – theft of plants from private gardens; rowdy behaviour in public ones.

Gardens exist within a social and economic framework and their story cannot be told without reference to this and how they and it altered over time. Personal and civic prosperity and poverty, social, legal and environmental changes and different philosophical ideas lie behind the story of Manchester's horticultural heritage.

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Finally thanks to Keith who has kept my garden under control while I have been otherwise engaged and to Spud, Mishka, Spice and Dizzy, who have both kept me company and been a general hindrance.

Tables, maps & images

Maps are referenced thus:

Digital Archives:

Casson & Berry (1751); Green (1794); Ordnance Survey 1844-49 (1850);

Cheshire Tithe maps (Chester Record Office)

Ordnance Survey: (1875)

Unless otherwise specified, photos are author's own

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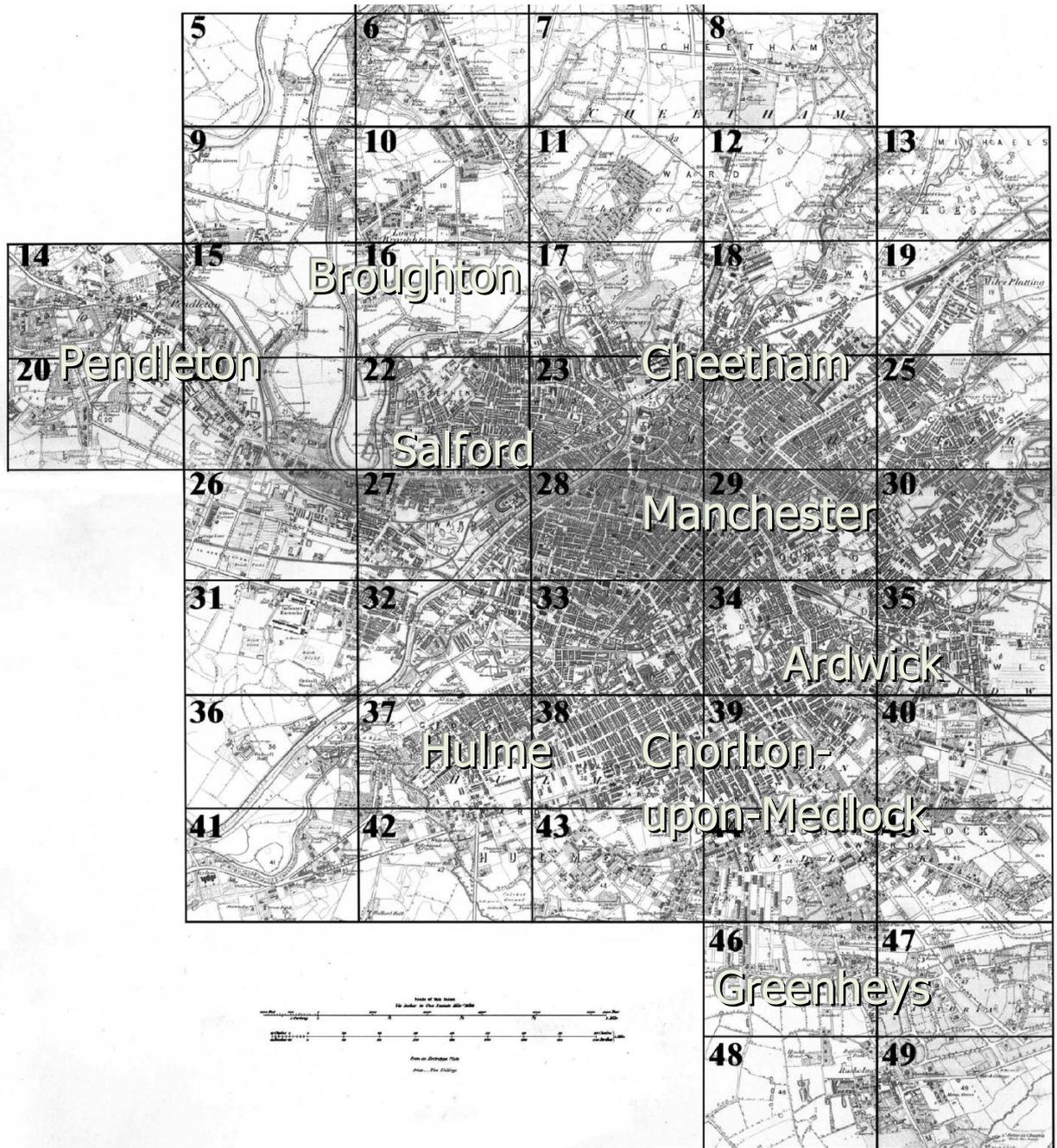
The growth of Manchester and its suburbs 1750-1850



Casson and Berry's map of 1751 shows how small the town was at the beginning of the period. The map in the right-hand lower corner shows Manchester c.1650



Growth was rapid over the next four decades. However, Green's map of 1794 shows that Ardwick was still a country area



By 1850 the town was encroaching on the countryside in all directions.

These 60" to the mile Ordnance Survey Maps, surveyed between 1844 and 1849, demonstrate the density of building in Manchester and Salford and the open nature of the villa suburbs.

(maps taken from Digital Archives CD)

Introduction

Too often history consists of the exceptional: of the lives and activities of the wealthy and influential or of the economic and political struggles by the poor and powerless. The first group has been over-represented in garden history; the second has taken centre stage in the history of Manchester. The every-day and the every-man are largely neglected. This thesis set out to consider the universal activity of gardening – gardening by ordinary people – and to consider it in terms of a northern city undergoing continuous social and economic upheaval. It was anticipated that it would be about the middle classes, simply because they were more likely to have left evidence behind them – and indeed they make up a large section of the story. But it is also about the dispossessed. Those who struggled to stay alive against inordinate odds, whose every-day relationship with the soil was severed but who clung to the delights of the countryside, though their enjoyment might be confined to the holiday period of Whit week, and who were to be rewarded eventually with the creation of public parks with free access for all.

The period chosen was originally 1790 to 1850: “*The essentials of the landscape of the Industrial Revolution had all appeared by 1790*”, said Trinder,¹ and “*By 1850, Manchester had established its ascendancy as an industrial centre*” (Frangopolu).² Six decades that transformed both the town and country. However, the period has been stretched to include the previous four decades, due largely to the discovery of information about local nurserymen. In addition the maps of Casson & Berry from 1741-1751 provide a useful counterpoint to the later development of Manchester. In 1750 Manchester had been a small, relatively quiet, market town in a bucolic setting. A century later it was a noisy, bustling, smelly, smoky metropolis and the surrounding countryside was rapidly disappearing under the ever-expanding suburbs. The explosion in the population which took place at the end of the eighteenth century created the excess labour which, in turn, made possible the changes taking place in industry, by providing a labour market in the towns.

¹ Trinder, Barrie: *The Making of the Industrial Landscape* (1982) p.87. Trinder split the period into two: his chapter on 1790-1810 he called “*The Heroic Age*” and he had two chapters on 1810-1850, one called “*The Age of the Engineer*” and the other “*The Condition of the English Landscape*”. See also Hopkins, Thomas *Great Britain for the last forty years* (1834): “*It was about the year 1790, that what may truly be called the present system of manufacturing cotton commenced*” (p.133)

² Frangopolu, N. J.: *Rich Inheritance* (1962) p.107.

Industrialised provincial towns grew at an alarming rate. They changed; became polluted; suffered all the ills of an inadequate infrastructure. A new middle class arose amid a new societal structure. The period of one hundred years from 1750 to 1850 saw the exponential growth not only of Manchester but also the surrounding towns of which Manchester was the hub. The demand for labour had drawn in people not just from the adjacent countryside, but from other parts of the United Kingdom (particularly Scotland and Ireland) and from abroad.³ There were changes in every part of society. Travel improved: at the end of the eighteenth century the carriage of goods and people became easier as roads improved and the network of canals spread, but movement remained slow. This changed with the coming of the railway. By 1850 the modern age of faster, more accessible travel had arrived.

Within the area that is now central Manchester, the demand for offices and factories eventually outstripped the demand for middle-class housing and the wealthier residents moved out to the surrounding suburbs. Both Ardwick and Chorlton Row were already established as residential areas in 1773, but in 1801 Ardwick was the more heavily populated, with 1,762 inhabitants to Chorlton Row's 675. By 1821 the positions were reversed as Chorlton Row was colonised by factories and working-class housing; although it remained a popular location for the middle-classes for some time, wealthier inhabitants began to choose Greenheys and Victoria Park for their homes. The development of Hulme followed with housing which was largely for lower-paid workers. Cheetham, Broughton and Pendleton expanded more slowly and were predominantly middle-class until much later. The comparative figures from the 1801 and 1851 censuses demonstrate that, while the increase in the *numbers* in the central areas was greatest, the *percentage* increase in the suburbs, even to the north and west, far outstripped the towns.⁴

³ Speaking in 1786, Thomas Henry referred to the census taken locally in 1773 which had proved that Manchester's population was increasing at a time when London's was thought to be in decline. Since then "The town [had] extended on every side, and such was the influx of inhabitants, that though a great number of new houses were built, they were occupied even before they were finished". Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester, Volume 3. p.160.

⁴ The Manchester Times reported the results of the 1841 census on 17 and 24 July 1841, giving the comparative figures for 1801, 1811, 1821 and 1831. The 1851 census returns were included in the same newspaper on 10 May and 7 June 1851. The accuracy of the 1801 figures was queried by 'Verax', writing in The Tradesman in 1810: "*but from the unwillingness of many houses to return the number of persons correct, from a fear of its being preparatory*

	1801	1851	number increase	% increase
Manchester & Salford	84,020	250,411	166,391	198%
Ardwick, Chorlton Row, Hulme	4,114	104,631	100,517	2,443%
Cheetham, Broughton, Pendleton	5,229	32,515	27,286	522%
Total	93,363	387,557	294,194	315%

Population Statistics for Manchester and Suburbs showing the relative increases between 1801 and 1851

How did all these changes impact upon gardening? Gardens within the central area disappeared and for many of the wealthier residents the country house which was owned – or at least occupied ⁵ – in addition to the town house, became the only address. Country houses were then overtaken by suburban villas, which in turn gave way to terraced housing – with or without a small garden attached. This was a phenomenon which continues to this day. Walk down Alexandra Park Road South and you can see where villas with substantial gardens have been demolished to make way for miniature estates of town houses.

It was never the intention of this thesis to consider the rights and wrongs of industrial change, but merely to see to what extent it impacted upon gardening as an activity. In many ways, it would appear to have had little impact. Gardens moved out of town, and nurseries left the suburbs only at the end of, or after, the period of study. Whilst living conditions worsened – and growing conditions likewise – the horticultural life of the city blossomed and flourished. Perhaps the dirt and smoke required the counterpoint of nature even if only in the horticultural shows which abounded after 1825.

The period for study was chosen not simply because this was a time of huge change – every century may be said to include such changes – but also as a challenge. After 1850 considerably more research material is available on the

to some new mode of taxation or military levy, many of the returns were considerably under-rated” (p.139).

⁵ Property was often held on relatively short leases or rented by the year.

subject, via gardening magazines. Early magazines were devoted to plants – Curtis's Botanical Magazine (began in 1787 and still published), the Botanical Register (1815-1847), the Botanical Cabinet (1817-1833), the British Flower Garden (1823-1838) and the Botanic Garden (1825-1851). A more general gardening magazine was not available until 1826, when John Claudius Loudon began his Gardener's Magazine. The following years saw the launch of a number of short-lived titles, many flower-related, and then, in 1841, the weekly Gardeners' Chronicle was begun by Joseph Paxton, John Lindley and others. This was to become a useful journal for the garden historian, including much information about gardens, gardeners, changing horticultural practices and equipment.

At the outset of the study, it was not known whether any useful information would be forthcoming owing to the general lack of archival material for the middle and working classes and the shortage of horticultural journals. In the event, the amount of material revealed has been vast, but fragmented. The internet and search engines have been both productive – in allowing the follow-through of items – and frustrating. Without them, less information would have been uncovered and the study may have stalled at an early date. With them, so many fragments have been found, so many threads exposed, that creating a coherent account has been challenging.

There was an assumption at the beginning of this study, that 'gardens' and 'gardening' would, and should, refer only to the grounds and activities of private people. It became clear that this would do less than justice to the vast majority of the population who, certainly by the end of the period, were living in homes without gardens and whose need for the benefits of public gardens and horticultural displays was therefore much greater. As the research progressed the number of threads increased. Firstly there were the physical changes which took place due to urbanisation: the loss of the town garden, the development of the detached town garden and the rise of the suburban villa garden. Secondly, the spread of publicly accessible gardens: the fruit gardens, tea gardens and bowling-greens available at the turn of the century were joined by the Botanic Gardens at Trafford, the short-lived Zoological Gardens at Higher Broughton, the Pomona Gardens at Cornbrook and – the longest-surviving of all – the Belle Vue Gardens. All these charged entrance fees, effectively excluding the poorest and neediest. For them there was only the

area in front of the Infirmary – now Piccadilly Gardens – and the fast-disappearing country walks in the neighbourhood, being lost not only to development, but also through the closure of public footpaths by landowners. The Manchester Footpath Society was formed in order to fight these cases and the Government was encouraged to support the creation of Public Walks and Parks. Manchester was the first town to raise funds by public subscription to create parks and Queen's, Philips and Peel Parks were opened on Saturday 22 August, 1846.

Another thread – or really, several threads – was that of the professional gardener. During the eighteenth century gardeners in private service might be skilled in only one section of gardening as large estates included many different aspects of horticulture: the kitchen garden, the flower garden, the orchard, the pleasure grounds, shrubberies and plantations. With the expansion of the suburbs with their smaller gardens, Gardeners needed the full range of skills: raising new plants from seed and understanding where they would best grow; composting and maintaining the fertility of the grounds; design and laying-out of grounds. Market gardens and nursery gardens were the commercial side of these skills; amateurs, from all walks of life, were frequently skilled gardeners even though they earned their living in very different areas of the economy. Some gardeners – known as florists – specialised in particular flowers. These florists' flowers included the tulip, auricula, pink, polyanthus, hyacinth and ranunculus.

The flow of plants that were available to gardeners had been increasing over the centuries, and continued to increase, becoming a torrent in the nineteenth century. America was being opened up and plants from there had been arriving in Britain for several decades.⁶ More recent introductions were from China, Australia and South Africa. The number of people employed as plant-hunters increased and the flow of plants for ornamental use likewise expanded. Varieties of erica from South Africa became popular. The dahlia and the chrysanthemum were added to the lists of florists' flowers. Botany as a subject to be studied became fashionable, following the publication of Linnaeus' works and the excitement generated by the voyage (1768-1771) to the South Pacific of Joseph Banks with Captain Cook.⁷ Botany

⁶ See Andrea Wulf's *The Brother Gardeners* (2009) for the forty-year story (beginning 1734) of the transport of seeds from John Bartram in America to Peter Collinson in London.

⁷ Linnaeus' work *System Naturæ* set out a new, simple, approach to naming plants. His first 11-page publication with this title was in 1735, but he continued to work on his ideas and by

was considered particularly suitable for study by women and articles appeared in journals such as La Belle Assemblée. This popular magazine, “*addressed particularly to the ladies*”, ran a series of “*Familiar Lectures on Useful Sciences*” which included gardening as well as botany.⁸ The development of the Botanic Garden in Manchester, though, was as much to provide the ladies with a safe haven of pleasurable walks, and, via the many flower shows, with unexceptionable entertainment, as it was to encourage their study of botany. Of all the sciences, botany was the one that could be studied most easily by those of limited means – even those without a garden had access to the countryside. Manchester was famous for its working class botanists.⁹

Gardens and gardening appeared often in the press, particularly from the mid 1820s: excerpts from Loudon’s books; the impact of weather on the unseasonal growth of plants or their destruction by storm and flood; unusually large vegetables; reports of flower shows in the region. One recurring theme was the need for gardens among the poor. This could be found in reports, Parliamentary papers, books and newspapers. The politics behind this varied. The *Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor* saw it as a way of staving off starvation when work was in short supply – the cottager could grow vegetables and keep animals if only he had sufficient land. Those who espoused this view might have been anxious to provide for the well-being of the poor, or simply keen to avoid increased poor-rates – reports by members of the Society made both points, sometimes in the same contribution. Others promoted the concept from the benevolent – or patronising – view that if the poor had gardens they would naturally spend their leisure time in raising flowers, fruit and vegetables rather than in the pub.¹⁰ The Manchester Times frequently reported on the provision of allotments by

the 10th edition in 1758 it constituted two volumes. He wrote in Latin, and the system started to be explained in English in Gardening books (e.g. The Gardiner’s New Kalendar published in 1758). An English translation of the 13th edition of Systema Vegetabilium was published by the Botanical Society of Lichfield in 1785. It was dedicated to Joseph Banks. The Manchester circulating library had a copy in its catalogue of 1794.

⁸ In its first edition (February 1806, p.42-3), La Belle Assemblée carried an essay on how to form a collection of dried plants. In the following months the continuation of this series on botany was in the form of letters “*from a young lady to her friend*”. From August to October 1808 it ran a series of articles on the history of gardening.

⁹ Botanists could be found in all walks of life. In June 1861 The Phytologist published a list of Lancashire and Yorkshire botanists provided by the Secretary of the Todmorden Botanical Society. It included the names of the businessmen Thomas Glover, Edward Leeds, R. S. Yates (a nurseryman) and Horatio Micholls (p.163-4). All these appear in later chapters.

¹⁰ Howitt was one who made this point in The Rural Life of England Vol II (1838) when discussing the detached gardens of Nottingham – “*And then to think of the alehouse, the*

landowners in other parts of the country.¹¹ Within a few miles of Manchester were a number of estates – like Heaton Park and Longford Park in Stretford – which would, in course of time, become publicly owned parks.¹² Long before that happened, however, estates such as Dunham Massey and, once the railways had arrived, Alton Towers, were the destination of thousands during the holiday period of Whit week.

It has been a major task of this thesis to tell as full a story as possible of gardening in Georgian, Regency and early Victorian Manchester. It begins with a look at the suppliers of plants, moves on to how those plants were perceived and used and then looks at the environmental challenges that affected their growth. Private gardens, public gardens and public parks each receive a chapter and the work concludes with a look at the horticultural shows at which plants displayed their charms and growers exhibited their skills. Running through the story, without ever taking centre stage, are the political, social and economic values of the times, which separated the poor from the wealthier and the wealthier from the wealthiest. For the working classes, gardening was seen as a “safe” occupation – not only did it provide healthy exercise and the possibility of food production, but it kept the gardener away from the pubs where earnings could be turned so easily into liquid refreshment: no doubt there was also the hope that he would also be kept away from any dissident ideas being discussed in the pub. There was also the expectation that home-grown vegetables would mean well-fed families who had no need to riot at the price of food. For the middle-classes, too, gardens had a role to play in food production, but they

drinking, noisy, politics-bawling ale house, where a great many of these very men would most probably be, if they had not this attraction” (p.308). In *The Florist and Garden Miscellany* (1850) an article headed *Flower-shows: their influence on the labouring and poorer classes* includes the sentence “*Many a thrifty housewife has had to thank God that her husband took to flowers and gardening, not only because they keep him from the ale-house ...*”. (p.260)

¹¹ Between 1829 and 1850 there were at least twenty items mentioning provision by various noblemen. In January 1844, there were a number of reports: the *Manchester Times* (27 January) reported that the Marquis of Westminster was introducing $\frac{1}{4}$ acre allotments on his estate; the *Newcastle Courant* (5 January) wrote of the Duke of Manchester introducing them on his Huntingdonshire estate; the *Leicester Chronicle* (6 January) reported that the Rector of Gumley had made seven acres “*of excellent land*” available; and the *Exeter Flying Post* (25 January) recorded the meeting in Bideford which set up a Society for the encouragement of a system of Allotments to labourers.

¹² Heaton Park, once the home of the Earl of Wilton, was sold to Manchester Council in 1902; Longford Park was purchased by Stretford Urban District Council in 1911 and opened to the public in 1912. Some parks were created in areas that had been farm land, such as Hullard Park (1895) which had once been the site of nurseries and Gorse Hill Park (1923), both in Old Trafford. For more information, see *Parks for the People, Manchester and Its Parks, 1846-1926*, (1987) published by Manchester City Art Galleries to accompany its exhibition of the same name.

also gave expression to status, and eventually this was displayed via the horticultural shows where exotic fruits and flowers demonstrated wealth and culture. The social life of the town was limited in the eighteenth century – the Manchester Agricultural Society dated from 1767 and the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society from 1781 – but there was a gradual increase in the nineteenth century including the Floral and Horticultural Society and the Botanical and Horticultural Society. Membership of the first certainly crossed class boundaries and membership of the second has been shown to cross both political and religious boundaries.¹³

¹³ See Ann Brooks *A Veritable Eden: The Manchester Botanic Garden 1827-1907 and the Movement for Subscription Botanic Gardens* (thesis Manchester University, 2007, p. 21)

Literature Review

Histories of Manchester say little about gardens and histories of gardening say little about Manchester.¹⁴ Similarly, each says little about the activities of the general population, though both help to set the scene for this thesis. To my knowledge, no other study has looked at all aspects of gardening for a specific provincial town – for the period covered by this thesis, or any other time. However, London has been the subject in both Galinou's (Ed.) London's Pride (1990) and Longstaffe-Gowan's The London town garden: 1740-1840 (2001). The first of these arose out of the Museum of London's 1990 exhibition of the same title and is a collection of essays covering the whole period from the Middle Ages through to the twentieth century, a number of which are directly relevant to the current study, including items on Georgian gardens, market gardens and public parks.

In 1757, Manchester was a small town with a population of around 16,000 and Casson and Berry's maps of the period show that properties all had garden spaces attached. The town garden has rarely been considered by authors although Thacker's The Genius of Gardening (1994) mentions Philip Southcote: "*... he sketched two designs for very small London gardens. The smaller – 50 by 20 feet – has an 'arbor' at the middle, flanked by 'Honey-suckles, and Jessamin' and a bracketed 'Vine between'...*"¹⁵ The larger garden was 50 by 40 feet and also made much use of honeysuckle and jasmine.¹⁶ Longstaffe-Gowan, in writing about London town-gardens, refers to Thomas Fairchild author of The City Gardener (1722) making "*it clear that his garden geography encompasses a great range of gardens... such as window boxes, individual plant specimens and fanciful outdoor displays*".¹⁷

History of Manchester

It seems that the story of Manchester's rise and rise at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution has been told many times, and indeed, it figures largely in books about that period. Briggs in Victorian Cities writes of the political struggle for which

¹⁴ The three public parks – Peel, Queen's and Philips' – are the gardens generally mentioned, as in Brent Elliott's Victorian Gardens, 1986, where he discusses the controversy around Joshua Major's design for Queen's Park, p.100-101

¹⁵ Thacker, Christopher. The Genius of Gardening: The History of Gardens in Britain and Ireland (1994), p.228.

¹⁶ Southcote lived from 1698-1758.

¹⁷ Longstaffe-Gowan, Todd. The London Town Garden (2001) p, 17.

Manchester was renowned: "...in the course of the Reform Bill struggles of the years 1831 and 1832 Manchester enhanced its national reputation as a centre of social disturbances, even as a possible cradle of revolution..."¹⁸ On the one hand, Manchester was a place of unbelievable squalor; on the other it was a new, thrusting, city of the future. Hunt's Building Jerusalem (2004) makes some mention of the social activities available to the middle classes, but neither this, nor Kidd's Manchester (2006) has anything to offer in terms of the gardening history of the town beyond Hunt's mention of the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Society and Kidd's brief reference to public pleasure gardens – Vauxhall; Pomona; Belle Vue and the Zoological Gardens.¹⁹ Around 1956 the Chief Inspector of Schools, Mr. W. T. Stevenson, suggested to the Manchester Teachers' History Discussion Group that there was a need for '*a handbook on local history*'.²⁰ This led to the publication in 1962 of Rich Inheritance, edited by N. J. Frangopulo; and in 1967 W. H. Thomson's History of Manchester to 1852 was published. Lacking in these, also, is any idea of the rich horticultural history of Manchester.

What information there is to be found lies in books written and published more than a century ago, though these are also of relatively little value. John Aikin, in his book A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester (1795), lists out all the important halls in and around the area. Ratcliff Hall, the closest to Manchester had by that time already fallen to the change of use which would overtake most of the others: it had been converted into two public houses. Despite this listing, there is little mention of gardens, (the gardens and orchards of Kersall-hall are mentioned only because in them were often found coffins and bones dating from the religious house which once stood upon the site) although we are told that Nathan Hyde possessed "*a spacious house situated in the midst of pleasure grounds*" in Ardwick. We also learn that at Dunham Massey "*The ground near the house has lately been laid out in an ornamental manner with shrubberies, flower-*

¹⁸ Briggs, Asa Victorian Cities 1963 (paperback 1968) p.90.

¹⁹ Two paragraphs on p.46. Kidd states that the stock of the Zoological Gardens was sold off in 1840 to Mr. Jennison of Belle Vue. The Manchester Times (26 November 1842) gives details of the Closing sale. Jennison's name does not appear there, but not every lot was mentioned. Mr. Wombwell, the curator of a travelling menagerie, purchased a boa constrictor, two emus, a pelican, a Bengal tiger, a leopard, two lionesses and a female rhinoceros, spending in total £544. Also present were representatives from the Liverpool Zoological Gardens, the Regent's Park Gardens and the Surrey Gardens, London, and Mr. Herring "*the great animal dealer*" of London who bought a puma, bears, swans and seagulls.

²⁰ See Frangopolu, Rich Inheritance, p.xiii.

beds, &c.”; and that at Shaw Hall, near Leyland, “*the grounds are laid out in a modern style, and there is a very excellent kitchen garden with fruit stoves, &c.*”²¹

Only two places warrant a greater description. Chaderton Hall (as it was spelled by Aikin), near Oldham, was

*“... surrounded by shrubberies and pleasure-grounds, laid out with great taste. In the front of the house is a beautiful park, from several eminences in which are delightful prospects. The park contains several clumps of trees, and much fine timber. A commodious shooting-ground is laid out within view of the house, for the amusement of the archers in the neighbourhood, who frequently resort to this hospitable retreat.”*²²

and Orford Hall near Warrington had been the home of John Blackburne, who was “*the second gentleman in England who cultivated that delicious fruit, now so common, the Pine-Apple; and his garden always continued one of the chief objects of botanical curiosity for its products, both foreign and domestic, in the north of England*”.²³ Blackburne had died, full of years, in 1786. In 1804 Joseph Aston provided a little more information. The Manchester Infirmary at what is now Piccadilly Gardens had

“... public walks, annexed to them, which are open to the use of all orderly persons, at proper hours. In front of the buildings, is a gravel walk, the whole length of the land, margined with grass, and partially planted with trees. The pool of water in front, adds considerably to its appearance, and renders it a most eligible promenade. The other parts of the public garden are situated between the Dispensary and the Public Baths: they are laid out in serpentine walks, and are interspersed with shrubs, grass plats, and flowers. Beside this, there is a kitchen garden, belonging to the charity, which is more prolific than could be expected, surrounded, as it is, by high buildings.”

There was also a “*well-cultivated garden*” surrounding the prison, though the area at the lower part of King Street “*which had for some years been gardens for the inhabitants of the town*”, had been built over around 1735.²⁴

Although there is little about gardens in books about Manchester written between 1790 and 1850 they do demonstrate the physical changes which were taking place at that time – whether written by local men, who emphasised the positive, or by

²¹ Aikin, John. A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester (1795) p.206, p.426 and p.291.

²² *ibid.* p.241

²³ *ibid.* p.307

²⁴ Aston, Joseph. The Manchester Guide, a brief historical description of Manchester & Salford, (1804) p.168-9; p.253; p.40.

foreigners who dwelt upon the negative. Leon Faucher (Manchester in 1844: its present condition and future prospects) drew attention to the divide between the relatively wealthy, with their “*detached villas, situated in the midst of gardens and parks in the country*” and the poor, who were denied the pleasures of physical recreation on their day off:

*“If the people of Manchester wish to go out upon a fine Sunday, where must they go? There are no public promenades, no avenues, no public gardens; and even no public common. If the inhabitants seek to breathe the pure atmosphere of the country, they are reduced to the necessity of swallowing the dust upon the public highways. Everything in the suburbs is closed against them; every thing is private property. In the midst of the beautiful scenery of England, the operatives are like the Israelites of old, with the promised land before them, but forbidden to enter into it. Aristocracy appropriates to itself the soil, and lives in ease and luxury, yet fears to grant a paltry plot for public recreation to the labourers, who have been the ladder to which they are indebted for their own elevation. Even the cemeteries and the Botanic Gardens, are closed upon the Sunday.”*²⁵

There are parts of life which are so ubiquitous that their existence need not be mentioned in contemporary writing. If those parts are subsequently lost, later writers will dwell upon them. Thus it is with gardens in Manchester. The early part of the twentieth century saw the publication of the five volumes of Thomas Swindells’ Manchester Streets and Manchester Men (1906 – 1908) and also Louis Hayes’ Reminiscences of Manchester from the Year 1840 (1905). They were looking back at a lost Manchester which included gardens in the centre and nurseries surrounding the town. Swindells makes frequent mention of the site of gardens, though says little about their layout or what was grown, although he quoted at length from a newspaper advert of 1769:

“To be let, and entered on immediately, a large garden, situated at the west end of St. Mary’s Church, Manchester, reaching down from the wall to the river, wherein is contained a Flower Garden, Orchard, and Shrubbery, with a large quantity of Gooseberries and Currant-berry Trees, Strawberries, Fruit Trees round the Walls, a Neat Summer House, with two rooms papered, and Grates fixed up in each room which goes alongside the River, lying open to the fields on that side, which makes the Air good, and the Garden pleasant.

²⁵ Faucher, Leon. Manchester in 1844: its present condition and future prospects. Translated from the French with copious notes appended by A member of the Manchester Athanæum. Republished Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. London. 1969; p.55-6. This was written before the public parks were created.

*There is likewise, planted a regular succession of Bulbous and Fibrous rooted Paraniels, some of which are in Flower most of the year.”*²⁶

The implication in this advertisement seems to be that Manchester was already suffering from poor air quality, but this may simply have been a reference to the medieval nature of most of the existing town, with its narrow streets and lack of sanitation.

Class and Gender

It is not possible to discuss the history of gardens without the issue of class arising – indeed the foregoing section has already used the terms ‘aristocracy’, ‘middle-classes’, ‘the relatively wealthy’ and ‘the poor’. Gardening requires access to land – however small the plot – and that in turn depends upon income and wealth. Most of garden history has been the history of the wealthiest members of society. This thesis considers those who may be thought to fall into the middle- and working-classes. In recent years there has been an increasing interest in the definition of middle-class, as a counterpoint to earlier historians’ preoccupation with the working classes. In addition, an appreciation of the attitudes of the middle class – particularly with regards to Sunday observance – is important background to the story of public gardens.

Briggs described the social structure of the country as a “*bold and massive social pyramid*”.²⁷ Ownership of land had a great deal to do with status – those at the top of the pyramid were the great landowners, below them those with less land, reaching down to the yeoman farmer. However, there were also members of the merchant class who might not own land but who could have considerable wealth and below them the artisans, those who were skilled at their trade. Beneath all, were the landless poor whose living came from working for others. Social structure, however, was a dynamic process: “*English society not only permitted but encouraged a considerable degree of individual mobility*”;²⁸ successful wealthy merchants could purchase land, though less successful merchants could lose everything in a misjudged venture.

²⁶ Swindells, T. *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*, First series, page 16. The advertisement was in Harrop’s Mercury of 22 August, 1769.

²⁷ Briggs, Asa. *The Age of Improvement: 1783-1867*. (1959: 2nd edition 2000, Harlow), p.9

²⁸ *ibid*, p.12.

Social mobility increased during the period 1750 to 1850; Chalkin comments that the middle-class tripled in size in this time.²⁹ Partly this was due to the general increase in population, but the change in manufacturing also gave rise to a demand for professional men. It was in the late eighteenth century that this section of society, neither the nobility/gentry nor the agricultural and factory workers, began to call itself the middle-class – before then the term generally used was “middle orders”.³⁰ One problem in understanding this group, however, is its breadth, taking in a wide range of different levels of wealth and income and including both new and existing occupations. The complications that arose around this time have been identified by Morris:

*“British towns produced a variety of social structures and economic situations. For the middle class, status divisions, status-group composition, relationships with other socio-economic groups both within and outside the town were influenced by the size of the town, its economic structure, the size of units of production, changes in technology, the composition and organization of wage labour, and the nature of the market served by the town, whether local, regional, national or international.”*³¹

There was clearly considerable scope for individuals to come together in different identifiable social groupings and similarly many ways for individuals to separate themselves from others. Indeed, Morris divided the middle-classes into three sections: the most prosperous (merchants, manufacturers, bankers, &c); the less prosperous (smaller manufacturers, shopkeepers, professionals) and the white-collar workers (clerks and teachers). I have not attempted to identify individuals according to this (or any other) definition, but Morris’ definition is useful when it comes to considering the membership of the Floral and Horticultural Society as opposed to that of the Botanical and Horticultural Society; the former seems to have had a wider appeal than the latter, which was much more exclusive (see chapters five and seven). Other writers have begun to show that class was much more complex than this,³²

²⁹ Chalklin, Christopher. The Rise of the English Town 1650-1850. (Cambridge University Press, 2001) p.14.

³⁰ Briggs, Asa. p.55 “*The newly rich began, in time, to consider their social position not in terms of order and degree, but in terms of class, a new concept in English social thinking.*”

³¹ Morris, R.J. The Middle Class and British Towns and Cities of the Industrial Revolution, 1780-1870 in Fraser, Derek and Sutcliffe, Anthony (ed.) The Pursuit of Urban History (London, 1983) p.291

³² See, for example Kidd, Alan and David Nicholls (ed) Gender, Civic Culture and Consumerism: Middle-class Identity in Britain, 1800-1940 (Manchester, 1999).

although here I restrict the discussion to those attitudes of the middle-class which are of particular importance with regard to the chapters which follow.

As time passed, the middle classes became more conscious of their position in society and looked for ways to distinguish themselves both from the aristocracy (who were seen as profligate) and the "lower orders", those who lacked the wherewithal to become successful. Differentiation between classes and between levels within the same class can be subtle,³³ not surprising, given the very considerable variation in income of the classes demonstrated by both Chalkin and Steinbach. Steinbach says

*"To comfortably maintain a family in a middle-class lifestyle required an income of between £300 and £1,000 per annum. However, a large number of middle-class families – probably the majority – actually lived on only £100 to £300 per annum."*³⁴

This is a very wide range of incomes on which to maintain a middle-class life-style, but the important point about the middle-classes was that economics was only part of the definition: "*classes were simultaneously economic, cultural, and discursive*", says Steinbach, so it was possible to consider oneself middle-class even though one's annual income was no greater than one's working-class neighbour. Accepting and adopting the beliefs, traditions and mores of the middle-class might be sufficient to *consider* oneself middle-class (though type of employment was a major factor), but having achieved that status did not necessarily make it any easier to mix with those who were *economically* in a different league.

Religion was an important factor behind the ideas which began to be more fully disseminated in the latter part of the eighteenth century and which came to define the middle-class – hard-work; sobriety; religious (particularly Sunday) observance – ideas which the middle-classes were keen for the lower orders to adopt. The process of re-interpretation of biblical teachings which had been such a feature of the seventeenth century continued throughout the eighteenth, leading to yet more new religious groupings some of which were of particular importance in Manchester, such as the Unitarian and Methodist churches. Methodism began within the Anglican

³³ Briggs referred to the "*minute social distinctions and nuances of status rather than broad collective groupings. It needed a novelist like Jane Austen to trace the delicate pattern.*" p.9.

³⁴ Steinbach, Susie, L. Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain. (2012, Abingdon) p. 124

community, part of the Evangelical movement, which has been identified as leading to the middle-class belief in behaviour and success:

*"... the Evangelicals among the Anglicans encouraged not only punctilious church-going but also prayers and bible-reading at home and charitable works ..."*³⁵

*"... Evangelical arguments originally grounded not in the creed of Progress but in that of the Cross were used to justify individual wealth and power as well as national morality."*³⁶

Religion thus justified the growing divergence of income and wealth: success was the result of hard work and good behaviour. The ambitious, would-be entrepreneur, therefore, is likely to have gained the impression that adopting the outward signs of piety must, of necessity, lead to success.

One of these outward signs was Sunday Observance. This was not a new subject, by any means. In 1625 an Act of Parliament had *"banned meetings or assemblies of people on Sundays for any sport or pastime, bear-baiting, bull-baiting, interludes or common plays"* and in 1677 a subsequent Act *"prohibited the sale of any wares, fruit, herbs, goods and chattels on a Sunday. Excepted was the selling of meat in inns and the selling of milk before 9 am or after 4 pm."*³⁷ Nevertheless, the matter continued to be contentious. A Sunday Observance Bill was introduced in 1795 *"for the better observance of the Sabbath"*, but at that time there seemed little support: at the second reading of the bill there were only forty-six members present, with some speakers maintaining that the 1677 Act was sufficient for purpose.³⁸ Forty years later the matter came before Parliament again, when Peel declared that example, not legislation, was what was needed:

*"Comparing even within my own short experience, the observance of the Sabbath with what I have witnessed, I should say that without the interference of any new law the Sabbath-day is now much better observed than formerly. If that effect has taken place nothing would be more easy than to show than you owe that consequence, that good effect of the influence of manners, to the influence of public opinion and not to legislation."*³⁹

³⁵ Chalkin, p.50

³⁶ Briggs, p.63

³⁷ http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/docs/slr_review.pdf

³⁸ Report in the *Derby Mercury*, 2 April 1795. Twenty-five were in favour of the bill and twenty-one opposed it.

³⁹ Report in *Kendal Mercury*, 30 May, 1835.

The subject of Sunday Observance is missing from many of the histories of the period, but, although it was a contentious issue, the expectations of the middle-classes made it an important element when it came to leisure and, as will be seen, this extended to the enjoyment on Sundays of public gardens. Bailey's comments associate the Evangelical attitude with the traditional view of Puritanism:

*"Its teachings stressed the need to strengthen personal and social standards of morality and evinced a deep suspicion of all worldly pleasures."*⁴⁰

It was no doubt easier to target leisure activities than other forms of non-observance, which would have impacted upon business life or upon the comfort of the middle-classes. The arguments in favour of Sunday Observance were that Sunday should be a day of rest (as laid down in Scripture) and of religious observance – i.e. attendance at Church. In 1848 a suggestion was put to Manchester Council that the post-office be closed on a Sunday. The arguments against it included *"To close the Post Office on Sunday would be to go against the existing course of things; the railways were open on Sunday, and benefits were thereby derived by the community. To close the Post Office on Sunday would be to create a great moral evil."* and that *"the Post Office [was] a great instrument of social intercourse ... the greatest benefit to the community of modern times."*⁴¹ The motion was successful (eighteen voted in favour, twelve against), yet, seventy-three years after the founding of the Sunday Observance Society, only sixty percent were in favour. It can be difficult to judge the extent to which particularly mores were supported by the population.

It does not follow that individuals in favour of the post office opening on a Sunday would have also been in favour of leisure activities being enjoyed on that day. The difference between work and leisure is an important one. Porter wrote *"For some, sabbath-keeping became a touchstone"*, and described those people as anxious to clean up society, to remove the lack of delicacy which was a part of eighteenth century life.⁴² His book reproduces *"The Spiritual Barometer (from the Evangelical Magazine, 1800)"* which shows how the slippery slope to damnation begins with light-hearted conversation, leads through luxurious entertainment, attending theatre and pleasure gardens, through pleasure on Sundays and jesting at religion.

⁴⁰ Bailey, Peter. Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational recreation and the contest for control, 1830-1885. (London, 1978). p.30

⁴¹ Manchester Courier, 9 August 1848.

⁴² Porter, Roy. English Society in the Eighteenth Century, (1982: 1991, London) p. 307.

(Interestingly, love of novels was considered worse than enjoying pleasure gardens, but there is no mention of work leading to heaven.)⁴³

One problem for middle-class reformers was that, as Turner has put it, causes such as Sunday observance and temperance "*were not particularly popular with the working people*".⁴⁴ While some believed that Sunday observance was important for the good of the soul, others looked to Sundays as being, for the poor, a day for bodily rather than spiritual refreshment. Having worked all week, they needed to be physically refreshed on their day off. Unfortunately, the ideas of the classes as to the best way to spend Sunday did not correspond.

*"Many Mancunians agreed that the gambling, drunkenness and idle lounging from which working-class areas of town suffered each Sunday had to be curtailed"*⁴⁵

Turner quotes Prentice on the subject: "*we wish not to abridge their pleasures. But we do wish to see them weaned from courses which in many instances lead to jail and the gallows*". The hope was that the workers would turn to "*rational*" activities as opposed to the "*drunkenness ... feasting, brawling and ... fornication*"⁴⁶ which were thought to be the existing recreational activities of the poor. Out of this movement came the proposals for public walks and parks, but the hopes of the middle-classes were by no means homogeneous. The Zoological and Botanical Gardens met the perceived need for "*rational recreation*" but fell foul of the demand for a more religious Sunday observance.⁴⁷

For the poor, recreational activities were often associated with the public house and this was a problem for the middle-classes who believed in temperance and

⁴³ *ibid.* p.309

⁴⁴ Turner, Michael J. Reform and Respectability: The Making of a Middle-Class Liberalism in Early 19th-century Manchester (Preston, 1995), p.82.

⁴⁵ *ibid.* p.171

⁴⁶ Bailey, Peter. Leisure and Class in Victorian England, p.48.

⁴⁷ Recreation and Sunday Observance continued to be a matter for discussion. In 1902 Rev. F. Meyrick published Sunday Observance: An Argument and Plea for the Old English Sunday in which it is clear that, while Sunday as a day of rest was generally accepted, the question of what recreational activities were acceptable was far from agreed. "*Should Sunday be made a day of greater amusement?*" asks Chapter XI, giving as one half of the argument in favour that "*the introduction of amusements on a much larger scale than public opinion at present permits in England would have the effect of refining and elevating the masses.*" Meyrick continues: "*... there are two questions mixed up – the first, whether amusements have a tendency to elevate; the second, whether amusements on the Lord's Day would be likely to have that effect.*"

abhorred such places and adjured others to keep away from them. Thus grew up a schism between individuals who, in other circumstances, would have found a great deal in common. Secord has written about the difficulty the middle-classes had in accepting that rational activities could take place in public houses:

*"The discovery, then, that rational pursuits, especially science, were associated with the pub was inconceivable to many in the middle class: it trumpeted the failure of such knowledge to imbue its consumers with the desired notions of order, self-control and sobriety. This was not simply because drink was equated with sensual and often bestial behaviour, but also because the pub was the most securely established and enduring bastion of working-class culture, impenetrable by those outside this culture."*⁴⁸

One other aspect of middle-class culture that needs to be considered is the separation of work and home. Steinbach wrote: *"The work that gender did to organize Victorian society was profound, complex, and variegated. Gender roles differed dramatically depending on a variety of factors. The primary one was class..."*⁴⁹ Pre-industrialization, men and women worked alongside each other – not necessarily performing the same roles, but in the same locale, since home was also the workplace. The offices, warehouses and factories which were the result of industrialization separated work from home and this was further encouraged when home was situated in the suburbs rather than in town. Thus the middle-class woman had her own sphere – the home – and the middle-class man's sphere was work. For this class, home – as Bailey has pointed out – became the centre of leisure activities, encompassing music, reading, billiards, dinner parties and gardens where *"the family and its guests could play a set of lawn tennis ... or take a game of croquet"*.⁵⁰ As will be seen, there were gardening books by women, for women, but women are largely invisible in the story of gardens and gardening. Women may have been actively gardening, but for the most part they were either not exhibiting, or were unsuccessful exhibitors at garden shows.⁵¹ Where they can be found it is often as continuing the nursery business of their husband or father.

⁴⁸ Secord, Anne. *Science in the Pub: Artisan Botanists in Early Nineteenth-century Lancashire* in *History of Science*, Vol. 32, p.269-315

⁴⁹ Steinbach, Susie, L. *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. (2012, Abingdon) p. 132

⁵⁰ Bailley, Peter. *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, p.72

⁵¹ Various references to "female florists" were found e.g, *Manchester Times*, 21 April, 1832: *"On Monday last the true Amazons of Middleton established, what they term a friendly female florist society, at the house of Mr. John Smithies, Wood-street. On this occasion, an excellent supper was provided by the worthy host, and the evening was passed in singing and other*

Garden Design

It is relatively recently that the history of gardening has been recognised as an academic discipline and this began as an appreciation of the design aspects of landscape gardening. In Britain over the past three hundred years design moved from the formality of the seventeenth century – imported from France and Italy – to the informal (brought to its apotheosis by Lancelot “Capability” Brown), took in the exploration of the picturesque, accepted the informal and largely suburban gardenesque, before returning to formality in Victorian gardens. The eighteenth was the century when garden design was focused on the large estate and the wealthy owner: formal gardens were swept aside to make way for the quintessentially English landscape park. It was the age of Kent, Bridgeman and Brown. From the straight lines and clipped hedges of earlier days, the move was for “*a style of gardening which was sinuous and free*” (Scott-James, 1977)⁵² or “*no garden at all, but a stretch of cultivated scenery*” (Nichols, 1902).⁵³ It can be difficult to know quite why fashions change and new styles become generally accepted. Hussey (1967) maintained that the reason for the landscape garden lay in “*the common English predilections for seeking to effect economies... and for facilitating sport*”⁵⁴ and Jane Brown in The Pursuit of Paradise (1999), argued that this exciting new fashion could have been a way for landowners to save money, to do away with the running costs of formal gardening and at the same time to look for income from the creation of grazing land.⁵⁵ Elliott (1990) comments “*it had become apparent to some that the features that formed the basis of [Capability] Brown’s parks were derived ... from the relics of agriculture and industry: from the enclosure of commons, from hedgerows and boundary trees, from the serpentine lakes created to power watermills*”.⁵⁶ Talking about Switzer (early eighteenth century), Jacques, Georgian Gardens: The Reign of

diversions, till a late hour. What were their husbands doing in the mean time, if they were married, and if unmarried, they must be bold men who would venture to marry those females.” Later references lost the “humorous” touch. However references to female gardeners and florists in this period refer to Friendly Societies of factory workers: “*Gardeners were spinners in the cotton mills. There was also a Grand Provincial Lodge of Female Florists.... Florists were carders in the cotton industry.*” (Marsh, Victoria Ryan. Historical Directory of Trade Unions - Volume 5, (2006) Page 429)

⁵² Scott-James, Anne. The Pleasure Garden (1979, Penguin edition) p.52.

⁵³ Nichols, Rose Standish. English Pleasure Gardens (1902) reprinted with a new introduction by Judith B. Tankard (2003), p.220

⁵⁴ Hussey, Christopher. English Gardens and Landscapes, 1700-1750 (1967), p.27.

⁵⁵ Brown, Jane. The Pursuit of Paradise (1999) p.98.

⁵⁶ Elliott, Brent, Victorian Gardens, 1986 (paperback 1990), p.7,

Nature (1990), says: "*The essence of this approach was that estate management, rather than the idle pleasures of gardens, is the key to both the pleasurable and the profitable enjoyment of the countryside.*"⁵⁷ Quest-Ritson (2001) argued that garden historians in general have missed the social aspect: "*It is all about social aspirations, lifestyles, money and class.*"⁵⁸ Whatever the impetus, it is certainly true that during the 18th century, vast acres were landscaped in a way unknown previously and the capital cost of landscaping could be immense (whatever the possible savings in running costs), involving the digging out of lakes, the creation of hills and valleys and, at times, the physical removal of whole villages. However, it is also the case that land was being reclaimed for agriculture and transport. The importance of economics cannot be underestimated; the Manchester Agricultural Society predated the Manchester Horticultural Societies by nearly sixty years, and the draining of lands in the area to make them productive was an expensive undertaking.

In addition to pleasure and profit, plants must also be considered. Brown's landscapes are vast sweeps of lawn, dotted with clumps of trees,⁵⁹ with sinuous lakes imitating rivers. His preference was for "*simplicity – broad sweetly contoured expanses of grass, stretching between the uncluttered garden front of the house and an adjacent lake or stream.*"⁶⁰ Flower gardens survived but "*...flowers and vegetables [were] far away out of sight, so that there is no interest whatsoever for the plantsman...*"⁶¹ But flowers were *not* banished entirely in the eighteenth century. It is sometimes assumed that they survived among the less well-off, in cottage gardens, and among those of the gentry who were not swayed by the innovations of Georgian designers. Yet writers have made clear that flowers could be important even with cutting-edge designs. Jacques refers to the planting of Philip Southcote (1697-1758):

"A thick thorn hedge with standard trees was supplemented on the inside by small trees and flowering shrubs. Between these and the five-foot-wide sand walk was a 2½ -foot flower bed. In other places there were flower beds and groups of shrubs detached from the belt. All the species were thoroughly

⁵⁷ Jacques, David. *Georgian Gardens: The Reign of Nature*. 1986 (paperback 1990), p. 18.

⁵⁸ Quest-Ritson, Charles. *The English garden: a social history*. 2001. p.3

⁵⁹ Papworth, John Buonarotti. *Rural residences*, (1818) has pointed out that Brown's clumps were accidental, arising from the failure to thin out (as intended) trees planted originally close together to provide reciprocal shelter and obtain more rapid growth. p. 67.

⁶⁰ Thacker, Christopher, *The Genius of Gardening*, 1994, p. 215.

⁶¹ Scott-James. *The Pleasure Garden*, p.58.

*mixed with others that flowered at different times of the year, so that there was always, except in mid-winter, some colour and interest".*⁶²

A most comprehensive book for the Georgian period, which rescues the landscape garden from the assumption that it was flowerless, is Mark Laird's The Flowering of the Landscape Garden: English pleasure grounds 1720-1800. In his introduction he undermines the generally held view of Brown's landscapes being only shades of green: "*Capability Brown is known to have ordered flowering shrubs for the Earl of Egremont's 'wilderness' at Petworth*".⁶³ His book provides ample evidence that flowers and flowering shrubs were an important part of at least some gardens throughout the century. The young Lord Petre, whose untimely early death led to the breakup of his extensive plant collection, was a recipient of the boxes of seeds received by Peter Collinson from the American John Bartram whose story is well and fully told by Andrea Wulf in The Brother Gardeners (2008).

The influx of plants into this country increased as the century progressed and not only from America. Coats in Flowers in History (1971) put it succinctly: at "*...the end of the eighteenth century... the whole world was systematically searched for plants that were hitherto unknown in Europe*".⁶⁴ Joseph Banks was a key player. He had gone round the world with Captain Cook and never lost the excitement of finding new plants. He continued to finance plant-hunting expeditions until his death in 1820. Musgrave, Gardner and Musgrave (The Plant Hunters: 1998) have told Banks' story and that of Francis Masson, Banks' replacement with Cook. Masson travelled throughout South Africa for twenty years before ending his life in Canada.⁶⁵ In The Origin of Plants (2004), Maggie Campbell-Culver has traced the first appearance in the U.K. of hundreds of garden plants, listing them by date of arrival. She also writes about the less well-known plant hunters. In addition to those employed in plant-hunting, plants and seeds could enter the country via friends and relatives. William Higson knew nothing about botany but sent his friend Edward Leeds plenty of seeds from Mexico, some of which turned out to be new introductions.⁶⁶

⁶² Jacques, Georgian Gardens, p.25

⁶³ Laird, The Flowering of the Landscape Garden p.3

⁶⁴ Coats, Peter. Flowers in History (1970). p.29.

⁶⁵ See also, Gribbin, Mary and Gribbin, John, Flower Hunters, (2008).

⁶⁶ Uings, Joy. Edward Leeds: A nineteenth-century plantsman. A dissertation submitted to the University of Manchester for the Certificate of Continuing Education in Garden and Landscape History, 2003

Regency England, as a separate period in garden history, is rarely mentioned. Mavis Batey's small book Regency Gardens (1995) is, perhaps, the only one that looks exclusively at that period, though she takes the period to cover 1794-1837, (George IV was Regent only from 1811 to 1820). So the early part of the nineteenth-century tends to be treated as late Georgian or early Victorian. Humphry Repton (generally considered Brown's successor, although his work was more varied) may be seen as Georgian though he lived till 1816 and John Claudius Loudon, the leading garden writer of the early nineteenth century, as Victorian, though he died in 1843. Certainly, from 1790 onwards, the nouveau-riche middle-classes and the general urbanisation meant that designers had a new clientele and smaller grounds to deal with and this was a niche that Loudon, in particular, filled, first with his two-volume A Treatise on Country Residences (1806) and subsequently with The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion (1838), and also through his other writings.

There was an important movement in garden design in the 1790s. The Picturesque was espoused in particular by Sir Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, whose first publications on the subject appeared in 1794. Like the Regency, the Picturesque is not often to be found in garden histories.⁶⁷ In King's The Quest for Paradise (1979) it warrants only a paragraph and does not even appear in the index and in Thacker's The Genius of Gardening (1994) the protagonists are mentioned only insofar as they related to Humphry Repton. Yet the Picturesque heavily influenced Loudon in his early years.

Batey describes the Regency garden as 'ornamental'. This was the period of the cottage orné, not to be confused with the cottages of the poor. The cottage orné could be a very substantial (and expensive) building: a lodge at Windsor was turned into a "... *thatched sylvan cottage orné retreat... ornamented beyond recognition at a cost of £50,000...*"⁶⁸ for the Prince Regent. The importance of flowers in the Regency period can be seen by the increase in conservatories attached to houses and the introduction of ornamental shrubberies. Batey quotes Henry Phillips who "*claimed that the ornamental shrubbery 'originated in England, and is as peculiar to the British*

⁶⁷ An important exception is Hunt, John Dixon and Willis Peter (Eds.) The Genius of the Place: the English landscape garden 1620-1820 1975 (paperback 1988), where Part Four is entitled "*Picturesque taste and the garden*"

⁶⁸ Batey, Mavis. Regency Gardens. 1995 p.36

nation as landscape-planting".⁶⁹ The planting style of the period is known as 'gardenesque'; a term coined by Loudon. If picturesque means 'as a painter would like', then gardenesque means 'as a gardener would like' and reflects the growing importance of science in horticulture.⁷⁰

Loudon was by no means the only garden writer in the period 1800-1850 but was certainly pre-eminent and not only because of the extraordinary number of his publications, from 1803 right up to his death (he died on his feet, while dictating to his wife). He travelled extensively throughout Britain, writing about the gardens he saw, encouraging good design and writing scathingly about poor design. His views on design changed: in 1806 he advocated the picturesque, but he grew to understand that different styles were appropriate in different places and at different times.

In contrast to the eighteenth, the nineteenth was the century – in gardening as in so many ways – of the aspirational middle class. At the outset it was still possible for the successful businessman to own or lease many acres of land which could be developed as farm, pleasure grounds, kitchen garden and flower garden in the manner of the aristocracy and landed gentry. As the population increased, so did pressure on land and the country house with tens of acres gave way to the suburban villa with five acres or fewer. Garden designers, of necessity, had to adapt to changing life-styles. The designers of the early suburban gardens are generally unknown or little known, but design eventually moved from the informality inherited from the eighteenth century and brought up to date for smaller gardens by John Loudon, back to formal layouts and bedding displays. Of course, not everyone follows fashion – then or now; economics and personal taste can mean that the styles of leading designers are not reflected in the gardens of particular areas or particular owners. Nevertheless, the prevailing fashion provides a benchmark against which to view the gardens and landscapes in and around Manchester. The importance of design in Manchester's gardening story is subsumed in this thesis to that of nurserymen and gardeners, but it remains a backdrop. Design services were on offer and, although the resulting work has been lost, those who laid out gardens would have been influenced by leading designers. For the reader who is not familiar with

⁶⁹ Batey, *Regency Gardens*. p.43

⁷⁰ Loudon, J.C. *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, p. 160: "... in short, the gardenesque style is calculated for displaying the art of the gardener; while the picturesque style has a constant reference to what would look well in a picture..."

garden history, this section provides some useful background information. Many writers use the best examples – or those with the most complete archives – to describe those gardens which reflect particular periods in history. So, for example, Batey and Lambert's The English Garden Tour: a view into the past (1990) has chapters including "the eighteenth-century garden" and "the nineteenth-century garden", which together provide details of thirty-four separate gardens, none of which is in the vicinity of Manchester, in either Cheshire or Lancashire and it would be easy to assume that the area around Manchester was devoid of gardens of historic interest, but this is not true. As garden history has developed in its appeal and scope, historians have looked more deeply. Professor Tim Mowl's book Cheshire (2008) records some of the gardens and parks⁷¹ to the south and south-west of Manchester – in Sale and Altrincham and the new commuter towns such as Alderley Edge, Wilmslow and Prestbury, the development of which was made possible by the new railway lines of the 1840s. The book includes lesser-known gardens within Greater Manchester which date from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – such as Quarry Bank garden, "... *the essence of the Savage Picturesque, but tamed and manicured to produce a great Cheshire garden...*";⁷² Abney Hall, on the banks of the Mersey, owned in succession by manufacturers with a keen interest in gardens and horticulture and Denzell Gardens in Altrincham, now a public park. Dunham Massey is included, though the vital role it played in the lives of Manchester workers is not mentioned.

Elliott discusses the importance of history to writers of the period, including Loudon. There was an appreciation of what had been lost during the Brown years and "*The opening years of the nineteenth century, accordingly, saw the first efforts in garden conservation and restoration.*"⁷³ The return to the formal can be seen in many of the large gardens developed in the Victorian period, such as Trentham in Staffordshire and Cliveden in Buckinghamshire. At the same time, flowers grew in importance as the volume of introductions increased. The two were combined in

⁷¹ Mowl, Tim and Mako, Marion, The historic gardens of England: Cheshire (2008). This was the eighth volume of a county series and the first to include a chapter on public parks, Cheshire being the county "*where the provision of public parks for the masses began*". This is arguable, referring as it does to Birkenhead Park which opened in April 1847, some nine months after the Manchester parks opened. The volume on Lancashire has yet to appear.

⁷² Mowl. Cheshire. p.106.

⁷³ Elliott, Victorian Gardens p. 57

geometric designs for parterres. But the high Victorian does not fall within the scope of this study.

By 1850, the public parks movement was well under way. This is described in Susan Lasdun's The English Park: Royal, Private and Public (1991). There had been Royal Parks which were available to the public (Hyde Park and St. James's Park in London) and there was a growing number of Botanic Gardens throughout the country in addition to pleasure gardens, such as Vauxhall and Ranelagh Gardens in London, or Sydney Gardens in Bath, which had been popular venues in the eighteenth century. But there was periodic unrest among the workers in the new towns and a recognised need to improve their health, which increasingly led to the creation of new parks for the public, provided by private benefactors. In 1833 Parliament had recognised the need for Public Walks, but in 1835 the Municipal Reform Act "*ironically rendered ... illegal*"⁷⁴ payments by local councils towards the creation of public parks. The first parks in Manchester were therefore created by public subscription and opened in 1846, although "*by 1848 [the public health movement] had led to the first Public Health Act, enabling local authorities to purchase and maintain land for the purpose of recreation.*"⁷⁵

Horticulture, floriculture and nurseries

The main reference book for individuals in the business is Ray Desmond's updated (1994) edition of Dictionary of British & Irish Botanists and Horticulturists (originally published in 1977) and hereafter referred to simply as Desmond. Despite his impressive bibliography of some 407 books and 189 periodicals (many running for several decades, even centuries), a comparison of entries with the names of nurserymen, seedsmen and gardeners found in the course of this research, shows to what extent the trade has been under-recorded. More than eighty people have been identified as operating in and around Manchester, of whom only fifteen have entries in Desmond, and for most of these the entry is of one line only, showing how little information has been previously recorded about them.

Design was originally the basis of garden history – and with that the story of designers – but of recent years plant hunters and plant introductions have become a

⁷⁴ Lasdun, Susan. The English Park (1991) p. 146

⁷⁵ *ibid.* p.164

major focus. The story of horticulture and floriculture appears less often, but has not been totally neglected, although the story has not been so much of horticulture as about writers of gardening books. Anne Wilkinson in The Victorian Gardener (2006) points out in her introduction "*There is a difference between 'garden history' and the 'history of gardening' "*"⁷⁶ and notes that writers on garden history are not necessarily gardeners. Mainly to do with the period after 1850, the book contains useful information on horticulture and horticultural writers before that date, and perhaps underestimates the extent of the trade in those early years.

Jenny Uglow's A little history of British gardening (2005) starts promisingly with the question "*Did the Romans have rakes?*" but, although entertaining, the book is more about designers and employers of gardeners than about horticulture. Equally entertaining, and with a political slant, is Martin Hoyles' The Story of Gardening, (1991) but this tells us little about horticulture.⁷⁷ More useful, though limited in scope, are Susan Campbell's A History of Kitchen Gardening (2005) and Walled Kitchen Gardens (2006) which consider the practical aspects of fruit and vegetable growing. George Drower's Gardeners, Gurus & Grubs (2001) moves through history and geography with stories of garden implements interspersed with information on garden writers and plant hunters. Christopher Stocks' Forgotten Fruits: A guide to Britain's traditional fruit and vegetables (2008) is one of the few books on garden history which makes reference to Manchester growers: "*... around Manchester the growers were ... primarily interested in size...*"⁷⁸ and lists by name Manchester Giant Red celery and Manchester Market turnip.

Wilkinson makes the distinction between gardeners and florists. A florist was someone who grew particular, specialised plants. Ruth Duthie, Florists' Flowers and Societies (1988) says the term was "*first applied to a person who grew plants for the sake of their decorative flowers... Later it came to refer to one who grew only certain kinds of flowering plants and these to a very high standard*".⁷⁹ Genders, Collecting Antique Plants (1971) describes the old florists' flowers – auriculas, polyanthus, tulips,

⁷⁶ Wilkinson, Anne. The Victorian Gardener (2006). p.xix

⁷⁷ "*The main perspective relating all the books I have written is a political one. Many of the subjects of the books are usually seen as non-political, e.g. gardening, literacy, childhood, but when you examine them carefully they are drenched in politics!*" Hoyles in interview: see www.biblio.com/unbound/2008/3/Hoyles.html

⁷⁸ Stocks, Christopher. Forgotten Fruits (2008) p. 68

⁷⁹ Duthie, Ruth. Florists' Flowers and Societies (1988), p.5.

etc which date back into the seventeenth century – but also includes the chrysanthemum and the dahlia, which were nineteenth century introductions. Floriculture was recognised as a separate branch of horticulture and those people known as florists grew specific plants with the purpose not only of growing prize-winning blooms but of breeding new varieties. Hybridisation between different species of plant (as opposed to between varieties of the same species) began with the experiments of a Hoxton nurseryman at the beginning of the 18th century. The story is told in Michael Leapman's The Ingenious Mr. Fairchild (2000), but no documents of his nursery survive.

Few nurseries have left any archives and only a handful of catalogues from the 18th and 19th centuries have survived, though evidence indicates that all nurserymen and sellers of seeds and plants produced them regularly. In his introduction to The Georgian Garden (1983) – a reproduction of the 1782 catalogue of John Kingston Galpine, nursery and seedsman of Blandford in Dorset, John Harvey wrote: "*The history of gardening in England has mostly ... been concerned with movements of taste and methods of landscape design [but] ...by far the greatest contribution... has been the masterly handling of very large numbers of different kinds of plants*".⁸⁰ Since this volume appeared, more writers have considered this aspect of garden history, exploring the story of plant hunters and of plants and, more recently, of nursery dynasties. Although a medieval historian, Harvey developed an interest in nurseries. His 1972 publication Early Gardening Catalogues, the result of an accidental discovery of a 1775 catalogue of Telford's of York was followed in 1974 by Early Nurserymen. In this we are told that "*In the Manchester area there were a great many small nurseries, mostly founded after 1800, but few seem to have been of any significance*."⁸¹ Harvey's remains the only wide-ranging – historically (from the 13th to the 19th centuries) and geographically – study of the subject.

More localised studies appeared through local history societies. The first of these, which pre-dated Harvey's work, was E.J. Willson's James Lee and the Vineyard Nursery, Hammersmith (1961), which was concerned with a single (though world-famous) nursery. This was followed by her West London Nursery Gardens (1982) (Brompton, Fulham and Kensington nurseries) and Nurserymen to the World: The

⁸⁰ The Georgian Garden (1983) introduction by John Harvey, p.7.

⁸¹ Harvey, John Early Nurserymen (1974), p.115.

Nursery Gardens of Woking and North-West Surrey and plants introduced by them (1989), which was self-published. Other publications included Commercial Nurseries and Market Gardens (Borough of Twickenham Local History Society Paper number 50) 1982, by A.C.B. Urwin. Willson's subjects had very clearly been nurserymen – and included some of the most famous, including London and Wise, whose Brompton nurseries dated to the 17th century. But terminology has been a continuing problem for writers concerned with commercial growers, and this is considered in detail in Chapter One. The one word "gardener" was used for private and commercial workers and was further complicated by the "nursery" being an integral part of country estates. The sale of plants could be a side-line for private gardeners, but could also be a side-product of market gardening. In the Edmonton Hundred Historical Society Occasional Paper (New Series) No. 45 ('Now Turned into Fair Garden Plots'), written by J.G.L. Burnby and A.E. Robinson (1983), the authors begin with a very good exposition of this difficulty (early directories listed gardeners with nurserymen). They traced the use of the term "market gardener" to 1816, although Batty Langley in his New Principles of Gardening (1728) used the term when he described the various types of garden. This demonstrates the difficulty for the historian of understanding the role an individual gardener may have played.

"The Productions of Gardens being greatly different, are therefore divided into divers Classes: As, First, the Kitchen Garden, whose Products is all Manner of Sallets, Herbage, Roots, &c. necessary for the Kitchen. Secondly, the Fruit Garden, which supplies the Table every Month in the Year, with the best of Fruits. Thirdly, the Flower Garden, which gratifies the Sight and Smell with its Flowers. Fourthly, the Market Garden, which produces all Sorts of Pulse, as Pease, Beans, Roots, Sallets, Herbage, &c. (as the Kitchen Garden,) for the Service of Cities, Towns, &c. Fifthly, Nursery Gardeners, or Nursery Men, who raise all Sorts of Trees, Shrubs, Plants, &c. for the Plantation of Fruit Gardens, Parterres, Wildernesses, Groves, &c. And Sixthly, the Physick Garden, wherein is cultivated all Medicinal Plants for Physical Uses.

"These Varieties of Gardens affords no less Employment for Gardeners; and therefore they are distinguished according to that Part of Gardening in which they are employ'd, as the Kitchen Gardener, the Fruit Gardener, the Flower Gardener, or Florist, the Market Gardener, the Nursery Gardener, (or Nursery Men,) and lastly the Physick Gardener; to which Variety may be added, the compleat Groundworkman and Planter, who surveys, designs, lays out, and plants Gardens in general." ⁸²

⁸² Langley, Batty. New Principles of Gardening (1728) p. 25-26.

It is clear here that Market Gardeners produced food for sale in towns and cities. It is not clear that Nurserymen produced plants for sale. Philip Miller's celebrated Gardeners Dictionary (1735) says:

*"There is no such thing as having a fine Garden or Plantation, without a Nursery both for Trees and Flowers, in which there are continually new Varieties of Fruits, Timber, or Flowering Trees, and choice Flowers, rais'd for a Supply of the several Parts of the Garden, Orchard, and Wilderness. The Size of this Nursery must be proportion'd to the Extent of your Garden, or design'd Plantation."*⁸³

In other words, a nursery was an essential part of the grounds and the private gardener was also a nurseryman. Miller made no reference in that early edition to commercial nurserymen, although in the 1768 edition he did:

"Nursery-garden, is a piece of land set apart for the raising and propagating all sorts of trees and plants to supply the garden, and other plantations. Of this sort there are a great number in the different parts of this kingdom, but particularly in the neighbourhood of London, which are occupied by the gardeners, whose business it is to raise trees, plants, and flowers for sale..."

Abercrombie, in his Universal Gardener and Botanist, makes clear that there are two types of nurseries – public and private:

"With respect to the proper extent or dimensions of a Nursery, whether for private use, or for public supply, it must be according to the quantity of plants required, or the demand for sale..."

Bearing in mind this difficulty of terminology, Burnby & Robinson note that there are no nurserymen or market gardeners included in the Enfield, Edmonton and Tottenham Directories for 1826-8, but there are nine fruiterers:

"A much commoner description was 'fruiterer'. To us it means a person who sells fruit by retail, but at one time it was used to describe a fruitgrower".⁸⁴

Burnby & Robinson compared later titles. In 1872 William Cuthbert was described as both "nurseryman" and "market gardener" and in 1888 John Crouch was a "market gardener", but fourteen years later he was "nurseryman and seedsman". In 1860 there were a number of businesses, described variously as "seedsman and florist", "gardeners and florist", "florists" and "nurseryman and florist". The authors continued by considering the problem of those who combined their plant trade with another, as

⁸³ Miller, Philip. Gardener's Dictionary (1735) entry for 'Nursery'.

⁸⁴ Burnby, J.G.L. & Robinson, A.E. 'Now Turned into Fair Garden Plots' (1983), p.3

in “*market-gardener and dairyman*” or “*farmer and market-gardener*”. Without necessarily being able to define these businesses in modern terms, their work includes biographical details (of varying lengths) of ninety-eight commercial growers in the area.

It had not been the purpose of this present study to look beyond recreational gardening, but it became evident that the delineations in Manchester, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, between pleasure gardening, market gardening and agriculture were not clear cut. In The Neat House Gardens: Early Market Gardening around London (1998) Malcolm Thick, touched upon the crossover between market gardening, nurseries and agriculture. His history begins with the famine of 1596. Grain was in short supply and vegetables could help to meet the demand. Demand was particularly high in London, with its population of 200,000 (a density that Manchester was not to reach for another 230 years), and market gardens sprouted on either side of the Thames. He identified the farmer-gardener mix which appeared around the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries, where individuals would rotate grain and vegetables on their land, and quotes from an 1810 description included in Miles Hadfield’s A History of British Gardening (1960) of Chelsea Fields:

*“The most perfect and best cultivated culinary grounds are in this parish and its vicinity: and here, in general, the characters of farmers and gardener are united in the same person, as the grounds are successively filled with grain and vegetables.”*⁸⁵

Evidence of this mixing of farming and gardening can be found in Manchester. In 1838 newspapers carried the reports of the murder of Mary Moore who was “*employed by Mrs. Chorlton, a farmer, at Withington, to attend the Manchester Smithfield Market to dispose of vegetables*”⁸⁶ and who had lost her life on her way back from selling gooseberries at the Market in town. A number of advertisements for the sale of farms include gardens in the description of land and buildings, as in:

*“... FARM, and TENEMENT, called “Top-o’th-Bank”, with barn, stables, shippons, outbuildings, gardens, land, and appurtenances thereto belonging, situate in Heaton Norris”*⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Taken from Thomas Faulkner, Historical and Topographical Description of Chelsea and Environs, 1810, p.14. A copy of this edition is available on books.google.co.uk/books.

⁸⁶ Manchester Times, 23 June, 1838.

⁸⁷ Manchester Times, 17 June, 1848.

although with other advertisements it is less clear whether the garden is a productive or an ornamental addition to the farmhouse.

This review would not be complete without reference to the theses written by Colin Treen and Ann Brooks. Treen's 1977 study of Building and Estate Development in the Northern Out-Townships of Leeds, 1781-1914 is a detailed discussion of the growth of a northern town, not dissimilar in size and spread to Manchester. Ann Brooks' 2007 thesis 'A Veritable Eden': The Manchester Botanic Garden 1827-1907 and the Movement for Subscription Botanic Gardens was followed by her 2011 publication of 'A Veritable Eden', the Manchester Botanic Garden: A History. The period of her work overlaps with that of this thesis. The Botanic Garden was set up by the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Society and, despite its many fiscal problems, was an important part of the horticultural life of the area from the outset. Brooks has also identified some of the gardens around Manchester in the early part of the century and has described gardens belonging to some of the Society's members in the period after 1850.

Methodology

The first challenge was to find a definition for “*Manchester*” and it soon became clear that this would be a difficult – if not impossible – task.

The name Manchester was used as loosely in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as it is today. It could refer to the Township, but was also the name of the Parish, which covered an area of around sixty acres. It was frequently used as a catch-all for the continuous built-up area. “Salford... *is to Manchester what Southwark is to London*”, said Aikin. It was a phrase that resonated, re-appearing in other writings, with slight variations in wording, such as the three part Topographical and Commercial History of Manchester contributed by ‘Verax’ of Salford to The Tradesman (Vol. 5) in 1810: “*The suburb of Salford, which district is to Manchester as the Borough of Southwark to the metropolis of London*”.⁸⁸ In 1832 the newly-formed Parliamentary Borough of Manchester included the areas on the outskirts – Ardwick, Chorlton-on-Medlock (previously Chorlton Row) and Hulme. Six years later the local authority of Manchester was created and covered a different area again, as described in the Charter of Incorporation:

*“... for the district comprised within the boundaries of the townships of Manchester, Chorlton-upon-Medlock, Hulme, Ardwick, Beswick, and Cheetham, in the said county palatine of Lancaster, which said townships (together with the townships of Newton, Harpurhey, and Bradford) comprise the boundaries of the Parliamentary Borough of Manchester...”*⁸⁹

One of the complications in seeking comparisons of population between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is that Pendleton was always listed with the other inner suburbs after 1800. However, it lay outside the parish of Manchester, and so was not included when the enumeration was taken in 1773-4.

⁸⁸ August 1, 1810, p. 139. Other phraseologies included: “*Salford is a distinct township, the Southwark of Manchester*” (The London Encyclopaedia, Vol.13 1829); and, in 1830 The New Lancashire Gazetteer described Salford to Manchester as being “*in somewhat the same degree as Southwark to London*”. Aikin was not the first to use the analogy. He may have taken it from Thomas Percival’s Philosophical, medical and experimental essays, (1776) who, in his essay Observations on the state of population in Manchester commented that he was uncertain whether Salford was included in the 8,000 population figure given for Manchester in 1717. In a footnote he wrote: “*Manchester and Salford, though distinguished by different names, like London, Westminster, and the Borough of Southwark, may be considered as one and the same town, being divided only by a small river, over which two bridges are erected*”. (By 1810 there were three bridges.)

⁸⁹ As reported by the Manchester Times, 27 October, 1838.

Manchester grew more quickly than Salford; the southern suburbs faster than the northern ones. As the central trading point, however, the name Manchester could be taken to include all those factories and weavers that lay in the surrounding countryside. Faucher phrased it rather aptly:

*"Manchester, like a diligent spider, is placed in the centre of the web, and sends forth roads and railways towards its auxiliaries, formerly villages, but now towns, which serve as outposts to the grand centre of industry."*⁹⁰

The wider use of "Manchester" to refer to what, today, we would think of as Greater Manchester, can be seen in the listing of provincial nurseries, seedsmen and florists in The National Garden Almanack and Horticultural Trade Directory of 1853 where "*Manchester and its vicinity*" includes, among its 30 entries, Sale Moor to the south, Flixton to the west, Middleton to the north and Oldham to the east (although, interestingly, Didsbury is listed separately).⁹¹

It has not been possible to contain this work to a strict geographical area. Suffice to say, that medieval Manchester – that area surrounding the collegiate church and market place – is the central pivot around which the story revolves. The centrifugal forces of industry and population growth flung gardens – and in due course, nurseries – ever outwards. Horticultural interchange between towns increased and included not only that circle of urban areas within a ten mile compass, but also places like Liverpool and even London.

The use of both historical and contemporary books about Manchester has been discussed above and has been shown to be of limited use in providing direct information about gardens and horticulture. Other types of books are also available, for example novels where Manchester was the setting and biographies, such as Samuel Bamford's Passages in the Life of a Radical (1844) and Early Days (1849). A poetic description of Manchester at the turn of the nineteenth century can be found in Mrs. G. Linnaeus Banks' The Manchester Man:

"Compared to its present proportions, Manchester then [1805] was but as a cameo brooch on a mantle of green; and that green was already starred with

⁹⁰ Faucher, Leon. Manchester in 1844: its present condition and future prospects. Translated from the French with copious notes appended by A member of the Manchester Athanæum. Republished Frank Cass & Co. Ltd. London. 1969. p.11

⁹¹ The 1853 Almanack also includes the information that the Falstaff Inn in Manchester was the place to visit on Saturday for those "*interested in the purchase and sale of most Gardening subjects*" (p.124)

*daisies, buttercups, primroses and cowslips. By wells and brooks, daffodil and jonquil hung their heads and breathed out perfume. Bush and tree put out pale buds and fans of promise.”*⁹²

Ardwick Green in 1809 was a pleasant place:

*“A long slightly serpentine lake spread its shining waters from end to end within the soft circlet of green; and this grassy belt served as a promenade for the fashionable inhabitants”.*⁹³

The picture changed radically over the next four decades. Elizabeth Gaskell's Mary Barton sets out the very different lives of the poor and the middle class in Manchester in the 1840s and the difference between the centre of town and the outskirts. *“But in Manchester, where, alas! there are no flowers”*⁹⁴ refers to the central area. This was a time when Greenheys was still fields: *“popular places of resort at every holiday time”.*⁹⁵ There is sufficient information in this novel to demonstrate the range of interests in plants. The comfortably situated Carsons bought plants for their garden from a local nurseryman; the window plants belonging to the poverty stricken George Wilson were his *“pride and especial care”.*⁹⁶ Alice Wilson spent *“all day in the fields, gathering wild herbs for drinks and medicine”.*⁹⁷ Meanwhile *“There is a class of men in Manchester ... who yet may claim kindred with all the noble names that science recognises”.*⁹⁸ These were the working-class botanists, whose story is not included here,⁹⁹ and whose skill was mentioned also by Mrs. Banks:

“Well, sir, I took the liberty to bring a sketch-book with me – I don't get many such opportunities – I could represent myself as an artist; or I could cram my

⁹² Banks, Mrs G Linnaeus. The Manchester Man. 1876. 1991 edition E J Morton, Didsbury, p.65.

⁹³ *ibid*, p.79. In 1846 there was some disagreement about this lake, said to cover between four and five acres. The lake had gradually silted up and become stagnant – some argued for it to be dredged, another for it to be filled in. In 1849 the worn out railings were replaced, part of the lake filled in and various trees and shrubs planted. It was hoped that *“... the green and its handsome lake will again become ornaments to the town, at once grateful and refreshing to the eye. Neglected as they have been, they had become the very reverse of this.”* (Manchester Times, 8 August, 1849)

⁹⁴ Gaskell, Elizabeth. Mary Barton. (1848) Everyman edition 1996. p.97.

⁹⁵ *ibid*, p. 5-6.

⁹⁶ *ibid*, p.118.

⁹⁷ *ibid*, p.16.

⁹⁸ *ibid*, p.38-9.

⁹⁹ For this group, see the various writings of Anne Secord of Cambridge University, such as Science in the pub: artisan botanists in early nineteenth-century Lancashire, in History of Science 32 (1994), 269-315 and Artisan Botany, chapter 22 of Cultures of Natural History (ed. Jardine, N., Secord, J.A. and Spry, E.C.) (1996).

pockets with plants and roots as I went along, and say I was a botanist in search of specimens'.

*"Stick to the artist, Jabez; our country botanists would soon floor you on their own ground – they know more of plants than of pencils, I'll warrant."*¹⁰⁰

Bamford provides us with some vignettes of gardens outside of the town: "*a modern and substantial farm house, with green shutters, sashed windows, and flowers peeping from the sills. A mantle of ivy climbs the wall, a garden is in front and an orchard, redolent of bloom, and fruit in season, nods on the hill-top above*"¹⁰¹ was on the road from Blackley to Manchester.

This thesis has benefited from – but may also have suffered from – the advantages provided by computers and the internet. At the beginning of the study it was unclear how much useful information might be available and (as demonstrated below) some avenues initially explored were unproductive. Newspapers were soon shown to be a mine of information, but had the effect of widening out the study. In my view, this has been of immense value, but it may be thought that depth of coverage has been sacrificed to breadth. The thought persists that there exists somewhere a vast archive of relevant material as yet uncovered. The belief that it is unlikely to be so is one reason for staying so close to electronic sources. The other reason is that the internet has enabled the opening up of areas which might otherwise have remained closed. The only drawback to that has been the constraint of word-count, leading to an omission from the final work of matters of both central and tangential interest: there is no discussion, for example, of the larger estates in the area, although their owners were leaders in the horticultural life of the town. Also missing is any consideration of cemeteries, although these were, by the 1840s, areas of considered and careful design and planting.

Many old books have now been scanned and are available via sites such as ECCO, (Eighteenth Century Collections Online), previously hosted by www.galegroup.com and now by www.jischistoricbooks.ac.uk which also hosts books from the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries) and www.books.google.co.uk. It has therefore been possible to find information which might otherwise have remained unexamined. *Sketches of Lancashire Life and Localities* by Edwin Waugh, was published in 1855. It provides just one relevant – and memorable – piece of

¹⁰⁰ Banks, *The Manchester Man*. p.209.

¹⁰¹ Bamford, Samuel, *Passages in the Life of a Radical*, (vol.1) (1844) p.137

information, which is the story of the recently deceased Jane Clough who lived near Rochdale:

*"She was the queen of all flower-growers in humble life upon her native clod; especially in the cultivation of the polyanthus, auricula, tulip, and "ley" or carnation. Jane was well known at all the flower-shows of the neighbourhood, where she was often a successful exhibitor".*¹⁰²

H.B. Rodgers' useful article The Suburban Growth of Victorian Manchester was found on www.mangeogsoc.org.uk.

Although it might be thought that a 'Search' facility – in terms both of searching the internet and individual publications – would take the reader easily to useful information, this is unfortunately not the case. I soon discovered two things: one that certain words used for searching can be unproductive or productive of an excessive quantity of unwanted information; the second that there is frequently a failure to find words within scanned documents. Depending upon the publication, 'Manchester' can produce more hits for the Duke of Manchester than for the town, while 'garden' will draw in Covent Garden. Using advanced search facilities is as likely to produce no result at all as to sift these terms. Similarly a search for 'dahlia' tends to ignore the many instances of that word and hit instead upon 'Dublin'.

These were difficulties faced particularly in using 19th Century British Library Newspapers, hosted by galegroup.com. This database includes most of the issues of The Manchester Times from its first issue on 17 October, 1828. It became clear that the most productive route was to read through each edition. This provided a great deal of information. The classified section included advertisements for properties including information about gardens and grounds, others from nurserymen, seedsmen and other providers of plants, reports of meetings of the Floral and Horticultural and Botanic and Horticultural Societies, details of flower shows, events in gardens and lists of subscribers to the Public Parks' fund. Further information on these could be found in Local Reports, and the District Reports included flower shows in neighbouring towns.

For the period 1790-1804, the Chetham Library's holdings of the Manchester Mercury, were also looked through and provided important advertisement information about nursery and seedsmen, gardens and grounds. The launch of

¹⁰² Waugh, Edwin. Sketches of Lancashire Life and Localities (1855) p.192.

www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk enabled a search to be made of the Mercury for a further period (though the holdings are not complete) and also of the Manchester Courier from 1 January 1825. Although I experienced the same problems with the search facility as described above, perseverance and lateral thinking brought out a great deal of additional information. Robert Turner's advertisements were eventually found by going through all the words connected with the nursery business, since the words "Robert", "Turner", "nurseryman", "Kersal Moor" each returned no hits, though all of these words appeared in the advertisements in the Mercury in 1782.

Although the main focus of the newspaper searches was with Manchester titles, other papers were also searched electronically, though less diligently. The temptation to continue searching remains great. Manchester newspaper titles for the town, date back to 1722; some were very short-lived, others eventually continued by merging with other titles. The Manchester Times mast varied over the years as it merged first with Cowdroy's Manchester Gazette in 1829 adding "Gazette" to its title, then replacing this with the Lancashire and Cheshire Examiner. The Examiner title then disappeared when the paper merged with the Manchester and Salford Advertiser and Chronicle (again appearing as a sub-title) before becoming the Manchester Examiner and Times. (The title Manchester Times has generally been used throughout the thesis to avoid confusion as this is how it is recorded in the databases. However, the databases for the Manchester Times also include copies of the Manchester Examiner even though it was a completely separate publication. I have tried to ensure that the Examiner has been cited in its own right.) In all, John West (Town Records, 1983), lists 26 titles for Manchester, and, apart from those that are available on-line (i.e. the Times, Mercury and Courier), others are held at Chetham's and Central Library in Manchester.

Time limitations prevented further investigation. The detailed examination of those editions of the Manchester Times available was undertaken when the shape of this thesis was still unclear as it was not known what information would be uncovered. Any item which might be of interest was collected. Later searches of other titles were less thorough. It is important to remember that the newspapers then, as now, had political leanings. It is possible that some nursery and seedsmen were prepared to advertise in some and not others, and this may be the reason why details on some has been hard to come by. For example, Ann Brooks found an

advertisement in the Manchester Guardian relating to Edward Leeds at the time he attempted to set up as a nurseryman. No such advertisement appeared in the issues of the Manchester Times that are available, but those from 1830 are missing from the database, so this is not conclusive evidence. The bias of newspapers was more likely to occur in reporting of events and activities, and the understanding of – for example – the tension around the elite nature of the Botanical and Horticultural Society must be read with the appreciation that other newspapers may have placed a very different emphasis upon events.

In addition to the newspapers, the gardening magazines were also a potential source of information, despite the drawbacks mentioned above. A great deal of time was spent initially – and fruitlessly – going through Curtis's Botanic Magazine issues held by MMU library. I decided that magazines should be put to one side while other avenues were examined. Stocks of magazines held at Central Library, Manchester have not been reviewed, though they undoubtedly contain further nuggets of information. Large numbers of nineteenth century titles have been scanned and are held on a database hosted by galegroup.com. Unfortunately, no gardening magazines are included. However, a few are hosted by books.google.co.uk and these contain a range of information from the teasing "*met with the same in the little garden of a weaver at Manchester*" (Curtis's Botanical Magazine plate 1807, 1816), through advice from Manchester gardeners and growers, to reports of local flower shows, including long lists of prizewinning blooms and their exhibitors.

Not all flower shows were fully reported and the format of them varied from time to time and publication to publication. Sometimes prize-winners were listed in full – and in some categories there might be up to 10 prizes – other times only the main winners were listed. Sometimes newspapers were reliant on receiving reports from those who organised the show and these were not always forthcoming. Other times, important news pushed show reports out of the papers entirely. (This was particularly the case at the time leading up to Manchester's incorporation.) Details of reports of more than 150 shows (with in excess of 8,300 prizes) from September 1828 to May 1869 have been collated. These range from local shows for specific plants to the larger horticultural shows in Manchester and surrounding towns. Most winners seem to have exhibited only in their locality (though without lists of entrants it may just be that they were only successful in some places), and indeed, some

shows were for a very specific group of people such as cottagers. A handful, though, were successful at a range of venues.

Direct evidence for gardeners and nurserymen is to be found in Directories.¹⁰³ The first Manchester directory appeared in 1772 and by 1850 they were more detailed and more frequent. In 1772 the listings included ten gardeners, one nurseryman (Robert Turner), one seedsman and confectioner (John Raffald) and one man who combined gardening with the duties of Parish-clerk. However, the discussion above about the difficulties of terminology should be borne in mind and it is not necessarily the case that only John Raffald and Turner sold plants. In fact John's brother James Raffald (gardener), along with another brother George, is said to have "*kept the only seed shop in Manchester*"¹⁰⁴ and his gardens in Salford were described in 1851 as "*what are called nursery gardens or florist's gardens*".¹⁰⁵ The other point to note is that directories were not all inclusive. Robert Turner's name did not appear in the 1781 directory. This may have been because he had the intention of retiring, although he was still advertising in 1782. However, other nurserymen known to have been active do not necessarily appear in directories. In Knutsford, the nursery of Nickson & Carr (later Carr & Caldwell, eventually Caldwell and Sons) was operating from before the 1790s, but was omitted from many general directories simply because Knutsford was too small to be included. As time went by, the listings in directories changed and it became easier to assess the role of individuals. Generally directories provided business addresses, although – again as time passed – this began to change and both home and business addresses could be found in directories. More information about nurserymen at the latter end of the period of study can be found in census records, and for this ancestry.co.uk proved very helpful, particularly the 1851 census where information on acres under cultivation and numbers of staff employed was frequently included.

Many of the Manchester nurseries of that period can also be identified on the 60" to the mile Ordnance Survey map dating from the 1840s. This, and a number of

¹⁰³ The reliability of Directories is called into question by Jane Norton in Guide to the National and Provincial Directories of England and Wales: "*It would be misleading to regard them as either precise or accurate. A glance at any two directories of the same place for the same year will reveal disconcerting differences*"(p.16)

¹⁰⁴ Swindells, Third Series, p.179

¹⁰⁵ Harland, John. Remains, historical and literary connected with the Palatine counties of Lancaster and Chester. Volume 72 Collectanea Vol II. Chetham Society (1867) p.153

other historical maps which provide useful information on the changing face of Manchester – the Casson & Berry series of the mid-18th century and Green’s map of 1794 were particularly valuable – have been accessed digitally, thanks to the Digital Archives Association of Warrington. For nurseries south of the river Mersey, the Tithe maps database of the Chester Record Office ¹⁰⁶ provides useful information about the site and ownership of a number of nurseries together with the ability to note their progress through the remainder of the century and to see their site on more recent maps.

It was not expected that there would be a great deal of archive material, but a search of the John Rylands catalogue turned up a small, but fascinating, collection of scraps of paper relating to land to the north of Manchester, leased by Charles White and let out by him as gardens. The archive of most importance is the Caldwell’s nursery ledgers held by the Cheshire Record Office. These ledgers date back to the late 1780s – one sales ledger covers the period 1787-1796. In all, nineteen ledgers, including periods in the 1830s and 1910s, have survived. The Cheshire Gardens Trust is working on digitising these and creating a searchable database of customers and plants – all to be made available via the internet. Caldwell’s customers included other nurserymen in the area (as well as country-wide) and businessmen in and around Manchester.

Finally, it should be noted that the gardening books available to gardeners and nurserymen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are again easily available, not only electronically, but also via p.o.d publishing. The most important ones – and those likely to be owned by Manchester people – were Philip Miller’s Gardener’s Dictionary, Abercrombie’s Every Man his Own Gardener and Universal Gardener and Botanist, and Loudon’s Encyclopaedia of Gardening and Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion. All went through many editions. Miller’s Dictionary was first published in 1724 (as The Gardener’s and Florist’s Dictiionary) and the list of subscribers in 1739 includes three copies for John Hodges and nine copies for Thomas Newton, who were both Manchester booksellers, plus a copy for the Manchester library and another for Thomas White.¹⁰⁷ There were many other authors providing instructions on creating gardens as well as growing plants. For those gardeners without the means – or the

¹⁰⁶ maps.cheshire.gov.uk/tithemaps

¹⁰⁷ Second Volume published 1739. see www.jisohistoricbooks.ac.uk.

wish – to employ a designer, they provide useful information about how gardens from the period might have looked.

Chapter One

Horticultural Trade

Underlying the story of gardens – whether of Manchester or elsewhere – is the trade in plants, yet this is an area which has been little considered by writers. The seminal work of John Harvey remains the only one which considers the subject nationally. Other writers – notably Willson, whose biography of the eminent nurseryman James Lee of Hammersmith predated Harvey's Early Nurserymen – have looked at specific areas in and around London, or recorded the history of individual businesses in the provinces. It is only Harvey who has covered nurseries in the north-west.

Understanding the trade of two centuries ago can be a challenge; terminology changes. Harvey wrote "*The one word gardener for several hundred years did duty for many men of various skills and often of diverse social standing*".¹⁰⁸ It was only gradually that the differentiation of roles became clear. Desmond – reflecting the comment by Nicol that nurseries could be "*as much market gardens as nurseries*"¹⁰⁹ – places market gardeners in the same list as nurserymen and seedsmen. His volume – as impressive as it is in terms of the numbers of horticulturists recorded – fails to adequately reflect the horticultural life of Manchester, with, on the most generous basis, fewer than one in five Manchester nurserymen, etc. listed from the period 1750-1850.

This chapter provides an overview of commercial horticulture in the locality over a century, something which has been undertaken for no other provincial town. It includes brief details of the major players – there is no room for more than this, but some additional information is included in the appendices. It will be seen that the number of known nurseries and other outlets increased during this time, but that, by 1850 those in Hulme and Moss Side were threatened by the continuing residential development in that area. The data uncovered has also revealed some of the horticultural connections between individuals both locally and nationally and shown how, in some cases, nurseries passed from father to son and even to grandson. The

¹⁰⁸ Harvey, Early Nurserymen, p.1

¹⁰⁹ Nicol, Walter The Planter's Kalendar; or the Nurseryman's and Forester's Guide (1812) p.26. Nicol's book was aimed at private owners, concentrating on those plants easily raised from seed, as he did not "*wish to interfere with the business of the public nurseryman*".

titles used by individuals, partnerships and companies varied – gardener, nurseryman, seedsman, florist. In some cases a business used all four; others combined all four in practice but did not use all these titles. Others were more limited in their scope, but nevertheless played an active part in the wider horticultural life of the town, the region and even the nation. It is useful to begin with a consideration of these terms before moving on to look at people in more detail, where these complexities become apparent.

Gardeners and nurserymen

In 1728 Batty separated gardeners out into six different categories – kitchen; fruit; flower; market; nursery and physic – each of which required different specialist skills. He noted the overlap between the kitchen and market gardener – the produce was similar, the scale different – but there is no particular reason to assume that those listed as gardeners in early town directories were market gardeners limited to the growing of vegetables. There was a market for fruit and flowers as well as for vegetables. The supply of market gardens around London has been considered in detail by Thick (1998), but otherwise this is an area of activity ignored by garden historians. He notes the crossover between market gardening, nurseries and agriculture and identified the farmer-gardener mix which appeared around the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. Harvey points out that the early nurserymen came from one of two sources: either they had been previously head gardeners of large estates or they had been market gardeners who, having amassed sufficient capital “*launched out into the more fashionable branch, which besides offered far greater opportunities for social advancement*”.¹¹⁰

The titles businessmen used cannot necessarily be relied upon to infer the type of business they were in. In 1813, Benjamin Powell placed an advertisement in the Chester Chronicle. He called himself a “*Gardener*” and was based in Common Hall Lane, Chester. Yet the produce he advertised was that of a nurseryman – “*Forest, Fruit, Evergreen, Flowering and other Plants and Shrubs*”. He was also offering very large quantities:

“*Many thousands ... Black Italian ... Poplar, ... Oak, ... Ash, ... Larch... Upwards of one hundred thousand of Hawthorn Quicksets ... many thousand Privets. A*

¹¹⁰ Harvey, John. Early Nurserymen, p. 37.

great number of common Laurels, Laurestinus, Gumcestus,¹¹¹ Box, Junipers, Honeysuckles, Province, White Unique and other Roses, and a variety of other Flowering Shrubs; and the best and most approved sorts of Apple, Pear, Peach, Nectarine, and Apricot, Currant and Gooseberry Plants, &c.”¹¹²

On the other hand, Charles Langtry, Gardener, in Macclesfield in the 1790s was clearly growing vegetables for sale. His order from Caldwell's Nursery in Knutsford of 17 January, 1792 cost over £10 and consisted of beans, kidney beans, peas, onion, leek, carrot, beetroot, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, spinach, turnip, radish, lettuce, cucumber, celery, parsley, mustard, cress, hyssop and marjoram. The whole order weighed more than 12 bushels.¹¹³

In addition to the differentiation between market gardens and nurseries and the problem of understanding to what extent nurseries were also market gardens, there is the issue of the private and the public nursery.¹¹⁴ Advertisements for sales of nursery stock did not necessarily imply a commercial undertaking. Nurseries were an integral part of a landowner's gardens, where forest and fruit trees, shrubs and flowers were grown from seed to be planted out elsewhere when ready.¹¹⁵ Miller, in 1735, made mention only of such private nurseries, but Abercrombie (Universal Gardener and Botanist) separates out the two types. He mentions the "*great number of extensive public nurseries*"¹¹⁶ within ten miles of London, but does not refer to those which existed in the provinces. Loudon (1824) wrote that public nurseries were begun by head-gardeners of private estates, who had saved the necessary capital,¹¹⁷

¹¹¹ Possibly *Cistus ladanifer*.

¹¹² Chester Chronicle, 8 January, 1813

¹¹³ Cheshire Record Office, Caldwell Collection DDX363/6 Order Book 1789-1795, p. 131-2.

¹¹⁴ For example, John Richmond died in December, 1808, aged 94. "He was about 60 years nurseryman and planter to the late John, and present Henry Sudell, Esqrs"; clearly a reference to a private nursery (Lancaster Gazette, 24 December, 1808.) In 1736 a Nursery was for sale at Clowes, near Bolsover. This could also have been a private nursery, as the advert makes no reference to a business (Derby Mercury, 19 August, 1736).

¹¹⁵ The comparative importance of private and public nurseries is hard to determine. In 1818-19, Henry Potts of Chester planted 194 acres with more than half a million trees. Most were from Dicksons of Hassendeanburn, In 1821 his bailiff wrote of planting up small areas in 1818 with plants from a Chester nursery: "*I received from the said John Rogers, nineteen thousand eight hundred forest trees, which, with twenty-five thousand oaks, beech, larch, and other trees taken out of Mr. Potts's nursery, in Llanferres, were planted by me*" (Transactions of the Society of Arts, 1821, p.14-26).

¹¹⁶ Abercrombie, John. The Universal Gardener and Botanist, entry under 'Nursery'.

¹¹⁷ Loudon, John. An Encyclopædia of Gardening. (1824) p.95 paragraph 444. Elsewhere (p. 1053 para. 7458, he makes the same observation about market gardeners.) The famous Brompton Nursery, which dated back to the latter part of the seventeenth century, was begun by four men who were each gardeners to the aristocracy.

although there is evidence to indicate that, even at that date, the next generation of nurserymen were being trained up by public nurseries.¹¹⁸

The size of nurseries varied considerably. Abercrombie considered that a public nursery would need to be at least three or four acres and demand might require fifteen or twenty acres, although he noted that larger ones – up to fifty acres – existed. For the gardener who wished to lay out a nursery – whether a private or a public one – there was guidance available. This covered soil and aspect as well as height of walls, width of beds and walks. There were many writers on gardening, although the key ones were (in chronological order), Miller, Abercrombie and Loudon. For each of these there were many different editions of their work, continuing after their deaths when others would edit and up-date their writings. In addition to general gardening books there were others aimed specifically at nurserymen, although not necessarily commercial nurserymen.¹¹⁹

In addition to the provision of plants (which are considered in detail in the next chapter), nurseries provided a range of other services. They sold garden tools and equipment; they offered design and maintenance services. They also acted as agencies, providing employers with gardeners and offering a place from which workers looking for a position could advertise themselves. Anyone wanting to dispose of horticultural equipment – like hot-houses – would know that those likely to purchase would visit nurseries.

Seedsmen and florists

The roles of seedsman and nurseryman frequently went together and it is quite likely that even where a tradesman referred to himself only as a nurseryman he also stocked seeds for sale. The same applied to florists. It was also the case that some, with a nursery outside the town, either local or further afield, also kept a shop in

¹¹⁸ This can be seen in nurseries which passed from one generation to the next, such as Rogers' nursery in Chester, run by George Rogers, then by his stepson John, followed by John's wife Mary (see advertisements *Chester Chronicle* 30 October 1789, 25 October 1816, 4 November 1825. See also Harvey *Early Nurserymen*, p. 110-111 and 167-170). Charles Bannerman, son of Alexander Bannerman, nurseryman of Liverpool, trained at Cormack's nursery in London (*Manchester Times*, 5 March, 1831)

¹¹⁹ Around the same time as Nicol and Sang's, *The Planter's Kalendar; or the Nurseryman's and Forester's Guide* (1812) Thomas Haynes produced *An Improved System of Nursery Gardening*, (1811) which was "*Peculiarly Interesting to the Nobility and Gentry and the Agricultural, Ornamental and Scientific Planter*". It is clear that both public and private nurseries were under consideration.

town as a useful outlet. The business of the shop was frequently that of "seedsman" even though the proprietor had a nursery elsewhere. Often the trade description was "gardener and seedsman". This may have indicated a market gardener who allowed some plants to run to seed to provide the following year's crop, selling any that were surplus to requirements.

However the trades were sometimes quite distinct and selling of seeds could be combined with other trades. One combination was that of "seedsman and druggist", which is perhaps not surprising. As the physic garden was the source of medicinal plants it is more surprising that there is no indication that druggists themselves grew the plants that provided those medicines. There were other trade combinations with seedsmen, some seeming more credible than others. A grocer or grocer/tea-dealer might sell seeds too and a combination with fruiterer or confectioner might indicate a nursery outside town (as discussed below). Seedsmen often sold hops, others cheese; corn; flour and bread. In other instances, the mixing of trades seems rather improbable. All the following can be found in directories, combined with the role of seedsman: iron-monger; cooper; woollen draper; tallow chandler; brazier & tin-plate worker and blacksmith. Localities with a low population would need individuals to double up on trades and the seed business, being seasonal, the second trade might be a necessary sideline. It is quite possible that those who undertook to provide seeds for their customers were those with a predisposition for and, perhaps, a practical interest in, growing things. But without further information it can be difficult to draw any conclusions. Seedsmen provided a range of seeds – agricultural, vegetable, flower and bird seed – and in a predominantly agricultural area it is possible that only the first of these was stocked.

A practical interest may have been the reason why some seedsmen were also florists – it was not until the end of the nineteenth century when florists as we know them became the norm. Before then a commercial florist was someone who sold, mainly, bulbs imported from Holland, but also herbaceous perennials. A particular interest in flowers – as opposed to growing plants for their practical, edible or medicinal purposes – is found reflected in books from the seventeenth century onwards, and the word used for those with such an interest was florist. When garden historians write of florists of the past, the tendency is to consider only those growing the so-called florists' flowers. These were a group of plants which were considered a

challenge to grow well and which were particularly suitable for hybridisation. This led to the development of many different varieties which were displayed for prizes at florists' feasts. Florists' flowers are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two and florists' feasts in Chapter Seven.

In 1792 the leading florist, James Maddock of Walworth, published The Florist's Directory. He listed those flowers he considered most worthy of attention (and today generally thought of as florists' flowers): the hyacinth, tulip, ranunculus, anemone, auricula, carnation, pink and polyanthus, each of which warranted its own chapter. Maddock included a further chapter 'on various bulbous-rooted flowers'. He referred to these, rather dismissively, as "... *being of little value, and easily cultivated...*" ¹²⁰ and included the various types of narcissus, iris, fritillaria, lily, peony, dog's-tooth violet, spring and autumn crocus, cyclamen and gladiolus. There were also the more tender plants which required a greenhouse or hot-house to succeed. By 1850 other flowers, notably the dahlia, had been added to the list of florists' flowers.

Other books with the word "florist" in the title were more extensive and less fastidious. The late eighteenth-century publication The Complete Florist; or, the lady and gentleman's recreation in the flower garden (2nd edition, 1785) certainly included the florists' flowers, but also listed month by month those flowers – bulbs, perennials and annuals – which would be in flower. Cheshire-born Maria Elizabeth Jacson followed up her botanical works with The Florist's Manual (1816). This was aimed specifically at women and those she referred to as the general florist:

"...for I speak not of those Florists who confine their admiration of flowers to the greater or lesser number of stripes in the petals of a tulip or of a carnation". ¹²¹

There continued to be volumes published which related mainly or only to "florists' flowers" (e.g. James Main, The Villa And Cottage Florists' Directory, 1830 and Thomas Hogg, A Practical Treatise on the Culture of the Carnation, Pink, Auricula, Polyanthus, Ranunculus, Tulip, Hyacinth, Rose, and Other Flowers, 1839) but others were more general (e.g. Thomas Willats, The Florist Cultivator, 1836; Jane Loudon, The Ladies'

¹²⁰ Maddock, James and Curtis, Samuel. The Florist's Directory (1810 edition), p. 108

¹²¹ Jacson, Maria Elizabeth. The Florist's Manual; or, hints for the construction of a gay flower garden. (1816) p.37.

Companion to the Flower Garden, 1841). For those for whom the term florist indicated a competitive spirit, Manchester's own John Slater published The Amateur Florists' Guide in 1860. By that time the deluge of new plants arriving in this country meant that, in addition to Maddock's flowers, Slater included the pansy, pelargonium, rose, cineraria, calceolaria, verbena, phlox, fuchsia, dahlia, hollyhock, china aster, gladiolus and chrysanthemum.¹²² There was a considerable demand from both competitive and general florists, a demand which increased as the availability of new plants – both new species and new varieties – grew almost exponentially as the nineteenth century progressed. A successful amateur florist would raise new varieties which they would sell on.

Fruiterers and confectioners

The trades of fruiterer and confectioner often went together. Fruiterers could be men with a specialist fruit nursery out of town, their own-grown stock being augmented by the purchase of excess produce from amateur growers and the importation of fruit.¹²³ General nurserymen who included fruit trees in their stock might have produce to dispose of – trees and bushes bearing fruit before being sold. Fruit trees grown for sale could be easier to retail if the purchaser could taste the produce. Allowing fruit to grow for this purpose, or simply having fruit trees which had failed to sell, meant that there was produce to be disposed of. Fruit was also an important ingredient in confectionery, the word being used more widely than meaning sweets. Dictionaries of the time referred to confectionery as "*a preparation of fruit, with sugar*"¹²⁴ and sweetmeats "*delicacies made of fruits preserved with sugar*".¹²⁵ The section in Elizabeth Raffald's cookery book of the mid-eighteenth century for "*Confectionary*" embraced jams, jellies, blancmanges and many types of dessert.¹²⁶

¹²² Although flowers such as the rose had been grown in England for centuries, it was the arrival of species from other parts of the world that led to hybridisation.

¹²³ See Manchester Mercury, 4 August, 1795. James Middlewood advertised Seeds and other items, concluding "*N.B. Gentlemen, Gardeners, Nursery-men, &c. having Fruits, &c. to dispose of will be treated with on the most liberal Terms.*"

¹²⁴ e.g. Ash, John, The New and Complete Dictionary of the English Language, (1775).

¹²⁵ e.g. Johnson, Samuel, A Dictionary of the English Language (10th edition, 1792).

¹²⁶ Raffald, Elizabeth, The Experienced English Housekeeper. In the 1769 edition the title page included "*PART SECOND, All kinds of Confectionary, particularly the Gold and Silver Web for covering of Sweetmeats, and a Desert of Spun Sugar, with Directions to set out a Table in the most elegant Manner and in the modern Taste, Floating Islands, Fish Ponds, Transparent Puddings, Trifles, Whips, &c.*"

Manchester and the North-West

Although this study has not included a comprehensive comparison with other geographical areas, it would appear that the north-west was fairly well served by the horticultural trade.¹²⁷ Indeed Harvey noted that, London apart, "*the greatest concentration of major nurseries*"¹²⁸ was in the north, although he dismissed those around Manchester as "*a great many small nurseries, mostly founded after 1800, but few seem to have been of any significance*".¹²⁹ The larger businesses, he said, were those of seedsmen or florists, but this conclusion seems to have been drawn on insufficient evidence. He referred to the firm of Taylor and Smith as florists, but, as will be seen below, they were general nurserymen.¹³⁰

It is inevitable that not all those involved in the trade have been identified – not all nurserymen found it necessary to advertise; some market gardeners will have also been nurserymen. Early Directories included only those with an outlet in the centre of town and, not being produced annually, will have missed those who stayed in the trade for only a short time. Although a comparison with the size and range of nurseries surrounding London leaves Manchester looking poorly provided for, this does not take into account the vast difference in size of the two towns. Manchester began the seventeenth century little more than a village in modern terms; even by 1757 estimates are that the population stood at only 16,000. Over the following century there grew an increasing number of horticultural outlets in the immediate vicinity of Manchester – let alone those further afield – to meet the needs of the burgeoning population.

A review of some of the key players in the horticultural trade in the area follows. It has been broken down into different time periods to reflect the changing face of the area. From 1750-1790 population growth saw Manchester become densely populated, with the expansion of warehousing facilities destroying town gardens. In 1790 the introduction of steam power brought factories into the central

¹²⁷ Many of these have not been recorded by Desmond. Some may have been short-lived businesses, but others were operating for decades, often being passed down the generations.

¹²⁸ Harvey. *Early Nurserymen*, p.107.

¹²⁹ Harvey. *Early Nurserymen*, p.115.

¹³⁰ This may be because Loudon referred to them as "*extensive florists*" although he added that they combined this with the nursery business. Harvey also mentions "*William Middlewood of Market Street Lane, whose catalogue of seeds and plants of 1776 survives*" but he appears in neither the 1772 nor the 1781 Directory. However, see James Middlewood below.

area and the long fight against smoke pollution began. Residential property was increasingly taken for commerce and those who could afford to do so moved into the surrounding suburbs. By 1830 population growth in the centre had slowed right down, but increased dramatically in the suburbs, particularly to the south of the town. These changes are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, and their impact on gardens themselves in Chapter Six.

1750-1790

The story of the horticultural trade in Salford and Manchester throughout this period provides an insight into the difficulties imposed by nomenclature discussed above: nurserymen are also referred to as gardeners; seedsmen turn out to be nurserymen; florists are both professional and amateur.

The earliest Manchester nursery identified is that of Robert Turner of Kersal Moor. He appeared in the first Manchester directory (1772), but had been trading since at least 1754, when he occupied about 20 Lancashire acres at an annual cost of £43.¹³¹ A Lancashire acre measured 7,840 square yards, which makes this nursery about 32 statute acres. Given the dimensions mentioned by Abercrombie (see above), this must be considered fairly large – although not all of it was necessarily given over to nursery produce. Kersal Moor was a good location for a nursery as it was a place of resort for Manchester citizens, particularly for horse racing. Such passing trade may have meant that it was not necessary to have an outlet in town, although the apparent lack of a shop may simply have meant that Turner sold his goods in the market. It is probable that Turner was the subject of the following letter sent on 29 November 1755 by the Bishop of Man to John Byrom:

“If the Manchester nursery-man (whose name I know not) will venture to trust the Bp. of Mañ (whose name he is probably no less a stranger to) for a certain portion of his vegetable family, he may transmit as under, at such time and season of the year as he shall judge most proper: —

12 Yews of about three feet high.

6 Laurustinas.

6 French or d' good baking Pippins, for standards.

6 Apples of good hardy sort, for espalias.

12 Scarlet double Hollyhocks, (no other colour.)

18 Honeysuckles, of the hardiest kind.

¹³¹ An advertisement from Harrop's Manchester Mercury, 9 April, 1754 was reproduced in the Manchester Examiner, 20 June, 1846.

24 Province or Cabbage Roses, (no other sorts.)

He will be pleased to pack 'em carefully in mats, and direct them for the Bp. of Mañ, to the care of Captain Kennish at Liverpool.

*If he could procure intelligence when the vessels trading to this isle are likely to come off, there would be less hazard of their laying too long out of the ground.”*¹³²

By 1782 Turner was looking to retire and ran a series of advertisements (see Appendix Two). These give a good indication of the range of plants that he stocked and are valuable in that they also provide prices. He referred to himself as a nurseryman and the majority of the stock listed was forest and fruit trees, but he also had a range of flowering shrubs, plus flower and vegetable seeds. In addition he sold some vegetables as plants – cauliflower, cabbage and asparagus. These were available at different sizes. Cauliflower is difficult to germinate as seed and these would have been grown for sale, ready to be grown on by customers.¹³³ If they did not sell as small plants they would naturally continue to grow and may have been eventually sold as ready to cook – in the same way as a market gardener would grow for sale. The description of Turner in that 1754 advertisement had, after all, been “*gardener and nurseryman*”. In 1788 a Robert Turner had a shop in the market place and he was described as “*fruiterer and seedsman*”. After 1794, the name disappears.¹³⁴

Kersal Moor lay to the north of Manchester. To the west lay Pendleton, the site of Giles Boardman’s nursery. In 1782 he announced via the newspapers that he had enlarged his nurseries at Sandy Lane. Like Turner, he carried the full range of types of plants, but his particular interest seems to have been fruit. He encouraged trade by making his fruit garden a place of summer resort, with “*Walks, Bowers and Pleasure Ground*”¹³⁵ where customers could sit and receive refreshment while their orders for “*fruit to preserve*” were made up. He could easily have been referred to as a fruiterer, but never was. Boardman’s outlet in town was at the Spread Eagle in Salford which was kept by Charles Boardman.

¹³² The private journal and literary remains of John Byrom, Volume 44. p.572-3.
www.books.google.co.uk.

¹³³ Similar sales, for cabbages, can be found in the 1789-1795 ledger of William Caldwell of Knutsford. c.f. plug plants sold by modern suppliers.

¹³⁴ Although a Robert R Turner was Hon. Sec. to the Zoological Company.

¹³⁵ Manchester Mercury, 26 March, 1782.

Closer to town were a number of gardens – Salford and Deansgate (then known as Alport Lane)¹³⁶ were the preferred sites and it is here that separating out the market garden from the nursery becomes difficult. The Directory of 1772, which was the first to be compiled for Manchester, was the creation of Elizabeth Raffald who was herself married to a seedsman (John), who had previously worked as a head gardener.¹³⁷ Ten men were listed in the directory simply as “*Gardener*”, another, Thomas Hulme, combined that trade with the role of Parish Clerk and John Raffald is recorded as a “*Seedsman and confectioner*”, although it was really Elizabeth who was the confectioner – she had opened her shop in the Market Place in 1766. At around the same time Betty Smith, a grocer, also stocked garden seeds.¹³⁸ John’s brother James was one of those listed as a gardener. However, a century later, it was stated both that he had been a seedsman and market gardener “*on an extensive scale*” and that Garden Lane took its name from “*his nurseries*”.¹³⁹ Elsewhere we are told that James and his brother George kept “*the only seed shop in Manchester, at the bottom of Smithy Door*”,¹⁴⁰ but no year is mentioned and the shop is not found in the early directories. Again, the information is given that all three brothers “*had a florist and seedsman's stall in the Market Place*”.¹⁴¹

By 1781, there had been some changes. Ann Cooke – druggist, confectioner and seed-seller – was established in the Market Place, where she would be found for the next two decades. There were two florists – Christopher Metcalf at the Tom Tinker in Salford and James Hallows, who combined the trade with that of fustian-cutter.¹⁴² Thomas Hulme had joined forces with one of the Raffalds. In the 1781 Manchester directory they were referred to simply as gardeners, but in Bailey’s Northern Directory of the same year they were described as “*nurserymen and*

¹³⁶ Procter wrote: “*the gardens and orchards, the stiles and the field-paths, lying in ye Deanesgate*”, formed the subject-matter of frequent arrangements in the ancient manorial courts”. (Procter, R. W. Memorials of Manchester Streets. 1874, p. 111.)

¹³⁷ Elizabeth and John Raffald had met while working at Arley Hall in Cheshire – she as housekeeper, he as head gardener. Following their marriage they moved to Manchester where Elizabeth was the driving force behind their various business activities.

¹³⁸ In the Manchester Mercury of 17 February 1767 she advertised “*from LONDON, a fresh Assortment of GARDEN SEEDS, the best in their Kind*”.

¹³⁹ Manchester Courier, 15 December 1879.

¹⁴⁰ Swindells, T. Manchester Street and Manchester Men Third Series, p.179.

¹⁴¹ Harland, John. Collectanea relating to Manchester and its neighbourhood at various periods. Vol. 2. p.146.

¹⁴² In December 1766 there was an advertisement regarding the death of William Booth, Flower Seller. However this was a common spelling of flour and it is assumed that was the meaning.

gardeners". The only other Manchester horticultural business included in Bailey's directory was that of Charles and Peter McNiven "*surveyors and nurserymen*", who were based in Alport Lane.¹⁴³ Three years later Bailey's directory no longer listed Hulme and Raffald, but had added Ann Cooke and the Samuel Ackerleys (senior and junior) in Salford, who appear in directories from 1772 to 1797.¹⁴⁴

Of the remaining gardeners, little is known except for Humphreys.¹⁴⁵ Both Procter and Swindells referred to Humphreys' Gardens, with Procter putting the death of the first Humphreys in 1757, which would indicate that he pre-dated Turner – though from what has been written it sounds as if he were a market gardener rather than a nurseryman. Swindells identified the site of Humphreys' garden as the junction of Deansgate and Priestnor Street and states that the produce was vegetables and flowers: "... *our grandfathers were wont to resort on fine Sunday mornings for the double purpose of admiring the growing plants and purchasing salads and bunches of flowers*".¹⁴⁶ However, an advertisement dated 16 July 1782 refers to "*twenty-one gardens ... held by lease under Robert Humphreys*". Procter recorded that Robert Humphreys died that year, which event may have given rise to the sale. However, a William Humphreys is recorded as a gardener in that location in directories from 1781-1787. It would seem, therefore, that the term "*Humphreys' Gardens*" might have referred to one particular garden and gardener or to a group of gardens and various gardeners.

This range of nurserymen, market gardeners, seedsmen and florists clustered around Manchester were augmented for customers by nurseries somewhat further away. The Knutsford nursery of Nickson & Carr (later to be known as Caldwell's) has been traced back (by Harvey) as far as 1759 and in Wigan, William Pinkerton was in business by 1782. During this period there were also nurseries in the surrounding counties many, but not all, listed in Desmond.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Peter McNiven died at Old Trafford in 1818, aged 80. (Manchester Mercury, 3 February 1818)

¹⁴⁴ Always described as "*gardeners*"; the name had been spelled "*Ackersly*" in 1772.

¹⁴⁵ Although also in Alport Lane was the Ratchford family: James (1772 and 1781 directories), and John (1781 and 1788).

¹⁴⁶ Swindells, *First series*, p.127

¹⁴⁷ Not listed in Desmond, e.g., were Charles Sandys, Ashborne, Derbyshire (Derby Mercury, 2 November, 1759) and F. Halley, Pontefract (Leeds Intelligencer, 6 December, 1785)

1790-1830

The last decade of the eighteenth century saw the beginnings of change in Manchester's horticultural trade. New people entered the scene, new partnerships were forged and there were the first signs of the loss of nurseries to development. The economic dangers to businesses leading to bankruptcy began to be felt. There appears to have been greater differentiation between market gardeners and nurserymen.

At the end of the 1780s Giles Boardman had left his Pendleton nursery and fruit garden to the care of John Boardman and he himself went out to Barton-upon-Irwell, where he had taken a 99-year lease on a large amount of land and buildings.¹⁴⁸ The owner of the land was William Turner of Warrington. Boardman intended the land – 64 acres – for an orchard¹⁴⁹ and his agreement was that Turner would receive half the net profits. Also included were the New Hall, with fifteen acres, various houses, cottages and gardens all of which had been sub-let. Part of the land – nearly six acres – had been sub-let to Thomas Wilkinson, himself a nurseryman.¹⁵⁰ Despite the set-back of bankruptcy (the sale of the leases was ordered in July 1792, but abandoned four months later) Boardman continued to work the land and his descendants were apparently still there seventy years later. (See Appendix One for more information.)

Other changes were taking place in society which would lead to a new player in the field. The long-standing fashion for men to wear wigs was dying out. At the age of 30 John Bridgford had featured in the 1788 Directory as "*peruke maker and hair dresser, Smithy door*". In 1794 he was simply "*hairdresser*" but by 1797, possibly because he was already an amateur florist, and having begun advertising the sale of seeds and plants in 1795, is recorded as "*hairdresser, seedsman and florist*".

¹⁴⁸ Giles Boardman appears to have owned Eveyln's books *Sylva*, *Pomona* and *Kalendarium Hortense*, as the three, bound together, were for sale some time ago, advertised as having "*The unique feature of this copy is that it leads off with a full page manuscript discourse on the expense of planting and harvesting timber, signed at the King's Head Inn, Mar. 6, 1804 by Giles Boardman, Nurseryman.*" www.tenpound.com/185/26.html

¹⁴⁹ This must be the orchard referred to by John Holt in the 1795 edition of *The General View of Agriculture in the County of Lancaster*, where he states, on p. 83 "*Except the orchard on the banks of the Irwell, in the township of Barton, containing about sixty-four statute acres, there are no orchards worthy notice*".

¹⁵⁰ Harvey records Wilkinson as active from 1791 to 1815, although from the advertisement, Wilkinson had occupied the land since 1789.

In 1800 he had finally left hairdressing behind him and in 1802 added the title “*nurseryman*” – having taken a nursery in Cheetwood. Bridgford played a central role in horticultural life until his death, aged 67 on 12 December 1825, less than two years after the establishment of the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society. He served on the committee of the new society and won prizes for the best herbaceous plant and the second best roses. Following Bridgford’s death, the nursery was taken over by one of his sons Samuel Hulme Bridgford, and the shop was run by three of his daughters, Frances, Isabella and the married Hannah Sandford.

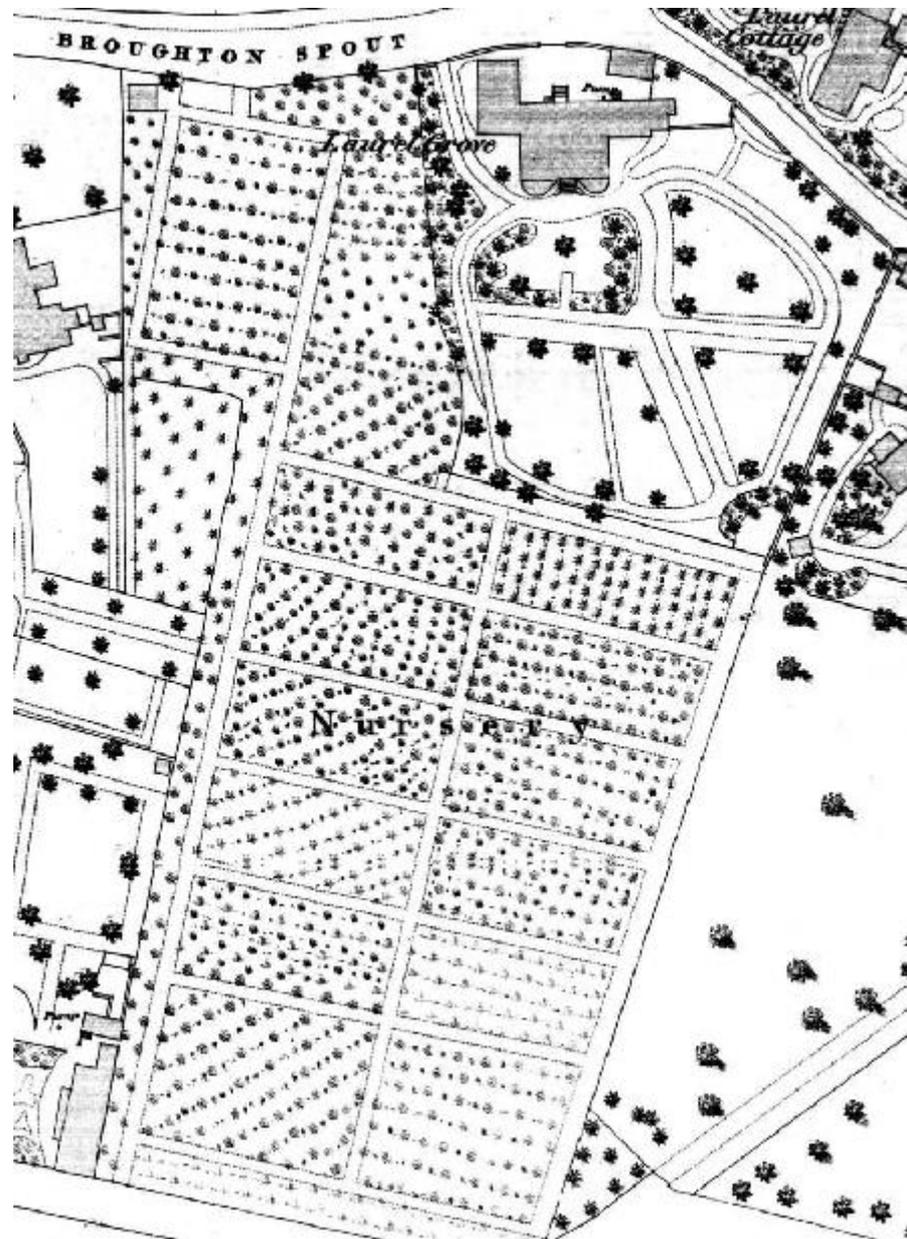
At the same time that Bridgford began advertising in 1795, so too did James Middlewood. According to his advertisements he was a fruiterer and seedsman, but the Directories recorded him as nursery and seedsman. Along with fruit and confectionery he stocked trees, shrubs and bulbs. His nursery – at Hullard Hall, Hulme ¹⁵¹ – was first mentioned in an advert of 1801. Middlewood was a nephew of Elizabeth and John Raffald and in his business combined the trades of both – his advertisements included the confectionery, fruits and cakes sold by the former and the seeds and florists’ flowers sold by the latter. Like Boardman, Middlewood had financial problems and was bankrupted in 1801, though he recovered and continued to trade in Manchester until at least 1808. He then moved to Liverpool, where he apparently concentrated on importing rather than growing fruit.¹⁵²

The name James Stanley did not appear in any of the early directories, but he had a nursery at Broughton Spout and a stand in the Market Place. He could be found at the Blue Boar on Tuesdays and Saturdays and at the nursery on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. In 1801 he took a shop and advertised, along with plants, garden utensils – bass mats, pruning knives, spades, hoes, rakes, lines, scythes and

¹⁵¹ A nursery continued to exist at this site long after Middlewood. There are references to various owners going up until at least 1891 when the business was for sale (Gardeners Chronicle).

¹⁵² In 1810 Middlewood’s shop in St. Ann’s Square had been taken by J.U. Taylor (Manchester Mercury, 6 April, 1810. In 1811 J. Middlewood had a Wholesale Fruit Warehouse in Liverpool (Liverpool Mercury, 18 October, 1811). In the 1841 Census, James was living with his wife Alice and daughter, also Alice, in Islington, Liverpool. In 1851, also with wife and daughter Alice, he was at West Derby. In 1851 the town of birth was given and for James it was Howden, Yorkshire (c.1766) and for his daughter it was Manchester. Howden was the home of Elizabeth Raffald’s sister: “*A sister of Mrs. Raffald married a Mr. Middlewood; they were flax growers at Howden, and had twelve children, all sons*” (Remains, historical and literary (Chetham Society) Volume 2; Volume 72). One of the items sold by Middlewood was the Abyssinian soap produced by his brother J.W. Middlewood of London (Manchester Mercury, 26 April, 1796, although the initials printed were T.W.). James recorded his brother’s death on 20 October, 1847, aged 92 (Liverpool Mercury, 29 October, 1847).

shears. He died in 1807 and the business passed to his son, also called James. Three years previously the younger James had married Esther Ryder and it was Esther who was running the business in 1824.



There was still a nursery at Broughton Spout in 1848 (Ordnance Survey)

At around the same time Mary Thorley took over the role of her nurseryman husband William. Peter McNiven had taken William Thorley into partnership by 1808 and the nursery moved to 38 Chester Road, Hulme.¹⁵³ Following McNiven's death in

¹⁵³ According to Jeremiah Finch Smith (*The Admissions Register of the Manchester School*, Vol. 2), before William Thorley, Peter was in partnership with his brother John in the company

1818, Thorley continued the business on his own and then in 1825 was succeeded by Mary Thorley.

It was in 1808 that Taylor and Smith began advertising in the Manchester Mercury. Their nursery was at Dukinfield and their seed shop at 32 Deansgate. It will be remembered that Harvey had noted this partnership as florists, but that first advertisement makes clear that they were much more than that. Their stock consisted of forest and fruit trees, American bog plants, ornamental shrubs, grape vines in pots, greenhouse and stove exotics, bulbs, seeds, tools, bass mats and "*every Article in the NURSERY and SEED BUSINESS*". They undertook contracts to plant either by numbers or area. The partnership lasted until Taylor's death around the end of 1820. Soon after this Smith left Dukinfield and began a nursery in Flixton.¹⁵⁴

There were numerous entries in the Directories during this period for "*gardeners*", though few remained for any length of time. In the town Ann Cooke's death (or retirement)¹⁵⁵ meant that her shop was occupied first by John Wilson and then by George Vaughan, who was already in his forties when he began this business – druggist and seedsman – in Manchester. Vaughan remained at the shop for around thirty years before handing over the business to Thomas Watkinson. Vaughan died on 14 September 1842. Although he was a chemist and druggist as well as a seedsman, the seed business was obviously of great importance and Vaughan's was

McNiven & Co. (1797 and 1800 Directories). There is no indication that John was an active partner however, and the entry indicates he might have been the brother involved in Brodie, McNiven and Ormrod, ironfounders. Peter McNiven occupied a farm in Old Trafford.

¹⁵⁴ The move appears to have been due to a religious disagreement, which led to Smith withdrawing from the chapel he attended. A note in the Chapel's records show that his wife, Mary left with him and died in Flixton in October 1825. Smith's son John, became a minister and worked in Hulme before leaving for India and his daughter Mary and her husband Robert Moffat (who had come from Scotland to work in the Dukinfield nursery) became missionaries in Africa. (*A history of Ashton under Lyne and the surrounding District*, William Glover, 1884. p.252). It appears that Taylor's son took over the Dukinfield nursery as an advertisement in the Chester Courant (15 February, 1831) states that, under the will of the late Samuel Taylor, the nursery at Dukinfield was "*about to be broken up*" and all the stock, consisting of "*every variety of Forest Trees and Shrubs, and an assortment of Greenhouse and bog Plants, Vines, &c*", was to be sold..

¹⁵⁵ This happened sometime between 1794 and 1797. An advertisement for Mrs Cooke appeared in the Manchester Mercury, for 10 June, 1794 and her entry appeared in the Directory of that year. In the 1797 Directory John Wilson was listed at the address (late Mrs. Cooke), but this phrase was repeated in the 1800 Directory, so it was not necessarily a recent occurrence. It does, however, show that Mrs. Cooke's establishment was well-known.

one of the addresses for subscribers to the Floral and Horticultural Society to leave their names.

Although there were relatively few nurseries active in Manchester in this period, there were an increasing number in other areas. In Cheshire there was Caldwell at Knutsford; Robert Reid, followed by his son Moses, at Middlewich; Thorley at Northwich and Rogers at Chester. Near Liverpool there was the Walton nursery of Alexander Bannerman and William Skirving and the extensive Prescott nursery of William Butler. There were other nurseries in Preston and Lancaster, but in Wigan, Pinkerton's nursery had been closed. In January 1796 he had advertised his stock for sale "*on Account of a Colliery going to be erected in the ground they stand on*".¹⁵⁶ The loss of Manchester nurseries to development would be a feature in later years.

1830-1850

The period 1830-1850 saw a flourishing of horticulture and a concomitant flourishing of horticultural businesses in the immediate vicinity of Manchester, with nurseries immediately to the south, north and west, as well as further afield.

By 1834, it is possible to pick up the story of James Smith at Flixton via newspaper advertisements and census data.¹⁵⁷ Smith was born in Perthshire, Scotland around 1763-4, so in 1839 he would have been in his mid-70s, and that year announced that he was "*desirous of giving up business*".¹⁵⁸ Despite the number of nurseries in the area – which argues a reasonable demand – for some reason closing-down advertisements seem never to have been successful. Smith's advertisements continued to appear over the next few years until in October 1841, he tried to sell the nursery as a going concern: "*The ground is well fenced with excellent hedges, and sheltered with cross hedges, very eligible for a nursery for any man wishing to establish himself*".¹⁵⁹ Altogether there were seven acres of nursery, plus house and outbuildings. Whether he sold the nursery or not, in 1851, aged 87, James Smith was still recorded in the Census as a "*Nurseryman*".

¹⁵⁶ *Manchester Mercury*, 19 January, 1796.

¹⁵⁷ See *Manchester Times*, 15 February, 1834; 14 March, 1835.

¹⁵⁸ *Manchester Times*, 28 September, 1839.

¹⁵⁹ *Manchester Times*, 30 October, 1841. He had twelve thousand forest trees between 4 and 9 feet, plus ornamental trees, evergreen and flowering shrubs, flowers and a range of fruit.

Smith's career was a long one. This was not always the case – some nurserymen died young, others changed career. One of the former was William Lodge, who was only 50 when he died on 25 May 1855. Born in Uley, Gloucestershire, Lodge was married to Salford-born Mary and they had seven children. Their nurseries – originally one at Broughton Lane, then an additional one at Singleton Brook – were run by the family members. Lodge was a great plantsman and won prizes at a great number of flower shows. He was particularly successful with dahlias, which he sold by the dozen – orders could be picked up at the nursery or at his stall in the Market Place. Writing in 1905, Louis Hayes recalled Lodge's nursery in the (1840s) idyllic surroundings of Broughton Lane:

*"The lane had its hedgerows thick with hawthorns and wild flowers peeping out from beneath with gay profusion whilst the gardens about were gay with bloom. A few yards down the lane you came to Lodge's Nursery Gardens, approached by a long, wide pathway, and bordered by a small running brook. Inside the Nurseries there was an extensive orchard of pear, apple and plum trees. Scattered about were summerhouses and arbours, where people could sit and have their tea, with water-cress. In the spring time it was quite a sight to stand on the higher ground on Bury New Road, and look across to Lodge's Gardens, at the wide expanse of fruit trees laden with bloom."*¹⁶⁰

Further out, in Kersal Moor – possibly on the same spot Robert Turner had worked the previous century – was another keen plantsman, James Faulkner. Born in Didsbury around 1797, Faulkner was in business as a nurseryman in Smedley Lane as early as 1828, and had moved to Kersal Moor by 1846. Like Lodge, he won numerous prizes at flower shows and went on to become a judge. Faulkner's nursery was visited by Loudon on his tour of England in 1831.¹⁶¹ Two years later the Manchester Times promised "A treat to florists":

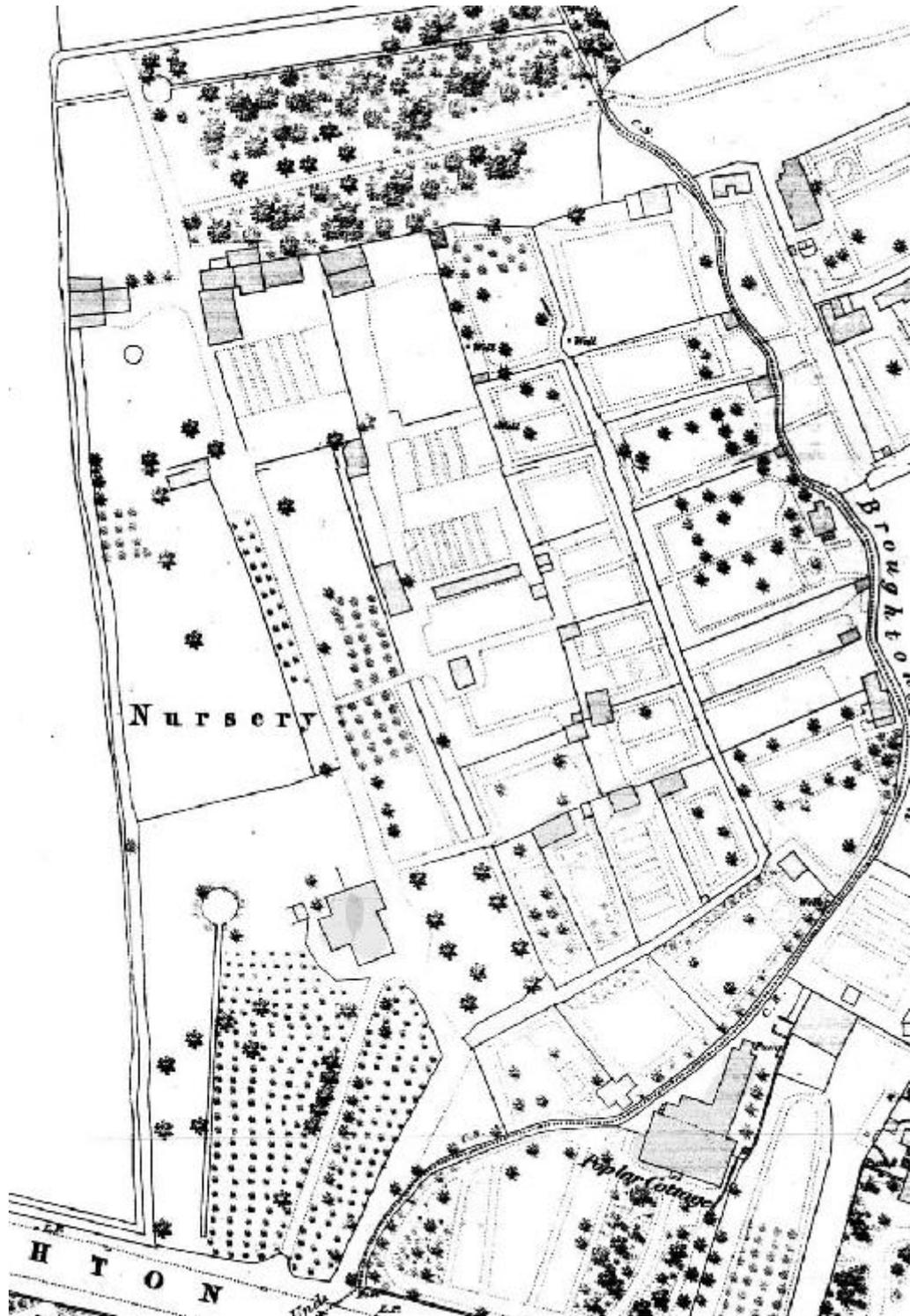
*"The admirers of flowers will be highly gratified by a visit to Mr. Faulkner's gardens at Smedley. That very rare and curious plant the Lady's Slipper, in a great variety of shades, is now nearly in full bloom, and supposed to be the finest ever seen"*¹⁶²

In addition to his nurseries, he was a fruiterer at 67 Long Millgate. Faulkner died, at his nursery, on 27 February, 1865. The notice of his death called him simply "horticulturist".

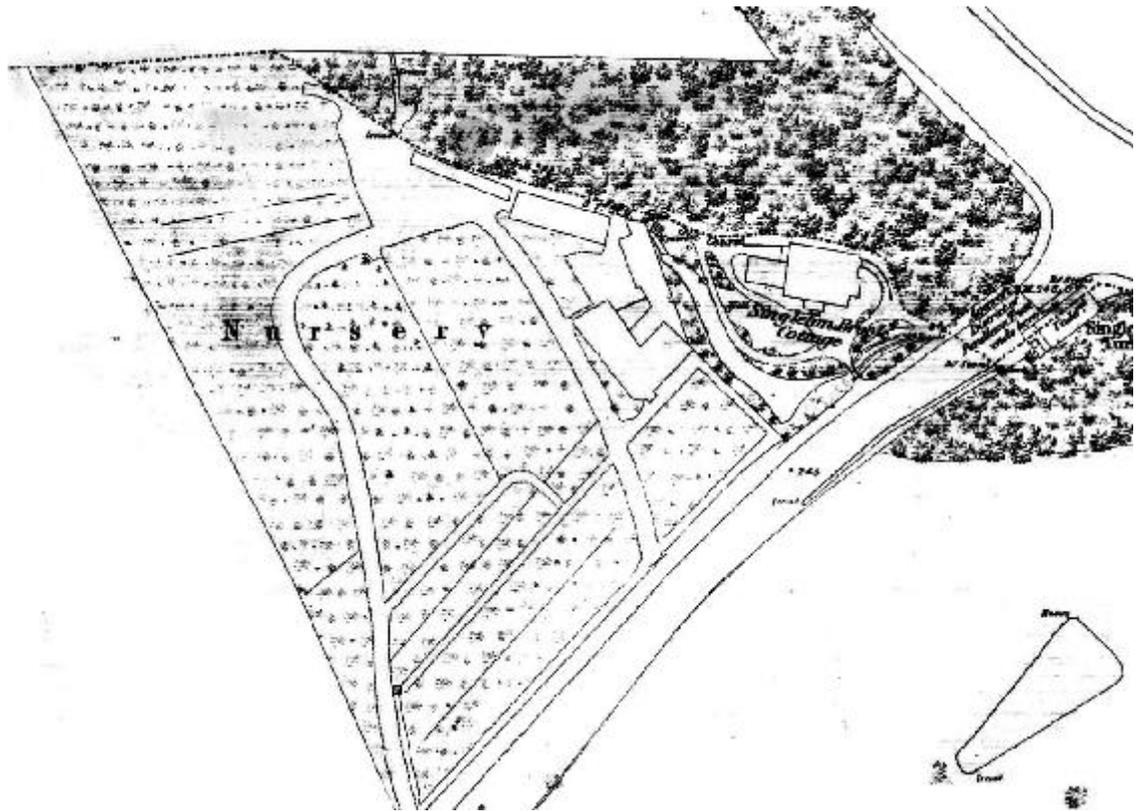
¹⁶⁰ Hayes, Louis M. Reminiscences of Manchester from the Year 1840 (1905) p.51.

¹⁶¹ The Gardener's Magazine, 1831, p.386.

¹⁶² Manchester Times, 15 June, 1833.



Lodge's nursery at Broughton Lane (1850 Ordnance Survey Map)



The Singleton Brook Nursery (O.S. Map, 1849)

Almost the same age as Faulkner was John Slater, a brush-maker and part-time florist with a nursery in Cheetham. Slater was still in his teens when he began his long career growing and raising new varieties of florists' flowers.¹⁶³ Whereas his contemporaries concentrated on their nurseries, Slater was keen to spread his knowledge. He was in demand as a judge at flower shows and contributed articles to various magazines. In 1843 his book on how to grow tulips¹⁶⁴ was dedicated to the florist John Shelmerdine of Altrincham and was "*designed to aid the young amateur*".¹⁶⁵ In 1852 Slater became editor of a new monthly magazine The Floricultural Review and Florists' Register,¹⁶⁶ and in 1860 he wrote The Amateur

¹⁶³ Reminiscences of an old Florist, reproduced in The Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, 24 October, 1865.

¹⁶⁴ The book was the result of a north/south controversy between Mr. W. Harrison and John Slater. It "*was severely animadverted upon by a writer in the Gardener*" but "*did [Mr. Slater] much credit, and was extensively circulated*" (The Floricultural Cabinet, 1847, p.148.)

¹⁶⁵ Slater, John. A Descriptive Catalogue of Tulips, together with its History, Mode of Cultivation &c. (1843) The dedication page read: "*This descriptive catalogue of tulips, designed to aid the young amateur, is most respectfully dedicated, with permission, to Mr. John Shelmerdine, of Altrincham, by his obliged servant, John Slater*". For more information on Shelmerdine, see page 271.

¹⁶⁶ A list of gardening magazines was included in The National Garden Almanack of 1853. The Review was published monthly and cost just 2d. As comparison, the weekly Gardeners'

Florist's Guide. In its review of this The Floral World wrote "*Mr. Slater is an experienced cultivator and a good judge, and a not wearisome, but most agreeable and explicit writer*".¹⁶⁷ The Floricultural Cabinet recommended its readers to peruse Slater's articles. Slater was secretary to both the Oldham and Ashton Floral and Horticultural Societies. In 1851 the Oldham Society presented Slater with a piece of plate "*as a mark of respect for his persevering exertions in promoting the science*". The report of this in The Cottage Gardener continued "*Mr. Slater... is one of the most energetic florists in the north... he is a warm-hearted as well as a warm-headed florist*".¹⁶⁸

There were more than fifty magazines devoted to botany, floriculture and horticulture published throughout the nineteenth century. Some were very short-lived while others – notably the Gardeners' Chronicle – lasted for decades.¹⁶⁹ The early titles were aimed at those interested in flowering plants, including colour plates (which made them expensive) and information about cultivation. The first magazine that could be construed as being aimed at the professional gardener (though was of interest to the amateur also) was Loudon's Gardener's Magazine, launched in 1826, with its dual objects to "*disseminate new and important information on all topics connected with horticulture, and to raise the intellect and the character of those engaged in this art*".¹⁷⁰ Contributing to publications was a good way of becoming known. The only other Manchester florist of the period in any way comparable to Slater – insofar as he wrote the occasional magazine article – was Edward Leeds.¹⁷¹ Although he did, for a short time, attempt a career as a nurseryman, Leeds spent most of his life in his father's businesses – first in the cotton trade and then as sharebroker. His heart was in his plants though, and his garden at Longford Bridge, Stretford was where he undertook the hybridisation of daffodils; the first ones he

Chronicle cost 6d., Paxton's Flower Garden (also monthly) was 2s. 6d. and the quarterly Horticultural Society's Journal was 5s.

¹⁶⁷ The Floral World, (1860) p.124.

¹⁶⁸ The Cottage Gardener, 13 February, 1851, p.300.

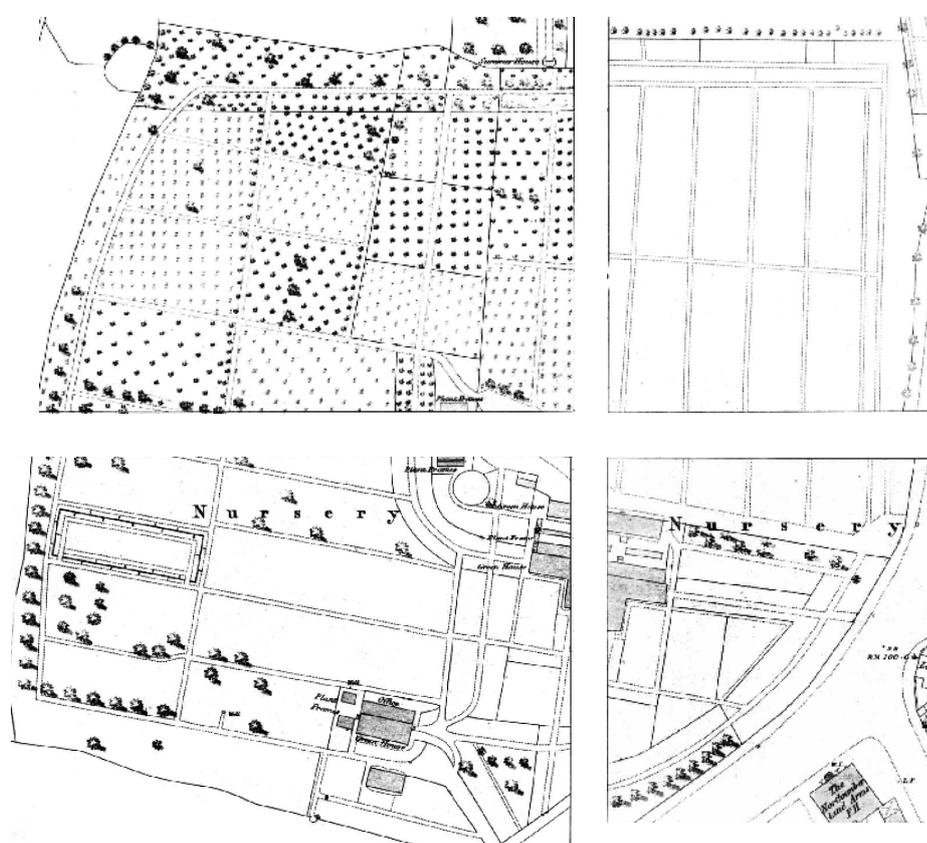
¹⁶⁹ Begun in 1841, The Gardeners' Chronicle was a weekly publication. Originally a general newspaper as well as a gardening magazine, it continues to be published although it is now known as Horticulture Week.

¹⁷⁰ Preface to the 1826 volume of The Gardener's Magazine.

¹⁷¹ Some of his articles appeared in Sweet's The British Flower Garden. In 1835, in item 150 (*Thalictrum aminoides*), Sweet wrote "*Our drawing of those two varieties was made last Spring, from two plants sent us by the kindness of our respected friend, Mr. Leeds, of Manchester, to whom we are much obliged for many presents which he has bestowed upon us, in sending us plants and specimens*". The implication is that he sent more information than was ever used.

shared with the public were via The Gardeners' Magazine of Botany in 1851. His collection of 24,233 bulbs – along with those of William Backhouse – became the parents of today's varieties.¹⁷²

Stretford and Chorlton-cum-Hardy were home to numerous market gardens and nurseries – and, as with the previous century it can be difficult to tell these apart. One which was definitely a nursery was that opened by Thomas Dewhurst Watkinson in Edge Lane, Stretford. Watkinson had inherited George Vaughan's business (having married his daughter), and developed the horticultural side of the business. The opening of the Manchester-Altrincham railway allowed him to encourage visits to the nursery, which was only a few minutes' walk from the station.¹⁷³



Cunningham & Orr's Nursery at Hulme

¹⁷² For more information, see Uings, Joy: Edward Leeds: a nineteenth-century plantsman, a dissertation submitted to the University of Manchester for the Certificate of Continuing Education in Garden and Landscape History, 2003.

¹⁷³ The first mention of the nursery was in an advert in the Manchester Times, 28 August, 1846. In the same publication on 21 July, 1849 he announced "the Edge Lane Station, on the Altrincham Railway, now open, is within three minutes' walk of his extensive Hothouses and Nursery Grounds, where a general assortment of PLANTS may be seen, gratis. Trains almost every hour during the day; fares, 3d. 4d. and 5d."

Nearer town were the nurseries of Cunningham & Orr in Hulme and Hodgson Bigland in Moss Side. Each has a claim to fame. In 1831 Loudon visited Cunningham's and found it one of the most weed-free nurseries visited so far. He wrote of Lowe's nursery at Wolverhampton that it was extensive, well stocked with plants in good condition and low prices and went on: "*The same may be said of Mr. Cunningham's nursery at Manchester, which is remarkably well laid out, and highly kept.*"¹⁷⁴ It is probable that Cunningham & Co. (subsequently Cunningham & Orr) had taken the nurseries previously occupied by McNiven and Thorley – although the addresses given are different, they are in the same general area. This was the same George Cunningham who had a nursery in Liverpool¹⁷⁵ and it is likely that he left the running of the Hulme nursery to William Orr, another Scot (born around 1788).

In Moss Side, Hodgson Bigland's nursery was a relatively large undertaking – in the 1851 census he is shown as employing 39 men and 3 boys – yet he was a very young man when he began the business. He was a Quaker, born in Liverpool on 4 August 1820 and was originally in partnership with either his father or his brother and Christopher Scott, but the partnership with Scott was dissolved as early as June 1842.¹⁷⁶ In addition to the nursery there was the seed shop in town, where sample plants could be viewed. Perhaps Bigland's biggest claim to fame – though today's readers are unlikely to appreciate that his is a real character – is his appearance in Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton. Amy Carson accuses her brother Harry of having forgotten "*to ask Bigland for that rose, that new rose they say he has got*". Harry replies that he had not forgotten – "*he has got the Rose, sans réproche; but do you know, little Miss Extravagance, a very small one is half a guinea*".¹⁷⁷

In Pendleton, Charles Noyes was becoming established. Born in Andover, Hampshire around 1800, Noyes was married to Susannah, from Sandy, Bedfordshire, but by the late 1830s they had settled in Pendleton, living at 30 Eccles Old Road and

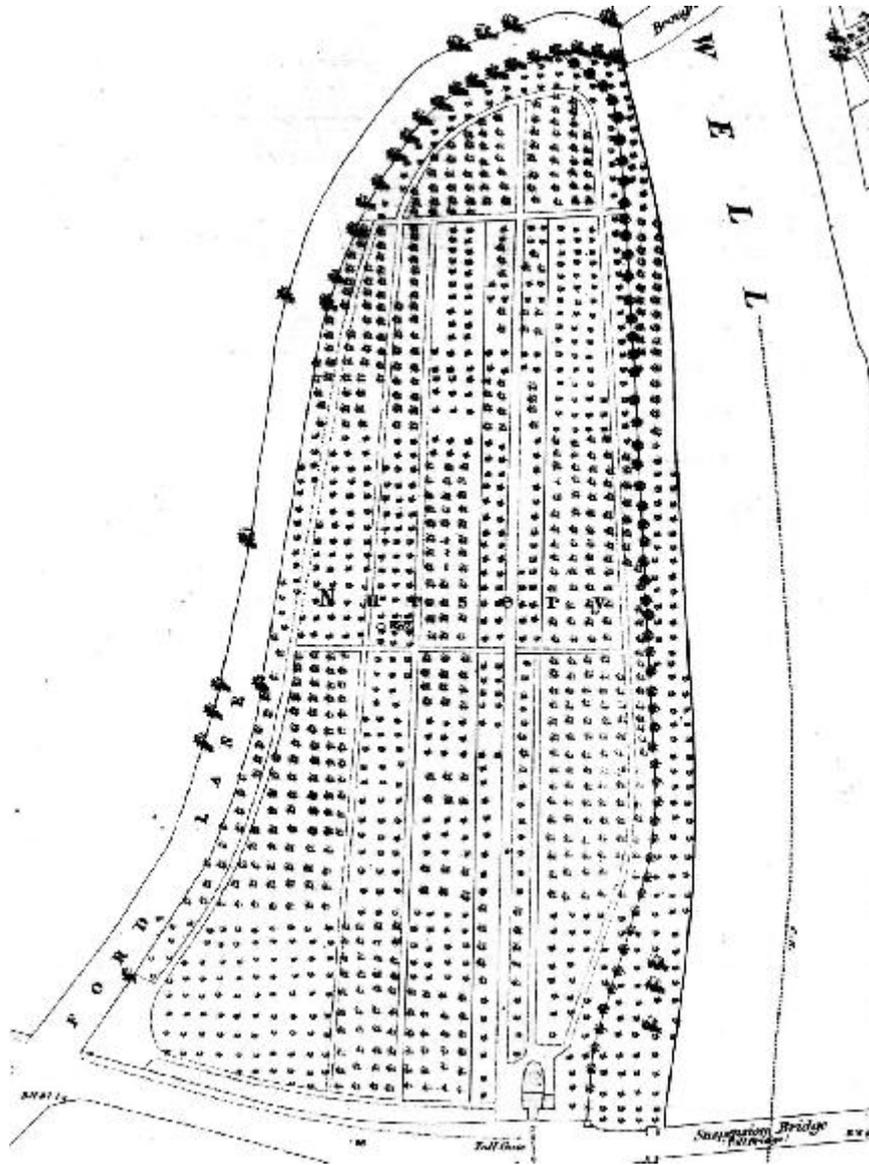
¹⁷⁴ The Gardener's Magazine, August 1831, p.410.

¹⁷⁵ Loudon wrote: "*The father of Liverpool grape-growers is Mr. Cunningham of the Liverpool Nursery, who has been a grape grower in Lancashire for more than half a century*" *ibid*, p.538. In the index to the volume is "*Cunningham, Mr. of the Liverpool Nursery, a notice of, p.538; his nursery at Manchester, p.410*".

¹⁷⁶ "*Partnerships Dissolved: A Bigland, C Scott and H Bigland of Manchester, nurserymen (so far as regards C. Scott)*" Manchester Times, 18 June, 1842. Both his father and his brother were named Amos (Quaker Registers on ancestry.co.uk).

¹⁷⁷ Mary Barton, Elizabeth Gaskell. Everyman edition, 1996. p.69. Gaskell may have used some licence in this. Although originally published in 1848, the story is set between 1839 and 1842. Bigland would have been barely established during this period, but well established by 1848.

running the Hope Nursery in Sandy Lane. Alongside the River Irwell lay the nursery of Thomas Bounds. Little is known of Bounds or his nursery, which had to close in 1849, upon the termination of the lease.¹⁷⁸ Also in Pendleton was a small nursery of 3 ½ acres run by John Jones.¹⁷⁹



Easily identifiable from the description in the advertisements, this was Thomas Bounds' nursery

¹⁷⁸ There was also a nursery in Besses-o'-th'-Barn run by a Thomas Bounds who died in the summer of 1849. It is not known if he was the same person. Although Thomas Bounds, nurseryman, Manchester was a corresponding member of the Horticultural Society according to the *Journal of the Horticultural Society of London* (1850), p.45, he may have paid his membership before he died. In the 1820s a T. Bounds was gardener to the Earl of Wilton (*Baines' Directory*, 1824/5)

¹⁷⁹ The size of the nursery is recorded in the census of 1851.

This increase in the number of nurseries was matched by an increase in the number of seed shops in town. Some of these – e.g. Bigland’s – were the town outlets of nurseries. One of the more notable ones was that of Francis and James Dickson of Chester, whose nurseries were both extensive and famous. Although the Dicksons had advertised in the Manchester press,¹⁸⁰ and promised free delivery to Manchester,¹⁸¹ it was not until 1849 that they took over 106 Deansgate. That address had been associated with the seed business for two decades. Originally it had been occupied by Charles Bannerman, the son of Alexander Bannerman of the Walton Nursery, Liverpool.¹⁸² Following his father’s death he had spent three years with Messrs. Cormack, Son, and Sinclair, of New Cross, near London.¹⁸³

Bannerman only stayed a few years. In 1839 the shop was taken by the next generation of nurserymen, and successors to his former employers, Cormack, Son and Oliver. In London, the business was not doing well, not aided by the loss of part of their nursery ground to development.¹⁸⁴ In Manchester, the shop was taken over by Henry Dalgety Cormack, but following his bankruptcy in 1849,¹⁸⁵ the Dickson cousins moved in.¹⁸⁶ Although Bannerman served on the committee of the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society,¹⁸⁷ and he sold, among other things, bulbs, dahlias and garden implements, his advertisements tended to concentrate on

¹⁸⁰ Manchester Times, 29 December, 1838. The advert referred to the Dicksons’ new nursery grounds at Newton and Upton; they had previously been based at Bachepool.

¹⁸¹ See Manchester Courier, 4 November, 1843.

¹⁸² Alexander Bannerman met with a fatal accident when, the horse taking fright, his gig came into violent contact with a lamp post. Bannerman died two days later of head injuries. (Liverpool Mercury, 18 May, 1827: “*He was a man universally esteemed, and his untimely fate is deeply regretted.*” His nursery was taken over by William Skirving with whom he had spent some time in partnership (see Liverpool Mercury, 7 November, 1823; 17 October, 1828, although in 1825 Skirving had apparently been working independently: “*W. Skirving (late of Walton)..*”, Liverpool Mercury, 14 January, 1825).

¹⁸³ Bannerman’s advert in the Manchester Courier, 4 December, 1830 read “... *C.B. has since the death of his late father, been upwards of three years with Messrs. Cormack, Son, and Sinclair, seedsmen, New Cross, near London.*”

¹⁸⁴ The Morning Post, 17 October, 1834: “... *that PART of their EXTENSIVE NURSERY (they still retaining upwards of 30 acres) situate between New-cross and Deptford, nearly opposite the four-mile stone, on the Great Dover-road, which must be cleared, in consequence of the expiration of the lease, and the land re-let for other purposes*”.

¹⁸⁵ See Morning Post, 23 June, 1849. W.J. Cormack of New Cross had been declared bankrupt the previous year (The Morning Post, 5 February, 1848). This may have been by Henry diversified into bottled ale and porter (Manchester Times, 10 February, 1849).

¹⁸⁶ Manchester Times, 2 February, 1850.

¹⁸⁷ See Manchester Times, 12 March, 1836.

grass and agricultural seeds.¹⁸⁸ This continued to be the case with the Cormacks – and even with the Dicksons (despite the very varied nature of their nurseries): all three could be found as prize-winners at Agricultural Shows.

Seedsman in the centre of town included Gilbert Blackberd, who at one time worked for George Vaughan, but who established his own business in 1826. This caused some friction as Vaughan had moved to other premises and Blackberd had taken the shop Vaughan had vacated.¹⁸⁹ Blackberd, in turn, trained Thomas Prichard who established his own shop in Old Millgate in 1831¹⁹⁰ then moved to Albert Place, New Bailey Bridge in 1843.¹⁹¹ In 1848 George Yates moved into the shop Prichard had once occupied in Old Millgate.¹⁹²

There are two others who should be mentioned, although their nurseries were well out of town. Samuel Stafford was based in Hyde, but attended the Manchester market¹⁹³ and was sometimes included in lists of Manchester nurserymen.¹⁹⁴ Closer to town was Richard Smalley Yates, with a nursery in Sale. Yates (no relation to George Yates), was more akin to Middlewood, his description of himself in the census varied from "fruiterer" (1841), to "confectioner" (1851), to "horticulturist" (1861), "nurseryman" (1871) and "florist" (1881).

¹⁸⁸ For example, Manchester Times, 7 February, 1835 is headed "GARDEN AND FARM SEEDS OF TRUE AND GENUINE QUALITY", but concludes, after one paragraphs in which he offered garden and farm seeds for sale either wholesale or retail and a second addressed to landowners and farmers in which he offered to provide grass seeds suited to their soil, "Orders for new and choice DAHLIAS promptly attended to. – GARDEN IMPLEMENTS of all kinds, RUSSIA MATS, &c &c."

¹⁸⁹ Manchester Courier, 11 February, 1826. Both Vaughan and Blackberd had adverts: the former stating that he had "NO CONNEXION WHATEVER WITH THIS FIRM" and the latter that he had re-opened Vaughan's previous shop.

¹⁹⁰ Manchester Times, 19 November, 1831.

¹⁹¹ Manchester Times, 18 February, 1833: Allan Richardson had taken over Prichard's shop. Prichard, the third son of Robert Prichard of Stocks, Cheetham, died in 1846 (Manchester Courier, 22 July, 1846), but the business was continued by his widow who announced that she had herself directed the Seed Department for the previous two years (Manchester Courier, 14 November, 1846).

¹⁹² Manchester Times, 11 March, 1848.

¹⁹³ Manchester Courier, 8 October, 1842: "Attendance on Saturdays and Tuesdays, at Falstaff Inn, Market Place, from eleven to two; and plants delivered free on those days, in or near Manchester".

¹⁹⁴ The National garden almanack, and Trade Directory for 1853.

Post 1850

The changes that took place post-1850 have been alluded to above. Nurserymen generally leased their land and when the lease was due for renewal, the land could be of more value for development. Thomas Bounds had been the first to lose his nursery in this way in 1849 followed by John Jones in 1851.¹⁹⁵ This is possibly the same John Jones who later worked as a nurseryman in Altrincham, retiring in 1874.¹⁹⁶ Cunningham & Orr were forced to close in 1854¹⁹⁷ and Bigland in 1855. Bigland's seed shop in the Market Place had been disposed of to T. F. Winstanley of London,¹⁹⁸ and Bigland's manager – Thomas Crane – would later establish another seed shop in Old Millgate.¹⁹⁹ Bigland himself left the nursery business behind and moved first to the Wirral, where he was an American merchant, and later to Darlington where he entered his wife's family's bank.²⁰⁰ He died at his desk on 14 January 1896.²⁰¹

Thomas Watkinson lost his nursery to development in 1851 and he died in 1853. In 1887 his brother revealed that when he had taken over from Thomas the business had been insolvent, but that he had turned it around and purchased seven acres of nursery ground in Stretford. The terms of the purchase was that he would build on this land when required to, which had not happened until 1886, at which

¹⁹⁵ Preston Guardian, 11 October, 1851 and Manchester Times, 18 October, 1851. The stock of the nursery was being auctioned due to "the very near approach of the termination of his lease".

¹⁹⁶ The census records show that he was born in 1791 in Ruthin, Denbighshire; the 1871 census records are very indistinct, but have a John Jones as a Landscape Gardener, apparently the right age. However, "J. Jones, nurseryman, Manchester Road, Altrincham", advertised in the Manchester Times, 10 January, 1874, which would make him 83.

¹⁹⁷ Manchester Times, 21 January, 1854: "As the Lease of this Nursery is now run out, and notice having been given to the proprietors, Messrs. Cunningham and Orr, that the land will be required for building upon, and must be cleared by the 25th March, 1854". The company had been trying to sell off their stock for more than a year. A similar advert had appeared in the Manchester Courier, 28 August, 1852.

¹⁹⁸ Manchester Courier, 18 March, 1854: the advert continued *H.B. and Co. will carry on the Nursery Business as usual until the stock is disposed of, to effect which as quickly as possible (their lease having nearly expired) they are prepared to treat with customers on the most liberal terms...*"

¹⁹⁹ Manchester Times, 4 April, 1857.

²⁰⁰ The information about Bigland comes from ancestry.co.uk and various Quaker publications held there.

²⁰¹ This was reported in a number of newspapers, such as Northern Echo, 15 January, 1896. Bigland had arrived at the bank as usual and in his "customary good health", but a few minutes later a sound of something falling was heard and Bigland was discovered "lying unconscious on the floor". "Deceased had a circle of devoted friends, and was much esteemed in private life. He was a great horticulturist, and took much pleasure in his hobby of gardening."

time he had insufficient capital to do so. Plants and hothouses were sold at a loss to clear the land. He had liabilities of £1,636 and assets of only £86.²⁰² Bankruptcy was also the fate of Richard Smalley Yates, despite a long and apparently successful career. In 1881 he had liabilities of more than £5,000 and assets of £405.²⁰³ Yates died on 28 December 1890 at the age of 84 and was buried three days later in Brooklands cemetery, and his obituary in the Manchester Courier referred to his "*once very familiar figure*", his businesses "*well stocked with fruits and flowers*", which were popular resorts with young people, his "*capital flower nurseries at Sale*", and his success at fruit and flower shows.²⁰⁴ Like Bigland, the name Yates was recorded for posterity in Mrs. Gaskell's Mary Barton. Although there was another company with the name of Yates, it is likely that it was Richard Smalley who was being referred to: "*... who gave half-a-crown for a bunch of lilies of the valley at Yates', a month ago, and then would not let his poor little sister have them*".²⁰⁵ Leo Grindon was also familiar with Yates' nursery. In Manchester Walks & Wild-Flowers, he wrote "*The most beautiful, as well as richest fernery on the south side of Manchester, is that of R.S. Yates, Esq., at Sale*".²⁰⁶

After the death of William Lodge of the Broughton and Singleton Brook nurseries, his family continued the business, but without the same level of success. In 1865 the contents of the Park Nursery at Singleton Brook were put up for auction²⁰⁷ and the Broughton Lane Nursery was eventually built upon, though its memory lingered – as we have seen above in the description of the nursery by Louis Hayes.

Not all the stories ended so desolately, however. In Pendleton, Charles Noyes was succeeded (in 1871) by his son Charles James and then his grandson, Charles Stafford. They were moderately successful. The most successful nurserymen were undoubtedly the Dickson cousins. At the end of 1853 their partnership split, with each cousin going into partnership with his son and they each had shops in both

²⁰² Manchester Courier, 12 May, 1887, report of hearing into Watkinson's insolvency.

²⁰³ Manchester Evening News, 1 October, 1881. Yates' stock at this time is recorded in Appendix Three.

²⁰⁴ Manchester Courier, 3 January 1891.

²⁰⁵ Gaskell, Elizabeth. Mary Barton. (1848) Everyman edition 1996. p.69.

²⁰⁶ Grindon, Leo Hartley. Manchester Walks & Wild-Flowers, (1859). p.145

²⁰⁷ Manchester Courier, 1 April, 1865. The "*valuable plot of building land*" was offered at a subsequent sale.

Chester and Manchester.²⁰⁸ The two firms were reunited in 1888, with a shared capital of £150,000.²⁰⁹ The original owners, Francis and James died in 1866 and 1867 respectively, but the nurseries were carried on by sons and grandsons, each generation becoming more affluent.²¹⁰

Connections

Some of the connections of those in the horticultural trade in Manchester have already been mentioned – Bannerman of Manchester, son of Bannerman of Liverpool was also brother to Bannerman of Preston²¹¹ and worked at the Cormack nursery in what is now South London. The Dickson cousins were part of a much larger family of nurserymen who hailed from Scotland, which was also the original home of the McNiven brothers and James Smith. Many private gardeners in Manchester were also originally from Scotland as was Archibald Prentice, editor of the Manchester Times, who included many snippets of horticultural information in his newspaper.

There was a network of nurserymen around the country, buying and selling from each other as the ledgers of William Caldwell reveal – not only did he do business with Manchester nurserymen, but also with those in London and Bristol. It will also be shown below in Chapter Seven, that nurserymen used flower shows outside their immediate vicinity to demonstrate their skill and make contacts with other growers.²¹² This sometimes led to closer relationships: Charles James Noyes married Annie Mary Stafford whose father Thomas was a Horticultural Salesman,

²⁰⁸ Advertisements around this time were fairly rancorous. Francis and Arthur Dickson opened new premises at 14 Corporation Street, while James stayed at 106 Deansgate. The seed business was under the management of Arthur who had "*the ENTIRE management of the old concern*" while Francis dealt with the nursery business: "*senior partner of the late firm, a practical nurseryman of 40 years' experience*" (Manchester Times, 14 January, 1854). James responded "*Having for thirty-five years been sole managing partner of the seed concerns, both at Chester and Manchester*" (Manchester Times, 21 January, 1854)

²⁰⁹ Chester Observer, 14 July, 1888.

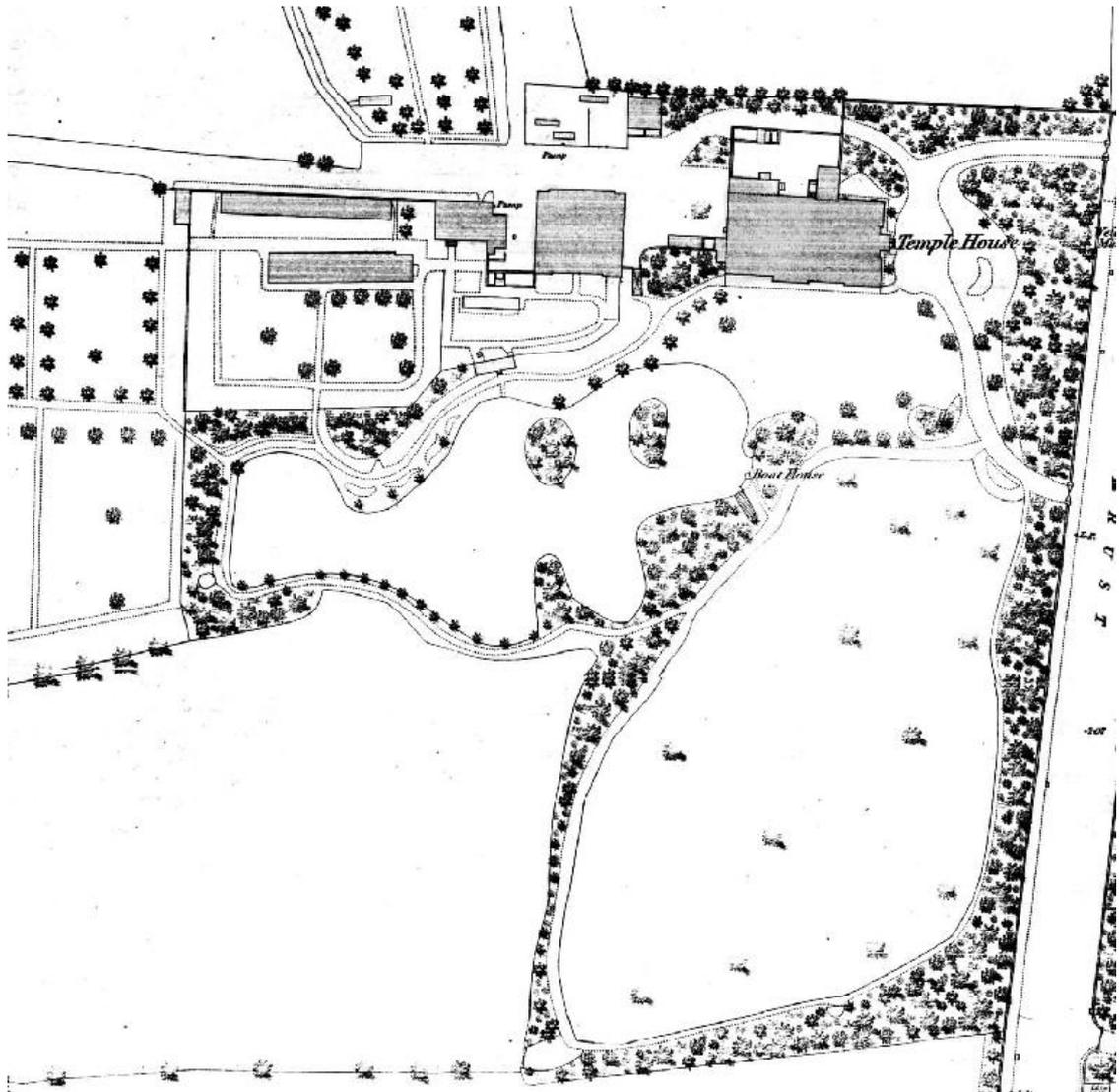
²¹⁰ Information re wills can be found on ancestry.co.uk.

²¹¹ Preston Guardian, 13 March, 1846. Alexander Bannerman retired and handed over to Charles who announced that he was "*recommencing the Agricultural Seed business*".

²¹² Networking was as important then as now. In 1855, Henry Carrington, nursery and seedsman of Stockport ran into financial difficulties as a result of underwriting others' debts. This resulted in his bankruptcy and the selling off of all his stock. He was enabled to re-enter the nursery trade by a gift of plants from the Commissioner in bankruptcy who heard his case and land provided by Charles Marsland of Stockport. In addition to this "*Messrs. William Brundrett, of Stretford, W.G. Caldwell, Knutsford, William Orr, Hulme, John Palmer, Annan, and many other nurserymer*" had contributed "*nursery and plantation stock; and have, as well, been very active in soliciting contributions from others in the shape of shrubs, trees, &c*" (Manchester Times, 7 February, 1855).

living at 2 Seedley Park Road. Prior to that he had been a nurseryman in Hyde and was the eldest son of Samuel Stafford (born c. 1797).²¹³

The nursery trade could involve all members of a family and be continued through the generations. It is also of note that horticulture could be a passion among extended families. Among the wealthier inhabitants of Manchester, was that of Philip Lucas.



Temple House, Cheetham Hill Road, home to Philip Lucas (O.S. map)

²¹³ Thomas Stafford was born c. 1822 in New Mills. Samuel's wife Mary was also from New Mills. The 1841 census does not give the town of birth and the age of Thomas gave a birth year of 1826. Such errors were quite common. By 1851 Thomas was married and no longer living at home.

Born in 1797 in Jamaica, Lucas became a Cotton Merchant in Manchester. His brother-in-law was S. L. Behrens and his nephews were Henry and Horatio Micholls.²¹⁴ All four can be found as prize-winners at various horticultural shows. Thomas Baines was Horatio Micholls' gardener (having previously worked for Philip Lucas), and he was a skilled horticulturist. In August 1864 "*the grandeur*" of his entry of ten stove and greenhouse plants "*startled some of the London growers, and won first prize with them most deservedly*".²¹⁵ Micholls moved to London in 1869 taking Baines with him. The gardener was so well respected locally that a dinner was held to mark his departure and he was presented with a gold watch inscribed "*Presented to Mr. Thomas Baines, by the gardeners and friends, as a mark of esteem, on his leaving the neighbourhood of Altrincham and Bowdon. – October 27th, 1869*".²¹⁶ Micholls went to live in Southgate Lodge, London and within a few months Baines was exhibiting at the Crystal Palace flower show (May 21, 1870) where his collection of plants "*the finest we believe [he] has ever exhibited in London*"²¹⁷ implies that Micholls took his plants with him when he moved – unlike S. L. Behrens, jun. This member of the family moved to London in 1853. Before he left he sold all his belongings, including his extensive collection of orchids and stove plants and all his garden equipment (see Appendix Four).

Horticultural connections can be found beyond nurserymen and extended families. A number of men in and around Manchester were members of the Horticultural Society of London, and among nurserymen, both James Smith and Thomas Bounds were corresponding members of the Society.²¹⁸ Horticulture often went with an interest in botany and other sciences. The manufacturer Thomas Glover, for example, was a member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science and was well connected with botanists and other scientists, though his friend Edward Leeds (a nurseryman for only a short time, but an ardent florist and hybridist) was a man who stayed in the background. Glover (and through him, Leeds) was a correspondent of both William and Joseph Hooker, and this led to Glover

²¹⁴ See Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

²¹⁵ The Floral World and Garden Guide, August 1864, p. 169.

²¹⁶ Journal of Horticulture and Practical Gardening, Volume 17 November 4, 1869 p.359.

²¹⁷ Journal of Horticulture and Practical Gardening, Volume 18 May 26, 1870 p.373.

²¹⁸ Journal of the Horticultural Society of London (1850). p.45 and p. 48. Also members at that time were Francis Dickson of Chester,

corresponding with Charles Darwin.²¹⁹ Leeds' interest in the hybridisation of daffodils might have arisen after William Herbert became Dean of Manchester,²²⁰ though if this were the case it is more likely that the contact was via Glover rather than direct. Certainly Leeds was unknown to William Brockbank (28 years his junior), though Brockbank was born and raised in Manchester and was himself a daffodil hybridist. Brockbank was a businessman who, like Glover, was interested in science and horticulture:

*"He is an ardent horticulturist, and his beautiful garden at Brockhurst, Didsbury, contains a very large collection of hardy plants, and especially of daffodils, Christmas roses, and many choice spring flowers. This garden has been the frequent resort of scientific and natural history societies, and its owner is never so happy as when acting the host and showing or describing his many treasures to the friends he is entertaining... Mr. Brockbank is proud of the fact that he was the first to prove the seeding of the double daffodil..."*²²¹

Brockbank became sufficiently interested, after Leeds' death, to write a two part article about him in the *Gardener's Chronicle* in 1894. Brockbank was also a correspondent of William Robinson.²²²

The most intriguing connection, however, is that of the nurseryman Hodgson Bigland with William Backhouse. Bigland married William's sister Jane. Like Edward Leeds, the banker William Backhouse was an early hybridiser of daffodils – between them they raised hundreds of new varieties of a flower which did not become popular until after their deaths. Might Bigland have been the connection between these two men? It is undoubtedly disappointing that no information about their possible relationship has yet come to light.

²¹⁹ Glover's correspondence with the Hookers can be found in the Kew Archives. (See also Uings: *Edward Leeds*) On 30 September 1857, Darwin wrote to Joseph Hooker: "In looking over my scraps I find one from you with some cases of Hybridism from M^r Glover of Manchester: Who is he? is he alive & do you know his address, as I sh^d. like to write & ask him some questions on one of his crosses of *Cereus*? Is he a man to be trusted?" In due course, Glover wrote to Darwin giving details about hybridising *Cactus speciosissimus* and *C. stellatus*. (The Darwin Correspondence Database, www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-2148 and 2160 accessed on Sun Dec 2 2012.)

²²⁰ Herbert had raised hybrid daffodils at Spofforth, before he came to Manchester and believed that many 'species' were in fact hybrids.

²²¹ *Manchester Faces and Places* Vol. 5 (1894), p.21-2

²²² In the Forewords to the New Edition of Robinson's *Flower Garden* (1900), 89 names are listed as having contributed to the second part of the book, the detail about specific plants. Among the more well known names (such as Gertrude Jekyll and Miss Willmott) is that of W. Brockbank.

Summary

Manchester's gardeners had a good number of local businesses from which to access seeds and plants and the number increased as time passed.²²³ There were many others who were of greater or lesser importance (not all who could have been included above; for some more information, see Appendix One) and some where the service provided is less than clear. The relationship between market gardener and nurseryman was blurred and this continued even beyond the 1850s. On 19 December, 1867 The Journal of Horticulture ran an article on Turn Moss Market Gardens in Stretford – "*celebrated for the quantity and quality of the fruit and vegetables grown in them*" – which were under the management of Hugh Doran, formerly gardener to Sir Arthur Aston of Aston Hall, Cheshire. In 1858 the gardens had been Turn Moss Farm and the then owner Robert Clark "*fruiterer*", who exhibited at the Horticultural shows in London,²²⁴ had purchased a large quantity of the glass from the 1857 Manchester exhibition for use on the farm. By 1867 it had more than 20 glasshouses of various sizes and covered several acres. In 1880, when the property was for sale, it was described by the auctioneer as "*Large Nurseries and Market Gardens*".²²⁵ It is a fair assumption that there were many other businesses that ran on similar lines, which did not leave a clear trace behind them through advertising in the press, appearing in Directories, winning prizes at flower shows or being reported in gardening magazines.²²⁶

It is also clear that by 1850 the loss of nurseries in the immediate vicinity of the town due to development to cope with the ever-increasing population had begun. It was felt first in Hulme and Moss-side, as those were the areas which grew fastest, soonest. It would eventually overtake the northern nurseries, but others would survive much longer. The difficulty for nurseries in the vicinity of towns was that their acres were of more value as land for development, whether for residential or commercial use. As now, building depended upon trade cycles, but owners of land,

²²³ What is not known is how many purchased from the more well-known, but London-based, firms.

²²⁴ Robert Clark won a Banksian Medal from the Horticultural Society of London on 17 October, 1854 "*for six Montserrat Pine-apples, the largest of which weighed 4 lbs 6 oz but all were handsome fruit and well ripened*" (The Journal of the Horticultural Society of London, (1855) p.lxx.

²²⁵ Manchester Courier, 30 October, 1880.

²²⁶ Occasional glimpses can be found of these as in the death notice of Elizabeth Bradock "*relict of John Bradock, nurseryman, late of Snowhill Gardens, Cheetwood*". (Manchester Courier, 15 April, 1854).

even when the economy was sluggish, would have an eye to the future. It is not surprising that the expansion of Hulme meant that the lease of Cunningham's nursery was not renewed. Elsewhere development was slower, but it is clear from Watkinson's experience that, even though it might take some decades, building eventually triumphed over nurseries.

Chapter Two

Plants

In the previous chapter we saw the variety of commercial gardeners in and around Manchester, and in this chapter we look at the range of plants they grew, how these were generally used in gardens and what it has been possible to find out about how they were used in and around Manchester.

Various categorisations appeared in catalogues and advertisements: Forest Trees; Ornamental Trees; Fruit Trees; Evergreen Shrubs; Ornamental Shrubs; Flowering Shrubs; American Plants (sometimes referred to as bog plants); Perennial Flowers; Florists' Flowers; Flower Roots (i.e. bulbs and corms); Annual Flower Seeds; Biennial Flower Seeds; Perennial Flower Seeds; Kitchen Garden (i.e. vegetable) Seeds; Bird Seeds; Grass Seeds; Agricultural Seeds; Greenhouse Plants; Hot-house and Stove Plants. Not all nurserymen used all designations. Some would refer to ornamental shrubs, others to flowering shrubs. Some listed according to habit e.g. hot-house climbers.

Forest trees

Timber growing was a patriotic duty. This concept dated back to John Evelyn's book *Sylva*, first delivered as a discourse to the Royal Society in 1662. The book was often re-printed²²⁷ and later writers regularly referred to Evelyn. For Evelyn, timber was needed for the building of ships and the security of the nation. In 1763 Roger Fisher, a shipwright, wrote that the demand for wood for shipbuilding in Liverpool was met from south Lancashire and Cheshire (plus surrounding counties to the south and west), but that in just thirty years "*the far greater part has been cut down*". More worryingly, most felled timber had not been replaced.²²⁸

A century and a half after Evelyn's book, it was the war with France which led to the demand, as this had disrupted the importation of timber from the continent,

²²⁷ An advertisement for a new edition appeared in the *Manchester Courier* on 29 April 1826.

²²⁸ Fisher, Roger. *Heart of Oak, the British Bulwark*. 1763. (p.32.) The Earl of Warrington had planted 100,000 oaks, elms and beech and been castigated for doing so as it took away the value of the land (i.e. rental income). In due course the trees were worth two guineas each and the owner of the land could expect, in a further thirty years, to reap £2,000 per annum from the sale of timber. (p.94-5).

and was using up the country's reserves at an alarming rate.²²⁹ According to John Holt, however, trees in Lancashire were planted to embellish property, provide cover for game or shelter, "*rather than with a view of supplying the country with timber, and preventing importation*".²³⁰ However, trees suitable to grow for timber were the subject for Charles White, Fellow of the Royal Society and Manchester surgeon (who we shall come across again in a later chapter), when he presented a paper on 21 April, 1797, to the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. His talk was entitled "*An Account of three different Kinds of TIMBER TREES, which are likely to prove a great Acquisition to this Kingdom, both in point of Profit and as Trees for Ornament and Shade*". From his own observation, the trees he described grew more quickly than others, which made them of particular use to the patriotic planter:

"The general decrease of timber in this island – the many waste lands unemployed – and the bill now proposed to be brought into parliament, by that great friend to Agriculture Sir John Sinclair, will be my apology for troubling the Society with this paper; for the planter ought certainly to be furnished with every advantage, and every possible inducement should be held out to him, for promoting so useful and so national a work."

The three he mentioned – Black American Birch with broad leaves, the Athenian Poplar, and the Iron Oak with prickly cups – were more likely to have been grown as ornamentals, although he described the first as being "*the most useful timber tree in North America, for building both of houses and boats*".²³¹

Although nurserymen sold all types of plants, some of the eighteenth century catalogues which have survived seem to have concentrated more on forest trees than on any other type of plant, though whether these were bought for national or personal reasons is debatable.²³² Nurserymen offered some trees for sale by the thousand although these were usually very small – one-year seedlings or two-year at

²²⁹ Nicol, Walter and Sang, Edward. *The Planter's Kalendar* 1812 (preface).

²³⁰ Holt, John. *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster* (1795), (David & Charles reprint 1969) p.84

²³¹ *Memoirs and proceedings – Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society* Vol 5, part 1, 1798 p.163-173. This lecture was reproduced in *A Journal of Natural Philosophy, Chemistry and the Arts*, (November 1798), p.333-7.

²³² Harvey dates this to 1760 and the beginning of "improvements" when "*Many of the landed nobility and gentry vied with one another in planting large expanses of wasteland and mountain slopes with thousands of trees, deciduous and coniferous*". Trees were important previous to this, but were perhaps grown and planted by private nurserymen. It is important to remember also, that nurserymen sometimes issued different catalogues for the different types of plants they provided. The survival of a tree catalogue cannot be taken to imply that other catalogues from the same nurseryman were not available – they may simply have not survived.

the most. Larger trees, which had been transplanted at least once – to develop their root systems – were usually sold by the hundred, though they were available at a variety of heights, and the largest were priced individually. In 1768, William Perfect of Pontefract sold one-year old seedling oaks (6 inches) at ten shillings per thousand. Two-year old oaks were fifteen shillings per thousand or thirty shillings if they had been transplanted. From two foot high, they were sold by the hundred and the tallest he had were three foot. Beech ranged from six-inch, one-year seedling at ten shillings per thousand to six-foot trees at thirty shillings per hundred, but eight-foot trees could also be had for sixpence each.²³³

The sale of forest trees by nurserymen reflected two things – firstly garden design, secondly economics. For the owner who wanted an instant impact, small numbers of larger trees might have been preferable. For the man who wished to grow timber as an investment, large numbers of small trees would make sense; although for the patient landowner who wished to create some of the designs popular at the beginning of the century, large numbers of trees were essential. At that time the prevailing fashion was for the formal and it was expected that owners would have many acres to cover. Avenues leading from the road to the house would be lined with one or more rows of large trees. They made a statement: here was the home of someone of importance. Further out there were areas planted with trees cut through with radiating rides; they formed an attractive place for equestrian exercise. Closer to the house trees were planted to provide shade. The early eighteenth century was a time when gardens could have very complex designs. The illustrations in d'Argenville's Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening²³⁴ and Langley's New Principles of Gardening demonstrate this. The title page of the former (1712) lists the components of a garden:

"...Parterres, Groves, Grass-Plots, Mazes, Banqueting Rooms, Galleries, Portico's, and Summer-Houses of Arbor-Work; Terrasses, Stairs, Fountains, Cascades, and the like Ornaments..."

²³³ Perfect published a two-page list entitled: "*Of the SIZE and PRICE of NURSERY Forest-Trees, Fruit-Trees, and Flowering Shrubs, SOLD BY WILLIAM PERFECT, Nurseryman and Seedsman, in PONTEFRACT, 17..*". This could be used from year to year. The copy available on ECCO has 68 added in writing.

²³⁴ John James published his translation in 1712 (from the edition published in Paris in 1709). Loudon wrote that authors such as d'Argenville "*rarely attempted to lay down any general principal of composition*" describing their comments as "*not principles, but mechanical rules, formed on very limited associations*" (An Encyclopaedia of Gardening Vol III par. 7160.)

and the designs within the book included such as “*A Great Wood of Forest trees pierced with a double star*”; “*A great Hall of Horsechessnuts in a Wood*” and “*A small Cloister with Arbours made by ye Trees*”. D’Argenville’s designs were the geometric shapes popular in the previous century. Writing in 1728 Langley maintained this emphasis on geometry, though he also introduced an element of informality via winding paths. His complex, but fascinating, designs came at the end of the formal period – soon the English Landscape Garden would be the high-point of fashion. Trees continued to be important but were used differently; parterres close to the house were banished – the style required that the lawn sweep up to the terrace and the enormous areas of grass were studded with clumps of trees. By the end of the century the fashion changed again to bring plantings once more closer to the house.

These different styles could be found in the area around Manchester. The oak trees at Dunham Massey dated from the formal style – in 1795 Aikin described their “*unmolested growth of many years, through which avenues or vistas are cut*”, though the newer style had also been adopted – around the house shrubberies and flowerbeds had been recently introduced.²³⁵ Other properties with a sufficient amount of timber for Aikin to consider them worth mentioning were Chaderton Hall, Adlington Hall and Poynton.²³⁶

Plantations and woods need careful management though. A mixture of short-lived and long-lived species are initially grown fairly close together as they provide support and shelter for each other, the faster-growing, shorter-lived, trees such as birch encouraging the growth of the slower-growing, longer-lived trees such as oak.²³⁷ As the trees grow, the short-lived trees are thinned out to allow for full development of those remaining. Without this type of management, trees would be likely to grow crooked. Some industries required very straight, very tall trees though others needed small trees with particular characteristics. Alder provided smooth poles for hanging cotton yarn to dry and its bark was used for dyeing.²³⁸ But oak seems to have been

²³⁵ Aikin, John. *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester*, p.426.

²³⁶ The Poynton property was owned by Sir George Warren. Loudon described this as “*The mansion is an elegant Ionic building; the park extensive, and the pleasure-grounds beautifully disposed*”. (*Encyclopaedia of Gardening*, 1824, p.1244, although he was writing sometime after Aikin.

²³⁷ Planting trees to provide shelter was also used by farmers and by gardeners in windy or cold locations.

²³⁸ Aikin, John. *A Survey of the Counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire...* (1797) p.36.

the tree of choice in the region. In Cheshire oak was the bedrock of the widespread tanning industry.

Since carefully managed woodland produced timber for sale, and the expanding population and growth of industry would have created a big demand, it might be expected that timber as a cash crop would be seen as a good investment. It is perhaps surprising that writers such as Aikin (and Edwin Waugh some decades later) make the point that Lancashire and Cheshire were not great timber-producing regions, although Waugh placed the blame upon industrialisation (“... *when the time came that Lancashire began to strip some of its old customs and ornaments for a vigorous fulfilment of its manufacturing destiny, every useful thing upon the soil was seized, and applied to the absorbing purposes of the new time...*”) and landlords.²³⁹ When pressed for cash – and, given the bankruptcies which were a regular fact of life, this could easily happen – then selling their timber was an easy way of raising that money. However, timber is a long-term investment – even young timber requires a few years in which to become saleable. The description of the area as being devoid of large areas of trees, may have been because timber was easily obtainable from overseas. Aikin includes a table of goods moved by canal in the years 1786-1788. During these three years, from the country to Liverpool, boats carried less than fifty thousand feet of oak timber, while from Liverpool to the inland towns, they carried more than ten times that amount of pine timber. However, these figures only demonstrate some comparative imports and exports and give no indication of the amount of timber grown and used locally.

The ownership of timber was not always clear.²⁴⁰ Properties were often occupied on lease. In 1766 a sale of timber from Fishwick Hall was advertised. Unfortunately it was growing on entailed land and the Heir in the Entail threatened

²³⁹ Waugh, Edwin. *Sketches of Lancashire Life*, (1855) p.164-5.

²⁴⁰ It was not only timber – all plants could be affected when gardens were rented. There was some discussion as to the rules for tenants in the *Midland Florist* of 1847. The editor explained to a reader that “*No person can legally remove trees or shrubs, unless they have been planted out, to grow for sale, as in nursery grounds. Orchard trees (though extremely hard on the planters) belong to the landlord, after being planted out seven years*”. (p.322). This prompted a response from Harry Wilson of Ryde who told his own story. He had become the tenant of a mansion having been assured he could stay as long as he wanted. He therefore set to, laid turf and planted 200 roses from a local nurseryman and more from France. Within two years he had created a visitor attraction. Then he got notice to quit and his landlord refused permission for him to take his rose trees: “*as the trees were in his soil, he claimed them*”. (p.342-3)

prosecution if the sale went ahead.²⁴¹ Properties offered for sale were sometimes described as “*well-timbered*” or the sale would offer the timber “*at valuation*”, implying that if the new owner did not want it, the seller would fell the trees and take the income before the sale was completed.²⁴² Whether trees had been planted for aesthetic or economic reasons, at some point they needed to be felled and the timber sold.²⁴³ Timber auctions were advertised in the press and oaks were prominent in these. In January 1782 there were adverts for ten different auctions for a total of 8,178 trees, of which more than 83% were oaks.²⁴⁴ The percentage of oaks in any particular sale fluctuated and in November 1835 was as low as 13%. Other sales were almost entirely of oak. In March 1839 a sale on the outskirts of Liverpool was 100% oaks – 1,188 (including 242 cyphers).²⁴⁵

Despite this apparent preponderance of oak, nurserymen sold a variety of trees. This can be demonstrated by comparing those available from three nurserymen – Perfect of Pontefract, Turner of Kersal Moor and Butler of Prescott. This cannot be an exact comparison, as there are catalogues for Perfect (from 1768 and 1776) and only advertisements for Turner and Butler. Advertisements rarely mention all plants available. Turner’s advertisements listed those he had for sale, some with a size and the cost per hundred or per unit. Butler had three million forest trees available, but there was no indication of the number of each. Turner had about 100,000 each of Scotch and Spruce firs, but these were the only trees where numbers were mentioned and many of his trees were available only as single specimens.²⁴⁶ Going by the information available, it would seem that, by 1776, Perfect had found a market for unusual varieties.

²⁴¹ *Manchester Mercury*, 18 March, 1766.

²⁴² The seller could make it a requirement. e.g. *Manchester Courier*, 29 April, 1826: advert for a freehold estate at Pickmere: “*There is a quantity of fine thriving young TIMBER now growing upon the Estate, which will be required to be taken by the Purchaser at a valuation...*”.

²⁴³ A discussion of the different ways in which timber was dealt with and sold in different parts of the country can be found in Marshall’s *Planting and Ornamental Gardening: A Practical Treatise* (pages 551-5). In particular, oak bark was needed for the tanning industry and in some places this was removed while the tree was still standing, the felling being left until later in the year.

²⁴⁴ *Manchester Mercury*, 1, 8, 22 and 29 January, 1782.

²⁴⁵ *Manchester Courier*, 30 March, 1839. Many advertisements referred to cyphers. The word cannot be traced as used for timber except in these advertisements and must refer to the dictionary definition “*person or thing of little value*”. In this context it must refer to sub-standard timber.

²⁴⁶ Although this may have been because he had run-down his stock prior to retirement.

Comparison of trees stocked by Perfect (1768 and 1766), Turner (1782) and Butler (1813)

Tree	Perfect (1768)	Perfect (1776)	Turner (1782)	Butler (1813)
Areatheophrasti ²⁴⁷		✓		
Ash	✓	✓	✓	✓
Balm of Gilead fir	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beech	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birch	✓	✓	✓	✓
Birch, weeping				✓
Cedar of Lebanon	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cedar, Red Virginian	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cedar, White Virginian	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cluster pine	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cypress, common	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cypress, deciduous		✓		
Elm, Dutch, striped		✓		
Elm, English	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elm, English, striped		✓		
Elm, Wytch	✓	✓	✓	✓
Holly, green	✓	✓		
Holly, variegated	✓	✓	✓	
Hornbeam	✓	✓	✓	✓
Horse-chesnut ²⁴⁸	✓	✓	✓	✓
Horse-chesnut, gold-striped leaves		✓		
Horse-chesnut, silver-striped leaves		✓		
Horse-chesnut, scarlet flowering		✓		
Horse-chesnut, yellow-flowering		✓		
Juniper			✓	
Larch	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lime	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lord Weymouth Pine	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mountain Ash			✓	✓
Oak, English	✓	✓	✓	✓
Oak, evergreen		✓	✓	
Oak, Luccombe		✓		

²⁴⁷ The Areatheophrasti – sometimes written Area Theophrasti – was the Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*).

²⁴⁸ The modern spelling seems to date from the second half of the nineteenth century.

Tree	Perfect (1768)	Perfect (1776)	Turner (1782)	Butler (1813)
Oak, Ragnal		✓		
Oak, scarlet		✓		
Oak, Spanish		✓		
Oak, striped		✓		
Pineaster	✓	✓		
Plane, occidental	✓	✓	✓	
Plane, oriental	✓	✓		
Poplar of Carolina		✓		
Poplar, Balsam		✓		✓
Poplar, Berry-bearing		✓		
Poplar, black		✓		✓
Poplar, Italian		✓		
Poplar, White	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scotch fir	✓	✓	✓	✓
Silver fir	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spanish Chesnut	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spanish Chesnut, striped		✓		
Spruce fir	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spruce, black American	✓	✓		
Spruce, Hemlock	✓	✓		
Spruce, white American		✓		
Stone Pine	✓	✓		
Sycamore	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sycamore, striped	✓	✓		
Walnut	✓	✓	✓	✓
Willow			✓	
Willow, Huntingdon	✓	✓	✓	✓
Willow, Sweet		✓		
Willow, weeping		✓		
Yew	✓	✓	✓	✓

Comparison of trees stocked by Perfect (1768 and 1766), Turner (1782) and Butler (1813)

There is little information as to the extent of planting around Manchester, although it is reasonable to assume that some landowners planted up areas of their land either for timber or for ornamentation. One of the difficulties for the newly rich was how to tackle estate work, to which they were unaccustomed, when their wealth

allowed them to purchase and develop land. Later we will see how writers chastised those who had attempted to improve their gardens with indifferent success. In 1819 an essay-length letter from “*An Experienced Planter*” appeared in the Chester Courant made a similar point about planting woods.²⁴⁹ It is likely that the writer was a nurseryman since he concluded:

“...at a time when labour is so cheap, when thousands are unemployed, and when our nurseries abound with healthy and valuable plants, our nobility and gentry could not employ their money more beneficially for the public, or more for the benefit of their properties, than by planting on a large scale.”

It is tempting to assume that the writer was the Scottish nurseryman Archibald Dickson who had been employed in planting in Wales more than half a million trees for Henry Potts of Chester.²⁵⁰ The writer’s treatise began with comments on the unpropitious mixing of “*ash, elm, oak, beech, birch, plane, mountain-ash, larch, and various sorts of firs*” without regard to the suitability of the soil. Although Dickson planted a range of trees for Potts, some were in much greater numbers than others.

	No.	%
Larches	256,000	48.5%
Scotch firs	204,000	38.6%
Ashes	20,860	3.9%
Oaks	17,400	3.3%
Planes	10,500	2.0%
Beeches	9,000	1.7%
Scotch Elms	7,660	1.5%
Birches	960	0.2%
Spanish Chesnuts	960	0.2%
Silver Firs	900	0.2%
	528,240	100.0%

Trees provided by Dicksons for Henry Potts of Chester, c. 1820

The trees provided by Chester nurseryman John Rogers showed a similar prevalence of Larch and Scotch Fir:

²⁴⁹ Chester Courant, 5 January, 1819.

²⁵⁰ Potts description of the planting of 194 Acres in North Wales was published in the Transactions of the Society of Arts Vol. 39 (1821) Papers on Agriculture, No IV p.14-25. This included statements from Dickson, Rogers, Thomas Ellis, Potts’ bailiff and local people confirming the work had been carried out. The Society, which had offered a number of premiums to encourage the planting of timber, awarded Potts a Large Silver Medal.

	No.	%
Larch	16,550	42.0%
Scotch Firs	8,900	22.6%
Oaks	7,300	18.5%
Beech	2,550	6.5%
Sycamore	700	1.8%
Ash	550	1.4%
Alders	500	1.3%
Birch	350	0.9%
	39,400	100%

Trees provided by John Rogers for Henry Potts of Chester, c. 1820

The preponderance of firs can be seen also in the 1813 advertisement of William Butler, nurseryman at Prescot, near Liverpool. Out of a total of nearly three million trees, 2 ½ million were firs – Scotch, Spruce and Larch.²⁵¹ Apart from these he had 200,000 thorn quicksets. Trees such as hawthorn are particularly suitable for hedging. Thorn quicks²⁵² were sold by all nurserymen and were usually very cheap – Turner was selling his for only one shilling per hundred though these were quite expensive compared with Perfect’s charge of five shillings for one thousand.²⁵³ (Butler gave no prices in his advertisement.) The demand for hedging increased with the enclosure movement, which continued sporadically.

By 1850, with the rapid increase in suburban gardens, the demand for other types of plant was in the ascendant. Forest trees were still available – the advertisement for the sale of Thomas Bounds’ stock at his Besses-o’-th’-Barn nursery in October 1849 mentions beech, birch, sycamore, horse chestnut, lime, Lombardy poplars, and mountain ash as forest trees.²⁵⁴ Other species had migrated to the heading “ornamental trees”, including the evergreen oak and weeping willow. But these took second place to the plants more suited to suburban gardens –

²⁵¹ *Liverpool Mercury*, 19 February, 1813.

²⁵² Hawthorn was known by a number of names, such as May tree, and quick thorn (referring to its speed of growth).

²⁵³ In 1842 in Wisbech, two million thorn quicks were also on sale at five shillings per thousand (*Stamford Mercury*, 11 November, 1842); although in Lancaster in 1814, Thomas Connelly had half a million 3-4 year old and half a million two-year old seedling quicks, the latter, suitable for hedging, costing eight shillings per thousand (*Lancaster Gazette*, 15 October, 1814). The quantity and price suggest a relationship to the Enclosure Movement in the area. Butler advertised in the same edition of the paper offering to provide trees at 5% less than local suppliers.

²⁵⁴ *Manchester Courier*, 13 October, 1849.

rhododendrons, laurels and flowering shrubs. This lack of the once ubiquitous Scotch and Spruce firs can be seen in the advertisement for Cunningham's which appeared in the same issue and highlighted the new, ornamental, coniferous trees – Araucarias, Deodaras, Taxodiums, Cryptomerias.

Fruit trees

The skill involved in growing fruit trees had been developed over centuries. Nurserymen knew how to graft, how to grow on dwarfing stock and as espaliers and how to grow out of season. For the amateur, to grow one's own fruit, and to have fresh fruit available throughout the year, demonstrated one's skill as a gardener – or at least that one had the wealth to employ a gardener with that level of skill. Some fruits were hardy and could be grown almost anywhere; others – peaches, nectarines, apricots and grapes – required warmth and shelter which only the wealthy could provide.

Fruit trees were grown as standards for the orchard or trained for walls in the kitchen garden. Some fruit – peach, nectarine, apricot, grapes – would only do well in England against a wall, and preferably a hot-wall. Walled gardens whether for vegetables or fruit (or both) provided shelter both from the weather and from predators. Miller recommended that walls be twelve feet high, while Loudon offered a variety of sizes – anything from ten to eighteen feet high – depending upon size of garden, aspect of wall and slope of ground. For him it was important that the walls *look* right as well as that they should perform the necessary function. There was plenty of fruit grown in and around Manchester. In 1759 an advertisement was placed for a new house in Dole Field which came complete with a garden at the front which was "*well stock'd with most Sorts of the choicest Wall and Hedgerow Fruit Trees and Flowers, in their Season*".²⁵⁵ Throughout the period 1750-1850 advertisements for houses – whether to buy or to let – made frequent mention of orchards and gardens well stocked with the choicest fruit.²⁵⁶ Nurserymen advertised fruit trees, but rarely mentioned what varieties they stocked.

²⁵⁵ Manchester Mercury, 6 March, 1759.

²⁵⁶ See for example, the advert referred to by Swindells, Manchester Streets and Manchester Men First Series, p.16 (a large garden by St Mary's Church, 1769); Manchester Mercury 29 April, 1783 (Ardwick Green); Manchester Mercury 27 January 1818 (a country house in Withington); Manchester Times, 1 June, 1839 (Cheetwood).

Some fruit came in many varieties. A comparison of advertisements and catalogues for fifteen nurserymen from 1760 to 1826 demonstrates this (see tables p.81 and 82). In 1760 Webb of London had in his catalogue 149 varieties of 16 different types of fruit and nut. In 1783, Grimwood's of Chelsea listed 464 varieties of 22 different types and in 1826 Millers of Bristol had 833 varieties of the same number. These last included 168 varieties of apple, 103 of pears, 70 of peaches, 69 of plums, 64 of grapes, 44 of nectarines, 39 of cherries, 27 of figs, and 16 of apricots. There were also 102 different varieties of gooseberry, 43 of strawberries and 10 of raspberries. Gooseberries were being developed at a considerable rate and Millers had fewer than some others. As early as 1783, Grimwood was listing 117 varieties (though only 17 by name) and in 1798 Goring & Wright had 161.²⁵⁷

Not all extant catalogues list the varieties held by individual nurserymen. In 1776, Perfect of Pontefract listed fifteen different types of fruit tree – all except grapes, gooseberries, currants and nuts available as standards or dwarfs – but added that particular varieties were listed in a separate catalogue, available on application. The details of the fruit varieties sold by Manchester nurserymen, are not available, although the range of fruit can be found in some instances. Turner, for example had several thousand apple trees, both standard and dwarf "*of the best Sorts*"; pears and plums "*good sorts*", peaches "*best kind*", apricots, cherries, quinces, almonds, mulberry, raspberries, berberries, gooseberries and currants.²⁵⁸ In the same year (1782), Boardman advertised his "*large Assortment of the newest and best Kinds of Gooseberries, Currants, Raspberries, Strawberries*".²⁵⁹ In 1799, Bridgford had 120 fruiting and succession pines for sale, but had perhaps bought these in, rather than growing them himself.²⁶⁰ But in 1803 he advertised "*a choice collection of Fruit Trees, as Apricots, Peaches, Necterines, Figs, Grape Vines in pots, Apples, Pears, Plums, Cherries, Rasps, Strawberries, Gooseberries, Currants, &c.*".²⁶¹

²⁵⁷ How useful all these varieties were is of some doubt. Nicol wrote (*Villa Garden Directory*) that too many people went for quantity rather than quality and that it was better to have a few varieties that had been proven to be good, rather than many, some of which might only crop once every seven years.

²⁵⁸ *Manchester Mercury*, 26 October, 1782.

²⁵⁹ *Manchester Mercury*, 26 March, 1782.

²⁶⁰ *Manchester Mercury*, 30 July, 1799.

²⁶¹ *Manchester Mercury*, 22 February, 1803.

Comparison of fruit trees stocked by different nurseries between 1760 and 1790

	Webb of London (1760)	Telford of York (1775)	Perfect of Pontefract (1776)	Malcolm of Kennington (1778)	Turner of Kersal Moor (1782)	Grimwood of Chelsea (1783)	Gordon, Dermer & Thomson (1783)	Callender of Newcastle (1790)
Almonds					√	2		
Apples	20	√	√	√	√	43	40	√
Apricots	6	√	√	√	√	12	8	√
Berberries					√	3		
Cherries	15	√	√	√	√	22	15	√
Chesnuts						1		
Crabs								
Cranberry								
Currants	3	√	√	√	√	6	5	√
Figs	10	√	√	√		9	8	√
Gooseberries (green)	6	√	√	√	√	117	15	√
Gooseberries (red)								
Gooseberries (white)								
Gooseberries (yellow)								
Grapes	12	√	√			62	20	√
Medlars		√	√			1		√
Mulberry	1	√	√	√	√	2		√
Nectarines	7	√	√	√		19	11	√
Nuts (filbert, hazel, cob)	3	√	√			1		√
Peaches	15	√	√	√	√	39	28	√
Pears	20	√	√	√	√	85	31	√
Pineapple								
Plums	20	√	√	√	√	25	28	√
Quince	3	√	√			1		√
Raspberries				√	√	5	4	
Services						1		
Strawberries	7			√		8	10	
Walnut	1					2		
Total varieties, where given	149	0	0	0	0	464	223	0

	Goring & Wright (1798)	Curtis & Salisbury (1799)	Willmott of Lewisham (1800)	Mackie of Norwich (1812)	Butler of Prescott (1813)	Backhouse of York (1816)	Millers of Bristol (1826)
Almonds			4	3		2	
Apples		√	95	48	√	76	168
Apricots		√	9	16	√	6	16
Berberries			2	4		3	4
Cherries		√	22	34	√	17	39
Chesnuts				4		2	0
Crabs			6	10		6	15
Cranberry						1	0
Currants		√	4	8	√	7	6
Figs		√	6	15	√	14	27
Gooseberries (green)	161	√	11	20		16	19
Gooseberries (red)				52		41	48
Gooseberries (white)				16		15	16
Gooseberries (yellow)				17		18	19
Grapes		√	29	61	√	32	64
Medlars			2	3	√	2	2
Mulberry			2	4		1	0
Nectarines		√	16	23	√	13	44
Nuts (filbert, hazel, cob)		√	6	10	√	7	7
Peaches		√	44	29	√	24	70
Pears		√	53	55	√	40	103
Pineapple			7			0	42
Plums		√	34	52	√	35	69
Quince			1	2	√	1	2
Raspberries		√	7	11	√	6	10
Services			1			2	0
Strawberries		√	12	20		12	43
Walnut		√	2	4	√	2	0
Total varieties, where given	161	0	371	518	0	399	833

Comparison of fruit trees stocked by different nurseries between 1760 and 1790

At around the same time, Stanley had peach, nectarine, apricot, cherry, pear, plum and apple trees for sale.²⁶² In 1801 McNiven's, at his request, sent William Forsyth a list of the largest new sorts of gooseberry shown in Lancashire the previous summer. Their list contained fourteen red, ten yellow, ten green and nine white varieties.²⁶³ Forsyth mentioned that Manchester catalogues contained between four and five hundred different varieties, but that some were so similar, it was hard to distinguish between them.

This was one of the problems with raising new varieties of any type of fruit, another being that new varieties were not necessarily particularly good. Gooseberries were grown by aficionados who were seeking to grow fruit that would win prizes and, for gooseberries, as will be shown later, size was of paramount importance. Grimwood, in his 1783 catalogue listed 17 named varieties and added: "*Besides the above one hundred varieties of Lancashire Gooseberries, very large and fine*". A comment about apples, also being raised in huge numbers, however, was more cautious, since flavour and keeping ability would have been important: "*Besides the above [43 varieties], which are all very good, above one hundred other sorts are planted to remain to bear Fruit, in order to ascertain their quality before they are inserted in the Catalogue*". Thirty-nine varieties of peach were listed, followed by the comment "*Many other late inferior sorts*" and the same was true for plums.

It is not clear whether or when there was any change in the number of types of fruit sold by Manchester nurserymen, although the increasingly challenging growing conditions described in the next chapter and the gradual reduction in the sizes of gardens must have had an effect. In 1852 Cunningham & Orr certainly stocked apples, pears, peaches, plums and cherries,²⁶⁴ but generally, the advertisements for most nurserymen refer simply to "*fruit trees*" without specifying type of fruit, let alone variety. The most reliable data obtainable for the varieties available from local nurserymen is in the ledgers left by Caldwell's of Knutsford. In 1794 and 1795

²⁶² *Manchester Mercury*, 26 January, 1802.

²⁶³ Forsyth, William. *A Treatise on the Culture and Management of Fruit Trees* (1802) p.146. On page 151 Forsyth wrote "*I enquired of Messrs. McNiven, Nurserymen at Manchester, how many good and distinct sorts they could send me out of their numerous Catalogue: they told me, that they could send about eighteen or twenty sorts, which they could answer for being good and distinct. I accordingly gave an order, and received all the sorts that they could warrant good, which turned out to my satisfaction.*"

²⁶⁴ *Manchester Times*, 16 October, 1852: "... Among the fruit trees will be found fine standard and dwarf pears and apples, in a bearing state; also handsome and well-trained peaches, plums, and cherries..."

several fruit trees were sold to James Harrison of Cheadle, near Stockport.²⁶⁵ These included nectarines – ‘Newington’²⁶⁶ and ‘Golden’; peaches – ‘Montauban’ and ‘Millet’s Mignon’; pears – ‘Brookhouse Bergamot’,²⁶⁷ ‘Aston Town’, ‘Jargonelle’, ‘Brown Buerrère’ and ‘Citron des Carmise’; apricot – ‘Orange’; and plum – ‘Orleans’. These were provided in a range of types – standards, dwarf and trained.



Occasionally traces of old fruit trees can be found. This label for Peach ‘Barrington’ is at Castle Gardens, Frodsham. Barrington, which appears in the 1826 Catalogue of John Miller’s Bristol Nursery, was described by The Horticultural Register (December, 1832, p.832), as “large, pale yellow and red, ripens the middle of September; tree grows vigorous, is a good bearer, not subject to mildew, very excellent”.

Even the reports of horticultural shows often give very little information. Prizes were for “*apples*”, sometimes for “*heaviest*”, and varieties were not always mentioned, although in 1828 there was rather more information with ‘Greenup’s Pippin’, ‘Ribston Pippin’, ‘Lording’, ‘Nelson’, ‘White Loaf’ and ‘Newtown Pippin’ apples all winning

²⁶⁵ Cheshire Record Office, Caldwell Collection DDX363/6 Order Book 1789-1795, p.340. Between 17 November, 1794 and 6 March, 1797 Harrison ordered more than £19 worth of plants (though the bulk of these were in February and March 1797); he finally paid on 22 September 1798 and even then payment was short by seven pence.

²⁶⁶ Grimwood also sold Newington and their catalogue marks it as one which was “*most high-flavoured*”.

²⁶⁷ Possibly Brocas’s Bergamot, which appears in some catalogues.

prizes.²⁶⁸ The following year, in Bolton, 'Northern Green' won an extra prize.²⁶⁹ Similarly, grapes were often described as "*black*", "*white*" or "*coloured*", although 'Black Hambro' and 'Black Lombardy', white 'Muscat of Alexandria', and white 'Tokay' were all mentioned.²⁷⁰ The only pear given by name was 'Jargonelle'. Among the many pineapples were 'Black Jamaica', 'Black Prince', 'Montserrat', 'Enville', 'Providence', 'Otation' and 'Queen'. But even these descriptions are insufficient, as there were often more than one type with the same name. According to Miller's catalogue of 1826, 'Enville' was available as both '*New*' and '*Old*' and 'Providence' as '*White*' and '*Green*'.

Reports of Gooseberry Shows generally gave the name of the variety as well as the weight. In 1847 the variety 'London' won four prizes and others went to 'Hero', 'Catherina', 'Slaughter', 'Drill', 'Glory', 'Thumper', 'General' and 'Weathercock', but gooseberry shows were akin to florists' shows and readers wanted to know which variety would be likely to win them prizes in the future. The newspaper reports of horticultural shows were aimed at a different audience: when the reports appeared in gardening magazines, they had usually been taken from local newspapers.²⁷¹ The report of the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society held in August 1830 appeared in The Gardener's Magazine, but was taken from Country Times. No name was given for the prize-winning peaches, apricots, currants (black, white and red), raspberries (red and white) and mulberries, but more information was forthcoming for others. There were 'White Providence', 'Enville', 'Montserrat' and 'Blood' pineapples: 'Muscat of Alexandria', 'Lombardy', 'Grizzly Frontignac', 'Frontignac', 'Black Hamburg' and 'Purple Constatia' grapes: 'Brugnon' and 'Elruge' nectarines: 'Green Gage' and 'Précoce de Tours' plums: 'Citron des Carmes' and 'Jargonelle' pears and 'Early Margaret' and 'Summer Pippin' apples. The gooseberries which won prizes were: Red – 'Roaring Lion', 'Lancashire Lad' and two unnamed seedlings; Green – 'Angler', 'Favorite', 'Ocean' and 'Toper'; Yellow – 'Gunner', 'Viper', 'Bunker's Hill' and an

²⁶⁸ See report in Manchester Courier, 20 September, 1828 and The Gardener's Magazine, 1828, p.520-1 where Loudon reproduced the report from the Manchester Herald of 18 September.

²⁶⁹ The Gardener's Magazine, 1829, p.362. Possibly Northern Greening – the name in Grimwood's catalogue.

²⁷⁰ Muscat of Alexandria and Tokay were both available as black and white.

²⁷¹ In 1829, perhaps not wishing to appear partisan, Loudon reproduced reports from The Manchester Gazette, The Manchester Advertiser, Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle and The Manchester Guardian in The Gardener's Magazine.

unknown variety; White – ‘White Eagle’, ‘Nonpareil’, ‘Lady Delamere’ and ‘Bonny Lass’.²⁷²

The importance of home-grown fruit began to decline by the middle of the nineteenth century, as imports increased. At the beginning of the century Middlewood imported large numbers of oranges²⁷³ and even apples from New York.²⁷⁴ By 1850 fruit was coming from even further afield. Pineapples were being grown in the West Indies for export to Britain. Two hundred thousand were imported in just three months in the summer of 1850.²⁷⁵ Growing one’s own fruit – particularly those fruits that required both the skill of the gardener and the protection of walls or the heat of the stove – became less economic as ships that could bring imported produce became larger and faster, forcing down prices. Combined with the demand for land and the damaging effects of smoke, the kitchen and fruit gardens that had been so much a part of the gardening life of the aspiring middle-class began to disappear in the immediate vicinity of the town, although, as will be seen later, John Ryland, at least, continued to find growing his own vegetables economic after 1850.

Very few of the varieties of fruit that were familiar to gardeners of the nineteenth century have survived. Usually varieties fall out of favour because others come along which have better flavour, heavier crops, are mildew-resistant, etc. It is still possible (though difficult) to find a handful of the varieties that were known to nineteenth-century gardeners. Gooseberries ‘Gunner’ (1820) and ‘Lancashire Lad’ (1824)²⁷⁶ are both available, as are apple varieties which date back to the eighteenth century (e.g. Acklam Russet). Also available is the pear ‘Jargonelle’ which is even

²⁷² *The Gardener’s Magazine*, (1830) p.743.

²⁷³ e.g. *Manchester Mercury*, “...has just landed a small Cargo of real St. Michael’s Oranges, Flavor and Quality inferior to none imported to this Kingdom”.

²⁷⁴ *Manchester Mercury*, 6 January, 1801: “AMERICAN APPLES, JUST LANDED FROM NEW YORK”.

²⁷⁵ Report in the *Daily News*, reproduced in the *Manchester Times*, 14 August 1850.

²⁷⁶ Choosing varieties of gooseberry today can be difficult; even the RHS Plantfinder only lists eight varieties (one no longer available). However, R.V. Roger Ltd of Pickering in Yorkshire has around eighty including both these (see www.rvroger.co.uk) and the dates given are from their website. ‘Lancashire Lad’ appears in Miller’s 1826 Catalogue and a plate of this variety won fourth prize at the Floral & Horticultural Show in Manchester on 9 August, 1830 (*Country Times* report reproduced in *The Gardener’s Magazine*). However, it was winning prizes as early as 1823 when it took first prize for Reds at the Brighton and Sussex Fruit Society Meeting on 24 July (*Sussex Advertiser* 28 July, 1823). On 2 August 1824 there was a contest between eight Derbyshire and eight Nottinghamshire growers, held at The Shakespeare in Nottingham. ‘Lancashire Lad’ was the sixth heaviest Nottinghamshire red, but the second heaviest Derbyshire entry. The next day it won a prize at Shardlow and the following week in Derby. (*Derby Mercury* 18 August, 1824).

older, being recorded by Parkinson in 1629. Fruit-growing by individuals no longer has the importance that it held two centuries ago when there were so many private orchards and walled fruit and kitchen gardens.²⁷⁷

Evergreen and flowering shrubs

Missing from the fruit section of surviving eighteenth-century nurserymen's catalogues – and not found mentioned in the advertisements of nurserymen in and around Manchester – were citrus trees, although these were still being imported direct from abroad and stocked by nurseries such as Grimwood's.²⁷⁸ Grown for decorative purposes, orange and lemon trees were available, in pots, from Perfect of Pontefract, where they were listed under Evergreen and Flowering Shrubs, rather than under fruit. Orange trees – complete with fruit – were shown by various people at Manchester horticultural shows in the 1820s and 1830s, but their inclusion in lists of flowering shrubs and their place in horticultural shows under 'plants' rather than 'fruit' underlines their role as ornamentals.

In his advertisements of 1782, Turner listed common and Portuguese laurels, privet, box, broom, honeysuckle and "4 or 5,000 hardy flowering shrubs", but most adverts simply mention a good collection of evergreen and flowering shrubs, without stating genus. Reports of flower shows also often mention a prize for 'best hardy shrub' without mentioning species or variety, although in May 1832 the prize went to the owner of a *Wisteria sinensis*. In August of the same year it was an *Erica ciliate*²⁷⁹ that won.

Roses had been a popular flowering shrub for a long time. Turner listed fifteen varieties ranging in price from threepence to one shilling each. This was relatively few. In 1775 Telford of York sold 41 different types and in 1826 Miller of Bristol had ten times that number to choose from. In Manchester, Bridgford sold potted roses "for forcing" and Middlewood had roses "in full bloom, for Nosegays". In 1794 Holland Ackers of Salford bought twelve Moss Provence Roses and twelve Common Provence

²⁷⁷ Most suppliers today have only a handful of varieties on offer.

²⁷⁸ In his 1782 catalogue he listed thirteen different types of orange tree (*Citrus aurantium*), all as Greenhouse plants. In 1789, J. Burgess, in the Strand, London, imported four hundred orange and lemon trees from Genoa. They had been properly budded, were ready to bear fruit and cost from 5s to 18s each. (*Oracle Bell's New World*, 2 October, 1789)

²⁷⁹ Presumably *Erica ciliaris*, a British native.

Roses from William Caldwell (the former costing 1s 6d each and the latter only 4d each). Samuel Greg purchased, from the same source:²⁸⁰

2	White Provence Roses	6s 0d
2	Dwarf Burgundy Roses	2s 0d
2	Double Marbled Roses	2s 0d
6	Red Provence Roses	2s 0d
2	Moss Provence Roses	3s 0d
2	Double Velvet Roses	3s 0d
2	Full Double Sweet Brier	2s 0d
2	Common Sweet Brier	0s 6d

Roses purchased by Samuel Greg from William Caldwell, 11 March, 1795

Although roses retained their popularity – we have seen already that Bigland stocked roses and that prices had increased, with a small specimen of a new variety costing 10s 6d²⁸¹ – many new plants were introduced during the eighteenth century from America, giving rise to areas within the overall garden known as American Gardens.

*“AMERICAN GARDENS are portions of ground devoted to the various American shrubs and plants, such as Rhododendrons, Azalias, and many other choice subjects, with their varieties; all of which are usually planted in bog or peat mould. As nearly all American shrubs bear splendid flowers, the effect is exceedingly beautiful in the spring, and little less so in the autumn, when the showy red, orange, and yellow tints in the foliage of the Azalias, contrasted with the deep green foliage of the Rhododendrons, enhance the beauties of the closing year.”*²⁸²

This quote perhaps explains why the plants sold were sometimes described as “*American Bog Plants*” as in Taylor and Smith’s advertisement in 1808. Many of them

²⁸⁰ 11 March, 1795. (Cheshire Record Office, [Caldwell Collection](#) DDX363/6 Order Book 1789-1795 – see Appendix Five)

²⁸¹ Comparative prices help to provide an appreciation of this cost. In 1844 ready-made clothes from Hyams of Market Street could be had for prices from 2s 6d (men’s moleskin trousers) to 25s (men’s surtout coat). A Taglioni or Chesterfield coat could be had for just 9s 6d ([Manchester Times](#), 19 October, 1844).

²⁸² [The Gardener and Practical Florist](#) (1843), p. 169.

– Kalmias,²⁸³ Azaleas, Rhododendrons – were particularly suited to the acid soil found in and around Manchester; although they did not in fact require boggy soil.²⁸⁴

One of the lesser known plant hunters in America was Thomas Nuttall (1786-1859) whose childhood friend, John Windsor was a surgeon at the Manchester Infirmary.²⁸⁵ Nuttall was in America from 1808 until 1841 when he returned to Nutgrove Hall near St. Helens which had been bequeathed to him by his uncle.²⁸⁶ Although American plants had been coming into Britain for many decades,²⁸⁷ Nuttall's introductions were numerous. As early as 1813, Fraser's nursery ("For Curious American Plants") in Chelsea published a list of 89 "New and Interesting Plants", the vast majority of which were new species. Although the printed list did not include the information, someone has added in writing "By T. Nuttall" underneath the heading "Collected in America and principally on the River Missouri, North America". In the same year, William Butler of Prescott advertised "10,000 Choice American Plants, in pots of good size".

The correct disposition of a shrubbery, with information about planting was available in all gardening books. Over time, these became aimed at the owners of smaller properties. Plants that were considered shrubs at the beginning of the eighteenth century (such as the laburnum) would in due course become thought of as small trees.

Florists' flowers

As we saw in the preceding chapter, the term florist was not necessarily synonymous with a raiser of florists' flowers, but the selling and growing of florists' flowers was an essential part of the horticultural trade. Florists' flowers were also very important to

²⁸³ A *Kalmia latifolia alba* won the prize at the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society show in May 1836. (Manchester Times, 28 May, 1836)

²⁸⁴ Writing to The Gardener's Magazine in 1830 (p.706), George Henry Walker, of Longford Holmesburg, near Philadelphia, (brother of C.J.S. Walker of Longford, Manchester) complained "I see in your publications American plants and bog earth always coupled together. This country is not a bog, nor any thing like one. Rhododendrons, azaleas, &c. grow in this neighbourhood on the dry steep declivities of gneiss and hornblende rocks; and thousands of rhododendrons grow in the state of New Jersey upon sands as dry and barren as those of Brandon in Suffolk."

²⁸⁵ Windsor's study of plants around his childhood home of Settle in Craven, Yorkshire Flora Cravoniensis was published privately in 1873 and was a collection of articles previously published in The Phytologist.

²⁸⁶ Nuttall was known to Edward Leeds of Stretford: each visited the other.

²⁸⁷ See Wulf, Andrea The Brother Gardeners.

horticulture in Manchester. In 1817 Patrick Neill, with others, undertook a tour through Flanders, Holland and the Northern parts of France on behalf of the Caledonian Horticultural Society. Neill wrote this up in 1823 when he stated: "*In the cultivation of Auriculas and Polyanthuses, the Dutch bloemists are certainly left far in the background by the zealous florists of Lancashire and Cheshire, especially near the great manufacturing towns of Manchester and Macclesfield*".²⁸⁸

In his Encyclopaedia of Gardening, Loudon refers several times to Manchester and this is almost certainly the source whenever writers refer to Manchester and florists. Manchester's pre-eminence was also recognised in America: "*There is no place in England where auriculas and polyanthuses are cultivated so extensively, or with so much success, as in the neighbourhood of Manchester, and that is the place to procure them*".²⁸⁹ Loudon traced the love of florists' flowers to the Flemish weavers who had settled in Norwich, from where the hobby spread to other weaving towns, especially to Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire and other northern counties. He made reference to the annual Manchester publication, An account of the different flower shews, held in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, &c (of which only a handful survive)²⁹⁰ listing all the flower shows held in the region, the flowers which won prizes and the new flowers which had been introduced. Manchester, said Loudon, was particularly known for the auricula and polyanthus, and evidence of this can be traced back to 1767²⁹¹ when Thomas Gorton, a florist, offered five named auriculas for sale. 'Earl of Chatham' and 'Liberty' each cost one guinea while 'Countess of Chatham', 'Lord Cambden' and 'Bright Flora' were each available at half a guinea. The advertisement continued:

"Liberty was in the Year 1764 shewn on the Seed Plant, at the Flower Meeting in Salford, and won the first Seedling Prize; in 1765 it also won the first Seedling Prize at the said Salford Meeting, and the Monday following, the same Truss of Flowers won the first Prize at Pendleton Pole; in 1766 it was shewn also in Salford, among the old Flowers, and won the next Prize to Ortana, and gave great Satisfaction to the Company there present. I flatter

²⁸⁸ Neill, Patrick, Journal of a Horticultural Tour Through Some Parts of Flanders, Holland, and the North of France in the autumn of 1817 by a deputation of the Caledonian Horticultural Society (1823) p.178.

²⁸⁹ The Magazine of Horticulture, Botany and Rural Affairs, (1837) p.130.

²⁹⁰ Just five are held by the Lindley Library compared with the seventy issues of the Gooseberry Growers' Gazette (also published in Manchester) dating from 1819 to 1916.

²⁹¹ Although Slater stated that the auricula was cultivated at Middleton as early as 1725 (Journal of Horticulture 1865, Reminiscences of an Old Florist, reproduced from West of Scotland Horticultural Magazine).

*myself it is one of the best Cheyne Flowers that ever appeared; its Stem and Trussing is the same as the Dutch Flower Flora Perfecta; its Eye is extraordinary, and will stand a Month in Bloom, and dye one of the best blues ever seen in an Auricula. The Earl of Chatham is now in Bloom, and exceeds most Flowers ever shewn; the rest are all very good. They may be seen in Bloom, and daily Attendance will be given to all who are minded to view or purchase the same..."*²⁹²

For the enthusiast who lived at a distance, Gorton offered a mail order service.



Display of auriculas in a traditional stand with a modern touch, Malvern Show 2009

Evidence of auricula growing could be traced as far back as 1720 in Middleton, near Manchester (though this was calculated by adding 25 years backwards from the date James Fitton of Middleton began to grow auriculas as a teenager).²⁹³ Joseph Partington of Tonge also began growing as a teenager, soon winning a prize – one guinea – at a show in Eccles around 1777. It is interesting to note that Slater was only able to trace such shows back to that date – the history of shows not having been recorded. The men he mentions as being leaders in the field were all living within four miles of each other in Middleton, Tonge, Chadderton, Royton and

²⁹² *The Manchester Mercury*, 21 April, 1767.

²⁹³ Johnson & Slater: *The Gardener's Monthly Volume*, (1847) p.5.

Castleton Moor. Some idea of the extent of the raising and stocking of new plants was to be found in an advertisement in the Derby Mercury of 3 April 1747, when almost one thousand auriculas – of the newest and best sorts – were to be seen in Nottingham, together with Dutch hyacinths and tulips, a thousand seedling ranunculus – due to bloom for the first time – and a range of carnations both French- and English-raised.²⁹⁴

Nearly one hundred years later, in 1831, two aficionados of the tulip died and their collections were put up for sale in Manchester. William Leighton of Preston had owned a collection of 4,000 and Mr William Crompton of Bolton-le-Moors 8,000 bulbs.²⁹⁵ There is no information on the number of varieties – though they were advertised as “*some of the best and most valuable sorts known in England*” – but there were sufficient for it to be necessary to issue catalogues. They were not the first such collections to be put up for sale in Manchester – nor the last. In 1782 the stock of tulips belonging to the late James Haslam of Rochdale had been advertised, though there is no information as to the quantity. In 1846 Samuel Ollerenshaw’s “*extensive and valuable collection of TULIPS, the whole of which are well worthy the attention of florists*” was for sale following his death and on the same day the “*extensive collection of TULIPS, tulip frames and covers, pinks, pansies, &c.*” belonging to Abram Arkwright was also sold, “*his garden being wanted for building upon*”.²⁹⁶ The auctioneer who dealt with the 1831 sales was Samuel Willcock who regularly imported bulbs from Holland for auction. Some idea of the quantity (though always referred to as “*a chest*”) is indicated by the fact that catalogues were issued. Willcock was not the first auctioneer in Manchester to deal in bulbs this way. In October 1818 it was Hime and Kewley, who were able to offer double and single hyacinths, crocuses, ranunculuses, jonquils, anemones, tulips &c. imported direct from “*the extensive gardens at Haarlem*”.²⁹⁷

Enthusiasts varied. During the eighteenth century the advertisements for florists’ feasts were frequently addressed to “*gentlemen*” or “*gentlemen florists*” and yet by 1847 a writer was able to state that florists’ flowers owed their origin “*to persons in humble life*” and that the wealthy “*felt it beneath their notice to*

²⁹⁴ It is not clear whether William Stevenson, at whose address the plants could be seen, was a private individual or a nurseryman.

²⁹⁵ Manchester Times, 8 and 29 October 1831.

²⁹⁶ Manchester Courier, 16 May, 1846.

²⁹⁷ Manchester Mercury, 27 October, 1818.

countenance such monsters".²⁹⁸ Certainly John Holt had placed the raising of florists' flowers among the mechanics of Lancashire in 1795 mentioning the auricula, carnation, polyanthus and pink, new varieties of which "*after being raised here, have been dispersed over the whole kingdom*".²⁹⁹ However, it must be remembered that the Manchester weaver before 1800, working from home rather than in a factory, was a relatively wealthy man. It was the mechanisation of the industry which led to the drastic reduction in weaver's wages and the concomitant change in his wealth and social standing.³⁰⁰

By the 1820s and 1830s there was a mix of classes – gentlemen, gardeners and cottagers – winning prizes for florists' flowers, but there is no doubt that plants went in and out of fashion. In 1843, John Slater (see previous chapter) wrote that the tulip was being neglected, because of the rise to importance of the dahlia and since The Annals of Horticulture also stated that there was a dearth of instruction on raising of florists' flowers,³⁰¹ despite the many books which had appeared over the previous two centuries, their comments may be taken to refer to a falling away of enthusiasm among the wealthier members of society over the years. Yet the most elementary understanding of supply and demand demonstrates that there must have been wealthy florists, certainly given the prices in 1798 when Goring & Wright issued a catalogue. The Dutch tulip-mania of the seventeenth century³⁰² had given way to a rather more sober interest in tulips and other florists' flowers, but they could still be much more expensive than forest and fruit trees. In 1775 it was possible to buy a three- or four-foot birch tree for 3d. from Telford of York and for the same price it was also possible to buy a single narcissus bulb in 1783 from Gordon, Dermer and Thomson of Mile End, London. But that was a very cheap bulb – their most expensive was a hyacinth at 4s.

²⁹⁸ The Annals of Horticulture, (1847) p.193.

²⁹⁹ Holt, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster, p.81.

³⁰⁰ In 1833, G.R. Chappell and Brothers employed 274 people in spinning and weaving – average wage less than 10s. a week. The Chappells considered themselves to be liberal employers as they provided a Sick Fund and a Sunday School. Working hours were 96 per week. Letter to Manchester Times March 1833.

³⁰¹ Although Sweet had published The Florist's Guide in 1827, this was effectively a description of the many varieties of particular florists' flowers.

³⁰² This has been written about often – see, for example, Mackay, Charles, Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds (Vol.1) (1841) and Dash, Mike, Tulipomania (2010). The railway mania of the 1840s was likened to tulip-mania in an article reproduced in the York Herald 17 May 1845.

General nurserymen usually stocked a small number of the more popular bulbs, but for the connoisseur it was necessary to go to a specialist. Goring & Wright were the successors to the great florist James Maddock who had written The Florists' Directory in which he had given instructions for "*The finer Flowers*" – the hyacinth, tulip, ranunculus, anemone, auricula, carnation, pink and polyanthus. Maddock had himself raised many plants – the catalogue listed twelve of his auriculas, of which two were priced at two guineas each.³⁰³ Carnations and pinks were relatively cheap, the most expensive being two guineas a pair. The highest-priced ranunculus was eighteen shillings; polyanthus fifteen shillings and anemone only four shillings. On the other hand hyacinths and tulips could be very costly. There were in all 305 varieties of hyacinth listed and the most expensive of the double reds and double whites were each eight guineas – the double yellows (five guineas) and double blues (£3) were perhaps not so sought after. Of nearly one thousand varieties of tulip, the most expensive was fifteen guineas. It must not be assumed, however, that all were expensive – except in relative terms. There were many bulbs available at only one shilling, but for that price (in 1776) it was possible to buy a standard apple tree from Perfects of Pontefract and various forest trees of 3 or 4 foot in height could be had from Telford of York for only £1 for one hundred.

For the passionate collector, though – then as well as now – it was necessary to seek out the newest and the best. In 1791 Manchester was visited by two Frenchmen – M. Valiars and M. Bernar – who had

"40 kinds of Hyacinths; 12 kinds of Pastous; 20 kinds of Spanish Daffodils; 25 kinds of Jonquils; 12 kinds of Tarcettes; 10 kinds of Tuberoses; 25 kinds of Tulips; 10 kinds of rare Flower Plants; 24 kinds of Pink Seeds; 101 kinds of Spanish Renunculuses; 20 kinds of odoriferous Renunculuses, from the Island of Cardial; 10 kinds of the Finest Renunculuses, for Garden Pots; 60 kinds of Anemones; 18 kinds of Dwarf Roses; 10 kinds of Dutch Roses; some models of the said Flowers will be shewn; 60 kinds of Apple Trees; 84 kinds of Pear Trees; 15 kinds of Vines; 4 kinds of Fig Trees; 10 kinds of Almond Trees; 24 kinds of Plump Trees; 11 kinds of Apricot Trees, 15 kinds of Cherry Trees; 20

³⁰³ In The Dutch Florist the author explains that in England it was popular to name flowers after nobles, leading to more than one variety sharing a name. "*They sometimes indeed add to their names that of the person who raised them from seed, which is a tolerable good method to prevent the confusion arising from the scarcity of their names*". In Goring & Wright's catalogue this is only the case with the auriculas. They listed fourteen plants as "*Gorton's ---*". This may have been the same Gorton, although the thirty year gap must be remembered.

kinds of rare Shrubs; 10 kinds of Avenue Trees; 32 kinds of small elegant Shrubs."³⁰⁴

This was the type of advertisement guaranteed to appeal to the curious gardener – after all, they might well have had varieties never before seen in England (or at least in Manchester). Nearly three decades later there were more visitors from France with a similar collection "*of the first quality, and the most rare*".³⁰⁵

During the 1790s florists' flowers were sold by both Bridgford and Middlewood. Hyacinths were clearly that period's 'must have' florists' flowers as, although all types were mentioned it was only for hyacinths that the number of varieties was given. In 1796 Middlewood specified sixty varieties of hyacinth³⁰⁶ and only months' later "*150 sorts of the choicest hyacinths*".³⁰⁷ Generally, however, the number of varieties was not mentioned either then or in the decades that followed.

In 1860 Slater published The Amateur Florists' Guide in which he stated that he had been raising florists' flowers for nearly fifty years. He was, perhaps, Manchester's best known florist and had been passing on his knowledge in print for many years. In 1843 his Descriptive Catalogue of Tulips provided information on more than 250 varieties, some of his own raising. Slater has provided us with information on a few other Manchester florists. William Bow of Broughton grew pinks from around 1825; Mr. Wrigley of Langley Hall near Middleton grew auriculas in 1767; John Shelmerdine of Altrincham (around 1831) produced seventy varieties of tulip from a single seed pod;³⁰⁸ a florist named Buckley lived near Ashton-under-Lyne and raised, among others the tulip 'Lancashire Hero', which was sold to a London florist for £13 10s. Many of the people he mentions are by surname only, without even a home town, which makes it impossible to know of whom he is speaking. Many varieties disappeared over the years. Was Auricula Wrigley's 'Northern Hero' raised

³⁰⁴ The Manchester Mercury, 15 March 1791.

³⁰⁵ The Manchester Mercury, 24 November, 1818. In March 1850 another Frenchman, from Paris, arrived in Manchester, having already been to Dublin and Liverpool and before moving on to Leeds and Newcastle. This time it was flowering shrubs which took centre stage – camellias, magnolias, kalmias, azaleas and rhododendrons. But there were also roses, fruit trees, bulbs and flower seeds. Such visits did not always lead to good purchases. In the Midland Florist of 1849, there was a letter regarding two people, supposedly French, who had visited the region with plants for sale but "*My "Superbe du monde", for which I gave ten shillings, turned out to be nothing better than a wild plant, having flowers like the hemlock. My yellow roses, camellias, lilacs, oleanders, pæonies, &c. have all turned out mere trash*".

³⁰⁶ Manchester Mercury, 18 October, 1796.

³⁰⁷ Manchester Mercury, 24 January, 1797.

³⁰⁸ Also reported in The Floricultural Cabinet, and Florists' Magazine, Volume 8 1840 p. 69.

by the Mr. Wrigley of Langley Hall and was the Gorton of Auricula Gorton's 'Champion' the same Gorton who had advertised in 1767? In 1844 Slater advertised the sale of one of his best beds of tulips, to make room for new varieties. Those he was selling were, he said, the leading varieties in cultivation: "*Louis XVI., feathered; Louis XVI., flamed; Duc de Bordeaux, Shakspeare, Catafalque, La Belle Nanette, Lord Milton, Royal Sovereign, &c.*" ³⁰⁹



Tulips: On the left 'Julia Farnese', raised by John Slater; on the right 'James Wild' raised by J. Walker of Winton. Walker and Slater conducted a public argument in the pages of the Midland Florist, in 1857. The editor finally suggested that "enough has been said on the subject". Photos Courtesy of the Wakefield and North of England Tulip Society

To qualify as a florists' flower a plant had to meet five criteria: it had to be perennial and therefore capable of being propagated other than by seed. However, it must also produce new varieties from seed and these had to be sufficiently different to warrant being given a name. Finally, these varieties had to be sufficiently distinct as to provide interest in a collection. During the first half of the nineteenth century a number of plants were introduced which met these criteria and, in the words of The Scottish Gardener:

"... such has been the rage for novelty, that flower after flower and plant after plant has been seized upon by the Florist as a proper subject for improvement, and have, as Mr. Loudon said of the Pansy, elevated it to the rank of a Florists' Flower. The Geranium, the Rose, the Camellia, Verbena, Petunia, Dahlia, Fuchsia, and many others originally known only as species, have been crossed and recrossed until we possess hundreds of varieties..." ³¹⁰

As early as 1832 there were a sufficient number of varieties of dahlia being grown in Manchester to warrant an exhibition devoted to them, which was held at the

³⁰⁹ Manchester Courier, 18 May 1844.

³¹⁰ The Scottish Gardener, 1854, p.197.

Floral Gardens in Hulme. The Manchester Times encouraged its readers to go see them. They included a fine crimson variety, "*tipped at the end of every leaf with pure white*".³¹¹ It was called Levick's 'Incomparable' and was shown by Skirving of Walton nursery, who won first prize for the best twelve flowers. By 1850 there were even more of the new florists' flowers being grown in the area: in addition to dahlias (by 1844 shows included a class of 36 distinct varieties), calceolarias, fuchsias, geraniums (pelargoniums), pansies (24 distinct varieties), roses and verbenas were all included in flower shows.

For the show florist, the way to grow plants was in rows. Slater, for example, referred to tulips as being suitable for the first, second, third or fourth row – the shortest in the first and the tallest in the fourth. This was quite different from using the plants as part of a garden design. However, it must be noted that not everyone was concerned about varieties – except possibly in a very general way. In addition to his many other purchases from Caldwells, Samuel Greg of Styal bought his tulips as 'striped late', 'dark late', 'double yellow' and 'double striped yellow', although, as this was 1795, his twelve Dutch hyacinths were all named varieties. We have already seen that Maria Jacson differentiated between the dedicated florist and the general florist and it may be that Greg had a collection of hyacinth, but wanted tulips only as part of his general garden design.

Exotic (hothouse) plants

The word exotic has been used in different ways – its meaning today, in terms of plants, being simply that it is not indigenous, although in common parlance an exotic plant implies bright colours and large blooms. In 1870 William Robinson (The Wild Garden) referred to "*hardy exotics*", but these were plants – like the Japanese anemone – which today we would call simply 'garden flowers'. Seventy years previously, Richard Steele (Essay upon Gardening)³¹² listed only what were thought of as tender exotics (some turned out to be hardier than originally thought), and this was how the word was generally applied.

³¹¹ Manchester Times, 15 September, 1832. Dahlias were also being exhibited in general shows that year.

³¹² Subscribers to this book included Thomas Richardson and Thomas Salvin of Manchester, William Egerton of Tatton Park and Messrs J. Nickson & Carr, nurserymen, Knutsford, the firm later known as Caldwells.

In 1795 an advertisement headed "EXOTICS"³¹³ referred to the sale of hot-house and greenhouse plants and Taylor & Smith in 1808 referred to "*Green-house & Stove Exotics*".³¹⁴ Other advertisers did not use the term, although they were also selling plants that needed to be raised under glass. Exotics were really only available to the wealthier gardeners. Greenhouses were not too expensive to maintain, but hothouses – where a fire had to be kept burning at all times – required round the clock attention. As the wealth of the town increased, so did the number of residents who could afford to erect and maintain hothouses. As early as 1750, Mr. Bury, a Manchester manufacturer had a greenhouse "*full of many curious exotic plants*".³¹⁵ It is likely that at that time there was little interest in growing plants and no hothouses in the vicinity of Manchester, although there may have been some further out in the countryside. (Mr. Bury lived on the outskirts of Salford.)³¹⁶ Certainly in 1782, the Old Hall at Ashton-under-Lyne included hot-houses amongst its garden equipment. Early in the nineteenth century, plants were arriving from South Africa – some in considerable numbers of species. Ericas and pelargoniums were both popular. In 1826 Miller of Bristol listed 267 species and varieties of erica and around 300 pelargoniums (including a few cultivars).³¹⁷ These plants were widely grown in Manchester, featuring heavily in flower shows.

The range of exotic plants grown by Manchester gardeners increased as the nineteenth century progressed – Manchester would become famous for its orchid growers – and some of these can be found in the reports of horticultural shows. The nurseryman Richard Smalley Yates was one of those who became well known for his unusual plants. In 1868 J Wills reported on his visit to the nurseries at Sale, enthusing over his collection of "*magnificent Calanthes, the large masses of Coelogyne cristata, and the Eucharis amazonica*" – the first two being types of orchid and the third the Amazon lily.³¹⁸

³¹³ *Manchester Mercury*, 15 September, 1795: "A Most Capital Collection of Hot-house and Green-house PLANTS, will be Sold by Auction, at Ashborne Hall..."

³¹⁴ *Manchester Mercury*, 18 November, 1808.

³¹⁵ *The Travel Through England of Dr. Richard Pococke*, Volume 1.

³¹⁶ See Casson & Berry's map of 1745. It was sufficiently important to be listed as "*Mr. Bury's House & Flower Garden*".

³¹⁷ i.e. a cultivated variety as opposed to a species or naturally occurring variety.

³¹⁸ *Journal of Horticulture and Practical Gardening* (1868) p.259-260. "*No such plants in equal health and quantity can be found in any other establishment in the country. Whilst looking at the above plants in such luxuriant growth, one might almost imagine that, after walking with*

Hardy plants

For the person who was – in the words of Maria Jacson – a “*general florist*” (and therefore interested in a wide range of flowers) perennials and annuals were available, generally in seed form. Robert Turner and Ann Cooke both stocked these – their 1782 advertisements specifying perennial, annual and biennial flower seeds. In 1796 Middlewood advertised “*upwards of two hundred Sorts of Flower Seeds, all new and true in their Names*”³¹⁹ and the following year John Bridgford advertised four different collections of annual flower seeds. It was possible to buy either 200 or 500 sorts, half tender and half hardy or – for the gardener without a greenhouse – there were smaller collections of up to 50 hardy varieties. Middlewood also made up his flowers into packages – the number of varieties is not specified, but the packages came at various prices – half a crown, five shillings, half a guinea and one guinea.

Advertisements give no indication as to the seeds of which flowers were available, although Prichard and Watkinson both referred to “*choice*” varieties, Bigland to “*novelties of the season and other most approved varieties*”³²⁰ and Dickson’s to flower seeds “*personally selected from the most Celebrated Growers, either in this country or on the continent*”.³²¹ The best indication as to the flowers grown is from the reports of flower shows, where a mixture of plants received prizes ranging from the humble cowslip and foxglove to the more glamorous peony and lily, from the easy to grow aubrieta to the more demanding cypripedium and trillium.

Manchester gardeners were also developing their own plants. *Dodecatheon manculiensis*³²² won a prize for James Faulkner in 1837.³²³ He may have raised it himself, or may have bought it from whoever did. The Manchester merchant Thomas Glover sold his seedling Camellia ‘Duke of Lancaster’ to R. S. Yates for sixty

considerable difficulty through an East Indian jungle, he had suddenly stopped to admire large masses of bright green foliage growing out of what he might for the moment suppose to be heaps or clusters of large goose eggs, so large and bright are the pseudo-bulbs... Beneath one of the Acacias we spent a very pleasant and instructive evening, and Mr. Yates very humorously described the origin of his Orchid fancy, and the failures and successes he had met with during a long series of years.”

³¹⁹ *Manchester Mercury*, 29 March, 1796.

³²⁰ *Manchester Times*, 16 March, 1850.

³²¹ *Manchester Times*, 2 February, 1850. The phrase “personally selected” was used also by Gilbert Blackberd and Charles Bannerman, and others, like Bridgford, implied this without using the exact phrase.

³²² However, this is not a name that has survived and therefore may refer to some other species.

³²³ *Manchester Times*, 27 May, 1837.

guineas.³²⁴ John Horsefield, better known as a working-class botanist, raised *Narcissus horsefieldii* and Edward Leeds raised *Crocus vernus* var. *Leedsii* in addition to the thousands of daffodils for which he is remembered. Earlier we saw that Thomas Gorton had raised a number of seedling auriculas. At the turn of the century Elizabeth Pickup of Cheetham had raised a new wallflower. Anyone wanting one left their name with John Bridgford and the plants were available at the Golden Griffin, Cheetham Hill on the 2 November 1801.³²⁵ It is only rarely that historic varieties survive³²⁶ and it is certain that more than have been recorded were raised locally. However, there were many other areas in the country known for their florists, and it is unlikely that Manchester growers were any more or less successful than their competitors elsewhere.

Vegetables

Compared to the exotic plants just mentioned, the produce of the kitchen garden seems rather mundane, but played a rather more important role, in that it provided food. Peas and beans were prominent in advertisements – in 1796 Middlewood stocked sixteen varieties of pea and eleven of bean. These compared reasonably well in number with catalogues of the period. In 1798 Casey of Cork listed ten peas and eight beans; in 1799 Curtis & Salisbury (Brompton) had fifteen peas and ten beans. But all of these were fewer than Callender (Newcastle) who, in 1790, listed twenty varieties of pea and sixteen of bean. There were so many different varieties, that only five of Middlewood's peas and three of his beans can be definitely agreed to those listed elsewhere.

It was rare that varieties were mentioned in advertisements, although in 1835 and 1836 Oldham & Son listed some together with their prices: Windsor beans were 4d a quart, though Long-pod and Mazagan could be had for only 3½d.³²⁷ Early Frame peas were 7½d a quart, but Early Charlton were only 5d and Blue Prussian 6d.

³²⁴ *The Gardener's Chronicle* in 1894 (in the article about Edward Leeds). This was probably the camellia advertised by Yates in 1844 as "a *Magnificent SEEDLING, raised by a gentleman in this neighbourhood*". (*Manchester Courier*, 9 March, 1844)

³²⁵ *Manchester Mercury*, 27 October, 1801.

³²⁶ The urge to create something new continues to the present time. New varieties of flowers are always in demand and old varieties must be very special or very fortunate to remain available. This can be exacerbated by the cyclical nature of enthusiasms, as plants go in and out of favour.

³²⁷ See *Manchester Times*, 18 April, 1835 and 2 January, 1836.

Onion seed cost from 1½d per ounce, although in 1836, True Tripoli Onion seed was as much as 6d per ounce. Cabbage seed was from 2d to 3d per ounce. Some of these prices can be compared to sales by Caldwell in the 1790s when some were slightly more expensive – Early Frame peas cost 8d. a quart and Mazagan beans were 4d and Best Windsor beans 5d. a quart.

The vegetables mentioned in advertisements varied and did not necessarily accurately reflect the stocks held. Bridgford's lists tended to be the longest and in 1803 he stocked seeds of beans, peas, turnip, carrot, parsnip, celery, beet, leek, onion, lettuce, radish, savoy and broccoli. However he also sold some vegetables as plants. Cauliflower, cabbage, artichoke and asparagus could all be purchased as young plants for growing on – they were available from Boardman in 1782 and Bridgford in 1803. In 1802 Stanley stocked cabbage and cauliflower plants and in 1807 his son had asparagus and sea kale plants, plus Shepherd's new golden Globe Potatoes. Caldwell's ledger records the sowing of cabbage seeds each year from 1790 to 1794. Sowing was always early in August (around the 8th) and either six or seven varieties were sown, including Caldwell's own Early Dwarf, but the most popular variety was Sugar Loaf.

Forcing of vegetables was as important as the forcing of fruit, and forced vegetables were expensive. When green peas were imported from Portugal in 1847 the Gardeners' Chronicle reported that they appeared fresh and tasted good, though they were not as good as those forced in Britain "to supply epicures at two or three guineas the quart, in the early spring months".³²⁸ The importation of vegetables, though, began to change the approach to growing of vegetables. Loudon refers to the selling of excess produce by owners of private gardens, but the introduction of steamships meant that imports began to undercut such sales. In 1836 it was reported that

*"Green peas, imported by the steamers from Bourdeaux, were sold in the Liverpool market on Saturday, at 1s and 1s. 6d. per peck. Those grown in the gardens in the neighbourhood of the town were offering at the same time at 6s. per peck."*³²⁹

Fruit and vegetables grown by private gardeners were not only used to feed the family: excess produce was sent to market. In 1795 Middlewood was offering to buy

³²⁸ Quoted in Manchester Times, 23 January, 1847.

³²⁹ Manchester Times, 11 June, 1836.

surplus fruit from private individuals as well as market-gardeners and nurserymen ³³⁰ and in 1824 Loudon in his Encyclopaedia of Gardening explained that for some, sale of produce was perhaps more important than personal use:

"In most parts of the country it happens that, from bankruptcies, absence of families, and such like causes, the produce of a number of private gardens is sent to market. This is a good deal the case near London; but so much so round Liverpool and Manchester, that scarcely a market-gardener is to be found near those towns. Indeed, many of the citizens there, who possess villas and gardens, cultivate them as much for the sake of the disposal of the produce as for their own enjoyment." ³³¹

In 1843 The Gardener and Practical Florist complained about this habit, although it was the removal of the duties on imported fruit and vegetables which lay at the back of the rant. ³³²

"Market gardeners have, among other evils, a just complaint, that gentlemen, aye, noblemen, send their produce to market, and with their commodities, which they can afford to sell at less than men who get their living by it, depreciate all their prices. It is, indeed, too bad, that persons, wealthy beyond their wants, send their fruit and vegetables to market to compete with tradesmen depending on their business for their entire income ..." ³³³

How great an impact sales of private individuals made on the food market of Manchester is impossible to quantify. Certainly no mention of it is made in Scola's Feeding the Victorian City.

Agricultural seeds

Although agriculture is outside the scope of this thesis, it has been impossible to ignore the close connection that lay between agriculture and horticulture. We have seen above that the delineation between nurseries and market gardens is not clear;

³³⁰ See Manchester Mercury, 4 August, 1795.

³³¹ Loudon, Encyclopaedia, (1824) paragraph 7457. It is difficult to know how to interpret this, given the number of gardeners in the area. It is possible that by 1824 market gardens had moved out to Stretford and Chorlton-cum-Hardy (which had plenty of market gardeners by 1851) and that Loudon did not consider these "near" the town. Or it may have been that they operated on too small a scale for Loudon to notice them. Certainly Scola (Feeding the Victorian City) refers to the areas around Warrington and Altrincham as emerging as market-garden centres in the 1780s.

³³² This had happened in 1838. See London Dispatch, 27 January, 1839 report of the Great Meeting of the Agriculturists and Horticulturists when a petition was brought forward by Glenny "for a repeal of, or modification of an act passed late in the last session of Parliament, which abolished the protecting duties on the importation of foreign fruits and vegetables".

³³³ The Gardener and Practical Florist, (1843), p. 2.

and the same may be said of the demarcation between market gardens and farms. Not only did seedsmen and nurserymen supply agricultural and grass seed, but they also exhibited at Agricultural Shows. It might be expected that seedsmen were more likely to do so, and indeed Charles Bannerman attended the 1833 Manchester Agricultural Show “with a great variety of plants and seeds for agricultural purposes”.³³⁴ The report of the show which appeared in the Lancaster Gazette mentioned his “very fine” red-topped Swedish turnip and his specimens of red mangel-wurzel both of which attracted great attention.³³⁵ Bannerman’s successor in Manchester, Cormack, won a silver medal in 1842 for turnips. However, nurserymen also showed plants and won prizes. Bigland exhibited three varieties of Italian rye grass and his own new hybrid turnip in 1843³³⁶ and in 1858 Francis and Arthur Dickson won a silver medal for a “general collection of seeds, grasses and various kinds of implements”.³³⁷ In 1841, the report of the Agricultural Society had a section headed “SEEDS, GRASSES, ROOTS, &c”. Cormack’s had shown a number of grass seeds, plus grass growing in pots. Prize turnips included purple-topped Swede shown by Cormack and Skirving (Walton Nursery) – they each had one weighing in at 28 lbs. – and a slightly smaller one from Christopher Scott and Co. of the Whalley Nursery.³³⁸

This connection between agriculture and horticulture – to be seen at times in combined Shows – was not surprising.³³⁹ For those who could afford it, the town house was matched by the country house. This might only be two or three miles distant from the town, but it was essentially a different way of life. The country house might be set in several acres, some of which would be leased to farmers. The large estate owners would be even more committed to agricultural pursuits. The owner of Trafford Park was active in both the Agricultural and the Botanical and Horticultural Societies, and he was not the only one. Thomas Potter came from a farming family in Tadcaster and, wrote Shaw, “*Farming was very congenial to his taste, and the elder Potter never altogether relinquished it*”.³⁴⁰

³³⁴ Manchester Times, 12 October, 1833.

³³⁵ Lancaster Gazette, 12 October, 1833.

³³⁶ Manchester Times, 30 September, 1843.

³³⁷ Manchester Times, 11 September, 1858, Manchester and Liverpool Agricultural Society Annual Show at Belle Vue.

³³⁸ Manchester Times, 2 October, 1841.

³³⁹ Many people were members of both the Manchester Agricultural Society and the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Society.

³⁴⁰ Shaw, William Arthur M.A. Manchester Old and New, Volume 1. 1894

Indeed, it could be argued that agriculture was more important than horticulture – certainly in the earlier part of the period when the growing population and the difficulties of transport made locally grown food so important. Given Holt’s comment that horticulture was more advanced than agriculture in Lancashire,³⁴¹ it is not surprising that the Agricultural Society dated from 1767 – some sixty years before the Botanical and Horticultural Society was founded – as that was the science that needed encouragement. However, we return once more to the difficulty of separating out nurseries from market gardens and market gardens from farms. If a nursery such as Caldwell’s could supply Peter Legh, esq. of Lyme with five bushels of apples a month before he supplied him with twelve apple trees, he could be said to be combining the roles of nurseryman with market gardener.³⁴² Similarly, purchases of cabbage and turnip seed may have been for growing these vegetables to feed to cattle through the winter months rather than for feeding the family.

The fascination with unusual plants

Newspapers frequently carried reports of unusual plants, some local, some from far away. They can be categorised as being exceptionally large, exceptionally floriferous or of unseasonal growth. Plants growing to an enormous size appear to have held a particular fascination. The size – or at least the weight – of gooseberries was what decided them as winners at gooseberry shows, but there were many other plants which appear to have grown to enormous size.

In 1779 James Clegg of Kirkdale had a cucumber weighing sixty-four pounds, nearly four foot in circumference, and 2 feet 5 inches long.³⁴³ Sixty years later surprise was evoked by a cucumber less than 2 feet long³⁴⁴ and in 1846 one growing in the gardens at Dunham Hall measured 2 ½ feet.³⁴⁵ Neither of these gave any indication of weight or diameter, but also in 1846 Mr. Meldrum of Kendal produced a cucumber which was forty inches in length, 18 ½ inches in circumference and

³⁴¹ Holt. *General View of the Agriculture of the county of Lancaster*, p.81: “*The horticulture of this county is in many instances superior to its agriculture*”.

³⁴² Caldwell Ledger (Cheshire Record Office accession number DDX 363/6) page 138.

³⁴³ *Manchester Mercury*, 16 November, 1779.

³⁴⁴ *Manchester Times*, 15 June, 1839: “*A cucumber of the Goliah kind, grown by John Walker, gardener to James Thomson, Esq., of Primrose, was cut last week, which measured twenty-three inches in length!*”

³⁴⁵ *Manchester Times*, 28 August, 1846.

weighed 15 ½ lbs.³⁴⁶ The report of a seedsman in Hull that the Waterloo cesarian cow cabbage could grow up to twelve feet high and fifteen feet round appeared in papers around the country, but seems to have been taken with a pinch of salt in Manchester where three exclamation marks were added.³⁴⁷ However, when Mr. Davenport of Ashton-on-Mersey grew a Drumhead cabbage weighing 40 lbs, it was exhibited at Cormack's shop in Deansgate.³⁴⁸ Growing in the grounds of William Hitchin who lived near Tarporley was a curl green cabbage, four feet high and more than seven feet in circumference.³⁴⁹

There were barely credible reports of beans – one with pods containing no fewer than 107 beans;³⁵⁰ a turnip weighing more than 31 lbs;³⁵¹ another that measured more than four feet in circumference and one that had grown "*in the shape of a man's left hand and fingers*".³⁵² A potato that also had the appearance of a human hand was put on show at Mr. Bleaze's in Chorlton-upon-Medlock. It appeared like five potatoes joined together at the "wrist" and "*to complete the resemblance to the hand, the eyes of the potatoes are exactly like nails, on the extremity of the thumb and fingers*".³⁵³ In 1834 Mr Murray of Cornbrook planted a single tuber which produced an incredible 1,382 potatoes. This was so unlikely, the Courier, gave as witnesses to its truth Mr. Orr of Cunningham and Orr and the gardeners to two distinguished gentlemen (one being an M.P.). The potatoes were put on show at Bannerman's in Deansgate.³⁵⁴ There was a radish 20 inches long and 9 inches in circumference, weighing nearly 3 lbs and an apple 13 ½ inches in circumference and weighing 13 ounces. But it was the mushroom which furnished most reports. Between 1843 and 1846 large ones were reported from Herefordshire (up to 10"), Alnwick (38" and 26 ounces), Norton (30"), North Moor (only 21" and 18", but

³⁴⁶ Preston Guardian, 16 May, 1846. (He also had a pear which weighed 1lb 3 oz.)

³⁴⁷ Manchester Times, 23 January, 1836. Later that year, a letter sent by Cormack, Son & Oliver appeared in the Sussex Advertiser, (4 July, 1836) leading to the comment "*The Cæsarean Cow Cabbage, about which such wonders have been told, is said to be nothing more than the Cæsarean Cole or Jersey Kale.*"

³⁴⁸ Manchester Times, 13 November, 1841.

³⁴⁹ Manchester Times, 11 March, 1843.

³⁵⁰ Manchester Times, 23 September, 1837: "*We have had sent to our office a bean-stalk grown by Mr. John Dean, having pods containing no fewer than 107 beans!*"

³⁵¹ Manchester Times, 6 January, 1838. Not the heaviest recorded, by any means. See, e.g. Manchester Mercury, 24 November, 1818: "*A turnip weighing three stone, and measuring four feet in circumference...*"

³⁵² Manchester Courier, 9 December, 1837.

³⁵³ Manchester Times, 15 September, 1838.

³⁵⁴ Manchester Courier, 1 November, 1834.

exceptional as they were growing on the thatched roof of an empty cottage), Rochdale (42"), Trefriw (29") and Sandbach (22½"). This last one grew inside the house of James Stubbs in Sandbach – *"it had forced itself through the floor, and raised the tiles from their places"*.³⁵⁵

In 1844 a strawberry more than five inches in circumference – *"the largest ever known in this part of the country"*³⁵⁶ – was growing in the garden of John Cook of Hooley Hill, but this was beaten six years later by one of 7½" at Kirkby Ireleth. The seven inch strawberry at West Derby however, was *"not less excellent in flavour than gigantic in size"*.³⁵⁷ In 1839 George Scholes of Moor Hey, Oldham grew a root of parsley with 116 stems, 2 feet 6 inches in diameter and weighing 1lb 12 oz.³⁵⁸ Not local, but still impressive was the broccoli 26" in diameter and eighty-seven in circumference exhibited at the Devon and Exeter Botanical and Horticultural Show in 1846. It weighed 15 lbs.³⁵⁹

Floriferous plants included the rose tree of Captain Monk, R.N. in Neston, Cheshire which had 3,700 flowers blossoming at one time,³⁶⁰ though this was exceeded by that belonging to William Alderley of Sale. His rose tree was grown from a cutting in May 1841. By 1845 it measured 67 ½ feet in width and 18 feet in height and had four thousand buds and blooms.³⁶¹ The following year it had twice as many blooms.³⁶² Some years earlier, in 1832 The Preston Chronicle recorded a rhododendron with bunches of flowers *"three feet in circumference"* to be seen at John Taylor's nursery in Preston,³⁶³ while in Knutsford, William Caldwell had a *Yucca gloriosa* *"which so seldom flowers: it is upwards of eight feet high; the flower stem alone measuring five feet, with more than eight hundred flowers upon it"*.³⁶⁴ There

³⁵⁵ Manchester Times, 8 August, 1846. The item had been reprinted from the Macclesfield Chronicle. However, a very similar story (from the Macclesfield Courier) was reprinted in the Manchester Courier of 3 June 1846, where the person concerned was also called James Stubbs, but from Buglawton, near Congleton. Which leaves open the question as to how many of these reports suffered from some form of Chinese whispers.

³⁵⁶ Manchester Times, 20 July, 1844.

³⁵⁷ Manchester Times, 6 July, 1844.

³⁵⁸ Manchester Times, 21 December, 1839.

³⁵⁹ Manchester Times, 1 May, 1846.

³⁶⁰ Manchester Times, 15 July, 1843.

³⁶¹ Manchester Times, 28 June, 1845.

³⁶² Manchester Times, 13 June, 1846, by which time it measured 69 feet wide and 38 feet high.

³⁶³ Preston Chronicle, 9 June, 1832. Taylor also had a rhubarb that had four stalks weighing (including the leaf) seven and a half pounds (1 June, 1833).

³⁶⁴ Preston Chronicle, 28 July, 1832.

were reports of huge fuchsias as well, though none locally, but the vicar of Mytton near Whalley found an auricula in a farmer's garden – "*as large as a fine dahlia, bearing on one stem the amazing number of 68 perfect and distinct flowers*".³⁶⁵

The effect of weather on plants

It was not only the size of plants which received attention. The state of the weather was as important to gardeners in the nineteenth as in the twenty-first century. Weather accelerates or delays the growth of plants but can also be destructive of them and of garden buildings and exceptional weather was always reported, whether it was storms and floods or unseasonal temperatures – warm in January or cold in July.

Unseasonal growth was of particular interest. There were raspberries in July, a second crop of pears and ripe strawberries in November, new potatoes at Christmas, gooseberries in January, a carnation grown in the open in January, peas in February. December 1818 was so mild, birds were fooled into thinking it was spring. In March 1846, mild weather meant that flowers were blooming early in the gardens.

*"We were quite gay with two or three sorts of daffodils, anemones, blue, white, and yellow crocuses, the beautiful grape hyacinth, the scilla, the moly, polyanthus, wallflowers, the large garden daisy, white and blue sweet violets, purple, lilac, sulphur, and white double primroses, the purple stock, the dogtooth violet, and the white, blue, and pink hepaticas, the early heath, the greater periwinkle, the arabis, and the houndstongue. Amongst the shrubs and trees, the white and the scarlet pyras, the corchorus japonica, and the ribes sanguinea were conspicuous; and in the orchards the early plums were in full bloom, and some pear trees partially so."*³⁶⁶

A mild winter had resulted in these plants blooming a few weeks earlier than usual, but gardeners and nurserymen had to cope with a great deal of extreme or unseasonal weather. Unfavourable weather could damage attendance at flower shows and plant auctions, but it could also cause physical injury – to people, plants and garden equipment. In September 1829 there was a violent thunderstorm together with hail which broke glass in hothouses in various Crumpsall gardens.³⁶⁷ In June 1833 a violent storm caused flash floods in town and serious damage in gardens

³⁶⁵ Manchester Times, 9 May, 1846.

³⁶⁶ Manchester Examiner, 28 March, 1846

³⁶⁷ Manchester Times, 12 September 1829.

at Middleton. Lichfield Hall lost up to 1,000 panes of glass in its hothouse.³⁶⁸ Seven months later, on the last day of the year, a much more devastating storm caused severe structural damage in town and in Heaton Park trees were uprooted and “*thousands of branches*” torn off.³⁶⁹ It came towards the end of an “*extraordinary*” winter – vast quantities of rain, but mild temperatures. Even in January it was like April – in the gardens, polyanthus, daisy, gillyflower and ten-week stock could all be found in full bloom.³⁷⁰ But in May 1834 another hail storm struck. The devastation in the gardens was “*dreadful, nearly every plant, flower &c. being levelled with the ground. The leaves of the radishes and cabbages appeared as if they had been perforated by shot*”.³⁷¹

For the gardener, it was not the end of his troubles that year. At the end of July another storm hit. The hail stones were enormous – in Regent Road they were recorded as an inch in diameter and weighing an ounce or more, but “*In Cheetham some were taken up weighing two ounces*”. They shattered the glass of hothouses and conservatories: “*Mr. Garnett’s hot-house ... had scarcely a whole pane of glass remaining*”.³⁷² In fact hot-houses had been damaged or destroyed all around the area – Broughton, Cheetham, Irlam, Pendleton, Eccles and Hulme. Attendance at the flower show on the same day was badly affected: “*The tremendous storm, which rendered the streets almost impassible, prevented the attendance of visitors in the afternoon, when the rooms were almost deserted.*”³⁷³

The destructive storms continued. In January 1839 the worst hurricane that could ever be remembered blew over the whole country, depositing salt water even further inland than Manchester. The devastation can be appreciated by the fact that the Manchester Courier devoted nearly thirteen columns – almost a quarter of the edition – to the event. Property was destroyed and people were killed, though there were many lucky escapes when chimneys – both domestic and factory – fell. Few correspondents, sending in their reports from around the region, felt it necessary to

³⁶⁸ Manchester Times, 15 June, 1833.

³⁶⁹ Manchester Times, 4 January, 1834.

³⁷⁰ Manchester Times, 18 January, 1834. This was despite yet another violent thunder-storm; in fact there had been heavy rain almost every day for three months.

³⁷¹ Manchester Times, 24 May, 1834.

³⁷² Manchester Times, 2 August, 1834. Before 1845 (when the tax on glass was abolished), panes of glass were about 6” square and only 1mm thick, which meant that on the one hand they would have broken easily and, on the other, that there would have been a large number of panes per glasshouse.

³⁷³ Manchester Courier, 2 August, 1834.

dwelling on damage other than to people and buildings, but there were reports of trees being lost. "At Worsley, Flixton, Urmston, Middleton, and in short throughout the whole district, the injury done to timber is very great." Although, being January, the effect upon gardens would have been limited, with few plants being above ground at that time, the scale of loss of trees is reminiscent of the great storm of 1987 and would have had a big impact upon the landscape: Heaton Park lost 150 trees and sustained damage to a further 170. In Middleton, "six very large beech trees were completely torn up by the roots." At Pendleton Hall near Clitheroe, a rookery of forty trees was completely demolished. Hopwood Hall had 854 trees uprooted and a further 85 damaged and at Hawkstone in Shropshire, several fine elms were among about 1,100 trees which were blown down. Near Chester, the nursery of the Dickson cousins also suffered, with two large newly-completed houses losing their roofs. It was the worst storm since 1703, but it seems to have been the end of the series of damaging storms of the 1830s.³⁷⁴

During the 1840s there were occasional reports of damage from storm, but they lacked the intensity of those in the previous decade. The damage done to greenhouses and hothouses though, clearly had had an impact on insurance costs. In July 1845 a new type of glass tile, supposedly strong enough to survive hailstorms and therefore well suited to glasshouses was reported as being imported from Antwerp. Either it did not live up to its claims, or existing glass had not been replaced. In June 1852 another hailstorm struck. Mr. Hindley lost glass valued at £20; Charles Noyes, nurseryman at Pendleton, lost 2,000 panes of glass; James Fyldes lost 3,000 panes and Mr. Boardman of Barton, in both broken glass and damaged fruit, sustained a loss of nearly £400. Pears, apples, gooseberries, strawberries were all lost. Fruit was knocked from trees by the force of the hailstones and cut to pieces. Pineapples belonging to Sir John Potter of Buile Hill, Mrs. Cooke of Sandy Lane and Edward Tootal of Weaste Lodge – among others – all suffered serious damage and thousands of panes of glass were damaged.

The weather, both good and bad, had its effect upon flower shows and was frequently mentioned in reports. In July 1829 attendance was reduced due to the

³⁷⁴ Manchester Courier, 12 January, 1839. By the following week reports from other parts of the country had been received and both the Manchester Courier and the Manchester Times reported 400 deaths in Ireland resulting from the storm.

"*excessive wetness of the weather*"³⁷⁵ although the following month the show of flowers was described as good despite the unfavourable weather.³⁷⁶ Poor weather conditions always seemed to affect attendance adversely (even if the gardeners had successfully brought their plants through) whereas fine weather had the opposite effect.³⁷⁷ Until the town was fully paved, wet weather would always have a greater effect than might be expected, particularly for women whose hems would have suffered in the mud.

Plant thefts

Sometimes the information we have as to what was being grown can come from unexpected sources – in this case the reports of garden robberies. As we have seen above, some plants could be quite valuable, and this made them liable to theft. In July 1766 the Manchester Mercury carried an abstract of a new Act of Parliament, which had just come into force, aimed at protecting the ownership of trees and plants. Punishment for damaging timber trees ranged from a fine of £20 plus costs (or up to twelve months in prison) for a first offence to transportation for seven years for a third offence. For stealing or damaging shrubs, plants and bulbs, the punishment was less – only £2 for a first offence – but instead of a prison term for non-payment, the offender was whipped. For a third offence, however, the punishment was the same as for timber trees – seven years' transportation. To ensure the guilty party was punished correctly, the act also listed the trees deemed to be Timber – oak, beech, chestnut, walnut, ash, elm, cedar, fir, asp, lime, sycamore and birch.

Individuals united to support one another in prosecutions – such societies being found in all parts of the country. In 1782, such a group was formed in Northenden where offences included "*cutting, spoiling, and destroying of Timber and other Trees growing, pulling up and taking Fruit-Trees, breaking and cutting of Hedges, robbing of Orchards*".³⁷⁸ Seven years' later, it seems that the act of 1766 was inadequate in its effects and Parliament was debating another. The problem appears to have been that the punishment of £5 for a second offence of robbing a

³⁷⁵ Manchester Times, 4 July, 1829

³⁷⁶ The Gardener's Magazine, 1829, p.633

³⁷⁷ Manchester Times, 29 May, 1841 – Botanical and Horticultural Society Show – "*The company was exceedingly numerous, the weather being delightfully fine and inviting*".

³⁷⁸ Manchester Mercury, 15 January, 1782.

garden did not help the poor nurseryman or gardener – one such on the south bank of the Thames had lost £75 worth of stock in one day.

Around Manchester, there were a number of reports of thefts from gardens, and various societies for the prosecution of felons, such as that in Northenden, were established. It was certainly not a problem which disappeared. The Modern Husbandman (October to December 1844) included an article on the necessity of keeping a dog to discourage thefts and related stories of thefts of cauliflowers, cabbages, cucumbers and onion seed. In fact, the majority of thefts were apparently food related – and the thieves were often young. In 1838 twelve boys who worked for Mr. T. Hall in his factory had opened the windows and stolen fruit from the walls. They were let off with costs and a warning.

An argument might be made that poverty and hunger drove some of these, or even youthful high spirits, but not all could be so easily explained away. Apples were most frequently mentioned and usually taken by young boys, but melons, cucumbers, pineapple, grapes, strawberries, currants, celery, gooseberries, rhubarb and blackberries were all taken at some time. Sometimes plants were damaged. In 1831 the Rev James Lyon of Prestwich was the victim. Not only were apples, onions and garden tools taken, but green-house plants were “*wantonly destroyed*”.³⁷⁹ Ten years later it was John Mellor of Royton – a noted botanist – whose plants were damaged,³⁸⁰ and in 1842 Mr. Birkett of Wigan had currant and gooseberry bushes “*maliciously destroyed*”.³⁸¹ A £5 reward was offered for information leading to a conviction. Other owners had less damage or were more understanding. In 1840 three boys aged about nine were accused of stealing fruit from Mr. Wood of Wigan. He said he was robbed most nights, but did not want to press charges – merely to deter others from “*making free with his fruit*”.³⁸² In 1847 it was Mr. Mellor of the Ardwick Lime Works who showed compassion – that time for the young Thomas Dyer,

³⁷⁹ Manchester Times, 30 July, 1831.

³⁸⁰ Manchester Times, 11 December, 1841.

³⁸¹ Manchester Times, 21 May, 1842.

³⁸² Manchester Times, 26 September, 1840. Two weeks' previously the Manchester Times had reported that, in Stockport, William Pearson had been caught in the act of stealing apples from Mr. Jarvis. He was sentenced to two months hard labour. In a different case, three others were acquitted as it couldn't be proved where the apples in their possession had come from.

who was only seven, and fatherless. Dyer had been acting as look-out for older boys who were stealing currants.³⁸³

It was not only edible crops that were stolen. John Fogg, living in Canal Street, Oldham Road, grew prize pinks and some were stolen by William Lee who tried selling them in the market. The value of the pinks was nearly £3, with one alone having cost Fogg seven shillings.³⁸⁴ When tulip bulbs were stolen from the garden of Samuel Bromley of Hooley Hill, the society of gardeners offered a £5 reward.³⁸⁵ Thomas Greig of Cornbrook Park lost five camellias worth about £50, but the thief in that case had previously been his gardener.³⁸⁶ In Bowdon, John Pimlot of Altrincham stole greenhouse plants from his employer.³⁸⁷

By 1849, the actual or perceived threat had apparently led to the raising of high walls and fences around gardens. A letter to the editor of the Manchester Times complained that the pleasure of seeing the beautiful plants and shrubs in gardens was no longer open to the "*honest, hard-working sons of toil*" as they passed by with their families. The flowering shrubs on the estate of Samuel Brooks had been "*plundered and broken*".³⁸⁸ Yet two months later the case against Mary Hughes, who had been taking flowers out of the gardens in Greenheys, was dropped as the owner of the one where she had been caught did not wish to press charges.³⁸⁹

In earlier years, some gardeners had taken a more robust approach – and possibly with good reason: a report of a garden theft in Southwark in 1773, records that the perpetrator, on being caught, attempted to cut the throat of his captor.³⁹⁰ In 1784 a Mr Eccles in Battersea shot one of three people robbing his garden. Although wounded, his companions spirited him away.³⁹¹ In 1814, at Mitcham, a man was killed by a spring gun while robbing the garden of the Hon. W. Herbert – the man who would end his career as the Dean of Manchester.³⁹² At the inquest the verdict

³⁸³ Manchester Times, 20 July, 1847.

³⁸⁴ Manchester Times, 22 October, 1836.

³⁸⁵ Manchester Times, 30 November, 1844.

³⁸⁶ Manchester Times, 24 February, 1849.

³⁸⁷ Manchester Times, 3 March, 1849.

³⁸⁸ Manchester Times, 22 May, 1849.

³⁸⁹ Manchester Times, 18 July, 1849.

³⁹⁰ General Evening Post, 27 February, 1773.

³⁹¹ Public Advertiser, 9 September, 1784.

³⁹² Morning Post, 1 October, 1814.

was given as accidental death, yet four years later in Tottenham, when a gardener was accidentally shot when loading a spring gun, the coroner stated that

*"The offence of robbing a garden was not punishable with death; and, therefore, if a thief was to be shot by a spring-gun, and it was to produce death, the owner would be liable to punishment, and the Jury who sat upon the body of the deceased would act properly in returning a verdict of Wilful Murder".*³⁹³

Around Manchester some gardeners did not rely solely on the Societies for Prosecutions. In 1800 Richard Walker of Hullard Hall in Stretford offered a reward for information, but also noted "*There are Steel Traps now set in those Gardens*".³⁹⁴ In 1833 the actions of gardeners in Bury incurred the wrath of the Manchester Times. Having lost many cucumbers to thieves, the Garden Committee posted a notice to warn anyone who might have stolen – or who might be tempted to receive – that some of the cucumbers stolen the previous night had been poisoned, and that other gardeners were taking the same steps.³⁹⁵ By 1841 a solution to the problem was offered by Naylor's Patent Alarm Guns "*the best prevention yet invented for the protection of Houses, Outhouses, Gardens, Orchards*".³⁹⁶ The alarm given was loud enough to be heard for miles off and anyone wanting one could be supplied by J. Wroe of Oxford Street, Manchester.

However, it must not be thought that every gardener was at risk of theft. In 1842 William Cooke Taylor wrote of the garden of Henry Ashworth at Turton, near Bolton. Ashworth was a mill owner whose house was close by the mill and he had a garden alongside the mill and away from the house. He grew wall fruit, flowers and vegetables, but the garden was unprotected by walls and the gate was easily opened. But not one of his workers ever stole a single cherry. "*I know of less tempting gardens*" wrote Taylor, "*secured by high walls, ponderous gates, and a regular*

³⁹³ Bury and Norwich Post, 22 July, 1818. Herbert was the son of Lord Carnarvon. Whether he escaped prosecution because of this, or whether the coroner in Tottenham had a different view of the law to the one in Mitcham is not known. Spring-guns and mantraps became illegal in 1827. Lord Carnarvon took part in the parliamentary debate in 1825. Lord Liverpool had also spoken in the debate: "*If a man went into a garden, and took away a basket of fruit already gathered, he was guilty of felony; but if he took away all the fruit from the trees, he was guilty only of a trespass. Now there were a great number of fruit-gardens in the neighbourhood of London which would be exposed to deprecation, if it were not for the terror of spring-guns.*"

³⁹⁴ Manchester Mercury, 5 August, 1800.

³⁹⁵ Manchester Times, 29 June, 1833.

³⁹⁶ Manchester Times, 10 July, 1841.

*apparatus of bolts, locks, and bars, to which man-traps and spring-guns were found necessary as an additional protection".*³⁹⁷

These very varied responses to thefts of fruit and flowers reflect the different attitudes of owners and the mores of the time – social, political and economic. For some it would have been a matter of ownership; others might be concerned about inequality, poverty and hunger; some would understand the temptations of youth. Louis Hayes, a child of middle-class parents, recalled his own short-comings:

*"The gardens to the houses in Woodland Terrace commenced where the pond terminated. I might mention that Keswick apples grew in those gardens; and I am afraid it was not always the owners who gathered those apples. They looked so tempting growing there, and they were so juicy and had such a wonderful flavour, and youth does not always pause to consider."*³⁹⁸

For those who grew for sale, theft would be lost income; for those who grew to show, lost esteem – and for the poor florist, the price of lost plants could be the loss of many years loving nurture and careful hybridisation. Gardens had walls to protect fruit from the weather, but these also provided protection from depredations by outsiders. Cobbett recommended walls twelve feet high but he also understood that walls have two sides and planting on the *outside* doubled the growing potential, if only the outside plants could also be protected. He gave an illustration of one solution that showed an understanding of human nature and an appreciation of community spirit:

*"I knew an old gentleman, one of whose garden walls separated the garden from a meadow, which was unprotected except by a common hedge. Those persons of the village who were fond of wall-fruit, who had none of their own, and who were young enough to climb walls, used to leave him a very undue proportion of his fruit, and that not of the best quality. He therefore separated a strip of the meadow from the rest by a little fence, very convenient for getting over; turned this strip, which lay along against the wall, into kitchen garden-ground, planted excellent fruit-trees against the wall, trained them and cultivated them properly; and thus, by furnishing his juvenile neighbours with onions for their bread and cheese, as well as fruit for their dessert, ever after he kept the produce of the inside of the garden for himself, generally observing (as he once particularly did to me) that he was not so unreasonable as to expect to have any of the produce of the exterior garden."*³⁹⁹

³⁹⁷ Taylor, William Cooke. Notes of a Tour in the Manufacturing Districts of Lancashire, (1842) p. 19-21

³⁹⁸ Hayes, Louis. Reminiscences of Manchester, (1905) p.53.

³⁹⁹ Cobbett, William. The English Gardener (1996; first published 1829), p. 20.

Summary

The range of plants stocked by local nurserymen compared reasonably well with that stocked elsewhere, although Harvey's conclusion that the nurseries around Manchester were relatively small seems to be borne out by the evidence available.⁴⁰⁰ How much this was driven by (lack of) demand is difficult to say. Henry Potts certainly felt it necessary to buy from Scotland in large numbers (though there were plenty of nurseries in and around Chester and Liverpool and in 1813 the stock in Butler's nursery was sufficient to meet Potts' needs) but this may have been an exceptional case. Certainly planting in Wales would have been a very different prospect from planting in the immediate vicinity of Manchester.

Although it is not always easy to discover what was grown by local people at different times there was a good supply of most types of plant throughout the century, although the balance of importance changed from the beginning of the period to the end, with forest trees gradually giving way to ornamental trees as properties became smaller. Plantations require large tracts of land; oaks and other large trees dwarf the smaller suburban gardens in which they can never be allowed to grow to their full size. Similarly, fruit and vegetables would have had a much greater role to play in 1750, when transport was difficult, than in 1850 by which time trains could take food around the country in a matter of hours and steamships bring produce from even far abroad in a matter of days. The extent of produce being provided to local markets from private gardens has not been, and may never be, identified. The range of produce grown will be considered further in Chapter Seven.

What is clear is that there was a considerable sub-culture of florists which dated back to the early part of the eighteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, while traditional florists continued to grow the historically important tulips and auriculas, there had been a big increase in the number of hardy flower species that were grown for show, which was largely a result of new plant introductions. However, alongside the outdoor plants, and confined to those who could afford the

⁴⁰⁰ Harvey placed Caldwell's at the forefront of nurseries in the north-west, but it seems likely that this was due to insufficient data about the totality of nurseries in the region and too great a reliance upon Caldwell's ledgers. He did not, for example, identify Turner of Kersal Moor, Butler of Prescott or Bannerman/Skirving of Walton.

necessary hothouses, there was a concomitant increase in exotic plants. These too, will be considered in more detail in Chapter Seven.

An appreciation of the conditions that prevailed for gardeners can be found in the newspaper reports of thefts and weather. The former suggests new lines of enquiry: not all court cases would have been reported and court records may have more detail. Thefts provide some important clues as to what was grown, its relative importance and the varying responses of gardeners. These highlight the opposing ideas of the middle classes which are discussed in more detail in later chapters. Weather reports provide some information as to the extent of greenhouse culture and the damage caused by wind, hail and storm. Gardeners throughout the ages have had to contend with the weather, both its destructive and beneficial impact. The newspaper reports provide a real insight into the pleasures and pains of gardening

Chapter Three

Environmental Changes

In this chapter we look at how the town grew, what this meant for gardens, the problem of smoke, its effect on plants and the attempts to combat it. The physical changes that were associated with the Industrial Revolution were immense. Towns grew rapidly in size and struggled to cope with all the pressures that this placed upon infrastructure – roads, water supply, collection and disposal of sewage. Changes in society meant that between 1750 and 1850 the whole way of living changed.

In 1750 England as a whole consisted of London plus a handful of – from a twenty-first century view – very small market towns and a great number of villages dotted around each county. It was a rural country. Travel was slow – in 1771 Pickford's coaches took four and a half days to get from Manchester to London.⁴⁰¹ Bad weather slowed travel, or stopped it altogether. The best way to move goods around the country was by sea. The canals, as they spread across the country, eased movement, but it remained slow.⁴⁰² Population levels were still low.

By 1850, however, all that had changed. The railway from Manchester to Liverpool was opened in 1830 and within twenty years the country was criss-crossed by lines – in 1845 the desperation to buy shares in the new and expanding railway companies had given rise to the term "Railway Mania" and the York Herald likened it to the Dutch tulipomania of the seventeenth century.⁴⁰³ Movement of plants became easier and quicker.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ www.pickfords.co.uk/pickfords-history

⁴⁰² Caldwell of Knutsford did business with Wrench of London. In November 1792 Caldwell sent Wrench 3,500 seedling pear stocks and the following month he took delivery of 2,000 Miracle plum stocks, and noted in his ledger that he had paid £1 2s 2d, half of which (11s 1d) he counter-charged to Wrench because they "*should have come by water*".

⁴⁰³ This may also be compared to the dot.com boom at the end of the twentieth century. Such booms and bubbles inevitably lead to economic collapse and depression often extending far beyond the area of interest. In 1845 the country had only recently come out of a lengthy economic depression.

⁴⁰⁴ Edward Leeds of Stretford sent plants to William Hooker at Kew by rail. Records show that it usually took less than two days for boxes to arrive. In 1876 Leeds sent his last consignment "*2 large boxes and one smaller one*" on 9th May 1876; they arrived on the 11th, though Kew's letter of thanks was not sent until the 23rd.

The population of the whole country had started to expand at the end of the eighteenth century and the censuses of 1801 onwards allow for comparison.⁴⁰⁵ Between that year and 1851 the population of England more than doubled, but that of Manchester and Salford together with the inner suburbs of Ardwick, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Hulme, Pendleton, Broughton and Cheetham quadrupled. The industrial towns drew in migrants from other parts of England, from Scotland and Ireland and also from Europe.

Within a century Manchester changed from a market town administered by the Lord of the Manor to a Municipal Corporation. It changed from the medieval centre together with the newer quarter around St. Ann's and King Street, surrounded by fields, to a densely packed area that reached from Strangeways to Hulme encircled by spacious villas. For the poor – destined to live in the very centre of this area – the countryside moved ever further away. But, from the gardener's point of view, apart from the constant pushing of gardens to the outskirts of town, the most devastating impact was caused by the sulphurous, black smoke pouring from the chimneys of the ever-increasing number of manufactories in town powered by the burning of coal.

Development of the town

Medieval Manchester nestled in the valley where the Irk joined the Irwell. The much-reproduced map of 1650 shows the Collegiate Church (now the Cathedral) at its heart, and across the Irwell lay the triangle of streets which made up Salford.⁴⁰⁶ Deansgate, to the south and Market Stead Lane (Market Street) to the east were built up on each side, but had no side roads at that time. Close to Acres Field (which would become St Ann's Square in the 1720s) lay the moated Radcliffe Hall – destined to be divided up and used as inns before being lost entirely to development. Although surrounded by fields, the houses all had their gardens and detail shows that these were not merely places for growing plants, but some were designed for pleasure with circular and oval paths.⁴⁰⁷ At the end of Deansgate were the carefully

⁴⁰⁵ Census figures are assumed to be reliable, although doubt was certainly cast on the earliest ones.

⁴⁰⁶ Although the original was lost, the 1650 map appears in the corner of Casson & Berry's maps of the mid-eighteenth century and on Laurent's map of 1794. It continued to be reproduced, though its orientation changed – as in 1906, when it was reproduced in Swindells' *First Series of Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*.

⁴⁰⁷ The 17th century was a period when straight lines were the basis of the design of large gardens, so circular and oval paths were unusual.

laid out New Gardens. Across the river in Salford, gardens and an orchard ran down to the Irwell.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, writers began to look back at the Manchester which had been lost. Procter refers to 1711 when the "*orchards and gardens*" of the Black Boy Tavern lay at the north-east corner of the Church and Ridge Field (its remains still to be found, lying either side of John Dalton Street) was characterised by "*verdant meads and cherry-gardens*". All these gardens were to be swept away in the frenzy of development. Procter knew that newcomers, experiencing the bustle of a town full of factories, shops and offices, found it hard to visualize its rural past. Referring to Buck's Prospect, drawn in 1728, he writes "*The doubting reader who may have fancied our orchards were mythical, our stiles and summer-houses mere day-dreams, will find such misgivings agreeably removed*".⁴⁰⁸ The Manchester of a century-and-a-half previous to the time Procter was writing was a very different place.

In 1750 Richard Pococke described Manchester and Salford as "*in reality ... only two villages*".⁴⁰⁹ Yet the previous year another author wrote of Manchester, that it was

*"... so much improved in this and the last century above its Neighbours, that tho' it is not a Corporation, nor sends Members to Parliament, yet, as an Inland Town, it has perhaps the best Trade of any in these Northern Parts, and surpasses all the Towns hereabouts in Buildings and Numbers of People, Manufactures, and its spacious Market-Place, and College."*⁴¹⁰

Each of these authors gave a different population figure – Pococke mentioned 35,000, the other writer put the number at more than 50,000. A more usual figure given was 16,000 in 1757. The enumeration of the parish of Manchester carried out in 1773-4 gave a total of 41,622, figures for earlier periods were estimates and, as we have seen previously, the definition of Manchester varied – was it the township or the parish? Was Salford included or omitted? Did it refer to the wider district – the catchment area for the merchants and warehouses of the town? (See Faucher's description given in section on Methodology.)

Regardless of the numbers of residents, it is clear that the town had grown considerably in the century which passed after that early map was drawn Casson

⁴⁰⁸ Procter, R. W. Memorials of Manchester Streets (1874) pp. 178; 205 and 207.

⁴⁰⁹ The Travel Through England of Dr. Richard Pococke, Volume 1. p.10

⁴¹⁰ A New Description of Lancashire, Leicestershire etc. (1749) p.9

and Berry's maps from 1741 to 1751 show that, though Salford had not changed a great deal, Manchester had many new roads leading off Deansgate and Market Stead Lane. Despite its growth it was still an area with plenty of open spaces – roads were interspersed with fields and houses had gardens attached. Some of these were substantial properties:

"Another resident [of Long Millgate], Lady Lever, upon finally quitting her dwelling, advertised it for sale as containing six rooms on each floor and with a large garden attached. A much larger mansion, boasting three names, was thus announced for disposal in Whitworth's Manchester Magazine for 1747-48:- "Situate in the Milngate, Old Greave Hall, or Langley Hall, or Culcheth Hall, converted into several dwellings with gardens and ten acres of land." ⁴¹¹

Glimpses of what the town gardens were like as Manchester expanded during this period can be found, but without any real detail:

"In the year 1776 my father lived in a house in Cannon Street, which had a beautiful garden behind it. The best and most genteel parts of the town in those days were Cannon Street, Marsden Square, and St. Ann's Square." ⁴¹²

Referring to the 1751 map, Harland speaks of the upper part of Cannon Street "*still fields and gardens*" and the "*appropriately named Garden Street, the space between these and the houses in Market Street being covered with gardens.*" ⁴¹³

Comparing the 1773 enumeration⁴¹⁴ with the 1801 census figures shows a greater than threefold increase in residents during that period. By 1801 the township of Manchester had a population of 70,409 – which equates to a population density of 44.6 to the acre. The comparative figures for Salford are 13,611 and 10.1. The actual density was much greater as the acreage is for the township as a whole, rather than that part of it that was built upon. The concentration of population within Manchester can be perhaps best understood in terms of its relationship with that of the Parish. Manchester township occupied less than 5% of the total acreage of the Parish. In 1773 it held 55% of the population and this increased to 64% by 1801. By 1831 it had dropped back to 53%, because its commercial properties were crowding out residential space and the surrounding townships were absorbing the excess.

⁴¹¹ Procter, R. W. Memorials of Manchester Streets. 1874. p.35/36

⁴¹² Housman, John. A topographical description of Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, and a part of the West Riding of Yorkshire Vol. 2. (1800) p.190

⁴¹³ Harland, John. Collectanea relating to Manchester and its Neighbourhood, 1866. p.107.

⁴¹⁴ Taken from Wheeler, James: Manchester (1836). The comparison cannot be completely accurate. The 1773 list included the areas of Cleddin (possibly Clayton), Fallowfield, Kirkmanshulme and Longsight no longer separately listed in 1801.

The town had initially coped with the increase in numbers by continual building. Green's map of 1794 shows how the town had spread beyond Piccadilly, out to St Peter's, even a short distance to the north. But it was southwards that the majority of the development had taken place, within the township of Manchester. Medieval Manchester lay at the north-western part of the township – cross the river Irk and by the time you'd reached Strangeways Park, you were in Cheetham; cross the Irwell and you were in Salford.⁴¹⁵ Development within the township could only go south and east.

Within the built up area, unlike forty years previously, there was virtually no green space. One must search carefully to find any garden still existing in the centre of town. The garden at Chetham's College was still intact and the Infirmary had its own pleasure and kitchen gardens,⁴¹⁶ but apart from these there seem to be only two. One was at the point where Church Street became Dale Street; the other at the top end of Portland Street – each was laid out with a circular walk, the second being nearly four times the size of the first. Other than these, the gardens were attached to the houses on the outskirts of the town or were detached gardens⁴¹⁷ clustered around Shude Hill and to the north of the river Irk. Fields still clustered around the central area but writers were fond of saying that Ardwick was now joined to Manchester, because there was scattered building along the road between the two.⁴¹⁸

Despite this change in housing density, it still took only a short walk to leave the town behind and walk among the fields. This may have been why Joseph Aston,

⁴¹⁵ Similarly, the built up area of Salford was at the very north-east corner.

⁴¹⁶ The Infirmary gardens were described by Joseph Aston in *A Picture of Manchester*, (1816), p.125: "*In front of the buildings, is a gravel walk, the whole length of the land, margined with grass, and partially planted with trees. – The pool of water in front, adds considerably to its appearance, and renders it a most eligible promenade. The other parts of the public gardens are situated between the Dispensary and the Public Baths: they are laid out in serpentine walks, and are interspersed with shrubs, grass-plats, and flowers. Beside this, there is a kitchen garden, belonging to the charity, which, surrounded as it now is, by high buildings cannot be expected to be very prolific.*" The rules of the Infirmary included (number 136): "*That such of the Patients as are able (each time obtaining leave from the Apothecary or House-Surgeon) be permitted to go into the garden every day when the weather is good, but it is expected that they be guilty of no improper or irregular behaviour whilst there, and that they do not walk on the grass or borders.*" (*Rules for the Government of the Infirmary and Dispensary, in Manchester*, published in *Manchester Tracts, 1796-1812.*)

⁴¹⁷ Discussed in later chapter.

⁴¹⁸ e.g. Aston, *The Manchester Guide* (1804), p.56: "*Ardwick, Chetham Hill, and Pendleton, which may be denominated suburbs, being almost united by the chain of buildings, to the mother towns*".

in 1804, felt able to write that "*Manchester is a healthy place*".⁴¹⁹ This is in stark contrast to Aikin's comments (1795) as to the state of the housing for the poor – he reproduced parts of a paper by Dr. Ferriar which shows that cellar living was already extensive and highly detrimental to health. The pestilential nature of the town by the time Engels came to write of it needs no description here. Aston wrote:

*"During this period, [i.e. 1760-1804] perhaps, no town in the united kingdoms, has made such rapid improvements as Manchester. Every year has witnessed an increase of buildings, churches, chapels, places of amusement and streets, have started into existence with a rapidity which constantly afforded matter for astonishment in the minds of occasional visitors."*⁴²⁰

Manchester was drawing-in new residents from all parts of the kingdom. Aston estimated that only one-third of the population was native to the town – every week bringing more newcomers.⁴²¹ In a foot-note, Aston writes that, although it was thought more houses were then being built than in any preceding year, it was highly unusual to see a "To Let" sign.

Johnson's map of 1819 shows how it was in the township of Manchester where the overwhelming majority of development was taking place. The map covers the thirty townships that made up the parish of Manchester.⁴²² Townships varied in size and population density, but more than half-way through the period covered by this research, it was really only Manchester township, and to a lesser extent Salford, that had absorbed the great increase in population over the preceding seventy years. The whole of the Parish of Manchester was an area of around 54 square miles. The majority of the population – more than 70% in 1821 – was crammed into an area of around 3 square miles. That would change over the following decades. Once Manchester was completely built over, the other townships would gradually follow suit.

⁴¹⁹ Although he was advertising Manchester as a forward looking town, so would not have suggested otherwise.

⁴²⁰ Aston, *The Manchester Guide*, p.42.

⁴²¹ By 1837, 9,000 inhabitants were of Scottish and 50,000 of Irish origin. (Butterworth, Edwin. *A Statistical Sketch of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (1841), p.75.)

⁴²² Broughton, Crumpsall, Blakely, Moston, Failsworth, Newton, Harpurhey, Cheetham, Salford, Manchester, Beswick, Bradford, Droylesden, Gorton, Openshaw, Ardwick, Chorlton Row, Hulme, Moss Side, Streford, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Withington, Rusholme, Kirkmanshulme, Levenshulme, Reddish, Denton, Houghton, Burnage, Didsbury and Heaton Norris.

Writing in 1831, Austin et al (Lancashire Illustrated), like Aston, took the year 1770 as the beginning of the rapid increase in building in Manchester.⁴²³ After sixty years, the length of all the streets added together was more than eighty miles. The town was in a constant state of flux. The medieval streets were narrow and winding and had needed to be widened. After 1776 Old Millgate, Cateaton Street and St. Mary's Gate were widened to allow more than a single carriage through at a time. Not learning from this – or perhaps to maximise rents – Mosley Street, when built was considered too narrow: it contained many capital houses, but if only it had been wider "*it would have been one of the best streets in the north of England*".⁴²⁴ Although the exponential growth of the town was dated from 1770, it was after 1790 that steam-powered factories began to proliferate in the town. Before then, factories had been placed in the hills alongside fast-flowing water to provide power.⁴²⁵ But the steam engines also needed water and this was obtained by sinking wells, effectively draining the wells previously used for domestic purposes. Rainwater was collected in cisterns on roofs to meet residential demands, but by 1830 a reservoir had been built at Gorton to pipe water to the town.

The increasing demands for office and warehouse space – not to mention the need for land to cope with the railways when they came, meant that the better quality residential properties were vacated and occupiers moved out into the suburbs.⁴²⁶ Still the town grew. By the time the Ordnance Survey maps of the 1840s were drawn, the remaining areas of open ground had been used for cotton mills, timber yards, warehouses, canals and wharves, railway lines and increasingly poor housing – poor both in quality and in standard. As early as 1795, Aikin wrote "*the poor are crowded in offensive, dark, damp, and incommodious habitations*".⁴²⁷ Five

⁴²³ Although the similarity of wording suggests Aston was Austin's source.

⁴²⁴ Aston. Manchester Guide, p.270. However, Austin explained that "by setting back the railing of the Infirmary pond, Piccadilly and Mosley-street have gained a valuable accession of carriage-way" (p.63-64)

⁴²⁵ Kearsley's Traveller's Entertaining Guide Through Great Britain (1801) states there were sixty mills on the river Irwell, all within three miles of the town.

⁴²⁶ Love, Manchester As It Is, p.136: "*Many gentlemen, who have been compelled, by the encroachment of commercial buildings, to take up their abode in the country...*"; p.143: "*... in consequence of the removal of many Manchester families into the country...*". This physical separation of classes no doubt fed the unease which is described in later chapters

⁴²⁷ Aikin, John. A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester, (1795), p.192.

decades later, Engels wrote of the “*chaos of houses, more or less on the verge of uninhabitableness*”,⁴²⁸ and Faucher’s descriptions of Manchester are elegiac –

*“The manufactories and machine shops form as it were, a girdle around the town, and follow the courses of the streams. Factories, seven stories in height, rear their lofty fronts along the banks of the Irwell, and along the borders of the canals, which, penetrating into the town, form an interior navigation. The waters of the Irk, black and fetid as they are, supply numerous tanneries and dye-works; those of the Medlock supply calico-printing establishments, machine shops, and foundries.”*⁴²⁹

Manchester could no longer be contained within the boundaries of the old township. The demands of commerce led to its spilling over into the neighbouring townships. By the 1851 census, the population within the original township had begun to level off. Between 1801 and 1831 it more than doubled. Between 1831 and 1851 it increased by only 32%. People were taking second place to factories, warehouses and offices.⁴³⁰ When Manchester finally achieved corporate status in 1838 it absorbed the townships of Chorlton-upon-Medlock, Hulme, Ardwick, Beswick, and Cheetham – despite a spirited campaign against it by some of the residents of Chorlton-upon-Medlock.

Gardens were virtually non-existent. In Manchester – “*alas! there are no flowers*” – wrote Mrs. Gaskell.⁴³¹ By the 1840s the appalling living and working conditions of the poor had given rise to demands for public parks so that those who had no garden of their own could benefit from the health-giving properties of fresh air and beautiful surroundings. The pleasant walks previously available on the outskirts of the town had disappeared. The loss of footpaths had given rise to the Manchester Footpath Society, dedicated to preventing further such loss, but these stories are for a later chapter. The development of Manchester, while it might have been inimical to gardens and the health of its residents was yet a source of pride. In 1881, Slugg underlined the changes that had taken place in Manchester – and in society – in just fifty years:

⁴²⁸ Engels, Frederick. The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844. p.51. www.gutenberg.org. Transcribed from the January 1943 George Allen & Unwin reprint of the March 1892 edition by David Price, email ccx074@coventry.ac.uk

⁴²⁹ Faucher, Leon. Manchester in 1844: its present condition and future prospects p.17.

⁴³⁰ In 1790 a piece of ground 2,400 square yards in size, sold for £400. In demand for warehouses, by 1850 it was worth more than £25,000. (Manchester Times, 17 July 1847, reproduced from The Land We Live In.)

⁴³¹ Gaskell, Elizabeth. Mary Barton. (1848) Everyman edition 1996. p.97.

*"Fifty years ago, then, there were in Manchester no Athanaeum, no Bonded Warehouse, no Assize Courts, no Free Library, no Botanical Gardens, no police court, no public parks, no statues, no Concert Hall, no railway stations, no beerhouses, no members of Parliament; no bishop, dean, or canons; no mayor, aldermen, or councillors; no town clerk, no city or borough coroner, no Cathedral, no stipendiary for the city, no police, no County Court, no poor-law guardians, no Saturday half-holiday, no early closing, no manorial rights, no penny postage, no telegraphs, no local daily paper, no penny newspaper, no cabs, no omnibuses as now, no teetotal societies, no volunteers, no steel pens in constant use, no lucifer matches, no Stretford Road, no free trade. There were no ocean steamships, slavery was not abolished, neither were the corn laws. Everything was taxed – almanacs, windows, paper, soap, leather; bottles, and other glass; newspapers, advertisements, and hundreds of other things in common use, which are now unburthened as the air."*⁴³²

Development of the suburbs

As time passed, so did the definition of what constituted the "suburbs". In the eighteenth century areas which now lie at the very heart of Manchester were considered almost the countryside. *"It is difficult to realise how at any time Shudehill could have been a country district"* commented Swindells two centuries later, reproducing rental information from 1708, including Withingreave Hall, complete with croft, orchard, garden and outbuildings plus a barn (converted into cottages) and about eight acres of land. In 1763 this property, still intact, was offered for sale.⁴³³ In 1736 Jeremiah Bower, built a mansion in the suburbs: *"he wished to be near the town, but on the other hand, he was desirous of enjoying a garden"* and found an ideal spot behind Market Street.⁴³⁴ The Parsonage which lay between Deansgate and the river Irwell had a *"rural character"* in 1769 when an advertisement described a large garden there which contained flower garden, orchard, shrubbery and summerhouse. There were gooseberry and currant bushes, strawberries and fruit trees and, in the garden, a mix of bulbs and perennials *"some of which are in Flower most of the year"*.⁴³⁵ Ardwick, Hulme, Cheetham, Broughton and Pendleton, which in the nineteenth century were considered the suburbs of Manchester, still constituted countryside at that time. Even in 1773, the population in each of these townships

⁴³² Slugg, J T. *Reminiscences of Manchester Fifty Years Ago* (1881) p. 113.

⁴³³ *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*. Fifth series. p. 126-9.

⁴³⁴ *ibid.* Third series. p. 7.

⁴³⁵ *ibid.* First series. p. 16.

was only between 0.4 and 0.6 per acre and Salford continued to be considered a suburb of Manchester well into the nineteenth century.⁴³⁶

In March 1759 an auction of a number of properties was held and the advertisement demonstrates that building land was already in demand. The properties included the new⁴³⁷ house near the Dole Field (mentioned above) “... *with a neat Garden to the Front, well stock’d with most Sorts of the choicest Wall and Hedgerow Fruit Trees and Flowers...*” but also for sale was a house in Queen Street complete with a vacant plot “*for Building upon*” and another vacant plot near Withy Grove “*very commodious for Building upon*”.⁴³⁸ As the town spread outwards, so these early suburbs and the gardens they contained became part of the built up area of the town. The top of Market Street may have been considered the suburbs in 1736, and even in 1755, when the new Infirmary was built, the area now known as Piccadilly Gardens was outside of the town altogether. A comparison of Casson & Berry’s maps of the mid-eighteenth century with Green’s of 1794 shows how rapid the expansion of the town was in those forty years. By 1819, the town had spilled into the surrounding townships. By 1850 the southern suburbs in particular were heavily populated, although those to the north and west less so.

The development of the town was insidious and gardens were a casualty. Swindells has provided a few glimpses of the gardens once to be found at the edges of the town. At a time when the area now covered by the Town Hall, Library and St Peter’s Square was still fields, a garden stood nearby, attached to a cottage (see next page). The garden was walled around and “*tastefully arranged*” with a fish pond in the middle. It was lost to warehouses, which in turn gave way to the Midland Hotel.⁴³⁹ Another garden on the corner of Mosley Street and Market Street disappeared under stabling and coach sheds when the house to which it was attached was turned into the Royal Hotel.⁴⁴⁰ Generally, however, he elicited the experience of eighteenth century Manchester by the use of phrases such as “*nothing but open fields*”

⁴³⁶ Salford was referred to as a suburb of Manchester as late as 1841 – see Butterworth, Edwin, *A Statistical Sketch of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (1841) p.67.

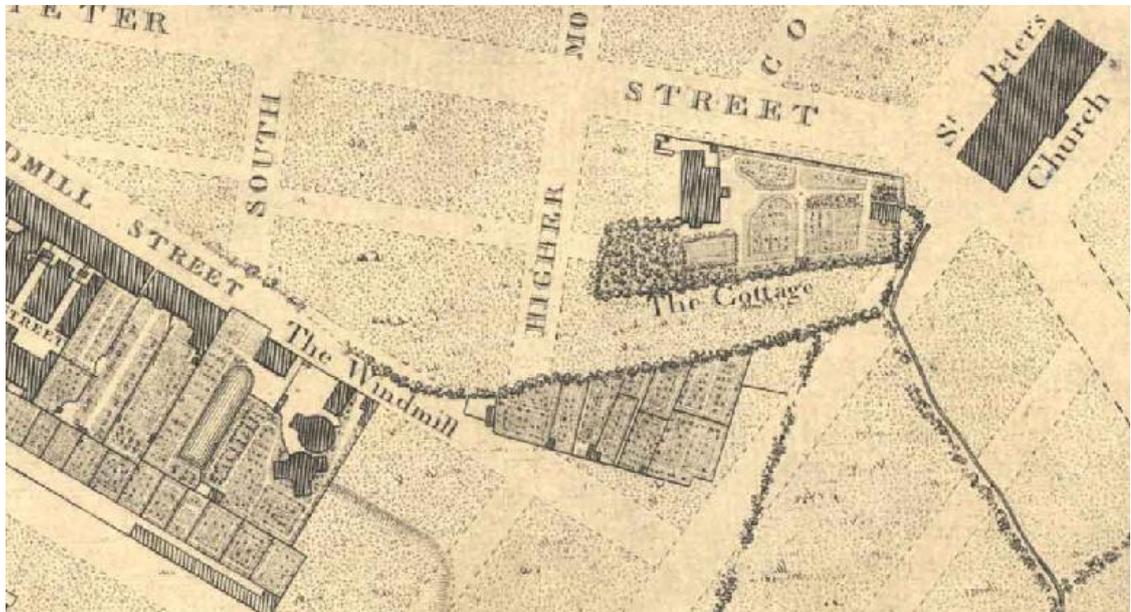
⁴³⁷ The word “new” or phrase “new-built” were used to describe brick houses as opposed to the wattle and daub medieval properties of the central area. It cannot be taken to mean that the building had only just been completed.

⁴³⁸ *Manchester Mercury*, 6 March, 1759. All in one advertisement which included property in Blakeley.

⁴³⁹ *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*. First series. p. 158.

⁴⁴⁰ *ibid*. First series. p. 196-7.

and gardens would be seen"; "gardens which in summer times were gay with flowers"; "the view being pleasant and rural".



Above: The area around St Peter's Church in 1794 (Green's map), with roads already laid out for new building

Below: the same area fifty years later (O.S. Map)



While the town grew, and while there was still quality residential housing in Manchester, the surrounding townships were the site of the country house for the merchant who wanted to demonstrate his increased status and wealth. At a time when walking was a preferred mode of travel, country houses did not need to be far

from the town – and in fact walking distance was a selling point in many advertisements. Aikin wrote “*At each extremity of Manchester are many excellent houses, very elegantly fitted up, chiefly occupied by the merchants of the town, which may in some measure be considered as their country residences, being from one to two miles from their respective warehouses*”.⁴⁴¹ In 1817 there was an advert for country residences “*about 20 minutes walk*” north of the town at Fairy Hill and Broughton Grove, the former coming complete with a shippon large enough for six cows and seven Lancashire acres (more than eleven statute acres) of land in addition to a large garden.⁴⁴² Even Granby Row, on the way out to Chorlton was still set in fields around 1820, though in less than a century the rural idyll had given way to the grim reality of urban life:

*“[Granby] Hall was in those days a desirable place of residence. Standing a little way from the river bank, across which open fields extended behind it in the direction of Chorlton Hall, the house was surrounded by a garden, which at the back extended down to the river. Flowers grew in abundance, and in the orchard were some prolific fruit trees. The house still stands, but its glory has departed, and the fine half circular bay windows look out upon a wilderness of bricks and mortar.”*⁴⁴³

Residential housing in the town became less attractive. Not only was it in demand for commercial use, being transformed into offices or demolished to build warehouses and factories, but the pollution associated with these increased, making the town less salubrious for living in. Existing country houses became the main home of those who lived there and building increased around them. Country thus metamorphosed into suburb.

The speed with which properties were added to the surrounding townships varied – as did the type of property. Ardwick – just one mile from the town – was generally mentioned as the place for country houses and Housman singles out that township for mention as it was “*particularly distinguished by the neatness and elegance of its buildings*”,⁴⁴⁴ but it is clear from the passage as a whole that it was only one of many.

⁴⁴¹ Aikin, John. A description of the country from thirty to forty miles round Manchester. (1795)

⁴⁴² Manchester Mercury, 1 April, 1817.

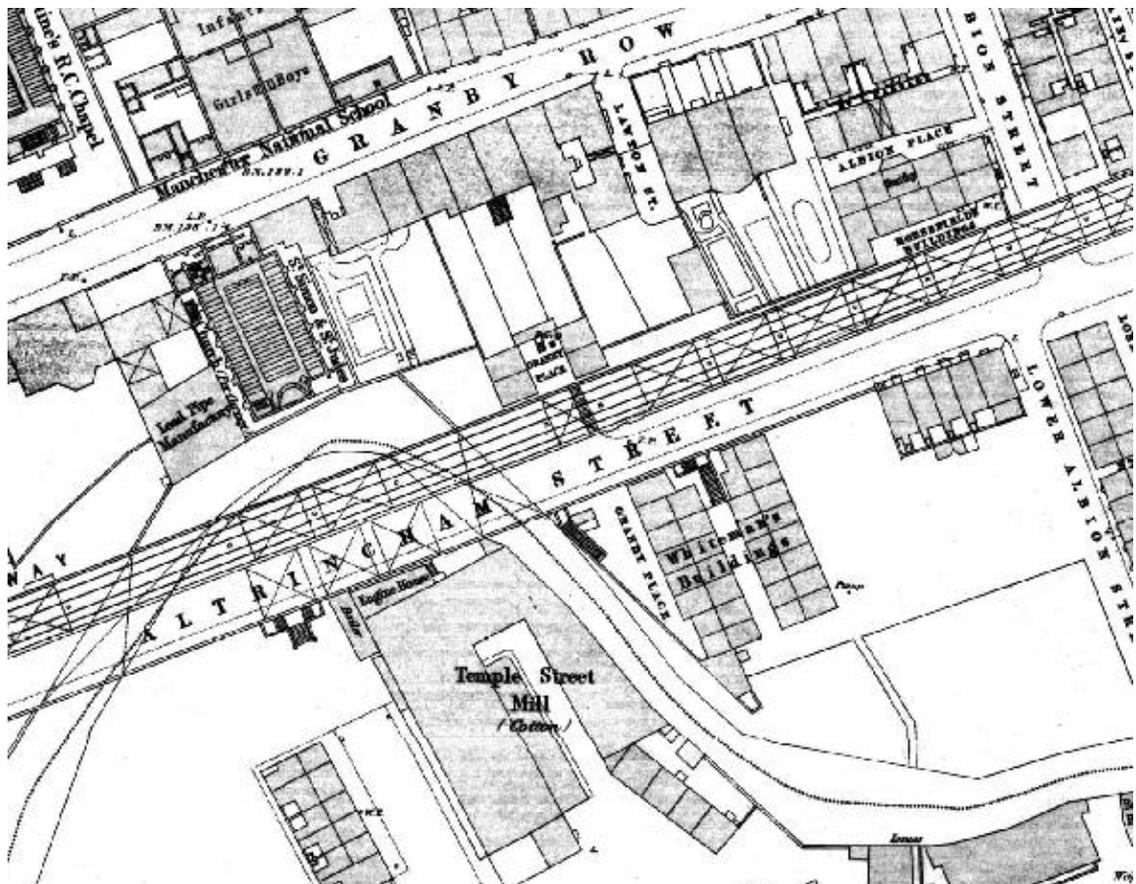
⁴⁴³ Swindells, Second Series. p. 283-4.

⁴⁴⁴ Housman, John A topographical description of Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancashire, and a part of the West Riding of Yorkshire (1800) p.535.



Above: Gardens in Granby Row, 1794 (Green)

Below: Granby Row in 1844 (O.S. Map)



The suitability of land for development was often mentioned in advertisements. In April 1831 a plot of land, a little under an acre in size, was offered for sale in Green Hill, Chorlton Row. It was suitable either for a "*Gentleman's COUNTRY RESIDENCE, with Gardens, &c*" or, alternatively, "*for the erection of three or four good dwelling-houses, with Gardens*".⁴⁴⁵ Property was generally purchased for its investment value, as most occupiers were tenants, and advertisements sometimes gave details of occupants and rental stream. Around this period (early 1830s) there is considerable information as to size of land, number of properties, rent receivable and chief rent payable. A single advertisement for property in Manchester, Rusholme, Chorlton and Hulme appeared on 1 September 1832. The amount of property and the inclusion of a pew "*No. 120, on the north side under the gallery*" in All Saints' Church would suggest that the seller was a bankrupt as such adverts usually were an attempt to realise assets. However, there was no mention of this (as there usually was), so the owner may simply have been someone who was experiencing cash-flow problems or was planning on leaving the area. Apart from the pew, there were eight lots for sale, ranging from Warehouses and Pubs in Manchester, through chief rents in Rusholme, to Yeald House, an estate in Rusholme of more than 45 acres. The majority of the lots were less than two acres in size, with varying numbers of properties situated on them and producing various levels of profit. Lot four was for a piece of land approximately one-sixth of an acre in size, bounded by Clarendon, Wilmott and Devonshire Streets in Hulme. It contained twelve houses and five cottages and returned a profit of around £88 per annum. By the time the Ordnance Survey was taken just twelve years later, this plot of land contained more than one hundred buildings – terraced houses, back-to-backs, workshops, a coal yard and a Baptist Chapel.

The same fate had befallen the rather larger neighbouring plots. That bounded by Devonshire, Medlock and Newcastle Streets – just less than an acre in size had contained eighteen cottages in 1832 and in 1844 more than 150 terraced homes and back-to-backs. Two others, each larger than an acre, one containing 26 and the other 27 "*cottages or garden houses*",⁴⁴⁶ were also crammed with properties. In all, rather more than five hundred dwellings, plus the chapel, a public house and a

⁴⁴⁵ *Manchester Times*, 2 April, 1831.

⁴⁴⁶ The reference to Garden Houses implies this land was used for detached gardens.



Above: After development: the two blocks Devonshire/Medlock/Newcastle and Clarendon/Wilmott/Devonshire Streets in Hulme (O.S. Map, 1840s)

Below: The Clarendon Inn and timber yards continued to exist, without the bowling green and brewery, though the housing can hardly be described as "of the first description".



Sunday School occupied land in 1844 which, little more than a decade earlier had been the site of just eighty-eight homes. There was no space for gardens, the houses having, at most, a yard occupying about one-sixth of the plot on which they stood. Nothing was sacred when it came to development. In Chorlton the Clarendon Inn, complete with its brewery, garden and "*comparatively unprofitable*" bowling green together with a timber yard – in all, just less than two acres – was divided into four lots for an auction in October 1832. The advertisement explained how the location close to the "*new road to the Botanical Gardens, render them remarkably valuable and suitable for buildings of the first description*",⁴⁴⁷ although there were various covenants in place which restricted the type of building and required some open space to be left.

These were all relatively small pieces of land. Much larger was the nineteen-plus acres situated "*one mile and a half from the Manchester Exchange*" which contained a house with garden and orchard, a farm house with outbuildings and twenty-one smaller (though four-storey) buildings. The advertisement (25 May 1833) continued: "*This estate offers a desirable investment to the capitalist, inasmuch as it has all the advantages of clay, coal, and water within itself; and from its contiguity to Manchester, is capable of being converted into building land, and to manufacturing and other purposes*".⁴⁴⁸

The speed of development can be traced by the population statistics. It was in fact Hulme which grew fastest between 1773 and 1801, increasing its population ten-fold to Ardwick's seven-fold. Trailing behind came Chorlton (nearly three times) and Cheetham and Broughton (less than doubling in those years). From 1801 until 1831 it was Chorlton (until the following year known as Chorlton Row rather than Chorlton-upon-Medlock), which grew fastest – according to Mr. Chappell (in a town meeting about taxes), people were induced to live there because the "*Poors' rates was lower, and the air was purer*" than elsewhere.⁴⁴⁹ In 1773 its population had been only 228; in 1831 it was more than 20,000 and by 1851 nearly 35,000. More than neighbouring Ardwick, however, it was used as an area for manufacturing as

⁴⁴⁷ *Manchester Times*, 20 October, 1832.

⁴⁴⁸ *Manchester Times*, 25 May, 1833.

⁴⁴⁹ *Manchester Times*, 26 December, 1828. Chappell was against the incorporation of Chorlton into Manchester saying that "*they would have to pay towards improving the narrow alleys of Manchester, when their own beautiful streets, laid out at right angles, did not require it.*" (*Manchester Times*, 24 February, 1838)

well as residential development – in 1836 there were twelve cotton mills – the same number as were in Salford, three times the number in Hulme and four times that in Ardwick (and compared to the 105 in Manchester).⁴⁵⁰

Meanwhile Hulme, growing fast before 1800, then grew more slowly until, in the twenty years after 1830, building accelerated and by 1851 population density in Hulme, at 110.6 per acre was approaching the population density of Manchester (118.6). Growth in the northern and western townships was slower. In Broughton, the landowner, John Clowes, “*strictly controlled the sale of land within his estates, allowing no small properties to be built, only superior residences with gardens*”⁴⁵¹ whereas such restrictions clearly did not apply in Hulme. Hulme was only about three-quarters the size of Chorlton and to accommodate the increased number of residents, housing was less likely to be provided with gardens attached. There were rows and rows of terraced houses, many back to back, still more with minuscule yards and narrow alleyways between them, yet even by 1850 not all the land had been covered and the further from the town houses lay, the larger they were and the greater the gardens attached. The phenomenal growth of Hulme, was likened to the growth of towns in some of the states of the western USA; though mostly “*cottage residences for the working classes*”, there had nevertheless also been a threefold increase in larger houses for “*the wealthy mercantile classes*”.⁴⁵²

By 1851 the combined population of Ardwick, Chorlton and Hulme was 104,631, whereas the combined population of Pendleton, Broughton and Cheetham was less than a third of this at 32,515. The west and north would appear to have been the more suitable for villas and gardens. Certainly Cheetham village in Cheetham was a “*pleasant place to live*”⁴⁵³ in the early part of the nineteenth century. The land leased by Charles White from the Earl of Derby was laid out and let as gardens. By 1808 they had developed beyond mere gardens. A summer house had been built on Richard Pickstock’s garden, but summer houses then were rather different to today’s summer houses. The one in the garden advertised in 1769 had “*two rooms papered, and Grates fixed up in each room*”.⁴⁵⁴ Pickstock’s had been

⁴⁵⁰ Butterworth, Edwin. *A Statistical Sketch of the County Palatine of Lancaster* (1841) p.67-92.

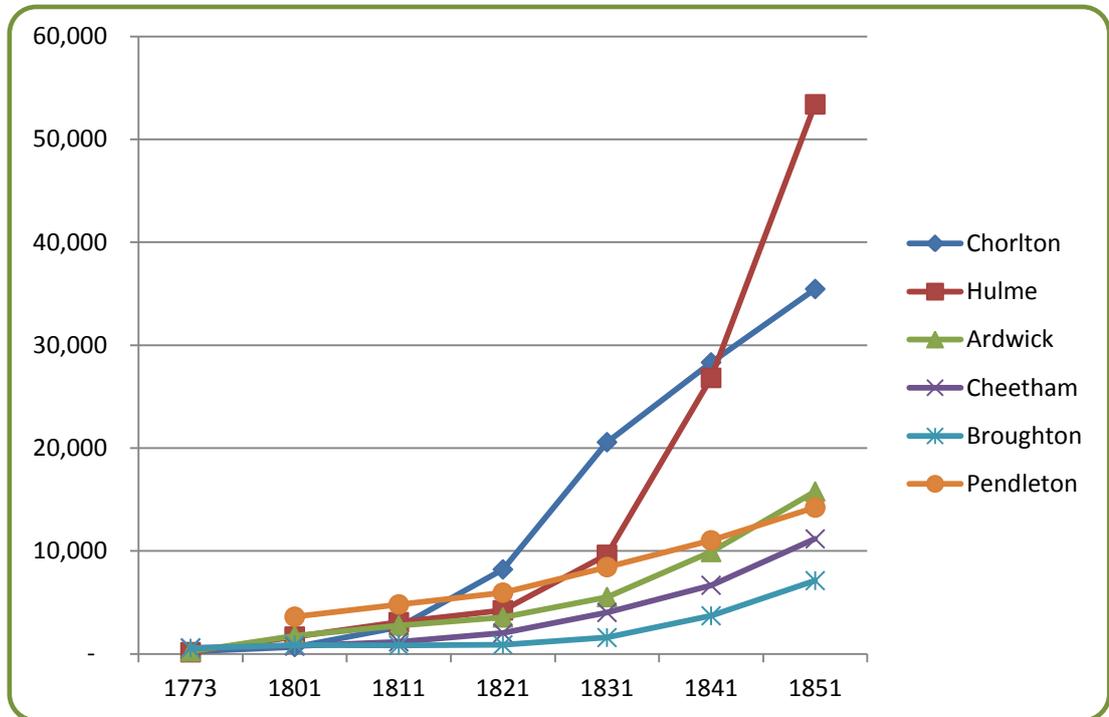
⁴⁵¹ Goffin, Magdalen. *The Diaries of Absalom Watkin* (1993) p. 52-3.

⁴⁵² *Manchester Times*, 13 July 1847.

⁴⁵³ Swindells, *Fourth Series*, p.174.

⁴⁵⁴ *Manchester Mercury*, 22 August, 1769, quoted by Swindells *First Series*, p.16.

developed further – “converted into and used as a dwelling-house”.⁴⁵⁵ By the 1840s the area had become, in Swindells’ words “an urban village”, the Ordnance Survey map showing numerous houses each with its own substantial and landscaped garden.



Population growth in the suburban townships 1773-1851

The downfall of the northern areas was to come after the period covered by this thesis. It was not just that low-rent housing was more and more needed in the suburbs. It was because the prevailing wind was from the south-west. Not only was there an increase in smoke from homes and factories, but it was blown towards the northern areas. Thomas Glover, living in the previously pleasant surroundings of Smedley Lane, wrote to Joseph Hooker on 6 November 1865:

*“... Our neighbourhood has of late years been much encroached upon by building and has become so smoky that I can do little good with anything in the open air, except such plants as are of quick growth. And indeed in the houses, if much air is to be admitted, much soot comes in along with it, so I have of late cultivated little beside ferns which bear to be shut up.”*⁴⁵⁶

Of all the pollutants which came with industrialisation, smoke was the most damaging to plants.

⁴⁵⁵ *Manchester Mercury*, 8 March 1808.

⁴⁵⁶ Letter, Thomas Glover to Joseph Hooker, November 6, 1865, Kew archives.

Smoke pollution

The pollution associated with industrialisation was all pervasive.⁴⁵⁷ Rivers were an early casualty. Swindells wrote that in 1776 the Medlock was “*a clear trout stream*”:⁴⁵⁸ Twenty years later, Aikin stated that the rivers of Lancashire were full of trout and salmon, except that the “*Irwell at Manchester and for some distance below is, however, destitute of fish, the water being poisoned by liquor flowing in from the dye-houses*”:⁴⁵⁹ Later, tanneries made the rivers worse – they were “*black and fetid*” (Faucher) and filled the area “*with the stench of animal putrefaction*” (Engels).

It can be difficult sometimes to reconcile statements about Manchester. Some writers – like Aston – gave a rather glowing account of the healthy nature of the town and the progressive character of its buildings. Yet the facts were that most of the medieval centre survived, that roads were unpaved, that sewage leaked from inadequate privies and, during rain, would get washed into cellar dwellings.⁴⁶⁰ Thomas de Quincey, writing of the town in the early days of the nineteenth century makes the point well:

*“But in those days the Manchester people realized the aspiration of the noble Scythian; not the place it was that glorified them, but they that glorified the place. No great city (which technically it then was not, but simply a town or large village) could present so repulsive an exterior as the Manchester of that day.”*⁴⁶¹

Even at that time Manchester was gloomy – “*mud below, smoke above*”. Smoke became omnipresent. Coal was easily obtainable via the Duke of Bridgewater’s canal. It was used to provide heat in homes and to power factories. As more factories were built – and as the number of houses increased – so the amount of smoke generated increased. It was a nuisance, not just in the vernacular, but in the legal sense. On 1 September 1821 a new Act of Parliament came into force aimed at abating the nuisance which arose from poor construction or improper use of steam engine

⁴⁵⁷ For an appreciation of the lasting effects of industrial pollution see www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-17315323.

⁴⁵⁸ Swindells. Fourth series, p.183

⁴⁵⁹ Aikin, John. *A description of the country from thirty to forty miles round Manchester* (1795)

⁴⁶⁰ Although not aimed specifically at Manchester, the booklet *Information for Cottagers*, published in 1800, in the chapter “*Advice to the poor in manufacturing towns*” warned against the occupation of cellar dwellings as being unhealthy. The extent of such dwellings in Manchester at that time is outside the scope of this thesis.

⁴⁶¹ De Quincey, Thomas. *Memorials and other papers*, Volume 1. (1856) p.90.

furnaces. Those who caused such a nuisance were called before the Court Leet where they could be instructed to abate the nuisance or incur a fine. In April 1825 Messrs Townley and Walker came before the court. It was not the first time, and they had made the changes insisted upon at the earlier hearing. However, the smoke continued to be a nuisance and they were told they would be fined £100 if the problem had not been dealt with in three months. Mr. Townley thought the best option was to increase the height of the chimney. The court agreed.⁴⁶²

The reports of the hearings at the Court Leet provide an interesting glimpse into the insalubrious nature of Manchester and into the relative position of nuisances in the minds of the general public and those setting fines. In October 1827 a number of nuisances were considered. Ringing a bell to attract customers meant a £10 fine for Mr. Normanall, while Mr. Webster had to pay five times that amount for the “*suffocating*” smell, which caused sick headaches, emanating from the mixture of tallow and train-oil in his factory. Boiling of bones to produce an ingredient used in the manufacture of stiffening warranted a fine of £100. Four tons of bones could sometimes be boiled at any one time and this was going on day and night without intermission, seven days a week. Meanwhile William Perkin, who had a bakehouse in Thorneley Brow, Shudehill which emitted showers of soot “*just as if it were snowing*” was fined just £10. The fines were only payable if the nuisance had not been abated within a given period.⁴⁶³

The problem of smoke was so great that there were regular inventions which promised to deal with it – whether it was domestic or commercial. In 1804 a patent was granted to Mr. Pether of Bristol to prevent or cure smoky chimneys.⁴⁶⁴ It might have been this patent which was advertised by Radfords and Waddington of Hanging Ditch in 1808.⁴⁶⁵ In 1810, ‘Verax’ writing in The Tradesman had confidently reported that the small fire engines used in factories without a water-wheel were “*mostly on the construction of Boulton and Watts’s patent, occasioning very little inconvenience to the neighbourhood, as they consume nearly all their smoke*”.⁴⁶⁶ In 1818 the Manchester Mercury explained at length a new idea for centrally located boilers which

⁴⁶² Manchester Courier, 16 April, 1825.

⁴⁶³ Manchester Courier, 20 October, 1827.

⁴⁶⁴ Bury and Norwich Post, 7 November, 1804.

⁴⁶⁵ Manchester Mercury, 31 May, 1808.

⁴⁶⁶ Part one of Topographical and Commercial History of Manchester published in The Tradesman, August 1, 1810, p.142.

would heat houses in a neighbourhood – “*We thus divest ourselves at once of coal or wood fires, of all their smoke, filth, and dangers*”.⁴⁶⁷ In 1820 Josiah Parke invented a method of consuming smoke in steam-engines and in 1821 it was successfully introduced at Messrs Horrocks & Co in Lancaster – “*the adoption of the plan had entirely removed the nuisance of smoke*” and the saving on fuel balanced out the cost of implementation.⁴⁶⁸

In 1822 the Salford Iron Works became the sole manufacturers of Stanley’s Patent Firing Machine which would save fuel and prevent smoke.⁴⁶⁹ The success of such machines was perhaps more imagined than real, as the problem would not go away. In 1830 Witty’s Patent Gas Furnace produced “*Heat without Smoke*”.⁴⁷⁰ John Wakefield, a one time resident of Manchester, provided improvements which were supposed to save fuel and at the same time abate the nuisance of smoke.⁴⁷¹ Engineers continued to struggle with the problem which – despite all the inventions and legislation – continued to increase. “*Perhaps the greatest gift of nature to England has been coal; yet one of the great drawbacks on this gift is its production of smoke.*” So began an article in The Mechanics’ Magazine of 1838. It continued:

“...nothing is more unquestionable than that smoke is not the fault of the coal, but of our own indolence. We could destroy if we would, nay, we could convert it into heat, and thus at once increase the force of our fire and relieve our atmosphere from the darkness which defies the sun, and our lungs from a vapour which half chokes the community.”

Eliza Cook’s Journal tackled the issue on 4 February 1854. It was uncompromising:

“SMOKE is one of the worst nuisances of large towns. It is a cause of uncleanness, of ugliness, and of unhealthiness. It is also very expensive, tends to multiply washing days, and to increase the troubles of cleanly housewives. It involves us in much whitewash and paint, not to mention endless soap and water. And withal, a smoky town or city never looks clean under its canopy of smoke. Nor does the human person feel clean: the minute soot settles upon our faces, upon our linen, upon our clothes, soon making them look foul and shabby. In thick foggy days, the condensed soot falls like a shower; in Manchester and Leeds these “blacks” are abundant—

⁴⁶⁷ Manchester Mercury, 8 September, 1818.

⁴⁶⁸ Lancaster Gazette, 13 January, 1821.

⁴⁶⁹ Leeds Mercury, 6 April, 1822. In 1831 L. Corkell of Oxford Road, previously employed by Stanley, sold an improved machine and promised that he had “*not encroached on the rights of Jack Stanley’s patent, real or pretended, in no manner whatever*” (Manchester Times, 11 June, 1831).

⁴⁷⁰ Liverpool Mercury, 15 January, 1830.

⁴⁷¹ Hull Packet and Humber Mercury, 5 June, 1832.

they are as big as raindrops, and far more terrible. We breathe smoke, swallow smoke, consume smoke. Our air-tubes become like an ill-swept chimney, and not even the safe ugliness of a respirator can altogether protect our lungs from its irritation."

The article made no mention, however, of the impact of smoke upon vegetation, which, for some plants, was deadly.⁴⁷²

In 1848, The Horticultural Magazine, published an article entitled "*Gardening in Manufacturing Towns*".⁴⁷³ It included the sort of advice still given – buy your plant from a reputable supplier, ensure it is suitable to the place you intend it to grow, make sure you water it, remember that a plant in a pot still needs watering even when it rains. Smoke, said the author, need not be a barrier to enjoying plants:

"Plants are purchased, placed in a window, droop and die. It is all laid to the smoke, whereas the smoke will not kill plants unless it is in great excess..."

The key to this advice – for those areas where smoke was **not** in great excess – lies in the words "*they must be well chosen as to the sorts*". The author lays the blame for plant loss on the plants having been purchased in the market instead of from the nurseryman and on the lack of attention to the plants' needs, though he does admit they might not do so well in the town as in the country:

"They may take our word for it, that they may have gardens in manufacturing towns, that plants will grow and flower, and that if they cannot equal their country friends, they can at least make pleasant and agreeable to the sight the most confined bit of ground in the most dense part of the metropolis."

Shirley Hibberd set out to show that gardening in such conditions was possible, though his description of London during the winter months (October to March) shows with what the gardener had to contend:

"... we are buried in a profound mist, composed of ammoniacal moisture, comminuted soot, and a thick vapour, half smoke, half animal evaporation, of a shabby drab colour, which, if we could not see it distinctly, would give unmistakable evidence of its presence to the nose. Soot in the air, soot dissolved in the rain, soot in coats thicker than paint on every ledge and wall; soot on the clothing, and in very visible particles on the nose and shirt front; soot on every leaf, and on the stems and branches of all trees and shrubs; soot everywhere, even in our lungs..."

⁴⁷² Although, Loudon reported the opinion of a gardener at Dudley who said the smoke prevented mealy bugs and other insects from attacking pine trees, which grew remarkably well. (The Gardeners Magazine, 1831).

⁴⁷³ Reproduced in the Supplement to the Manchester Examiner, 1 July 1848.

But it was not all bad:

*"Soot is the first enemy and first friend of the town gardener. In the air it will kill his plants almost as rapidly as if they were mown with a scythe; in the soil it will nourish them, and give them strength to resist the everlasting black deposit."*⁴⁷⁴

The indisputable facts were, however, that only some plants would grow in the sort of adverse conditions experienced in towns. This had been made clear by Thomas Fairchild early in the seventeenth century in his book The City Gardener. Fairchild was a nurseryman in Hoxton, of many years' experience. He had observed that not all plants coped well with smoke and told his readers which plants were best for where they had to contend with it. Figs did well, as did the plane tree and hawthorn, although the stress caused to trees by smoke meant they could not also cope with the stress of being pruned. Among flowers, China pinks coped better than other types of pink or carnation, because they bloomed in the first year of growth. In fact, annuals were the most suitable purchase.

Fairchild separated out the West End of London – which bordered on the countryside – from the City, which was much more inimical to plants: *"THIS Part of City Gardening depends upon more Skill than all the rest; for here we have little Liberty of Air"*.⁴⁷⁵ This differentiation could be found in nineteenth century Manchester – the centre of town equating to the City of London, and the surrounding suburban townships to the West End. Writing a century and a half after Fairchild, Hibberd had similar advice. Lawns – at least in the back garden – were wasted labour, though in a front garden where they would not be constantly walked upon they could be useful. In the border, certain plants would not survive in smoky London – *"the fritillaria, crown imperial, anemone, ranunculus, cyclamen, amaryllis, colchicum, dogs-tooth violet, and scilla are all unsuitable for town culture"*,⁴⁷⁶ but tulips, hyacinths and narcissus were all satisfactory, as was, surprisingly, the dahlia.

In 1864 a Manchester gardener provided a detailed list of what would grow and what would not. H.A. lived on the east side of Manchester, a mile away from its centre. His garden was well protected with trees or buildings on east, south and

⁴⁷⁴ Hibberd, Shirley, The Town Garden, (1855) p.14-15

⁴⁷⁵ Fairchild, Thomas. The City Gardener (1722), p.50, [Chapter 4: "Of Court-Yards, and close Places in the CITY"]

⁴⁷⁶ Hibberd.. The Town Garden p. 53 – "Bulbs unsuitable for town": the dahlia "is often said not to flourish within city walls, but this is a mistake".

west. Some trees survived better than others – limes and elms would grow for a couple of years but would then either “*break off midway down the trunks, or, as if by magic, die in a moment*”. Poplars tended to do the same and never looked well at the best of times. The copper-beech struggled, the mountain ash coped, pear and horse chestnut trees grew well, but seldom or never bloomed. Hollies did well while young, but never succeeded in reaching maturity. The *Weigela rosea* would not bloom, however much care it was given. However, some plants coped well – hawthorns, lilacs, guelder roses (*Viburnum opulus*), Siberian Crabs, Aucubas, Broom, Privet, Ribes and, above all, the hardier Rhododendrons – the *Ledum latifolium* (now known as *Rhododendron groenlandicum*) flowered every season – although some of the less hardy varieties struggled and “*like consumptive people, die off*”. Laburnums, said the writer “*are very satisfactory for a town buried in smoke, but when compared with those grown in more favoured situations they are scarcely worth naming*”. The writer concluded:

*“There is, however, one remark I am desirous of making to all who desire to have trees and shrubs in the neighbourhood of large towns, and it is this – that if they want to be successful they must look carefully after them, and never cease their efforts in protecting them from the enemies which they have to fight against.”*⁴⁷⁷

The attitude to smoke nuisance varied. In 1825 it was remarked how cheerfully those people called to the Court Leet complied with its suggestions to abate nuisances.⁴⁷⁸ Three years later a letter appeared in The Manchester Times headlined “*EXPOSING GOODS FOR SALE AT SHOP DOORS, A LESS NUISANCE THAN SMOKE AND SOOT*”. It was mainly a complaint about the fining of a shopkeeper for placing goods for sale on the pavements outside his shop but its conclusion perhaps gives an insight into the varying attitudes of the time:

“The linens, woollens, prints, &c. which decorate the walls and doors of your industrious townsmen, give the place an air of gaiety, and a business-like appearance; and relieves the eye a little from the unpleasant gloom, which the smokey (sic) volume of thick vapour, manufactured in such vast quantities in the furnaces of perhaps some of your police commissioners throws over the town. But this thick veil of soot of course, as it has remained unabated for years, is either not considered a nuisance at all by these commissioners, (although nausea, sickness, head-ache, and general debility, are the acknowledged consequences of inhaling the pestilential effluvia), or one of

⁴⁷⁷ Journal of Horticulture and Practical Gardening 5 July, 1864

⁴⁷⁸ Manchester Courier, 16 April, 1825.

*minor importance to the public; whose interests these good souls, if you "judge them by their works", have always more or less at heart. Of what import is the general bodily health of the thousands who at mid-day wade through smoke, and are literally compelled to swallow the floating particles of soot, which contaminate the air, and "mar the fair face of day", compared with keeping a graceless urchin outside the walls of a prison, whose thieving propensities are in danger of overpowering his moral feeling, whenever an article or commodity presents itself sufficiently portable and convenient for clandestine removal? No import at all, - "straining at a gnat, and swallowing a camel".*⁴⁷⁹

In November 1850 The Manchester Courier reported on "a case of considerable importance to the public of Manchester and Salford". It concerned Grove House in Salford, "a very handsome house, having pleasure grounds and a little fish-pond attached to it". The produce of the gardens had been worth up to £50 a year. The previous year, John Hough, a brick-maker had erected brick-kilns so close to the garden that smoke was "a great nuisance, but in summer ... almost intolerable". Blossom of fruit trees had been injured by the smoke and very little fruit was growing; vegetables had suffered similarly. Even the grapes in the confines of the greenhouse had been affected by the smoke. Two local nurserymen – William Orr of Cunningham & Orr in Hulme, and John Jones of Pendleton – were called to give evidence as to the damage done to plants. Orr estimated the damage done to the trees and vegetables at £20, but had no way of judging the loss occasioned by the failure of fruit. Within four years Cunningham & Orr would close down, the ostensible reason being that the lease had expired. However, the environmental conditions were becoming difficult for the business. Mr. Orr stated:

"We have brick-kilns near our nursery – within fifty or sixty yards of us. The nurseries cover about 10 or 12 acres. Some of the trees there are of a very delicate nature. The first brick-kiln put up did us a little injury, but being neighbours we did not make complaint."

He agreed that chemical works would also be bad for a garden, and John Jones agreed, though he thought brick-kilns were worse. The judge summed up, the jury retired. After a short time they returned and, said the paper in some surprise, "brought in a verdict FOR THE DEFENDANT".⁴⁸⁰ This failure of the jury to convict

⁴⁷⁹ Manchester Times, 12 December, 1828.

⁴⁸⁰ Manchester Courier, 2 November, 1850. This report can be compared with a sitting of the Court Leet in April 1842. John Shawcross was foreman of the jury, but was one of the defendants, also. He expected to be dealt with by his fellow jurymen no differently to anyone else. He – and other defendants – had already appeared at earlier hearings and their fines were now due if the nuisance still continued. Rather than insisting on the fine being paid, the

was perhaps a reflection of a changing attitude to smoke, described by Stephen Mosley in The Chimney of the World.⁴⁸¹

The history of attitudes to smoke pollution is complex, with economic, social, political and medical factors all playing a role. In 1842 William Cooke Taylor wrote:

*"Thank God, smoke is rising from the lofty chimneys of most of them! for I have not travelled thus far without learning, by many a painful illustration, that the absence of smoke from the factory-chimney indicates the quenching of the fire on many a domestic hearth, want of employment to many a willing labourer, and want of bread to many an honest family."*⁴⁸²

The actions for 'smoke nuisance' brought to the Court Leet were purely associated with business use, even though smoke from domestic chimneys would have increased the pollution as the town grew, even if the factory chimneys had not been severe pollutants. Attempts at finding solutions – and there were many inventions to make for less polluting smoke – failed for a variety of reasons, not least because the promised savings in fuel were exaggerated, but also because of the human factor. Inventions for home use needed to be operated other than in the usual way of piling coals on top, yet, for busy servants, that was by far the quickest method.

From the 1840s onwards, various pressure groups were set up to work towards smoke abatement, bills were brought before Parliament and local authorities, including Manchester, introduced bye-laws. All these were ineffective against a belief, widely held by workers: that an absence of smoke was against their best interest. This apparently anomalous idea can only be understood when set against the working conditions of the time. Although Manchester was apparently a hugely successful manufacturing town, the fact was that the early nineteenth century was a continual cycle of economic prosperity and recession. During good times, workers worked, were paid and could support their families. During the bad times, poverty struck and the workhouse beckoned. The symbol of the good times – that showed a factory was working and needed employees – was the plume of smoke arising from its chimney. *"To most Mancunians coal smoke meant jobs and money, and it is*

defendants were given yet more time to deal with the nuisance. (Manchester Times, 23 April, 1842.)

⁴⁸¹ Published 2001 and sub-titled A History of Smoke Pollution in Victorian and Edwardian Manchester, this is a useful exploration of the differing views attached to smoke described in the following paragraphs.

⁴⁸² Taylor, William Cooke. Notes on a tour of the manufacturing districts of Lancashire (1842) p. 20.

hardly an exaggeration to say that they viewed its absence in the urban landscape as nothing short of disastrous”, wrote Mosley.⁴⁸³ Manufacturers were happy to support the idea that smoke meant work – they, after all, were at risk of bankruptcy when the skies were clear and the fear of this would have mitigated any perceived benefit of spending to (possibly) alleviate a problem which was not theirs alone. Although the factory chimneys were the most visible sign of smoke pollution, its use everywhere was a problem. In Manchester this was exacerbated by the type of coal used – other coalfields produced coal which was less polluting.

For the gardener, the impact of smoke on his plants depended very much upon how close to the garden the chimneys were and the quantity of noxious elements within the smoke, but there is no doubt that even in the suburbs the impact was severe. Leo Grindon was the author of *The Manchester Flora* (1859), which was about wild flowers growing within eighteen miles of Manchester. In it are three mentions of garden plants which could cope with smoke. *Dielytra formosa* (now *Dicentra formosa*) was “*found in almost every suburban garden, bearing the smoke complacently*”; London Pride (*Saxifraga umbrosa*) was inestimable to gardeners due to “*its indifference to smoke and dirt*” and *Lysimachia vulgaris* was “*very common in gardens, especially suburban ones, where its tall, solid pyramids of yellow flowers grin through the iron railings, and bid defiance to the smoke*”. In the early part of the twentieth century, Swindells wrote of Cheetwood where “*in spite of the smoke-laden atmosphere*” there was a respectable show of foliage. He continued “*... the atmospheric conditions are against the cultivation of the finer varieties of plants*”⁴⁸⁴ but common types seemed to flourish and provided colour in gardens.

Prevailing winds meant that areas to the south and west were less badly affected than areas to the north and east and the decision was taken to site the Botanic Gardens in Old Trafford to the southwest of the town.⁴⁸⁵ Although it was the

⁴⁸³ Mosley, *Chimney of the World*, p.185.

⁴⁸⁴ Swindells, *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men*, Fourth series, p. 177.

⁴⁸⁵ The entry in www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/A2A for the Archive of the Royal Botanical and Horticultural Society of Manchester and the Northern Counties reads “*The Manchester scientist John Dalton was consulted as to the most salubrious site for a garden close to Manchester. He recommended Old Trafford, south-west of the city (the prevailing wind carried the city's airborne pollution eastward)*”, however Brooks has identified John Shepherd the curator of the Liverpool Botanic Garden who “*was known to the Manchester gardening elite and was highly regarded within the network of botanic gardens*” as the person consulted. The *Manchester Courier*, 2 May 1829 – in the report on progress towards opening the Botanic Garden in Old

southern suburbs that were built up most quickly, Broughton and Cheetham to the north were, even in 1850, areas of middle-class villas with extensive gardens.

Summary

One of the difficulties experienced in understanding the past is that we, consciously or unconsciously, bring our own experiences to bear upon it and our own experiences vary, not least in the length of time we have ourselves lived. In the same way that anyone under the age of fifty will have no memory of the distinctive outline of an English elm, once so common in the countryside, so anyone of a similar age will have no memory of terraces of smoking chimneys and the black face of the chimney-sweep on his annual visit. It is now only among the very elderly, that a true appreciation exists of what life was like when soot could ruin the clean washing on the line or combine with fog to create the dense, murderous smogs that were a feature of life in Britain before Clean Air Acts began to be passed.

It is not surprising that by 1840 smoke was seen as a necessary part of life in towns. The growth of the smoke cloud would have been gradual, as the number of factories and furnaces increased. As Douglas Adams said "*Anything that is in the world when you're born is normal and ordinary and is just a natural part of the way the world works*".⁴⁸⁶ Manchester's wealthier inhabitants might have recognised the damaging effect of smoke on vegetation, but this would not have stopped them from having their own coal-fired hot-houses for raising tender plants.

A description of how bad something is may depend upon the writer's understanding of how good it might be. It might equally depend upon an appreciation of how bad it was previously; or compared to elsewhere. Over time our previous experiences can lead us to expect the circumstances we currently experience and to accept them as normal. This seems to have been one of the problems with the smoke nuisance. The extent of the problem *as experienced by Manchester people* in the early part of the nineteenth century is difficult to ascertain. Anyone who had lived in the country could find the town unpleasant, when that

Trafford – did not mention the consultee by name, referring to him as "*a gentleman of high celebrity in the scientific world*".

⁴⁸⁶ Adams, Douglas. *The Salmon of Doubt*, (2003) p.95. Today most people recognise the polluting effects of cars, but there are very few who would give up the convenience of owning their own.

unpleasantness was only a fraction of that which was to come. Smoke was, after all, only one aspect of unsavoury life – as seen above, there were other pollutants which probably were perceived as much worse. By the end of the century smoke had become a fact of life; as had its effect on vegetation.

It is the descriptions of the impact of smoke upon plant life which, in the context of this study, are the most compelling. This problem had been long noticed in London: to Fairchild's comments above we could add those of John Evelyn – smoke

*"... kills our Bees and Flowers abroad, suffering nothing in our Gardens to bud, display themselves, or ripen; so as our Anemonies and many other choycest Flowers, will by no Industry be made to blow in London, or the Precincts of it, unless they be raised on a Hot-bed, and governed with extraordinary Artifice to accelerate their springing; imparting a bitter and ungrateful Tast to those few wretched Fruits, which never arriving to their desired maturity, seem, like the Apples of Sodome, to fall even to dust, when they are but touched."*⁴⁸⁷

It was not as bad in 1850 as it would become in the following decades – as Mosley makes clear. He quotes from the Manchester Guardian in 1887:

*"... it is quite possible to increase our 'verdure' by planting in every available space the large-leaved, or balsam poplar. 'Tis true they will not live many years in dense smoke, but they are the best kind for resisting it, and will hold out for different periods up to about ten years, and by eliminating the dead ones and putting fresh plants .. in their place, patches, clumps, and avenues of greenery might be produced and sustained throughout the summer to the delight of thousands who would look upon them ..."*⁴⁸⁸

If a tree whose normal life expectancy is eighty to one hundred and fifty years could not survive for even ten years – even with the best of care – then a true appreciation of the impact of smoke can be felt, even now. Similarly, the extent of or loss of gardens in the town can be understood by the detailed maps that were drawn at different periods. Economics was at the heart of this loss. When land is more valuable built upon than it is when used as a garden, then it is only a matter of time before it is lost to greenery. As Manchester grew, its gardens were pushed ever outwards. Similarly, as the suburbs grew, the quantity of land left as gardens

⁴⁸⁷ Evelyn, John. Fumifugium, (1772) p.20-21. First published in 1661, this reprint included a preface which explained how much worse the situation had become in the intervening century. Referring to Evelyn's comments about orchards in Barbican and the Strand which bore a good crop the year that Newcastle was besieged (as it interrupted the supply of coal to London), he adds: *"It would now puzzle the most skilful Gardener to keep Fruit-trees alive in these places: The complaint at this time would be, not that the trees were without Fruit, but that they would not bear even Leaves."*

⁴⁸⁸ Mosley, The Chimney of the World, p.39.

reduced. This is considered in more detail in the following chapter. Despite the poor conditions – and perhaps because of them – horticultural shows began to proliferate, not only in Manchester itself but also in the other manufacturing towns. More information on this is included in the Chapter Seven.

Chapter Four

Private Gardens

It has been shown above that there was a significant amount of gardening activity in and around Manchester during the period under consideration, but the fragments of information rarely provide more than a glimpse of the gardens themselves. In this chapter consideration is given to the different types of garden which existed at the time and which therefore may be expected to be represented in the area. The garden literature available to garden owners is reviewed, as it may fairly be assumed that gardeners would refer to this, and the design and maintenance services provided by nurserymen discussed. The focus is on the smaller gardens, although some mention is made of larger estates, and map evidence is used to demonstrate the type and design of garden that existed.

Eighteenth-century Lancashire and Cheshire are not renowned for their designed gardens and landscapes. There were a number of halls dating back to Jacobean and Tudor times – Aikin lists eighteen in the vicinity of Manchester, though that included Radcliffe Hall, already being used, at the end of the eighteenth century, as two public houses. Other halls fell victim to conversion in time – by 1831 Hulme Hall a “*singular specimen of ancient domestic architecture*” with a “*romantic and picturesque*” exterior and a much admired interior of “*of curious and ancient carved work*” was fast decaying as it was occupied by a number of poor families⁴⁸⁹ and Chorlton Hall became a school, before finally being demolished.⁴⁹⁰ Ordsall Hall in Salford was still occupied in the 1840s, the house and gardens surrounded by a moat. This (now a museum *sans* moat and, until recently, garden⁴⁹¹) and a few others have survived, to the present day, though not as dwellings.

⁴⁸⁹ Austin S.; Harwood J.; Pyne, G & C. Lancashire illustrated (1831) p.78.

⁴⁹⁰ Chorlton Hall had been demolished by 1841 (Butterworth, p.80). John Holt was also rather lacking in information about fine gardens, although Ince Hall warranted a mention as did the homes of the merchants and tradesmen, “*many of which are furnished with hot walls, green-houses, the rarest plants and finest fruits: the adjoining grounds have been improved, laid out in various styles, and fringed with plantations*” (General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster (1795) p.15).

⁴⁹¹ Gardens have recently been created at Ordsall Hall. No records survive of the gardens before 1800, but “*elements of Tudor, Victorian and modern day heritage*” have been included in the planting. See <http://www.salfordcommunityleisure.co.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/Garden%20eaflet.pdf>

The absence of any comment about gardens attached to these halls – apart from stating that coffins and bones had been found in the gardens and orchard of Kersall Hall (it stood on the site of an earlier religious house) – would indicate that they were not particularly noteworthy. The fact that gardens were not mentioned did not mean they did not exist. Chorlton Hall, for example, was available to let in 1793, including “*the Gardens, Coach-houses, Stables, and other Offices*”.⁴⁹² Only three gardens or grounds receive a mention by Aikin: Shaw Hall near Leyland had “*grounds laid out in a modern style, [and] a very excellent kitchen garden with fruit stoves, &c.*” Chadderton Hall, near Oldham was “*nearly surrounded by shrubberies and pleasure-grounds, laid out with great taste*” and stood in a well-timbered park. At Orford, near Warrington was the home and garden of John Blackburne “*Lancashire’s leading horticulturist*”⁴⁹³ reputed to be the second person in England to have grown and ripened a pineapple. Before his death, which had occurred nine years before Aikin’s book was published, Blackburne’s garden “*always continued one of the chief objects of botanical curiosity for its products, both foreign and domestic, in the north of England*”.

In the absence of any information about gardens in the leading descriptive books of the area of the time, an appreciation of what gardens were like in and around Manchester must be, for the most part, inferred from advertisements and from the books which owners were likely to have consulted. The 1794 Catalogue of the Manchester Circulating Library listed forty-three books (2.4% of the total held) under the heading “*Agriculture, Botany and Gardening*” and, of those, twenty-two were to do with agriculture, two arboriculture, and fourteen botany,⁴⁹⁴ leaving four specifically about gardening and one on floristry – Maddock’s Florist’s Directory.⁴⁹⁵ The gardening books consisted of Hale’s Eden, or a complete Body of Gardening;⁴⁹⁶

⁴⁹² Manchester Mercury, 25 June, 1793. It was advertised again on 26 November, 1793 and 9 September, 1794. It must have been let, but was again advertised on 17 April, 1798 (where the garden was described as “*very extensive*”).

⁴⁹³ Edmondson, J. R.: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

⁴⁹⁴ At the same time, Chetham’s library catalogue (1791) listed 218 books on Botany (Love, B. Manchester As It Is, (1839) p. 130

⁴⁹⁵ In 1850 the Manchester Mechanics Institution listed in their catalogue Miller’s Dictionary (1741 edition), Cobbett’s English Gardener (1829), Johnson’s Dictionary of Modern Gardening (1846) and Cottage Gardener (1849).

⁴⁹⁶ This was clearly an early edition. The title page of the first edition in 1757 refers to the fact that the book was “*Compiled and Digested from the Papers of the late celebrated Mr. HALE*” and makes no mention of the author/editor, John Hill, while by the 1773 edition, this recognition had been abandoned, and the title page showed the author as J. Hill, M.D.

Abercrombie's Gardeners Dictionary (the full title being The Universal Gardener and Botanist; or a General Dictionary of Gardening and Botany); plus Observations on modern Planting and Gardening and Treatise (Practical) on Planting and Gardening. The lack of any author in the catalogue listing for the last two makes it difficult to be sure which books they were. There were two volumes of Observations, which might mean they had two copies of the book – possibly different editions, the fifth edition appearing in 1793 – by Thomas Whately (although that did not include the word planting in the title) or it may have referred to Switzer's two-volume The Practical Husbandman and Planter: or, Observations on the Ancient and Modern Husbandry, Planting, Gardening, &c. first published in 1733. The Treatise was almost certainly the book by William Marshall: Planting and Ornamental Gardening: A Practical Treatise.⁴⁹⁷ It would be an attractive choice for the Manchester of the period, which was still developing as an industrial and wealth-producing hub, as it emphasises the practical and the useful and denigrates the unnecessarily costly and deceptive adjuncts so popular earlier in the century, such as the Temples at Stowe.

Although not specifically a "picturesque" writer, Marshall had been influenced by Gilpin and the book finishes with a description of Persfield in Monmouthshire, in an area naturally picturesque. Before this, he wrote of three types of property, any of which the Manchester businessman might occupy – the Ornamented Cottage, the Villa and the Principal Residence.⁴⁹⁸ The first of these, he said, should avoid ostentation and the garden should be neat around the house but not further away. Botany was allowed, but only of native plants – exotics were to be avoided. The Villa could be "*elegant, rich, or grand*" and skill was required successfully to marry the building with the surrounding countryside. Too many villas, said Marshall, were surrounded, inappropriately, with Brownian landscapes created by inferior designers. The Villa was not occupied all the year round, and planting should be appropriate to the season in which it was used.

The Principal Residence was a different matter. Marshall gave his view as to the appropriate placing of rooms within the house and garden outside. Overall, the owner should be able to gaze out upon his acres with an uninterrupted view;

⁴⁹⁷ A second edition, in two volumes, entitled Planting and Rural Ornament, was published in 1796. *The Library also carried a number of Marshall's agricultural titles.*

⁴⁹⁸ Marshall, William. Planting and Ornamental Gardening: A Practical Treatise (1785) p.610-617.

specifically, the view from the drawing-room should be "*feminine*" and such as provided a backdrop and encouragement to polite conversation; from the breakfast room, the view should be more "*masculine*" – "*wood, water, and an extended country for the eye to roam over*" – and such as would encourage the owner to leave the house to ride or hunt. On the other hand, dining rooms needed nothing in the view outside to provide such "*allurements*".

The shortage of gardening books in the Circulating Library did not necessarily reflect a lack of interest generally. It is possible subscribers already had a good selection at home and that the Library did not consider it essential to carry many volumes. When the catalogue of Sir Edward Watkin's library was published, it contained a good selection of gardening books dating back to 1685 – many of which he would have inherited from his father Absalom, but Absalom is known for his interest in gardening and his library may have been exceptional.⁴⁹⁹

The books referred to below have been limited to those most likely to have been consulted at the time – those of both Miller and Abercrombie ran into many editions (both before and after their deaths) – Loudon is generally considered the leading writer of his time and Walter Nicol has been included as he was the first to write specifically about Villa gardening. Each of these writers combined discussion of gardening with design of gardens.

Garden design and composition

The history of garden design has focused mainly on the larger properties of the wealthy. For those with plenty of land and – more importantly – plenty of cash, it was possible to employ the leading designers. In the eighteenth century, the most prominent was Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, who took to its extreme the growing trend away from the formal gardens of the seventeenth century and, in doing so, created the 'English Landscape Garden'.

The often complex approach of Langley (see chapter on Plants) gave way to the apparent simplicity of Brown – apparent, because, in order to achieve such simplicity, he was prepared to level – or create – hills, change the course of rivers or

⁴⁹⁹ Absalom Watkin was a leading member of the Athenaeum and lived many years at Rose Hill, Northenden.

turn lakes into apparent rivers, move buildings and demolish villages. The result was a 'natural' look. Walled gardens, previously attached to, or close by, houses, were banished to a place distant and disguised. These were expensive undertakings and Brown was never asked to work his magic in the area around Manchester, although his disciple, William Emes was called upon to landscape the grounds of Heaton House (the home of the Earl of Wilton) towards the end of the eighteenth century.⁵⁰⁰

For most people, their understanding of how to create a garden would have been through one or more of a number of routes: their training as gardeners, their reading of literature and their experience of others' gardens. There were a number of writers who could be relied upon to provide sound information, not just on how to lay out a garden, but information on plants and how to grow them. Philip Miller's Gardeners Dictionary went through many editions. Miller was the leading garden writer of his time,⁵⁰¹ indeed Marshall stated that "*Miller is in the hands of most Gentlemen*"⁵⁰² and certainly there were copies available in Manchester at an early date. The list of subscribers to the 1739 edition includes nine copies to two Manchester booksellers, one copy to the Library and another to Mr. Thomas White. Eleven copies seems a small number among a population the size of Manchester and its surrounding areas, even at that time. However, the orders by the booksellers may reflect the ownership of earlier editions rather than a lack of interest among householders with gardens. Elements of the changing taste from the formality of the seventeenth to the informality of eighteenth century design, can be seen in a comparison of the editions of 1735 and 1768.

In the early editions, the Dictionary had, as a frontispiece, a wood-cut of a seventeenth-century-style garden – all straight lines, long avenues and high hedges. In later editions this was replaced by a pastoral and somewhat classical scene of a group of people under a tree, with baskets of fruit and gardening equipment. These illustrations in themselves reflected the changing approach to gardens, although it is surprising how little of the text had been changed for the 1768 edition compared to that of 33 years previously. Under the heading 'Parterres' the phrase 'bowling greens'

⁵⁰⁰ William Emes' foreman, John Parry, was in partnership with George Rogers, nurseryman of Chester, by 1789, when he was designing and laying out "*PLEASURE GROUNDS and PLANTATIONS*" (Chester Chronicle, 30 October, 1789).

⁵⁰¹ Miller (1691-1771) was head gardener at the Chelsea Physic Garden from 1722 to 1770.

⁵⁰² Introduction to Planting and Ornamental Gardening: a Practical Treatise.

was lost, but not the description of them. They were the forerunner of today's ubiquitous lawns:

"Plain Parterres are more beautiful in England than in any other countries, by reason of the excellency of our turf, and that decency and unaffected simplicity that it affords to the eye of the spectator."

Also missing from the 1768 edition is any mention of terraces. Again an important part of seventeenth century design, they were raised walkways on either side of a parterre – particularly of a parterre of embroidery or scroll-work. The high ground allowed the viewer to look down upon the design for a better appreciation of the skill of the designer and gardener.

Under the heading "*Wildernesses*", there was a change of emphasis from "*The usual Method of contriving...*" to "*The old formal method of contriving...*" although much of Miller's text could be interpreted for either a formal or informal approach. Even in 1735 he spoke of a natural look – he suggested planting "*Primroses, Violets, Daffodils, and many other Sorts of Wood Flowers, not in a strait Line, but rather to appear accidental, as in a natural Wood*" – and recommended that symmetry be avoided: "*for that is so formal and stiff, as to be now quite rejected*". By 1768 he went further to suggest that walks should twist "*in easy natural turns*".

However, the greatest difference in the two editions – in terms of garden composition – was in the section on Kitchen Gardens: the 1768 entry being 75% longer than that of 1735. The first sentence is particularly of note. It begins: "*A good Kitchen-garden is almost as necessary to a country seat, as a kitchen to the house*". This is not information which it would have been considered necessary to provide to anyone whose land had been occupied by their family for generations. It would, however, be necessary to explain to any town dweller who had bought – or who was planning to build – a country house. Miller explained that a country house was too far from decent markets to buy fresh food or to have a respectable choice of varieties. The message was clear – the kitchen garden was the most important element when deciding where to build a country-house: "*... therefore whoever proposes to reside in the country, should be careful to make choice of a proper spot of ground for this purpose*".

There is an indication that the banishing of kitchen gardens away from the house in a landscape garden had been productive of poor quality produce: "*for I have*

generally found where Kitchen-gardens are placed near woods or large plantations, they have been much more troubled with blights in the spring, than those which have been more exposed". That Miller is addressing readers who are new to gardening is indicated by the increase in explanation as to *why* he makes the points that he does.

By the time the 1768 edition appeared, Miller was nearing 80 and it was time for a younger garden writer to take the lead. That person was John Abercrombie – thirty-five years Miller's junior. His book Every Man His Own Gardener, first published in 1767 under the name of Thomas Mawe, ran to sixteen editions in 33 years.⁵⁰³ This volume provided instructions for the "*Hot-house, Green-house, Shrubbery, Kitchen, Flower and Fruit Gardens*". The title implies a change in gardening habits – that the middle classes, who perhaps could not afford a gardener, or at least a first-rate gardener, nevertheless aspired to having their own garden. The subheading on the title page, "*Being a New, and much more Complete, Gardener's Kalendar, Than any one hitherto published*" was a direct challenge to Miller, whose own Kalendar had run to many editions.⁵⁰⁴

It was, however, Abercrombie's The Universal Gardener and Botanist which was the equivalent of Miller's Dictionary, and this also demonstrates a desire to reach a different audience. For example, Miller, although he used the phrase often, had not felt it necessary to provide an explanation of "pleasure garden", whereas Abercrombie included a long entry starting with an explanation of what the pleasure-ground consisted.

"The district commonly called the Pleasure-ground, may be said to comprehend all ornamental compartments, or divisions of ground and plantation, surrounding a noble site, consisting of lawns, plantations of trees and shrubs, flower compartments, walks, pieces of water, &c. whether situated wholly within the space generally considered as the Pleasure-garden, or extended over ha-ha's to the adjacent fields, parks, paddocks, or other out-grounds."

He then went on to explain that long straight walks, regular intersections and symmetrical arrangements were "*almost abolished*" and the modern way was to have "*rural open spaces of grass ground, of irregular dimensions, and winding walks, all*

⁵⁰³ Loudon, in his Encyclopaedia of Gardening, described the book as "*a work which has had an extraordinary influence in spreading a knowledge of and taste for gardening*".

⁵⁰⁴ Although Miller remained in demand, as editions of his Kalendar continued to appear after his death.

bounded with plantations of trees, shrubs, and flowers, in various irregular clumps". Elsewhere, however, he states that in some large estates an element of the formal was retained (or re-introduced) "to preserve some appearance of the remains of ancient gardening"⁵⁰⁵ and by the end of the century, the pendulum of taste had begun to swing backwards. Other authors were exploring the ideas of the Picturesque in garden design, but Abercrombie, in his 1797 edition of the Universal Gardener, added a paragraph not included in the early editions and which shows that formality never went away entirely:

"Sometimes similar to the ancient designs, a spacious gravel walk is extended in a perpendicular line, immediately from the front of the habitation, dividing the lawn, or extended on both boundaries, and in other situations; and with a wide border on each side, either straight, or sometimes a little serpentine, and planted with the most curious low flowering shrubs, ever-greens, and herbaceous flowering plants."

However, as early as 1778, Abercrombie was recognising that the size of the pleasure ground depended upon the wealth of the owner, and it can be seen that his initial comments of what constituted a pleasure-ground could be considered excessive for more modest estates:

"The extent of a Pleasure-Ground may be various, according to that of the estate or premises, and of the quality and fortune, &c. of the owner; so may be from even a quarter or half an acre, to thirty or forty or more."

The result was that the new owner of a small amount of land could be inveigled into trying to include too many elements in his new garden. As the nineteenth century dawned two Scottish gardeners were about to make their mark in garden design – John Claudius Loudon and Walter Nicol.

Loudon's early work A Treatise on Forming, Improving, and Managing Country Residences (1806) was a mixture of the polemical and the practical. Even at the very young age of 23 (he was born in 1783), Loudon was very definite in his opinions and always ready to state these, whether complimentary or disparaging. This book was aimed at informing readers as to what constituted good taste as well as explaining how to go about choosing the right site for a country house. There were sections on

⁵⁰⁵ The use of the word "ancient" in eighteenth century gardening books does not equate with current usage (as in "Ancient Rome"). It referred simply to the seventeenth century formal style – ancient being the antonym of modern.

agriculture, culinary gardening and on ornamental gardening, and an explanation of how they varied:

*"Culinary gardening ... is separated from Agriculture ... only by the difference in the implements used for cultivation; and from Ornamental and Nursery gardening ... by the difference between the objects in view."*⁵⁰⁶

In this two volume Treatise, Loudon addressed the newly rich who, having made their mark in business, wished to retire to a country residence. Nicol also had this group in mind – but recognised that they wanted to live away from the centre of town while still working and so addressed their wives as well, knowing that their presence at home while their husband was at work meant they would have a greater say in how the garden was developed and managed. In his preface to The Villa Garden Directory (1809) he states

"It is intended as an assistant to Gentlemen, whose business necessarily confines them to the Chamber and to the Counting-room, who seek health and recreation at their Villas; and to the Ladies of their families, who take upon themselves the management of their own Gardens and Parterres."

For Nicol, unlike Marshall a quarter of a century previously, the Villa could be a Principal Residence. He begins by making clear that there is a distinction between the country residence and the villa, but that this distinction has not previously been properly recognised.

*"The Villa is one thing; the Country Residence, and the Palace, are of another cast: so are their respective Gardens."*⁵⁰⁷

With regard to the properties in the vicinity of Manchester described by contemporaries as "*country residences*" it is difficult to know whether Nicol would refer to them in the same terms. The amount of land available to the owner, he said, is an important factor in deciding what elements should be included in a garden:

"To pretend to represent, on a few acres, the buildings, plantations, and waters of a Place, is absurd. Yet we sometimes meet with the belt, the shrubbery, (sic) the double approach, the lawn, the kitchen garden, the court of offices, the prospect tower, the temple, and even the lake, huddled together in a very extraordinary manner."

Nicol also recognised the restrictions on choosing sites – unlike other writers who assumed that their readers would be able to search out a site well-suited to the type

⁵⁰⁶ Loudon, Treatise, Vol. 1, p.253

⁵⁰⁷ Nicol, Walter, The Villa Garden Directory, (1810) p.1.

of garden and gardening they wished to create and undertake. Nicol's readers were those whose most pressing need was that the site of their new garden would be within easy distance of their place of work.

It is in the organisation of his book that it is most obvious that Nicol was addressing busy people. Small enough to fit into a pocket, the book contains only 52 pages devoted to the laying out of grounds and much of this is to do with choosing the right plants – particularly fruit trees. The expectation was that the owner would have only a small acreage⁵⁰⁸ and there is advice on planting trees that would look right in relation to the size of the house and garden – large trees near to small buildings would look wrong. A further 286 pages are devoted to an "*Index of Work*", equivalent to the Kalendars of Miller and Abercrombie and, of these, more than 70% relate to fruit and vegetables. At the end of the book is a short section entitled "*Hints on the treatment of shrubs and flowers kept in the green room, the lobby and the drawing room*", which provides a useful insight into the importance given to plants in every-day living. Although included in his list are plants now recognised as being suitable for indoor-growing, there are also many now considered only suitable for the garden, being fairly large-growing shrubs.

Nicol died, quite suddenly, just before his 42nd birthday only two years after completing his Villa Garden Directory and Loudon, his junior by seventeen years, was set to become the author best known for writing about Villa gardens in his book The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion (1838). He had previously written the short Hints on the Formation of Gardens and Pleasure Grounds (1812) – but like his Treatise of three decades earlier, The Suburban Gardener was an extensive volume covering the building and internal decoration of the villa as well as the area outside. The changes which had taken place in and around towns becomes clear however, in Loudon's description of houses and gardens as first-rate, second-rate, third-rate and fourth-rate. A first-rate house might have a fourth-rate garden due to pressure of development having reduced its available garden space. Similarly a fourth-rate house might have a second or third-rate garden, because, being outside the town, a small cottage had a large amount of land attached to it. The ability to find a virgin spot of

⁵⁰⁸ The kitchen garden might be no more than half an acre, although it is only in the upper limit of one acre that Nicol varies from Miller and Abercrombie before him. Miller gave a range from one to four acres; Abercrombie from a quarter of an acre to six, or even eight. However Abercrombie also recognised that the kitchen-, fruit- and pleasure-garden might all be combined.

countryside on which to build a house had diminished. Loudon includes details for new owners as to how to renovate existing gardens.

It is generally thought that this book is all about the suburbs, yet in fact it includes references to country residences and also to farming. However, like the earlier 1812 book, it deals with very small as well as much larger gardens – the smallest being one perch (30.25 square yards, for example, a garden measuring 13 feet by 21 feet), the largest one hundred acres, but the majority being around two to four acres. Despite the occasional reference to cows and dairies, it is a modern gardening book. Houses are terraced, semi-detached or detached. Gardens have to cope with underground pipes for water and gas. Owners have different requirements from their small pieces of land – one may wish to grow fruit and vegetables, another to have a botanic garden, a third to enjoy flowers, a fourth to enjoy exercise and recreation. Loudon also considered the economics of gardens – whether the initial outlay or the maintenance should be kept low or whether the garden should be made profitable.

These were certainly not the only writers on gardening – there was a good choice of books depending upon the taste and needs – and even political affiliations⁵⁰⁹ – of the purchaser, but they certainly led in the field. Excerpts from Loudon's writings were reproduced in The Manchester Times, covering such disparate topics as "*How to Kill Slugs*"; "*Cemeteries*"; "*Religion and Gardening*"; "*English and French Fruit Desserts*" and "*Park Lodges*". These were chosen, no doubt, because they appealed to the editor, who wrote about the Gardener's Magazine:

*"To us, Mr. Loudon's monthly lucubrations have all the interest of a novel, and transport us from our dark study to the sunny glades of the forest, the verdant lawn, the luxuriant shrubbery, the ornamented cottage, and the poor man's garden."*⁵¹⁰

For the new gardener, a careful reading of any of these writers would show the importance of "taste", but it was not always clear whether this referred simply to "fashion" or to "artistry". In his section on "*Borders*", Miller described parterres, but then explained how:

⁵⁰⁹ Radicals could, if they wished, learn their gardening from William Cobbett

⁵¹⁰ Manchester Times, 5 October, 1833.

"... Since the modern way of gardening has been introduced in England, all the French taste of parterres, scroll-borders, and fret-work in Box, has been justly banished our gardens: therefore I have only mentioned them here, to expose the taste of those architect-gardeners, who have no idea of the noble simplicity of an open lawn of grass, properly bounded by plantations; but, instead of this, divide the part of the garden near the house, into various forms of borders edged with Box, with sand, shell, or gravel-walks leading about them, by which the ground is cut into many angles scrolls, &c. which is very hurtful to the eyes of a judicious person ..."

It is clear that fashion is being discussed, but that the change in fashion is considered to be due to an appreciation of good design. Loudon also referred back to the formal designs of a previous century which were *"too obsolete, as well as too expensive in execution, for the present day"*. Keeping up with fashion, though, was not always successful. He continued:

*"The prevailing taste, however, must be imitated; the modern style, therefore, has been applied in town villas without science, and the grounds of the retiring citizen filled up with clumps and strips of trees, after the undigested ideas of his builder or upholsterer; or planted out with borders of rare shrubbery, by his nurseryman."*⁵¹¹

The importance attached to the kitchen garden in Miller's work of 1768 has already been noted and this aspect of gardening was important to each of these writers. Kitchen gardens were traditionally geometric in layout, but in interpreting Manchester's gardens it is worth remembering Loudon's description of how small gardens could encompass a range of activities:

*"Where a kitchen garden includes the orchard, and is in part also a flower or ornamental garden, the form may be varied and curve lines occasionally introduced to relieve the sameness of a square shape... An example ... combines kitchen, fruit, flower, botanic, and exotic garden; is surrounded by a shrubbery; and which, by the great extent and variety of its walks, is well calculated for an interesting walk during the winter season."*⁵¹²

Garden Designers

As with any profession, garden designers encompassed a wide range of abilities – the skilled and the competent; the pedestrian and the creative; the journeyman and the master. Only a handful of names have come down through history. Some have already been mentioned above. Brown dominated the mid-eighteenth century and

⁵¹¹ Loudon, John. *Hints on the Formation of Gardens and Pleasure-Grounds* (1813), p. vi.

⁵¹² Loudon, *Hints*, p.20.

remains well-known, despite the lack of documentary evidence left by him. At the end of the eighteenth century, there was the movement known as the Picturesque, argued about in print by Uvedale Price, Richard Payne Knight and Humphry Repton. Repton, often mentioned as Brown's successor, had his clever marketing tool – The Red Books – to ensure his place in history.⁵¹³ He was influenced by, but did not entirely agree with, the picturesque protagonists and is now generally remembered for bringing flowers back into the immediate vicinity of the house, from where they had been banished by Brown.

Repton died in 1818 and Loudon was the man who followed him with his own new approach – the Gardenesque. In the Suburban Gardener, Loudon explained there were three different types of garden:

"... the picturesque, the gardenesque, and the rustic. By picturesque gardening is to be understood the production, in country residences, of that kind of scenery which, from its strongly marked features, is considered as particularly suitable for being represented by painting; while by the gardenesque style is to be understood the production of that kind of scenery which is best calculated to display the individual beauty of trees, shrubs, and plants in a state of culture; the smoothness and greenness of lawns; and the smooth surfaces, curved directions, dryness, and firmness of gravel walks; in short, the gardenesque style is calculated for displaying the art of the gardener; while the picturesque style has a constant reference to what would look well in a picture; and the rustic style to what is commonly found accompanying the rudest description of labourers' cottages in the country."

Garden owners had two options – to lay out their own lands or to employ someone to do it for them. Creative or artistic skills might have been enjoyed by an employer who could direct the work of a gardener. Some gardeners would have been more skilled in that direction than others. For those who could afford it, it was possible to use a garden designer, although Loudon warned of *"the ignorance of professional landscape-gardeners of the gardenesque, and of professional horticulturists and nurserymen of the picturesque"*.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ Many of his Red Books survive. They were a clever way of showing current views and how they might be changed by means of a flap laid over the main sheet. Repton would sketch a few views with such suggestions and give the Book to the owner of a property. If he was commissioned, more such drawings would follow. If he was not, the Book remained. Still in the owner's possession are those of Rode Hall (not commissioned) and High Legh, both in Cheshire. Many Red Books are now in America; the Cheshire Gardens Trust has recently purchased a digital copy of the one of Aston, near Runcorn.

⁵¹⁴ Loudon. Suburban Gardener, p.165.

Some, if not all, nurserymen, offered a design service. William Butler of Liverpool could both plan and execute improvements to land – “*Plantations, Pleasure Grounds, Gardens, &c.*” – and also design and contract for the building of “*Pine, Vine, Peach, Steam, or Greenhouses, Hot Walls &c.*”⁵¹⁵ He was not the only person to offer such services in Manchester. Mr. Malcolm of Surrey, who would have been a son of William Malcolm, the nurseryman of Stockwell in Surrey, who had died two years’ previously, advertised in both Manchester and Cheshire.⁵¹⁶ Since his advertisement was headed “*Picturesque Gardening*” it is probable that he was trying to attract business from those who wanted to make their grounds more fashionable. He offered various designs – pleasure grounds, parks, even “*forest scenery*”, plus buildings, lakes and so on. He also promised to make new plantations 25% cheaper than anyone else. He described himself as “*Land Surveyor*”.⁵¹⁷ “*Architect and Surveyor*” was the title Charles McNiven used, so that, although no advertisement has been found, it can be inferred that Charles laid out grounds as well as providing designs for buildings and his nurseryman brother Peter provided the plants and supervised the planting.

Alexander Bannerman was another Liverpool nurseryman who provided designs – for “*the laying out and improving of Parks, Approaches, Pleasure Grounds, and Gardens*”⁵¹⁸ and some years later, John Ker, having worked as a Land Steward and Gardener in Chorley, set up as a “*Nursery, Seedsman and Landscape Gardener*” in Preston. He spoke of his experience in “*the Planting and Improving of Estates, Laying out of Pleasure Grounds, &c.*”⁵¹⁹ Nurserymen generally kept a list of gardeners who were looking for work and this may have included those who designed and laid out grounds. Thomas Ayres, a nurseryman at Duffield near Derby was both nurseryman and designer. In 1828 he described himself as “*Ornamental Gardener and Nurseryman*” and offered to design and lay out “*Parks, Lawns, Lakes, Parterres, Pleasure Grounds and Kitchen Gardens*”.⁵²⁰ He was also competent in the

⁵¹⁵ Manchester Mercury, 25 February, 1800.

⁵¹⁶ See, for example, Chester Chronicle, 17 October, 1800 and Manchester Mercury, 21 October, 1800. However, during the same period (September-December), his advertisement appeared in the Reading Mercury and the Exeter Flying Post, so there is no reason to suppose that he came to the North West.

⁵¹⁷ Manchester Mercury, 21 October, 1800.

⁵¹⁸ The Lancaster Gazette, 12 February, 1820. When Skirving took over the nursery, he made no mention of offering this service.

⁵¹⁹ Preston Guardian, 15 December, 1849.

⁵²⁰ Derby Mercury, 29 October, 1828.

management of trees and plantations and the construction of garden buildings. Within five years, mention of the nursery side of his business was absent and when he advertised in the Manchester Times, it was as a “*Landscape Gardener*”.⁵²¹

Landscape gardeners were eventually listed together with nurserymen and seedsmen, in Trade Directories. In 1840 Andrew Foote, who was based at Bank Parade in Salford, referred to himself as a Landscape Gardener and Seedsman in an advertisement that was purely to do with the sale of flower and garden seeds.⁵²² It became a more regular description. Bigland not only referred to himself as such in an advertisement (1850 – “*Gardens and pleasure grounds laid out and planted, by contract or otherwise*”) but also in the 1851 census. James Hallam at Cheetwood also described himself as a landscape gardener.⁵²³ It should not be forgotten, however, that designing gardens was often an amateur undertaking. This was displayed at Didsbury in 1858 when the Flower Show included designs for flower gardens – “*Immense care and skill were displayed in their construction*” – for which Mr. Hobbs, an amateur, won first prize. There were also four designs submitted by cottagers.⁵²⁴

Urban gardens

Town gardens have received little attention, an important exception being Todd Longstaffe-Gowan’s The London Town Garden, 1700-1840 (2001) but he acknowledges the difficulty of defining urban gardening in a period of rapid growth of towns. (Urban became suburban in a few short years, as shown in the chapter on Environmental Changes.) The history of town gardens, he said, is less one of design “*as the town garden was an amateur and everyday accessory it was generally poorly documented*” and evidence was gathered (as here) from garden writers, maps, newspapers, etc:

⁵²¹ Manchester Times, 19 March, 1831.

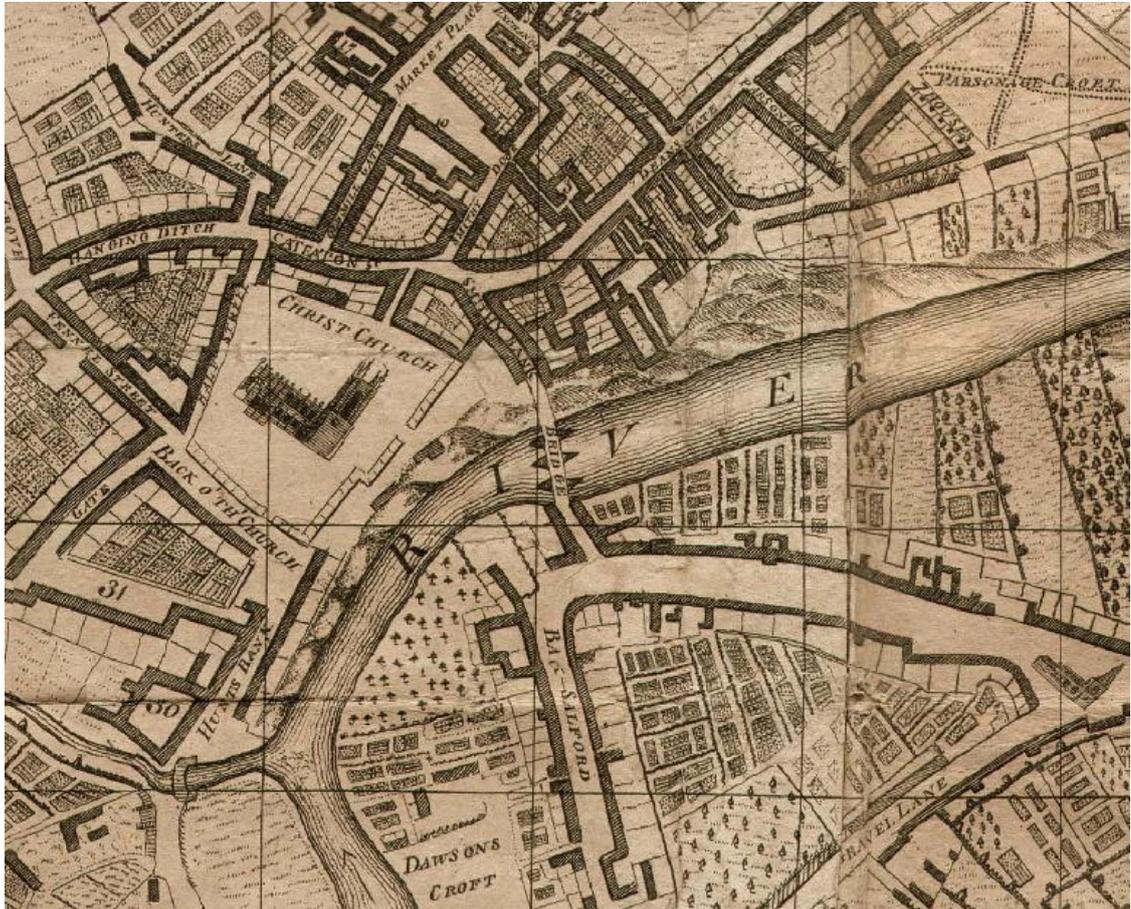
⁵²² Probably the same Andrew Foote who was Gardener at Broughton New Hall, Manchester Courier, 1 May, 1830. Born around 1789 and died 9 August, 1855 (Manchester Courier, 11 August, 1855). A William Foote was gardener to Sir Benjamin Heywood in 1856, and may have been Andrew’s eldest son. William was a judge at local flower shows.

⁵²³ Though apparently not a very successful one. Twenty years later he appeared as a “*pauper inmate*”.

⁵²⁴ Manchester Times, 28 August, 1858.

*"The sources of evidence ... include gardening and horticultural literature... maps ... contemporary novels, journals, newspapers, magazines..."*⁵²⁵

In Manchester, gardens depicted on the mid-eighteenth century maps of Casson & Berry, show neat, rectilinear plots, possibly only of vegetables, and orchards.



*The centres of Manchester and Salford, 1751 (Casson & Berry).
Note the East/West rather than North/South orientation*

Only Strangeways had a large amount of land attached, with the superscription "*Part of Strangeways Park*",⁵²⁶ but Strangeways, despite its proximity to the town, was a country estate. Apart from these maps, what information remains of gardens in the centre of Manchester in the mid-eighteenth century is fairly sparse and relates mostly to those houses which might be said to be in the suburbs – being on the very edge of the built up area of the time. The Dole Field was considered to be the best situation

⁵²⁵ Longstaffe-Gowan. *The London Town Garden*, p. xii. In the Bibliography he lists fourteen newspapers and magazines including the *Daily Advertiser*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Gardener's Magazine*, the *London Evening Post* and *The Times*.

⁵²⁶ This appeared only on the 1741 map. Later editions included a Prospect of Manchester, which obliterated the Park.

close to town and the house available there has been mentioned above. It may well have been the same house that was advertised twenty years later, still referred to as “*pleasantly situated*”,⁵²⁷ though within fifteen years, the whole area had been built up and Dole Field was a street, its name recalling its original countryside position. In 1766 there were “*three Gardens (in one of which there is a genteel Summer House)*” to let in Hunts Bank.⁵²⁸ In the same year the Windmill at the top end of Deansgate – again outside of the main part of the town – was for sale. The property included “*a Summer House, and large Kitchen Garden, well planted with Wall Fruit, the Whole containing 2500 Yards, handsomely Wall’d and Palisado’d round*”. This was a considerable amount of information for such advertisements which tended to speak of simply “*a garden*” or possibly “*a large garden*” and occasionally mentioned the fruit trees with which it was stocked.

It was shown in the previous chapter how, as the town grew, gardens were pushed to the edges and for several decades the detached town garden was a feature of Manchester. The town was not alone in this. In 1831 Loudon wrote of the “*gardens belonging to persons living in towns, but which are detached from their houses; the latter being gardens of culture only*”.⁵²⁹ He specifically mentioned Birmingham (more than two thousand),⁵³⁰ Wolverhampton, Dudley and Manchester. Very few of these gardens survive into the twenty-first century – there are fifteen in Warwick⁵³¹ but the ones generally referred to are those at St. Ann’s, Nottingham, where 670 such gardens, first created in the 1830s are now in use as allotments.⁵³² There were once many more; Howitt recorded more than five thousand.⁵³³

The idea of subscription gardens – detached gardens with specific attributes – was propounded by Joseph Paxton in the first volume of The Horticultural Register. His suggestion was to surround 12.5 acres with a wall and divide the land inside into fifty gardens of a quarter of an acre each, with some elements (like a conservatory)

⁵²⁷ Manchester Mercury, 16 November, 1779.

⁵²⁸ Manchester Mercury, 1 July, 1766. Even in 1791 there was an “*elegant House, with Coach-house, Stables, Gardens, and Pleasure Ground, situated at Hunt’s-bank*”. Advertisement in Manchester Mercury, 10 May 1791.

⁵²⁹ The Gardener’s Magazine (1831) p. 408

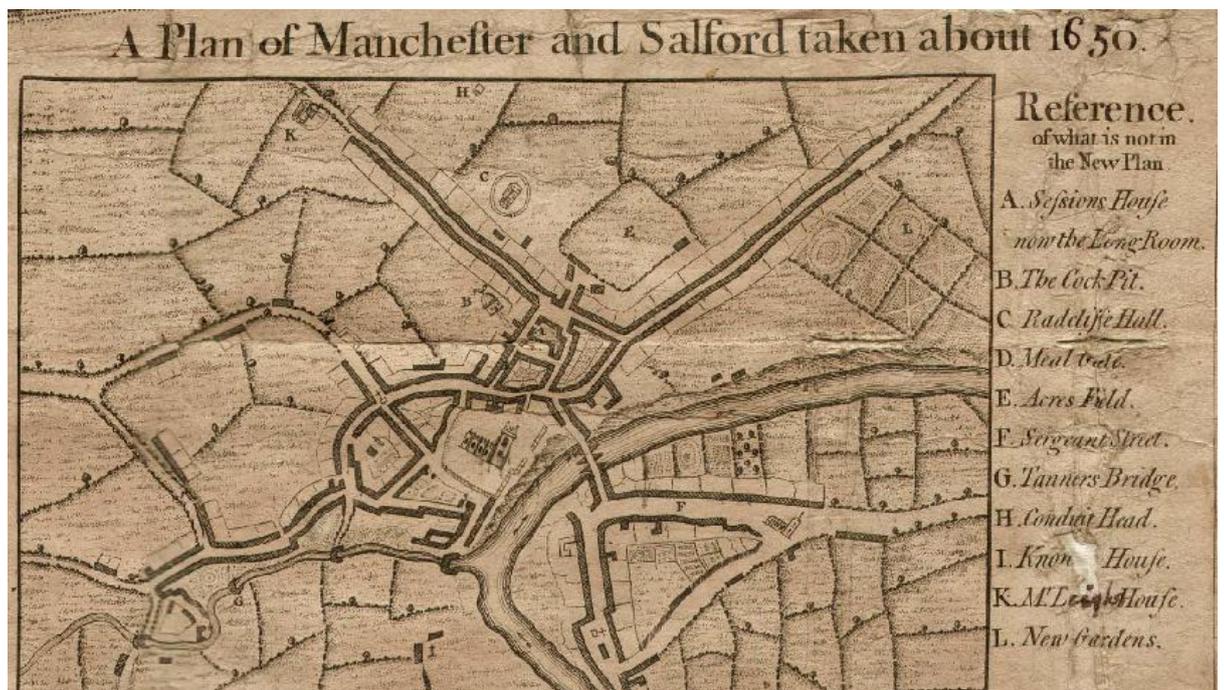
⁵³⁰ The remaining gardens are at Edgbaston. See www.edgbastonguineagardens.org.uk

⁵³¹ Cheshire Gardens Trust Newsletter, October 2011. Victorian Guinea Gardens by Gaye Smith.

⁵³² See www.staa-allotments.org.uk/heritage.

⁵³³ A description of the gardens, their contents and their owners appeared in Howitt’s Rural Life of England, reproduced in the Manchester Times of 25 November 1843.

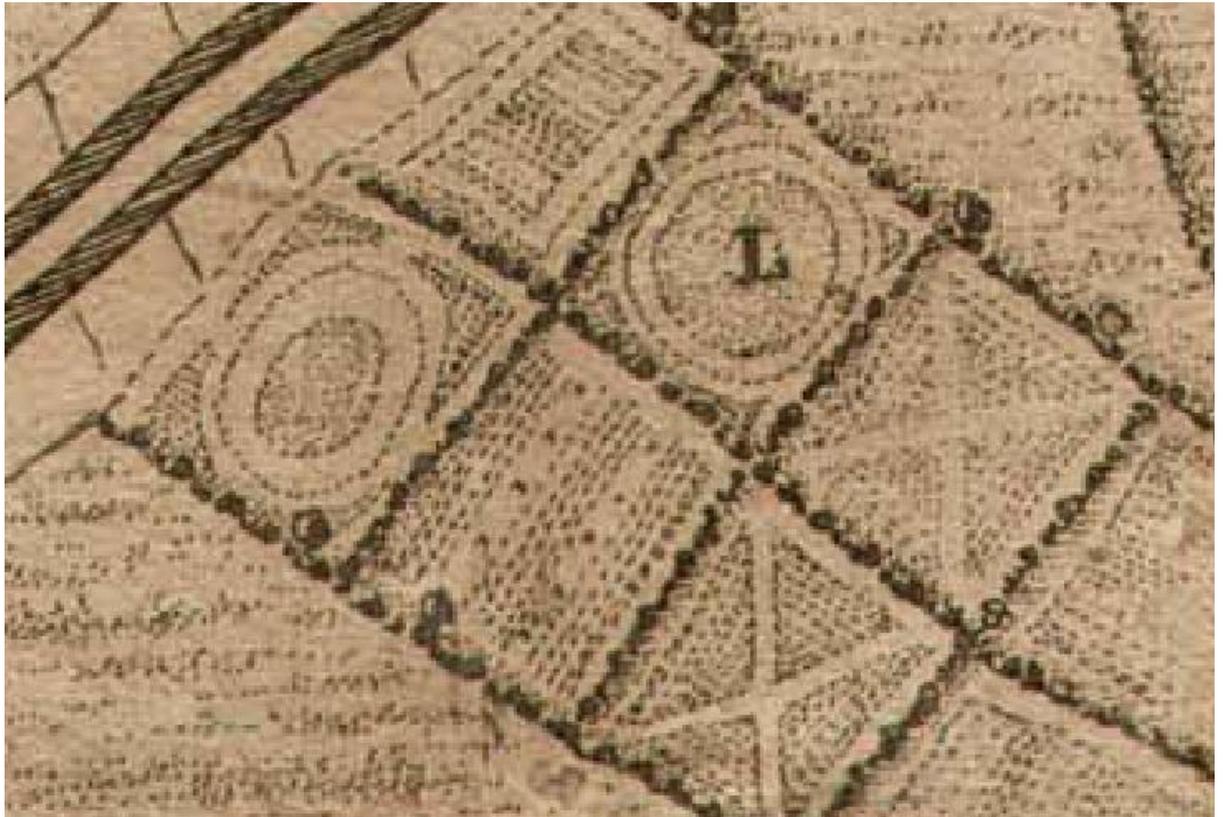
open to all subscribers. A first-rate gardener could be employed to oversee the whole, and labourers used to keep the gardens in order. Each owner could develop their own quarter of an acre in a way that suited them. Paxton's idea was taken up – and his article reproduced in whole or in part – by other gardening magazines, including Loudon's. The Manchester detached gardens predate those of St Ann's by several decades. It is possible that the New Gardens on the 1650 Plan of Manchester were detached gardens, individually occupied rather than a communal or commercial area.



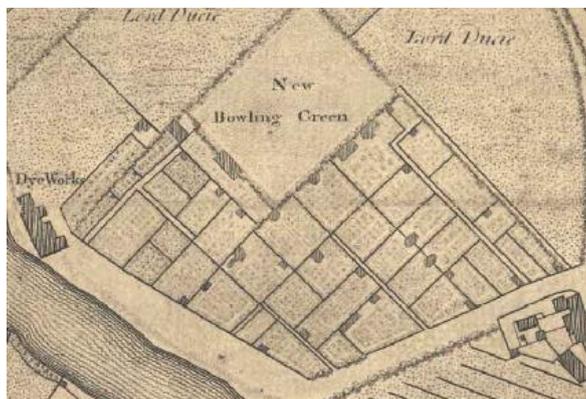
The 1650 Plan of Manchester taken from Casson & Berry's map of 1751. The 'New Gardens' marked 'L' are to the west of Deansgate. It can be seen that the buildings along all the main streets have areas behind them, but these may have been yards rather than gardens, as it is clear they are separate from cultivated areas in Salford (note, the orientation of the map is east/west rather than north/south).

Certainly by the 1790s there were a number of detached gardens – they could be found around the New Bowling Green on the road out to Strangeways, on the north side of the river Irk at Walker's Croft⁵³⁴ and either side of Swan Street (now part of the Manchester Inner Ring Road), at the top end of Shudehill. All of these can be seen on Green's 1794 map of Manchester. The area of gardens at Walker's Croft can also be identified on Casson and Berry's maps.

⁵³⁴ According to Swindells, the name came from the Flemish "walcken" to full – the Flemish immigrants who brought fulling to Manchester having been known as "Walkers". The gardens gave way to a burial ground by 1815. (Fourth Series, p. 146-7).



A close-up of the 'New Gardens' taken from the 1751 reproduction. It is clear that these gardens are separated by hedges or trees and they show a variety of layouts.



From Green's map of 1794: on the left are the gardens on the way out to Strangeways; on the right those at Walker's Croft. By 1850 the railway had cut through the land beyond Walker's Croft gardens which had been turned into a cemetery

In Deansgate, in 1782, there were at least twenty-one gardens – “*all well-tenanted*” – held under lease from Robert Humphreys. These appear to be the cluster of small gardens (shown on Green's map) situated in a corner of the field behind the much larger site of what would have been Humphrey's Gardens (see Chapter Horticultural Trade). Not far away, bounded by Gartside Street and Quay Street, was a more

extensive cluster of larger gardens, the largest, probably attached to the house in Deansgate, clearly laid out as a pleasure garden rather than a productive one.



A large number of gardens lay between Deansgate and Gartside Street



The same area fifty years later

Also on Green's map were the gardens at Cheetwood. These were owned by Charles White, the celebrated surgeon, co-founder of the Manchester Infirmary, on a lease from the Earl of Derby. White himself lived in King Street, with a country residence at

Sale⁵³⁵ where he had extensive gardens and a good collection of plants – in 1781 he sent some thirty pages listing the plants in his garden to fellow doctor and botanist, John Hope of the Edinburgh Botanic Garden.⁵³⁶ In his covering letter he described how he had constructed a rock garden – made of an artificial rock, comprised of “*stone, tin rubbish, gravel of sorts*”.⁵³⁷ The structure was in the shape of a half moon, facing south, with the two points being sixty-three feet apart and the distance north to south fifty feet. In 1792 White advertised “*a large Quantity of Land, exceedingly proper to make into Gardens*”. The land lay between Strangeways and Mount Pleasant. It was virgin soil, sloping southwards and sheltered to the north. There was plenty of marl (used as a manure), and a brook for water. Altogether it was “*pleasantly situated, commands a fine Prospect, and is calculated to produce the earliest Crops of Vegetables*”.⁵³⁸ White let the land as a number of gardens of differing sizes – it is difficult to be precise as to the exact number, as the information is on several scraps of paper, most of which are undated.⁵³⁹

In 1796 Edward Holt was employed to measure the gardens let by Charles White, which varied considerably in size – from 262.5 square yards (slightly less than a perch) upwards, though most were no more than a quarter of an acre. The cost was one penny a yard. The gardens were rented by individuals who, for the most part, did not appear in the Directories of the time. In 1801 one list of thirteen gardens covered an area of approximately two and a quarter acres and in 1803 a number of gardens were being charged at twopence a yard. One of the gardens – previously occupied by a Mr. Pickstock – was advertised for sale in 1808.⁵⁴⁰ From this it is clear that some, at least, of the gardens were leased for a number of years and that they had become rather more than detached gardens. A summer house, which had been built on the garden, had been converted into a dwelling house. By the 1840s all these gardens had given way to Villas. Not all detached town gardens had

⁵³⁵ He appears to have lived first at Sale Hall and subsequently at Sale Priory – now Priory Gardens.

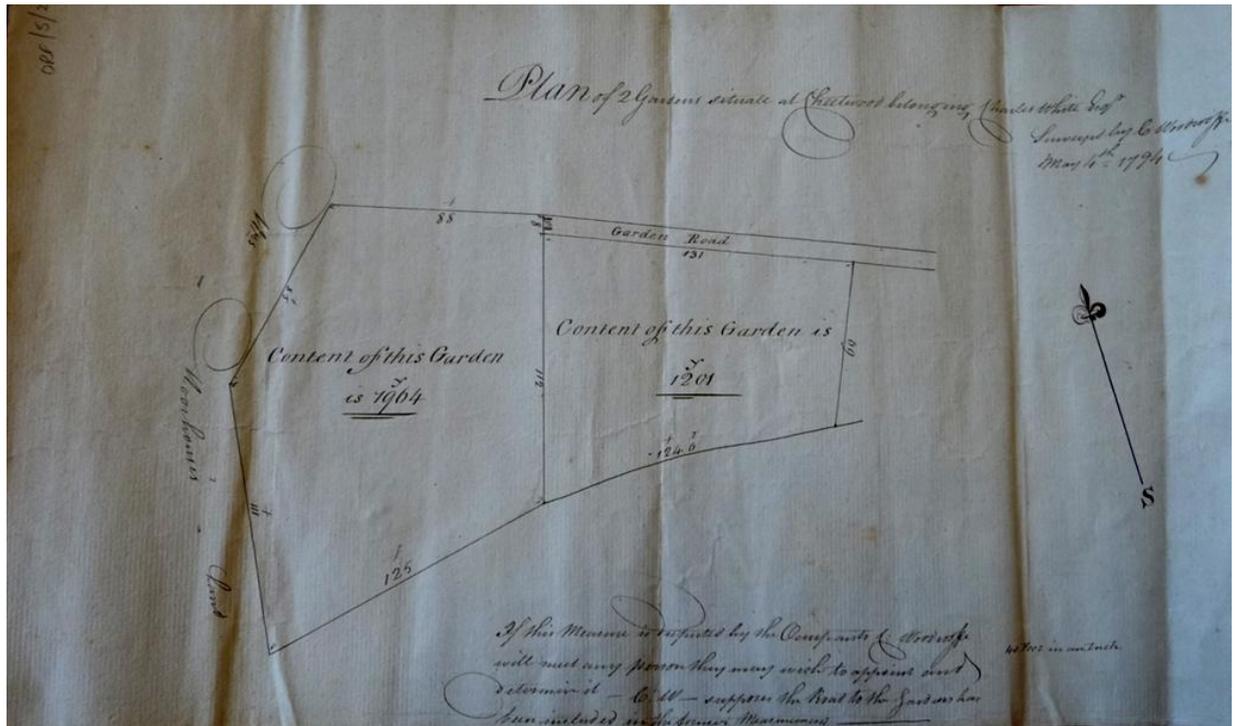
⁵³⁶ A copy is held by the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh and the original is held by the National Archives of Scotland.

⁵³⁷ This pre-dates Pulhamite, the artificial rock famous in the nineteenth century.

⁵³⁸ *The Manchester Mercury*, 10 April, 1792

⁵³⁹ The papers from which the following information is taken are held at John Rylands, Deansgate and are part of the Orford Papers, ref: ORF/5/2/34 and ORF/5/2/36,

⁵⁴⁰ *Manchester Mercury*, 8 March, 1808. Two months previously the leasehold interest of Thomas Wardle on a house and garden at Cheetwood was auctioned. Wardle held the lease from Charles White and sub-let to Thomas Owen.



This plan dated May 4th 1794 is headed: "Plan of 2 Gardens situate at Cheetwood belonging Charles White Esqr." The surveyor was C. Woodruffe who promised to "meet any person they may wish to appoint" if they disputed his measurements. An earlier document dated February 2nd 1794 apparently of the same grounds gave the measurements as 1676 and 1208 square yards rather than 1964 and 1201.

been lost to Manchester by then, however. Some could be found in Chorlton and Rusholme. To the east of Oxford Street, running between Rusholme Road and Rosamund Street East (now beneath buildings of the University of Manchester) were ten narrow plots laid out as gardens, with small buildings – sheds or summerhouses – on some. There were others behind the Chapel on Upper Brook Street and a little further away a larger group alongside Robert Street. In 1881, Edwin Waugh recalled the detached gardens which can be seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1848 (shown overleaf). These were on the east side of Bury New Road by Mount Pleasant and Waugh described them:

*"... there was a tract of garden plots, mostly tenanted by poor men and working botanists, some of whom lived at a considerable distance. This quiet tract of gardens in the fields, with its bowers, and flowers, and quaint little summer houses, was a very pleasant scene; and some of these gardens were beautifully cultivated. Five-and-twenty years ago, and for fifteen years after that, it was a delightful custom of mine to wander in and out amongst this tract of gardens, and chat with the gardeners whilst at their work."*⁵⁴¹

⁵⁴¹ Manchester Times, 5 March, 1881.



Detached Gardens near Mount Pleasant

In Manchester, town gardens became a luxury; land was more valuable for commercial use. As they disappeared in the town itself, areas on the outskirts were available for detached gardens, until they also were required for building. Detached gardens further out of town, such as those owned by Charles White at Cheetwood, became suburban gardens as their occupiers extended their summer houses to become villas.

Country gardens

The idea of the merchant or manufacturer's country house as a retreat from business was discussed in the previous chapter and it was shown how such a residence could be within walking distance of the town. Some were rather further out and not particularly large, though others were more akin to the homes of the landed gentry,

the mansions being large and the grounds divided up into a number of different elements. One example is Parr's Wood, a villa in Didsbury which came complete with thirty-two acres of land.⁵⁴² This was a substantial building with two parlours, a dining room, study, store rooms, butler's pantry, housekeeper's room, kitchen, back kitchen, brewhouse, laundry, dairy and larder on the ground floor. A double staircase led upstairs to the drawing room, a dressing room and eight bedrooms. In the grounds were gardens, orchards and plantations of forest trees.⁵⁴³

Not all houses described as country residences were so grand. In 1790 a number of properties were advertised for sale or to let – a sample of eight provides localities of Cheetham, Gorton, Longsight, Burnage, Didsbury, Newton Heath, Sale and Wilmslow.⁵⁴⁴ The information offered varied, but the importance of location is shown in that five of them gave the distance from town and the one near Wilmslow (thirteen miles away) emphasised that there was a stagecoach from that town to Manchester three days a week.

The importance of gardens to the population as a whole at that time is questionable. Certainly, all but one of the sample mentions gardens (the one that didn't stated the house was "*well adapted for the Country Residence of any Gentleman's Family*"), but other things were of more importance – stables and coach house, together with pasture, for example, were necessary for anyone wanting to keep his own carriage. The house at Cheetham, being only one mile from town, was within walking distance and the stable and pasture land were offered only "*if required*". The house at Newton Heath was also available "*with or without 5 acres of meadow and pasture, coach-house, barn, stable, shippon, &c.*"

The blurring of boundaries between farms and gardens was also clear – country residences, even within three miles of Manchester's markets, appear to have been relatively self-sufficient. It was not just fruit and vegetables. Poultry were kept for eggs, cows for milk, pigs for bacon. Four adverts specify a barn and shippon, and the house at Didsbury also had a granary.⁵⁴⁵ It was the advertisement for this

⁵⁴² The twenty Lancashire acres advertised have been calculated to give statute acres.

⁵⁴³ *Chester Courant*, 10 March, 1795

⁵⁴⁴ *Manchester Mercury*, in turn, 9 February, 15 March, 17 May, 12 October, 23 March (both Newton Heath and Didsbury), 15 June and 12 January 1790.

⁵⁴⁵ As late as 1846 a house within two miles of Manchester was available with a cow-house in addition to "*garden and pleasure grounds ... tastefully laid out, with a fish pond, hot-house, pinery, mellon pit*" (*Manchester Times*, 14 March 1846).

that provided the most information about its grounds. There were three gardens – in all nearly five acres – with the ubiquitous fruit trees plus hot-houses, hot-walls and greenhouse.⁵⁴⁶ There were also nearly ten acres of meadow and pasture. It is also this advertisement which hints that extensive gardens were not necessarily acceptable to all: it promises that the hothouses (which were expensive to maintain) would be reduced if necessary. In 1793 a house in Newton was offered “*with or without a large Garden well stock’d with Fruit Trees*”⁵⁴⁷ and later that year a wanted advert appeared for a house in the country which stated rather lukewarmly: “*A garden to it would be acceptable*”.⁵⁴⁸

The country feel to the area immediately surrounding Manchester can also be found in advertisements for properties in Longsight and Moss Side. That at Longsight was occupied by Daniel Shelmerdine in July 1790.⁵⁴⁹ There is no indication of the size – it is referred to simply as a “*Genteel Country House*”, but it came complete with a large garden (well stocked with fruit trees) a shrubbery and a pleasure ground. Although not specified, the inference is that the garden was walled. In addition to these grounds, there were the usual offices – barn, shippon, stable, coach house, etc – and also eleven acres of land. Ten months later, Shelmerdine having apparently moved out, the property was still available.⁵⁵⁰ In Moss Side, the remaining twenty-five years of the lease on Badger Hall were for sale in 1791. This had only three acres of land, but, importantly for anyone keen to develop the garden, it came complete with a gardener’s house.⁵⁵¹

When Birch Villa was advertised two years later, there was rather more information than was usually the case. The house, smaller than Parr’s Wood, was situated on the road to Stockport. It enjoyed good views and was well built, with dining room, drawing room and back parlour as well as kitchen, pantry and scullery on the ground floor, four bedrooms on the first floor and two more on the second floor. The grounds were in excess of two acres (not including a “*sheet of water*”) and surrounded on three sides by a wall of which about thirty yards was designed as

⁵⁴⁶ The gardens specify two acres Lancashire measure – i.e. nearly five statute acres. The six acres of meadow and pasture would also have been Lancashire measure.

⁵⁴⁷ Manchester Mercury, 23 April, 1793.

⁵⁴⁸ Manchester Mercury, 20 August, 1793.

⁵⁴⁹ Manchester Mercury, 13 July, 1790.

⁵⁵⁰ Manchester Mercury, 17 May, 1791.

⁵⁵¹ Manchester Mercury, 19 April, 1791.

a hot wall.⁵⁵² The borders and part of the land had been well manured over the previous two years (and there was plenty of horse manure still available) and “*a great number of shrubs, fruit, and flower trees*” had been planted.⁵⁵³ When the house was on the market again in 1836, the flower gardens and pleasure grounds were described as “*full of valuable ornamental plants and shrubs*”. There was also a small greenhouse and the inevitable fruit garden.⁵⁵⁴

Some houses were advertised to let several times – Chorlton Hall and Strangeways being examples.⁵⁵⁵ It could be that they were taken on short-term lets and therefore returned onto the market, or it might be that they were difficult to let. The grounds of Strangeways had undergone a considerable transformation between 1751 and 1794, and in 1793 the property was described as having “*Gardens, and Fish Ponds completely stocked together with about three Acres of Shrubbery, or Pleasure Grounds*”.⁵⁵⁶ Fish ponds were a common feature. At a time when the Irwell was no longer able to support fish, ponds and pits in the neighbourhood were stocked with carp and tench.⁵⁵⁷

It might be thought that the paucity of description of the grounds surrounding country residences in the 1790s suggests that gardens were not a deciding factor in choosing accommodation, were it not for the fact that information about the houses themselves was frequently non-existent. It is clear though, that the larger the house, the more information was included. This continued to be the case into the nineteenth century, when advertisements for country houses became increasingly longer. One possible reason is that with the increasing wealth of inhabitants came increasing demand and it became a seller’s market. In 1817, the Longford estate was for sale

⁵⁵² Hot walls were built with flues along which the heat from fires could be spread. They were useful for protecting and encouraging the formation of less hardy fruits such as peaches and nectarines.

⁵⁵³ *Manchester Mercury*, 19 February, 1793.

⁵⁵⁴ *Manchester Times*, 4 June, 1836.

⁵⁵⁵ *Manchester Times* 26 February 1881: Edwin Waugh describing Strangeways wrote: “*After [the Ducie family] left [Strangeways Hall], it fell into the hands of several occupants, in succession.*”

⁵⁵⁶ *Manchester Mercury*, 12 March, 1793.

⁵⁵⁷ Aikin, John. *A description of the country from thirty to forty miles round Manchester* (1795). p.205.

and the advertisement ran to more than 360 words.⁵⁵⁸ The following year it was West House in Eccles with an advertisement nearly twice as long.

Longford was the home of the Walker family and in 1817 it was on sale following the death of Thomas Walker. The remains of the estate now constitute Longford Park, in Stretford, but in 1817 the property consisted of approximately 58 acres, most inside a ring-fence, the rest a short distance away near the banks of the river Mersey. It was a complete country residence, with outbuildings for cows, pigs and poultry and stabling for ten horses. There were a barn, a granary and fruit rooms (pears were much in evidence). A walled garden of one Lancashire acre (1.6 statute acres) had sections of the walls heated. An orchard, twice the size of the garden, included a well-stocked fishpond. Following the death of Thomas Walker, the property was occupied by his brother C.J.S. Walker, a noted horticulturist.⁵⁵⁹ Loudon, in his *Encyclopædia of Gardening* (1835) lists a variety of cucumber: "*Longford: handsome fruit, originated at Longford, near Manchester, the seat of C.F.S. (sic) Walker, Esq., and grown there sometimes to the length of 27 inches*". Loudon visited Walker in 1831 at which time he saw a cucumber – "*a perfectly straight fruit, measuring 39 in.*", though this he thought was "*Walker's Improved*" variety.⁵⁶⁰ The estate continued to be farm as much as garden – in 1837 a heifer raised by Walker went for slaughter.⁵⁶¹ In 1857 the property was purchased by John Rylands who had his book-keeper keep a careful note of every item of produce used by the kitchens: "*Every cauliflower was charged. Every melon was set down in silver. 'This is the only way' said the millionaire, 'by which you can really tell whether a garden pays or not'*".⁵⁶²

The grounds in which West House stood were even larger than those belonging to Longford – 75 statute acres. The building itself was relatively large – the dimensions given make the ground floor in excess of 1,605 square feet. Outside

⁵⁵⁸ *Manchester Mercury*, 1 July, 1817.

⁵⁵⁹ *Manchester Times*, 8 January, 1881: "*His brother was the well-known and highly-respected Manchester magistrate, C.J.S. Walker, whose fresh, benevolent face, and quaint figure, with blue coat and bright buttons, buttoned up to the chin many people will still remember.*"

⁵⁶⁰ *The Gardener's Magazine*, 1837.p.202.

⁵⁶¹ *Manchester Times* 1 April 1837. Loudon appears to have known Walker well. In 1831 he printed a letter from George Henry Walker of Longford Holmesburg near Philadelphia on the subject of soil fertility and crop rotation. Loudon added a note which read "*We wish this ingenious writer could see the fruit tree borders in his brother's garden at Longford, near Manchester*".

⁵⁶² Swindells (Third series) p.31-2.

the dining room was “*a beautiful sheet of running water*” stocked with trout. As at Longford, there were cows, pigs and poultry. One walled garden was heated for peach, nectarine and apricot trees. There was an orchard, lawns, pleasure ground and plantations. The estate was crossed by several streams and up to thirty thousand trees had been planted. This “*delightful residence*” was well placed between two turnpike roads and was about three miles from Manchester. The pleasure grounds, the shrubberies and gardens had been “*laid out and planted with great taste*”. However, probably because it was relatively close to the town, it was suggested that the estate could be divided up to provide “*two more beautiful residences*”.⁵⁶³

Country residences did not change a great deal in the three decades following these 1817/18 advertisements – they simply moved further away from the town. Their continuing attraction was facilitated by the railways. A six-bedroom house at Barton Moss, with plantations and two acres of gardens was advertised in 1850 as being “*within one hundred yards of the Barton Moss Station. The trains take up and set down passengers six times each way daily*”.⁵⁶⁴ Timperley Brook, (“*shrubs and choice flowers*”)⁵⁶⁵ and Bloomsbury Cottage (“*shrubs, plants, and flowers, of the rarest description*”)⁵⁶⁶ each with accoutrements of non-floriferous outbuildings and animals, were just ten minutes walk from Altrincham station.

However, some owners developed their grounds more than others and were more interested in ornamental than practical planting. In Sale, Charles Wood⁵⁶⁷ owned a house and grounds, described as a *Cottage Ornée* with a Botanic Garden, where he grew a huge variety of “*rare and costly American and other evergreen and deciduous shrubs*”. The garden had been laid out for him by John Shepherd, the Curator of the Botanic Gardens at Liverpool. The grounds were described at length when Wood attempted to sell the property in 1829. The flower garden was divided by hedges to allow for arrangement along botanical lines, and it included all types of plant – “*hardy, herbaceous, alpine, and bog plants, dahlias, &c*”. In addition to the kitchen garden and the usual fruit trees, he grew grapes, melons and pineapples. In

⁵⁶³ *Manchester Mercury*, 28 April, 1818.

⁵⁶⁴ *Manchester Times*, 4 May, 1850.

⁵⁶⁵ *Manchester Times*, 13 July, 1850.

⁵⁶⁶ *Manchester Times*, 31 August, 1850.

⁵⁶⁷ Wood was a lawyer, his offices in Brazennose Street.

the heated and unheated greenhouses he had a collection of plants – “*many particularly scarce and valuable*”.⁵⁶⁸

Not so concerned with gathering the rare and exotic, nor with new fashion in garden design, was Richard Shelmerdine, a man of independent means, who lived at Baguley House with its “*conservatory and greenhouse, and ... gardens, pleasure grounds, and lawn ... laid out in the old style, with hedges of yew and holly, ... filled with shrubs and ornamental trees of most luxuriant growth, and surrounded with groups of chesnut, lime, purple beech, variegated oak, and other trees of great size and beauty.*”⁵⁶⁹ However, apart from a handful of large estates such as Heaton Park and Trafford Park, country residences around Manchester tended to be relatively modest, though relatively self-sufficient.

There is one other type of garden, situated in the country, which must be considered. Mills erected before steam engines became common were situated alongside rivers and streams, where the water could turn wheels to provide power. Owners lived alongside their mill, creating gardens which, being in hilly areas with naturally occurring water, whether the owner had the intention or not, were naturally picturesque in character. Most of these mills have long since gone, but that at Styal was saved by the National Trust. Over the past few years, the garden which was attached to the house has been cleared and re-planted, giving us a glimpse into the garden history of two centuries ago. Many plants were purchased originally from Caldwell’s in Knutsford. The information in their ledgers has been invaluable in the re-creation of the garden. Appendix Five gives more details of this garden and the Caldwell purchases.

Suburban gardens

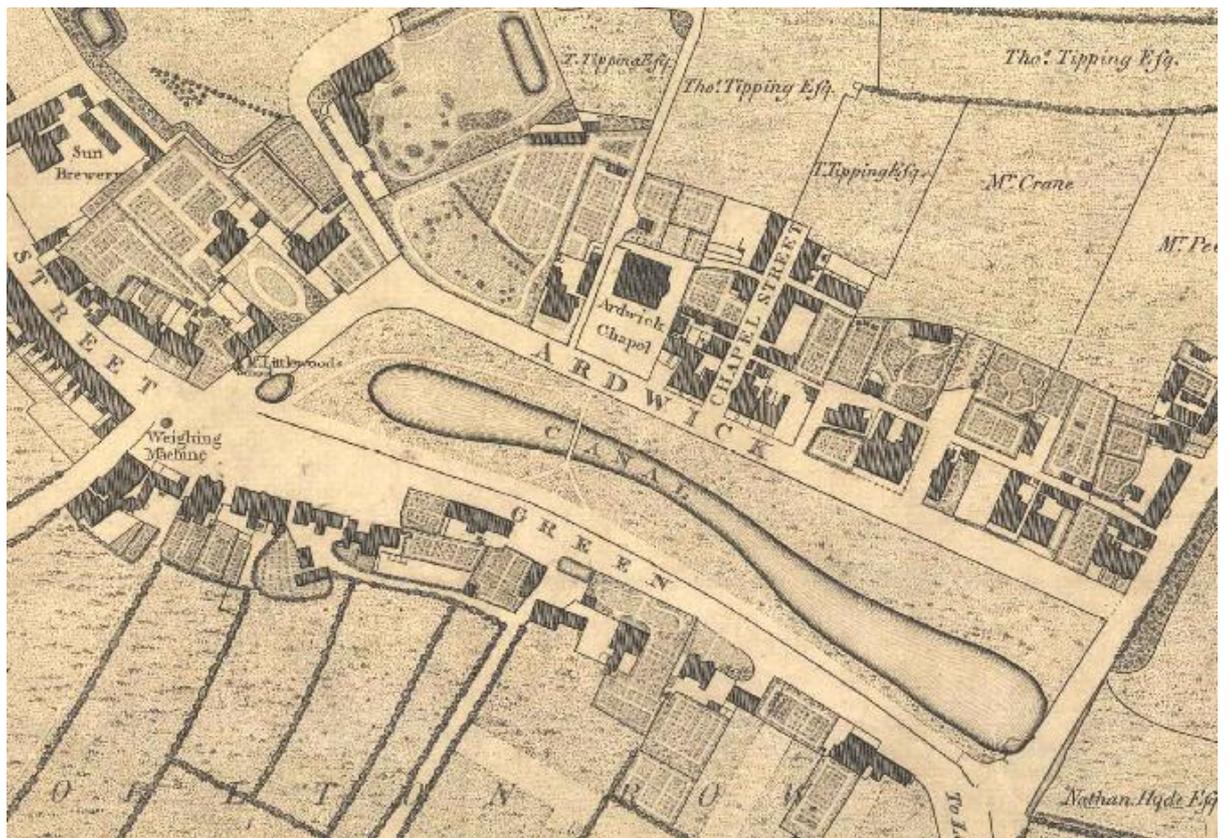
The differentiation between gardens was never clear cut, but as the nineteenth century progressed, the country residences in the immediate vicinity of Manchester were transformed into suburban villas, losing part of their associated land in the process. However, if the garden linked to a “country residence” is taken to imply self-

⁵⁶⁸ Manchester Times, 13 May, 1829.

⁵⁶⁹ First advertised for sale in 1849 (see Manchester Times, 19 September) and again in 1850 (Manchester Courier, 8 June). Shelmerdine later moved to Northenden.

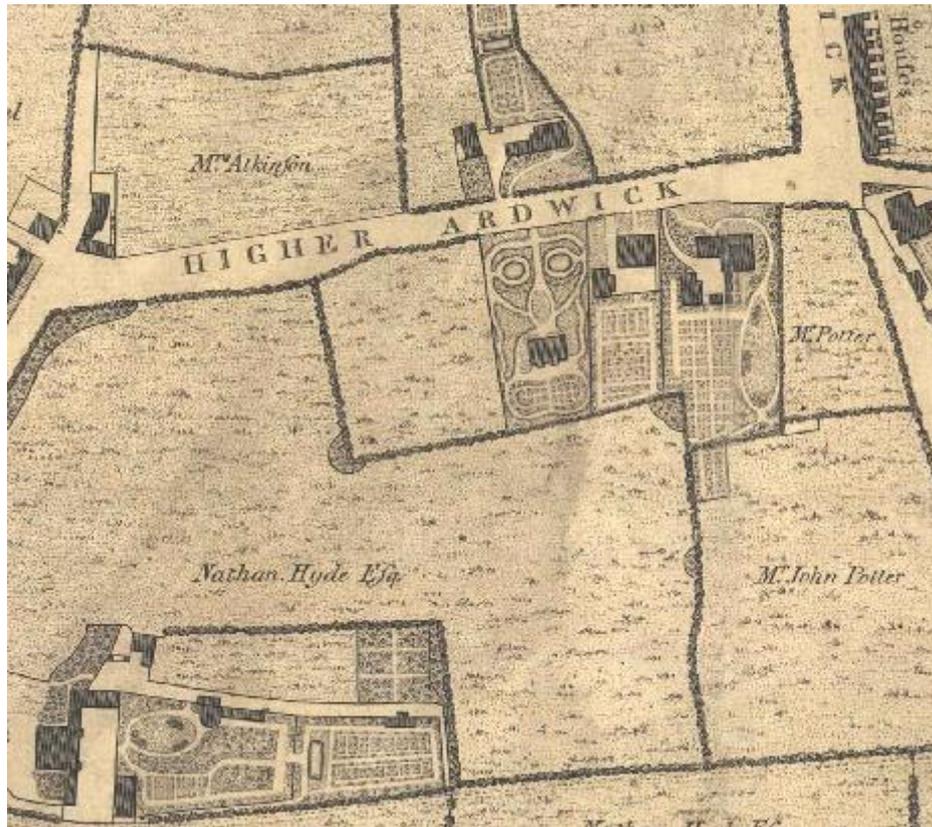
sufficiency in food, then the indications are that proximity to the town led to an ornamental as much as functional approach to the garden.⁵⁷⁰

Green's map of 1794 did not stretch far beyond the urban areas of Manchester and Salford, but it provides a useful look at what these "country" gardens were like. Ardwick, known for its "country residences", had relatively small gardens. None is of particular note. Many are rectilinear implying a walled garden of fruit and vegetables; a few have walks which curve or are laid as circles or ovals, denoting a pleasure ground. They do not demonstrate particular creativity. One, hopefully more impressive on the ground than on the map, looks like nothing so much as a face (see following page). Its central path is crossed by another which follows a heart-shaped route, diverting symmetrically and inwards into circular paths half-way along each side, while the central path continues until it divides around an oval shaped lawn. The impression of eyes and nose is overwhelming.

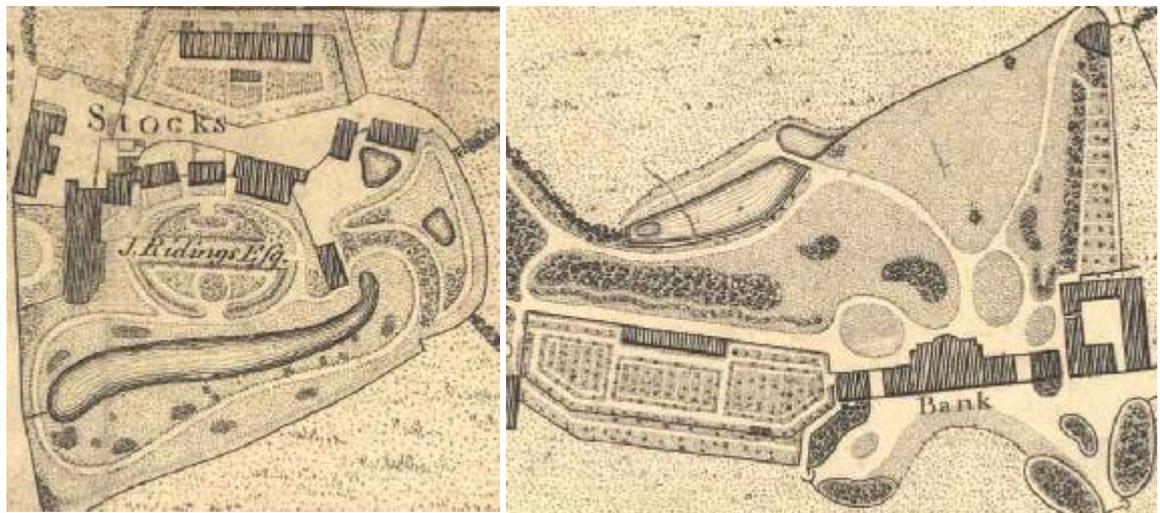


⁵⁷⁰ Although, interestingly, Love commented on the fact that ornamental water was often missing: "The great resources of water ... which are available to the inhabitants of all the main roads leading out of Manchester, make it a matter of surprise that the wealthy inhabitants of the suburbs, do not, more frequently, avail themselves of the means thus afforded them of decorating their villas, by the erection of fountains." (*Manchester As It Is*, p.150.

Properties around Ardwick Green (previous page) and Higher Ardwick (below) in 1794

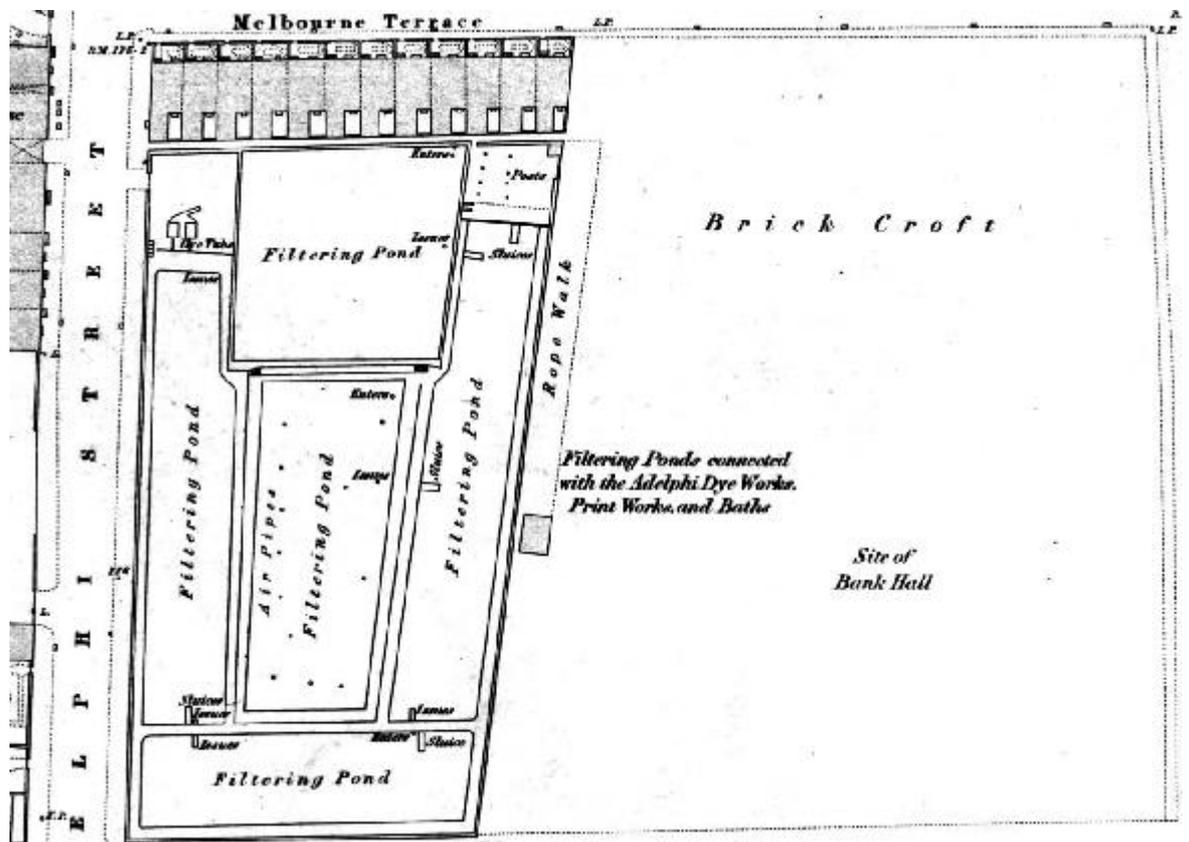


There were some gardens which were larger and which showed more taste in their layout. Stocks (below left), the residence of John Ridings, a fustian manufacturer, rather more than a mile north of the town was laid out with a serpentine lake, sinuous walks and areas of planting. It was not an extensive garden, but it had been given considerable thought.



*To the left, Stocks, the home of J. Ridings, Esq. and to the right, that of Holland Ackers, 1794
Note: the scale is 25% greater than in the Ardwick images*

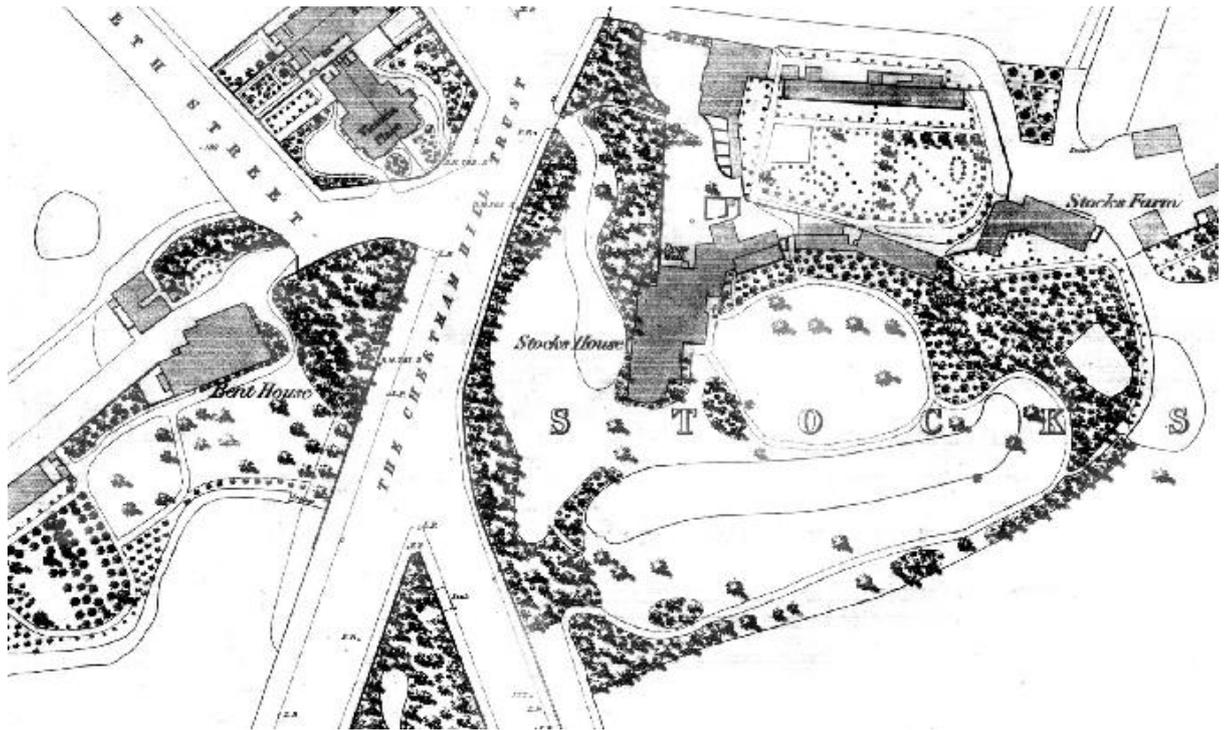
The drive to Holland Ackers' house, Bank, led from White Cross Bank in Salford. The walk to the left of the picture (above, right) continued for some distance, heavily wooded on either side, round two sides of the field, ending in a circular walk with two large ponds at the top end of the path back down to the pleasure grounds. This property, more than any other in the area covered by the map, demonstrates how kitchen and fruit gardens could be linked with shrubberies and pleasure grounds. Each of these properties was of sufficient size to allow for creativity in design. Most gardens were very small and their owners kept to a simple plan with, at most, a circular or oval path to provide some interest.



By 1850 Holland Ackers' house and garden had disappeared, having given way to a Brick Croft and Filtering Ponds associated with the Adelphi Dye Works, Print Works and Baths.

However, (next page) Stocks house retained its garden, though changes had been made. The lake remained, but the circular flower garden had been turned into a lawn. The planting was much more mature and there were new villas in the neighbourhood.

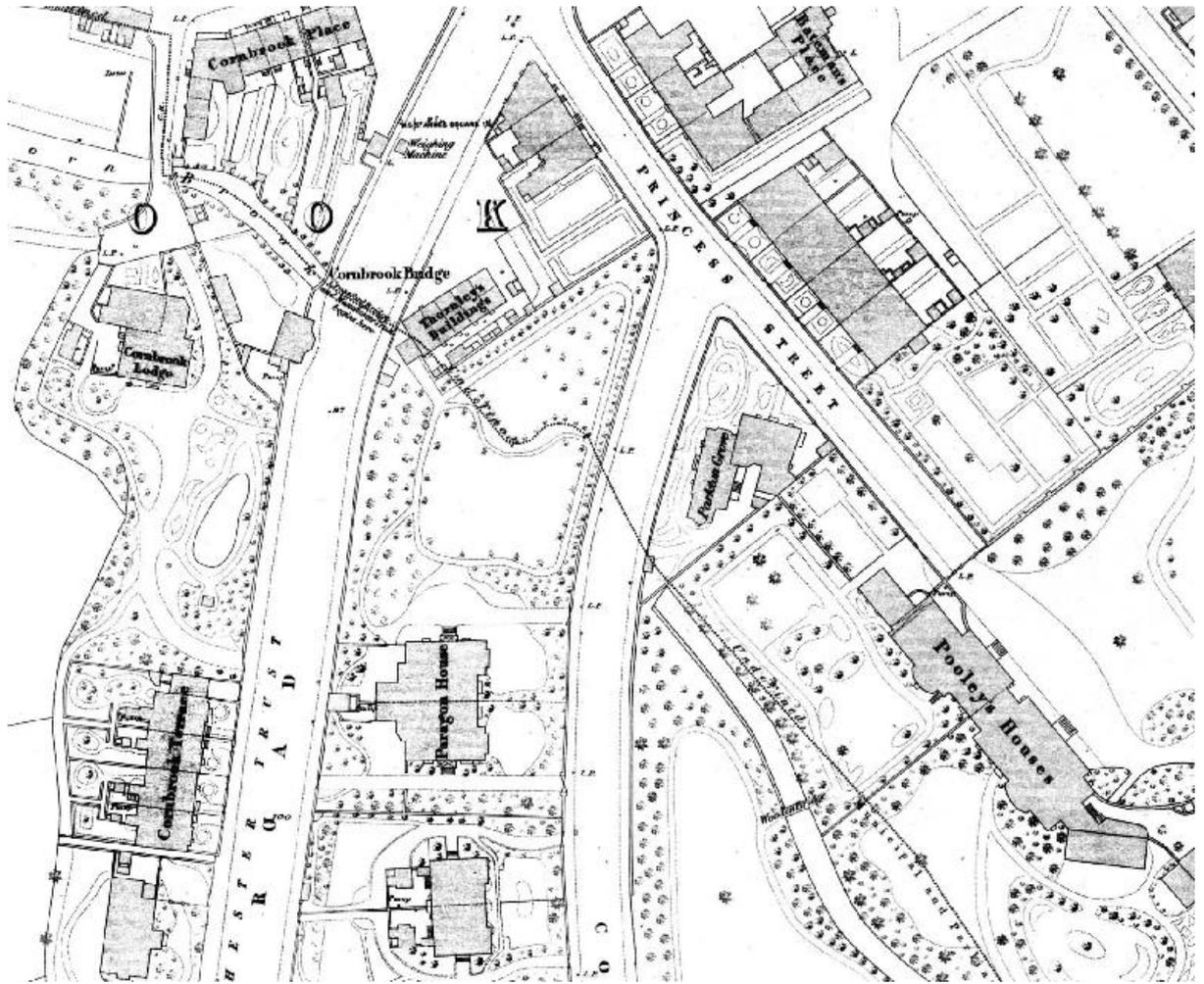
Today both sites are car parks



Stocks (1850)

By the mid-1840s, when the Ordnance Survey map of Manchester was created, the range of gardens was much greater and those which might be designated villa gardens showed a variety of layouts, though serpentine paths and areas of shrubbery predominated. There is little evidence of kitchen gardens, but the planting may be – at least partly – of fruit. The variation in size of garden at this time was considerable. Some were of several acres, but they were often surrounded by more modest housing – smaller properties, semi-detached houses, terraces with tiny (or even no) gardens. For owners of property, the temptation to give up part to development was great and would have been exacerbated by turbulent economic times. There were periods of recession, bank failures and bankruptcies. Individuals who had invested in property when times were good could see the whole of their portfolio put up for auction. In May 1841 Mr. Rowell lost fifty-six newly built properties in Hulme.⁵⁷¹ Occupiers were seldom owners, and investors bought for the rental stream.

⁵⁷¹ These properties were terraced, without gardens, and included some back-to-backs. There would have been no opportunity for buyers to develop further.



This area of Cornbrook shows the incursion of smaller houses into an area of substantial houses and gardens.

Towards Greenheys was Mayfield Terrace in Chapman Street. Here two houses were described as having "*Gardens back and front, delightfully situated*",⁵⁷² though the front gardens were very tiny and the back gardens very ordinary. How delightful the situation would continue to be was not mentioned. Apart from the fact that a Penitentiary stood at the end of the street, the vacant plot next door was also offered as suitable for building six more houses of the same size. All around were roads, ready laid out for more development. Yet at the end of Chapman Street lay some delightful villa gardens, clearly laid out under the influence of the teachings of John Loudon.

⁵⁷² Manchester Times, 8 May, 1841.



Above: The properties in Mayfield Terrace, Greenheys; the lack of detail in the gardens possibly due to their being newly built

Below: Around the corner, more substantial, and longer-established, houses and gardens

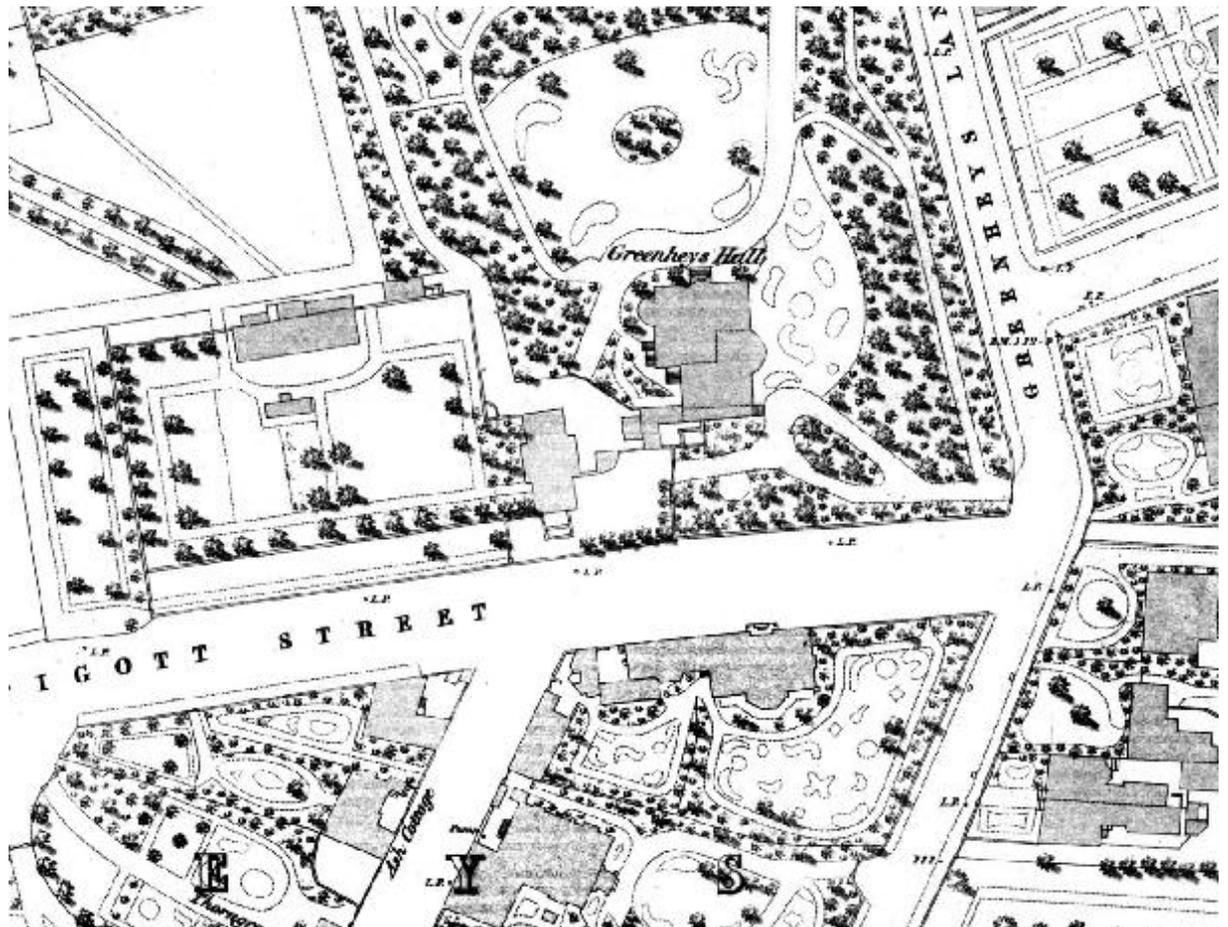


In 1831, Loudon had written about the faults to be found in villa gardens – “*We shall pass over the ridiculous twisting and turning of walks, without real or apparent reason, which is so frequently met with, and rather dwell on the bad shapes and improper places of groups of shrubs and flowers on lawns*”.⁵⁷³ In his usual way, Loudon condemned the vast majority of the gardening population who could not understand the principles that he had laid down: “*All that can be done with grown-up gardeners is, to lay down a few rules derived from the above fundamental principle; and all that can be hoped from the adoption of these rules is, the avoiding of glaring error*”. His rules were simple. Firstly the correct placing of groups was essential, and outlines should complement each other – the curve of a flower bed matching the curve of the nearby walk. Secondly, flower beds within lawns should be sparing and in harmony with the lawn – i.e. geometrically shaped flower beds were out of place in an informally shaped lawn. Thirdly, the shapes should be “*long and narrow rather than round and lumpish*”. Fourthly, a group – or a tree – should never appear dead-centre. Finally, beds should be near the paths, but if they extended into the lawn, they should be placed in groups, leaving broad sweeps of lawn. For the most part, the gardens in Greenheys met his criteria – though it is possible to find a tree dead-centre, and a lawn cluttered with variously shaped beds, including small diamonds and circles. Loudon would not have approved, so it is as well he did not visit its owner. He praised the villas of William Bow of Lower Broughton and John Clowes at Broughton Old Hall whose gardens, he wrote were “*highly kept, and of the very highest floral and botanical interest*”.⁵⁷⁴

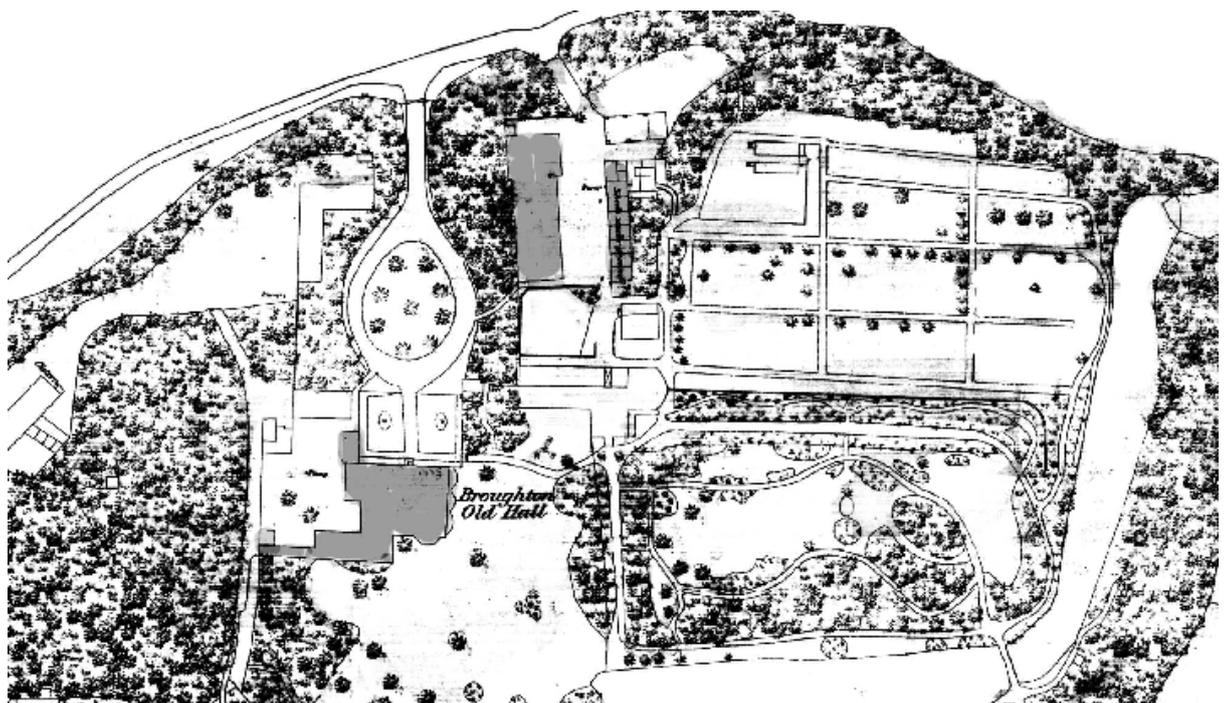
The continuing growth of Manchester and its suburbs eventually pushed large suburban-cum-country gardens further and further out. Already by 1850 advertisements were appearing for land in places like Timperley and Cheadle Hulme “*suitable for the building of villa residences*”. However, in 1850, a ring of villa gardens existed around Manchester – Greenheys, Pendleton, Cheetwood all had a good selection of such properties, although each was being encroached upon by housing for less affluent inhabitants.

⁵⁷³ *The Gardeners' Magazine*, 1831. p.400.

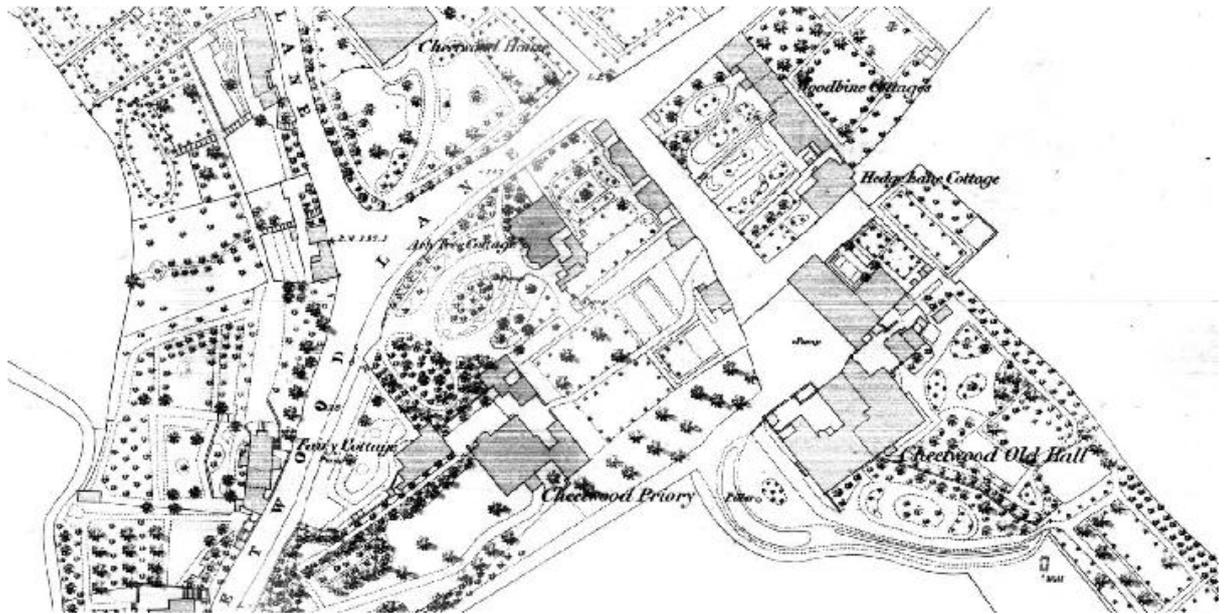
⁵⁷⁴ Elsewhere, Loudon mentions Bow as “*one of the very best cultivators of heaths in England*”. John Clowes was a member of the Horticultural Society of London in 1823.



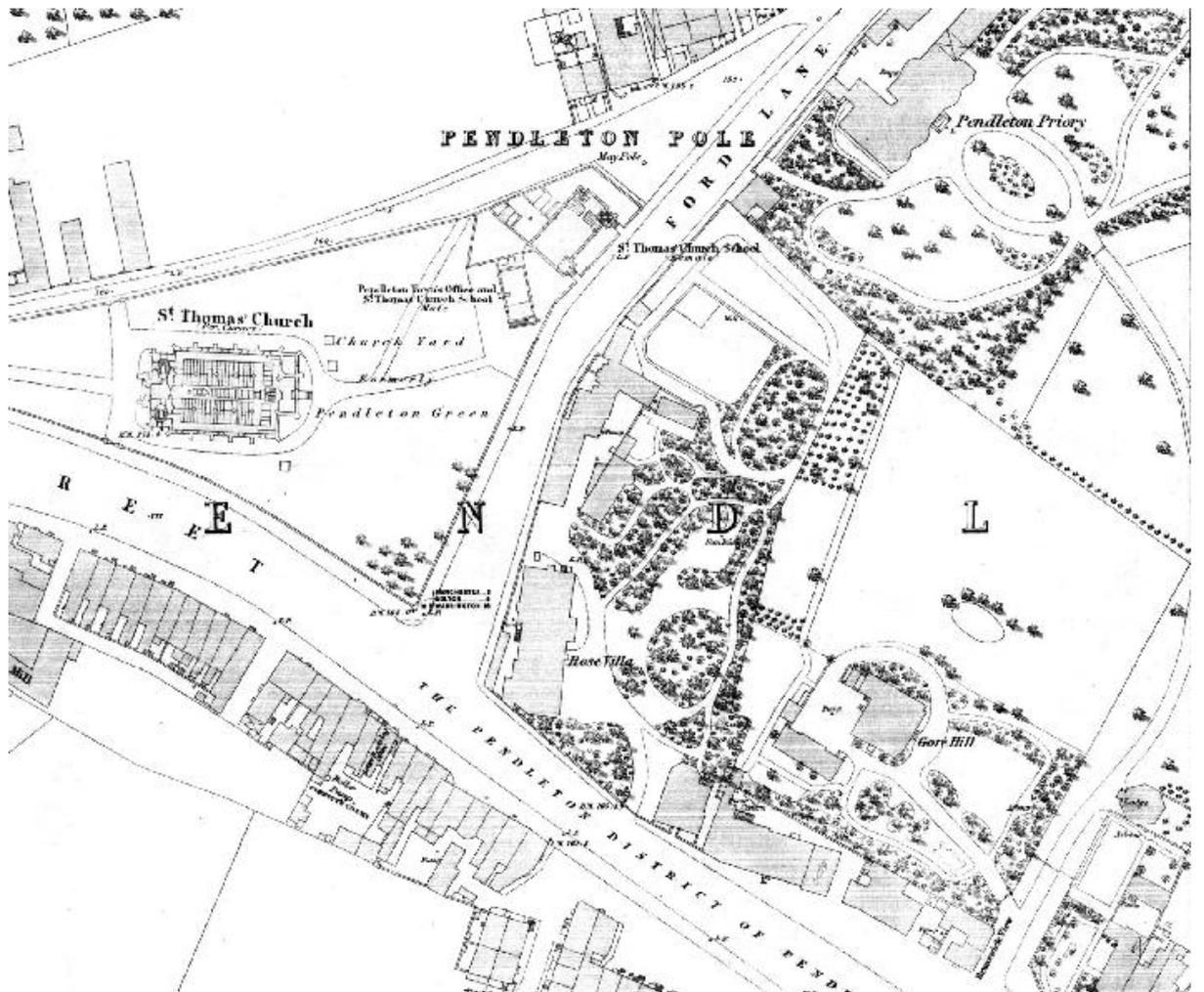
The paths of Greenheys Hall gardens meet Loudon's criteria, as did the flower beds in the lawn (for the most part) – Loudon would no doubt object to the flower beds of his neighbour the opposite side of Pigott Street



The gardens around Broughton Old Hall in 1848



By 1850 that part of Cheetwood once occupied by Charles White's gardens had extended considerably (this is only a part) and was a desirable place to live



In Pendleton, the villa residences of Pendleton Priory, Rose Villa and Gore Hill were, by 1850, surrounded by terraced houses and back-to-backs.

Cottage gardens

In the twenty-first century, the phrase 'cottage garden' evokes an impression of a riot of planting surrounding a picturesque thatched cottage, such as Helen Allingham might have painted. The reality could be very different – and indeed Allingham's work showed plenty of cottages where the surroundings were less floriferous.⁵⁷⁵ Cottages in Lancashire varied: some – the older ones – were of stone; others of brick. They varied in design, too, depending upon the occupation of the resident. They were built by speculators. Some, attached to factories, were built as terraces. Gardens were sometimes attached and, if so, provided healthy exercise and the ability to raise food cheaply. So wrote John Holt in 1795.⁵⁷⁶ Elsewhere, he expanded upon this comment. Horticulture, he said, was superior to agriculture in Lancashire. The owner of a cottage garden nurtured his plants with the hope of winning prizes. This meant that he benefited from fresh air while raising new varieties of auriculas, carnations, polyanthuses, pinks and gooseberries. Some of the best Lancashire-raised flowers had been sold around the whole country.⁵⁷⁷

As shown in a later chapter, cottagers around Manchester continued to cultivate flowers, although the arguments propounded for providing gardens with cottages tended to be moral, economic and political. It is sometimes difficult to decide which was considered the more important. As the nineteenth century progressed, the concern about workers spending their leisure time in pubs grew. Gardens would keep them out of pubs (there was never any doubt that workers would prefer to garden than to drink) and therefore save them from moral turpitude. Gardens also provided cottagers with land on which to cultivate fruit and vegetables, which should mean they never went hungry. No doubt there was sometimes pure altruism behind such an argument, but it could also be used as an excuse to keep wages low and maintain the Corn Laws. Meanwhile, a well-fed man was unlikely to rise up against the state.⁵⁷⁸

⁵⁷⁵ See, for example, Taylor, Ina: Helen Allingham's England (2000).

⁵⁷⁶ Holt. General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster, p.18-19.

⁵⁷⁷ *ibid*, p. 81.

⁵⁷⁸ See, for example, The Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor Volume II. 1800. A sixty-two page booklet entitled Information for Cottagers was published, with prices shown as " *Three Shillings a Dozen or a Guinea a Hundred, to give away*".

In his Encyclopaedia of Gardening, Loudon stated that almost every cottage had its garden attached, though he admitted that they were not necessarily well-kept. Vegetables, salads, herbs, flowers and fruit (almost invariably including gooseberries) could all be found growing in cottage gardens. He made the point, though, that the best cottage gardens were those belonging to people who could be sure that they would remain in occupation. Writing about his trip around the country in 1831, Loudon mentions that the cottage gardens in Lancashire are "*of a good size, and ... they contribute materially to the support of the cottager by the potatoes, cabbages, and onions grown in them*".⁵⁷⁹ Writing the previous year, Charles Hulbert referred to the time

"Thirty years ago, when ... the neighbourhood of Eccles and Barton, and indeed the entire vicinity of Manchester, were celebrated for neat gardens ... It was, indeed a most delightful treat to visit the tulip beds, the gooseberry gardens, or the auricula and polyanthus sheds ..."

Although there were still plenty of people with a love of them, because houses were being built without gardens, they could not own one. "*This is wretched policy*" said Hulbert.⁵⁸⁰

The editor of The Manchester Times, Archibald Prentice, was a Scot and frequently reproduced items from Scottish papers in the columns of his newspaper. Whether it was the fact that the writer was Scottish or because Prentice was keen to further the interests of the poor, in 1828 he reproduced part of an essay by Stuart Monteith of Closeburn, which had appeared in the first volume of The Journal of Agriculture. The full essay – Few hints on ornamenting with suitable plants the grounds about a country residence– was partly a recommendation to owners of estates to grow various trees and shrubs – particularly evergreens to provide winter interest. Prentice reproduced only part of the second half of the essay, which dealt with the ornamentation of cottages.⁵⁸¹ Landlords were called upon to encourage their tenants to grow suitable plants on the walls of their cottages – "*walls, which now are generally naked and cheerless, would be covered with some one or other of the evergreens, mixed with the jessamine and the rose, the Virginia creeper, and the*

⁵⁷⁹ The Gardener's Magazine, (1831) p. 555.

⁵⁸⁰ Letter to The Gardener's Magazine, 1830 (p.598-9).

⁵⁸¹ The full text can be found in The Quarterly Journal of Agriculture. Vol. 1. May 1828 to August 1829 p.353-8

prettiest of all Scotland's wild plants, the woodbine".⁵⁸² The advantage to the landlord was that the tenants would, through this one modification, change from being dirty and disorderly to clean and tidy; the children of the property would become interested in and careful – instead of destructive – of plants. It was generally considered necessary to encourage landlords to provide gardens. In The Cottager's Manual of Cottage Husbandry, Architecture, Domestic Economy, and Gardening⁵⁸³ the author begins by setting out six reasons why this should be (though the reasons were somewhat repetitive). These were aimed, not at the cottager, but at the landlord, who was probably also a manufacturer. Every cottager had a need for vegetables and the ability to raise a pig and poultry. Vegetables he grew himself would be cheaper than shop-bought (because he would not be paying for the labour in producing them). He needed leisure time for reasons of health, recreation and enjoyment (though recreation did not equate with idleness). Lastly, the owning of a garden would make the cottager a "*better member of society*".⁵⁸⁴ This was not the first such publication. In 1831 Charles Lawrence, having written out some instructions to agricultural labourers working on his brother's estate was persuaded to make them more widely available. The resulting book – Practical directions for the cultivation and general management of cottage gardens – was available at cost. Lawrence realised that many or most cottagers would be unable to read – or insufficiently able as to find the book useful. However, there would have been someone in the neighbourhood who had this skill, could read and pass on instructions.⁵⁸⁵

His first point was that gardening should not interfere with working for wages, which could be depended upon and which would prevent the garden-owner from falling into debt. He then stated that every garden should have a pig (not only for food, but to provide manure), so building a pig-stye and shed for keeping produce in

⁵⁸² Manchester Times, 14 November, 1828.

⁵⁸³ In the third volume of British Husbandry. 1840.

⁵⁸⁴ The association of cottage gardens with the growing of vegetables can be seen in a report of a court case in the Leicester Mercury reproduced in the Manchester Times of 16 September, 1848. Passing money judgement against a defendant who had refused to allow his erstwhile tenant the produce of his garden, the judge deducted the value of flowers since flowers were "*out of place in a cottager's garden*".

⁵⁸⁵ Loudon reviewed the book (Gardener's Magazine, 1831, p.216): "... *as it does not contain a single word of political economy, and approves of going regularly to church, we do not think there is a single individual in the country who could seriously object to it*"; but he made a plea for less supervision and more independence for the poor gardener.

should be the first move. The garden – which, like most writers of the time, he expected to be a quarter of an acre in size – should be divided up into eleven beds and the crops rotated through the years. He expected his cottagers to grow early and late potatoes, barley, peas, beans, cabbages, onions, lettuce, kale, leeks, carrots, parsnips. The barley (and quite a lot of the vegetables) was required for the pig and there were instructions as to how best to fatten it – though at the point where the pig was slaughtered, Lawrence uses the words of William Cobbett⁵⁸⁶ to show how even the offal was of value. There was no mention of flowers.

One difficulty in considering cottage gardens of the period is in deciding exactly what was meant by the term. Loudon, for example, explains that, for him, cottage gardens refer to the gardens attached to “*cottages in villages or attached to the humbler class of dwellings scattered through the country*”.⁵⁸⁷ Yet in his Encyclopaedia, he differentiates between the garden of the artisan and that of the cottager, the former being on a long-lease.⁵⁸⁸ The confusion is not helped by the habit of wealthier people to name their houses “ --- *Cottage*”.

The importance of livestock can be seen in Manchester, even for those without the necessary land. Pasture was routinely advertised – a cow could be kept for twenty weeks during the summer months at Hopwood Ley near Middleton at a cost of £3 6s. 0d., and a calf for just £1 10s 0d. At Tabley Ley the period was slightly longer and the charge only £3.

Allotments

Although often mentioned in newspapers as being created in other parts of the country, no mention could be found of allotments around Manchester during the period under consideration. Modern allotments may be thought of as the off-spring of detached town gardens and cottagers’ gardens and, as we have seen, both of these existed at that time. On the one hand, allotments are grouped together, away from the occupiers’ homes; on the other, their intention is to encourage gardening – not always for food, but that is an important element today as it would have been

⁵⁸⁶ William Cobbett’s Cottage Economy was first published in 1821-2 as a series of pamphlets, then in 1822 as a book.

⁵⁸⁷ The Gardener’s Magazine, (1831). p.410.

⁵⁸⁸ Loudon, John. An Encyclopaedia of Gardening, (1835) para.1320. “*Tradesmen and operative manufacturers, who have a permanent interest in their cottages, have generally the best cottage-gardens.*”

two hundred years ago. In the nineteenth century the terms “*allotment*” and “*cottage garden*” were sometimes used interchangeably as by Charles Lawrence, whose book begins “*In setting out allotments of land to supply all of you with gardens ...*”.⁵⁸⁹ Their history can be traced back to the eighteenth century – there are a number of examples included in The reports of the Society for bettering the condition and increasing the comforts of the poor (volume II). At that time it was the agricultural labourer who was the focus of attention – although it was pointed out that the factory worker in Manchester, though he earned more when he was working, was, in fact, less well off than the cottager with a garden. He might earn two guineas a week, but, lacking any incentive to economy, he was tempted to spend as he earned, leaving nothing for times of unemployment. The demand for allotments nationally partly arose out of the enclosure movement which took Common land away from use by the poor. Enclosure happened at different times in different places, which may explain the piecemeal introduction of allotments.⁵⁹⁰ It was to take several decades before local authorities were given a duty to provide allotments. In July 1843 Lord Ashley (later Lord Shaftesbury) tried to introduce a Parliamentary Bill to extend the allotment or Field Garden system, but it was not until 1887 that the Allotments and Cottage Gardens Compensation for Crops Act was passed. This provided only that allotments be provided if there was a demand for them and it was to be yet two more decades before stronger legislation was introduced.⁵⁹¹

Allotments – sometimes referred to as the ‘Cottage System’, ‘Field Gardens’ or ‘Spade Husbandry’ – began to spread more quickly from about 1830 and were a practical response to political unrest due to low wages amongst agricultural labourers. In 1829 The Quarterly Review had published an article on the cottage system (reproduced in The Manchester Times)⁵⁹² which suggested it should be adopted in the manufacturing districts. The article appeared to encourage landowners to espouse the system by, on the one hand, listing some of the respected people who had already adopted this approach and, on the other, enumerating the many benefits – tenants who paid their rent on time, who were respectful, well-behaved and

⁵⁸⁹ Lawrence, Charles. Practical Directions for the Cultivation and General Management of Cottage Gardens (1831) p.4.

⁵⁹⁰ The enclosure movement is outside the scope of this work and is mentioned here only as a background to the introduction and growth in the number of allotments.

⁵⁹¹ For a brief history of Allotments see www.allotment.org.uk/grow-your-own/allotments/history.

⁵⁹² Manchester Times, 15 August, 1829.

hardworking and, most importantly, had no need to apply to the parish for support. For the manufacturer in Manchester, however, the examples given were not helpful: Lord Brownlow “*allotted between five and six acres of land to each of his cottagers*”, the Duke of Northumberland “*from three to five acres*” and the Marquis of Stafford at Trentham “*land for the maintenance of two cows*”.⁵⁹³ Such large quantities of land per cottager would have been unthinkable in Manchester, although some individual factory owners – away from the town – took action on a smaller scale. In 1840 the Westminster Review published an anonymous letter (which Faucher reported as having been written by Robert Hyde Greg). In it the writer explained how, in 1832, he and his brothers had taken on a destitute mill together with about fifty cottages, mostly untenanted. Once the mill was ready to operate, they looked for workers who would settle down and stay in their new employment. To encourage this and to provide “*innocent recreation for their leisure hours*”, they took three fields in front of the cottages and divided them up into gardens, each about six roods and separated by hedges.⁵⁹⁴ In addition, each cottage had its own flower garden either at the front or rear. In 1848 the Ten Hours Bill (Factory Act, 1847) became law. This meant workers had time to spend in a garden and, said the Manchester Times, many mill owners had purchased land, split into allotments, for their employees. As a result there had been an outbreak of flower and vegetable shows.⁵⁹⁵

In May 1834 Archibald Prentice had “*prepared some remarks*” on the new Land Allotment Societies which were beginning to appear, but unfortunately there was no space in the paper to print them and it was not until November 1835 that another opportunity arose. This time it was inspired by Howitt’s article on the Nottingham Gardens in Tait’s Magazine. Howitt had commented that in towns like Manchester “*the never-resting, unwearable, unpersuadable giant, the steam-engine*” would be a serious obstacle.⁵⁹⁶ ‘True’, was the comment, but there were thousands who were not factory workers who would jump at the opportunity “*if they could find*

⁵⁹³ Manchester Times, 15 August, 1829.

⁵⁹⁴ Six roods seems rather large if the rood was the normal ¼ of an acre, which would make each garden 1.5 acres in extent. However, it is possible that it was a mis-print for rod (six rods = 181.5 square yards).

⁵⁹⁵ Manchester Times, 17 September 1851.

⁵⁹⁶ In The Rural Life of England Vol. II (1838) p. 306. Howitt had written “*But the slave of the steam-engine must be at the beck of his tyrant night or day, with only such intervals as barely suffice to restore his wearied strength and faculties: – therefore you shall not see gardens flourish and summer-houses rise in the vicinity of this hurrying and tremendous power*”.

the land".⁵⁹⁷ From then on the paper regularly recorded the setting up of allotments in various parts of the country. In 1837 there was mention of Sir Edward Kerrison in Suffolk who had created two hundred allotments. In February 1844, it was the Marquis of Westminster. Three months later it was stated that the Duke of Rutland had let more than a thousand cottage garden allotments, though these were – at one-sixth of an acre – smaller than the usual one-quarter.

In Rochdale, a Freehold Land Society – one of many that sprang up around the country – was set up on 7 October 1850. With three hundred members they were soon planning to purchase twenty-four acres for £10,000, which plot would be divided up into 500 allotments.⁵⁹⁸ These societies were, however, a political move to extend the franchise – the 'forty-shilling freeholder' having the vote in county elections – and gardens were a by-product.⁵⁹⁹ The Essex Standard reproduced an item from the Gardener's Journal, which itself reproduced a paragraph from the Coventry Herald, which said the Coventry society "*offers to every working man who can afford to subscribe 1s 6d. per week the certainty of becoming, in no long time, the possessor of a piece of freehold land and a vote for the county*".⁶⁰⁰ The Gardeners' Journal had added "*The member on getting his plot of garden also gets his county vote*". But they were not necessarily simply for gardens and the similarity with Building Societies is apparent.

Despite the activities of Freehold Land Societies and individuals such as the Marquis of Westminster and the Greg family, there were few allotments created in either Lancashire or Cheshire. A report in the Manchester Times of 12 September, 1890 recorded fewer than one thousand allotments in each county in 1873 and even in 1890 the numbers compared poorly with those in Northamptonshire, Wiltshire, Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire, each with in excess of twenty thousand. The

⁵⁹⁷ Manchester Times, 7 November, 1835.

⁵⁹⁸ This would have given an average of 232.5 square yards per investor, equivalent to a square 45 feet by 45 feet.

⁵⁹⁹ But they were not necessarily simply for gardens. The Journal of the Society of Arts, Vol 14, (1866) p.177-186 includes a discussion on Building Societies and Freehold Land Societies: "*Freehold land societies were commenced for a political purpose, that of creating forty shilling freeholds to secure votes in favour of certain projects of financial and parliamentary reform. The first society of this kind was established in Birmingham in 1847, the declared object being to purchase large estates, and to sell them out to the members in such portions as would make a garden plot or a site for a house, and at the same time create a freehold qualification.*"

⁶⁰⁰ Essex Standard, 25 August, 1848.

combined total in 1890 for Cheshire (3,239) and Lancashire (4,447) amounted to less than 1.8% of the total number in England that year (up from 0.8% in 1873). In terms of this work, therefore, the impact of the allotment movement may be disregarded.

Summary

Although houses had begun to lose their attached gardens in the second half of the eighteenth century, there was a considerable number of detached gardens around the edges of Manchester in 1794, although the overwhelming majority show little sign (despite their summer houses) of being used as pleasure grounds, being featured in Green's map as gardens for growing – fruit, vegetables and florist's flowers would all be grown in serried ranks – rather than as areas of lawn and shrubbery. The absence of any discussion of gardens outside the town in the books of the time would indicate that there, also, gardens were for utility rather than pleasure, although a handful of grounds further from the centre of town were laid out with lawns, lakes, gently curving paths and ornamental planting. By 1850 gardens had changed completely. They had moved out of the town and into the suburbs; most were attached to houses and the larger properties were all designed as pleasure gardens, demonstrating a varied attention to the teachings of Loudon, but recognisably meeting the fashion of the time – informality in layout demonstrated by an absence of straight lines. Even the smallest front gardens are depicted with circular paths.

The increasing stratification of society in the nineteenth century can be traced in the variety of properties. Some terraced houses lacked gardens entirely; others had a tiny front garden, yet others a larger front and even a back garden. The houses with gardens, however small, were, nevertheless, in closest proximity to open fields; those in town most likely (though not invariably) built as back-to-backs. Nationally, there were many calls for gardens to be available to the poor – some from pure altruism, others from naked self-interest – yet in Manchester these calls went unheeded. The growing demand for allotments was generally made on behalf of the agricultural poor, who were losing their access to land from the Enclosure Movement; any suggestion that allotments should be provided for the manufacturing poor failed against the demand for, and subsequent rising prices of, land in industrial areas.

For the wealthier inhabitants, ownership or occupation of land demonstrated their success as did their ability to raise their own produce – particularly those items like pineapples which required both skill and expense.⁶⁰¹ Information shows that the town (while it still had gardens) together with the surrounding area was full of walled fruit gardens. Although these gardens were probably also used for raising vegetables, the importance of fruit should not be underestimated. This was a period when new varieties were being introduced yearly. Although the wealthy were able to grow the more exotic fruits – apricot, peach, nectarine – which could be nurtured against their south-facing and hot walls, they also had plenty of hardy fruits to grow, as shown in the Chapter on Plants. For the cottager, the humble gooseberry became the focus for efforts to improve quality and raise new varieties. However, the map evidence suggests that, by 1850 growing food had largely given way to gardening for appearance, certainly among the villa gardens: the long and narrow back gardens of the terraced properties appear to have been too recently established to contain much planting, but if they were being used for growing vegetables this might not appear in the cartography.

A major change for the population in the century from 1750 to 1850 was in its access to vegetation. At the beginning of the period, anyone living in Manchester – even if they had no garden, and most did – was only yards away from open fields and market gardens. Looking back to the 1780s, Gregson demonstrated how town gardens began to be lost and housing became run down as factories pushed hand-loom weavers into poverty. Clock Alley, once a relatively well-to-do street was, by 1833, “*only remarkable ... for its general neglect, filthy appearance, and the depressing poverty of its inhabitants*”. In the same period, while rents had trebled, the houses had become “*despoiled of their gardens*”.⁶⁰² By mid-nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of inhabitants lived in almost permanent exclusion of nature. The following chapters consider the increasing role of the public garden, as the nineteenth century progressed, of the public park for those least able to pay the

⁶⁰¹ It cannot, however, be assumed that all garden owners/occupiers cared for their produce. Absalom Watkin referred to the garden of Mr. H – (landlord to his son, Edward): “*I never saw a large and well arranged garden in such a state of neglect. The whole is overrun with weeds, the growth of years. The fruit trees are quite wild, the glass has been sold from one of the grape-houses and is all shattered in the other. Both are falling to pieces from neglect; the vines hang as they may*”. [Watkin, A.E. (Ed.) Absalom Watkin: Excerpts from his Journal (1920) p.238.]

⁶⁰² Gregson, John Stanley. Gimcrackiana (1833). p.153-4.

entry costs to the public gardens, and the increasing importance of the horticultural show for both growers and spectators.

Chapter Five

Public Gardens

For the wealthy, a large private garden provided much more than a great variety of fresh fruit and vegetables. There was also enjoyment of nature and flowers, which became so much more important as the town became less salubrious, a place for gentle exercise and space for more energetic family activities. For those with smaller gardens, Loudon recommended that they should consider the benefits of being close to public gardens or other open space:

*“Places of public Resort, such as ... a public garden or park, a common or piece of waste ground, and private nurseries or commercial flower or fruit gardens, in which the public are allowed to walk, are important circumstances in the choice of a suburban residence; and more especially, in the case of such as are comparatively on a small scale.”*⁶⁰³

He continued *“Much of the comfort of the occupants of a suburban residence of the smaller size must depend upon their ready access to these sources of instruction, provision, entertainment, and recreation”*. How much more important, then, were publicly accessible gardens to those who had no garden of their own.

Such gardens available to the public had a number of functions. They could be a safe place to meet other people;⁶⁰⁴ a place of refreshment; a place for exercise; a place of amusement; a place for education; a place for thrills. This chapter is divided up into four sections – Gardens of Refreshment; Pleasure Gardens; Activity Gardens and Educational Gardens. Some gardens tried to combine some or all of these functions, so that, although some places have been put into one section, it should be recognised that they could easily have fitted into others. There were public gardens throughout the country, but very little has been written about them as a category. Among Manchester public gardens Ann Brooks’ recent thesis and subsequent publication on the Manchester Botanic Gardens is a notable exception, although the internet contains a good deal of information on Belle Vue, which remains in the public consciousness, having closed in living memory.

⁶⁰³ Loudon, J.C. *The Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion* (1838) p.29. But not market gardens, as the smell of decomposing plant matter was disagreeable.

⁶⁰⁴ Throughout the summer of 1796 a “Promenade” was held every other Monday (beginning 11 July) at 6 p.m. at Broughton Butts. This was very exclusive – entrance fee was three shillings. (*Manchester Mercury*, 5 July, 1796.

The story of these public gardens informs us about how leisure time was spent and what was of interest to town-dwellers of two centuries ago. It also provides insights into the increasing fragmentation of society and how the rules and mores of the few were increasingly inflicted upon the majority. There was conflict as well as enjoyment; disappointment as well as success; intimations of snobbery and dissent and the hubristic failure of the Manchester Zoological, Botanical and Public Gardens Company.

The class divisions which, in the nineteenth century, became more pronounced were sometimes expressed in religious terms. Keeping Sunday special was seen as a religious duty, though there was disagreement over how this should be expressed, but at a time when work occupied the rest of the week, Sunday was the only day for most people to enjoy leisure activities. The arguments used for and against allowing Sunday opening of gardens are discussed under the heading Gardens of Education.

Gardens for refreshment

An early example of this was the "Ladies' Stand" on Kersal Moor. Every Wednesday and Friday during the strawberry season, tea, coffee and chocolate were served, along with strawberries and cream and "*other agreeables*".⁶⁰⁵ This business was begun by Elizabeth Raffald in 1780, but did not survive her early death the following year. There were probably a number of concessions at the Kersal Moor Races, perhaps dating back to their very beginning in the seventeenth century, as an advert of 1750 gave the rates which were to be paid by anyone bringing liquor or requiring any other standing.⁶⁰⁶

By 1782 Giles Boardman of Pendleton (see Chapter on Horticultural Trade) had enlarged his nursery, which stocked various firs, young vegetable plants for growing on and – most importantly – a range of soft fruit: gooseberries, currants, raspberries and strawberries. It seems to have been the fruit which was of particular interest to visitors of whom he had sufficient to have laid out an area of "*Walks,*

⁶⁰⁵ Procter, Richard Wright. *Manchester in Holiday Dress*, (1866) p.159. Swindells, *Third Series*, p.180, quotes the advert. Procter seems to have used artistic licence to expand on "&".

⁶⁰⁶ Procter wrote that he possessed the only known copy of this. (p.153).

Bowers, and Pleasure Ground” for their enjoyment.⁶⁰⁷ The gardens were opened around June or July each year, and were clearly well patronised as over the years the range of entertainment on offer increased. In 1794 there was a special evening of music, supplied by the Band of the Royal Manchester Volunteers, when ice cream and cakes were on offer.⁶⁰⁸ The gardens remained open for the rest of the season when the refreshments were tea and coffee. The musical evening must have been successful as two years later music was on offer every Friday.⁶⁰⁹

Although always referred to by the Boardmans as “*Tea and Fruit Gardens*”, in the nineteenth century such places were sometimes known as “*Strawberry Gardens*”. Indeed, in 1802, Middlewood advertised his Strawberry Gardens at Hullard Hall,⁶¹⁰ which, the following year, were “*well supplied with the best Strawberries, rich Creams, Tea, &c.*”⁶¹¹ Half a century later, the Shepherd Tea Gardens at the same place could accommodate 300 for tea and dancing.⁶¹² In 1838 Thomas Gardner advertised his “*Tea and Strawberry Gardens*” at Seedly Lane in Pendleton. The grounds of these had been “*laid out with the utmost care and taste; the walks are numerous and perfectly dry, and well shaded*”. To round off a visit to a delightful garden, refreshments were available “*at moderate charges*”.⁶¹³ A decade later these gardens were described as “*afford[ing] a delightful retreat from the hum and bustle of the city, - a rurality that is quite refreshing*”.⁶¹⁴ In 1852 they were open in Whit week when they offered a range of attractions:

*“The Salford borough band was in attendance every day during the week, and provision was made for the accommodation of dancers. The other amusements furnished consist of a skittle ground, a quoiting ground, and swings for both sexes.”*⁶¹⁵

⁶⁰⁷ Manchester Mercury, 26 March, 1782.

⁶⁰⁸ Manchester Mercury, 22 July, 1794. By this time John Boardman was in charge.

⁶⁰⁹ Manchester Mercury, 28 June, 1796.

⁶¹⁰ Manchester Mercury, 13 July, 1802.

⁶¹¹ Manchester Mercury, 26 July, 1803.

⁶¹² Manchester Times, 3 October, 1848.

⁶¹³ Manchester Courier, 14 April, 1838.

⁶¹⁴ Manchester Times, 10 April, 1849. Gardner died in 1857 but the gardens remained open until at least 1860.

⁶¹⁵ Manchester Courier, 5 June, 1852.



Clay Hall and Seedley Gardens, Pendleton c. 1850 (O.S. Map)

Strawberry gardens could be found around the country and also in fiction. In Hull, the Scot, Sam W., proud of his countrymen's fame as gardeners, had a strawberry garden in the early part of the nineteenth century, to which he charged admission and at which he provided refreshments.⁶¹⁶ At Wannock, in Sussex, the Strawberry Gardens dated back to the end of the eighteenth century and in 1868 occupied about four acres. They were open to the public and attracted about forty visitors a day who "*banquet[ed] on Strawberries, cream, and bread and butter*".⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁶ Thomson, Christopher: *The Autobiography of an Artisan* (London, 1847). p.89-94.

⁶¹⁷ *Journal of horticulture and cottage gardener*, 18 June, 1868.

Willmore's Strawberry Gardens were close to Edgbaston Hall, Birmingham, and were "*much frequented*", despite the entry charge of one shilling.⁶¹⁸ In the novel Blanche and Agnes by Mrs. Perring there is a chapter entitled "*The Strawberry-Garden*" which gives an indication of what such places would have been like and how they would have been enjoyed:

*"THERE were pleasant arbours, and shady walks, and smooth green grass plots, and beds of lovely flowers, and abundance of other fruit as well as strawberries, in this beautifully-laid-out garden. There were green-houses, hot-houses, pineries, and vineries—all most inviting to the sight as well as to smell and taste. Plenty of room for enjoyment to our young party here, and they rambled about in pleased excitement, examining the varied flower-beds, and inhaling their delicious scents, or breathing the oppressive air of the hot-house that they might admire the rare exotics which required more than European summer heat to bring them to perfection."*⁶¹⁹

Having feasted on strawberries and cream, the characters then "*had some pleasant games on the smooth green with the india-rubber balls they had provided themselves with*". Another piece of fiction was published in Eliza Cook's Journal, where a strawberry garden was described as "*a well-known place of entertainment, much resorted to by the holidaymakers of Kingscross and its neighbourhood. There were wonderful arbours, surmounted by flags and mottoes, secluded walks between high box edges...*"⁶²⁰

Strawberry gardens were sometimes attached to inns, and one such was situated south of Manchester, on the banks of the river Irwell at Throstle Nest, then a small hamlet in the area known as Cornbrook. In 1853, The Manchester Times published its story – fifty years previously the Gardens were attached to the Grapes Inn (previously known as The Grapes Coffee House), and the proprietor in 1808 – when the gardens were at the height of their popularity – was William Hopper. They remained in existence until 1820, when the property was sold and became a private house and garden. The Gardens were a popular place of resort, particularly for the young, and many marriages were said to have owed their beginnings to time spent in the gardens. The newspaper did not include a description of the gardens themselves, but wrote poetically about the setting:

⁶¹⁸ Osborne's Guide to the Grand Junction, or, Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester Railway (1838), p. 281

⁶¹⁹ Perring, E. Blanche and Agnes (1869), p.20-24.

⁶²⁰ Eliza Cook's Journal, Vol. 5, (April to October 1851), p.383.

"Pleasantly situated on the banks of the river Irwell, which then ran a clear, deep, broad, and rapid stream, tumbling its volume over the noisy weir at the bucolic hamlet of Throstle Nest, below which the fly-fisher plied his playful rod in the turbulent waters, snarling his finny prey. Looking westward on a fine summer evening, the setting sun gilded the antique casements of Ordsal Hall, which reared its gray walls within its moated grounds, some 300 yards distant from the gardens; and as it set upon the purple-tinted hills of Horwich and Rivington Pike, the scenery was beautiful, enhanced by the mellowed sounds of the bells of the Old Church, St. John's, or those of the parish church of Eccles, which were often heard echoing along the glade like the soft airs of an Æolian harp, vibrating upon the breeze. ... On the east lay a lofty ridge, whose slope was covered with plantation shrubs, ... On the south lay the majestic park and forest lands belonging to the ancient and venerable house of Trafford, where, in unbroken line, the family hold their Anglo-Saxon lands, and almost unimpaired ..." ⁶²¹

Other public houses had tea gardens attached.⁶²² Also at Throstle Nest was the Dog and Partridge, in Oxford Road, the Eagle Inn, in Openshaw, the Grey Mare and in Pendleton, the Wool Pack Inn. Tea gardens sound innocuous, but raised considerable disquiet since most sold alcohol as well as soft drinks and food. In 1831 the Lord's Day Observance Society was founded. One of their concerns was *"the multiplication of tea gardens and other places of public resort for amusement and dissipation"*.⁶²³ One response to this was the setting up of Temperance Tea Gardens, one of which was established in Cheetwood. They were described by Swindells:

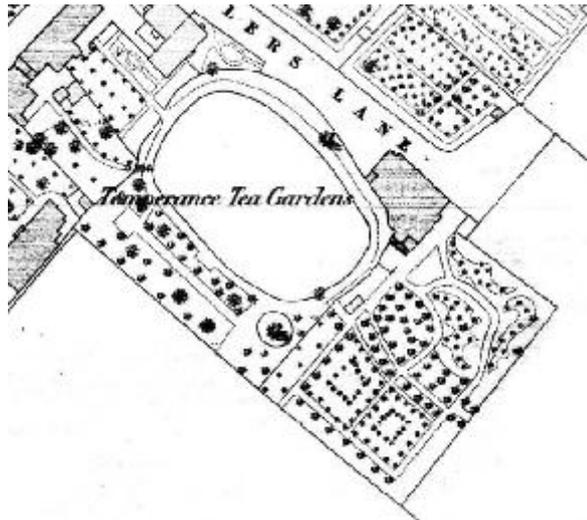
"The tea gardens, which were about mid way through the village, was a popular place of resort in summer times... Tea could be partaken of in the little summer houses that were dotted up and down the gardens, which were gay with numberless flowers; and the air was sweet with the perfume of roses, pinks, carnations, mignonette, and other blooms... In the orchards the currant and gooseberry trees bore many a fine crop of fruit; and when the summer was on the wane the overhanging branches of pear and apple trees offered abundant temptation to the juveniles of the hamlet. Tea taken amidst such surroundings was a delight to hundreds of town dwellers, who would often carry home with them to their cottages in over-crowded streets, souvenirs of their holiday in the shape of bunches of fragrant blooms." ⁶²⁴

⁶²¹ Manchester Times, 14 May, 1853. Such descriptions highlighted the losses occasioned by industrialisation and the growth of the town.

⁶²² In Observations and facts relative to public houses in the City of London and its Environs, (1794) Patrick Colquhoun listed 8 types of public house. No. 3 was *"Houses of public amusement, such as tea gardens, &c."*

⁶²³ Chester Courant, 1 March, 1831

⁶²⁴ Swindells, T. Manchester Streets and Manchester Men Fourth Series. 1908 J E Cornish Ltd, Manchester p.174/5



The Temperance Tea Gardens, Cheetwood c. 1850 (O.S. Map)

Gardens for pleasure

The delineation between tea gardens and pleasure gardens is a difficult one to appreciate, since Tea Gardens were, in their own way, pleasure gardens, providing entertainment as well as refreshment. However, some places were distinctly described as Pleasure Gardens, the first one in Manchester being Vauxhall Gardens in Collyhurst, which, indeed, was originally a tea and coffee garden. The associated public house was originally called The Grapes and eventually renamed the Vauxhall Tavern.⁶²⁵ Opened by Robert Tinker towards the end of the eighteenth century, the gardens were a popular resort for Manchester people, inspiring Alexander Wilson to pen the song Johnny Green's Description of Tinker's Gardens. Generally known as "Tinker's Gardens" (despite its renamings) the place was briefly called The Elysian Gardens in 1812, when Tinker advertised a "*grand celebration*" in response to Wellington's victory at Salamanca. Having "*improved and beautified*" his gardens (at considerable expense) he had decided to give them this new name.⁶²⁶ It did not take. By the following year they had the name Vauxhall Gardens, no doubt as a way to compare the displays and events to those of the more famous London gardens of the same name.⁶²⁷

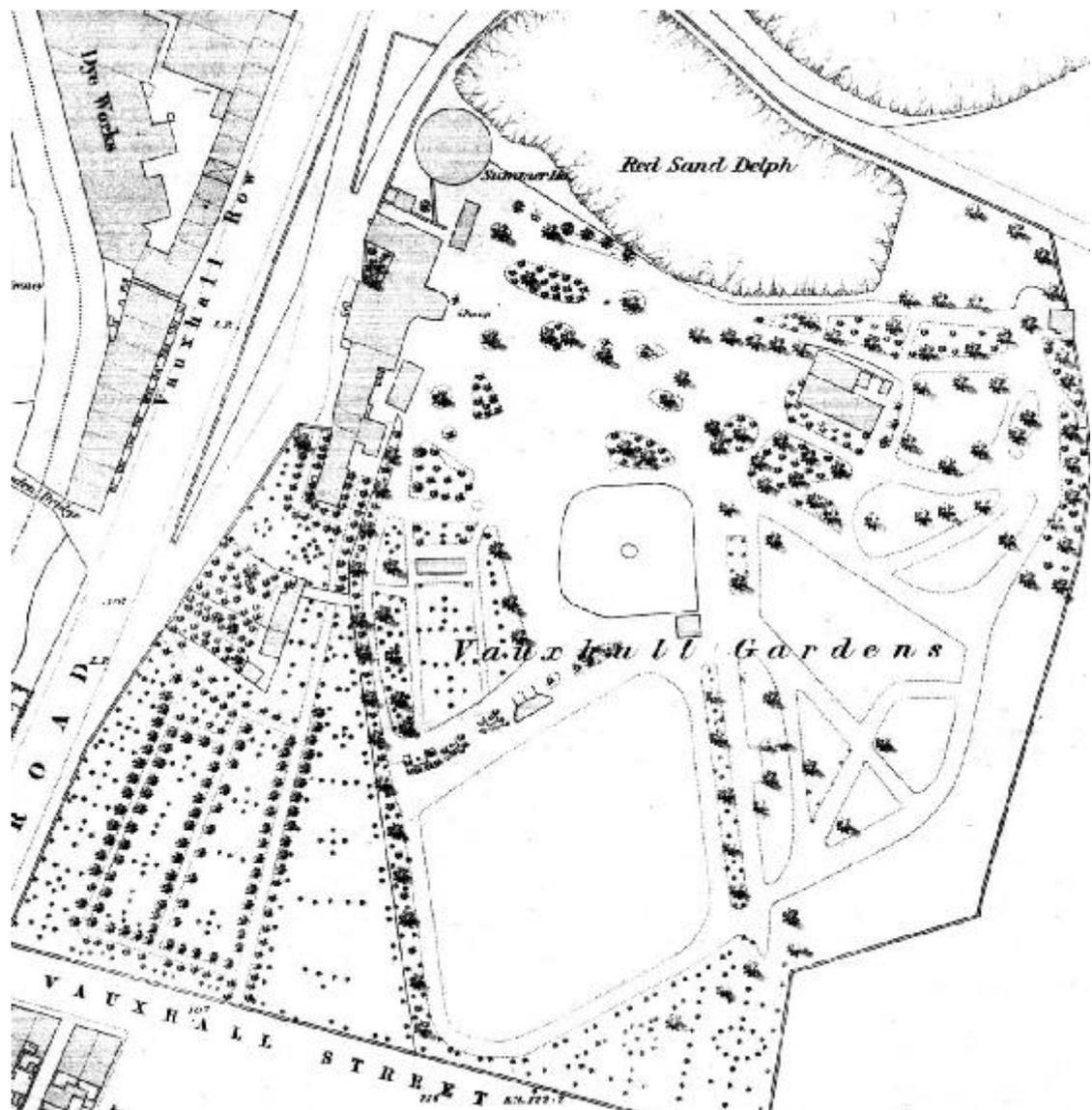
⁶²⁵ Scholes' Directory, 1797. "Robert Tinker, Grape and Compass Coffee House and Tea Gardens, Collyhurst".

⁶²⁶ Manchester Mercury, 25 August, 1812.

⁶²⁷ Nineteenth century writers (e.g. Procter) gave the date of the naming of Vauxhall Gardens as 1814, but there were several advertisements using that title which appeared in 1813 (e.g. Manchester Mercury 3, 10 and 31 August and 5 October). There were firework displays,

Writing in 1908, Swindells noted that the gardens were unknown to the new generation, having been closed for around fifty years, but that for two generations, at least, they were a "popular holiday destination":

*"On holidays and Sundays great crowds of people resorted to the gardens, where they could promenade or dance (except on Sundays) to the music of a brass band, and where they could partake of tea and other refreshments at small tables standing under overhanging trees or in alcoves covered with creepers."*⁶²⁸



Vauxhall Gardens, 1848 (O.S. Map)

balloon ascensions, military bands playing. Two events celebrated Wellington's victories in the Peninsular War, another the Prince Regent's birthday.

⁶²⁸ Swindells, T. *Manchester Streets and Manchester Men Fifth Series*. 1908 J E Cornish Ltd, Manchester. p.149/153

There is no clear description of the gardens in the early part of the century, but the 1848 Ordnance Survey shown above gives some idea of their size. They were on a slope, running down to the river Irk and closer to town than the Queen's Park which opened in 1846, after the heyday of the Vauxhall Gardens but before their closure. Tinker used up to 3,000 lamps to illuminate his gardens and began offering firework displays, musical bands and famous singers on special occasions. Over the years the variety of events increased. In 1817, George Wilson, "*the Blackheath pedestrian*", came to the gardens to repeat his accomplishment of walking 1,000 miles in 18 days (not including Sundays). Wilson walked between 40 and 65 miles a day.⁶²⁹ In the latter days of its life, Vauxhall Gardens also hosted a number of flower shows.

From its early days, the Gardens suffered the same sort of problems that later Gardens would face – bad behaviour.⁶³⁰ Originally patronised by all classes, the Gardens became less attractive to the wealthiest. In 1813, when the assembly was "*numerous and respectable*", pickpockets were at work. One was caught in the act and given a ducking.⁶³¹ Four weeks later Tinker complained of "*frequent and repeated injuries done to the Gardens, by rude and disorderly persons breaking down the fences*" and his adverts often made mention of the presence of officers to keep the peace.⁶³²

The popularity of the gardens gave rise to Wilson's song, which is full of rowdy fun – the swings which were more popular with the girls than the men, the chasing around until falling into a bower and getting covered with others' food and drink. The description of the gardens includes the lights on poles, a fishpond, a menagerie of small animals and birds, the musicians on a stage above the ground, statuary –

⁶²⁹ Manchester Mercury, 1 and 29 July, 1817. The report on the 29th suggests that ill-behaved members of the crowd tried to prevent Wilson succeeding in his attempt, although it might simply have been people jostling for a better view.

⁶³⁰ This was not a problem that afflicted Manchester gardens only. In 1812 the Liverpool Mercury printed a poem about the London Vauxhall Gardens which included the lines "*Shuffling, obtruding, playing dancing, / Laughing, insulting, kicking, prancing, / Jesting, and singing, shouting, bawling / Swearing, provoking, fighting, falling!*"

⁶³¹ Manchester Mercury, 3 August, 1813.

⁶³² e.g. Manchester Mercury, 10 August, 1813 "*Civil Officers will attend as usual to prevent any Irregularities*"; Manchester Mercury, 1 July, 1817. "*To prevent confusion, and preserve proper order and regularity in the Garden, Peace Officers will attend*".

"*cupids under trees and shrubs*" – and a bowling green. The song concludes "*it's th' grandest place i' th' nation*".⁶³³

The success of Vauxhall Gardens seems to have been very reliant on Robert Tinker, who retired two years before his death, aged 70, on 1st February 1836.⁶³⁴ The Gardens then changed hands several times. In 1834 James Pownall had spent money on improving the gardens⁶³⁵ and his advertisement the following year spoke of a "*grand series of illuminations, fire and water works, vocal and instrumental concerts, &c.*" He added:

*"The Gardens will always be found a most desirable place of resort during the present delightful period of the year. Attached is a verdant and picturesque BOWLING-GREEN, beautifully levelled, and in excellent order; on either side it is environed by shady and rural arbours, and sequestered promenades, which are beautifully diversified by the mutual aid of nature and art. The Proprietor flatters himself that visitors will find this spot enriched with every attraction for health, relaxation, and enjoyment."*⁶³⁶

However, by September they were being run by Captain Wild⁶³⁷ who was not successful and who soon had the misfortune of being declared bankrupt.⁶³⁸ In 1838 James Pownall was again in charge⁶³⁹ and in 1839 it was announced that the

⁶³³ Swindells, *Fifth Series*, p149/153. The article and song are reproduced as Appendix Four.

⁶³⁴ *Manchester Times*, 20 February, 1836. In the notice of his death he was described as "*original promoter, and for upwards of forty years proprietor of Vauxhall Gardens, Collyhurst. During that period he was an active and sedulous servant of the public.*" The retirement is inferred from the advertisement in the same paper of 29 March, 1834, where Pownall recorded himself as the Proprietor.

⁶³⁵ *Manchester Times*, 29 March, 1834. The Gardens were to be opened for the season on Easter Monday (31 March), Pownall "*having spared neither labour nor expense in his endeavours to secure their respectability*".

⁶³⁶ *Manchester Times*, 6 June, 1835.

⁶³⁷ *Manchester Times*, 12 September, 1835. The Public House and Gardens had been advertised to let in the same paper on 29 August, 1835.

⁶³⁸ In *The Book of Days*, Volume 2 (ed. Robert Chambers, 1864), the story of Captain Wild is told. He joined the Army as a volunteer and served in the Peninsula War. Rising through the ranks, he was eventually made Captain and, as a half-pay officer, returned to Manchester where he ran the White Lion Inn in Long Millgate, before taking on Tinker's Gardens. Here "*all went wrong; and poor Wild was taken as a debtor to Lancaster Castle. Hearing a bell ring in the evening, he asked what it was, and was told it was the time for the prisoners to be locked up. He fell down and expired on the spot.*"

⁶³⁹ *Manchester Times*, 26 May, 1838. The property was auctioned on 21 June, 1837 (*Manchester Times*, 17 June, 1837), but advertisements continued to sell or let it (*Manchester Times*, 1 July, 30 September, 25 November, 1837). The inn had been renamed the Vauxhall Tavern and advertisements dwelt on the attractions of the gardens "*that splendid seat of luxurious and recreative retirement*"; "*the gardens and grounds are in beautiful order*"; "*well known by the name of Vauxhall Gardens; together with the summer and pleasure houses, hot houses, bowling green, and other erections and formations in the said gardens*".

gardens were “*undergoing a complete renovation*”.⁶⁴⁰ Success was elusive however. James Ruse, the proprietor from 1845 was declared bankrupt in 1855⁶⁴¹ and the licence then changed hands with depressing regularity.⁶⁴²

The failure of Vauxhall Gardens was partly due to the rise of other pleasure gardens around Manchester, but could not have been helped by its location, to the east of Manchester and therefore at greatest risk of smoke damage to plants. However, it was the economic value of the sand on the site – perfect for use in iron moulds – which finally sealed its fate: “*in the course of a few years the site was literally carted away*”.⁶⁴³ In the mid-1830s, just as the Vauxhall Gardens’ decline began, the Belle Vue Gardens opened and, ten years later, in Hulme, the Pomona Gardens. The popularity of these was partly due to their locations, but, like Tinker at Vauxhall, it was John Jennison who made Belle Vue Gardens so highly regarded. Jennison moved to Belle Vue from Stockport, where he had been a gardener, opening his grounds as a Strawberry Garden and beginning an aviary to attract visitors.⁶⁴⁴ By August 1837, Jennison, having collected specimens of rare birds and beasts for several years, was able to advertise the Bellevue Zoological Gardens. On his 36 acres he intended to accommodate “*a great number of persons of taste, of the respectable classes of the community... of a gratification at once innocent and harmless*”.⁶⁴⁵

By 1842, the gardens were enclosed and undergoing a complete renovation and “*The aviary, lakes, and zoological outbuildings [were] well stocked with foreign and British birds, water fowl, and rare and choice animals*”.⁶⁴⁶ At that time the target customer was still the well-to-do – a large paddock had been set aside for customers’ carriages. As time passed, however, the gardens became a place of resort for the masses. This was largely due to the railway – Longsight station was only 300 yards from the gardens and it meant that customers could treat themselves

⁶⁴⁰ Manchester Times, 9 March, 1839.

⁶⁴¹ Manchester Times, 5 May, 1855.

⁶⁴² The licence was transferred to Ann Ruse (Manchester Courier, 17 October, 1857) and then to Mary Ann Cox (Manchester Courier, 28 July, 1860; from Cox to Richard Ireland (Manchester Courier, 16 February, 1861); from Ireland to Richard Barlow (Manchester Courier, 12 April, 1862); In 1864 it was transferred from James Law to William Berry (Manchester Courier, 12 October, 1864).

⁶⁴³ Swindells, T. Manchester Streets and Manchester Men Fifth Series. 1908 J E Cornish Ltd, Manchester p.149/153

⁶⁴⁴ See manchesterhistory.net/bellevue/zoo.html.

⁶⁴⁵ Manchester Times, 26 August, 1837. The gardens would be expanded after 1850. At their peak they covered 165 acres.

⁶⁴⁶ Manchester Times, 26 March, 1842.

to a still-novel train journey as well as the ever-changing delights of the garden. Jennison was well aware that change and development was essential to bringing repeat visits and each year promised new delights, from fireworks, to boating in the lake, to music, to new walks. In 1844 a repeat of an earlier pedestrian feat was planned – to walk 1,000 miles in 1,000 successive hours, beginning at 6 p.m. on Easter Monday. Originally accomplished by Captain Barclay at Newmarket in 1809, this feat had been repeated by a Mr. Berry at Cornbrook Strawberry Gardens in 1819. Advertisements over the coming weeks kept the public informed of the number of miles accomplished. The following year, Jennison offered daily performances of “*a talented company of Equestrians, La Tranca Performers, Rope Dancers, Polanders, Vaulters, &c. Mr. Furr will introduce his wonderful performing dog Blutherups, who will exhibit his extraordinary feats*”.⁶⁴⁷

Belle Vue Gardens became a leading tourist attraction, bringing visitors from all over the north⁶⁴⁸ and with increased visitor numbers – and hence income – Jennison was able to increase the attractions on offer. These did not always endear him to his neighbours. In 1845 he was brought before the magistrates by Mr. Hughes who complained about the pigeon shooting competition which had been held and which, Hughes said, had caused a shot to go close to a servant’s head. The fact that a nine-foot wall separated the two properties ensured the dismissal of the complaint. It did, however, highlight the class division. The Manchester Times headlined its report “The Pigeon Shooting of the Lower and the Deer Shooting of the Higher Classes” and reported the statement of the defending counsel:

“He did not defend the practice of pigeon shooting, but so long as the aristocracy set an example of breeding game to shoot it for mere sport, it was in vain to expect that the humbler classes would refrain from the same degrading practice. It was equally absurd to try to get rid of these games by saying it was disorderly conduct and contrary to license, which was trying to put a stop to the practice among the lower classes by a side command, while the rich protected the right by acts of parliament”.⁶⁴⁹

⁶⁴⁷ Manchester Times, 21 June, 1845.

⁶⁴⁸ In 1860 Jennison requested an excursion train on the East Lancashire section of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. It was anticipated that there would be 1,000 travellers. In the event there were 2,453 passengers picked up on the route from Colne to Radcliffe and additional trains had to be put on. The journey back (around midnight) was marred by an accident. (House of Commons Papers (Vol. 57): Report of Col. W. Yolland to the Board of Trade, p.77-81.)

⁶⁴⁹ The fact that pigeon-shooting was also associated with betting may have had a bearing. The Sporting Magazine, April 1840 (p.445) carried an article which described pigeon-shooting

By 1847 the gardens were well established. Of the 36 acres, fifteen were laid out as gardens with choice exotics and flowering plants. There were fountains with goldfish; a maze (a copy of that at Hampton Court), rustic grottoes, a large lake with a fleet of boats, a deer paddock, museum, aviary and menagerie.⁶⁵⁰ Two bands alternated, and there was space for dancing.⁶⁵¹ In 1849 Jennison hosted three flower shows and the success of the gardens was such that annual subscription tickets were available.⁶⁵² The Manchester Guardian described the gardens in detail. In all there were, by then (1849), forty-one acres, with up to eighteen acres laid out as gardens which included "a lake, with its serpentine waters, fountains, &c. with maze, dancing floor, lawns, bowling green, avenues, arbours, grottoes, caves, &c." Twenty-one acres were set aside for a race-ground, both for horses and for foot-races, and there were several exhibits in the zoological section: an Australian dingo, an Indian bull, fallow deer, both Norway and American eagles, a vulture, kites, hawks, owls, pheasants, peacocks and a whole range of parrots – macaws, cockatoos, parakeets, etc.⁶⁵³

Some miles away, and rather closer to town were the Pomona Gardens. These were developed from the Strawberry Gardens at Cornbrook mentioned above.⁶⁵⁴ Between 1820 and 1845 the gardens had been private, but the Beardsley brothers (William and Joseph) purchased them and opened them as the "*Pomona Gardens Regatta Pleasure Grounds*"⁶⁵⁵ to take advantage of the annual Regatta held

as bringing people together, exciting competition and promoting amusement. "*A little betting is perhaps desirable, for it adds to the interest*". The article also offered tips on how to gain advantage: "*invite [your] antagonist to dine with [you] ... blow him out with salmon and lobster sauce, persuade him to "help himself to the claret" [to] gain the advantage of two birds out of eleven*". Although Jennison did not necessarily approve of gambling, he was once hauled before the magistrates on a charge of assaulting Mary Buller, who had set up a stall and gambling table at the gardens on the occasion of a foot-race. Jennison had ordered Buller out and she refused to go, hence the supposed assault. The case against Jennison was dismissed.

⁶⁵⁰ Manchester Times, 21 May, 1847.

⁶⁵¹ Manchester Times, 29 May, 1847 "*A full military and quadrille band relieve each other at stated periods, and the votaries of Terpsichore may here enjoy themselves on the green sward until they weary from very exhaustion.*"

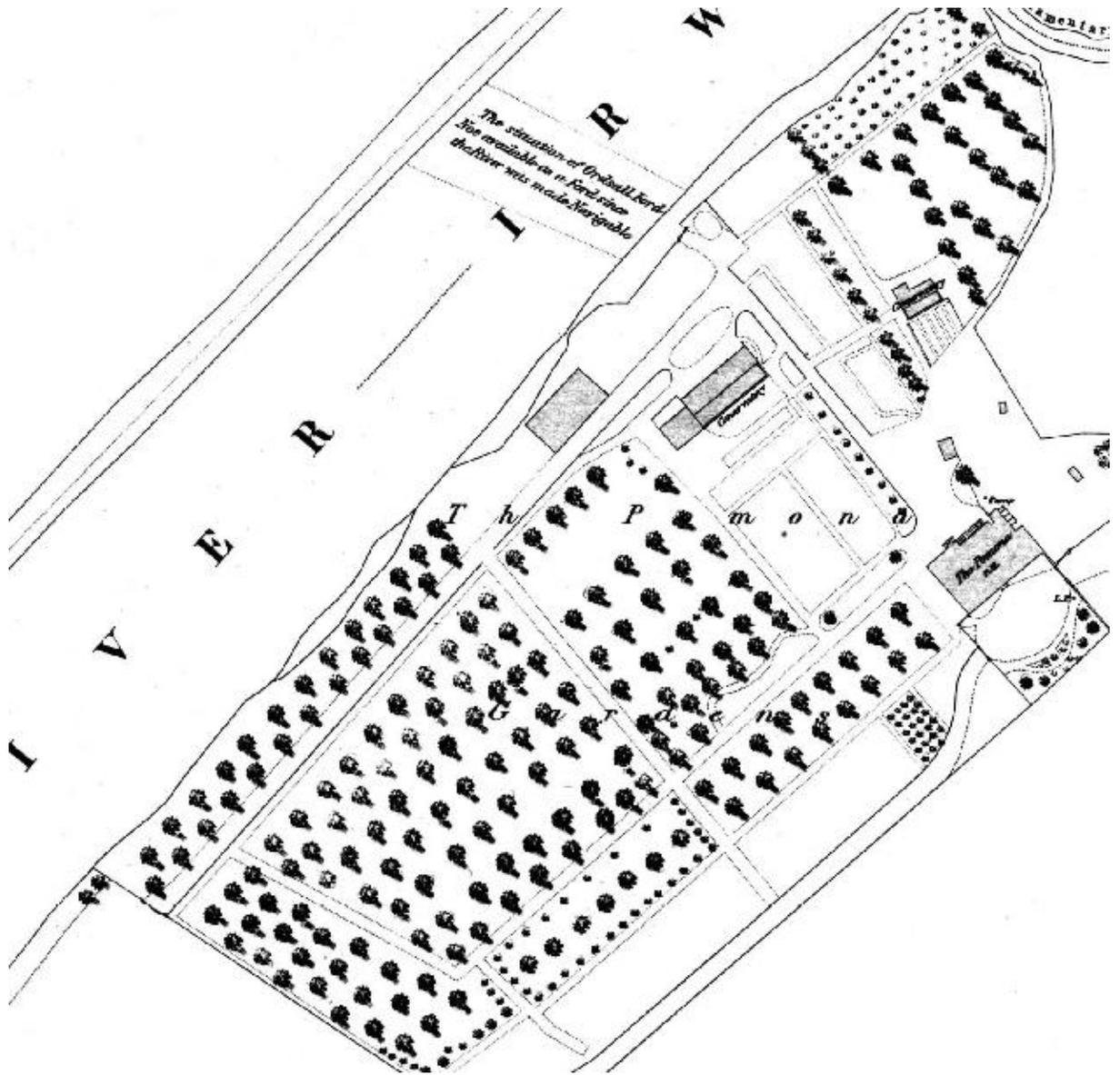
⁶⁵² Manchester Times, 7 April, 1849. A subscription of 10s admitted a whole family every day of the year. Otherwise, admission was 3d on weekdays and 6d on Sundays.

⁶⁵³ Taken from the reproduction in the Midland florist and suburban horticulturist (1850) p.83-90 The original (longer) article from the Manchester Guardian, of 8 August, 1849 is included as Appendix Seven.

⁶⁵⁴ For the history of the Pomona Gardens see Appendix Six.

⁶⁵⁵ Manchester Courier, 19 April, 1845.

on the River Irwell, which had begun in 1842.⁶⁵⁶ Although only about one-third the size of Belle Vue, the gardens stretched for half a mile alongside the river Irwell, making them ideal for viewing the regatta races, but also allowing for the hiring of pleasure boats.



Pomona Gardens, c. 1850 (O.S. Map). The map shows "The situation of Ordsall Ford. Not available as a Ford since the River was made Navigable". The Gardens were behind the Pomona Public House.

⁶⁵⁶ Manchester Times, 3 September, 1842: The Manchester and Salford Regatta, patron Lord Francis Egerton. The first Regatta was held on 12 September, the club having been in existence for only three months and already with sixty members, mostly working men (Manchester Courier, 17 September, 1842. Regattas had been held at Warrington and Liverpool for several years.

During Regatta week, refreshment tents were erected. Normally admission to the gardens was 7d, with 6d returned in refreshments, but for the regatta "*in order to preserve the respectability of visitors*" the entrance fee was 6d – refreshments extra.⁶⁵⁷ There was clearly a class issue, since, even at other times, "*persons [were] appointed to see that no improper characters are admitted*".⁶⁵⁸ The Manchester and Salford Regatta Club, by 1845, had around eighty members and had hired the Thames boatmen, Messrs. Doubledee, as trainers. As a spectator sport, it was highly successful, judging by the number of licenses issued for the selling of alcohol. In addition to the newly opened Pomona Gardens on the Hulme side of the river, there was a grandstand and refreshment booths on the Salford side.⁶⁵⁹

By 1846, the Beardsley Brothers boasted that the Pomona Gardens were "*the most elegant and decidedly the most delightful public gardens*" outside of London:

*"The beautiful scenery, combined with the salubrious breezes direct from the Irish sea, sweeping the fertile and perfumed meads of Cheshire, render the situation as one appropriately chosen for rural pleasures, and one which the proprietors have taken every advantage of, with a view of encouraging health and recreation, and have spared no expense in making this retreat worthy of the great manufacturing metropolis of the world."*⁶⁶⁰

The success of the gardens was not purely reliant on the regatta. For the first Grand Gala of 1847 there were so many visitors that the gardens ran out of refreshments and the Beardsleys had to publish an apology to the thousands of visitors who went without.⁶⁶¹

Like Belle Vue, the gardens and attractions were under constant re-invention. As the years went past, the number of events increased. There were exciting balloon ascensions by the celebrated aeronaut, Mr. G. B. Gale.⁶⁶² Balloon ascensions were nothing new – they had been spectacles for several decades – but Mr. Gale was offering rather more. His balloon, "*The Prince of Wales*", had two baskets, thirty feet apart, and Mr. Gale – at 4,000 feet – moved from the higher to the lower, from where

⁶⁵⁷ *Manchester Times*, 26 July, 1845.

⁶⁵⁸ *Manchester Courier*, 17 May, 1845.

⁶⁵⁹ *Manchester Courier*, 16 August, 1845.

⁶⁶⁰ *Manchester Times*, 5 June, 1846.

⁶⁶¹ *Manchester Courier*, 29 May, 1847.

⁶⁶² Originally described as an American, it was later said the Mr. Gale was an Englishman who had achieved his first success in America.

he set off fireworks.⁶⁶³ A spectacle purchased from the proprietors of the Vauxhall Gardens in London, was the Temple of Honan.⁶⁶⁴ This was perforated with many holes which were covered with transparent cambric so that different coloured lights behind it gave different effects. With this, the balloon ascent, illuminations, fireworks and the promise of music and dancing, it was not surprising that Pomona Gardens were a popular resort. In addition to the gardens, there was an area for orchestra and concerts, a ball-room with space for 100 quadrille sets. It was stated that, in Whit Week, there were up to 30,000 visitors.⁶⁶⁵

The weather was always a problem for pleasure gardens. Tinker had advertised his special events as falling on particular dates but giving alternative dates in case the weather was "*unfavourable*".⁶⁶⁶ Jennison also promised alternative dates, but gradually increased the amount of sheltered space available in the event of inclement weather⁶⁶⁷ and the Pomona gardens "*provided good shelter for her visitors*".⁶⁶⁸

The gardens which have left a record – albeit a small one – are only a few of the gardens that existed. Most public houses had a garden as well, but their use as pleasure gardens were either very limited or their owners felt no need to advertise their existence. Ben Lang's gardens at Ordsal⁶⁶⁹ have left little impact, as have the Arcade Gardens towards Cheetham "*a pleasure resort where boating and fishing*

⁶⁶³ Manchester Examiner, 19 June, 1847.

⁶⁶⁴ Manchester Courier, 27 March, 1847.

⁶⁶⁵ Manchester Times, 14 May, 1853.

⁶⁶⁶ Manchester Mercury, 25 August, 1812.

⁶⁶⁷ "*Under the stand, secure and protected from the weather, is a noble Room, [which] affords shelter for 2,000 persons.*" (Manchester Times, 22 May, 1846); "*and in the event of unfavourable weather, accommodation is provided in the gardens for the shelter of thousands*" (Manchester Times, 30 March, 1850); "*a Summer Marquee, 150 feet in length, and capable of sheltering upwards of 1,000 persons – a retreat in addition to the permanent covered erections throughout the garden*" (Manchester Times, 18 May, 1850)

⁶⁶⁸ Manchester Times, 14 May, 1853.

⁶⁶⁹ Manchester Courier, 24 May, 1856. Lang had taken the gardens to provide "*SUMMER AMUSEMENTS for the working classes*". He also ran a music hall. In 1895 J. Lavender recalled the gardens "*on the top of the [Music Hall]. He had the roof levelled, and a light drawing-room erected, with a promenade around it. Plants were placed here and there, and that was his garden*" (Manchester Times, 22 February, 1895). Of the gardens at Ordsal, another correspondent wrote: "*They were only in existence a few years, and scarcely deserved the name of "gardens."* They consisted of a dancing board, band stand, and refreshment bar, surrounded by a wooden hoarding, and were frequented by the rising generation of the working class ... the price of admission ... was threepence. It was a favourite resort of the "roughs," and the scenes at times were somewhat lively." (Manchester Times, 29 March, 1895).

could be enjoyed".⁶⁷⁰ Other gardens did not get beyond an initial idea. In 1829 a "*private subscription pleasure, tea and strawberry garden*" was proposed at Longsight. The plan was for the gardens to also have space for archery, a bowling green and a cricket pitch. The cost of £6,000 would have been raised by the sale of shares at £12 each. A correspondent in the same edition of the Manchester Times in which the advert appeared, wrote that, while appreciating the need for pleasure grounds in the vicinity of the town, he felt the whole thing was doomed to failure:

*"But, after all, the scheme, appears to me to be a far too extravagant multum in parvo. In a plot of land of "about 150 yards square", it is proposed to have "pleasure, tea, and strawberry gardens, – an archery ground, cricket ground, bowling-green, promenade, fishpond, baths", and I know not what besides!! Why really, sir, this seems to be making rather too much of the ingenious projector's good thing. What numberless disasters would be perpetually occurring! What havoc the cricket-balls would soon make among the tulip beds! What confusion it would occasion to the unsuspecting and happy tea-party as it descended among the frail ware which contained their refreshing beverage! What a disappointment, when you had sweetened your strawberries and cream, and made them "just the thing", to have the bowl dashed from your hand!"*⁶⁷¹

It is noteworthy that the gardens which succeeded were those set up and run by individuals – Tinker, Jennison and the Beardsley brothers. They had no need to keep shareholders happy via annual dividends.

The pleasure gardens – despite their popularity – began to be seen by some as a problem. This related to the twin 'evils' of intemperance and Sunday opening.⁶⁷² In 1854 the House of Commons Select Committee on Public Houses took evidence from Reginald Richardson, a land and building surveyor, of Manchester.⁶⁷³ Reference was made to both Belle Vue and Pomona Gardens, which were both open on a Sunday, but without music. These were not the only pleasure gardens: Richardson referred to a "*few smaller*" places. One of these was Ben Lang's gardens in Ordsal and the evidence given to the Select Committee is perhaps of importance with regard to these. Lang's gardens were on the opposite bank of the Irwell to the Pomona Gardens and Lang built a grandstand and employed a band to provide music during the Regatta. However, Lang had a licence to sell beer only and was consistently

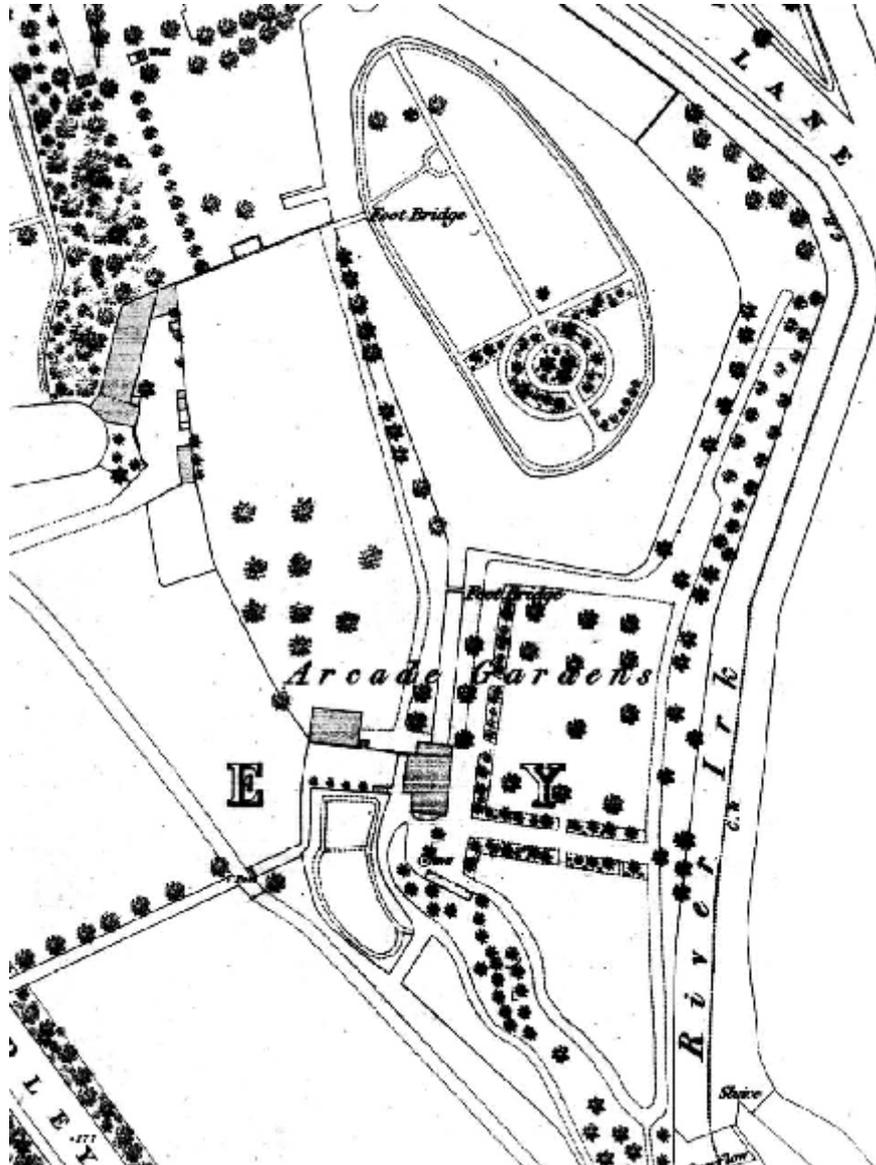
⁶⁷⁰ Swindells, Fifth Series, p.46.

⁶⁷¹ Manchester Times, 4 July, 1829.

⁶⁷² Not all gardens opened on a Sunday. Newspapers referred to Mr. Gardner keeping his Clay Hall Gardens closed on the Sabbath.

⁶⁷³ See House of Commons papers, Volume 14, p.196-206; paras 3505-3600

refused a license for spirits by the magistrates.⁶⁷⁴ Richardson's evidence was that favouritism had been displayed by the licensing authorities, with regard to the licensing of both public houses and theatres.⁶⁷⁵



Arcade Gardens, Smedley (O.S. Map, c. 1850)

⁶⁷⁴ In 1863 an eighth application for a spirit licence was made on Lang's behalf "The proprietors of the other public gardens in the locality – Belle Vue and Pomona Gardens – had spirit licences; and he could only attribute the refusal heretofore to licence these gardens to prejudice" Another application was granted, but Lang's was refused. "Mr. Trafford said the bench would not state the reasons why they refused Mr. Lang's application." (*Manchester Courier*, 29 August, 1863).

⁶⁷⁵ A license had been refused for Charles Dickens to put on one of his performances at the Free Trade Hall, despite the fact that the proceeds would have been for the benefit of Guild of Literature and Art. It is easy to see how the suggestion of favouritism arose when magistrates refused to give their reasons for refusal of licenses (see *Manchester Courier*, 25 August, 1849).

Gardens for activity

Although the Pleasure Gardens were ideal for those who wished to spend time walking amongst flowers and shrubs, or who were looking for fun and spectacle, both Belle Vue and Pomona Gardens also catered for those looking for a more active way of spending their leisure hours. In addition to the boating available on the lake at Belle Vue and the river at Pomona, each offered opportunities for dancing, each had a bowling green, Belle Vue had a cricket ground and Pomona a quoiting ground. The latter also had a gymnasium within the grounds. Particular groups were catered for and in 1848 the Foresters held their annual festival at Pomona Gardens where "*archery, running, jumping, leaping, bowling, dancing on the green*" recalled the days of Robin Hood, Little John and Will Scarlet.⁶⁷⁶

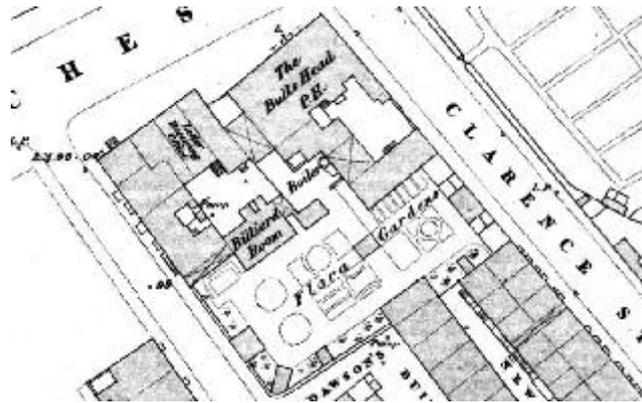
Among the "*few smaller*" pleasure gardens referred to by Richardson were the White House Gardens in Hulme and the Grove Inn Gardens in Strangeways, on the Bury New Road. The former, like Belle Vue, had a cricket ground and the latter, like Pomona a quoiting ground. Each had a bowling green and the White House gardens had skittles on offer. One of the reasons given for the loss of popularity of the Vauxhall Gardens was the attractions offered by the White House Gardens. They were south of the Stretford New Road and were open by 1835 when they were offering music daily and refreshments "*of the best quality*".⁶⁷⁷ The gardens were taken over by James Platford in 1840. Platford, born around 1778, had run the Flora Gardens and Bulls' Head Inn on Chester Road for thirty-three years before moving to the White House Gardens.⁶⁷⁸ At the Flora Gardens he held Dahlia shows, firework displays, even balloon ascents.⁶⁷⁹ The White House Gardens were larger and gave him more scope. His advert of May 1840 differentiated the gardens from the pleasure grounds and his announcement of the attendance of a Quadrille Band implies dancing. Like his rivals at Belle Vue and Pomona, Platford made changes to his gardens, always with an eye to his customers. In 1848, the papers reported that "*The gardens are in excellent order ... there have not been many alterations on these grounds since last year, but in what improvements have been made regard has been*

⁶⁷⁶ *Manchester Times*, 5 August, 1848.

⁶⁷⁷ *Manchester Times*, 6 June, 1835.

⁶⁷⁸ *Manchester Times*, 30 May, 1840.

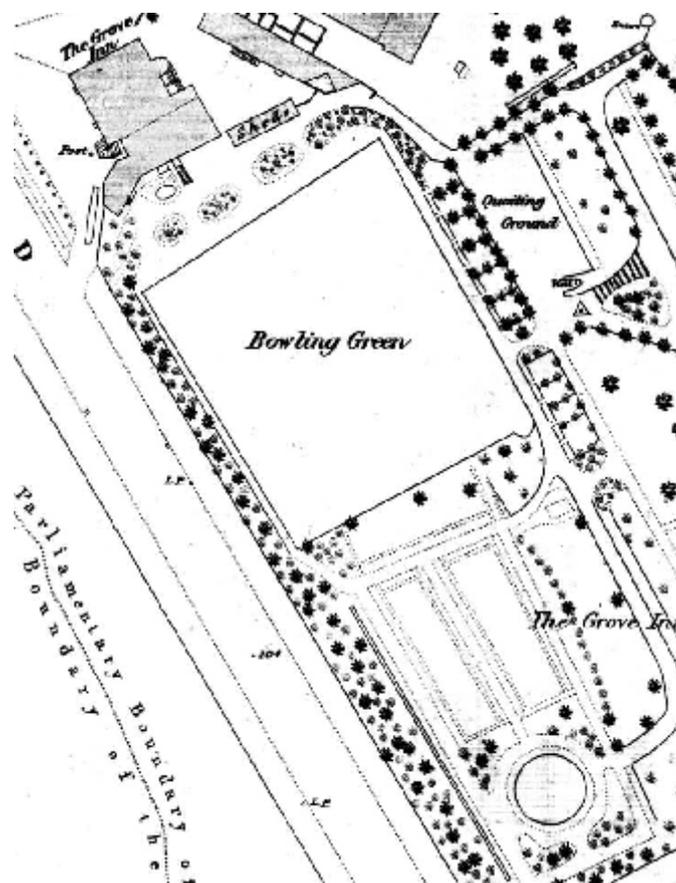
⁶⁷⁹ James Platford won prizes in the Floral and Horticultural Society shows



Above: Flora Gardens, attached to the Bull's Head Public House, c. 1849 (O.S. Map)
 Below: The Apollo Gardens attached to the White House Hotel on New Stretford Road, c. 1849 (O.S. Map)



*had to the comfort and convenience of the visitors”.*⁶⁸⁰ The White House gardens were particularly noted for sport. Cumberland and Westmoreland style wrestling competitions were regularly held and were reported not only locally, but also in those counties.⁶⁸¹



The Grove Inn Gardens, Bury New Road, complete with Bowling Green and Quoiting Ground (1849, O.S.Map)

The Grove Inn Gardens also hosted wrestling matches.⁶⁸² The landlord was Joseph Lodge and the gardens ran alongside Bury New Road. A few hundred yards away, on the opposite side of the road, were the Broughton Lane nurseries of William Lodge. These two men may have been brothers; certainly Swindells links the nursery with the inn, but implies they were run by the same man. He quoted in full an advertisement from the Manchester Guardian of 28 July, 1832 which referred to them

⁶⁸⁰ Manchester Courier, 26 April, 1848.

⁶⁸¹ See, for example, Kendal Mercury, 3 April, 1841; Carlisle Journal, 30 March, 1844; Manchester Courier, 26 April, 1848. In 1845 a Stand erected for spectators collapsed, causing a few injuries (Manchester Courier, 5 April, 1845).

⁶⁸² Manchester Times, 5 March, 1836: the competition was limited to natives of Cumberland and Westmoreland who had been "resident three months within four miles of the Manchester Exchange".

as the "*Broughton Grove Inn Zoological Gardens*", although there was nothing to explain the use of the word Zoological:

*"Broughton Grove Inn Zoological Gardens. The inhabitants of Manchester and its neighbourhood are most respectfully informed that these rural and interesting gardens are now opened to the public. The proprietor, Joseph Lodge, begs leave to inform the gentlemen, subscribers, and others, that the bowling-green, billiard-room, and quoiting-ground are now in complete order, and will be set apart for their exclusive amusement every Wednesday and Friday; and to the public generally on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. The ladies and younger branches of families will find in these retired gardens everything that can contribute to their health and amusement. Tea, coffee, salad, fruit, etc., will be provided on the most reasonable terms. J. Lodge hopes by unremitting attention to the comfort of his visitors, keeping only the choicest wines and spirits, together with his home-brewed ale and London porter, etc. to make this the most pleasant lounge in the neighbourhood, being only one mile from town on the Bury New Road."*⁶⁸³

The Grove Inn Gardens did not always enjoy a good reputation. In 1843 there was complaint about the "*drunken rabble*" which left the gardens on a Sunday evening, causing "*scenes of riot and disturbance*" and incommoding respectable citizens returning from church.⁶⁸⁴ The Manchester Times commented "*the gardens are a great public nuisance, and we trust that the authorities of the town will at once correct the evil*".⁶⁸⁵

The Gardens attached to the Grove Inn fell eventually to development and the demand for housing and business premises. Louis Hayes, in 1905, recalled that Firework Displays were put on periodically to encourage trade and that not having "*sixpence to pay for admission*", he would watch free of charge by climbing a wall – unless discovered: "*some people have such prejudiced views as to the ordinary rights of merely looking over a wall*".⁶⁸⁶ In 1847 the Manchester Courier reported on a number of gardens visited in Whit Week during a period of very warm weather. Grove Inn Gardens a "*rural Elysium*", which was on the route to the race course, was the stopping off place for those who did not want to walk so far, given the heat. They lay stretched out on the lawns, "*smoking, chatting, and while away time as they*

⁶⁸³ Swindells, Fourth series, p. 189-190.

⁶⁸⁴ Manchester Times, 5 August, 1843.

⁶⁸⁵ Manchester Times, 12 August, 1843.

⁶⁸⁶ Hayes, Louis M. Reminiscences of Manchester, 1905. p.91.

best could”, calling, as needed, for the waiters. Meanwhile, in the “*snug arbour*”, groups of young women sang together.⁶⁸⁷

The Turf Tavern at Kersal Moor was another public house which offered activities as well as pleasure gardens. In 1841 it was to let, and the advertisement described it as “*a large, commodious Inn, with extensive stabling, bowling green, archery, and pleasure grounds, gardens, orchard, and Land*”.⁶⁸⁸ It would have had good trade while the Moor was used for the annual Races. Several inns had bowling greens attached in the 1840s (sometimes with other activities and/or pleasure gardens), whereas in the 1790s those identified stood alone. Strangeways Hall had its own Bowling Green set among plantations; in Salford there was the Union Subscription Green and on the route to Strangeways Hall was the New Bowling Green.



Bowling Greens in 1794 (Green) l to r: in the grounds of Strangeways Hall; by St Stephen's Church in Salford; by the detached gardens on the route to Strangeways Hall

Bowling was a favourite pastime and John Dalton was probably the most famous of the Manchester residents who enjoyed this game, which he played every Thursday.

*“When it came to his turn to bowl, he threw his whole soul into his game, and after he had delivered the bowl from his hand, it was not a little amusing to spectators to see him running after it across the green, stooping down as if talking to the ball, and waving his hands from one side to the other exactly as he wished the bias of the ball to be, and manifesting the most intense interest in its coining near to the point at which he aimed”.*⁶⁸⁹

We have seen above that bowling greens could fall to the developers when they were close to town, but for the enthusiasts there were greens further out. In Stretford, the

⁶⁸⁷ Manchester Courier, 29 May, 1847.

⁶⁸⁸ Manchester Times, 9 October, 1841.

⁶⁸⁹ Henry, William Charles. Memoirs of the Life and Scientific Researches of John Dalton. p.215

Green attached the Angel Inn was used by subscribers on Thursdays and Fridays.⁶⁹⁰ In Pendleton there was the Bowling Green Inn;⁶⁹¹ in Ardwick the Shakspeare Inn, with its Bowling Green and Racket Court;⁶⁹² in Altrincham the Stamford Arms and Bowling Green Hotel;⁶⁹³ in Cheadle, the White Hart Bowling Green⁶⁹⁴ and at Ashton the Snipe Inn had a "*Large and Splendid BOWLING GREEN and PLEASURE GARDENS*".⁶⁹⁵ Competitions were sometimes advertised. At the Turf Tavern, Kersal Moor, sixteen members each subscribed 25s. to a purse of £20⁶⁹⁶ and at the Angel Inn a more modest subscription of 2s. 6d. was required to play for a prize of a silver snuff box.⁶⁹⁷ Most of the advertisements included information on travel.



The Griffin Hotel, Cheetham Hill Road (above) also had a Quoiting Ground, but The Eagle & Child Inn, further down the road (overleaf) did not (O.S. Map)

⁶⁹⁰ Manchester Times, 29 April, 1837. The omnibus called l'Hirondelle was available to take customers to and from Manchester.

⁶⁹¹ Manchester Times, 16 April, 1842.

⁶⁹² Manchester Times, 1 October, 1842.

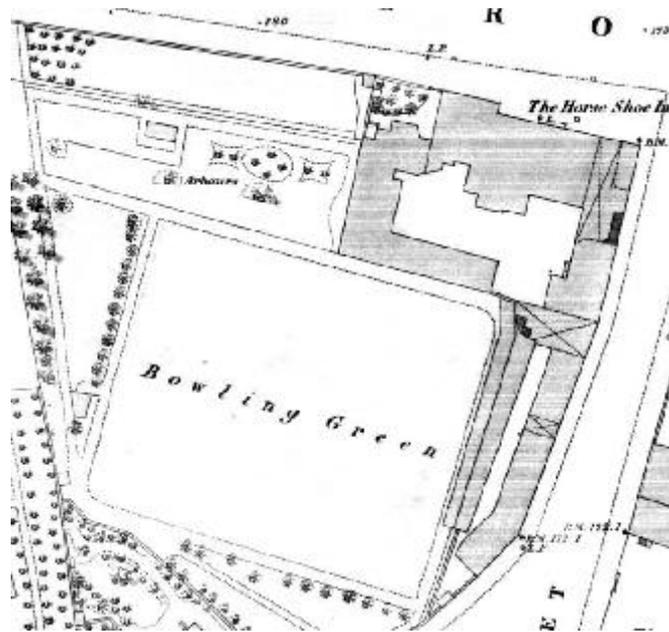
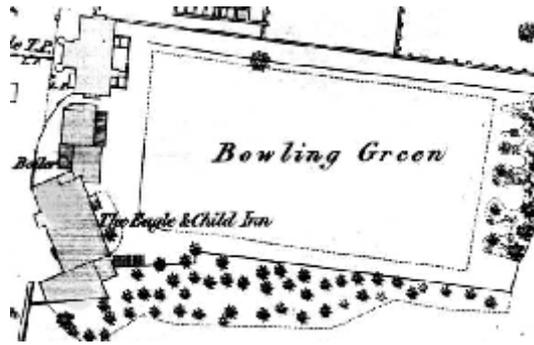
⁶⁹³ Manchester Times, 28 July, 1849.

⁶⁹⁴ Manchester Times, 13 April, 1850.

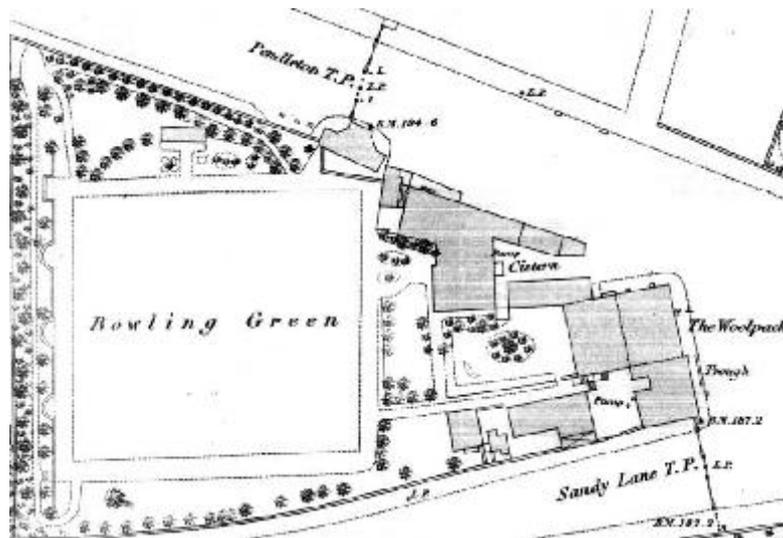
⁶⁹⁵ Manchester Times, 11 May, 1850.

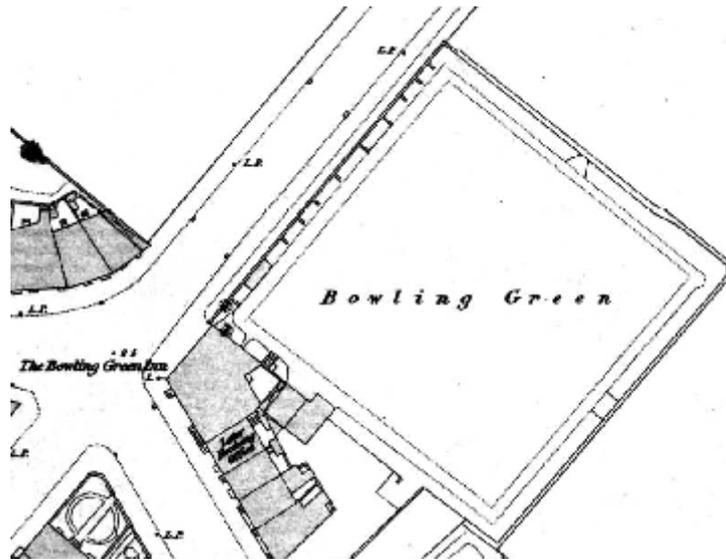
⁶⁹⁶ Manchester Times, 16 May, 1840. There were other matches promised also and "*Every alteration has been made to the green that was necessary, under the superintendence of a professional gentleman; the whole of the arbours have been re-decorated with taste and judgment, which, it is presumed, will render this green inferior to none in the locality, whilst it will be found a pleasant lounge to all who are fond of enjoying a rural retreat.*"

⁶⁹⁷ Manchester Times, 15 August, 1849.



Well placed, either side of Pendleton Green Nursery, were The Horse Shoe Inn and The Woolpack Inn, complete with gardens and Bowling Greens.





Not all inns had gardens as well as Bowling Greens. Above: the aptly named Bowling Green Inn close to River Irwell opposite Regent Bridge and, surprisingly (as it was in an area with a great number of large gardens), neither did the The Birch Villa Inn on the Wilmslow Road (below)



Gardens for education

All the gardens already referred to were popular and available, at least to those with sufficient spare income, but some made their appearance after the two gardens included here – The Manchester Botanic Gardens and The Manchester Zoological Gardens. It was, perhaps, the exclusive nature of these two gardens – apparently, yet not actually, intended to bring education to all – which ensured the rise of both Belle Vue (a rival Zoological garden) and Pomona (in the same general area as the Botanic Garden).

Speaking to the Select Committee on Public Houses, Richardson described a major reason for the popularity of gardens: people were “*so confined during the week days at their work, that they feel let loose on the Sunday, and wish for fresh air and exercise*”. During the period of this study Sunday was the only day off work⁶⁹⁸ and yet the churches had long been demanding that all places of amusement be closed on Sundays. Sunday closing was an issue for the two gardens considered here, causing dissent, discontent and, perhaps, ultimately, economic failure.

The Manchester Botanic Gardens in Old Trafford were private gardens (though not in the sense of the previous chapter), in the ownership of the members, and their availability to the public was strictly limited – unless one includes as the public those who could afford the cost of membership.⁶⁹⁹ The Botanic Gardens are included here, however, as an appreciation of the exclusivity of membership is necessary to understand the move to create the Zoological Gardens. The Botanic Gardens opened in June 1831 just less than four years after the inaugural meeting of the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Society where the decision to open a Subscription Botanic Garden was taken. The idea of a Botanic Garden in the town had been suggested in 1822 in a letter in the Manchester Iris,⁷⁰⁰ and in 1825 the Manchester Courier, reporting on the first Floral and Horticultural Society show of that year added: “*We hope soon to be able to congratulate our readers upon the addition of a Botanic Garden to the other spirited improvements and embellishments of our town*”. Liverpool had a Botanic Garden and so should Manchester. Liverpool people prided themselves on their Garden and the Manchester one would be comparable, but provided at a fraction of the cost. The Courier added:

“The streets of a bustling manufacturing town like this, are very unsuitable as a promenade for our fair townswomen; and it is the constant theme of strangers, who visit Manchester, that they scarce ever see any of our far-famed “Lancashire Witches” out of doors. Besides, then, the credit which the establishing of a botanic garden would reflect on the science and good taste

⁶⁹⁸ The Factory Act 1850 introduced the Saturday 2 p.m. finish, although Saturday half holiday began to be introduced in Manchester from 1837. (Warrender, Keith Manchester Oddities (2011) p.14.)

⁶⁹⁹ For a full history of the Manchester Botanic Gardens, see Brooks, Ann ‘A Veritable Eden’: The Manchester Botanic Garden 1827-1907 and the Movement for Subscription Botanic Gardens, thesis submitted to Manchester University, 2007 and ‘A Veritable Eden’ The Manchester Botanic Garden A History (2011).

⁷⁰⁰ *ibid*, p. 69

*of the town, it would scarcely be less valuable as an agreeable and delightful promenade.”*⁷⁰¹

It is clear that the Botanic Garden was to have a number of functions – it would provide both status and an area of safety, as well as the more obvious duties of an area for scientific and practical study. Despite the prompting of the Courier, it was to be two years before progress was made, with the meeting on 30 July 1827 at the Town Hall. The address given there was reproduced in the Courier the following week, together with details of subscriptions and a list of eighty-five original subscribers.

The Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society had only been formed in February 1825, so the idea of creating a botanic garden was an early concept, emanating from that society. The establishment of the Botanic and Horticultural Society to take forward the idea of the botanic garden, rather than it being a production of the Floral Society, had its basis in class divisions. Although the Floral Society had the Earl of Wilton and Thomas Trafford as patrons and the Rev John Clowes as President and Richard Potter and William Hulton as Vice-Presidents, the Committee of twenty-four men shows a cross-section of the community and included the nurserymen John Bridgford and James Faulkner as members. The Annual Subscription was only ten shillings and a donation of £5 gave free entry to all shows. The Botanic Society, on the other hand, was set up with a minimum requirement of payment of £10 and annual subscriptions of two guineas (life members) or an initial payment of £25 and annual subscriptions of one guinea (hereditary members). A comparison of the committee members of each society at the time of institution shows that only three made the move, although some members of the Botanic Society continued to exhibit at the Floral Society.

Botany was a popular subject in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Manchester was known for its working class botanists, who happily spent their Sundays wandering through the countryside seeking out rare plants. Their knowledge was legendary. However, botany was also considered a suitable subject for women and popular magazines ran articles to introduce the subject. At its inaugural meeting, the address given made reference to the fact that botany was available to, and appreciated by, all sections of the community, but that the lack of

⁷⁰¹ Manchester Courier, 28 May, 1825.

hothouses meant that working class botanists were frustrated by not being able to learn about rare and exotic plants which needed expensive protection. There was mention of the civilising effects of horticulture, of the success of the Floral Society (by then with 600 subscribers), of the need to educate young gardeners, but also of creating a space for public recreation. It was proposed that the ornamental walks would create a fashionable resort where individuals would be "*unexposed to the intrusion of rude familiarity and licentious mirth*". Despite the apparent inclusion of the working classes in the speech, the Botanic Gardens were to be for the well-behaved – i.e. wealthier – members of society.⁷⁰²

By the time the gardens opened in 1831, the class divisions had become more pronounced. In May, an advert referred to the need to "*discontinue the indiscriminate admission of the Public to the Gardens*".⁷⁰³ Two weeks later the newspaper carried a correction with regard to a misunderstanding. The number of subscribers to the Botanic Gardens was not limited to 400, as was thought, but that once that number had been achieved, the subscription would be two guineas a year and not one guinea. This compares with the one shilling entrance fee that Vauxhall Gardens charged at that time, and the 10s annual subscription that Jennison would later introduce at Belle Vue.⁷⁰⁴

The following year a correspondent, who knew of the fame of the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society Shows, attended one held by the Botanic and Horticultural Society, where he was disappointed to find not a single pink, rose or ranunculus – which he would have expected at that time in the year. On inquiry, he was told that this was only a "*scion*" of the original Society, and that "*their views were so lofty, aristocratic, and, I had nearly said, exotic, that a pink, a rose, or ranunculus was beneath their notice*".⁷⁰⁵ The existence of two such similar societies was problematic and the Floral and Horticultural Society struggled to continue, eventually failing, then being revived and failing yet again.

⁷⁰² Manchester Courier, 4 August, 1827.

⁷⁰³ Manchester Times, 14 May, 1831.

⁷⁰⁴ Manchester Times, 23 March, 1850: "*THE Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Society having discontinued their annual subscriptions, the proprietor of the ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, BELLE VUE, Hyde Road, near Manchester, professes to meet the exigency by receiving Subscriptions of 10s. per annum, entitling parties to free admission for themselves and the resident members of their family, from the 1st of May, 1850 to the 1st of May, 1851.*"

⁷⁰⁵ Manchester Times, 7 July, 1832.

The Botanic Gardens were closed on Sundays and, for a population that worked six days a week, this was a problem. In 1833 a correspondent complained that he had not known of this when he had become a subscriber and wondered why it should be. After attendance at Church "*what could be more innocent than walking with your children and select friends in a garden, to muse on the beauties of creation, and look from Nature up to Nature's GOD?*" he asked.⁷⁰⁶ More than two decades later, the matter was still an area of contention. Punch ran a piece headlined "*Pharisees and Flowers at Manchester*":

*"We are bidden to consider the lilies of the field. This advice is often repeated on a Sunday. But, according to certain highly sanctified persons, we ought to put off the consideration of the lilies till the next day. For lilies are flowers – and flowers are unlawful objects of contemplation on a Sunday in the judgment of those persons."*⁷⁰⁷

The piece had been prompted by the 1856 Annual General Meeting, when James Heywood moved a resolution to open the Gardens from 2.30 p.m. to dusk on Sundays. Although he had a fair amount of support, those who opposed Sunday opening had more and the resolution was lost.

Discontent about the way the Gardens were being run led directly to a plan for a rival garden. One of the complaints was that, being in Old Trafford, the Gardens were too far from town, another was to do with the cost of membership. A suggestion that Manchester should, like its rival Liverpool, create a Zoological Garden, appeared in the press in 1833. It concluded that, unlike the Botanic Gardens, the proposed Zoological Gardens should "*be so near to Manchester that persons starting from the Exchange could reach it on foot within half an hour*".⁷⁰⁸ Two weeks later, another correspondent endorsed the idea but went further – the proposed Zoological Gardens should encompass medical botany as well:

"The student of botany is in Manchester excluded from the use of the Botanical Gardens – not less by the terms of admission than by the distance at which they are placed. Had the arrangements been formed more considerately than they have been, the medical students who are obliged to make botany a part of their professional studies would have been enabled, to the advantage of all parties, to meet their lecturer occasionally in the gardens,

⁷⁰⁶ Manchester Times, 15 June, 1833.

⁷⁰⁷ Punch, 22 March, 1856, p.118.

⁷⁰⁸ Manchester Times, 10 August, 1833.

*and thus to observe under the most favourable circumstances the plants which he has to describe.”*⁷⁰⁹

Nothing happened at that time, but the idea continued to be discussed, with various ideas being mooted. In April 1836 a Prospectus was issued for a rather grand scheme – a Zoological, Botanical and Public Gardens Company combined with a Coliseum and Baths. The timing of this is noteworthy. During 1835, the town had been going through a period of prosperity and this had led to a number of extravagant ideas. Some minds, said Reilly, seem to have been driven “*to the verge of insanity*”, so many joint-stock companies requiring millions in capital were suggested.⁷¹⁰ He included the Zoological Gardens Company in his list. However, the economic tide was turning. Just a week after the advertisement for the Prospectus appeared, the Manchester Times issued a warning:

*“There is yet much reason for caution not only as regards new schemes, but as regards ordinary business. Five years of active trade, uninterrupted by any serious depression, do much to inspire over-confidence, and with it over-trading. When, for so long a period, things have gone on smoothly, every body grows gradually less circumspect, and credit is consequently more easily obtained.”*⁷¹¹

The advertisement for the proposed Company, riding on this over-confidence, referred to the “*distinguished place*” Manchester held in the kingdom and its lack of a suitable place for the population to obtain recreation and amusement. “*True it possesses a Botanical Garden*” it pontificated, but that was such an exclusive Society that the public in general was unable to benefit from it at a time when Parliament was recommending that all large towns should be provided with public walks to promote health. A provisional committee had been formed and the following was the intention:

*“A Coliseum upon a plan more extensive than that in London; a splendid and extensive Menagerie; Reading Rooms amply provided with the means of instruction; Public and Private Baths, with a Promenade through a beautiful and extensive Botanic Garden.”*⁷¹²

⁷⁰⁹ Manchester Times, 24 August, 1833. Not everyone agreed: a letter in the edition 21 September, 1833, called the scheme “*preposterous*”.

⁷¹⁰ Reilly, John. The History of Manchester. 1865 p.353

⁷¹¹ Manchester Times, 30 April, 1836. The article was headed “*Will 1836 be like 1826*” and warned against wild speculation (likening 1835 with 1825), but concluded that the panic of 1826 would not be repeated.

⁷¹² Manchester Times, 23 April, 1836.

The proposal was a share capital of £200,000 in 10,000 shares each of £20, with the project going ahead once half of these had been sold. Only £1 was payable on purchase, which meant that work could start once £5,000 had been received. Voting rights would be geared to those owning large numbers of shares – fifty shares provided four votes and each additional fifty shares one more. Potentially, therefore, the voting rights could have been skewed to a handful of shareholders, and anyone owning fewer than five shares had no voting rights at all.⁷¹³

Over the next few weeks, the newspapers carried information about the progress of the Company, which, reading in hindsight, indicates problems from the beginning. It is clear that the public did not buy shares in the numbers anticipated as the price was reduced to £10 per share in July, despite the original date after which they could not be purchased being set at 7 May. The site for the proposed garden lay to the east of Bury New Road and was said to be about ten acres in size. A correspondent calling himself "*Amicus*" wrote at length to the Manchester Times about the site, owned by Rev John Clowes, complaining of corruption.⁷¹⁴ When the budget for the gardens was published, "*Amicus*" ridiculed it as inadequate.⁷¹⁵ There was to be a capital outlay of £13,800 (which did not include the purchase of land), annual income was estimated at £6,072 and expenditure at £3,846 per annum. This would have given a return of more than 15% on capital outlay. It is difficult to reconcile this to the £200,000 share capital and a decision must have been taken at some point to change the prospectus, since in the end the capital provided was £18,000. Unfortunately, capital expenditure was eventually in excess of £20,000, 45% higher than originally anticipated.⁷¹⁶ Expenditure would have been even higher, but for the many donations of plants and animals the company received.

The Directors employed the Landscape Gardener Richard Forrest to design their garden, and he reported to them in November 1836.⁷¹⁷ He congratulated them on having "*wisely given up all idea of a Botanical Garden*", but suggested an arboretum as "*nothing can be more appropriate as an accompaniment to these*

⁷¹³ Five shares = 1 vote; 15 shares = 2 votes; 30 shares = 3 votes.

⁷¹⁴ Manchester Times, 30 July, 1836. The rumour was that Clowes had sold the Provisional Committee sixty acres in total at below market price.

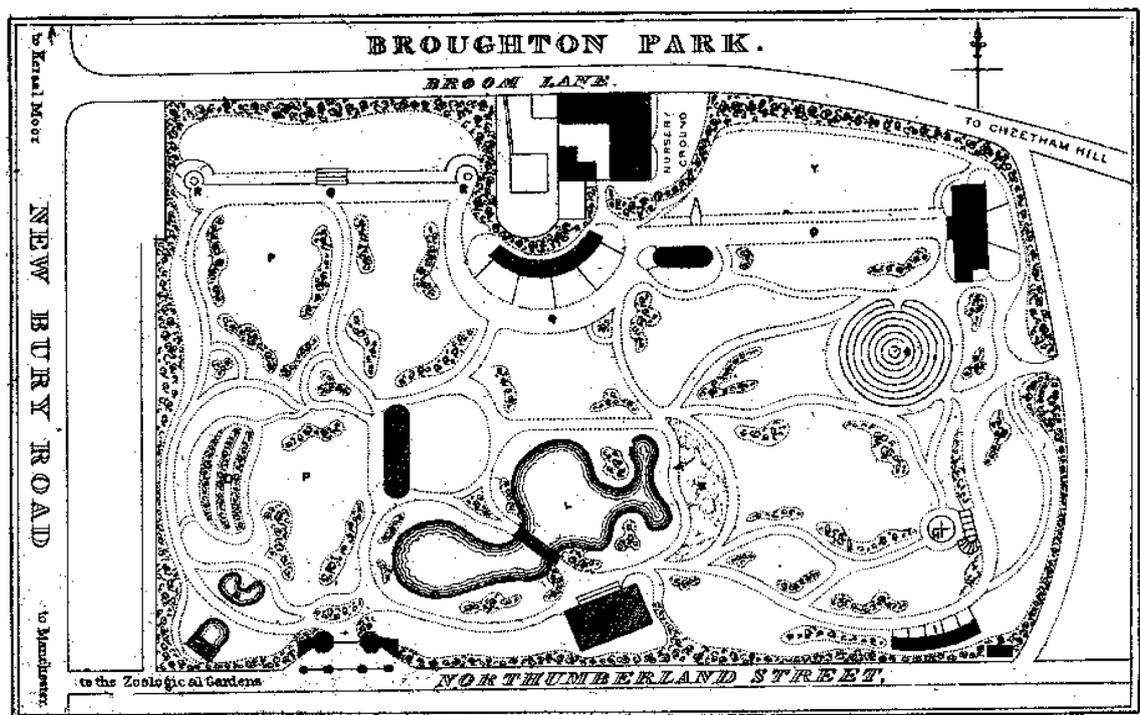
⁷¹⁵ Manchester Times, 13 August, 1836.

⁷¹⁶ Stated at the adjourned AGM in 1840. Capital income had been £18,080, including £80 in fines. Capital expenditure was £20,080. Report from Manchester Times, 12 December, 1840.

⁷¹⁷ The Report was published in the Manchester Times (26 November, 1836) and also appeared in The Gardener's Magazine in 1837.

gardens than a collection of all the interesting trees and shrubs that will bear the open air of this country properly named and arranged". He was to use similar phraseology in an advert for his Kensington nursery in 1838.⁷¹⁸

Forrest's report stated that the site for the Zoo was fifteen acres. The ground, "*delightfully undulating*" sloped from north to south and was sheltered from prevailing winds. There was a good supply of water. By October 1837 progress had been made: buildings had been erected, the lake had been dug out and was ready for filling, and bears, wolves, lions, Bengal leopards, porcupines, hyenas, pelicans, a zebra bull, monkeys and birds – many of them very young – had been purchased.⁷¹⁹



PLAN OF THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

The plan of the Zoological Gardens from Manchester As It Is (B. Love, 1839)

⁷¹⁸ The advert for the Kensington Nursery, which Forrest took over after William Malcolm's death in 1837 appeared at the back of the 1838 edition of Loudon's *Suburban Gardener and Villa Companion*, where Forrest referred to his continuing work as a landscape-gardener, mentioning, among others, the Manchester Zoological Gardens and Arboretum. Forrest had been the designer for Bristol, Cheltenham and Manchester Zoological Gardens, and the Great Western Cemetery in London. A Scot, and son of a nurseryman, Forrest had worked with leading horticulturists, including a period at Kew. He also spent six years converting "*a marsh into a paradise*" for Earl Grosvenor at Eaton Hall, and planned and executed improvements at Sion House for the Duke of Northumberland. An article on Richard Forrest appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1837 (Vol. 24; p.658-660)

⁷¹⁹ *Manchester Times*, 7 October, 1837.

The plan was to open in summer 1838, but by January so many people were wishing to see what was going on, it was said, that it was decided to open for a limited period,⁷²⁰ which was extended subsequently until Whit week.⁷²¹ Entrance fee was one shilling; shareholders could get in for free. The Gardens were opened, with great ceremony, on 31 May 1838.⁷²² The weather was good, but spring was late that year and so many of the plants were not looking as good as they might. The grounds had been laid out under the direction of John Mearns, previously head gardener to the Duke of Portland at Welbeck.⁷²³ In addition to the lake, the enclosures for the animals and birds, a rockery and a labyrinth, space had been found for an archery ground.

One of those attending the opening was Absalom Watkin, who recorded in his diary:

*"A large company, excellent music, and lovely weather and scenery. The breakfast did not begin till near 2 o'clock. It was eaten in a marquee, 120 feet by 40 and 45 high ... I spoke to the sentiment "The Manchester Zoological Gardens: may they long be distinguished as a source of rational recreation and instruction to all classes of the inhabitants of this populous district". I spoke about 15 minutes, easily, and with applause."*⁷²⁴

Over the following four years, the Gardens struggled to become and stay solvent. The newspapers did their best to encourage visitors and the Gardens began to put on additional events to drum up trade – firework displays and flower shows were popular. Attendance never really improved, however, and for some people this was because the Gardens were closed on Sundays.

The argument for Sunday opening was twofold. Given that, for the majority of the population, Sunday was their only free day, the Company was depriving the masses from enjoying the rational pleasures associated with zoology and botany. The second argument was that the company was losing potential revenue. The question of opening on Sunday was raised at the very first Annual General Meeting, in 1837, by Joseph Adshead, who was strongly against the idea, which he had heard had been suggested. The Chairman, Andrew Hall, "*felt strongly in favour of their being opened*

⁷²⁰ *Manchester Times*, 20 January, 1838.

⁷²¹ *Manchester Times*, 14 April, 1838.

⁷²² *Manchester Times*, 2 June, 1838.

⁷²³ And also a Practical Gardener admitted to the privileges of Fellows of the Horticultural Society of London (see *Journal*, 1850)

⁷²⁴ Watkin, A.E. *Absalom Watkin, Extracts from his Journal 1814-1856* (1920) p.199.

on Sunday” and a resolution was put that they should be. It was heavily defeated.⁷²⁵ The question was raised again at the AGM the following year and it was agreed a special meeting would be held in February 1839 to discuss the issue.⁷²⁶ The resolution to agree the postponement of the discussion was moved by Absalom Watkin and the following week a correspondent to the Manchester Courier was strongly opposed to the very concept of Sunday opening. Referring to Watkin, sarcastically, as “*Absolute Wisdom*”, the writer referred to the prevalent idea that this had always been the object:

“But I was struck with the following passage in your report of the late proceedings of the shareholders, which “sounds the dreadful note of preparation” for what their enemies always said was an ultimate object with them, viz., that, for private profit and gain, under the pretence of accommodating the public, they would exhibit their monkeys and cockatoos, to be gazed at by the people, (for a consideration) on the LORD’S OWN DAY; or, what is even worse, would reserve that bit of delicious iniquity for the exclusive indulgence of subscribers; making it a temptation to become a shareholder, that you may enjoy the privilege of breaking God’s commandments, by solacing the lusts of the eye within their preserves on the Sabbath day.”

Broughton was a highly respectable, and desirable, neighbourhood – still at that time sparsely populated – and the writer continued with what was, perhaps, the real (or at least a major) reason behind the antagonism: “*that the dregs of the population of Manchester are not to be attracted into their neighbourhood, rendering their dwellings insecure, and their Sabbath hours an anxiety...*”⁷²⁷

Unfortunately for the majority of the population, among the middle-classes supporters of Sunday opening were few. Those against canvassed heavily. In the week before the meeting was due to take place, advertisements appeared, signed by various non-conformist ministers, urging that Directors and Shareholders vote against such a move which would “*scandalously desecrate*” the Sabbath.⁷²⁸ In fact, the resolution was mild, only going so far as to suggest that Sunday opening, from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., be tried and, if it should be accompanied by “*objectionable results*”, the directors could immediately put a stop to it. Joseph Adshead put an amending motion stating that Sunday opening “*would be a desecration of the Sabbath*” and a

⁷²⁵ Manchester Times, 11 November, 1837.

⁷²⁶ Manchester Times, 17 November, 1838.

⁷²⁷ Manchester Courier, 24 November, 1838.

⁷²⁸ Manchester Courier, 2 February, 1839.

bad precedent for other public institutions. When put to the vote, the amendment was carried by 95 votes to 14.⁷²⁹

The speeches made by John Davies (for) and Joseph Adshead (against) were fully reported in the Manchester Courier. Davies sought biblical support for the resolution and concluded:

"The consequences of opening these gardens had always appeared to him as likely to be worked thus: – Persons would go there first from curiosity, – curiosity led to observation, – observation led to intelligence, – intelligence led to reflection and good habits, – these led to virtue, – that to religion, – and religion would, he trusted, in this as in other cases, lead to eternal salvation."

Adshead put forward his amendment and spoke at length about the sanctity of Sunday, but his concluding remarks, again, make clear there was also a NIMBY⁷³⁰ effect in force:

*"...of late years, gentlemen seemed to hold a strong preference for country residences, for the advantage not only of a better atmosphere, but also of quiet retirement; but only let these gardens be opened, and gentlemen who lived on that side of the town would be disappointed in the latter particular, and the gardens become an intolerable nuisance, nothing but a vanity fair on the Sabbath."*⁷³¹

Various others spoke against the original motion, making similar points about the "evils" that would follow such a step. As a concession, it was suggested that the directors be asked to consider Saturday opening and this must have been put in place as at the third AGM in November 1839 a motion to empower the directors to cut the price of admission by fifty per cent on Monday and Saturday afternoons was approved.⁷³²

The question of Sunday opening did not go away. At the fourth AGM in 1840, at a time when the financial position of the Gardens was precarious, the Rev John Clowes proposed that, "on condition that the idea of again raising the question of opening the garden on Sundays be wholly abandoned" and providing that the remaining liabilities be covered, he would forgo the nearly £1,500 in rent that was

⁷²⁹ Manchester Times, 9 February, 1839. Although the names listed only give 75 to 12.

⁷³⁰ i.e. "Not In My Back Yard".

⁷³¹ Manchester Courier, 9 February, 1839.

⁷³² Manchester Times, 16 November, 1839. Mr. Labrey, who moved the motion said that "Saturday was not a sufficiently leisure day for the working classes, and he wished every one to have an opportunity of visiting the gardens".

due to him.⁷³³ A committee was appointed to look into the finances and the meeting was reconvened in December.⁷³⁴ The committee made a number of recommendations, including selling off part of the Gardens for building, letting the Curator's house, increasing the attractions on offer, reducing the cost of subscriptions but charging subscribers admission fee to events. They also recommended that Clowes' proposal be adopted. The meeting then became acrimonious and disorderly. Absalom Watkin arrived late and asked a number of pertinent questions – which as auditor to the Gardens, he should have known the answers to, but the administration (not just financial) seems to have been very poor. Watkin said that if things were really bad, they should close the gardens and sell the property.⁷³⁵

The arguments continued and the adjourned AGM had to be adjourned yet again, but the Gardens remained open. During 1841 and 1842 there were a great many events held at the Gardens, but the financial position did not improve and in November 1842 the auction of all the animals and birds was announced.⁷³⁶ The sale brought representatives from Liverpool and Regent's Park Zoos as well as Mr Wombwell, who had a travelling menagerie which he brought to Knott Mill Fair, and so may have been one reason for the failure of the gardens as the population was accustomed to seeing exotic animals (see Appendix Nine). It was difficult to find buyers for some creatures, and many went at prices far below what the Zoo had originally paid. A bear was sold to Mr. Langfield, a hairdresser of Oxford Road for £5, for the "*bear's grease*" that could be obtained from it. A large crowd gathered to watch the animal being slaughtered and several men sat down for a supper of the bear's heart and liver which "*were relished and considered to have a most delicious flavour*".⁷³⁷

The Manchester Times in announcing the closure of the Gardens stated "*It has been thought that the gardens might have prospered had they been thrown open on the Sabbath*",⁷³⁸ but the truth was that the town had entered a

⁷³³ Manchester Times, 21 November, 1840.

⁷³⁴ George M'Intyre, a supporter of Sunday opening stated that Manchester people should have the same freedom as those living in London, Bristol, Dublin and Edinburgh, which all had botanic gardens open on Sundays. (Report of the adjourned AGM, 1840 Manchester Times, 12 December, 1840)

⁷³⁵ Manchester Times, 12 December, 1840.

⁷³⁶ Manchester Times, 12 November, 1842.

⁷³⁷ Manchester Times, 26 November, 1842.

⁷³⁸ Manchester Times, 12 November, 1842.

recession, even as the Garden was first proposed, and it had been long-lasting. Income at the Gardens was, in 1842, little more than half what it had been in 1841. Whether it would have survived in better economic times is questionable, however. It was not only the matter of Sunday opening, and the high cost of renting, the Gardens appear to have been ill-run. At the 1840 AGM, the Chairman had complained of the difficulty of achieving quorate meetings and it was agreed to reduce the quorum from five to three (out of twelve). On March 15th 1843 Watkin recorded in his journal:

"Attended the final meeting of the Zoological Gardens Company and moved the resolution of dissolution. All the money is lost, and we are glad to get rid of the excessive chief-rent by giving up all the fixed property."

Mr Mearns left Manchester to take charge of the Leeds Zoological Gardens, where the same problems were found. It was under-capitalised – the gardens had been prepared on £11,000 – but larger, at twenty acres.⁷³⁹ The ground had been purchased at a cost of approximately five years' worth of the ground rent payable at Manchester. However, unlike Manchester, the decision had been taken to open on Sundays.⁷⁴⁰ This was even supported by at least two church ministers, who wrote:

*"Believing that whatever has a tendency to draw away the humbler classes of society from low grovelling pursuits, and to enlarge the sphere of their mental vision, should be encouraged, and believing that in gardens replete with shrub and flower there is much calculated to promote that important end, much to awaken the curiosity and improve the heart, to lead the thoughts "from nature up to nature's God," we could not without doing violence to our convictions, countenance any measure which would prevent them from having access to so large a field of improvement, for at least a portion of the only day in which they have leisure to avail themselves of it."*⁷⁴¹

Financially the move was a disaster, because the middle-classes withdrew their support, and yet, even when the Gardens were again closed on Sundays, they continued to run at a loss. In 1847 economy measures saw the departure of Mr.

⁷³⁹ Leeds Mercury, 15 December, 1838. This gave a description of the gardens shortly before opening.

⁷⁴⁰ Leeds Mercury, 1 April, 1843.

⁷⁴¹ Leeds Mercury, 8 April, 1843.

Mearns, but it was not enough.⁷⁴² By the end of 1848 the Leeds Gardens, like those in Manchester, had been sold.

Summary

Public gardens played an increasingly important role in Manchester society, providing physical recreation activities, spectator sports, shows and displays. Originally a place to spend a pleasant afternoon, with the attraction of strawberries and cream as refreshment, and often attached to a nursery, when attached to public houses inn-keepers needed more inducements to retain and increase custom. Gardens were unable to succeed financially merely by offering the simple pleasure of walking among trees, shrubs and flowers, when the centre of town was dirty, smoky and malodorous and so special events were introduced.

Ownership of the gardens, however, was a major key to their success. It was only those gardens that were privately owned – rather than owned by a society or a company and therefore run by a committee – that might be said to be successful.⁷⁴³ True, the Botanic Gardens survived longer than the Zoological Gardens, but they had the similar problems – too few subscribers, exclusivity, and closure on Sundays. Their financial crises and eventual closure have been described by Ann Brooks. Today only their entrance gates survive – standing on the Chester Road at the edge of the White City retail park.⁷⁴⁴ Other gardens were swallowed up by the town's expansion. Vauxhall Gardens were covered by houses, although, today, they are once again open space. The Belle Vue Gardens finally closed in 1977, though Belle Vue Street and Jennison Close keep alive the memory of the successful Gardens kept by a Stockport gardener. Pomona Gardens were sold to James Reilly, who, in 1886, sold the

⁷⁴² "We regret that the pecuniary difficulties of this beautiful place of public resort have rendered further economical measures necessary. The discharge of the persevering and talented curator, Mr. Mearns, has at length been determined upon, and a less expensive management is hereafter to be pursued. This measure of retrenchment has been resorted to with great reluctance by the committee, and, judging from the esteem in which Mr. Mearns is held, his discharge will no doubt be greatly regretted by the shareholders. The gardens have been under his management nearly from the first. Botanical gardens more delightful and attractive do not, we believe, exist in the country." (*Leeds Mercury*, 8 May, 1847).

⁷⁴³ Although it may have been the owner's aptitude for the business that was a deciding factor. Vauxhall Gardens were very successful under Robert Tinker and not under his successors. How much was due to their lack of ability and how much to the encroachment of the town making the Gardens less attractive or to the increase in competition from rival gardens?

⁷⁴⁴ The Society itself continues as the Royal Botanical and Horticultural Society of Manchester and the Northern Counties, a grant-making body.

gardens to the Manchester Ship Canal for the purpose of constructing a dock. Today there is Pomona Gardens Metro Station to remind those who know that this area used to be a sylvan and floral setting for pleasure and excitement. The activities for which they were renowned – sport, music, entertainment – all now tend to be held in purpose-built venues rather than out-doors, although the increasing variety of activities now held at gardens open to the public recall their heyday.⁷⁴⁵

These public gardens, however, all required payment – whether a small amount for a single visit or a large amount for an annual subscription. They therefore excluded the very poorest of society, who had to content themselves with walks in the countryside. Their story is told in the next chapter.

Running throughout the story of pleasure gardens and public house gardens, was the growing tension between the classes. Owners of Public Gardens were anxious to re-assure customers that they would be safe from bad behaviour. The middle classes were increasingly concerned with drunkenness, yet refused to open gardens which could have provided an alternative to public-houses as a way of spending time – their view being that gin-shops would appear on the route to the gardens to take advantage of Sunday visitors.⁷⁴⁶

The religious classes increasingly imposed their own ideas of moral and religious behaviour upon the majority who did not attend church. As Richardson said to the Select Committee, the church goes “*can pack a meeting at anytime. There is no chance of a fair and free discussion at any meeting where religion comes into question. I believe all those who have been in the habit of taking a part in the public meetings in Manchester have abstained from attending on that very ground.*” The same concerns about the Public Gardens being open on a Sunday would re-surface when the Public Parks (the subject of the following chapter) were formed.

⁷⁴⁵ Such activities (consider for example those held at Arley Gardens in Cheshire – www.arleyhallandgardens.com) are as financially necessary to the continuation of the gardens as they were to nineteenth century pleasure gardens.

⁷⁴⁶ *Manchester Courier*, 9 February, 1839 report of the discussion re opening the Zoological Gardens on Sundays: “*True, it was said there were no gin shops there; but who could secure the public against the introduction of gin-shops into the neighbourhood?*” and “*It was said that the building covenants of the landlords in the neighbourhood would not allow of gin-shops being opened in the neighbourhood, but who could answer for what Mr. Clowes’s son or great grandson might consent to twenty years hence?*” The alternative view was that “*they would confer a great blessing on the working classes by contriving any recreation which would lure them from the gin-shops*”.

Chapter Six

Public Spaces

For the middle classes, the ability to move into the countryside, where it was possible to create a large garden, with all the benefits of health, recreation and pure pleasure it could give, became more imperative as the town became less salubrious. Living amongst fields, with trees and greenery all around was a pleasant prospect. As early as 1787 George Wright wrote of those who could afford to retire to the country where they could appreciate “*the peaceful abodes of sylvan life, [and] enjoy mental serenity and undisturbed reflections.*”⁷⁴⁷ This idea of peace and tranquillity was widely recognised as being concomitant with rurality and was in sharp contrast with the confines of a town with its noisy and malodorous factories, noisome courts and back-to-back housing. Little wonder that writers eulogised over the pleasures of rural living.

Over the century from 1750 to 1850, the poorest of Manchester’s population became slowly disenfranchised, not only from gardens, which disappeared from the town, but also from the countryside. Eventually the one high point in their year, when they could visit a fair at Kersal Moor, take a trip down the Irwell to Dunham Park or treat themselves to a visit to a pleasure garden, was the traditional holiday period of Whit week.

Town living was unhealthy. It was not just the smoke. Until 1845, removal of night soil was the responsibility of owners and they were not always prepared to pay the cost. Many thousands lived in cellar dwellings. They saw little sun and had little opportunity for exercise. Concern about the health of those living in the industrial towns grew throughout the early part of the nineteenth century until even Parliament took notice and began to encourage the formation of public parks and walks, even making a small sum of money available.

This chapter considers how this disenfranchisement of the poor came about and what moves were taken to address the issue. It looks at how the freedom to roam the countryside was curtailed with the closing of footpaths and the creation of

⁷⁴⁷ Wright, George, Esq. Retired Pleasures in Prose and Verse (1787) Advertisement (i.e. preface).

physical and economic barriers. It considers how, as an answer to this, Manchester's first public parks came to be created and how they fell short of what had been hoped for. It raises questions about the attitude of employers to the health of their employees; looks at where the financial support for the parks came from and the arguments put forward to avoid contributing to the parks. It shows how successful these were, despite the limited funding, in providing recreational spaces in the quasi-rural setting of trees, shrubs and flowers, for those who could not afford to travel far from the town or pay the entrance charges to the pleasure gardens.

Public footpaths – the ancient right of way

In 1750 anyone living in Manchester not only had a garden, but also had the countryside at their back gate – or at the very least within a few minutes walk from their home. As the town grew, the distance to the countryside became greater, but was still within easy walking distance. However, the fields which surrounded Manchester in the 1790s would – over the following 60 years – become covered with inadequate housing, warehouses, factories and other places of business. Green spaces were lost in an atmosphere in which plants could not – in any case – flourish.

In the eighteenth century, the route from one town to another might have been by foot alone. Even within a locality, for a population that was normally pedestrian, the footpath – or fieldway – was an important means for staying in touch with the tiny hamlets and small villages in the neighbourhood – and for their residents to reach the markets of Manchester. Such routes, while of practical use, also provided close contact with nature – a pleasant change from the working environment for growing numbers. Bucolic descriptions can be found by various writers – sometimes long after the area they describe had been lost. So Swindells (1906) refers to a walk along the lane which ran alongside the river Tib:

*“Very pleasant would such a ramble be through fields frequented by the throstle and blackbird. In summer, the air fragrant with hawthorn blossom, honeysuckle or new-mown hay...”*⁷⁴⁸

In 1831 William Howitt published his Book of the Seasons in which he eulogised on the pleasure of field paths:

⁷⁴⁸ Swindells, Third Series, p. 7.

"... I love our real old English footpaths. ... I love to see the smooth, dry track ... It seems to invite one from noise and publicity into the heart of solitude and of rural delight. It beckons the imagination on through green and whispering corn-fields, through the short but verdant pasture; the flowering mowing grass; the odorous and sunny hay-field; the festivity of harvest; from lonely farm to farm, from village to village; by clear and mossy wells; by tinkling brooks and deep and wood-skirted streams, to cross where the daffodil is rejoicing in spring, or the meadows where the large blue geranium embellishes the summer wayside; to heaths with their warm elastic sward and crimson bells – the chithering of grasshoppers – the foxglove, and the old gnarled oak; in short, to all the solitary haunts after which the city-pent lover of nature pants "as the heart panteth after the water-brooks". ... It is along the footpath in secluded fields, upon the stile in the embowered lane, where the wild rose and the honeysuckle are lavishing their beauty and their fragrance, that we delight to picture to ourselves rural lovers, breathing in the dewy sweetness of summer evening, vows still sweeter." ⁷⁴⁹

The contrast with the smoke-filled town and the rancid Irwell – "*less a river than a flood of liquid manure*" ⁷⁵⁰ – became annually more apparent. It is easy to imagine the benefit of country footpaths in the neighbourhood of the town to those working long hours in mills and other factories. ⁷⁵¹ The air was fresh; the atmosphere was one of relaxation and repose; the sights were those that had been lost to the town-dweller. For children born in the town, it was their only way of learning about and appreciating the pleasures of trees, grass and flowers. ⁷⁵²

Yet by the time Howitt wrote those words, such paths were under increasing threat, helped along by the Enclosure Movement. Ancient footpaths were a right of way, but they were being lost. Harland (Collectanea) referred to a book in which the author wrote of a footpath from Castle Field to the top of Tib Lane "*which was an*

⁷⁴⁹ Howitt, William. The Book of the Seasons, (1831, American edition, published Philadelphia) p. 193-4. (Hathi Trust Digital Library)

⁷⁵⁰ Thomson, W. H. History of Manchester to 1852 (1967). p.361 – a quote from "*Hugh Miller, a Scot who first visited the town in 1845*", which was published in the Manchester Guardian 1 May, 1847.

⁷⁵¹ Factory hours were excessive and there was, in fact, little time (even on Sundays) for people to enjoy the country. In the same year that the movement for Public Walks began, people were debating the proposals of the Ten Hour Bill. It was argued that long hours spent in factories was not conducive to health. G. R. Chappell wrote to the Manchester Times (30 March, 1833) listing the numbers and ages of the 274 people employed in his factory: "*The average earnings of each per week, 9s. 9¼d. Working hours are 96 per week*". The company ran a sick pay scheme, but in three years the average of employees sick was less than one. In addition to the sixteen-hour day, Monday to Saturday, Sundays were catered for also, with a Sunday School and "*the Gospel preached every Sunday evening*". Chappell clearly saw himself as an enlightened employer.

⁷⁵² Descriptions never seem to have included the less pleasant walks these would have made in the depths of winter, with the ground hard with frost, the trees bare and the cold chilling the bones of the pedestrian.

agreeable walk, till some tenants of the fields blocked up the styles; and ... the footpath was lost to the public".⁷⁵³ That was before 1783. As the town colonised the fields of Manchester and the middle classes colonised the surrounding countryside with their villas and gardens, not only did the poor worker find it harder to reach the countryside, but the paths he could once have trodden with impunity when he arrived there also disappeared. In 1826 a group of Manchester residents constituted a Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths. Recalling this, Archibald Prentice, wrote of the dense cloud of smoke over Manchester and how, for the population,

*"... to counterbalance the disadvantage, they have the privilege of walking unrestrainedly through the fine fields of the vicinity; and thousands and tens of thousands, whose avocations render fresh air and exercise an absolute necessity of life, avail themselves of the right of footway through the meadows, and corn fields, and parks, in the immediate neighbourhood. ... The beautifully undulating country between the valley of the Irk and Cheetham Hill; the fine valley of the Irwell, with its verdant meadows; the slope from Pendleton to the plain, ... all this scenery ... has a hundred additional charms to him who is condemned, day after day, month after month, and year after year, to toil in the dirt and smoke of a great town."*⁷⁵⁴

This health-restoring privilege was being lost because individuals were illegally closing off ancient rights of way, in order to improve their estates.

A famous case in Flixton involved Ralph Wright. A footpath ran alongside his estate, but was hidden from view by hedges. Wanting to give his grounds a more park-like feel, he had the hedges and fences removed. Unfortunately, this meant that he could see the passing traffic on the footpath. He closed off one bit without obtaining a magistrate's order – a legal requirement. Another part, which led to a church and several farms, he diverted. His neighbours allowed that to pass, but when he tried to divert the roads away from his ground entirely, they decided to act. As a magistrate himself, Wright easily obtained the signatures of two others on the necessary order. The next step was for this to be confirmed at the next quarter sessions, but Wright acted peremptorily. He closed off the road, ploughed up the footpath and sowed it with oats. A local farmer, Samuel Wood, took action. Three times he led a group which broke through and restored the path by treading down the oats. Wright succeeded in gaining another order, but abandoned it when local

⁷⁵³ Harland, John, *Collectanea* Vol.II, 1867. p.222: From "A Description of Manchester &c. by a Native of the Town, supposed to be a Mr. Lowe".

⁷⁵⁴ Prentice, Archibald. *Historical Sketches and Personal Recollections of Manchester* (1852) p.289.

people appealed against it. A second attempt failed for administrative reasons. A third try was successful. But by that time the case had become notorious. The nearby farmers were finding the law an expensive business and so it was that the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Footpaths was formed. It was felt that not only could such a society provide financial support, but it could also remove the possibility of harassment of individuals for standing up for their rights.⁷⁵⁵

The Society had some success. At its AGM in 1829 it reported that sometimes it was sufficient to speak quietly to those who were planning to close a footpath, though with others, legal proceedings looked like the only route.⁷⁵⁶ It was not long before the members were accused of disregarding the footpaths closest to the town. In 1831 a letter to the Manchester Times implied that the Committee was ignoring the many footpaths that were being closed in Broughton, suggesting it was spending its time in dealing with footpaths some distance from the town, rather than close by it. In particular, the letter referred to a path that had been stopped up without any attempt at doing so legally:

*"All along this footpath is exceedingly pleasant. It is beautifully ornamented with fine oak and beech trees. At this season of the year, the air of its neighbourhood is redolent with the music of birds, and considering its proximity to Manchester itself, lying in the very bosom of seclusion, I am sure the footpath society will not do its duty unless it cause this road to be again, and immediately, opened to the public."*⁷⁵⁷

Broughton was a sensitive area. Most of the township was owned by Rev John Clowes, who laid down strict rules about development.

Prentice, the editor of the Manchester Times was a founding member of the Footpaths Society and used his newspaper to forward the cause. In 1828 a flood destroyed a bridge over the river Irk. It had been part of a footpath between Crumpsall and Blakely, but the man whose responsibility it was refused to replace the bridge. Prentice wrote a warning in the Manchester Times:

"It is some mitigation of the evils which an over-taxed, and an over-worked people are compelled to suffer, that they can enjoy the cheap and refreshing

⁷⁵⁵ This story, from Prentice's Historical Sketches was reproduced in full in Manchester Times, 15 October, 1853. "This case, which has been the subject of much conversation in this neighbourhood, excited an extraordinary degree of interest, and the Court was crowded in every part at an early hour this morning" reported the Manchester Courier, 22 January, 1825.

⁷⁵⁶ Manchester Courier, 6 June, 1829.

⁷⁵⁷ Manchester Times, 28 May, 1831. The letter was signed "A Member of the Society".

luxury of a walk in the country; and the man who dares to deprive them of any part of the means to enjoy that luxury, may rest assured that to the extent of our influence we shall not only direct the powerful current of public feeling against him, but that we shall give encouragement to every association that may be formed to procure such remedy as the law defective as it is, still affords." ⁷⁵⁸

Prentice was in a position to keep the public informed on the subject and the following year, when a footpath in Pendleton had been closed off he informed his readers "*that they have a right to walk across Mr. Jones's lawn, and to cut down any fences that may be put up to obstruct them*". ⁷⁵⁹ In 1831-2 Parliament was considering a Bill to consolidate various Highways Acts and the Society put forward a proposal that where it was planned that footpaths should be stopped, and where there was opposition to such a move, the final decision should lie with juries rather than justices. That would deal with the inappropriate use of powers by magistrates, who were all men of wealth and property. At the time, Manchester was still without representation in Parliament, but the proposal was presented by Mr. John Wood. ⁷⁶⁰ One result was that any planned stopping of footpaths had to be advertised, giving notice of the Quarter Sessions at which the closure would be approved unless "*upon an appeal against the same to be then made it be otherwise determined*." ⁷⁶¹ In 1839, Prentice wrote of the Society having been for many years keeping "*the squirearchy of the surrounding country in salutary fear*", ⁷⁶² but the closing of footpaths continued. The following year there was some correspondence which displayed two different points of view. Lord Francis Egerton had closed the footpath to Hulme Hall. Prentice wrote:

" ... frequently have we enjoyed the walk along it in the spring and summer times. To thousands of the pent-up inhabitants of Manchester it was a pleasant retreat from toil and confinement, easily accessible to themselves and infant children; and there are few persons, having lived long in Manchester, who have not often walked along the path with delight." ⁷⁶³

A fortnight later, a letter from someone signing himself "*A friend to real improvements*" gave an alternative perspective:

⁷⁵⁸ Manchester Times, 17 October, 1828.

⁷⁵⁹ Manchester Times, 4 April, 1829.

⁷⁶⁰ M.P. for Preston. Reported in Manchester Times, 30 June, 1832.

⁷⁶¹ Manchester Times, 22 February 1834 – Notice for the stopping of a footpath in Hulme.

⁷⁶² Manchester Times, 16 March, 1839.

⁷⁶³ Manchester Times, 16 May, 1840.

"With respect to the walk near Hulme Hall, which I have known for upwards of twenty years, I could never see the use of it. It was not a convenience to the public; because the direction was circuitous. It presented no interesting prospects; and therefore could not gratify those who delight in rural scenery. One purpose, indeed, it did answer: it was a place for fighting dogs, and, sometimes, for greater brutes to fight with each other. I have heard of pitch and toss being carried on there during divine service on the Sabbath. The sooner, therefore, such a place be closed, the better.

"That which was formerly a useless, and, in some respects, a mischievous waste, has now been rendered subservient to the promotion of our commerce, by affording increased facilities for conveyance. In this way the public are really benefitted; and if they are wise and just, they must be grateful for the improvement." ⁷⁶⁴

Prentice took the opportunity of publishing this letter to ridicule the writer.⁷⁶⁵ He then re-iterated the reason for opposing the closing of footpaths – that they were necessary for the health of inhabitants – and went on to discuss the opportunities for leisure activities, which can be seen as a forerunner of the movement for public parks in Manchester which would start within four years:

"What town in England has so small a number of public walks as Manchester, and what town so much requires them? The fields are shut out from the sight of the people, and encroachments on their pastimes and pleasant enjoyments are, unhappily, made daily. If a working-man has a taste for angling, he is compelled to walk miles before he can enjoy his favourite recreation, as the rivers and canals here are poisoned with gas refuse and dye-woods. Flying kites, throwing the quoit, trap-ball, prison-bar, &c., would be enjoyed by thousands had they opportunities for so doing; but they are driven from the fields, and waste ground there is none on which they can play." ⁷⁶⁶

The conflict between commerce and social benefit, which had already seen the loss of so much green space in Manchester, was not one that would go away. As with other social causes, there were polarising opinions which, in this case, created different views of the physical surroundings of the town.

⁷⁶⁴ Manchester Times, 30 May, 1840. The disapproval of games on Sundays is again noteworthy.

⁷⁶⁵ *"We insert the above letter, principally to show the absurdities with which newspaper editors are occasionally pestered from parties afflicted with the cacöethes scribendi. The writer speaks in his motto of folly and malady. What greater folly can be exhibited than his letter; and as to malady, we fear that he has acquired a bad one, from his preference for the dingy corner of a Tom and Jerry shop, filled with guests bemused with small beer, and reeking hot with gin and smoke, to the healthy and invigorating breezes to be enjoyed in a country walk. Our former remarks on this footpath, he says, "appear to possess very little force," and yet "have, in spite of their irrelevancy, made a considerable impression!" Admirable logician!"*

⁷⁶⁶ Manchester Times, 30 May, 1840.

The Society became less active in the 1840s, but there was another cause for Prentice to take up. It was not only the loss of footpaths which was making it difficult for people to enjoy rural areas – it was also the question of the cost of passing through toll-gates to reach the countryside. The Turnpike Trusts had done much to improve the road network of the country – which in 1700 had been almost non-existent. Around Manchester, there had been a huge increase in roads, particularly after 1800.⁷⁶⁷ While these had greatly facilitated trade, the requirement for pedestrians to pay towards their upkeep meant that tollgates could act almost as prison-gates, keeping those who could not afford to pay inside the increasingly unhealthy town. In 1841, the Manchester Times wrote that the “*annoyance to the inhabitants and public generally from these toll-gates is increasing daily*”.⁷⁶⁸ The town had expanded and the Strangeways area was, by 1841, well populated. But to reach Salford pedestrians had to cross toll-bridges either at Broughton or New Bridge Street or had to go the long way round and cross Victoria Bridge. Similarly, walking towards Cheetham Hill, required a half-mile detour to avoid a toll-gate. Three years later, it was suggested that the Broughton Bridge (charge for a pedestrian was one-halfpenny) and, to the south, the Regent Road Bridge should be made toll-free.⁷⁶⁹ The first was the property of Rev. John Clowes and had been in place since 1806.⁷⁷⁰ Closing of a footpath alongside the river had made the bridge more of a problem. Clowes lived at Broughton Old Hall, and was a keen plantsman.⁷⁷¹ In 1823 his garden was described as:

“... very pretty. There are some of the largest, and for their size most healthy, Portugal laurels I ever saw. The greenhouse and hothouse are pretty, and the plants all labelled with the Linnæan names. I saw in the greenhouse a geranium in flower which was at least nine or ten feet high. There is a fine piece of water at the bottom of the garden, and a piece of rock-work...”

This description was from Absalom Watkin who, with two others, was visiting Clowes to ask for some gravel to complete a road. They were not successful and Clowes seemed ill-at-ease at the request: “*It was evident, that our application troubled him.*

⁷⁶⁷ See map on www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/historichighways/turnpike.asp.

⁷⁶⁸ Manchester Times, 6 March, 1841.

⁷⁶⁹ Manchester Times, 30 November, 1844.

⁷⁷⁰ Although this was five years before John Clowes inherited the Broughton estate.

⁷⁷¹ In his Will, Clowes bequeathed the whole of his collection of orchideous plants “*considered one of the finest in the kingdom*” to the Queen, to form part of the royal collection at Kew. Morning Post report, reproduced in Manchester Times 26 December 1846. See also Appendix 27 of Ann Brooks’ thesis “A Veritable Eden”.

He fidgeted about in his chair.” Watkin added, however, that Clowes looked like a “good-natured man”.⁷⁷²

Good-natured he may have been, but he also had strong views about society, trying to keep the working classes at bay by the covenants included when he made building land available. Despite the Manchester Times’ description of him as both liberal and kind, their suggestion that Clowes would be willing to come to a financial arrangement with Salford Council over the Bridge, making it free to use, was not successful. Clowes was not going to submit to such a change. He was not alone in thinking it a bad move. Broughton was a very middle class area and those living there were anxious to keep it so – consider the complaints about the “*drunken rabble*” leaving the Grove Inn Gardens (previous chapter). A letter to the paper agreed that it was obviously right that people should have access to fresh air, but the bad behaviour of the few would stop the many from receiving it.⁷⁷³ Why should the bridge be open to all, when already residents were suffering depredations of their gardens – flowers and shrubs taken up, root and all and, even worse, young trees broken in half?⁷⁷⁴ It was not a logical argument (as Prentice was quick to point out), but it demonstrates the NIMBY attitude that was prevalent. Even those more liberal in their thinking could still suffer from such behaviour. Absalom Watkin, whose son Edward wrote the pamphlet A Plea for Public Parks (1843), lived then in Northenden. A few days before the meeting held to launch the subscription fund for Manchester’s first Public Parks, Absalom wrote in his diary:

*“Some of our apples were stolen in the afternoon and the trees broken. We have had this summer a much greater influx of rude people into the village on Sundays. The neighbourhood is much more noisy and we are much less secluded.”*⁷⁷⁵

It was in this dichotomous atmosphere of concern for the health of the population and fear of the behaviour of the poor that the movement for public parks progressed.

⁷⁷² Watkin, A.E. (Ed): Absalom Watkin, Extracts from his Journal, p.99-100.

⁷⁷³ Manchester Times, 11 January, 1845: “*Abstractedly speaking I know you are right, and it may appear hard that the Public at large should be deprived of the benefit of fresh air in consequence of the wanton acts of a few blackguards*”.

⁷⁷⁴ Keeping out the Manchester residents was not necessarily a help, as there were resident children who could misbehave. Louis Hayes recalled the time he lived in Broughton as a boy, when he and others helped themselves to the apples growing in the gardens of Woodland Terrace. These may have been planted by Absalom Watkin, who built the houses in Frog Place in 1821 “*hereafter to be called the Woodlands*”.

⁷⁷⁵ Goffin, Magdalen (Ed.) The Diaries of Absalom Watkin (1993) p.242.

Meantime, Salford Council pressed ahead with the plan to open Broughton Bridge, but with little success. At a meeting in October 1845, the matter was raised yet again. "*Confound Broughton Bridge*" said the mayor, to general laughter, before it was explained that staff had been busy on other matters. It was observed "*that if the council did not speedily do something, the inhabitants of Broughton would be doing it themselves, and he considered it desirable that the corporation should have the honour of throwing the bridge open to the public.*"⁷⁷⁶ The matter was still unresolved in 1860 – fourteen years after John Clowes' death.

Whit week

Whitsun was traditionally a holiday week and a period when all classes relaxed and enjoyed themselves. It was particularly important for Sunday school children for whom processions, parties and trips out were arranged. It could be used as a barometer for economic prosperity and recession: 1826 was a very bad year, economically, but 1827 was different. At Salford Fair and at the Races, the visiting show folk had arrived in good numbers, with their exciting rides and unusual exhibits.

*"The flying-horses, boxes, boats, &c. were in perpetual motion, and the "holiday folks" appeared to be as happy as fun and frolic could make them. The scene presented a striking contrast to that of last year, and was a gratifying proof of the amendment of the times. The labouring classes looked happier, were better dressed, and appeared to have more money in their pockets."*⁷⁷⁷

During Whitsun, the beginning of the summer season, owners of pleasure gardens put on special events to encourage attendance. Even the Zoological Garden, during its brief life, used the week to appeal to youngsters. In 1840 Sunday School children were admitted for just threepence, provided they were accompanied by their teachers⁷⁷⁸ and the advertisement in 1842 promised experiments and explosions.⁷⁷⁹

As time passed, there was a growing number of possible destinations. The canal was a favourite means of transport to Dunham Park and Howitt described it in glowing terms in his Journal, contrasting the quite ordinary scenery with the town left behind:

⁷⁷⁶ Manchester Courier, 18 October, 1845.

⁷⁷⁷ Manchester Courier of 9 June 1827

⁷⁷⁸ Manchester Times, 7 June, 1840. This was half the usual price and used on various occasions such as around New Year (Manchester Times, 29 December, 1838).

⁷⁷⁹ Manchester Times, 7 May, 1842.

*"Even every standing place in the canal packets was occupied; and as they glided along, the banks were lined by people, who seemed to find it object enough to watch the boats go by, packed close and full with happy beings brimming with anticipation of a day's pleasure. The country through which they passed is as uninteresting as can well be imagined, but still it is country; and the screams of delight from the children, and the low laughs of pleasure from the parents, at every blossoming tree which trailed its wreaths against some cottage-wall, or at the tufts of late primroses which lingered in the cool depths of grass along the canal banks, the thorough relish of everything, as if dreading to let the least circumstance on this happy day pass over without its due appreciation, made the time seem all too short, although it took two hours to arrive at a place only eight miles distant from Manchester. ... And hither came party after party; old men and maidens, young men and children – whole families trooped along after the guiding fathers, who bore the youngest in their arms, or astride upon their backs, while they turned round occasionally to the wives, with whom they shared some fond local remembrance. For years has Dunham Park been the favourite resort of the Manchester work-people; for more years than I can tell; probably ever since "The Duke", by his canals, opened out the system of cheap travelling. It is scenery, too, which presents such a complete contrast to the whirl and turmoil of Manchester; so thoroughly woodland, with its ancestral trees (here and there lightning-blanced) its "verdurous walls", its grassy walks leading far away into some glade where you start at the rabbit, rustling among the last year's fern, and where the wood-pigeon's call seems the only fitting and accordant sound. Depend upon it, this complete sylvan repose, this accessible depth of quiet, this lapping the soul in green images of the country, forms the most complete contrast to a towns-person, and consequently has over such the greatest power to charm."*⁷⁸⁰

Despite lives lived in unrelenting toil, families retained the ability to enjoy their few days of freedom.

The coming of the railways saw people travelling further afield. In 1842 the new line between Manchester and Birmingham offered exciting places not previously available to excursionists being rather too far out and without the easy access of Dunham. The Manchester Times took the opportunity of describing the scenery through which the new line would pass and spoke of

*"... the source of gratification it offers to the middle and working classes will be found in the easy access it will afford to pic-nic parties and persons bent on pleasure in visiting some of the most romantic scenery in the neighbourhood..."*⁷⁸¹

The use, during Whit week, of the five railway lines which terminated in Manchester was recorded in 1846, when nearly 400,000 passengers passed through the

⁷⁸⁰ Howitt's Journal, (12 June, 1847) p.335.

⁷⁸¹ Manchester Times, 16 April, 1842.

stations.⁷⁸² On the route to Birmingham, the numbers were up by nearly 80% on the previous year.⁷⁸³ The pleasure of Whit week was recorded in the papers more frequently as time passed. Yet for the very poorest, even a visit to Belle Vue or a trip down the canal to Dunham may have been beyond their pocket. Something completely free to use was the answer.

Manchester's public parks

With rights of way being lost and the town becoming ever less healthy to those who could not afford to live outside it, there was recognition of the need for new places, free of charge, where those who toiled in the factories could re-charge their batteries. Fresh air was needed to maintain or restore health. Exercise was necessary for those forced to stand for hours a day at their workplace. The movement for public walks and parks began. Preston was a borough which responded very early, in 1833 publishing plans for enclosing and improving Preston Moor, including the provision of rides and walks (see next page). However, the moor was still intended as a largely productive area. It was not until the 1840s that public parks as we know them today began to appear, with Victoria Park in London, Birkenhead Park on the Wirral, Princes Park in Liverpool and in Derby the Arboretum laid out by John Loudon. The funding of these was either through a single benefactor or through the sale of excess land for villas, but all can lay claim to being the first public park, either having been opened or begun before those in Manchester were ready.⁷⁸⁴

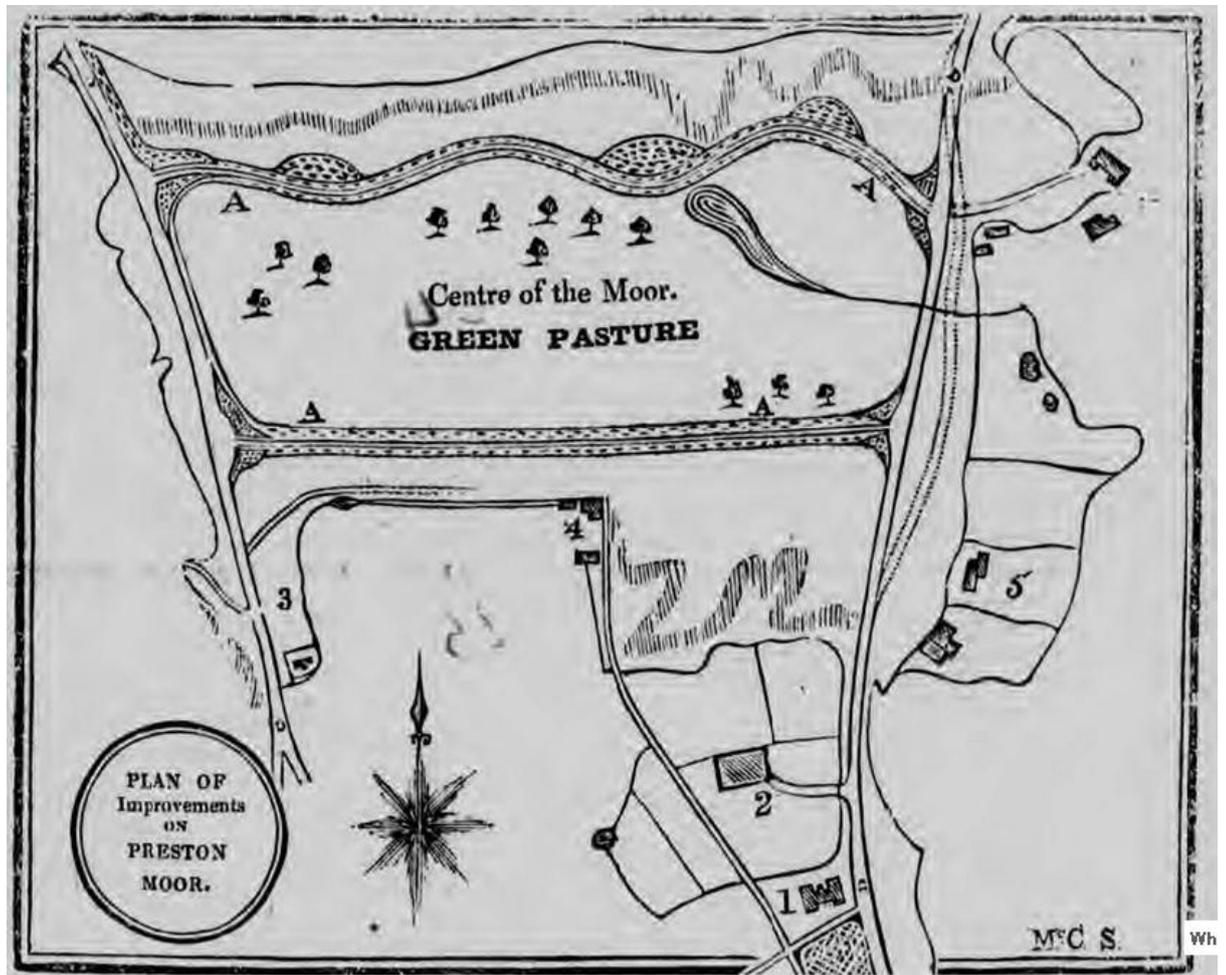
Although Manchester and Salford both had Borough status by the 1840s, their powers did not include the spending of money on creating parks – that would not come for some time. It was not that the Government was ignoring the issue of recreational space for the population. On 21 February 1833 Mr. Robert Slaney, M.P. for Shrewsbury, rose in the House of Commons and moved "*that a Select Committee*

⁷⁸² Manchester Courier, 13 June, 1846: "*a grand total of 395,728 passengers, who, in the Whitsun-week of this year, have travelled along the lines of railway, having termini in Manchester*".

⁷⁸³ In 1850 twice-weekly railway excursions were on offer to Alton Towers with their "*magnificent gardens, which, in floral beauty and picturesque arrangements, are gorgeous beyond description*" and to Dove Dale. (Manchester Times, 20 July, 1850)

⁷⁸⁴ See Hazel Conway, Public Parks, for more detail on the development of the early parks.

*be appointed to consider the best means of securing open places in the neighbourhood of great towns, for the healthful exercise of the population”.*⁷⁸⁵



Plan of the improvements on Preston Moor, published Preston Chronicle, 28 September, 1833

Slaney referred to the rise in population over the previous three decades, showing how the increase in towns such as Manchester was far greater than in the population as a whole. He used Manchester as an example of how there was nowhere available for exercise or recreation on Sundays – *“the working man and his family were met on the road with notices against trespass, and the inhospitable intimation of spring-guns, and Steel-traps”.*⁷⁸⁶ This issue of Sunday availability continued to be debated (as it had with the Manchester Zoological Gardens),

⁷⁸⁵ Hansard, reproduced at hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1833/feb/21/public-health.

⁷⁸⁶ Slaney gave credit to the Society for the Preservation of Footpaths: *“from the exertions of that society, which were necessarily limited, the greatest advantages had followed; for they had preserved for the working man many of his limited comforts, of which he would otherwise have been deprived”*,

discussions in Parliament including comments that while public walks might be open on Sunday, public sports could not be allowed. In October 1833 the Committee took evidence from Manchester. Richard Potter, by that time MP for Wigan, had previously been on the committee of the Society for the Preservation of Footpaths, and his evidence was fully reported by Prentice.⁷⁸⁷ There were references to the loss of footpaths and the possible location of public open spaces. It was also clear that when possible, the population did leave the town – “*I could also state that a vast number of persons frequently pass early in the morning by my house to the race-course, and on Sunday mornings particularly; in spring and summer they are almost innumerable; I might say thousands every week*”.⁷⁸⁸ The racecourse at Kersal Moor – two miles outside the town – had been popular for more than a century and attracted many visitors, not only for the races: other events were also held there, including political rallies.⁷⁸⁹

It was, however, the letter from J.P. Kay which perhaps best expressed the general feeling. He first explained that working hours meant no spare time for recreation during the week. He then pointed out that expecting workers to attend church on Sunday was futile. However, if they could only be induced to prefer “*healthful exercise in the open air to their present gross and degrading pursuits*”, they might then pay attention to “*the instructions of their public teachers*”. In other words, public open spaces and opportunities for recreation would wean the worker from the ale-house and encourage him to behave like his ‘betters’.⁷⁹⁰

⁷⁸⁷ Potter died in 1842 and therefore never saw the Manchester Parks.

⁷⁸⁸ The Report of the Select Committee of Public Walks with the Minutes of Evidence taken before them; as reported in Manchester Times, 2 November, 1833.

⁷⁸⁹ The setting for the races at Kersal Moor during Whit Week was described in the Manchester Examiner of 6 June, 1846: “*It is a barren, sandy moor, with a broad-backed, low hill in its centre, round the base of which hill there has carefully been cut a level green-sward, or course. This course is fenced in, and around it there are ranged an immense number of tents of all sizes and shapes, sufficiently numerous to accommodate a large army. In the interior of the larger tents there are earthen seats, covered with straw, forms, tables, huge piles of barrelled and bottled porter, ale casks, ginger beer, soda water, ham, bread, cheese, butter, pies, cakes, gingerbread, &c. apparently sufficient to provide an army for a tolerably long campaign.*” This was part of a much longer essay on the various ways Manchester folk spent their Whitsun.

⁷⁹⁰ As Theresa Wyborn expressed it “*Manchester’s middle class believed that their elevated status was based on more than economic wealth; they considered themselves morally and culturally superior as well.*” (Parks for the People, www.mcrh.mmu.ac.uk)

To what extent it was this attitude and how far it was the wish simply to provide the poor with something the wealthy took for granted – access to green grass, trees, recreational facilities – is difficult to gauge, both points of view being reiterated throughout the process of raising money and creating parks in Manchester.⁷⁹¹ Certainly it was the more radical members of the community that, in 1844, pushed for their construction. Having given their evidence to the Select Committee in 1833, it must have been disappointing that it was not until 1840 that Parliament finally agreed to allow £10,000 of the national budget to be used towards the creation of public parks and just as disappointing that nothing seemed to be happening in Manchester. As a national figure, £10,000 can only be described as derisory. To create just one park would take the whole of the sum – and more – so it was perhaps not surprising that the first two payments were both small and for the improvement of existing spaces, and interesting to note that they both went to Scotland: £300 to Dundee and £200 to Arbroath.⁷⁹²

Those were the only payments made up to April 1843.⁷⁹³ Mark Philips, one of Manchester's MPs, was moved to write to the Mayor of Manchester pushing for action. His letter concluded: "*The loss of my own health has made me think seriously of the wants of others, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see some proper provision made for the exercise and health of my constituents of the working class*".⁷⁹⁴ Philips' continued championing of public parks would result in one being named after him. It was not that the matter had not been given consideration. Two years previously Salford Council had agreed to the setting up of a committee "*to obtain information with respect to the establishment of public walks for Salford*",⁷⁹⁵ but the towns had been going through difficult economic times (which had resulted in the closing of the Zoological Gardens), so it was not until 1844, when the economy was once again moving, that the Mayor of Manchester was presented with a requisition for a meeting to consider "*the propriety of taking steps for the formation of a public park, walk or playground*".⁷⁹⁶ The requisition began circulating in April

⁷⁹¹ c.f. the arguments re allotments.

⁷⁹² See letter from Mark Philips to the Manchester Courier, 13 May, 1843.

⁷⁹³ In 1844 Oldham received a grant of £1,000 towards the creation of its own public parks, but the necessary organisation and support which Manchester enjoyed meant that it still had not been used by the time the Manchester Parks opened.

⁷⁹⁴ Letter from Mark Philips to the Manchester Courier, 13 May, 1843.

⁷⁹⁵ Manchester Courier, 8 May, 1841.

⁷⁹⁶ Manchester Courier, 6 April, 1844.

and on the 1 June 1844 the Manchester Courier published a section of Edward Watkin's pamphlet A Plea for Public Walks, &c. in which he compared Britain unfavourably with Europe:

*"Rouen, the Manchester of France, is, in spring and summer, green with foliage; trees line its streets, and shade its courts; and its principal thoroughfare possess two rows of noble elms, limes and chesnuts, worthy of the royal parks. With us this shade and verdure are forbidden by the smoke; but surely we can plant and water beyond the influence of tall chimneys."*⁷⁹⁷

Two weeks later the Manchester Times published an editorial, together with much longer extracts. It dealt with the unhealthy situation in the town and compared it unfavourably with the suburbs – the death rate in the town was more than twice that in Broughton – but also appealed to those who wanted to eliminate less savoury characters: if only there were places of resort, then the "*manners, dress, and deportment*" of the poor would improve. If the classes would but mix, then "*middle-class manners, and middle-class elegance, will shed a powerful influence upon all*".⁷⁹⁸ This oft-stated wish to change the behaviour of the poorest could be traced back to the movement for field gardens.

The request to hold a public meeting was published in the papers on 29 June 1844, together with 111 signatories – a mixture of private individuals and companies. The meeting was scheduled for 8 August and in the intervening weeks the Manchester Times ensured its readership would stay alert to the subject by publishing letters and editorials. At the meeting, around forty men were on the platform, only a few of whom had signed the requisition.⁷⁹⁹ The problem facing the town was not that

⁷⁹⁷ Edward Watkin played a crucial role in the formation of the public parks, not only writing this pamphlet, but (with Malcolm Ross) originating the requisition for a meeting, helping to organise, and speaking at, public meetings, acting as honorary secretary, etc. This was during a time of personal upheaval as he wished to marry and needed employment at a high enough salary. He married in September 1845 and returned from his honeymoon to start work at the Trent Valley Railway. He would go on to be a leading man in the railway industry, eventually knighted, and was the first to promote the idea of a Channel Tunnel. During the period when he was collecting subscriptions for the public parks, his father found him difficult to live with, frequently referring in his diary to Edward's "*insolence*".

⁷⁹⁸ Manchester Times, 15 June, 1844.

⁷⁹⁹ Manchester Times, 10 August, 1844. The meeting resolved that "*...the formation of parks, public walks, or other open spaces for exercise and active sports in the immediate vicinity of the town, would contribute greatly to the health, rational enjoyment, kindly intercourse, and good morals of all classes of our industrious population*". A second resolution was to provide "*... two or more places of public resort of the kind required, in such localities as shall combine, with readiness of access, the advantages of fresh air and suitableness for exercise*". The third anticipated support from the Government: "*...considering the claims which this populous and*

there was no interest in creating public parks (though the extent of that interest is debatable), but the cost of so doing. The money available from the Government was inadequate (though £3,000 would eventually be paid to the Manchester fund from this source) and, in the absence of a single donor (as happened in Derby, when the arboretum was given to the town by Joseph Strutt), the necessary finance had to be raised by public subscription. Of those who had written previously to the Mayor offering support for the notion of public parks, two – Sir Benjamin Heywood and Mark Philips – had already subscribed £1,000 each (a substantial sum)⁸⁰⁰ but letters from the Earl of Wilton, Oswald Mosley, Rev Herbert (Dean of Manchester), William Entwisle (MP for South Lancashire) and Rev. Wray offered only general, and not, at that stage, financial, support (though that followed in due course, sizeable contributions being subsequently received from some although at only a fraction of the level of Heywood's and Philips').

By the end of the meeting, the fund stood at £7,011, from a total of 17 contributors, including 3 of £1,000; 6 of £500 and – at the other end of the scale – 2 of £5 and 1 of £1.⁸⁰¹ Given the levels of attendance at the meeting, the number of contributors at that stage was not great – even though the sum contributed was substantial. Over the following months as Malcolm Ross and Edward Watkin, in their role as Honorary Secretaries to the Committee, collected subscriptions these were recorded in the newspapers. Not everybody wished to be known by name – three were recorded as “*A Director*” (of the Athenaeum), forty-two as “*A Friend*” or “*A Friend to Public Parks*” – so that it is not possible to be completely certain as to who contributed and who did not. However, of the one hundred and eleven people who had signed the requisition for the meeting, only forty-one can be definitely identified

important borough, the metropolis of the manufacturing district, has upon her Majesty's government, this meeting confidently anticipates, that, in addition to the voluntary contributions which it has now pledged itself to obtain, for the purpose of affording to the industrious classes of this community the requisite facilities for healthful and rational recreation, liberal aid will be received from the public funds already or hereafter to be voted by parliament for the promotion of such desirable objects”. All the resolutions were passed unanimously.

⁸⁰⁰ Calculating this at today's prices is difficult, but £1,000 in 1844 is likely to equate to around £60,000 in 2013. A straightforward RPI calculation takes no account of the relative costs of items at different times in history. One comparison is with the cost of clothes in an advertisement in the same issue of the *Manchester Times* in which the report of the meeting was given. A bespoke wrapper “*of the most Fashionable Materials, a good fit warranted*” cost one guinea. Moleskin trousers could be had for 2s 6d or 6s for “*the very best, with rule pocket*”. Using a factor of sixty would give £63; £7.50 and £18.

⁸⁰¹ *Manchester Times*, 10 August, 1844. Report of the Meeting.

as also contributing to the fund. Similarly, of those who sat on the platform at the meeting, several cannot be found as contributors. However, some may have wished to remain anonymous – perhaps because they were not able to contribute as lavishly as others, or as they would have wished to, although the absence of their names would have been noticeable – and some may have been partners in a company that did contribute.

It is easy to receive the impression that the financial support for the public parks among the middle class was much greater than it was in reality.⁸⁰² Before the meeting the Manchester Times in an editorial wrote:

*“Money, not mere speeches will be wanted. Let us make a demand for the people of Manchester – we demand then the sum of £50,000. Surely the 2,600 spinners, manufacturers, and merchants who frequent the Exchange, and who profit by the strength and health of the people, will not grudge a voluntary subscription as life insurance of that by which they live.”*⁸⁰³

A simple calculation shows that it only needed each of the 2,600 to contribute £20 to exceed this target. In fact there were donations from only around 300 companies and although some contributed handsomely – Jones, Loyd & Co. gave £1,000; a further three companies gave £500 and another thirty-three gave at least £100 – the vast majority of the companies that contributed (206) gave £20 or less and of these eighteen managed only between five shillings and one pound.⁸⁰⁴ Yet at the time the Parks were handed over to the public, the editor of the Manchester Examiner wrote: *“The wealthy have done their duty well in making so fine a gift to the people.”*⁸⁰⁵

There were other requests for contributions being made at the same time. Rowland Hill had introduced the penny post system, which had been of immense benefit not only to businesses, but also to individuals. Contributions for a Testimonial in recognition of this service were collected from June to September 1844. In all, over £1,000 was collected from more than three hundred individuals and companies. A comparison with those who gave to the public parks fund, however,

⁸⁰² “... such a large sum ... is a tribute to the generosity of the affluent classes in Manchester” wrote Magdalen Goffin regarding the £7,000 subscription at the meeting. (The Diaries of Absalom Watkin, p.241. Goffin equated the £7,000 to £350,000, but was writing in 1993.)

⁸⁰³ Manchester Times, 3 August, 1844.

⁸⁰⁴ Contributions were recorded week by week in the newspapers.

⁸⁰⁵ Manchester Examiner, 15 August, 1846.

shows that less than half who gave to the testimonial also gave to the parks.⁸⁰⁶ Of those who gave to both, a comparison of the amounts is also notable, in that it gives an indication of the relative importance placed on each. Townend and Hickson gave £20 to the Rowland Hill Fund and £500 (twenty-five times as much) to the Public Park Fund. For S & J Watts, the comparative figures were £20 and £100 (five times as much). For the merchant Ami Bernard & Nephew they were 2 guineas and £5 – little more than twice as much.⁸⁰⁷

A similar picture can be found in the testimonial to William Gibb, in recognition of his work in creating a bonding warehouse in Manchester. The first subscription list for this was published in July 1844. Again, many of those who contributed to this fund cannot be found in the Public Parks list, and the variations in the levels of donation are similarly different. For the Public Parks, Sir Francis Egerton, Sir Benjamin Heywood and Mark Philips donated £1,000 each. For the Gibb Testimonial, Egerton contributed £20, while Heywood and Philips each gave only £5.

Without the substantial donations from a few members of the wealthy middle classes the public parks could not have been created, but the extent of the contributions from that part of the population can easily be exaggerated. At the opening of the parks, W.B. Watkins, Mayor of Manchester declared that they would never have existed but for “*able heads ... kindly hearts ... and ... an able purse*”. He continued:

*“... no less a number than 5,000 persons... have given, as their free gift to their poorer neighbours, the munificent sum of £32,000, for the purpose of forming these parks.”*⁸⁰⁸

A breakdown of the contributions, which was published in the newspapers in July 1846⁸⁰⁹ shows that the numbers contributing – and the amount they contributed – was very wide. For a start, there were only 3,930 listed, well short of the five thousand advertised, the difference possibly being accounted for by members of the

⁸⁰⁶ Figures can only be approximate. Manchester had a number of prominent families, but there would also have been people with the same names as these, but from a different walk of life. For example, there were more than 20 people named James Heywood living in Manchester in 1851. Only one was brother to Sir Benjamin Heywood.

⁸⁰⁷ As with the contributions to the Public Parks (and in fact contributions to any cause), those for the Rowland Hill memorial were recorded in the newspapers during the period of collection.

⁸⁰⁸ Manchester Times, 28 August, 1846.

⁸⁰⁹ See Manchester Examiner, 18 July, 1846.

Odd Fellows and other Societies.⁸¹⁰ The largest slice of the fund - £21,755 or 67% of the total had been contributed in sums of more than £100. Another 31% had been contributed by those who had given between £1 and £50. The final 2% had come in donations of fifteen shillings or less, including 111 who had given less than fourpence. If the total sum contributed (£32,539 19s 11d)⁸¹¹ is broken down by numbers of contributors, the percentages, instead of being 67%/31%/2%, would be almost exactly reversed: 2%/29%/69%. One difficulty in understanding the relative contributions is with the value of money, as there are various ways in which to translate these sums into modern equivalents. Straight inflation does not take account of wage inflation, nor can it really explain purchasing power, since the relative value of goods (as well as the range available) changes over time. However it would appear that at 2012 values, it is necessary to multiply the figures by 60 to reach an approximate figure. This produces contributions at today's prices of £60,000 down to less than £1:

No. of contributors	Amount contributed	2012 equivalent
5	£1,000	£60,000
10	£ 500	£30,000
7	£ 300	£18,000
3	£ 250	£15,000
16	£ 200	£12,000
1	£ 150	£ 9,000
1	£ 105 ⁸¹²	£ 6,300
56	£ 100	£ 6,000
66	£ 50	£ 3,000

⁸¹⁰ A Ball had been held on 10 December, 1844, raising more than £89.

⁸¹¹ This was the figure printed in the *Manchester Times*. The figure in the *Courier* was £32,470 2s 5d. As late as August 1846, £350 in promised contributions had still not been received. The final sum, including government grant, bank interest, additional contributions, discounts &c. was £36,540 17s 2d (*Manchester Examiner*, 24 October, 1846).

⁸¹² This was published as £100, but must have been a misprint.

No. of contributors	Amount contributed	2012 equivalent
4	£ 40	£ 2,400
3	£ 30	£ 1,800
121	£20 - £25	£1,200 - £1,500
143	£10 - £15	£600 -£900
191	£5 – 5 guineas	£300 - £315
410	£1 – 1 guinea	£60 - £90
92	½ guinea – 15s.	£31.50 - £45
258	10s.	£30
676	5s. – 8s.	£15 - £24
560	2s – 4/6	£6 - £13.50
681	1s – 1/8	£3 - £5
318	4d – 6d	£1 - £1.50
111	Less than 4d	Less than £1

Contributions towards the Public Parks Fund, with 2012 equivalent value

It is possible to think of many reasons for the apparent lack of support among those who could well have afforded to contribute to the fund and so made the three parks more complete – or even have allowed for the fourth that had been anticipated. For a start, the alternative viewpoints that it was necessary on the one hand to provide the working classes with fresh air and exercise or, on the other, to keep them away from bad influences may not have been as widespread or as imperative to the majority as it appears from what was said and written at the time. It can be easy to over-emphasise the ideas and beliefs of those who are very vocal, silence does not always signify consent. The majority may have been indifferent; or possibly, having suffered severely from the continued economic depression, they were struggling, as companies and as individuals, to stay afloat and did not feel giving was in their best

interest.⁸¹³ Yet it is clear that there were other opinions which were the cause – or ostensibly the cause – of a failure to contribute.

On 25 September 1844 a public meeting was held in Salford to demonstrate that the Committee was not being exclusive to Manchester.⁸¹⁴ The first resolution put to the meeting was that the establishment of Public Parks would “*tend to elevate the moral and improve the sanitary (sic) condition of the population*”. That cleverly covered both the major viewpoints. But Edward Watkin and Malcolm Ross, each spoke of the arguments they had heard while collecting subscriptions. The proposal, explained Watkin, was for there to be “*a Park, Promenade, Garden, and Playground, with baths and refreshment rooms attached, on each of the four sides of the town*”. He had heard two objections. The first was that working men would simply not use them if they were provided. The second was that (even if they wanted to) they had no leisure in which to use them. Ross added that they had met many objections, some on the flimsiest argument. Kersal Moor was already available said some, but it wasn’t used by the poor for exercise; the parks would cost a £million said others and – as always – the argument that they could not be used on a Sunday, to which he answered: “*public parks would not be public parks unless they were as free as Chapel-street and Greengate on a Sunday and every other day*”.

On the question of cost, they anticipated £40,000 would be sufficient for the four parks and, after little more than a month, £19,000 had already been collected – indeed by the end of the week the total would be over £20,000. It must have seemed inevitable that they would reach their target. Yet it would take a further five months to reach £30,000 and the decline in donations meant that it would take yet another five months to collect another £1,500.⁸¹⁵ In November 1844 the Committee revealed its plans. Four parks, each about 30 acres; a gymnasium (free to use), in each; space for ball alleys, quoits, skittles, archery and other active sports at a nominal charge; fountains of pure water; lots of seats; refreshment rooms. The parks would be open every day of the week, but the sports facilities would be closed on

⁸¹³ The fear of bankruptcy was very real to businessmen of the nineteenth century, which was one reason why they diversified into various interests. Lists of bankrupts were published in every edition of newspapers.

⁸¹⁴ Report in *Manchester Times*, 28 September, 1844; the equivalent Manchester meeting had been reported in the paper of 14 September, 1844.

⁸¹⁵ Calculated from published lists in the newspapers

Sundays. It was also anticipated that there would be public baths and wash-houses, too, either free or at a nominal cost.⁸¹⁶

After almost a year, having collected only £31,500 (another £2,000 was eventually collected, to which would be added the £3,000 from the Government Fund), the plans had to be scaled back.⁸¹⁷ There would be only three parks and not four. The seven acres of the Lark Hill estate were augmented by 25 acres of the neighbouring Walness estate and would become Peel Park, named after the Prime Minister, Robert Peel, (who had contributed a personal £1,000 to the fund). The Endham Hall estate in Harpurhey (the grounds of which were described as "*tolerably well laid out... well wooded, and command extensive and pleasant views of the neighbourhood*")⁸¹⁸ would become the Queen's Park and in Bradford, 31 acres purchased from Lady Houghton would become Philips' Park – named after Mark Philips who, like Peel, had contributed £1,000 and used his influence to encourage the creation of the parks. The total purchase price (of land and existing buildings) of £23,825⁸¹⁹ severely depleted the fund and constrained the landscaping work that could be attempted.

The Committee had decided to run a competition for designs for the parks and in October 1845 the one hundred designs submitted were displayed in the Town Hall for public inspection. The cost of viewing on Monday and Tuesday, the 27-28 October, was one shilling. On Wednesday and Thursday the charge was reduced to sixpence and on Friday and Saturday just threepence.⁸²⁰ At no time was viewing free for those who could not afford even this small sum. Some one hundred people took the opportunity to view, raising £17 13s to be added to the fund.⁸²¹ The Manchester Times approved of this showing, but suggested that the first thing to do would be to produce a shortlist. That was done and the resulting nine included Robert Forrest

⁸¹⁶ *Memorandum agreed upon unanimously at a Meeting of Committee*, Nov. 21st, 1844, published Manchester Times, 23 November, 1844.

⁸¹⁷ A deputation was sent to Sir Robert Peel (Prime Minister) with a request that the Government should provide "*a sum at least equal to that already raised by spontaneous donation*" (Report in Manchester Times, 12 April, 1845. At that time just under £31,000 had been collected.)

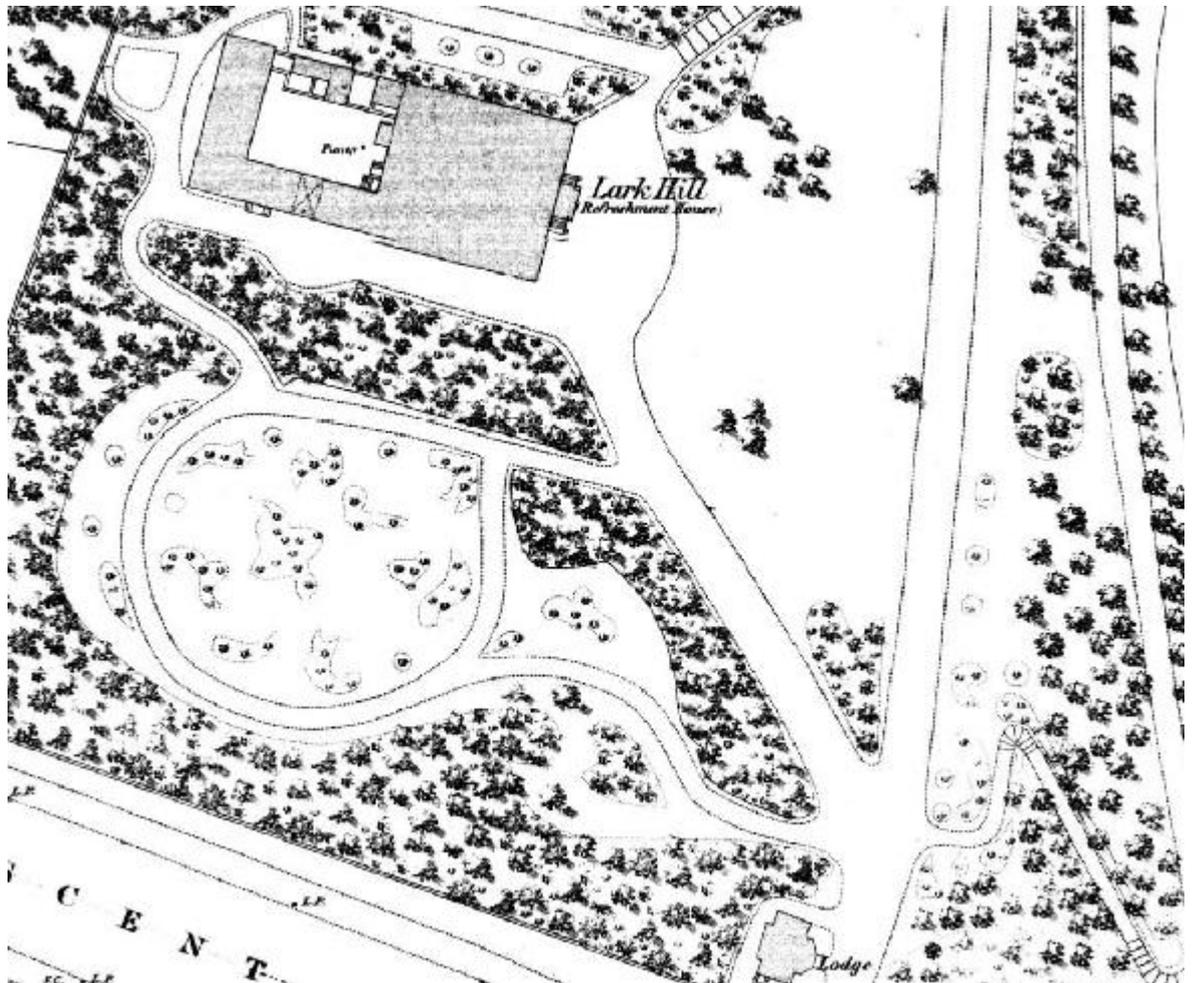
⁸¹⁸ Manchester Times, 24 May, 1845.

⁸¹⁹ Manchester Times, 26 July, 1845.

⁸²⁰ About fifteen shillings or 75p at today's rates.

⁸²¹ Manchester Times, 30 October, 1846. One hundred visitors is calculated by adding the payments due on each day together (12 + 12 + 6 + 6 + 3 + 3 = 42 pence), the assumption being that the numbers attending were roughly the same each day. £17 13s. = 4,236d.

(who had designed the Zoological Gardens), Ninian Niven, a Scot living in Dublin, James Pringle of York (who had also entered the competition for the Leeds Zoological and Botanical Gardens) and three local men as well as the ultimate winner – Joshua Major of Knowstrop near Leeds.⁸²²



Lark Hill, once the home of James Ackers, by 1850 served as the Refreshment House for Peel Park

The local competitors who were fortunate enough to be short-listed were the Hulme nurseryman Hodgson Bigland, landscape gardener Thomas Diggles of Singleton, Broughton and Pim and Richardson of Ardwick. Bigland and Diggles were both in the final three, with Bigland winning the second prize of twenty-five guineas (Major's prize was fifty guineas). Pimm⁸²³ and Richardson won the contract for the ground-work. It was anticipated that the parks would be ready within six months. As

⁸²² Manchester Times, 8 November, 1845. In 1852 Joshua Major published The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening

⁸²³ The name was variously spelt 'Pim', 'Pimm' or 'Pym'.

always with such projects, this was optimistic, but, even so, it took less than eight months from beginning on site to the parks opening.

The Manchester Courier in reporting the start on site gave great detail of each of the planned parks.⁸²⁴ They were that strange mixture of pleasure ground and recreation space that epitomises the municipal park. On the one hand they were laid out like a fully landscaped garden belonging to a wealthy man,⁸²⁵ with serpentine walks, flower gardens, (Queen's Park even had a rosarium), ornamental fountains, sundials, and space for "*obelisks, monumental pillars, and statues to the memory of great men, pedestals with busts, vases, &c.*" which could not be included with the funds available, but could be introduced at some point in the future. On the other hand, there was space for all sorts of active recreational facilities with plenty of seats (both open and covered) for spectators. Like the pleasure gardens in the vicinity, the parks included gymnasia, bowling-greens and areas set aside specifically for cricket, skittles, quoits and archery. The big difference from the pleasure gardens was the different areas for girls and for boys, each with their swings, see-saws, etc. Games for boys included "*knor and spell*". Dating back to the fourteenth century, the name referred to the two parts that were needed to play. A knor (or knurr), about the size of a walnut was launched into the air from a trap. It was then hit by the spell. This consisted of a bat about four feet long with a pommel on the end measuring 6 x 4 x 1 inch. The object was to see who could hit the knurr the furthest.⁸²⁶ The boys also had "*leaping rods*". These were two rods, set at a distance apart, measuring the start and end of a leap, with the rods being gradually moved further and further apart.⁸²⁷ Girls were expected to play skipping games, shuttlecock and 'The Graces'. Invented in France, this was a game for two, each having two rods. With these, each player took turns to toss a hoop into the air for the other to catch.⁸²⁸ Each park was given a sixty-foot high maypole. There was every expectation that children would use the parks in a wide range of physical activity.

⁸²⁴ Manchester Courier, 6 December, 1845.

⁸²⁵ The Manchester Times (21 August, 1846) described them as "*more ornamented and more beautiful than are to be found surrounding the seats of our nobility*".

⁸²⁶ See for example, www.tradgames.org.uk/games/knur-spell.htm. See also excerpt from BBC programme Countryfile: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00dnx5z. Other illustrations and video of game (YouTube) also available on internet.

⁸²⁷ See Gymnastics for Youth, Or, A Practical Guide to Healthful and Amusing Exercises (1800) p. 218-9. This was a translation from a German original.

⁸²⁸ see www.janeausten.co.uk/the-game-graces/. There are a number of other websites explaining and showing how the game was played.

The shortage of funds, following the purchase of the sites, meant that the Committee advertised for donations of any item which might be of use in the creation of the parks, such as "Stone, Flags, Bricks, Timber, Derbyshire Spar, Shrubbery Plants, Forrest (sic) Trees, Iron Railing, Gates &c &c."⁸²⁹ There were donations of tar from the Manchester Gas Works, of gravel from the surveyors of Salford and stone from Mr J G Appleton.⁸³⁰ Subsequently, Mr. Armitage of Sheffield donated three statues.⁸³¹ Even so, certain works had to be omitted due to shortage of funds and wet weather not only delayed work, but added to the cost. Donations of shrubs had also been promised, but the majority of the planting was from various nurserymen. Joshua Major, the designer, had his own nursery, so some came from there. Three Manchester nurseries supplied plants – Hodgson Bigland, Cunningham & Orr and Taylor and others came from Samuel Stafford, of Hyde and William Skirving, of Liverpool.⁸³² Joshua Major described the wishes of the committee and the difficulties faced by lack of funds:

"In forming the three parks at Manchester, (which we had the privilege of designing), the committee particularly wished us to arrange our plans so as to offer convenience for as many varieties of games as possible. In order, therefore, to make the most of the ground we had to operate upon, we designed the pleasure ground as near as practicable to the skirts of the plot, and then took advantage of every nook or recess which was to spare for the different play-grounds,—for archery, quoit alley, skittle ground, bowling green, climbing poles, gymnasium, marbles, see-saws, &c, for males; and see-saws, balls, skipping rope, the Graces, &c, for females. A general play-ground was formed in the centre of the whole plot, of about twelve or fifteen acres, for cricket, knor and spell, leaping poles, football, and foot races, &c, and also for the additional purpose of large public meetings. These plans, with but a few exceptions, were generally approved and acted upon. One exception I think it necessary to mention, because the omission very much deteriorated our general arrangements; and the committee would not have permitted it had their funds been larger. I allude to an inner fence of wire, by which it was intended to divide the pleasure grounds from the open area or general play ground, so that the grass might be kept short by letting in sheep at hours when the ground was otherwise unoccupied. This I consider the cheapest way of keeping in order so large a space. Such a fence would also have been useful in preventing the formation of tracks in order to gain the shortest access to any particular spot. Of such tracks there were soon many, in addition to the walks originally laid down, and which, I understand, has resulted in many additional walks being made, whereby the boldness and

⁸²⁹ Manchester Times, 6 December, 1845.

⁸³⁰ Manchester Times, 14 March, 1846.

⁸³¹ Manchester Examiner, 15 August, 1846.

⁸³² See "Progress of the Public Parks", Manchester Times, 15 May, 1846.

*freedom of the whole has been to a great extent destroyed. I mention this to prevent similar errors.”*⁸³³

Just one hundred and six weeks after the initial public meeting, the parks were opened on 22 August 1846, with great ceremony. A procession wound its way through the towns, beginning at Peel Park and finishing with Philips’ Park, spectators lining the streets and waving flags. There were 44 carriages in all, plus bands and, appropriately, there was a large contingent of those who had spent eight months digging and planting:

*“The workmen of Messrs. Pim and Richardson, 45 in number, headed by their employers, 14 of the men bearing emblems formed of hollyhocks, dahlias, sunflowers, and various evergreens. ... The men also carried a Prince of Wales’s plume, formed of flowers, and a regal crown, on each side of which were the letters “V.R.” formed of flowers; and a large wreath suspended, in the midst of which was a very large vegetable marrow, weighing from 30lb to 40lb. There was also a garland with a melon and a vegetable marrow, with evergreens, laurel, holly, fruit, flowers, &c. All the men were well dressed, and each had a bouquet of flowers in his button hole.”*⁸³⁴

The ceremony and accompanying speeches were fully covered in the press which were filled with understandable hyperbole during this period. The Manchester Examiner wrote:

*“The Public Parks – placed as they have been so wisely at the doors of a vast working population, to whom, hitherto, the means of out-door exercise and recreation have been denied – offer to the young and to the old, to the strong and to the feeble, to every class, the free enjoyment of those quiet and peaceful influences to which it would appear that Providence had made even the sternest and rudest amongst us ever susceptible; and, while they will exert the happiest influence upon the health of the public, they will help to infuse a healthier glow into the social and moral life of Manchester.”*⁸³⁵

The Examiner hoped, even anticipated, that “*The Parks will gradually become the neutral ground upon which classes, elsewhere divided, may meet in friendly social intercourse*”. But this was not to be.

The parks were formally handed over to the Manchester Council, which then wished to transfer Peel Park to Salford. Notwithstanding the excitement generated by the official opening, which had begun in Salford, there were a number of voices raised against this when it was discussed by the Salford Council. There were

⁸³³ Major, Joshua. The Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, 1852, p.193

⁸³⁴ Manchester Examiner, 29 August, 1846.

⁸³⁵ Manchester Examiner, 22 August, 1846.

concerns about the on-going cost of maintenance. Mr. Morris spoke of the civilising influence of the Park – “*A friend of his had been told that the parks were “playing the very dickens” with the ale-houses*” – but Mr. Charlton “*had strong misgivings of the effects of the parks*”. He had noticed a great deal of disorderly conduct and had been told that on the previous Sunday, despite the regulations against the playing of games on the Sabbath, “*men were playing at pitch and toss and at ball*”. Despite these concerns, the meeting agreed the transfer and set up a Parks Committee.⁸³⁶ Salford councillors were not the only ones to speak against the parks. In Manchester, before the parks were even handed over, Mr. Slater had complained of unnecessary cost and wondered whether the ratepayers, “*when they learned what the annual expenditure would be of keeping these parks in order, would find the parks dear, even as a gift*”. There were murmurings, also, about the cost of the Salford Park to Manchester and whether or not the Committee or the Council should be responsible for the purchase of hurdles to fence off and protect the plantations of trees and shrubs. A resolution to expend £900 on hurdles was defeated by 17 votes to 11.⁸³⁷

Only one month after the parks had been opened, the additional costs to the councils resulting from the insufficient level of the original funding were becoming clearer. The limited funds at the Committee’s disposal meant that the Parks had been inadequately resourced. Both Queen’s and Philips’ Park needed public conveniences, an additional fifty seats, two more sets of swings and circular swings one for girls and one for boys⁸³⁸, a few see-saws for girls “*of better and more durable construction than those at present in use*”, garden tools – scythes, spades, rollers &c.⁸³⁹ In all an additional £1,200 of capital expenditure was required for the two parks in Manchester and running costs were estimated at £730 a year, although it was anticipated that receipts from letting the refreshment houses would reduce this to £530. These sums were accepted with little discussion. What exercised the minds of the Council were the questions of whether or not the refreshment houses could be allowed to operate on a Sunday, whether public-speaking should be allowed (if this was sanctioned for religion, how could it not be approved for politics – a very dangerous thought!) and whether carriages should be permitted to enter the parks. Rules were set out for the parks. They were to be open from sunrise to one hour

⁸³⁶ Manchester Examiner, 5 September, 1846.

⁸³⁷ Manchester Times, 3 July, 1846.

⁸³⁸ It had been noticed that where boys and girls mixed, the boys hogged the equipment.

⁸³⁹ Manchester Examiner, 19 September, 1846.

after sunset; bells would be rung to alert visitors that gates would be closing; entry was forbidden to anyone who was drunk; gambling and "*improper language*" was strictly forbidden; games and gymnastics were not allowed on Sundays; dogs were not allowed and "*no males permitted to intrude upon the playgrounds appropriated to the females*".⁸⁴⁰ In Salford, the Council adopted similar rules to Manchester, adding that all people "*frequenting this park are required to be clean in their persons, and dressed in clean and decent clothing*".⁸⁴¹

The idea that the parks would not be used – put forward by some who refused to contribute – was soon seen to be quite wrong. Thousands were sometimes in a park at the same time. The Examiner assured its readers that the working classes could be trusted to behave in the Parks. A week before the official opening of the parks, it wrote that this was the beginning of a "*new social era*" where the middle and working classes could mix and

*"... if a thoughtless person should be smitten with a desire to immortalise himself, by carving his initials on a fine tree; if a flower-lover should endeavour thievishly to appropriate to himself what belongs to all; or if any act of spoliation or depredation takes place, we are pretty sure that... the spectators will immediately take upon themselves the authority of park policemen, and put the offender in a way of being properly punished. It will require no little hardihood for a maliciously inclined individual, if such there should be, to play his pranks, when he knows that he is injuring the property of every person within sight."*⁸⁴²

But it may have been with a sense of relief that The Times was able to write that the day after the opening "*Thousands of people, of all classes, visited the parks on Sunday, and not a single act of indecorum was committed by any party. This promises well, and shows that the industrious community of Manchester are worthy the munificent gifts now bestowed on them.*"⁸⁴³ The idea that the public parks would result in a mixing of the classes was not shared everywhere. Some people wished to keep the classes quite separate. In 1847, the report to the Annual General Meeting of the Botanical and Horticultural Society was explicit. The Botanic Garden was for the wealthy alone. The parks were for the poor:

⁸⁴⁰ Manchester Times, 25 September, 1846.

⁸⁴¹ Manchester Examiner, 3 October, 1846.

⁸⁴² Manchester Examiner, 15 August, 1846.

⁸⁴³ Manchester Times, 28 August, 1846

*“To the wealthy inhabitants of our densely peopled town, the opportunities which these beautiful gardens afford for needful recreation in a purer atmosphere, can hardly be over-rated; and the proprietors, whilst availing themselves of these delightful privileges, have now the additional satisfaction of knowing that, by the establishment of public parks, similar opportunities for recruiting their health and spirits are henceforward gratuitously secured to all the humbler classes of society.”*⁸⁴⁴

This was not to say that some members had not contributed handsomely to the fund. The President (Lord Francis Egerton) and three of the four vice-presidents had between them contributed £1,400, but of the other twenty-seven members of the Council in 1845-6, at most ten had contributed. Twenty-five pounds had been contributed by Lot Gardiner and Co. and Addin Gardiner (the brother) was on the Botanical Society Council, but whether the impetus for the contribution came from him or from Lot is not known.⁸⁴⁵

In 1849 Malcolm Ross and Edward Watkin were presented with a silver plated epergne and a silver tea-service respectively.⁸⁴⁶ The shield on the epergne and the coffee-pot of the tea service were each engraved with the thanks of the Committee for their *“zeal, energy and judgment”* in raising the money for the parks. In his speech of thanks, in contrast with the “official” version of Manchester people gladly giving to *“the largest provisional subscription that had ever been recorded”*, Ross gave some idea of the difficulties he and Watkin had faced.⁸⁴⁷ They had tried holding district meetings – but no-one turned up. They asked employers if they might hold workplace meetings – only to find workers clambering over a gate to get away from them.

Yet, said Ross, he was pleased to see that the Parks were successful, even though they seemed to have failed in one respect. One of the reasons given for the creation of the parks was that there should be *“a place where all classes could unite in harmony and concord”*. This seemed to have been forgotten. If only the Council would allow carriages to enter the parks, perhaps those who either *“could not or would not walk”* would mix with the other classes. Support for the parks may not have been as widespread as was originally hoped and may have fallen well short of

⁸⁴⁴ *Manchester Times*, 2 May, 1847.

⁸⁴⁵ List of Council members taken from Ann Brooks’ thesis.

⁸⁴⁶ *Manchester Examiner and Times*, 27 March, 1849.

⁸⁴⁷ And which no doubt had a great deal to do with Watkin’s father’s complaints about him during this period.

the impression given. There may have been voices raised against the very idea of providing them. The middle classes may not have used them. But they were successful among the working classes. In 1849 the Manchester Times wrote of their use during Whit week by people who could not afford the other attractions on offer. It was estimated that 45,000 Sunday school children alone, plus many others, had visited Peel Park, where the gardener in charge – Mr. Thomas Gibbon – had, since the previous year, designed and overseen the construction of raised flower beds and rockeries. Both Queen's and Philips' Parks had also been visited by thousands, though neither in the number given for Peel Park.⁸⁴⁸

Summary

A century of change in British society had left sharp divisions between the middle and working classes which could be understood, not just in terms of wealth (or its lack), but in terms of access to gardens and open spaces. As the town became shrouded in smoke, the rivers turned into toxic streams and a variety of extremely unpleasant smells assaulted the nostrils, the need for fresh air grew. For the middle classes the answer was to move into the surrounding countryside where they were able to enjoy fresh air and the refreshing access to vegetation which today is recognised as so important to human well-being.⁸⁴⁹ For the less wealthy, walking in the countryside or spending time in one of the public gardens supplemented their meagre, if any, garden-space. The vast majority of workers, in homes with no gardens, were gradually removed from both – through lack of income, shortage of leisure hours and the physical and economic restrictions relating to footpaths – with the concomitant appalling effect on their health. Concern about workers' health was widespread, but the extent to which individuals were willing to actively address the matter was limited. It was, after all, a time when the only help from the state was incarceration in the Poor House; when anxiety about potential loss of personal income was fed weekly by the lists of bankrupts published in the papers and underscored by bank failures and

⁸⁴⁸ Manchester Times, 27 March, 1849.

⁸⁴⁹ see, for example, Ulrich, Roger S. Health Benefits of Gardens in Hospitals, Paper for Conference Plants for People at International Exhibition Floriade 2002 (available at greenplantsforgreenbuildings.org/attachments/contentmanagers/25/HealthSettingsUlrich.pdf) or Morris, Nina Health, Well-being and Open Space: Literature Review (2003) available at www.openspace.eca.ac.uk/pdf/healthwellbeing.pdf. Although known to be important, the impact of politics and economics is as detrimental to their availability and support today as it was two centuries ago.

the regular trade slumps; when revolution abroad raised fears at home. Nevertheless, some members of the Manchester middle class fought on behalf of the poor – they tackled the loss of footpaths, raised the issue of public health in Parliament and, ultimately, succeeded in creating three public parks for the people, which remain in existence today.

The divisions in society – always there – had become more acute as industrialisation drove a wedge between the haves and the have-nots. There was fear of the poor; condemnation of their behaviour; but also the idea that it was possible to raise up the humbler classes: after all, many manufacturers were self-made men. The range of wealth – so clear in the contributions to the public parks fund – had found expression in the level of access to gardens and open spaces. Making these available to the workers, in the form of public parks, was a way of sharing personal good fortune, but also, in benefiting their health, a way, for employers, of ensuring continued good fortune through the health of their workforce. There was room therefore both for the altruist and the self-seeker, and it seems surprising that there were so many with such a negative view of those whose toil ensured their wealth. There was undoubtedly great generosity; but the extent and relative size of that generosity cannot be ascertained without access to personal and company finances. Was £1,000 from Mark Philips a greater or lesser relative contribution than the same sum from Sir Benjamin Heywood? Did £100 from Dean Herbert constitute a similar percentage of his wealth to the £300 from Samuel Brooks or the £50 from Sir Oswald Mosley? How did £500 from Townend & Hickson compare with £50 from Coates & M'Naughton in terms of the companies' relative profitability, liquidity and number of staff? These would be interesting questions for another study. In terms of the present study, it is sufficient to note that, by 1850, the disenfranchisement of the poor in their access to fresh air, trees and flowers had been overturned by the provision of public parks. The appreciation amongst workers was evidenced in the level of use the parks received.

Chapter Seven

The Element of Competition

The story of Manchester and gardens would not be complete without a look at the element of competition between gardeners in the area. This was frequently touched on by writers and is what gave rise to Manchester's reputation as a centre of horticultural excellence, but has never been properly explored. Indeed, the story of horticultural competitions in general has not been the subject of any great consideration.⁸⁵⁰ This is surprising as there is a long history of horticultural shows in this country. If the eighteenth century can be classified as the time of the florists' feasts, with their emphasis on individual flowers, then the nineteenth may be thought of as the century of the wide-ranging floral and horticultural shows which sprang up in almost every town. Such simplistic classification however is far from the reality. Florists' feasts – whether or not they went by that name – could include other horticultural exhibits in the eighteenth century and, as single-plant shows, continued well into the nineteenth century. At the same time, their impact can be seen in the early floral and horticultural shows, which were organised around the blooming of florists' flowers.

What is clear is that in Manchester, in the 1820s, growing and showing flowers, fruit and vegetables began to change from a hobby of the few to a spectator activity of the many. The paying public were admitted to shows and attendance was popular with women, who the Manchester Courier insisted on referring to as the '*Lancashire Witches*'.

*"The day was uncommonly fine, and the attendance was extremely numerous and highly respectable. Indeed, we believe, that had the room been four times as large, it would have been crowded to excess. The fairest flowers of the creation, "The Lancashire Witches", were in great profusion, and appeared highly delighted with the display of flowers, fruits, and green-house plants."*⁸⁵¹

One of the difficulties of tracing the history of floral and horticultural competitions is the lack of information that has survived. Shows were frequently very local and

⁸⁵⁰ Although there are a number of books about Florists' Flowers, such as Ruth Duthie's small book *Florists' Flowers and Societies* (1988) and Roy Genders *Collecting Antique Plants: The History and Culture of the Old Florists' Flowers* (1971).

⁸⁵¹ Manchester Courier, 21 April, 1827.

written records may not have been kept. Where they were, they probably did not long survive the demise of the society. Small societies could be very dependent upon one or two individuals. The larger, better organised – and probably the more middle-class – societies placed advertisements in newspapers and, if they provided the newspaper with the details of winners, reports on the shows also appeared, but their quality was dependent upon the amount of information provided.⁸⁵² So some reports would include only the major prizes, while others would include all winners. Some gave the names of the winning plants, others not.

Horticultural competitions were a feature of Manchester life in the eighteenth century, but with little information available for the town for this period, this chapter looks at the wider national picture to give an idea of how the Manchester shows might have been organised. It also draws on later writers' memories of plants and people or their knowledge gained through discussions with older members.

This chapter is divided into three sections. The first considers the Florists' Feasts of the eighteenth century and the locally based single-product shows of the nineteenth. The second section considers the more generic horticultural shows with their very strong florists' input by considering the early shows of the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society. It also looks at the rivalry between that and the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Society. Where there is competition there is also the possibility of disagreements and misunderstandings, quarrels and rifts. For the most part these are only hinted at in reports, but the 1850 falling out among members of the Manchester Amateur Tulip Society and the resultant two shows on consecutive days is described.

The final section considers the gooseberry shows which ran alongside all the others. Gooseberry growing was a nationally recognised part of horticultural life, not only in Lancashire but also Cheshire and Staffordshire and was a very specific activity for many amateur growers. Today, only a handful of these traditional shows can still be found in Cheshire on the last Saturday in July or the first Saturday in August.

⁸⁵² Although reports of flower shows could be omitted if there was a lack of space – often the case during the political high points of the Reform Bills, Abolition of the Corn Laws, etc. The Carlisle Patriot, in 1819, refused to include information on the Gooseberry Show, which had appeared in the Carlisle Journal because it had not received it "at the same time". The following year the article was "reluctantly omitted".

Florists' feasts

Flower meetings were often, but not always, referred to as "Florists' feasts" and were an important element in eighteenth century England, although they dated back much further.⁸⁵³ They were generally held in inns, the dinner provided by the inn-keeper being a part of the event – hence the "feast" – and advertisements normally stated the time the dinner would be ready, the additional sales being an important recompense for the hosting of the show. In Tetworth in 1755, the advertisement for the carnation show included the comment that anyone wishing to see the plants without partaking of dinner would be required to pay one shilling towards the cost of the following year's event.⁸⁵⁴

The element of competition can be seen in newspaper reports. In Northumberland there was a Society of Florists and Botanists which met annually and which pre-dated 1724. Its meeting that year was attended by the Mayor, Sheriff, Clergy and about one hundred Gentlemen, which gives a good idea of its standing locally and the support it received. On show were a "*greater Variety of Carnations, and the largest Melons and other Fruits... than has been seen in the North before*" – one of the few reports to refer to anything other than the usual florists' flowers.⁸⁵⁵ The best flower was exhibited by William Davison of Beamish, and it was reported that there would be a prize the following year of a piece of plate valued around forty shillings. Davison was the winner again in 1725, receiving a cup for his "*greatest Choice of the finest Flowers*".⁸⁵⁶

Although it would seem that carnations, in the earlier part of the eighteenth century, were the flower of choice in the Newcastle area other florists' flowers were also grown. In 1764 there was a locally produced translation of The Dutch Florist, originally written by Nicholas Van Kampen and Son in Harlem, Holland.⁸⁵⁷ This

⁸⁵³ The play *Rhodon and Iris* was presented at the Florist's Feast at Norwich in 1631.

⁸⁵⁴ *Oxford Journal*, 26 July 1755.

⁸⁵⁵ *Newcastle Courant*, 15 August, 1724.

⁸⁵⁶ *Newcastle Courant*, 21 August, 1725.

⁸⁵⁷ This was reviewed in *The Critical Review: Or, Annals of Literature, Volume 18*; (1764) p.157. "*We heartily join in all attempts to propagate innocent recreation, of which we think the study of a florist is one of the most harmless as well as curious. We are the more ready to recommend this pamphlet, as we have had many opportunities of seeing and admiring the almost incredible improvements which the industrious Dutch have made upon the produce of bulbous roots. Happy would it be if half the authors who hunt after religious or political*

covered the hyacinth, tulip, anemone and ranunculus – “*the four principal ornaments of Flora*” – but included a final chapter on a range of other bulbs organised by month of flowering.⁸⁵⁸ This included varieties of cyclamen, narcissus, iris, crocus, fritillaries, lilies, gladiolus, tuberose etc. Although florists’ would have grown these flowers for interest, many lacked the important ingredient of the florists’ flowers chosen for show – their ability to produce a large number of very variable off-spring. As Jane Loudon put it:

*“Florists’ flowers are those which it has been found may be grown to an extraordinary size and degree of perfection by taking great pains with their culture. ... every year many new kinds are raised, which are eagerly sought for, and sell for enormous prices. It is thus desirable that all florists’ flowers should either hybridise freely, or vary very much from seed.”*⁸⁵⁹

Writing in the middle of the nineteenth century, Loudon listed as florists’ flowers, in addition to the traditional plants, dahlias, pelargoniums, violas, calceolarias and chrysanthemums. All these became show plants, though did not always give rise to specialist shows; dahlias being a notable exception.

Different parts of the country were supposed to specialise in certain plants – so Manchester, for example, was known for the auricula and polyanthus.⁸⁶⁰ This was noted in the earlier Chapter on Plants, where it was seen that flower shows for the auricula can be dated definitely to Gorton’s advertisement of 1767, which referred to Flower Meetings in Salford and Pendleton between 1764 and 1766. Some of these first shows of the season, held in April, exhibited only auriculas, others included polyanthus. Tulip shows followed in May and Carnations were shown in July or August. The conclusion that geographical areas specialised can only be tacit: shows were not necessarily publicised. Auriculas and polyanthus may have been the flowers of choice in Manchester at one time, but pinks, ranunculus and tulips were also

controversies, would apply themselves to the cultivation of their flower, or kitchen, gardens, and to that experimental knowledge which teaches us even to improve Nature.”

⁸⁵⁸ Flower shows appear not to have included hyacinths or ranunculus or others listed in the eighteenth century as florists’ flowers. This may be because the fanciers of these plants were less likely to advertise their shows. As early as 1732 an advertisement by the seedsman William Millar, junior, in the *Caledonian Mercury* showed he stocked, among other types of florists’ flowers, eighty varieties of hyacinths and eighty varieties of polyanthus-narcissus.

⁸⁵⁹ Loudon, Jane. *The ladies' companion to the flower-garden* (1849) p.110

⁸⁶⁰ Although John Holt (*General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster*: 1795) shows there were more florists’ flowers grown. He stated that cottagers had been “*raising new flowers of the auricula, carnation, polyanthus, or pink, of the most approved qualities in their several kinds, and which, after being raised here, have been dispersed over the whole kingdom*”. p.81

grown. In 1847, "Dahl of Manchester" wrote, when discussing the cost of new varieties and the competition between the north and south of the country:

*"It is true that in many villages for miles round Manchester there are a great many poor men who are weavers, that are tulip growers, and have their exhibitions in their localities, who cannot afford to give 15l. for a Pandara, or 10l. for a Devonshire, or 5l. for a Strong's King, ... At a Tulip sale I attended the other day, I was surprised at the price that breeders sold at, not at the rate of 8l. or 10l. the hundred, but 10s., 15s., and 20s. the single root; thus from all that I have seen and heard, I consider that the Tulip growers of the north are at least on a par with the growers of the south."*⁸⁶¹

Ipswich was one town where there were not only three lots of shows – auriculas, tulips and carnations – but also, for a number of years, rival competitions. A Society of Florists was based at the Bowling Green Inn, whose landlord was Simon Jackaman. He hosted shows for auriculas, tulips and carnations from as early as 1748 until 1782⁸⁶² after which they continued under his successor James Walden.⁸⁶³ One of the members of this Club was John Rycraft who, in 1756, suffered the loss of eight auricula roots, which had been stolen from their pots. The Society offered a reward of one guinea, plus (reasonable) costs for anyone who brought the culprit to justice.⁸⁶⁴ Despite this support, Rycraft set up a rival society and by 1765 was holding his own shows at the Gardener's Arms. This seems to have given rise to some ill-feeling as by 1771 the shows at the Bowling Green were specifically excluding members of John Rycraft's society from winning prizes.⁸⁶⁵

Prizes offered at shows varied considerably. Sometimes they were cash, sometimes silverware or china, occasionally a mixture of the two or of something unusual – at least by modern standards. In Ipswich in 1763, the first prize for tulips was a China Bowl of one guinea in value and the second prize was five shillings.⁸⁶⁶ The following year in Badminton the first prize (for carnations) was a gold medal of

⁸⁶¹ The Floricultural Cabinet 1847, p.149. Despite Dahl's comments here (1847), Slater had written in 1843 that the tulip had become neglected due to the rise in popularity of the Dahlia.

⁸⁶² See, for example, the Ipswich Journal, 14 May, 1763; 23 May, 1778. Born around 1710, Jackaman died 16 May 1784, aged 74 (Ipswich Journal, 22 May, 1784).

⁸⁶³ Ipswich Journal, 26 April, 1783.

⁸⁶⁴ Ipswich Journal, 29 May, 1756. Rycraft was not the only sufferer of this type of crime. Seven years previously, in Derby, the local Society of Florists offered a reward of five guineas for anyone who similarly brought to justice "any Person or Persons, who shall be convicted of stealing or destroying any Flowers, or Pots, belonging to the Subscribers" (Derby Mercury, 28 April, 1749). In 1753 nearly forty auricula roots were stolen from Benjamin Granger of Derby (Derby Mercury, 23 February, 1753).

⁸⁶⁵ Ipswich Journal, 25 May, 1771.

⁸⁶⁶ Ipswich Journal, 14 May, 1763.

two guineas value and the second prize a silver medal gilt with gold.⁸⁶⁷ In 1767 at Lyncomb near Bath, the first prize at the auricula show was the more normal silverware and the second prize was “*to have his Ordinary and Extraordinary free*”.⁸⁶⁸ In 1768 in Ipswich (John Rycraft’s society), the first prize for tulips was a hat valued at 25s.⁸⁶⁹

Florists were collectors by nature, buying new varieties as they came to market and raising new ones from seed. Collections could become very large. In 1772, following the death of Henry Stow of Lexden in Essex, two days were set aside to auction his collection of more than six hundred auriculas, many of which he had purchased within the previous two years.⁸⁷⁰ To be sure that attendees knew what they were purchasing, the auction was arranged for a time when the auriculas were in bloom. A later auction was to be arranged for tulips, once they were blooming. In 1865 John Slater of Cheetham Hill, a well-respected florist who had exhibited, judged and written about florists’ flowers, looked back over his long life.⁸⁷¹ He recalled a Mr. Keynes telling him that he had “*pawned his watch, unknown to his father, to buy his first collection of Pinks*”, but that he, personally, had not needed (or, perhaps, been able) to go to such lengths. Slater had begun collecting his plants in 1813 and recalled Mr. Bow of Broughton – who was to become a regular exhibitor (and winner) at the Manchester Floral and Horticultural shows – becoming a pink-grower around 1825.⁸⁷² Although he started with pinks, Slater moved on to auriculas, purchasing them from Daniel Bradshaw of Prestwich. He eventually wrote extensively on tulips and also grew hyacinths. Slater dated the growing of auriculas back to 1725 in Middleton and named plants, then still in cultivation, that had been raised as far back as 1757 and 1767. Several raised around 1785 were named as being raised by Gorton, but whether this was the Thomas Gorton of 1767 fame is not known – floristry, as a hobby, was often indulged in by several members of a family.

⁸⁶⁷ Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette, 19 July, 1764.

⁸⁶⁸ Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette, 9 April, 1767.

⁸⁶⁹ Ipswich Journal, 21 May, 1768.

⁸⁷⁰ Ipswich Journal, 2 May, 1772. Stow had been displaying his auriculas for many years. In 1755 he advertised that they would be on show on 24th April and were “*likely to be as fine as ever they were, or finer, by Reason of the large Number, and so many new Sorts*” He also asked that visitors not bring dogs. The following day was the annual show at Colchester. Stow was president of the society. (Ipswich Journal, 19 April, 1755)

⁸⁷¹ At the time Slater would have been about 67. His Reminiscences of an Old Florist was published in Vol 9 of the Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, where it was reproduced from the West of Scotland Horticultural Magazine.

⁸⁷² For John Loudon’s comments on Mr. Bow’s garden, see Chapter Four.

By the 1820s Manchester was taking a leading role among the nation's florists. The annual publication, known colloquially as The Flower Book, but originally as An account of the different flower shews, held in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, &c. for the year ... and subsequently as An Account of the different Floral and Horticultural Exhibitions held in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, and other Parts of the Kingdom, in the Year ... " was a Manchester production.⁸⁷³ In 1826 it was produced by John Winstanley, a bookbinder, and Joseph Clegg, an inn-keeper – whose names can be found as prize-winners at flower shows – and contained information about more than two hundred horticultural societies, although, according to the review in The Gardeners' Magazine, only the traditional meetings for auriculas and polyanthus (April), tulips (May), ranunculuses (beginning of June), pinks (end of June) and carnations (July) were included.

The change of title was the result of the rise of the more generic floral and horticultural societies which, though florists' flowers still took a leading part, encompassed a much wider range of plants including fruit and vegetables. A review in The Gardeners' Magazine was thoughtful: did this change mean that growers were becoming more knowledgeable?

*"The constant attention and great nicety required to bring florists' flowers to perfection are excellent things for engrossing the whole of the leisure time of a labourer or a tradesman of very limited reading, and filling it up in an innocent manner: but, as this labourer or tradesman becomes more generally enlightened, his taste will take a wider range, and he will not only desire to know something of other plants besides florists' flowers, but to study other subjects besides botany and gardening; to engage in other pursuits, and to possess other things."*⁸⁷⁴

Loudon was only repeating the often used claim that, given the chance, the lower orders could and would take on the tastes and mores of the middle classes. What

⁸⁷³ The change of title happened sometime between 1826 and 1830 as reviews in The Gardeners' Magazine have the older title for 1826 and the newer title in 1830. The Catalogue entry at RHS Lindley Library for one of only two editions they have reads "An account of the different flower shews, held in Lancashire, Cheshire, Yorkshire, &c. for the year 1821: consisting of auriculas, polyanthuses, tulips, ranunculuses, star pinks, and carnations. To which is added, a statement, exhibiting at one view the number of prizes won by each sort of flowers, at the several meetings." In that year it ran to 160 pages. Editions are hard to find. In addition to the Lindley Library's copies of 1821 and 1826, the John Innes Centre Library holds an 1820 edition.

⁸⁷⁴ Review of both the Flower Book and Gooseberry Book in The Gardener's Magazine, 1831, p. 213.

was in fact happening was that the middle classes were attempting to take control of flower shows (a move which is discussed in more detail below).

Despite the growth of the generic floral and horticultural show, there continued to be a range of small shows, usually taking place at a public house. The traditional flowers continued to be shown – there was a tulip show at the Three Pigeons, Macclesfield in 1835;⁸⁷⁵ a pink show at the Rising Sun, Rycroft (Ashton) in 1844⁸⁷⁶ and another at the Three Swans, Macclesfield in 1848⁸⁷⁷ – but newer ones began to take a lead. In 1832 there was a Dahlia show at the Floral Gardens in Hulme, then still in the hands of John Platford.⁸⁷⁸ The overall winner was the nurseryman William Skirving of Liverpool, who would provide some of the plants for the public parks more than a decade later. In 1848 there were Geranium Shows at the Queen’s Arms Inn in Macclesfield and (on the same day) at the Commercial Inn, Buxton Road. The newspaper report demonstrates that flowers were popular and had an economic importance. The show

*“... received a great number of visitors, and was very much appreciated by the public, which fact is an undeniable proof of the artistic knowledge derivable from the variegated tints always found in abundance at these exhibitions, and are so essential to those engaged in the designing branches of the silk manufactures.”*⁸⁷⁹

Shows widened in their scope however. While there continued to be the specialist florists’ shows of pinks, auriculas, tulips and the new dahlias and geraniums, reports of other types of specialist show can be found taking place in public houses. In 1831, for example, there was an Apple Show in Bolton.⁸⁸⁰ In 1848 the sixteenth annual Rhubarb Show was held at the Bee Hive in Macclesfield.⁸⁸¹ The same year saw shows for peas and beans at The Jolly Carter in Bury,⁸⁸² for celery at the Spread Eagle Inn in Ashton-under-Lyne⁸⁸³ and potatoes at the Church Inn, Higher Hurst.⁸⁸⁴ There were also small-scale horticultural shows covering flowers, fruit and vegetables at the same type of venue – in 1835 the Saddleworth Floral and Horticultural Society held their

⁸⁷⁵ Manchester Times, 6 June, 1835.

⁸⁷⁶ Manchester Times, 20 July, 1844.

⁸⁷⁷ Manchester Times, 8 July, 1848.

⁸⁷⁸ Manchester Times, 15 September, 1832.

⁸⁷⁹ Manchester Times, 24 June, 1848.

⁸⁸⁰ Manchester Times, 1 October, 1831.

⁸⁸¹ Manchester Times, 24 June, 1848.

⁸⁸² Manchester Examiner, 25 July, 1848.

⁸⁸³ Manchester Examiner, 26 September, 1848.

⁸⁸⁴ Manchester Times, 21 October, 1848.

show at the King's Head in Dobcross⁸⁸⁵ and in 1844 the Whitefield Horticultural Show was held at the Church Inn (though no flowers were shown, only fruit and vegetables).⁸⁸⁶

The production of the annual Manchester publication covering the flower shows seems to have stopped, but there were newer publications to take its place, for example The Midland Florist, which began in 1847. This was much more than a list of shows, however, being mostly a series of articles by knowledgeable growers such as John Slater of Cheetham Hill. It also carried reports of flower shows listing winners and their winning plants, but was reliant on show organisers sending in this information. The importance of Lancashire as a county of florists – or at least of florists who wished to share information – is notable. Of the sixty-two reports included in the first year of publication, nearly a third were from Lancashire or within the Greater Manchester area. The majority of these were for tulip shows, reflecting Dahl's comments about the popularity of this flower. The venue for shows was not always provided, but of those that were, many were public houses – the Blue Pig, Audenshaw, the Botanical Tavern, Ashton-under-Lyne, the Commercial Inn Denton and the King's Head, Barton were all mentioned.⁸⁸⁷ However, not all shows sent information to the editor.

In the same year (and including only those that could be found in a quick search of Manchester newspapers online) there were three shows at the Botanic Gardens, two at Belle Vue, a further two at Ashton, one each at Rochdale, Todmorden, Upholland and Warrington, a carnation show at Bury, a dahlia show at Denton, an apple show at Taunton near Ashton and a potato show at Mossley.⁸⁸⁸

In May 1850 there were two Great Northern Tulip Shows (of which more below), the Great North Cheshire Tulip Show at the Sportsman Inn, in Hyde and a Grand Tulip Show at the Grapes Inn, Ashton. Tulips also featured heavily at the Ashton-under-Lyne and Oldham Floral and Horticultural Shows.

⁸⁸⁵ Manchester Times, 19 September, 1835.

⁸⁸⁶ Manchester Times, 12 October, 1844.

⁸⁸⁷ Not all flower shows sent their information to the Midland Florist.

⁸⁸⁸ The potato show was written about at length. It had come about because the curate of the village had been concerned about the number of men out of work. He had raised subscriptions and £19 was given in prize money. There were 44 competitors and seven prizes; (Manchester Courier, 16 October, 1847).

Horticultural shows

Missing from the 1847 lists of shows in public houses were any situated in Manchester itself. In the town, the focus was on the wider horticultural shows, of which there were many – particularly in the 1830s, when, for a while, the rival bodies the Manchester Floral and Horticultural and the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Societies were both active and each holding four shows a year. Indeed, in 1836 the Floral Society held a fifth show to raise money for the Music Festival held that year. These shows were put on at venues such as the Exchange Dining Room, the York Building in Salford, the Town Halls of both Salford and Manchester.

The difference between the small local shows and the more flamboyant floral and horticultural shows – societies sprang up in almost every town⁸⁸⁹ – was partly a matter of class, or at least economics, which ultimately came to the same thing. During the eighteenth century florists' feasts or meetings were concentrated on keen growers, whatever their background – advertisements were often aimed at "*gentlemen florists*".⁸⁹⁰ The reports of such meetings in the nineteenth century show that "*gentlemen*" were absent from many, though not all. Keen florists among the middle-classes continued to exhibit at the specialist shows,⁸⁹¹ but the generic shows added horticulture to floriculture, with fruit and vegetables sometimes taking as much or greater importance than both the florists' flowers and the new exotics, many of which required the specialised care of the hot-house, the cost of which ensured that the middle-classes began to take precedence. Tensions between the classes could be identified, particularly in the rival societies which existed in Manchester.

The Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society was formed in 1824.

"Considering how much the taste for plants and flowers prevails among us, and how

⁸⁸⁹ In 1838 John Loudon listed, (in the *Gardeners' Magazine*), Botanical, Horticultural and Floricultural Societies. The list only included those reported on in that year, but there were around 180, nearly all in England and Scotland. There would have been a great many more Shows which did not get reported.

⁸⁹⁰ See, for example, the advert in the *Derby Mercury*, 19 May 1780. This had the heading "*Gentlemen Florists*", but the text referred to "*the Friendly Society of Gentlemen Florists and Gardeners*". This was a tulip show and there were 4 prizes, two each for the best white striped and best yellow striped.

⁸⁹¹ The report of the Tulip show held at Vauxhall Gardens in 1837 (*Manchester Times*, 10 June, 1837) lists the most successful prizewinners as "*R. Dixon, John Thorniley, John Morris, John Holt, and Samuel Wood, Esqrs*" while other prizes went to "*Messrs. Richardson, Ogden, Dean, Fletcher, Slater, Bird, and others*". Where used in the same report, these different terms of "*Esq*" and "*Mr*", provide a useful understanding of the relative social standing of exhibitors.

many really fine specimens of the better sorts of both are to be found in the collections in the neighbourhood, it is a matter of surprise that a society like the present was not instigated before" wrote the Manchester Courier reporting on the first show of 1825.⁸⁹² The Society had very middle-class attachments – its patrons were the Earl of Wilton and Thomas J. Trafford, of Trafford Park; its President was Rev. John Clowes and the Vice-Presidents were William Hulton of Hulton and Richard Potter of Smedley Hall. The Committee included Charles White, G.R. Chappell and William Bow – all very keen middle-class plantsmen – but also John Bridgford and James Faulkner who were nurserymen. The purpose of the Society "to encourage the growth of flowers, plants, fruits" was to be achieved by offering prizes to the growers of flowers "principally Auriculas, Tulips, and Carnations, Stove, Green-house Herbaceous, and other Plants" which would be publicly exhibited and judged by competent people. However, a secondary purpose was to place the shows in the social calendar by making them attractive to "Ladies and the Public, as well as the Florist and Horticulturist".⁸⁹³ This was a time when the town was beginning to develop its cultural life, for a long time limited to the Literary and Philosophical Society and the various libraries.

The annual subscription to the Floral and Horticultural Society was a relatively modest ten shillings, but this may have made the society insufficiently exclusive for some members, as in 1827 it was proposed to "consider the propriety of advancing the subscription to one guinea".⁸⁹⁴ The proposal failed: the lowest subscription rate continued to be ten shillings, though over the years the number of tickets this entitled the subscriber to dropped from four to one. Non-subscribers were allowed to show, but on payment of five shillings each time and they were barred from the premier prizes. The Society was very well supported, with numbers of subscribers quickly exceeding five hundred.⁸⁹⁵ The focus was on florists' flowers, the first meeting in 1825 offering a total of forty-four prizes for tulips ranging from 5s up to a silver cup value ten guineas (in all £32 15s of which £19 2s was in cash prizes). However, there

⁸⁹² Manchester Courier, 28 May, 1825.

⁸⁹³ The Manchester Courier, 5 February 1825

⁸⁹⁴ The general meeting to receive the Treasurer's report and to consider the suggestion was announced in the Manchester Courier, 10 February 1827. The meeting took place on 14 February and the report (in the form of an advertisement) appeared the following Saturday (17 February). There was no information as to the discussion, it simply reported the resolutions passed which included: "That a donation of five guineas or an annual subscription of Ten Shillings, constitute the Donor or Subscriber a Member of the Society..."

⁸⁹⁵ The Manchester Courier, 21 April, 1827.

were also prizes for those who could afford hot-houses and greenhouses – four prizes for stove plants; four for geraniums (pelargoniums); four for other greenhouse plants – and also four for hardy herbaceous plants. Also offered were two prizes each for pineapples and grapes and one each for cucumbers, cauliflowers, mushrooms and asparagus. In all, for these non-tulip plants, there were twenty-four prizes, totalling £10 4s 6d. The importance still at that point attached to florists' flowers can be seen in that although they accounted for 65% of the prizes, they took 76% of the prize value.⁸⁹⁶

The show was held in the Exchange dining-room and the display was a little disappointing as hot weather had played havoc with the tulips.⁸⁹⁷ Nevertheless it attracted a good number of people, the room remaining crowded throughout the four hours it was open to the public. In the event there were no grapes, cauliflowers or asparagus, but there was a prize for melons. In all sixty-one prizes were awarded, of which thirty went to officers or members of the committee. Although the split in numbers was almost 50/50, when it came to prize money, the officials of the Society took two-thirds, leaving open the question as to whether this was favouritism or whether it was the most successful horticulturists in the towns who had become officers or committee members.

The reports of the Floral and Horticultural Shows⁸⁹⁸ are useful in that they provide a much greater appreciation of the range of plants that were being grown by enthusiasts in the area. At this particular show there was, for example, both the low-growing alpine *Saponaria ocymoides* (grown by John Bridgford) and the (non-edible) scarlet banana, *Musa coccinea* which usually grows to about six feet (Mr. Darbyshire of Greenheys). There were also a number of Ericas, including *E. Tubiflora*; *E. Vestita* and *E. Vestita Coccinea*. Ericas continued to be an important part of flower shows,

⁸⁹⁶ Manchester Courier, 30 April, 1825.

⁸⁹⁷ Manchester Courier, 28 May, 1825: "excessive heat immediately succeeding a little rain produced such a scorching of the extremities of the petals". The state of the weather was mentioned in many reports. Either the season had been too hot or too cold or too stormy or the day of the show was good weather, which encouraged visitors, or bad, which discouraged them.

⁸⁹⁸ These were generally (though not always) reported in full in the local newspapers. Those in the Manchester Times have been considered in detail and also those in the Manchester Courier for the years before the Times began publishing. Reports also appeared in The Gardener's Magazine, e.g. in 1828 the report from the Manchester Herald, was reproduced; in 1829 that from the Manchester Gazette; in 1830, the Country Times, The Gardener's Magazine did not always give a source and it is possible that those reports had been submitted by the Society direct.

taking numerous prizes. Unfortunately reports frequently referred to them simply by their generic and not always by their specific name. The popularity of Ericas – which had been introduced by Francis Masson from South Africa – was high. One reason was that there were so many to choose from; another that ericas could be found in flower in every month of the year.⁸⁹⁹ However, they were not completely hardy, so were grown by the wealthier members of the Floral and Horticultural Society. William Bow of Broughton and Mrs Hobson of Hope, one of the few female prizewinners, were particularly successful with these plants.⁹⁰⁰

The relative esteem in which florists' flowers were held by the Society is clear from the prizes offered. At the second meeting – for ranunculuses, pinks and roses, (also stove, green-house and herbaceous plants and fruit) – the prizes were much lower than for the tulips – the highest awarded being only one guinea (cash) as compared to the cup worth ten guineas for tulips.⁹⁰¹ Of the three, the ranunculus attracted the highest number of prizes and the highest amount of prize-money, followed by roses and then pinks. To win the first prize for ranunculus or roses, it was necessary to show six varieties, but for pinks, only three and the prize money reflected this (one guinea for ranunculus or rose; half a guinea for pinks). However, carnations were held at the same level of esteem as tulips – the top prize at the third meeting being the same as at the first: a silver cup worth ten guineas. Bizarres (which had two colours on a white ground) were held in higher esteem than flakes (a pure white ground with distinctive markings in just one colour) and flakes were held higher than picotees (white or yellow, with a coloured edge).

The Society – at one time with as many as six hundred subscribers⁹⁰² was, by 1837 down to three hundred and fifty-two, still a high number.⁹⁰³ It seemed to be in good health, with, in 1838, a committee of forty-four – half of whom were "gentlemen", the other half including John Slater, James Faulkner, William Orr and William Lodge, all florists and nurserymen and James Platford, of the Flora Gardens in

⁸⁹⁹ Loudon listed out those ericas in flower each month at the Tooting Nursery of Messrs. Rollison. In all, they stocked 285 species and varieties. The same year, the catalogue of Professor George Dunbar of Edinburgh, listed 350. (*The Gardeners' Magazine* 1826)

⁹⁰⁰ In 1830, Bow won twelve prizes in one show for ericas. (*The Gardener's Magazine*, 1830, p.742).

⁹⁰¹ *Manchester Courier*, 18 June, 1825.

⁹⁰² *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction*, 1832, p.129.

⁹⁰³ *Manchester Times*, 11 March, 1837.

Hulme.⁹⁰⁴ John Platford was the Secretary and at the beginning of March 1839 he placed an advertisement calling for a general meeting, but that seems to have been when the Society folded as references to it disappear from the pages of the newspapers from that point.⁹⁰⁵ One of the difficulties it faced was the fact that there was a similar society. Very early on in its life, the idea of a Botanic Garden had been mooted,⁹⁰⁶ but rather than undertake this itself, a rival society was formed. In 1827 the Botanic and Horticultural Society was set up – the Botanic Gardens at Old Trafford opened in 1831 – and for twelve years the two Societies ran side by side, with some people being members of both.⁹⁰⁷ The Botanic Society also held flower shows so that, as mentioned above, there were sometimes eight shows a year competing for exhibitors and visitors.

The difference between the two societies was clear in the range of plants exhibited: the Botanical and Horticultural Society considered itself superior to the Floral and Horticultural Society. In 1832, (as described in an earlier chapter) an indication of how this manifested itself was given by a correspondent to the Manchester Times. He had heard of the “*fame of the Manchester Floral and Horticultural meetings*” and had travelled a long way to visit the Botanical and Horticultural Society exhibition only to be disappointed.

“Well knowing the great cotton metropolis stood pre-eminent for the fancy or florist flowers, I was struck with the greatest surprise to find that there was neither a pink, a rose, or ranunculus exhibited.”

A bystander explained to him that this was just an off-shoot of the original society and its

“... views were so lofty, aristocratic and, I had nearly said, exotic, that a pink, a rose, or ranunculus was beneath their notice– being the hobby only of the canaille – the unwashed artisan, and tired mechanic – and that they could not

⁹⁰⁴ Manchester Times, 24 March, 1838.

⁹⁰⁵ The Botanical and Horticultural Society, in their advertisement for their first exhibition for the year 1839, stated: “*Cottagers, whose rental does not exceed ten pounds per annum, will be allowed to exhibit specimens of their own growth, free of any charge for admission*”. It is likely that this was in response to the failure of the Floral and Horticultural Society. (Manchester Times, 13 April, 1839)

⁹⁰⁶ It is mentioned in the report of the May flower show in 1825 (Manchester Courier, 28 May, 1825).

⁹⁰⁷ Ann Brooks (thesis: A Veritable Eden) compared the 1827 Patrons, officers and committee members of the Botanic Society and The Floral and Horticultural Society. Of the 29 names listed for the Floral Society, 15 were also members of the Botanic Society.

*admit three of nature's loveliest productions for fear of being eclipsed by beings of this unfortunate class."*⁹⁰⁸

Unfortunately, 1832 was a difficult year for the original society. Its funds had been depleted by the offering of silver medals to those who had won most prizes the previous year; the third meeting of the year had been cancelled as a result and then the date of the fourth had to be changed. *"My informant thinks this once valuable society is tottering to almost irremediable ruin"* wrote the correspondent. Surviving until 1839 was perhaps a considerable feat under the circumstances.

The complaint of the correspondent was a reasonable one. Floriculture had a long history. It had been practised in the region for a century at least, but for a Manchester middle-class beginning to develop a distinct persona, it had the fatal flaw of being non-exclusive. This aim of exclusivity was not immediately apparent in the Address to the Inhabitants of Manchester and the Neighbourhood on the formation of a Botanical and Horticultural Garden which was published in the newspapers in August 1827, which sang the praises of the working-class botanist. The study of botany –

"... Far from being confined to the higher orders of society, ... has found its most disinterested admirers in the lowest walks of life... to the skill and perseverance of the cottager we are confessedly indebted for the improved cultivation of many plants and fruits"

The speaker continued:

*"... whilst some knowledge of the principles of Horticulture is almost universal, and the inferior subjects of attention are readily procured, it is obvious that the difficulty and expense which attend the possession of plants of rare, and more particularly of foreign growth, form a natural and insurmountable obstruction to the researches of many lovers of the science. In every pursuit, the enterprise of individuals is sensibly affected by an insufficiency of means; ... the ardour of the Botanist is damped, when he is no longer able to indulge his curiosity, and is denied the opportunities of gratifying his taste."*⁹⁰⁹

Despite these apparently inclusive comments – for the implication could only have been that a Botanic Garden would be available to the poor – the Botanical and Horticultural Society, as shown in an earlier chapter, was experienced by most people as very exclusive. Indeed, its high membership rates set at that very meeting,

⁹⁰⁸ Manchester Times, 7 July, 1872. The correspondent signed himself *"An Uninterested Observer"*.

⁹⁰⁹ Manchester Courier, 4 August, 1827.

immediately excluded the cottager. If we use the multiplication figure of sixty to give an idea of what it would be in today's terms (as used in the Public Parks chapter), then the cost was either an initial payment of £1,500 and an annual fee of £63 or, alternatively, an initial payment of £600 and an annual payment of £126.

There were a number of people of position in the town who continued to subscribe to both societies and in 1838 the Floral and Horticultural Society seemed to be in good health. It had six noble patrons: four local earls – Ducie, Derby, Wilton and Stamford and Warrington – plus Lord Francis Egerton (who would become Earl of Ellesmere in 1846) and Lord Suffield. Rev. John Clowes was President and there were eight vice-presidents, including local gentry Sir Oswald Mosley, T. J. Trafford and Benjamin Heywood. Among the Committee were leading middle-class horticulturists. So why did it fail so suddenly? The answer is almost certainly: the State of Trade. The town was going through a lengthy recession (as discussed with regard to the Zoological Gardens). The problem was probably not among the middle-class members: the subscription rates were relatively modest and they continued to be members of the Botanical and Horticultural Society. It was almost certainly the poorer members who were unable to manage the ten shilling subscription.⁹¹⁰ Without this section of the membership it was only sensible for the middle-class members to amalgamate the society with the Botanical and Horticultural Society.

It was probably not a true amalgamation.⁹¹¹ However, this was the term used in an obituary of John Shelmerdine in 1847. Shelmerdine was a solicitor, living in Mount Pleasant, Altrincham. He was also a true florist; his "*enthusiasm for floriculture in all its varied forms ... gained for him the admiration and esteem of a large portion of the florists of the north*". In 1840 it was reported that he had raised seventy distinct varieties of tulip ("*his favourite flower*") from a single sowing of a pod taken from the variety Louis XVI.⁹¹² Shelmerdine inaugurated the Altrincham Floral and Horticultural Society, which became the society of choice of Manchester

⁹¹⁰ In October 1838 the report of the Accounts Committee of the Manchester Police Commissioners demonstrated this. Not only had the Police Rate been increased, so had the numbers unable to pay. Of 7,261 cases of non-payment inquired into by the inspector, a massive 77% had to be excused payment on the grounds of poverty. Manchester Courier, 3 November, 1838.

⁹¹¹ There is no record of such – see Brooks, A Veritable Eden.

⁹¹² The Floricultural Cabinet and Florists' Magazine, 1840 p. 69.

florists, supposedly helped by antagonism to the amalgamation with the Botanical and Horticultural Society, of which the obituary writer was clearly not a fan:

*"It is a well known fact, that the [Botanical and Horticultural] society, with all its splendour, wealth, and other means attached, has never been popular; nor has it ever extended a fostering influence to horticultural and floricultural science, the ostensible object for which it was established."*⁹¹³

Despite these negative comments, the Botanical and Horticultural Society held four exhibitions each year. Early exhibitions may have deliberately avoided the showing of florists' flowers, but their exclusion did not last, albeit the shows may have relegated them to a lesser position within the whole. In 1834, the show of tulips was less than impressive and the Society came in for some very harsh criticism, not only for that, but for general ignorance, bad management, and cronyism:

*"... we are sorry to observe that the exhibition of tulips was very indifferent, and painfully contrasted itself with the gorgeous display held there in previous years. Whence does this failure arise? Can it be that the taste for this truly magnificent flower has declined? or is it to be attributed to the glaring mismanagement of the committee – the profound ignorance, or the gross partiality of the should-be judges on these occasions. To these united causes may the Manchester societies attribute their declension; and if the committee, with a mulish stupidity, persevere in patronising the whims and fancies of one or two antiquated florists, they may soon write over their doors, as a monument of their folly, "Ichabod (thy glory is departed)". Our remarks may appear somewhat harsh and severe, but they are less so than the occasion requires. It is the custom here to exhibit tulips in pans consisting of a feathered and flamed flower in each class, and that in the pan which took the premier prize was placed a half-grown rose for a byblomen of a marvellously beautiful shape, something like a pyramid, and as the commonalty here observe with a bottom as "clear as mud"; a feathered bizarre, about the size of my grandmother's thimble, and into which it would have been difficult to place a sixpence. Greater partiality was never seen, and we are assured, if so homely a comparison may be allowed, that the parties knew as little of the merits of a tulip as a brewer's horse! The judges adjudicated upon their own plants, one of which happened to be a verbascum (and consequently took a prize), and on its owner being asked its habits, answered, with equal ignorance and simplicity, that it was a "British plant – a native of Russia – and came from Behring's Straits". Such are the men which this society, in the exercise of their consummate wisdom, appointed as censors – men too who are acquainted pretty nearly with each individual fruit, flower, or vegetable, or rather the parties to whom they belong, linked either by ties of servitude, neighbourhood, or private friendship; and is it likely that such a state of things can long exist?"*⁹¹⁴

⁹¹³ *The Midland Florist*, 1847, p.162-3.

⁹¹⁴ *The Royal Lady's Magazine and Florists' Register*, June 1834, p.218. In May, the journal had been just as scathing: "...an unbecoming and unbending spirit of haughtiness on the part

Perhaps for these reasons, prize-winners whose names can be found at many Floral and Horticultural Shows (and not just the Manchester ones – there were societies at Oldham, Ashton, Bury, Bolton, etc), can rarely be found in the reports of the Botanical and Horticultural Society Shows. Mr. Colonel Lee,⁹¹⁵ a weaver from Rochdale, was a regular winner at both Manchester and Oldham, always for florists' flowers – auriculas, polyanthus, carnations and picotees – but was a rare winner at the Old Trafford Botanic Gardens.⁹¹⁶

Throughout the 1840s there may not have been a Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society, but that was not the end of floral and horticultural shows other than those held at the Botanic Gardens. Several were held at the Zoological Gardens before their demise and, certainly from 1847, John Jennison had been holding two or more flower shows a year at Belle Vue.⁹¹⁷ Despite this, in 1850 a letter appeared in the press from a one-time member of the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society. "I well remember their splendour and the pleasure they gave to all" he wrote, continuing that, not being able to "afford to subscribe to the Botanic Gardens" he was deprived of the pleasure of visiting flower shows.⁹¹⁸ In addition to the shows at Belle Vue, there were shows in all the surrounding towns, and, possibly – because there was a Manchester Amateur Tulip Society – within the town as well.⁹¹⁹ Indeed,

of several influential members, whose fancied importance could no longer brook that the humble cottager's superior skill and management in the cultivation of florist's flowers should obtain for him the highest prizes, whilst the "rich man" was literally "sent empty away"." (p.182).

⁹¹⁵ Reporting on the Rochdale Floral and Horticultural Show, the Manchester Times, 8 September, 1855, explained that the best carnations were exhibited by "Col. Lee, who, it should be stated is not a military man, but a working man, and a first-rate florist". Lee had been exhibiting, winning prizes, and being recorded in the papers, for three decades before it was felt necessary to give this explanation, perhaps because he was here recorded as Col. Lee and not Mr. Colonel Lee. In 1847 Lee had been the Judge at the Todmorden Floral and Horticultural Society exhibition on 5 June (Midland Florist, 1847, p.329).

⁹¹⁶ There are two possible conclusions. The first is that florists tended not to exhibit at the Botanical shows, the second that they did exhibit but were unsuccessful.

⁹¹⁷ In 1847, the shows were on 25 June: "All amateurs, cottagers, gentlemen's gardeners, nurserymen, and dealers to exhibit free of charge. Specimens for exhibition or competition forwarded from any part of the country, addressed to J. JENNISON, the proprietor, with instructions will be duly attended to" (Manchester Times, 18 June, 1847); 18 August, (changed from 25) for "Carnations, Piccottees, Dahlias, &c. &c." (Manchester Courier, 31 July, 1847). There were three shows in 1848 (Manchester Times, 28 August, 1848) and in 1849 also there were "Three flower shows [to] be held at stated intervals during the season, the first of which will take place on Friday, May 25th" (Manchester Times, 7 April, 1849).

⁹¹⁸ Manchester Times, 6 March, 1850.

⁹¹⁹ Although the name 'Manchester' seems to have been used in the sense of the wider geographical area, rather than simply referring to the town. There was a Lancashire Tulip Society which, in 1834, held an organising meeting at the Apple Tree, Fennel Street and set

the nurseryman T D Watkinson had underwritten a "*Grand Floral and Horticultural Exhibition in aid of the Infirmary*" which was held at the Town Hall in August 1845. It was very successful in everything except the numbers of paying visitors; indeed the footfall was so low, that rather than being able to donate the surplus to the Infirmary, Watkinson was left out of pocket.⁹²⁰

The letter in 1850 (could it have been a 'plant' ?) gave John Slater the opportunity to reply. It was a disgrace, he said, that Manchester should not have a show (perhaps he considered Old Trafford and Belle Vue to be outside the town). That being so, he announced, a few individuals were attempting to resuscitate the old Society and planned to put on a show in May to test the market. The true story behind this seems to have been a disagreement between members of the Manchester Amateur Tulip Society. The North of England Tulip Show was held annually in a different town each year – the florists of that town taking responsibility for its organisation. In 1849 it had been at York and there had been financial difficulties – expenditure exceeded income.⁹²¹ The 1850 show was scheduled to be held in Manchester and there was a falling out, apparently on the issue of how much to charge. One section wanted to increase the subscription to 10s. – twice what it had been in York – in order to avoid financial problems. The other section (including John Slater) wanted to keep the subscription to five shillings, to avoid out-charging young growers.⁹²²

The arguments, for and against, were played out within the columns of The Midland Florist, with Richard Dixon, (Honorary Secretary to the Manchester Amateur

the date for the show as 19 May in "*some suitable room in Manchester*" (Manchester Courier, 15 February, 1834). No report of the show has been found.

⁹²⁰ Manchester Courier, 16 August 1845 and 5 May, 1847. In this latter year it had been suggested that a flower show be held to raise funds for the Soup Kitchen, but the spectre of the 1845 show was raised against the notion.

⁹²¹ Manchester Courier, 1 June, 1850: the Society "...held its meeting last year in the Guildhall, at York. The entrance fee for membership was 5s., and the prices for admission to the room those usually charged; but when the committee came to balance accounts, they found the receipts were below the expenditure, and they had to make up the difference by subscription among themselves."

⁹²² Midland Florist, 1850 p.40-42 and p.76-77. Dixon began by referring to a leaflet put out by Slater and friends: "*I shall make no comment on their professed sympathy with the young amateurs and cottagers; nor on the scheme which proposes to separate the large from the small growers, or, as they elegantly express it, the giants from the dwarfs; nor yet on those equitable principles which secure prizes to a certain portion of the exhibitors exclusively; nor on the cups and class-money which they expect to raise; nor on that pharisaical charity towards Manchester, which says one thing and means another; nor on that envy, which, like the jaundiced eye, sees everything through an improper medium*".

Tulip Society)⁹²³ responding to a circular which had been put out by a group of growers meeting at Denton. Dixon may be described as 'incandescent with rage': his letter fairly burns on the page –

*"It has also been stated that the opposition has its origin in our having deviated from the principles acted on at Wakefield, York, &c. though it must be apparent to every sensible man that that is not the true cause. The same breath which censures us and professes an adherence to the rules and regulations at York, requests the nurserymen to aid them with money to convert the tulip show into an horticultural display of plants, &c. also. Admirable consistency!"*⁹²⁴

Slater replied within the same publication, though his letter was reduced to only half the length of Dixon's. The editor, Mr. J. F. Wood, who would be one of the judges at the opposition show (and would also attend the 'official' show), had obviously been following the conflict and his editing may have removed some particularly acrimonious comments:

*"On the principle of hearing both sides, and to avoid the charge of partiality, which has been more than once hinted at, we insert the above reply, observing, that we deeply regret the difference which has arisen amongst the florists of Lancashire. Mr. Slater will perceive that we have been obliged to prune the communication; and if that pruning will be the means of producing a more abundant crop of unity, we shall be glad. We shall now, however, avoid all further discussion on the matter, and hope to have a more pleasant task in reporting on the flowers which may be exhibited."*⁹²⁵

The result was that, confusingly, there were two Great Northern Tulip Shows held in Manchester at the end of May 1850: the 'true' show at Belle Vue on Wednesday the 29th May and the 'opposition' show the previous day in the Corn Exchange in Manchester.⁹²⁶ The first was indeed a wider horticultural show as John Slater had hoped for. In addition to more than 100 prizes for tulips, there was a range of other prizes: for stove; greenhouse and ornamental plants; orchids; ericas; hardy plants

⁹²³ Dixon had also been Chairman of the Manchester Floral and Horticultural Society. (*Manchester Times*, 11 March, 1837.)

⁹²⁴ *The Midland Florist*, 1850, p.40-42.

⁹²⁵ *ibid*, p.77. Slater, of course, was a contributor to the magazine.

⁹²⁶ *The Midland Florist* reported on both shows (1850 – p.195-201 and 223-6), although it recorded only the prizes awarded for tulips at the "alternative" show. A full report of all prizes appeared in the *Manchester Courier*, 1 June 1850. This stated that the prizes for tulips were worth £50 (there were 103 prize-winners listed) and for other plants £30 (117 prizes). The show was not a financial success: "but in respect to attendance the experiment was a failure, and instead of having a surplus to hand over to the funds of the Juvenile School of Refuge and Night Asylum, as intended, after the expenses were paid, we fear they will have to sustain a considerable loss individually".

and the relatively new florists' flowers of calceolarias, cinerarias and fuchsias, plus pansies, roses, verbenas and a range of fruit and vegetables. Prize-winners came from as far as Liverpool and Nottingham, with a number from places in Derbyshire. Some won prizes at both shows. The Rev. S. Creswell of Derby took the eleventh prize for his 'Queen Katherine' at the Corn Exchange, but, for the same plant, won ninth place at Belle Vue. For his 'Lady Wilmott' the situation was reversed: sixth place and then ninth place. For his 'Violet Wallers' Mr. Ackerley of Altrincham took the third position on the first day and second place on the second. That tulip was a flamed bybloemen and in that section 'Queen Charlotte' took first place on both days, though shown by different people, probably because Mr. Prescott only attended at the Corn Exchange and Mr. Hardman only at Belle Vue. A Mr. Heap of Royton not only took prizes at each of these shows but the following day did the same at the Oldham show.⁹²⁷ The way the winners were presented was different in the Midland Florist and in the Manchester Courier. In the former, the plants were more important and their names preceded the names of the exhibitors. In the latter, this was reversed.⁹²⁸

Having two shows on successive days, each calling themselves the Great Northern Tulip Show, was a rather unusual outcome to a clash of ideas but demonstrates the tensions that existed not only between the Floral and Botanic Societies, but within the Floral community as well.⁹²⁹ Cost was a significant cause, with people such as John Slater consistently pushing for the florists to reach out to the young and the poor. The number of blooms to be shown was another factor, related to this. Slater's show allowed for single blooms to be exhibited. He kept the charges as low as possible: that for showing tulips, orchids, stove, greenhouse or

⁹²⁷ There were a number of apparently different people with the same name, so that it can be difficult to know who the winners actually were. James Heap of Sandbach was one of the Vice-Presidents for the opposition show. This may have been James Goolden Heap, Esq. At the same show, another winner was John Heap of Royton, and at Oldham both John Heap and James Heap won prizes. The report of the opposition show in The Manchester Courier showed John Slater winning nine prizes, though no firsts.

⁹²⁸ Comparison is between the reports in the Manchester Courier of 1 June, 1850 and in the Midland Florist (1850), p. 223-6.

⁹²⁹ There were also tensions and arguments between the southern and the northern florists. "A *Southern Florist*" wrote to the Midland Florist, on its first publication, complaining about the language used by northern florists: "*we hope we are not fastidious, but we do feel objections to certain phrases used by the northern florists*". The Editor responded that he was pleased to receive the correspondence, but that the complaints were "*of no greater magnitude than a few provincialisms*". He continued: "*It may so happen that the terms used by southern florists may be as ambiguous to us; but at all events, we shall be but too happy, to hear of their new flowers, modes of cultivation, &c., &c., even if they are shrouded in a queer word or two...*" (Midland Florist, 1847, p.45-6).

other such plants was 5s, but pansies could be shown for just 1s 6d., fruit and vegetables 2s 6d, and rhubarb 1s. Anyone paying five shillings to show plants could enter fruit and vegetables for just one shilling. Entry to the show for visitors was 2s 6d or 1s after four o'clock.⁹³⁰

So, by 1850, and despite Slater's comments, flower shows were proliferating in the region. In the final week of May that year, there were, in addition to the Tulip and Horticultural Show at the Corn Exchange in Manchester, mixed shows at Blackburn, Ashton-under-Lyne and Oldham. In addition to the Tulip show at Belle Vue, there were the Grand Tulip Show and the Great North Cheshire Tulip Show mentioned in the earlier section. These were the shows that were advertised or reported on in the Manchester Times on the two Saturdays, the 1st and 8th of June. The Botanical and Horticultural Society had held its first show of the year exactly two weeks before the Corn Exchange Show. There had been no traditional florists' flowers, but there were a number of the newer ones – petunias, verbenas, fuchsias, calceolarias and cinerarias were all on show alongside orchids, ericas and a variety of fruit and vegetables. There were twelve names given as prizewinners in the report of the show and despite the antagonism that was supposed to exist within the horticultural community, eight of these can be found as winning prizes at the Corn Exchange show. In all the sections other than tulips they took 97 of 117 prizes. Their names are listed overleaf with the number of prizes they took and the categories in which they took them.

This pattern of a few people receiving the majority of prizes can be seen at other shows as well, both at the wider-ranging horticultural shows and at the single-produce shows. Where names appear, over time, only once or twice, one is left wondering whether the exhibitor had been discouraged from entering or whether they continued to enter but were unsuccessful.

Over the years, the organisation of flower shows changed. The names of the gardeners of the prize-winners began to appear in reports and there were new prizes such as for the "*Best written and most correctly spelled labels*".⁹³¹ In some shows,

⁹³⁰ Manchester Times, 18 May, 1850. Exhibitors may have had to pay more to enter the show at Belle Vue, but visitors paid less. The charge being one shilling before and sixpence after four o'clock.

⁹³¹ Manchester Times, 8 August, 1849: report of the second Botanical and Horticultural Show of the season. The winner was George Dickson, gardener to Alfred Binyon.

cottagers were given their own class as were nurserymen and dealers.⁹³² Some nurserymen were constant exhibitors: William Lodge, for example, won prizes at many different shows and was particularly successful with dahlias.⁹³³ Showing their plants was one way to attract business, and nurserymen occasionally presented displays without entering the competition. At the Corn Exchange in May 1850, in a move reminiscent of modern shows, Watkinson, Richard Smalley Yates, and other nurserymen had “*some very fine plants*” for sale.

Name	Total number of prizes	Prizes received for
Alfred Binyon	5	Stove plant (2); greenhouse plant; basket of plants; hardy plant
Samuel Brooks	13	Stove plant (4); greenhouse plant (3); ornamental plant; baskets of plants; cinerarias (2); baskets of cut flowers; asparagus
Thomas Cardwell	13	Ornamental plant; fuchsia; rose (5); verbena (3); asparagus; mushrooms (2)
Wilson Crewdson	17	Stove plant; greenhouse plant; ornamental plant; basket of plants; fuchsias (5); geraniums (2); verbena; basket of cut flowers; french beans (2); lettuce
Philip Lucas	11	Stove plant (2); baskets of plants; erica; hardy plant (2); Indian azalea; grapes (4)
John Sharp	11	Stove plant; orchid; ⁹³⁴ calceolaria (4); geraniums (2); grapes, cucumbers (3)
Samuel Simpson	18	Greenhouse plant (4); orchid (2); baskets of plants; erica (7); Indian azalea; cineraria (3)
Lord de Tabley	9	Strawberries; asparagus; potatoes; cabbages (2); lettuce; apples (3)

Major prize-winners at the Tulip and Horticultural Show at the Manchester Corn-Exchange, 1850

⁹³² *Manchester Courier*, 21 September, 1844, report of the “*third and last exhibition of the season*” at the Botanic Gardens. The only flowers exhibited for prizes were dahlias and the prizes were split between “*Nurserymen and Dealers*” and “*Amateurs, Cottagers and Gentlemen’s Gardener’s*”. Under the first category, first prize went to Charles Noyes and second to William Lodge.

⁹³³ Of 150 prizes identified for William Lodge, 46 (or 31%) were for dahlias. The next nearest was pelargoniums (11%), but it must be remembered that not all shows have been identified and not all that have been identified have been included.

⁹³⁴ Sharp may have won two prizes for orchids. The report gave the full name of the winner the first time it was mentioned and after that simply ‘Mr.’ There was one orchid prize which went to a Mrs. Sharp. This may have been a mis-print.

Gooseberry shows

Horticultural shows sometimes included gooseberries among the fruits exhibited, but this was in order to show horticultural excellence – the normal method of showing was several on a plate. This was a completely different approach to the Gooseberry Shows. There, weight was everything.



Above: the horticultural show approach to showing gooseberries – RHS Tatton, 2012

No-one knows exactly when gooseberry shows started, but it was well before 1772, when Richard Weston wrote that “*The Gentlemen of Lancashire [had] given a Premium for several Years, for raising of curious new sorts, remarkable for size and flavour*”.⁹³⁵ He then listed the eighty-three varieties stocked by James Maddock at Walworth.⁹³⁶ These were divided up by colour. The first section “*Red, Deep Red, and nearly Black*” numbered forty-seven varieties; there were eleven each “*green*” and

⁹³⁵ Weston, Richard. *The Universal botanist and nurseryman* vo. 4, 1772, p.211-2.

⁹³⁶ Maddock placed advertisements for Lancashire Gooseberries in newspapers around the country. In 1783 he had 300 varieties available (*Reading Mercury*, 17 November, 1783).

"Yellow and Amber" and ten "White" plus four where the "colour [was] uncertain".⁹³⁷ James Maddock of Walworth reckoned he had the "largest and best collection of Lancashire, &c. GOOSEBERRY TREES in England; consisting of many thousand trees, and of nearly three hundred of the newest and finest sorts, the Berries of which have weighed from 10 to 15 pennyweights and eleven grains, and are of excellent flavour".⁹³⁸ In 1798 his successors, Goring & Wright, offered customers a number of collections. The most expensive – at five guineas – was two each of one hundred "Different superfine sorts". Despite Maddock's mention of 300 varieties the number listed by name was only 111.⁹³⁹ Even so, this was considerably more than those listed by Parkinson, whose seventeenth century book had only eight – "the small, great and long common, three red, one blue, and one green".⁹⁴⁰

The Lancashire climate must have been particularly suited to gooseberry growing – "it is cultivated in greater perfection in Lancashire than in any other part of Britain", said Loudon – and the fruit itself particularly variable in its seeds, producing ever greater numbers of new varieties, which could be tested at the local shows.

*"The best gooseberries now under cultivation had their origin in the county of Lancaster; and to promote this spirit, meetings are annually appointed at different places, at which are public exhibitions of different kinds of flowers and fruits, and premiums adjudged. These meetings are encouraged by master-tradesmen and gentlemen of the county, as tending to promote a spirit which may occasionally be diverted into a more important channel."*⁹⁴¹

One show in Wigan in 1795 had as prize for the heaviest gooseberry a silver cup worth £1 7s plus cash prizes totalling six guineas.⁹⁴² Reds seem to have been the colour of choice at that time as the premiums for that colour were substantially higher than for the others.

Gooseberry shows began to proliferate and to spread beyond Lancashire. In 1790 there was a show of carnations, melons and gooseberries at Shefford in

⁹³⁷ This can still be a problem today, as the difference between green and white gooseberries can be very hard to detect, even by experts.

⁹³⁸ Reading Mercury, 17 November 1783.

⁹³⁹ Goring & Wright, Walworth: Catalogue 1798, p.50-51. They also had "upwards of 50 other fine named Sorts, at 6d. each, of which the necessary Limits of the Catalogue will not permit the insertion". Of the named varieties prices ranged from 1s to 10s 6d. Each named variety had the name of the raiser and some were names already noted in this work: Boardman; Brunderit; Gorton; Shelmerdine; Yates. We have noted Boardman and Gorton from this period; the others may have been parents to those mentioned above.

⁹⁴⁰ An Encyclopaedia of Gardening, (1824) p.732

⁹⁴¹ Holt, John, General View of the Agriculture of the County of Lancaster. p. 81-2.

⁹⁴² Manchester Mercury, 14 July, 1795.

Bedfordshire, but that was not in the traditional format as the prize was simply for “any Person that will shew three Score of the largest Gooseberries, of their own Produce”. The traditional format was first to find the heaviest individual berry – whatever colour – after which they were weighed in colour order: red, yellow, green, white and, at some shows, there was an additional class for seedlings. At others, there were also prizes for “twins” i.e. two berries hanging from the same stalk.⁹⁴³



The traditional way of showing gooseberries: centre top are the best three, and on either side are the twins; then come the winners in the different colours: red, yellow, green then white. The difficulty of telling the colours apart is clear, here though others are more easily identified. (RHS Tatton, 2012)

Gooseberry shows, to this day, have weighed in the imperial measures pennyweights (dwts) and grains (grs). In the eighteenth century a berry was heavy at 10 dwts but as time passed, newer varieties produced ever larger berries. In 1790 a show at Melbourne in Derbyshire had first prize going to 'Price's Sceptre' at 16 dwt 12 grs. By 1815, Mr. Samuel Taylor's 'Viper', shown at Chester weighed in at 21 dwts 15 grs. In 1830 the Manchester Courier, reported:

"The four heaviest gooseberries grown in England this year are as follows, one of each colour: – Red Roaring Lion, 30 dwts. 14 grs. grown by Mr. Thomas Braddock, at Hayton show. – Yellow Teazer, 32 dwts. 13 grs. grown by Mr. George Prophet, at the Stockport show. Green Peacock, 28 dwts. 14 grs. grown by Mr. John Lovart, at the Nantwich show. White Eagle, 27 dwts. 12

⁹⁴³ At a show in August 2012, the proceeding was to weigh berry against berry until the heaviest was identified, at which point its weight was ascertained.

*grs. grown by Mr. George Prophet, at the Stockport show. Considerable merit is due to the gooseberry growers, for cultivating this useful fruit to such great perfection. The above are the heaviest berries that have been exhibited since the commencement of gooseberry shows."*⁹⁴⁴

This information would have been garnered from the annual publication the Gooseberry Growers' Register. This listing of all the shows and the winning growers and berries had been published in Manchester, probably from at least 1786.⁹⁴⁵ Writing in 1828, Joseph Clarkson of Blackley stated that he had seen a published list of shows and prize-winners from that year,⁹⁴⁶ although the Register of 1851 stated that "*This is the Fiftieth year since the Gooseberry Growers' Register was first published*". As the Register was produced by the Manchester growers – hence reliant on volunteer editors – it is probable that there was a break between the early ones and the later Register.⁹⁴⁷ Manchester was the hub for gooseberry growing. The idea of the Register was that reports of all shows would be sent in, collated, published and sent out for growers to see which varieties were the most successful. In 1819, the Register included reports from 136 meetings.⁹⁴⁸ In 1851 there were more than 170 and the editors of the Register apologised that several reports had arrived too late for inclusion. Ninety per cent of the shows held (or, to be more precise, ninety per cent of reports provided) were in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire and Nottinghamshire.⁹⁴⁹

However, there was a much more important role for the Manchester Show, which was held at the Sir John Falstaff in Market Place. All new varieties of gooseberry were supposed to be submitted to the Manchester Show, and it was only once its approval had been given, that customers could be assured that the new variety they were wishing to purchase really *was* new:

"It is particularly requested that all Seedlings going out be sent to this meeting, which was established expressly for the purpose of examining them

⁹⁴⁴ Manchester Courier, 30 October, 1830.

⁹⁴⁵ Darwin, Charles. The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication, Vol.1 (1868) p.355.

⁹⁴⁶ The Gardener's Magazine, 1828. It is possible that Darwin was relying on this information.

⁹⁴⁷ The Register continued to be produced for several decades. The RHS Lindley Library holds seventy editions dated from 1819 to 1916. The editor in 1851 was Thomas Whittaker of Blackley and in 1855 James Whittaker of the same place. James Whittaker retired that year and handed over to Charles Leicester, a Florist at Macclesfield.

⁹⁴⁸ Loudon, J. C. An Encyclopaedia of Gardening, para 4634.

⁹⁴⁹ Not all reports were identifiable by location. Some merely gave the name of the Inn at which they were held.

before going out, so that none may be let out that are not distinct from the sorts now out; also, that a description may appear in the book of every Seedling previous to going out, and thereby prevent disappointment of the following nature :—Oft She Goes, let out by James Capper, of Wistaston, in 1846, at 10s. 6d. per lot, is so like the Peacock, that it will not pass for anything else, and is hereafter to be shown for Peacock.—More Cock, sold in plants, by John Mosley, of Scholes, near Keighley, in 1849, at 10s. per plant, sold for a green, has turned out to be the Queen of Trumps, and hereafter to be shown as the Queen of Trumps.⁹⁵⁰—Marquis, sold in plants, by William Emberlin, Marlborough, Wilts, in 1849, at 5s. per plant, has turned out to be the Thumper, and after this notice will not be allowed to show for anything but Thumper.”⁹⁵¹

This quality control – and the naming of those who were at fault – seems to have been, in the main, successful, as Charles Darwin wrote:

“Mr. Thompson in classifying the fruit for the Horticultural Society found less confusion in the nomenclature of the gooseberry than of any other fruit, and he attributes this “to the great interest which the prize-growers have taken in detecting sorts with wrong names”, and this shows that all the kinds, numerous as they are, can be recognised with certainty.”⁹⁵²

In 1851 the Show judges considered eight new seedlings, seven of which were adjudged “*Quite distinct*” and one “*fine and distinct*”. One of the seedlings was from Thomas Badrock. This was probably the Thomas Badrock of Willington, in Cheshire who had been a gooseberry grower and exhibitor for many years, winning, in the process, fifty-seven prizes, in the shape of copper kettles, for showing the finest gooseberries.⁹⁵³ The prize plants he grew in his garden gave their name to the road in which he lived – still known as Gooseberry Lane today. The reports in the Register did not always mention the prizes, although where they did, kettles predominated, with tea-pots, dubbing-shears, cups, brass pans, pruning knife, silver teaspoons and even a pork pie appearing, plus cash prizes.⁹⁵⁴

⁹⁵⁰ ‘Queen of Trumps’ was a White variety.

⁹⁵¹ *The Gooseberry Growers’ Register*, 1851, p. 179.

⁹⁵² Darwin, Charles. *The Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*, 1868. Vol.1 p.354.

⁹⁵³ *Chester Chronicle*, 6 April, 1861. Some growers exhibited for decades. In the 1855 *Gooseberry Growers’ Register* were a number of obituaries: John Tetlow of Newton Moor had been growing for fifty years; James Hall of Nesbrook, near Leeds, 33 years; William Ross, a Nottingham representative at the Manchester show in 1854, was only 43 when he died, but had been growing gooseberries for 20 years.

⁹⁵⁴ *Manchester Times*, 28 May, 1847: “*FEATS OF A GOOSEBERRY GROWER. – Benjamin Butterworth of Broad Lane, Castleton, aged 64 years, has been a gooseberry grower thirty years, during which he has won eighty-four copper kettles, fourteen brass pans, two silver*

The organisation of the various shows was much the same – a first meeting (though some groups met each month); a making-up meeting and the meeting at which the weighing took place. These meetings were all held at the public-house and some set minimum amounts that had to be spent on liquor, whether or not the member was able to attend the meeting. The report from West Derby, where the show was held at the Gardener's Arms was particularly well spelled out in 1851:

*"First meeting, second Saturday in the New-Year; making-up, Saturday after Easter Monday; day of weighing, first Tuesday in August; subscription, 4s; 1s each meeting for liquor; come or send. There will be a set of silver spoons the free gift of Mr. Richard Tyrer, the landlord, for the heaviest berry of any colour. There will be four tea kettles for steward's prizes, and one for maiden growers, if three enter, and pay up. All subscriptions to be paid on or before the 24th of June, or not allowed to weigh for a premium or steward's prize. – Free to Lancashire."*⁹⁵⁵

Making-up referred to the setting of the terms for the show, the number of prizes and the listing of exhibitors.

Over the years the gooseberries available changed as new ones surpassed older varieties. A comparison of those considered by Loudon (in 1824) to be the best, shows perhaps five that were in Weston's 1772 list.⁹⁵⁶ Similarly, the winning varieties in 1851 show little resemblance to those thirty years earlier.

*"Assuredly the "Highwayman" in 1817 could not have produced fruit like that of the "Roaring Lion" in 1825; nor could the "Roaring Lion" though it was grown by many persons in many places, gain the supreme triumph achieved in 1852 by the "London" Gooseberry."*⁹⁵⁷

So said Darwin in 1868. If the largest fruits from 1830 (above) are compared to the lists of winners in 1851, it can be seen that 'Roaring Lion' was absent; 'Teazer' was relegated to twenty-fourth position, with just eight prizes; 'Peacock' was still holding on with ninth position (52 prizes) and 'Eagle' was still a fairly strong contender at fifth position (97 prizes).

cups, two sets of silver tea spoons, two garden spades, one metal tea pot, one silver cream jug, one pig and one ham. He has also won as many as 103 prizes in one year."

⁹⁵⁵ The Gooseberry Growers' Register, 1851, p.23.

⁹⁵⁶ This assumes that "Warrington" is equivalent to "Warrington Red"; "Black Damson" to "Damson or dark red"; "Globe" to "Green Globe". Only "Green Gage" and "Honeycomb" appear exactly the same in both lists.

⁹⁵⁷ Darwin, Charles. The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication (1868) p.355-6.

In 1851 there were about 180 different varieties which won prizes, but the leading ones in each colour group were well ahead of most of their rivals in terms of the number of prizes they had taken, although they were not necessarily the heaviest in that group. The 'London', a red variety, took 336 out of a total of 1,605 prizes (21%) and was also the heaviest red berry recorded at 27 dwts 12 grs. The result was similar for the yellow berries, where 'Catherina' won most prizes and was also the heaviest berry overall. Among the greens, however, the winner of most prizes was 'Thumper', but the heaviest was 'Invincible' which came only sixteenth in the list of forty-six names. This was repeated among the whites with 'Freedom' and 'Jenny Lind'. Overall, the largest berry, by just 8 grs, was a 'London'. Weather would have made a big difference year by year to the size attained. Darwin notes that in 1852 a 'London' fruit was exhibited which weighed a massive 37 dwts 7grs.

Clarkson explained that there was considerable variation between different varieties. Some were remarkable for their size, others for their looks, or for their flavour, or for the quantity of fruit they produced. At the same time "*there are several sorts not worth growing*". The idea grew up that size and flavour were incompatible. This was challenged by Mr T. Chippendale of Enfield, near Blackburn in a letter to the Midland Florist in 1849. He listed twelve new, and promising, varieties and his predictions as to their future success were good. Each of them won prizes in 1851, the most successful being Snow Drop, with 144 wins. He described it in glowing terms:

*"One of the most beautiful sorts ever planted. As soon as midsummer arrives, it turns quite white, with the exception of the veins, which are green as the blade of an onion, forming a most singular contrast."*⁹⁵⁸

Not all were perhaps as flavoursome as might be hoped for. Three were described as "*good*"; three as "*excellent*"; two as "*first-rate*" and one as "*good flavour when quite ripe*". The flavour of the beautiful Snow Drop was simply "*good*".

The importance of gooseberry growing in the region is quite clear. What is also important is that it was mainly cottagers who entered the competitions – Joseph Clarkson wrote that gooseberries were "*cultivated scarcely by any but the lowest and most illiterate part of society, at least in this neighbourhood*". Loudon stated that

⁹⁵⁸ The Midland Florist, (1849), p.69.

gooseberry bushes could “*be found in almost every cottage garden in Britain*”.⁹⁵⁹

But it was the Lancashire growers who had pre-eminence and the Manchester show which was at the centre of the nation’s growers.

Summary

This chapter has fleshed out the background to Loudon’s comment that “*the love of flowers continues popular ... among the weavers in ... Manchester ...*”⁹⁶⁰ and shown that “growing and showing” was a popular pastime in the area. The shows devoted to florists’ flowers, which dated back to the eighteenth century, continued into the nineteenth, when the wide-ranging horticultural shows extended the pastime to “showing and viewing”. From 1825 onwards there were as many as eight or nine general horticultural shows held in Manchester each year in addition to the smaller shows which did not get reported. There were also shows in all the major towns surrounding Manchester, reported on at length in the newspapers, and a handful of keen florists could be found winning prizes at locations well beyond their area of residence.

It has also been shown that behind the apparent façade of gentility there lurked the enmity between the classes and the antagonism that creates schisms when circumstances cause underlying differences in principle to be exposed. These have provided glimpses of the personalities involved – particularly that of John Slater who took his floriculture very seriously indeed. Others also exposed the tensions between the classes which separated the Botanical and Horticultural Society from the sponsors of all other horticultural shows, although correspondents generally used pseudonyms and reporters never gave their names. In these circumstances it is impossible to accurately estimate the extent of such clashes – particularly since many individuals can be seen to have won prizes at the supposedly conflicting shows. Just one person with a grievance can make a great deal of noise.

Regardless of these real or imagined differences, the greater Manchester area was noted for its horticultural and floricultural excellence. This was not only demonstrated at exhibitions, but locally raised flowers – and particularly locally-raised gooseberries – could be found available nationwide. The important role Manchester

⁹⁵⁹ Loudon, *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1824) p.732. para. 4634.

⁹⁶⁰ Loudon. *An Encyclopaedia of Gardening* (1835) p. 350 para. 1246.

played nationally as a centre of excellence – particularly for gooseberries – can be seen in the annual productions of the “Flower Books” and “Gooseberry Books”.

Conclusion

The decades from 1750 to 1850 were times of enormous upheaval for the country as a whole and for the industrialising towns in particular. The population changed from being overwhelmingly rural to essentially urban – a transfer that would continue in the years that followed. This loss of contact with the countryside was most acutely felt by the poorest in society – those whose work kept them in factories for more than twelve hours a day and six days a week. Children were born for whom urban living was the only experience. For those who could afford it, there was the possibility of owning or renting a house with a garden – or of renting a garden detached from their home – a benefit not simply of status, but providing their own ‘piece of countryside’ among lawns, trees and flowers.

The process by which this happened, the increase of both private and public gardens with their range of leisure activities and, throughout all, the impact of class divisions, have been described above. In following the various threads relating to horticulture questions have been raised alongside information uncovered. Each chapter is here reviewed in turn with the questions which now need to be considered – each providing potential new areas of research, not just for the garden historian, but also for the social and economic historian.

The Horticultural Trade

The horticultural trade, particularly in the eighteenth century, remains poorly understood, and has been the subject only of garden historians, when it would benefit from consideration within the wider economic sphere. However, there is a lack of quality data and the generic use of the term “gardener” makes it difficult (in the absence of any supporting information) to identify the role that was undertaken by each person. It is not likely that a clear definition for any one individual will be forthcoming and very likely that gardeners combined, in varying degrees, the roles of nurseryman, seedsman, florist and market gardener or fruiterer. The extent of the under-recording of this business sector – at least in and around Manchester, and to a certain degree further afield – has been identified and it is likely that this can be found in other parts of the country. It is probably only in the immediate vicinity of London that fuller records can be – and have been – traced.

There are additional areas for further consideration relating to nurserymen in addition to simple identification. Their design role, for example, would benefit from additional investigation, particularly before 1800. There are certainly individuals who are remembered primarily as landscape gardeners but who also ran their own nurseries (Joshua Major, the designer of the Manchester parks, is one such), but it is clear that many nurserymen offered design and build services. Where they were operating close to the developing towns, it is possible that they may have produced quality designs but that these disappeared as the towns spread and their fame was never secured. It is more likely that they were journeymen designers, relying on the writings of men like Loudon for their inspiration. Information may be available among the records of builders and developers as well as owners.

Research into the relationships between nurserymen and the transportation of plants around the country would also be of use in understanding how the trade operated. It has been shown that nurserymen in Manchester travelled to London to seek out suppliers; that nurserymen from France travelled around the country selling their plants; that nurserymen travelled some distance to undertake training – William Caldwell from Liverpool to Knutsford and Charles Bannerman from Liverpool to Kent are examples. Further information will be made widely available over the coming months by the Cheshire Gardens Trust through its transcription of the Caldwell ledgers,⁹⁶¹ where both sales and purchases are recorded to and from other nurserymen, including Giles Boardman, McNiven & Sons and Wilkinson (all in the vicinity of Manchester), Telford of York, Pinkerton of Wigan, Perfects of Pontefract and Wrench of Fulham. Also recorded is information about carriage of goods, both formal and informal, provision of garden services and details about payments received. The length of time nurserymen sometimes waited for payment would have put a strain on the cash-flow of the business and was no doubt a contributory cause of the many bankruptcies such firms suffered.

The role of women in nurseries of the period has been identified, though with little additional information. Wives and daughters who took over the running of the nurseries following the death of their husband or father may have themselves worked in the nursery or may have relied on employees to undertake the day to day work.

⁹⁶¹ Although always referred to as the "Caldwell ledgers", the early ledger from the Knutsford nursery dates from the time the nursery was owned by Nickson and Carr.

Ann Cooke was a businesswoman in her own right and Elizabeth Raffald was probably the driving force behind John Raffald in the 18th century. Elizabeth Cole took over her husband's business after his death, but was in partnership with her sons. In the 20th century, Winifred and Sarah Caldwell were partners with their younger brother William.⁹⁶² Women's role in the horticultural trade would make an interesting and useful study.

Plants

Central to the horticultural trade were the plants that were stocked. The change of emphasis in advertisements from forest trees to exotic plants has been shown above, but there remains much to be uncovered. Writers have discussed in general terms the history of plants, mostly of flowers, but little about the use of plants in the economy. The 18th century nurseries in the north-west were providing trees by the million, yet writers have stated that the area was not well-wooded. These facts appear contradictory, unless the nurseries were selling further afield, but there would have been a huge demand locally for timber for building and manufacturing and it may have been that fast growing trees were preferred and their place in the landscape came and went swiftly.

The introduction of new plants is also an area which would benefit from further research. The role played by local growers has been explained, but how this compared with plants raised by growers elsewhere in the country has not been considered. The dissemination of these plants – and that of new introductions from abroad – could also be considered in more detail, particularly in the differing roles of the nurseryman and the enthusiastic amateur.

A better understanding of diet and use of food might come from a deeper study of the different kitchen foods available. There were many varieties of some vegetables and fruit. It may be that these arose out of natural rather than intentional hybridisation, but their usefulness (and hence their dissemination) may have arisen from their particular virtues – early or late-cropping, ability to keep well, suitability for particular types of cooking are all examples. Greg's purchases (see Appendix Five)

⁹⁶² From family history written by Sarah Caldwell in 1964: "*In the spring of 1918 father died and William V, Maud and myself joined Uncle Arthur as partners in the business. We worked hard and flourished.*" David Caldwell, son of the last of a succession of William Caldwells, who is currently transcribing family papers from the 19th century.

show a variety of different vegetables (though few compared to some other customers), but it is possible that some, at least, of these were intended for feeding livestock.⁹⁶³

Researchers into the history of crime and punishment will have found of interest the evidence of plant thefts and the legal (and illegal) methods used in trying to counteract these. It is likely that there is further information to be found in court records. The economic historian might consider the relative values of plants and gardening services compared with other goods and services.

This study has not looked closely at the role of science – and particularly of botany – in the leisure pursuits of the period, but it was a time when many people pursued these interests. Thomas Glover, for example, was an entomologist as well as a botanist; although he pursued these interests as an amateur he nevertheless counted professional scientists among his friends and acquaintances. Richard Buxton and Leo Grindon were two Manchester men who wrote about botany.⁹⁶⁴ It is possible to imagine why this interest in plants was so great at this time. Certainly the work of Linnaeus made understanding and differentiating between plants easier and botanising was a science that could be undertaken at little or no cost. It was also considered suitable for women. The interest in gardening as opposed to botany, however, may have increased for quite different reasons. Although there was clearly a sector of society that was particularly keen on florists' flowers, the importance of the kitchen and fruit garden would have taken precedence for many. The extent to which individuals contributed to the food supply of the town may be impossible to gauge, although it was sufficient for it to be noticed. Others may have the key to unlocking this aspect of horticulture, but the walled kitchen garden seems to have given way in the suburbs, by the end of the period, to the generic pleasure grounds.

⁹⁶³ A useful reference book for the use of vegetables for feeding both animals and humans is The Library of Agricultural and Horticultural Knowledge, printed and published by J. Baxter, 1830. This also includes information about the use of trees. Alder, for example, provided dyes (green from the berries, yellow from the bark).

⁹⁶⁴ Buxton's A Botanical Guide to the Flowering Plants, Ferns, Mosses, and Algæ found indigenous within Sixteen Miles of Manchester (1949) includes a fascinating, though brief, autobiography in which he explains how he became interested in botany. Grindon, originally from Bristol, was Buxton's junior by more than 30 years and wrote several books: The Manchester Flora: A Descriptive List of the Plants Growing Wild within Eighteen Miles of Manchester was published in 1859. It was aimed at the beginner and included information about garden plants.

Environmental Changes

The urbanisation of the population began in earnest during the period of study. Every available piece of land within the township of Manchester was eventually covered, with the great loss of the town garden. The colonisation of the suburbs followed and, despite continual development over the decades since, some of the houses, for example around Ardwick Green, have survived, as has the Green itself, although its lake has been lost.

The spread of the town has been recorded, but not its impact upon gardens and this would be another area potentially suitable for further research. Certainly it would be useful to trace the position of the private garden in areas, such as Hulme, which have undergone many periods of development and re-development. It would be interesting, too, to discover how pollution impacted upon plants – and their growers – during the decades that followed before the Clean Air Acts of the second half of the 20th century began to provide a more wholesome environment.

The most useful area for further research, however, is in comparing Manchester with other towns which have undergone industrialisation. Different areas of the country specialised in different industries and their impact may have varied from town to town. A better understanding of the importance of gardens to an urbanising population and the deleterious effect of industrialisation could help towns in developing countries deal more effectively with their 21st century problems.

Private Gardens

The way in which private gardens disappeared from the town and the range of gardens that became available in the suburbs has been described. Gardens grew in importance as contact with the countryside became more difficult, but they were only available to a minority. Those who sold their land for development were able to include covenants which could ensure that certain areas were developed for the wealthier. Owners of fields around Manchester were included in Green's 1794 map and it might be possible to show how subsequent development related to those owners.

Houses were developed for their rental stream, and the indication is that the developer ensured that the garden was laid out and stocked before the property was let. Further information on this might be forthcoming: perhaps developers worked in partnership with nurserymen who provided the layout and planting services in addition to the trees, shrubs, flowers and grass. It is possible that these nurserymen were also contracted to maintain the gardens or were employed to do so by the new occupant. It is known that some people employed their own gardeners, but there may also have been jobbing gardeners who provided a few hours a week to each of a number of employers. These are all areas for which no definitive information has been uncovered.⁹⁶⁵

Public Gardens

For the majority of the population with no garden of their own to enjoy, the gardens open to the public were an important amenity, providing a range of leisure activities. The story of such gardens throughout the country has not yet been fully told, but some attracted considerable attention, including the Rosherville Gardens in Gravesend, mentioned in Appendix Seven.⁹⁶⁶ These are of particular interest when considering the gardens around Manchester as they were originally conceived as the shareholding Kent Zoological and Botanical Gardens Company opening in 1837. As such they were contemporaneous with the Manchester Zoological Gardens and suffered the same difficulties – they failed to attract the wealthy in large enough numbers although in 1842 they avoided the Manchester Gardens fate by transforming themselves into something akin to Belle Vue Gardens. Indeed, Baron Nathan, who was installed as Master of Ceremonies at Rosherville that year, spent a week at Belle Vue in the same role in 1849.⁹⁶⁷

⁹⁶⁵ Nickson and Carr certainly provided planting services. In November and December 1794 John Arden bought more than £41 worth of trees (including 5,000 thorns) to be planted at Stockport. They also charged £18 7s 6d for planting the trees, which was paid to Joseph Hussey. He spent nearly 26 weeks on the work, but the quantity of trees supplied suggests that it was a wood being planted.

⁹⁶⁶ The gardens were created in an old chalk pit near the Thames. Visitors from London arrived by river.

⁹⁶⁷ See www.discovergravesham.co.uk/northfleet/rosherville-gardens for more information about Rosherville Gardens. Baron Nathan's visit to Belle Vue is recorded in the Manchester Courier, 2 June, 1849.

This parallel between Manchester and Gravesend indicates that a comparison with other such gardens of the period would be useful in identifying the reasons behind success and failure. As mentioned above, the causes of the failure of the Manchester Zoological Gardens and those of Belle Vue were not purely economic, but were related to leadership. The Manchester Vauxhall Gardens were never successful after the retirement of Robert Tinker. An entrepreneurial spirit and an understanding of popular culture were perhaps the combination required for success in these ventures; the need to satisfy shareholders may have ultimately led to failure even if Gardens had been created in prosperous times.

The remnants of some 19th century Pleasure Gardens can still be found, but the role they then played, combining sport, music and varied entertainment has been lost. Tracing their history would perhaps show not only some remarkable individual businessmen, but demonstrate the pressures that eliminated their central role in the leisure industry.

Public Spaces

The demand for labour lay behind Manchester's exceptional increase in population, but this resulted in a demand for housing which led to hastily built, rapidly over-occupied properties in close proximity to some of the most unpleasant manufacturing processes of the time. The need for people to access fresh air was evident. The availability of land can lie behind the way in which towns develop and the demand was such that very little green space was left in the township of Manchester by the time it became a borough and the need for even pedestrians to pay to leave the town via the toll-gates led to the insistence by some for the provision of public parks.

All of the industrialising towns would have faced similar problems and it would be a useful comparative study to consider how the demand for free public space was dealt with elsewhere. There are many possible variables – the speed and time of development; ownership of land; date when the enclosure movement affected the locality; type of industry; size of town; local politics and personalities. All – and more – could have influenced development in different ways, leading to better or worse conditions for the poorest. Manchester benefited from the availability of Kersal Moor and Dunham Massey, at least during holiday times, and it might be that similar venues were available to other towns.

The Element of Competition

Flower and horticultural shows grew in number and importance during the period covered by the study. In the 18th century they were probably confined to a limited number of keen florists, though their history is unlikely ever to be satisfactorily uncovered. By the 19th century, however, the growing number of local newspapers and gardening magazines makes it easier to trace their story and easier to gauge their popularity. Important elements are missing from reports however, particularly the number of competitors and their social background. As already mentioned, without this information it is difficult to judge whether a restricted number of prize-winners was a reflection of the number of entrants, the excellence of their skill or (cynically, perhaps) the politics of the society hosting the show.

One element which has been touched on, but not explored, is the north/south divide among florists, frequently mentioned by writers. This may have been a reflection of a general division within society which still exists. There certainly seems to have been an economic division, with Slater and Dahl both referring to the cost of plants, but it may have been a social division also. Advertisements for florists' feasts in the 18th century almost always addressed themselves to "*gentlemen*" and southern florists may have considered themselves socially superior to the artisan growers of the north.

The importance of horticultural shows in and around Manchester was no doubt echoed in other parts of the country. They continued to be important beyond 1850, with shows being held in the newly developing commuter towns such as Altrincham and Didsbury. Continuing the history of shows through the remainder of the 19th and into the 20th century might provide some useful clues as to the reason behind their demise. There are various possibilities: they may have fallen out of fashion; been interrupted by war and never revived; or become a victim of increased pollution.

Summary

The importance of gardens – and of the natural environment – during the period covered by this study has been demonstrated. Plants and garden were a source of personal satisfaction for the florist, of food for the family and market, and a satisfying

respite from the over-developed, over-crowded and malodorous manufacturing centre that Manchester became. Private gardens can be considered purely from the point of view of the individual and of vegetation. However, they were also closely linked to social and economic status. Public gardens can be considered simply for their pleasant surroundings and range of leisure activities, but they can also be regarded as places which could be the focus of the social anxiety caused by rapid and apparently unrestrained population growth.

Manchester was not simply a centre of manufacturing; it was also a centre of horticultural and floricultural excellence. Areas around Manchester continued to be of considerable horticultural significance after 1850, although that may have been via its market gardens rather than from private individuals and its full influence on floriculture has yet to be explored: the second half of the 19th century was a time of possibly even greater significance as its enthusiasts continued to develop prize-winning blooms.⁹⁶⁸ The number of people working as nurserymen, seedsmen, florists and landscape gardeners continued to increase and nurseries could still be found in their traditional areas at the end of the century.⁹⁶⁹

This study has thrown up a large number of areas which would benefit from further research and the continuation of the story of gardening in Manchester after 1850 is just one.

⁹⁶⁸ Manchester was renowned for its orchid-growers in the second half of the 19th century. See Chapter Two and Appendix Three for further information.

⁹⁶⁹ See Kelly's Directory of Manchester for 1895, where there are nearly 80 entries for nurserymen, seedsmen, landscape gardeners and seed growers and merchants. A quarter of this list were apparently simply florists, although by this time the term florist probably referred in many cases to a seller of flowers rather than a grower. Flowers were sold at Smithfield market.

More Horticultural Tradesmen

N.B. where not otherwise specified, information is from Directories and family details have been taken from the databases on www.ancestry.co.uk.

[D] after a name denotes an entry in Desmond's Dictionary of British & Irish Botanists and Horticulturists (revised edition, 1994).

[H] indicates an entry in Harvey's Early Nurserymen (1974)

The amount of information available is extremely variable. Some left an entry in a Directory and little more. Not all advertised (at least in the newspapers and periodicals examined). Some could be traced easily via the census records examined, others not at all. A few were sufficiently well-known to appear in articles; information about a couple was gleaned through crime reports.

Ackerley family

In addition to the two Samuel Ackerleys who appeared (as gardeners in Salford) in various directories, beginning in 1772 there was also a Robert Ackerley – “*gardener and seedsman*” – in the 1788 and 1794 Directories. Ackerleys were listed as market gardeners and farmers in Timperley in 1860 and Ackerleys won prizes for vegetables and tulips at various flower shows between 1838 and 1850.⁹⁷⁰ In 1895, the name Ackerley re-appeared. John and James Ackerley were florists, with an outlet at Smithfield Market and (probably) a nursery at Urmston. A Robert Ackerley & Son were florists at Smithfield Market in 1929.

⁹⁷⁰ For example, a James Ackerley, won prizes for carrots and turnips at the Altrincham Flower Show (Manchester Courier, 29 September, 1838) and a man of the same name won prizes for tulips at the 1850 Corn Exchange Show (Manchester Courier, 1 June, 1850). They were not necessarily the same man and were not necessarily in the nursery or market garden business.

Attenbury, John

Based at Regent Road, Salford in 1824, described as Nursery and Seedsman. This may have been the same John Attenbury (born c. 1789 in Ashbourne, Derbyshire) who appeared in the 1851 Census as a Public Gardener, living with his family, including four sons, two of whom (Henry and Abraham) were also gardeners.

Barber, Thomas

Thomas Barber was an apprentice of Ann Cooke and in 1794 set up as a "*Chymist, Druggist and Seedsman*" at the Golden Mortar and Pestle, Hyde's Cross. Like Ann Cooke, he sold turnip and cabbage seeds.⁹⁷¹ A Thomas Barber (not necessarily the same one)⁹⁷² was active in the Manchester Floral & Horticultural Society where he was a committee member and deputy treasurer and won prizes for ranunculuses, asters, baskets of flowers, hardy annuals, beans and onions.

Beddome, Josephus

Josephus Beddome, the eldest of the family was born in 1808 and named after his father, who had moved from London to Manchester by 1810. Beddome's business was at 23 Piccadilly "*opposite the Infirmary Clock*" and he advertised garden and flower seeds, bulbs from both Holland and South Africa and, in February 1834, the double tuberose and *Oxalis crenata*.⁹⁷³ This latter plant had only been introduced into this country, from South America, in 1832; it was a wood sorrel and was, within a couple of years of introduction, being grown as a vegetable, described as being "*more agreeable than the common potato, to which it is supposed, in nutriment, to come very near*".⁹⁷⁴

As with other seedsmen in the town, Beddome's was a place where subscriptions for the flower shows could be received. However, his life as a seedsman was short-lived. In 1835 he announced that he was leaving Manchester and as a result, selling off his stock at very reduced prices.⁹⁷⁵ It seems that he went to live in Canada, as a report on his death appeared in British papers in 1854 –

⁹⁷¹ Manchester Mercury, 29 July, 1794.

⁹⁷² A Thomas Barber of Pendleton married in 1834 (Manchester Courier, 6 December, 1834).

⁹⁷³ Manchester Times, 15 February, 1834.

⁹⁷⁴ The Vegetable Cultivator, John Rogers, 1839, p.211.

⁹⁷⁵ Manchester Times, 30 May, 1835.

"November 8, at his brother's house, London, Canada West, aged 46, Josephus Beddome, Esq., late of Hamilton, Upper Canada, and formerly of Manchester." ⁹⁷⁶

Bent, Henry

Henry Bent senior (born c. 1772, died 11 October, 1845) and Henry Bent junior (born c. 1806, died at some time after 1871) were nurserymen in Flixton. Henry Bents won prizes at various flower shows between 1829 and 1850 (for roses, gooseberries, pears, mushrooms, marrow, hollyhock, melon) and in 1850 a Henry Bent was gardener to John Wilson, Esq.⁹⁷⁷

Boardman family

Boardmans were involved with gardens, nurseries, etc for at least a century, although it has not been possible to work out exact relationships. In addition to the Giles and John Boardman at the end of the eighteenth century, a Giles and John Boardman were born about 1781 and both appeared in the 1841 census as nurserymen at Barton on Irwell. They each had several children. By 1851 Giles was recorded as a Market Gardener and his two eldest sons as gardeners. He appears to have died on 16 April 1856, leaving effects of under £20. In 1861 a Richard Boardman was to be found in the same area as a *"nurseryman, occupying 16 acres, employing 7 men and 1 boy"*. Meanwhile, nearby, Margret Boardman (wife of the John Boardman born about 1781) was gardening 3 acres with her three sons. In the 1830s a Miss Boardman was a fruiterer in King Street, Manchester. Hers was one of the addresses given for those interested in subscribing to or buying tickets for the flower shows. Another John (born c.1831) and his brother Thomas (born c. 1836) who were sons of John were market gardeners (their brother Richard was a domestic gardener). John died in 1903, and one of his executors was Charles James Noyes, nurseryman of Pendleton. The Eccles home and garden of a Richard Boardman *"gardener and nurseryman"* was advertised in 1830, following his death. The garden was small – 855 square yards – but contained *"two Hot-houses, judiciously planted with vines"*.⁹⁷⁸

⁹⁷⁶ The Liverpool Mercury, 5 December, 1854.

⁹⁷⁷ Manchester Times, 6 July, 1850. Report of the Horticultural Exhibition at Belle Vue Gardens.

⁹⁷⁸ Manchester Courier, 3 July, 1830.

Booth, Thomas

Thomas Booth appeared in 1851 and 1852 Directories under "*Seedsmen*". However, his address is Church Street, Eccles and the Census gives his occupation as "*chemist & druggist*".

Bowker, Joshua

Joshua Bowker, the son of a farmer, was born around 1810 and, at the age of 30, was working as a gardener. By 1850 he was based on the Mottram Road in Hyde where he combined a nursery with The Grapes Inn and tea garden. However, in 1853 he was bankrupt and the business was auctioned, with the nursery plants being auctioned separately on 17 – 19 October.⁹⁷⁹

The tea gardens were large and included, in addition to a number of pleasure seats, a large wooden building accommodating up to 500 people and a place for a band. The stock in the nursery was extensive:

*"... several thousands of rhododendrons, of different and choice sorts; evergreen hollies, variegated hollies, scarlet and pink thorns, ash, elms, beech, limes, privets, quicks, sycamores, near 2,000 dwarf and standard budded roses, in sorts; a large variety of peaches and nectarines, apples, pears, plums, apricots, and other descriptions of fruit trees, and English and Irish plants, shrubs, and flowers, containing altogether near 200,000, which have been selected with great care, and are in fine growing condition."*⁹⁸⁰

Bowker appears to have left the area and moved to Scarborough where he worked as a landscape gardener, and in 1866 he was again bankrupt.⁹⁸¹ His son, Edward (born c. 1837) was also a landscape gardener, settling eventually in York, where Joshua died towards the end of 1886.

Brown, George

In 1804 there was a Thomas Brown, Gardener at Brierley Street. The entries for George Brown began in 1808; also a gardener, Union Place, Oldfield Lane. This may

⁹⁷⁹ See *Manchester Courier*, 28 May; 11 June; 17 September; 15 October, 1853

⁹⁸⁰ *Manchester Courier*, 11 June 1853

⁹⁸¹ From London Gazette www.london-gazette.co.uk/issues/23139/pages/4067/page.pdf. 7 July 1866: "*Joshua Bowker, of Scarborough, in the county of York, carrying on business of Landscape Gardener, under the style or firm of Joshua Bowker and Co., and also carrying on the business of a Beer Retailer at Dean-street, Cemetery-road, in Scarborough aforesaid.*"

or may not be the same George Brown who appeared from 1828 as “*nurseryman*” in Newton.

Brundrit/Brundrett

The names Brundrit, Brundrett and Brundret were common in and around Manchester and there is sometimes doubt as to whether the spelling has been correct in a particular situation.

There were Brundrits in Stretford who were nurserymen. William was based at 78 Chester Road and Jacob at Higgin Lane, Stretford. They both died in 1858, within four months of each other – Jacob was aged 68 and William 72. Jacob’s son (also Jacob) followed his father into the business, but died aged 41 in 1868. However, there was also a Thomas Brundritt on Chester Road, Stretford who, in 1851, was designated a gardener (employing 3 men and 1 boy), although in 1841 he was on the census as a farmer and in 1861 his widow was also a farmer. Also in 1851 a William Brundrett (gardener, 2 ½ acres, employing 3 sons) was at High Lane in Chorlton, where there could also be found a James Brundrett, gardening 1 acre. In 1855, an advertisement in The Manchester Times refers to “*Messrs. William Brundrett of Stretford... nurserymen*”,⁹⁸² and this may be William Brundrit, mis-spelled – as indeed was Jacob’s name in the notice of his daughter’s marriage, shown by a cross-reference to the marriage records. In various spellings, William Brundrit / Brundritt / Brundrett, was a prize winner at local flower shows, being particularly successful with roses.

Buckley, Henry and John

In 1772 a Henry Buckley is described as “gardener” based at Alport-town. In 1781, the same description and address is used for John Buckley, although Henry Buckley was still a gardener.⁹⁸³ John’s name continued to appear until 1804, although in 1794 the address was Hulme and in 1804, Miles Platting.

⁹⁸² This was the advertisement on behalf of Henry Carrington of Stockport, see footnote, p.73.

⁹⁸³ Also in Manchester Mercury, 28 May, 1782. An advertisement for the sale of a Dyehouse: “*Mr. Henry Buckley, Gardener, top of Deansgate, Manchester, will order a proper Person to shew the Premises...*”

Capstick, Joseph

In 1830, Capstick, describing himself as a "*Nursery, Seedsman and Florist*", based at 85 Deansgate, imported a chest of bulbs from Holland, including "*Amaryllis, Hyacinths, Narcissus, Tulips, Anemonies, Ranunculus, Jonquils, Irises, Ixias, Crocuses, Crown Imperials*" and also had for sale, fruit and forest trees and ornamental shrubs.⁹⁸⁴ He was bankrupted in 1838.⁹⁸⁵

Cookson, Thomas

Listed under "Nursery, Seedsmen and Landscape Gardeners" in the 1845 and 1846 Directories, Cookson was based at Broad Street, Pendleton.

Crane, Thomas

Crane had worked as Bigland's manager and in 1857 had set up shop at 19 Old Millgate where he sold garden and agricultural seeds.⁹⁸⁶

Crossfield, Samuel

Variouly described as "*gardener*"; "*gardener and Seedsman*" Crossfield was at Tontine Street, Salford in 1808. By 1813 until at least 1825 he was at New Windsor, Salford.

Diggles, Thomas

Before setting up as a Landscape Gardener in 1838, Thomas Diggles had been Head Gardener to Rev J Clowes of Broughton Hall for sixteen years.⁹⁸⁷ He appeared in a number of local Directories between 1843 and 1852 under the heading "*Nurserymen, Seedsmen, and Landscape Gardeners*", but in the Census returns he is recorded as simply a Gardener. He was born c. 1797 in Prestwich and lived in Broughton, his address in the 1841 census was Park Lane, Broughton and in 1851 Singleton Brook Cottage. These addresses match the ones in the Directories. The cottage was next

⁹⁸⁴ [Manchester Courier](#), 23 October, 1830.

⁹⁸⁵ [Manchester Courier](#), 4 August, 1838.

⁹⁸⁶ [Manchester Courier](#), 14 March, 1857.

⁹⁸⁷ [Manchester Courier](#) 29 September 1838

door to Park Nursery, which was occupied at the time of the 1851 census by a number of William Lodge's children.

In 1845, Diggles came third in the competition to design the proposed public parks and in June 1850 he was one of the judges at the Manchester Botanical and Horticultural Exhibition. A Thomas Diggles was also a judge in 1851, and it seems fair to assume it was the same man, although there was no address as there had been the previous year. [A Thomas Diggles, Esq. served on council of the Botanical and Horticultural Society but this would have been Thomas Diggles, Esq. of York Street, Cheetham, who was returned, unopposed, to Manchester Town Council in November 1844.]

In 1849, Diggles announced that "*in deference to the urgent requests of many gentlemen*" he had taken a licence to appraise garden and nursery stock.⁹⁸⁸ He died on 6 November, 1855, aged 61.

Elliot, T. B.

In 1808, druggist, seedsman, &c. 26 Market Place.

Fogg, Birch & Hampson

This was a company that covered a number of trades. They were based at 16 Old Millgate: in 1804 when they advertised clover, grass seed, etc. they were simply Fogg & Birch,⁹⁸⁹ but by 1808 Hampson had joined them. They again advertised clover and grass seeds, thanking gentlemen and farmers for their "*... liberal support ... for some years past*". They also had available "*a constant supply of Soap Waste, (for manure) at their Soap Works, Hunt's Bank*".⁹⁹⁰ In the same advertisement they announced that they had given up the retail trade and would instead deal wholesale as "*Grocers, Chandlers, Soap Boilers, &c*". In the 1788 Directory, Edward Fogg, was a Grocer in Old Millgate. In the 1824 Directory, Birch & Hampson were Grocers at 16 Old Millgate.

⁹⁸⁸ Manchester Courier, 13 October, 1849.

⁹⁸⁹ Manchester Mercury, 13 March, 1804.

⁹⁹⁰ Manchester Mercury, 22 March, 1808.

Foote, Andrew

Born c. 1789, it appears that Foote was the gardener at Broughton New Hall in 1830⁹⁹¹ but by 1837 he was appearing in Directories as a landscape gardener based at Bank Parade, Salford. However, he also sold garden and flower seeds⁹⁹² and the notice of his wife's death in 1852 referred to him as "*nursery and seedsman*".⁹⁹³ Their home appeared to be in Irlam as that is where his wife died and where he himself died 9 August, 1855 aged 66.⁹⁹⁴

Foulds, John

Foulds occupied a nursery at Hullard Hall, Stretford New Road in the 1860s. A trade catalogue for "*Chrysanthemums, Dahlias, Geraniums &c.*" was issued in 1864⁹⁹⁵ and another for "*Plants and Cuttings of New Zonal Bedding Pelargoniums, Fuchsias, Chrysanthemums &c.*" in 1868.⁹⁹⁶

Glasier, Samuel & Absalom

Listed in 1851 as "*seedsman*"; 41 Shudehill, in the 1852 Directory, they appear in the "*seedsman*" trade listings, but also as "*chemists and druggists*" and in the personal listings they were described as "*Wholesale Druggists*"; though only Samuel is shown separately (home address 8 Green Street, Ardwick). In the 1861 Census, Samuel Glasier, Legh Place, Ardwick, gave his profession as "*Wholesale druggist*".

Hallam, Thomas

Listed in 1845, 1846 and 1848 under "nursery, seedsman & landscape gardeners", Cheetwood, Thomas Hallam appeared in the 1851 Census in Cheetwood Lane, with his profession "*Landscape Gardener*", and he was listed as such in the 1855 Directory, where his address was given as 69 Cheetwood.⁹⁹⁷ Born around 1805,⁹⁹⁸ he was from

⁹⁹¹ Manchester Courier, 1 May, 1830: "*LEY FOR HORSES AND CATTLE. – An excellent Ley for Horses and Cattle. – Apply to ANDREW FOOTE, the gardener, at Broughton New Hall.*"

⁹⁹² Manchester Courier, 8 February, 1840. In his advertisement he referred to himself as "*Landscape Gardener and Seedsman*".

⁹⁹³ Manchester Courier, 3 July, 1852.

⁹⁹⁴ Manchester Courier, 11 August, 1855.

⁹⁹⁵ Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, 2 August 1864, p.94.

⁹⁹⁶ Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener, 26 March, 1868, p.242.

⁹⁹⁷ In the 1852 Directory, he appears as Thomas Hallen, Landscape Gardener, 111 Cheetwood.

Holme Pierrepont, Nottinghamshire,⁹⁹⁹ (incorrectly recorded in the census as "Home Torpoint"). In 1861 he was visiting his family at Nottingham and his profession was simply "*Gardener*". He was not successful. In 1871 he was a pauper inmate of the Nottingham Workhouse.

Hammond, Charles

Although listed in the 1851 directory under both "*nursery, seedsmen & landscape gardeners*" and "*seedsmen*", at 208 Deansgate, for Charles Hammond, seeds were a sideline to his Chemist & Druggist business. In the 1851 census (occupation Chemist and Druggist) a Charles Hammond, born at Openshaw around 1823 is listed at 234 Deansgate. In 1854 he suffered the same fate as many others when he was declared insolvent (in addition to his chemist shop he kept a horse and lurry for hire) but was back in business in Salford in 1856.

Hamnett, James

James Hamnett was born around 1796 and was married to Ann. They appeared on the 1841 and 1851 Census sheets, where he was recorded as a Nurseryman. They lived almost next door to Richard Smalley Yates. Hamnett occupied eight separate plots of land; those owned by Peter Shawcross lay to the west of what would be the Washway Road, and those owned by Samuel Brooks lay to the east.¹⁰⁰⁰ Although Hamnett had died by the time the OS map of 1875 was drawn, the land was still then being used as a nursery and continued to be known as Hamnett's.

In Pigot & Co.'s National Commercial Directory of 1828-9, Hamnett was recorded under the Altrincham heading of Seedsmen, although the entry gives his address, together with his nursery, as Sale Moor. In White's Directory of 1860 Hamnett is described as a "*managing nurseryman*" and it is possible that the nursery had been purchased by John Hockenhull¹⁰⁰¹ as it was he who ordered the auction of

⁹⁹⁸ Census records show variations in his age, giving a birth date of between 1803 and 1808.

⁹⁹⁹ Now home to the National Water Sports Centre.

¹⁰⁰⁰ He also occupied plots in other areas – see maps.cheshire.gov.uk/tithemaps.

¹⁰⁰¹ The partnership between William Darbyshire and John Hockenhull, nurserymen of Sale Moor was dissolved. Manchester Courier, 23 September 1866.

the nursery stock in September 1879.¹⁰⁰² There was more than one nursery. Hamnett's needed to be cleared, but it took some time and in March 1880 remaining stock had been cleared onto one of the other nurseries. This included stock which had been purchased but not collected, and quite a bit remained:

*"These include many of the finest specimens that have been sold at former sales and not taken away; fine pyramidal trees, 6ft. to 12ft. high, of cupressus, lawsoniana, thurja tatarica, English yews, thujopsis, gold and silver hollies, rhododendrons, fine bushy plants, 4ft. to 5ft. each way; many thousands of fine large straight ornamental trees, from 9ft. to 15ft. high, fit for avenue and other planting where immediate effect is required, with smaller sizes of same, being chiefly sycamore, horse chestnut, lime, birch, laburnum, ash, elm, &c."*¹⁰⁰³

It is possible that Hockenhull had also taken Yates' nursery, as the advertisement continued with the sale of stock from the second nursery:

"... large quantities of fine strong fruit trees, all of sorts adapted for this climate 0 apples, pears, plums, cherries, currants, gooseberries, &c. – in quantities of selected sorts to suit purchasers; about 30,000 strong thorn quicks; also fine specimen English yews, 6ft. to 3ft. with aucubas, rhododendrons, hollies, Portugal laurels, and other evergreens, roses, &c."

A final sale notice appeared on 13 October. The tenancy of the land had expired. Hockenhull retired and died 16 April, 1886, aged 76.¹⁰⁰⁴

Heyes, H.

Heyes was a Druggist as well as a Seedsman. He placed adverts in The Manchester Times in three consecutive years, 1837-39. In the first of these he listed some with prices by the bushel (e.g. early Warwick peas at 11s. and Early Long Pod beans at 7s), but also had onion, turnip, carrot and lettuce seeds and "a choice assortment" of flower seeds.¹⁰⁰⁵ The following year, his advertisement made no mention of types of

¹⁰⁰² The sale continued over many days – 27 days up to 20 November 1879 (Manchester Courier, 20 September; 18 October; 25 October; 8 November and 15 November 1879) and a further three days the following Spring (Manchester Courier, 14 and 28 February, 1880).

¹⁰⁰³ Manchester Courier, 13 March, 1880.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Manchester Times, 24 April, 1886.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Manchester Times, 6 May, 1837.

seeds, but did promise a catalogue.¹⁰⁰⁶ In these two years, his address was 61 Oldfield Lane, but in 1839 he was at 120 Deansgate.¹⁰⁰⁷

Heywood, Samuel

Born c. 1816, Samuel Heywood was a nurseryman and florist, living in Prestwich, with a nursery at Heaton Park. He appeared in the 1852 Directory. In 1838 there was a Peter Heywood "*nurseryman and constable*" in Prestwich.¹⁰⁰⁸

Knott, John

Little has been found about John Knott. In Pigot's Directories of 1836 and 1837 (he does not appear in the 1834 edition) he is listed under nursery and seedsmen, with an address at Cheetwood. Swindells refers to him very briefly in a discussion of Cheetwood "*... and near to [John Fothergill's] house were the nursery gardens of John Knott*".¹⁰⁰⁹ It is likely that he had taken over Bridgford's nursery, but it seems that he was more of a gardener than a nurseryman. That is the profession he gave in the 1851 census and again in the 1852 Directory, where he appeared in the private, but not trade, listings. His address was 22 Cheetwood. Knott was born in Glossop around 1780.

Lockhart, Miles

Miles Lockhart was in Manchester in 1841 and 1842,¹⁰¹⁰ offering for sale Dutch bulbs and flower seeds listed in free catalogues. His advertisements referred to his brothers Theodore and Charles who were in business as florists at Cheapside in London (they lived in Fulham). Theodore was the eldest of the brothers (born c. 1806 at Hawkshead in Lancashire) and in 1830 he was in Haarlem, from where he sent "*a dozen of his best hyacinths, with several other valuable bulbs*" to Hull Botanic

¹⁰⁰⁶ Manchester Times, 6 January, 1838.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Manchester Times, 16 February, 1839.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Liverpool Mercury, 23 March, 1838. This was a report of a serious mugging of Peter by three men near the Strangeways toll-bar. Peter was taken to the Grove Inn, where he was seen by a doctor. He was expected to recover, but to lose an eye. Peter was 20 years older than Samuel.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Swindells, T. Manchester Streets and Manchester Men Fourth Series. 1908 J E Cornish Ltd, Manchester. p.176.

¹⁰¹⁰ Manchester Courier, 18 September and 9 October, 1841; Manchester Times, 19 and 26 February, 1842.

Gardens.¹⁰¹¹ He was probably in training at Kreps nursery as later advertisement refer to their collection as being the origin of plants on offer.¹⁰¹² In 1833 he visited Leeds and three years later Miles could be found there on the same errand.¹⁰¹³ By 1841 he was in Manchester. It is not clear from these advertisements whether these were relatively short visits or whether he was in longer residence.

Despite references to the business of T & C Lockhart¹⁰¹⁴ in the floriculture magazines,¹⁰¹⁵ it ran into financial difficulties and the company was made bankrupt in 1845. Although Theodore continued in the business,¹⁰¹⁶ his brothers went into other lines of work¹⁰¹⁷ and the connection with Manchester was lost.

Lowe, John

Appeared in Trade listings (Nursery & seedsmen & landscape gardeners) in Directories between 1843 and 1846. Address Shakspear Place, Longsight.

Mason, Daniel

In 1792 Daniel Mason, a gardener, was "*declining business*"¹⁰¹⁸ and had for sale a stock of apple and cherry trees, gooseberry and currant bushes. He appeared in the 1781 Directory, in Chapel Street Salford. In the 1788 Directory a Randall Mason, gardener, was in Quay Street, Salford.

Mayor, Thomas

1818 Directory. Seedsman, Higher Ardwick

¹⁰¹¹ Hull Packet, 21 September, 1830.

¹⁰¹² Information about Kreps Nursery can be found in Neill, Patrick, Journal of a Horticultural Tour through some parts of Flanders, Holland and the North of France, in the Autumn of 1817. (1823) p.175-181.

¹⁰¹³ See Leeds Intelligencer, 17 September 1836 and 16 September, 1837.

¹⁰¹⁴ There are separate entries in Desmond for Charles and Theodore Lockhart; however the one for Charles refers to his being in business with his brother Thomas. It is possible that at some point Th or Theo for Theodore was mis-translated as Thomas.

¹⁰¹⁵ See e.g. The British Florist, May 1840 p.10 and November 1844, p.223; The Gardener and Practical Florist, 1843, p. 303.

¹⁰¹⁶ The census records show that he remained in Fulham and continued business as a Florist until, at the age of 75, he was recorded as "*Clerk to a Nursery*".

¹⁰¹⁷ Charles was employed by the railways; Miles appears to have moved into property.

¹⁰¹⁸ Manchester Mercury, 21 February, 1792.

Moore, John

1845 and 1846 Directories, 27 Brook Street, David Street, under "*Nurserymen, seedsmen and landscape gardeners*". In 1834 a Charles Moore, Rusholme, is listed under "*Nursery and seedsmen*".

Needham & Sudlow

In the 1858 Directory, appeared the name Needham & Sudlow, Rusholme, Florists. John Sudlow was a gardener, born around 1800 in Dunham, Cheshire, and living in Nelson Street, Rusholme. Ephraim Needham was an older man – born around 1785 in Biggin, Derbyshire, but living in Longsight when his son James was born in 1825. James followed his father's profession and in 1861 was a Master Gardener, employing 6 men and 2 boys. The business possibly suffered as a result of the Cotton Famine as in 1871 he was recorded once more as "*gardener*", as was his son James. His older son Ephraim worked in a shop.

O'Brien, Daniel

1851 Directory, at 33 Regent Street, Salford.

Ord, Joseph

Ord appeared in the 1845 Directory at 39 Fountain Street, Cheetham Hill. In the 1851 Census, Fountain Street is shown as Crumpsall and Ord was recorded as a Landscape Gardener. He was born in Hexham, Northumberland, about 1786; his wife Susannah, ten years his junior, was born in Bolton, but their son Thomas was born in Cheetham (c. 1827). A Joseph Ord died in Manchester early in 1857 shortly after a Susannah Ord died.

Osbaldeston, John

Born around 1817, the son of a gardener (Thomas), John was a Florist, living in Ashton-on-Mersey. By 1861 he combined work as a Florist with that of Professor of Music. This continued as his occupation in 1871, when his address was Glebelands Road, Ashton-on-Mersey.

Pierce, Roger

In 1824, Roger Pierce was listed as a gardener at 6 Boundary Street, Chorlton Row and in 1834 as a "*seedsman*" at 16 Downing Street, Ardwick. A death notice for his wife, Elizabeth, in 1852, referred to him as "*Landscape Gardener, Boundary Lane, Greenheys*".¹⁰¹⁹

Ratchford, James and John

These names appeared in directories spanning the period 1772 to 1788 (James in 1772 and 1781; John in 1781 and 1788). The address for both was Alport Lane/Street. In 1788 John was listed as "*gardener and seedsman*". Earlier entries were simply "*gardener*". John and George Ratchford "*Gardeners*" were involved in an unseemly altercation with Special Constables in January 1782. In exchange for the Constables dropping the prosecution, the Ratchfords had to place an advertisement "*making a Public Acknowledgement, and causing this Advertisement to be inserted ... at our own Expençe*".¹⁰²⁰

Scott, Christopher

Although the partnership between A. Bigland, H. Bigland and C. Scott was dissolved in 1842, it is not clear when it began. In 1840 Christopher Scott & Co. won an extra prize for an *Oncidium flexora* at the July Botanical and Horticultural Society Show.¹⁰²¹ Scott was advertising separately in 1841, as C. Scott & Co. Nursery and Seedsman, Whalley Nursery, and 7, St. Ann's-street, Manchester¹⁰²² and he appeared in Slater's Directory for 1843. At the Botanical and Horticultural Society exhibition on 30 June 1841, the company picked up three first prizes: for six specimens of Greenhouse plants; for single specimen Pelargonium and for their Basket of Plants.¹⁰²³ Later that year at the Agricultural Society's Annual Exhibition the company showed a fine turnip and the following year won a silver medal for their turnips and carrots.¹⁰²⁴ Their advertisement of 16 October 1841 encompassed, Dutch bulbs, their "*splendid seedling Cinerarias, that were much admired, and which gained extra prizes at the*

¹⁰¹⁹ [Manchester Times](#), 4 September, 1852.

¹⁰²⁰ [Manchester Mercury](#) 15 January, 1782.

¹⁰²¹ [Manchester Times](#), 11 July, 1840.

¹⁰²² [Manchester Times](#), 16 October, 1841.

¹⁰²³ [Manchester Courier](#), 10 July, 1841.

¹⁰²⁴ [Manchester Times](#), 2 October, 1841.

Liverpool and Manchester flower shows in the spring, at 3s. 6d. each, or collection of 12 for 30s”, stove, greenhouse and hardy plants plus garden and agricultural seeds. Mentions of the company then cease although mention of the Whalley Nursery continued. In 1860 it was in the hands of John Shaw (below).¹⁰²⁵ In 1879 the creditors of John Potts, nurseryman of the Whalley Range Nursery met at the Mitre hotel.¹⁰²⁶

Shaw, John (1814-1890) [D]

When he died, Shaw’s obituary referred to his “*half a century [as] a prominent personage in horticultural circles*” – and indeed he was a Fellow and life member of the Royal Horticultural Society.

Born in Dumfries, Scotland in 1814, Shaw was involved in reclamation works in Cannock Chase before moving to Manchester where he set up business in Moss Side. He had outlets in Princess Street, Oxford Street and York Street, Hulme and owned the Whalley Nursery (see Scott, above), in Moss Side. In 1851 he lived with his Manchester-born wife Mary and their growing family in Withington Road, Moss Side. He described himself as a Landscape Gardener, Nursery and Seedsman and employed eighteen men and two apprentices. Although he kept the outlet in Oxford Street and retained the Whalley Nursery, he later opened (in addition) the Stamford nursery in Bowdon.

Stamford nursery lay on the A56, just north of where Denzell House would be built in 1875 (its grounds today are open to the public) and opposite to Dunham New Park. Shaw threw a party for the inauguration of the new nursery in February 1859, and, to mark the event, planted two deodar cedars.¹⁰²⁷

Shaw was variously referred to as a Landscape Gardener (generally in local reports) and a nurseryman (nationally).¹⁰²⁸ His name cropped up several times in reports of the Botanical and Horticultural Society and he was for a few years Secretary to the Society. In 1852 the Society responded to complaints that they were not making provision for gentlemen’s gardeners on exhibition days and, in

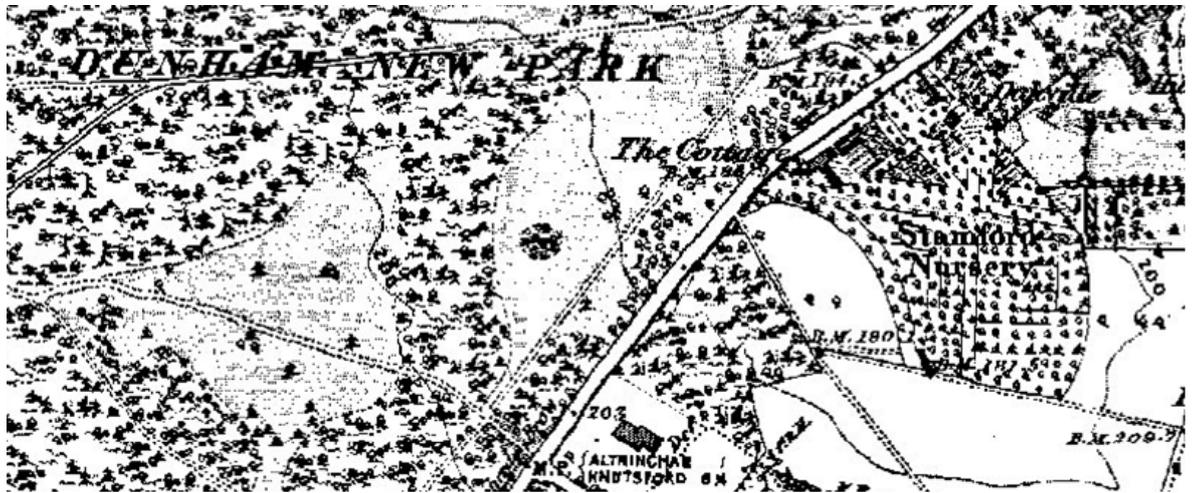
¹⁰²⁵ [Manchester Courier](#), 19 May, 1860.

¹⁰²⁶ [Manchester Courier](#), 24 September, 1879.

¹⁰²⁷ [Manchester Times](#), 12 February, 1859

¹⁰²⁸ Although in the probate record he was called a seedsman.

addition to providing refreshments, inaugurated discussions on gardening matters. John Shaw undertook to open the initial discussion.



Shaw's Stamford Nursery. opposite Dunham New Park. Ordnance Survey map c.1875. Courtesy Cheshire Archives and Local Studies e-mapping Victorian Cheshire

Like other nurserymen, Shaw exhibited at flower shows – not necessarily for competition. At the Botanic Gardens Extra Flower Show (June 1853), he provided a display of ericas and “a *Quercus niger*, a new variety of oak”,¹⁰²⁹ considered by the judges worthy of a certificate of merit.¹⁰³⁰ In 1864 he displayed roses at the first exhibition held by the Sale and Ashton-on-Mersey Floral and Horticultural Society.¹⁰³¹ He won several prizes at the Grand National Horticultural Exhibition held at Manchester in May, 1869 – for roses; orchids; stove and greenhouse plants in flower; miscellaneous plants; *Dracænas* or *Cordylines*; pair of palms; pair of pyramidal bay trees; twenty-four hardy ferns; ten amaryllis in flower; twelve hardy rhododendrons in flower and twelve hardy azaleas in flower, but his only first prize was for twenty hardy conifers.¹⁰³² In 1872, he was a judge at the September show held at the Manchester Botanic Gardens, where he received two first-class certificates for new plants – one was a *geonoma* (a type of palm) and the other a *musa superba*¹⁰³³ –

¹⁰²⁹ Correctly, *Quercus nigra*.

¹⁰³⁰ *Manchester Times*, 15 June, 1853.

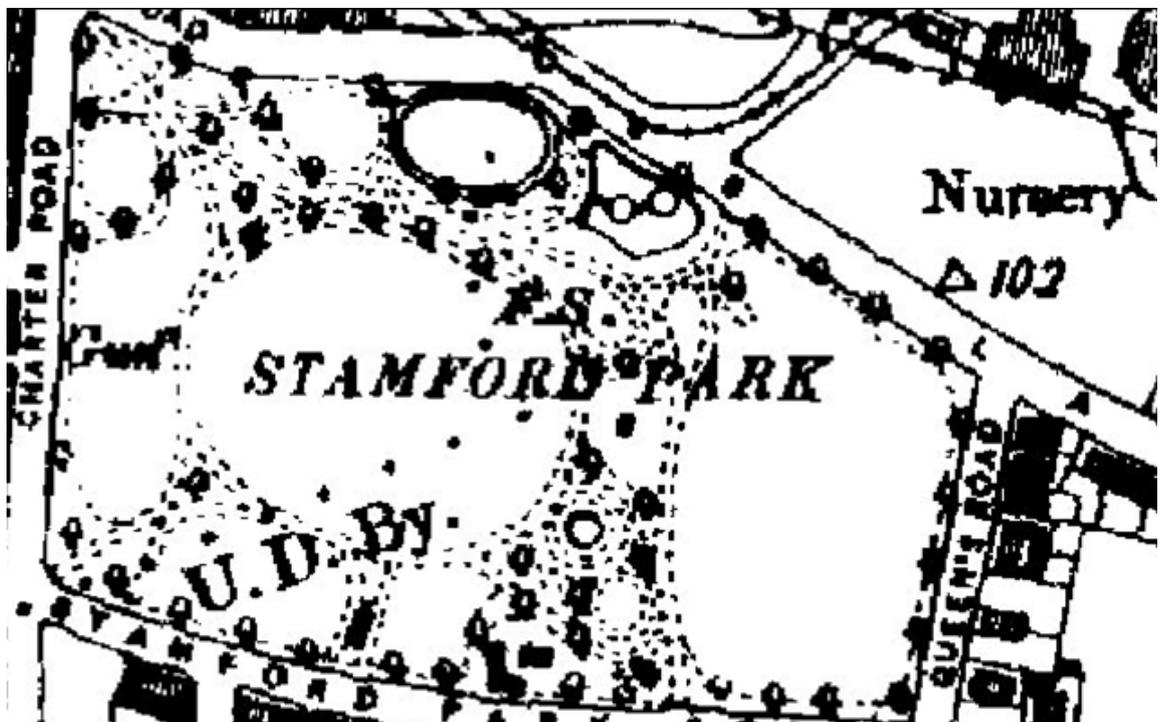
¹⁰³¹ *Manchester Times*, 2 July, 1864. They were for show only as the Society had been formed “solely for cottage gardeners”.

¹⁰³² *Manchester Courier*, 15 May, 1869. Judging was severe: for ten roses in flower the 2nd and 3rd prizes was not awarded; Shaw was given an extra prize of £4 (half the 3rd prize). Other classes showed similar results..

¹⁰³³ Now known as *Ensete superbum*.

and a first-class commendation for a miscellaneous group of plants.¹⁰³⁴ Two years later he received a first-class certificate for another new palm.

As a Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society, Shaw subscribed five guineas to, and underwrote by £50, the 1866 International Horticultural and Botanical Congress.¹⁰³⁵ The previous year the RHS approved a new form of labels which Shaw had developed. They were made of polished zinc, in various sizes and shapes, and with the names deeply etched in the metal. The names were then filled with a black substance. The RHS Committee considered these well adapted for their purpose “*provided the black substance remains permanent, and the polished surface does not become so tarnished as to render the name indistinct*”.¹⁰³⁶



*Stamford Park, Altrincham. Ordnance Survey map c.1875.
Courtesy Cheshire Archives and Local Studies e-mapping Victorian Cheshire*

Shaw's work as a Landscape Gardener included the design of Stamford Park, Altrincham, with the actual construction being undertaken by his son, John Shaw, Jr. The park was a series of circles and ovals, providing space for cricket, football, bowls,

¹⁰³⁴ Manchester Times, 14 September, 1872.

¹⁰³⁵ The International Horticultural Exhibition and Botanical Congress held in London from May 22nd to May 31st 1866: Report of Proceedings. p.419.

¹⁰³⁶ Journal of Horticulture and Practical Gardening, Vol. 8 p.211.

quoits, and children's playgrounds.¹⁰³⁷ Enclosed by trees was a lake, for swimming. In October 1880, the park was opened. A procession, complete with brass band, made a circuit of the town, ending up at the gates to the park. Shaw presented a gold key to the mayor, who unlocked the gates, made a tour of the ground and declared the park open to the public.¹⁰³⁸

Following his father's death at the age of 78, John Shaw, Jr, continued in the business and appeared as a Landscape Gardener in Directories up until at least 1923.

Smith, William and James

In addition to the James Smith who was a partner with Taylor at Dukinfield and then moved to Flixton, there was also James Gray Smith, in partnership with William. They had a nursery at Stocks, Cheetham Hill and a shop at 39 Deansgate. They ran into financial difficulties in 1826 and their stock of forest and fruit trees, stove, greenhouse and other plants at the nursery were put up for sale at "*very reduced prices*".¹⁰³⁹ It is not clear how many years they had been in business, but in an advert in 1827 James Gray Smith thanked "*those who have for so many years favoured him with their commands*".¹⁰⁴⁰ In 1830 James Gray Smith was discharged from bankruptcy and the following year again advertised in Manchester, having opened a shop at 6 Hanging Ditch.

*"Garden and Agricultural Seeds, Fruit and Forest Trees, Evergreens, Shrubs, &c. J.G. SMITH (late of Deansgate) No. 6, Hanging-Ditch, begs to inform his Friends and the Public, that he has OPENED an ESTABLISHMENT as above, where, by keeping the most superior articles, and on the best possible terms, he trusts to be favoured with a continuation of their former patronage."*¹⁰⁴¹

¹⁰³⁷ Shaw has been described as "*the only English follower of Edouard André, who had introduced French curvilinear style into England*". The regeneration of public parks. Woudstra and Fieldhouse (Ed.)

¹⁰³⁸ Unfortunately, this was not the end of the matter for John Shaw, Jr. In 1882 he was forced to go to the Courts to recover £734 13s. 1d., the balance owing to him.

¹⁰³⁹ Manchester Courier, 17 February, 1827.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Manchester Courier, 6 January, 1827.

¹⁰⁴¹ Manchester Times, 12 February, 1831.

Stafford, Samuel

Although based in Hyde, Samuel Stafford brought his goods to market in Manchester,¹⁰⁴² and was listed under Manchester nurserymen.¹⁰⁴³ Born in Gee Cross, Cheshire around 1795, Stafford's Hyde Nursery was in business from around 1830 and in 1851 he was employing twenty men.¹⁰⁴⁴ His family also worked in the nursery and Thomas Stafford (whose daughter Emily was to marry Charles James Noyes) was probably his son, although in 1851 he was living in his own home.

In 1844 Stafford advertised 200,000 four-year old thorn quicks (15s. per thousand or stronger ones at 20s. and 25s). He also had the usual "*forest, fruit and ornamental trees; evergreen and deciduous shrubs*", but also the less hardy camellias and calceolarias, which were grown in greenhouses. In 1864 The Floral World and Garden Guide described the catalogues produced by Stafford (one was of greenhouse and stove plants, orchids and ferns, the other of trees, fruit trees and shrubs): "*These catalogues are of more than average interest and merit. They are neither voluminous nor verbose, but short, concise, and containing only the choicest and most useful subjects in the several departments represented.*"

Stafford was found at many flower shows – at Glossop, Ashton, Oldham, Manchester, Rochdale – both displaying plants and acting as judge. His displays could also be found at agricultural shows. In 1857 the Queen's visit to the Art Treasures Exhibition in Manchester was marked by an exhibition at Greenacres Grammar School in Oldham where Stafford provided 160 ft of display of greenhouse plants – either side of a lobby erected to link two buildings.

Following his death, (7 May, 1869)¹⁰⁴⁵ his son Samuel continued in the same business until after the turn of the century.

Stretch, William

Appeared as "*gardener and seedsman*" in Directories from 1815 to 1824.

¹⁰⁴² Stafford's name appears as one of those agreeing to the change in Market Day. Report The Manchester Times, 25 October, 1856.

¹⁰⁴³ The National Garden Almanack (1853); Slater's Manchester Directory (1869).

¹⁰⁴⁴ Ten years later the number was 17 men and 6 boys.

¹⁰⁴⁵ See Manchester Record, 1869

Swaile, John

A John Swale (gardener), Travis Street appeared in the 1800 Directory and in 1815 a John Swaile (gardener and seedsman), Chapel Street, Ardwick.

Taberon, Timothy

Although only ever described as a gardener, Timothy Taberon is noteworthy for the length of time he remained in Caygill Street, Salford (1804-1819). His surname is variously spelt – he first appeared in the 1797 Directory as Timothy Tabbern at 127 Chapel Street, Salford, then in 1804 and 1808, it was Tabberny, before becoming Taberon (1814-19) – but it seems fair to assume it is the same person throughout.

Taylor, James

A James Taylor, near the Toll-bar, White Smithy, Crumpsall, listed under "*Nursery, Seedsmen and Landscape Gardeners*" appeared in directories from 1843 to 1851. A Taylor was one of the local nurserymen who provided plants for the public parks.¹⁰⁴⁶

Taylor, Gregory

Gregory Taylor (born around 1799) is an example of how difficult it can be to understand the horticultural trade from a distance of 150 years. In the Census returns (his address was Davyhulme) he was recorded as a "*Market Gardener*", yet in an 1852 Directory he was described as a "*Gardener and Seedsman*" and in 1858 a G. Taylor, Davyhulme, was recorded as a "*Florist*"

Walker, Ann

As one of the very few women involved in the trade, it is unfortunate that the only references to Ann Walker were in an 1825 Directory. In the personal listing, where she was described as "*gardener*" her address was given as Broomhouse Lane, Pendleton and in the Trade listings as Eccles Old Road.

¹⁰⁴⁶ The Manchester Times, 15 May 1846.

Wild, James

A Nurseryman and Florist at Cheetham Hill, Wild appeared in a Directory for 1843. In 1837, his shop was one of those where subscribers to the Floral and Horticultural Society could leave their names.¹⁰⁴⁷

Wilkinson, Thomas [D] [H]

Thomas Wilkinson occupied Barton Nursery between 1791 and 1815.¹⁰⁴⁸ He had available all the usual nursery plants – forest and fruit trees, evergreen and flowering shrubs, bog and herbaceous plants, plus cauliflower and asparagus plants, kitchen garden and flower seeds and “*every article in the Nursery line*”. He also had a “*curious Fern leaved Beech, which has been so very much admired*”. He apologised to his customers that he had had insufficient Mushroom Spawn bricks to meet the previous year’s demand, but had laid in a stock of these and hoped that no one would be disappointed. They would be ready at the beginning of May.¹⁰⁴⁹

Willcock, Samuel and William

An auctioneer, rather than a nurseryman, Samuel Willcock regularly auctioned plants. In October 1831 Samuel was asked by the executors of the late William Leighton of Preston to auction “*The entire of his Collection of named TULIPS, amongst which are some of the best and most valuable sorts known in England*”. That was a collection of around 4,000 bulbs. In the same month he had twice that number from the estate of Mr. William Crompton of Bolton-le-Moors – again “*some of the best and most valuable roots known in England*”. He imported Dutch bulbs direct from Holland – “*named Tulips, Ranunculuses, Hyacinths, Polyanthus, Narcissus, Jonquils, Anemonies, Irises, Crocuses, Crown Imperials, &c.*” Although Samuel died in 1835, William Willcock, jun. continued the business, at least till November 1835.

¹⁰⁴⁷ The Manchester Times, 11 March, 1837. This is probably the James Wild after whom J. Walker of Winton named a tulip (see p. 90).

¹⁰⁴⁸ Harvey, John. Early Nurserymen. p.115.

¹⁰⁴⁹ The Manchester Mercury, 8 February, 1803.

Wilson, John

By 1797, John Wilson had taken over Ann Cooke's "*druggist and seedsman*" business at 27 Market Place. He was succeeded (by 1808) by George Vaughan.

Wilson, Mr.

Occupied a nursery at Longsight. The range of plants was considerable – greenhouse, bedding, herbaceous, and rock plants, evergreens, ornamental shrubs, forest trees (including 1,000 beech up to 10ft high), gooseberry, currant, vegetables, potatoes, beet. The nursery was apparently closing down in 1849 as not only were these plants for sale, but also gardening equipment – cucumber and other frames, glasses, garden tools, wheelbarrows, mats, etc.

Winstanley, Thomas Frank

Winstanley took over Hodgson Bigland's shop at 28 Market Place in 1854. He appeared in the 1855 Directory, (home address 14 Ducie Street, Oxford Road) but not in 1869. In 1856 he advertised a "*NEW POTATO – DIOSCOREA BATATAS (var. Japonica)*", for which demand was rapidly increasing.¹⁰⁵⁰ This was known as the Chinese Potato or Yam and was being widely advertised that year.¹⁰⁵¹

Yates, George, and sons

George Yates was born in Liverpool around 1807. In 1841, he was living in Stockport and recorded his occupation as Grocer. However, by 1851 he was a seedsman, living at Hulme Hall, Reddish with his wife Ann and eight children. The eldest, Samuel and next eldest, John were 19 and 17 respectively and working for their father as Assistant Seedsmen. George (12), William (10) and Thomas (8) were still at school. By 1851 Samuel and John had left home, but George, William and Thomas had entered the seed business.

In 1848, Yates opened a shop at 17 Old Millgate, Manchester, in addition to the one he had at Stockport, where he had been in business for 22 years. His early adverts at this address were for garden and agricultural seeds – "*Cabbages*,

¹⁰⁵⁰ The Manchester Times, 9 February, 1856

¹⁰⁵¹ The Kitchen and Flower Garden, Delamer, 1856 p. 50-1. An account of this "new" plant was carried by The Gardener's Chronicle, 23 December, 1854.

Cauliflowers, Lettuces, Onions, Winter Vetches, Rye, &c. &c."¹⁰⁵² In 1854 he had priced catalogues available of Dutch bulbs – hyacinths, tulips, crocus – which he had imported direct from Holland.

By 1855 he had taken his son, Samuel, into business and their address was 16 Old Millgate. Subsequently Yates opened a shop at 28 Market Place, Manchester, leaving Samuel in charge at Old Millgate. In 1862 Samuel was offering the best varieties of peas and beans; celery, onion and cucumber seeds for exhibition growing; Ashleaf kidney potatoes which he had had grown especially for him; *Gladioli gandavensis* hybrids.¹⁰⁵³ He sold seeds wholesale as well as retail. In 1864 he was importing seed of German stocks, Asters and Zinnias.

While Samuel continued to run the Old Millgate outlet, two other of Yates' sons – George and William – took over the Market Place shop. Alongside the seeds and bulbs, they stocked bedding plants (geraniums, calceolarias, verbenas, &c.) and, in addition, lawn mowers, garden chairs, &c.¹⁰⁵⁴ Other items recorded in advertisements were *Lilium auratum* ("5s. each"); tobacco cloth for fumigating ("extra strong, 1s. lb"); winter flowers ("Epacris, Azaleas, Camellias, &c. cheap and good"); greenhouse and window flowering plants. In 1869 Mrs. Pollock geraniums were available at 5s. to 7s. per dozen, verbenas at 20s. per 100 and plants were delivered daily from their Heaton Norris nursery to the Market Place shop (the 1871 census shows that William was employing 18 men on this nursery).

The brothers exhibited at various flower shows. At the Grand National Horticultural Exhibition at Manchester during the third week of May 1869 they featured heavily:

"The special prizes for a miscellaneous collection of bedding and hardy plants brought a capital collection from Messrs. G. and W. Yates, Manchester, being in small square boxes, a good assortment comprising Pelargoniums of all kinds, Centaureas, Tropæolums, Petunias, variegated plants, &c. Special prize open to all Miscellaneous Collection of Bedding and Hardy Plants – Messrs. G. & W. Yates, Manchester. Twelve Hardy Shrubs in flower – ... 2. Messrs G. & W. Yates. Nurserymen's prizes: Eight Zonal Pelargoniums in flower, distinct – ...; 2. Messrs G. and W. Yates. Eight Variegated Pelargoniums, distinct – 1. Messrs. G. and W. Yates; ... Twenty Hardy Conifers – ... 3. Messrs. G and W

¹⁰⁵² Manchester Times, 4 August, 1849.

¹⁰⁵³ These hybrids between *G. natalensis* and *G. oppositiflorus* had first been made in France by Lemoine of Nancy in 1837.

¹⁰⁵⁴ The Manchester Times, 16 June, 1866.

*Yates ... Fifty Hardy Alpine and Herbaceous Plants – 1. Messrs. G and W Yates; ...*¹⁰⁵⁵

In May 1875 they won second prizes in a number of categories – greenhouse ericas; alpine and herbaceous plants in pots; ten hardy evergreen trees and shrubs; pair of greenhouse palms; eighteen bunches of cut flowers. At the National Horticultural Exhibition in 1876, “*Mr. R. S. Yates, Messrs. H. Lane and Sons, Berkhamstead; and Messrs. G. and W. Yates, Heaton Norris, competed for the mastery*” and won three second and two third prizes for, variously, greenhouse ericas, greenhouse azaleas, hardy rhododendrons, alpine and herbaceous plants and a pair of greenhouse palms.

George Yates, the father, having set up the business which his sons so well developed, diversified, and in the 1871 census was described as “*maltster, hop and seedsman*”. He died on 1 April, 1879. His will was sworn to by his second son John, who was also a seedsman but in Doncaster, and by George and William.

¹⁰⁵⁵ The Gardener 1869

Robert Turner's stock

[*Advertisement transcribed from Manchester Mercury, 26 March, 1782*
This is the fullest priced listing of a Manchester nurseryman's stock found.]

This is to inform Gentlemen and Others,
That ROBERT TURNER,
 NURSERY-MAN, at KERSAL-MOOR, near *Manchester,*
 Being old, and not able to follow so large a Business,
And having got about
 A Hundred Thousand Scotch Firs,
 ALL TRANSPLANTED,
 Proposes to sell them, and the under-mentioned Articles,
 at the following low Rates, viz.

	<i>S.</i>	<i>D.</i>	
SCOTCH FIRS, eight or nine Inches	1	6	per hundred
Ditto, one Foot and a Half ditto	2	6	ditto
Ditto, two Feet	3	0	ditto
Ditto, two Feet and a Half	5	0	ditto
Ditto, three Feet	7	6	ditto
Ditto, six Feet	0	4	each
About a hundred thousand SPRUCE FIRS			
Spruce Firs, one Foot	2	6	per hundred
Ditto, two Feet	4	0	ditto
Ditto, two Feet and a Half	5	0	ditto
Lord Weymouth Pines, six Inches, all transplanted	0	2	each
Ditto, one Foot	0	3	ditto
Ditto, two or three Feet	0	6	ditto
Cluster Pines	1	0	each
Yellow Pines	0	6	each
Balm of Gilead Firs	0	3	4d or 6d each
Silver Firs	0	3	4d or 6d each
Portugal Laurels	0	3	4d or 6d each
Ditto, larger Sizes	1	0	each
Common Laurels, 1 or 2000 Larger Sizes	0	2	3d or 4d each
Arber Viteas, several Sizes	1	0	each
Varigated Hollys	0	3	4d or 6d each
Stript Phillerays	0	6	each
	0	9	each

Virginia Cedars and Cypress	1	0	each
Ditto, smaller Sizes	0	6	each
Evergreen Honeysuckles	0	6	each
Cedars of Lebanon	2	6	each
Evergreen Oaks	1	0	each
Smaller Sizes	0	6	each
Evergreen Cork Oaks	1	0	each
Evergreen Butcher's Broom	0	3	each
Fine Gold Edged Box	0	6	each
Large Yews, four or five Feet	1	0	each
Junipers)			
Spanish Brooms) low Prices			
Portugal Brooms)			
Evergreen Privet	5s. or 7	6	per hundred
Large Oaks, ten or twelve Feet	0	6	each
Ditto, six or seven Feet	0	3	each
Fine Oaks, one Year old	5	0	per thousand
Ash, five or six Feet	0	4	or 6d each
Sycamores, two Feet	2	6	per hundred
Ditto, six or seven Feet	0	3	each
Larger Sizes	0	6	each
Larch, two Feet	3	0	per hundred
Ditto, four or five Feet,	0	2	each
Ditto, seven Feet	0	4	each
Ditto, eight or nine Feet	0	6	each
Spanish Chesnuts, two or three Feet	0	2	each
Ditto, five or six Feet	0	6	each
Horse Chesnuts, three or four Feet	0	2	each
Ditto, one Foot high	2	0	per hundred
Limes, two Feet	0	2	each
Ditto, six or seven Feet	0	6	each
Beech for Hedges, three or four Feet	12	0	per hundred
Ditto, larger Sizes	0	4	each
Hornbeam, seven, eight, or nine Feet	0	6	each Plant
Ditto for Hedges, three Feet	15	0	per hundred
Poplars, different Sorts, very cheap			
Platainus, or Indian Planes, three Feet	0	3	each
Ditto, five Feet	0	4	each
Ditto, six or seven Feet	0	6	each
Huntingdon Willows, six or eight Feet	0	3	each
Golden Willows and Weeping Willows, very cheap			
English Elms grafted, twelve Feet	1	0	each
Ditto, grafted, four Feet	15	0	per hundred
Ditto, six Feet	20	0	per hundred
About 1000 thin-shelled Walnuts, 4 Feet	0	4	each
Ditto, six, seven, or eight Feet	0	6	each
Fine Mountain Ash, 6 Feet	0	4	each
Ditto, eight or nine Feet	0	6	each

Several thousand Standard Apple Trees, of the best Sorts that can be collected, of 1, 2, 3, or 4 Years old.

Ditto Dwarfs, either on Paradise or free Stocks of the best Plate Fruit, all to be sold at low Prices, according to Age.

Pears, very fine Plants, either Standards or Dwarfs, good Sorts.

Plumbs, Standards or Dwarfs, good Sorts.

Peaches, of best Kind, one Year old	1	0	each
Ditto, 2 or 3 Years old, headed down and) trained for present bearing)	1	6	or 2s. each

Apricots likewise

Cherrys, Standards or Dwarfs, in Sorts

Quinces, Fruit-bearing Almonds, Rasperrys, Barberrys, best Goosberrys, and black, red, white, or champaign Currants, at low Prices

Fine Mulberry Trees	2	6	each
About 4 or 5000 hardy flowering Shrubs			
Large and strong Plants	20s or 30	0	per hundred
Snow-drop Tree	1	0	each
American Spindle Tree	1	0	each
With other choice flowering Shrubs	0	6	each
Roses, Moss Provence	1	0	each
Royal Virgin Rose	1	0	each
Late white Cluster or Musk	1	0	each
Red Cluster monthly Rose	0	6	each
Double Velvet Rose	0	6	each
Semey Velvet Rose	0	4	each
Double Sweetbriar	1	0	each
Franckfort Rose	0	4	each
Red Provence Rose	0	3	each
Common Provence Rose	0	4	each
Full double white Rose	0	4	each
York and Lancaster Stript	0	6	each
Dutch Hundred Leav'd Rose	0	3	each
Stript Monday Rose	0	4	each
Apple Bearing Rose	0	4	each
Fine Rose Accacias	2	0	each
Two-thorn'd Accacias	0	6	each
Double-blossom'd Cherry-Stands, or Dwfs.	1	0	each
Double-blossom'd Thorns	1	0	each
Different Kinds of Honeysuckles, very cheap			
Large white Thorn Quicksets	1	0	per hundred

Where may be had, Peas, Beans, and all Sorts of Garden Seeds for Kitchen Use; likewise Flower Seeds, either Annual, Perannual, or Biannual, of the very best Kind; also Cabbage Plants and Colliflower Plants, at low Prices, and Asparagus Plants, at low Prices, according to their Age; Filberd or Hickery Nuts, at low Prices; with many other Trees of different Kinds, very cheap.

R. S. Yates, Nurseryman, Sale

Obituary – Manchester Courier, 3 January, 1891

"A once very familiar figure in the social life of Manchester has passed away in the person of Mr. Richard Smalley Yates, of Oak-road, Sale. Mr. Yates, who was a member of an old Manchester family, was born in 1806. Between 60 and 70 years ago he was established in business in the Old Exchange, near St. Anne's; afterwards in St. Ann's-square; finally in Corporation-street. For very many years his two former places of business, well stocked with fruits and flowers, were the daily resort of most of the "youth and beauty" of the town. With his capital flower nurseries at Sale, Mr. Yates was at one time the leading florist in Manchester, and was for several seasons a very successful exhibitor at the Botanical Gardens, Old Trafford, and other fruit and flower shows."

* * * * *

Memories of Brown Street from a reader – Manchester Times, 30 January, 1891

"... Yates's dining room was on the opposite side of Brown-street to Mr. Hall's office. I remember it opening. It had no appearance of a shop, but was just like an ordinary large dwelling. I don't think Yates came out of St. Ann's Square, but from the small space behind St. Anne's Church leading through the arched passage into King-street. The Yates family kept the celebrated fruit shop then; the rich odour of their noted choice home and foreign fruits was diffused all round about the place. This was one of the principal of the very few high-class fruit shops then existing, such articles as were kept there being very rare and expensive at the time, oranges and American Newtown pippin apples costing at certain seasons more than 6d. each..."

* * * * *

Sale of plants from the nursery, as a result of bankruptcy, November 30 – December 2, 1881 – Manchester Courier, 26 November 1881

*"... the Extensive and Varied Collection of Well-known ORCHIDACEOUS, STOVE, and GREENHOUSE PLANTS, CAMELLIAS, &c.; many of them being of an unusual size, in high condition, and of varieties scarce and difficult to obtain. The Orchids comprise upwards of one thousand plants, including 150 splendid specimens of the scarce *lælia anceps* and 50 other fine species; 34 grand masses of *Cælogyne Cristata*, 2ft. to 3ft. 6in. across; 100 *odontoglossum*, 90 *Cattleya*, 70 *Calanthe*, 70 *Dendrobium*, 180 *Cypripedium*, 50 *Vanda* and *Aerides*, 30 *Oncidium*, 20 *Zygopetalon*, &c. The Stove, Greenhouse and Ornamental Plants consist of about three thousand five hundred, a large proportion from 6ft. to 20ft. high, consisting of 300 large specimen camellias, 6ft. to 12ft. high and 3ft. to 9ft. through, all in large pots and tubs, with 300 smaller sizes, 2ft. to 5ft., the bulk of which are the old double white, *alba plena*; 13 large orange trees, 100 large azaleas, and 100 smaller sizes, about 2ft.; 60 splendid palms, 3ft. to 8ft. high; 20 tree ferns, in variety, with trunks 2ft. to 6ft.; 15 large *gleichenias*, 12 *todea trichomanes* and other filmy ferns, with many hundreds of other choice stove and greenhouse productions; 400 tea and other roses, in 12in. to 18in. pots, 250 *eucharis*, several hundred *amaryllis*, splendid sorts; 25 *anthurium scherzerianum*, 50 large *acacias*, 10ft. to 20ft. high, in pots; 36 *gardenias*, 2ft.; 150 *calia Æthiopia*, 40 *poinsettia*, 40 *euphorbia* specimens, 200 *chrysanthemums*, 1,000 *geraniums*, hundreds of *jacquini flora*, *primulas*, *cinerarias*, *fuchsias*, &c.; 70 *ericas*, 25 *agapanthus*, 20 *imantophyllum miniatum*, large pots; 50 *dracænas*, 12 large *rhododendron Gibsoni*, *allamanda*, *stephanotis*, *lapageria alba*, *yucca filamentosa variegata*, a choice collection of table plants; also spring cart, horse, harness, lawn mowers, garden roller, plant pots, garden tools, &c. – Catalogus are now ready..."*

* * * * *

Sale of nursery – Manchester Courier, 31 December, 1881.

"All that Valuable FREEHOLD ESTATE situate at Sale, in the county of Chester, close to the turnpike road to Altrincham, and within a very short distance of

the railway station at Brooklands, now or late in the occupation of Mr. R.S. Yates, containing in the whole 3a. 2r. 26p., Cheshire measure, or 7a. 0r. 37p. statute measure or thereabouts. And also all that Dwelling-house erected on the said land, with the barn, stables, and all other outbuildings thereon, together with the Cottage Ornee or Entrance Lodge on the said ground. And also all and every the Horticultural Erections thereon, which comprise 14 extensive houses, all of which are heated in the most efficient manner with hot water and flues, several of them being of great size and importance. And also all the Shrubs and Plants on the said ground, comprising great numbers of hollies, rhododendrons, azaleas, &c., of the most approved quality, and which to a large extent are fully and correctly named. Together with all and every the Cold Pits and Frames, and all other incidental matter now standing on the said ground, which have been used by the said R.S. Yates in connection with his said business. The property is free from chief, and subject to no building or other restrictions whatsoever..."

* * * * *

The reference to a Cottage Ornee is reminiscent of an advertisement from the Manchester Times, 30 May, 1829:

"... convenient and well-constructed VILLA or COTTAGE ORNEE, usually known by the name of SALE GREEN COTTAGE, comprising a vestibule, well-proportioned dining-room, excellent drawing-room, commodious kitchen, and back-kitchen, larder, butler's pantry, store-room, closets, wine and beer cellars, and six lodging rooms; capital four-stalled stable, coach-house, wash-house, and other domestic offices, with a spacious court-yard, pump terrace, cistern, and every other convenience.

"And also the extensive PLEASURE GROUNDS and FLOWER GARDEN, belted with a thriving plantation of ornamental trees, including an infinite variety of rare and costly American and other evergreen and deciduous shrubs, disposed on the most scientific principles of Landscape Gardening with the greatest taste and effect, by Mr. Shepherd, Curator of the Botanic Gardens, Liverpool.

"The FLOWER GARDEN is at once sheltered and divided into compartments by cross hedges, with a view to botanical arrangement, and furnished with all

that is estimable and valuable in hardy, herbaceous, alpine, and bog plants, dahlias, &c. whilst the ROSARY forms a distinguishing feature of this truly desirable property.

"Also the superior built HOT-HOUSE, GRAPERY, and MELON PITS; the Pines are of the most approved kinds, in the healthiest state, and perfectly clean, and the Vines, discriminately selected, are now in full bearing, with the promise of an annually fine and abundant crop. The STOVE and GREENHOUSE PLANTS, collected regardless of trouble or expense, are in the highest state of perfection, and amongst them will be found many particularly scarce and valuable.

"Together with the very productive Kitchen Garden, judiciously and tastefully planted with the most esteemed kinds of fruit-trees, and well stocked and cropped with vegetables, &c. for the present season.

"The above Premises are freehold of inheritance, and including the site of the buildings contain about three statute acres of Land. They are in complete repair, and form altogether a most desirable and delightful residence, being distant from Manchester six miles, from Altrincham three, and about one mile from Cross Street and the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal, to and from which places Coaches and Packet Boats pass almost every hour of the day..."

Plants etc. owned by S.L. Behrens, jun.

In June 1853, at the Exhibition by Gardeners in aid of the new Building at the Botanic Gardens, S L Behrens, junior received a Certificate of Merit for his collection of ornamental plants.¹⁰⁵⁶ He had plenty to choose from.

When Behrens re-located to London, the entire contents of his home in Polygon Avenue, Ardwick, were put up for sale. The auction was signposted in July and August 1853¹⁰⁵⁷ and took place in September. It ran for eight days, with the plants being sold on the seventh day – Monday 19 September.¹⁰⁵⁸

The following is taken from the advertisement for the auction in the Manchester Times of 10 September, 1853. The full advertisement comprised almost two full columns. In addition to collections of florists' flowers (auriculas, hollyhocks, dahlias) there were around 40 orchids and even more stove plants. Some names were incorrectly spelled (these have been corrected where the same species appears correctly spelled elsewhere).

*"... The Plants are of rare quality. The following is a brief enumeration: -
Orchidaceous; Peristeria Barkariana; Dendrobium Densiflorum, Miltonia
Clowesiana; Odontoglossum Citrosinum; Lycaste Harrisoniæ, Lælie
Autumnalis, Cattleya Mossiæ, Cattleya Crispa, Oncidium Ampliatum,
Zygopetalum Orinitum, Oncidium Cavensishianum, Lycaste Depii,
Odontoglossum Grana, Dendrobium Farmeri, Renanthera Coccinea,
Dendrobium Cœrulescens, Maxilaria Tenafolia, Dendrobium Nobile, Oncidium
Sphegiferum, Brussia Lanciana, Dendrobium Calceolaria, Cymbidium Alœfoliæ,
Ditto Giganteum, Oncidium Lancianum; Vanda Roxburghii, Oncidium
Celæbelum, Dendrobium Clavatum Cœlogyne Flaccida, Angreum Oderatum,
Oncidium Flinuosum, Lælia Anceps, Oncidium Papilio Major, Oncidium
Skinnerii, Sarcanthus Rostratus, Dendrobium Pulchellum, Broughtonia
Sanguinea, Anæctochilus Setaceus, Argenteus, Goodyera, Discolor;
Anæctochilus Labianus, Ditto Lowii, ditto Zanthophylla.*

*"Stove: Achimenes Margareta; Gessomeria Longiflora; Amaryllis Johnsonii,
Gloxineas; Alamanda Carthartica (very large, on trellis); Euphorbia Splendens;
Clerodendron l'aniculatum; Stephanotis Floribunda; Ixora Coccinea; Hoya
Carnesa; Selaginella Ixvigata, Taberniontana Coronaria Pleno; Cœchmea
Fulgens; Æschynanthus Pulchra; ditto Zebrina; ditto Grandiflora; ditto
Lobianus; ditto Parasitica; ditto Bosephyanus; Hoya Bella; Ixora Griffithii;*

¹⁰⁵⁶ Manchester Courier, 18 June, 1853.

¹⁰⁵⁷ e.g. Manchester Courier, 30 July, 1853.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Manchester Times, 10 September, 1853

Gardenia Fortunii; Ixora Javanica; Strelitzia Regina; Gardenia Florida; ditto Stanleyana; Caladium Bicolor; Cissus Discolor (splendid plant); Tillandsia Zabrina; Æschynanthus Splendidus; Bilbergia Rhodæana; Draccena Nobilis; Bilbergia Moreliana (very fine); Euphorbia Jacquiniiflora; Lycopodium Stolonifera (very large); ditto Plumosum; ditto Apus; ditto Veticulosum; ditto Apus; ditto Stellata; ditto Scholtii (splendid specimen); Achrostichum Flabelliforme; Lycopodium Lævigata; Clerodendron Splendens; Nepanthus Ampulacca; ditto Distillatoria; also a good collection of Hardy Plants, comprising the best show sorts of Auriculas; Hybrid Rhododendrons; Dahlia, Hollyhocks, &c...

"... Sundries Out of Doors: Capital lean-to greenhouse, 22ft. long by 15 ft. wide, with movable glazed sashes, 12-tier painted stage, and cast iron heating apparatus, complete; three hothouses, 18ft, 15ft and 16ft long respectively, by 10 ft wide; quantity of manure, part rotten and part long; 200 yards of galvanised wire, rabbit proof fencing, and posts, one 4-light, two 2-light and three 1-light hotbed frames; two splendid real China garden seats, received direct from China; four large cast-iron garden chairs, one a very handsome one, the frame being formed wholly of the tendrils, leaves, and fruit of the vine; four smaller ditto, four painted wood ditto, about 500 dahlia sticks and 50 dahlia shade boards, with sticks to match; Budding's patent mowing machine, very excellent iron straw cutting machine, by Whitehead, Preston; two fine large yard dogs, with painted kennel for each; large metal vase, eight rustic ditto, with plants; great quantity of plants, propagating boxes and glasses, hand glasses, wheelbarrows, 24 in. iron garden roller, with balance handle, oak grass roller, with a vast number of garden implements of all descriptions..."

Appendix Five

Samuel Greg's private garden at Quarry Bank, Styal

The following items were sold by William Caldwell, nurseryman of Knutsford to Samuel Greg of Styal

(Transcription from Purchase Ledger;

Cheshire Record Office, Caldwell Collection DDX363/6 Order Book 1789-1795)

To Samuel Greg, Esqr. of Styal

					£	s	d	
23	Oct	1789			A Parcel of Trees as per Day Book	2	13	6
			3		Large flower Pots		1	6
2	Feb	1790			A Parcel of Trees as per Day Book	5	17	6
			10,000		Thorns	3	0	0
			1		Large Matt		1	0
					<i>Wrote out</i>	11	13	6
15	Feb	1791	700		Green Hollies	1	1	0
			50		Laurels		12	6
			1	oz	Italian G Sollid Celery			8
					1 Large Matt		1	0
					Wrote out July 8 Rec'd	13	8	8
3	Jan	1792			To the above Saml Greg Esqr			
			100		Red, White & Black Currants		16	8
			1		Spade		4	8
			1		Scuffle		1	6
			1		Pruning Knife		1	3
			1		Large Matt		1	4
26	March	1792	1	lb	Shallot		1	0
					Garlick		0	3
					Picatee Carnation seed			9

			2	oz	Red Beet		1	0
			2		Garden Scythes		7	0
			2		Strickles		1	0
			1	pk	Early dwarf Kidney Pottatoes		1	0
	7 sent		12 7		Large Bass Matts	0	9	4
			1		Garden Line		1	4
31	July	1792	½	lb	Green Top Turnip seed		8	0
			½	lb	Purple Top Turnip seed		8	0
			2	oz	StoneTurnip seed		0	3
			2	oz	Yellow Turnip Seed		0	3
10	Nov	1792	80		Large Philbert Trees	1	0	0
			1		Large matt		1	4
2	April	1793	1	qrt	Early Pease		0	6
			1	qrt	Mazagan Bean		0	4
			1	Pk	Early dwarf Pottatoes		1	0
			6		Large Bass Matts		8	0
			4		Portugal Laurels		2	8
			4		Laurus Tinus		1	4
18	Nov	1793	2		Red Virginia Cedars 2 feet		2	0
			33		Goosberry Trees		5	9
					Entered Page 282	4	12	10
	p. 282							
18	Nov	1793			Brought from Page 1			
			12		Standard Damscen Plums		9	0
			4		Standard Apple Trees		4	0
			4		Dwarf Apple Trees		2	8
			1		Garden Spade		4	8
			2		Large Matts		2	8
25	March	1794	20		Large Matts	1	6	8
			20		Portugal Lime Laurels		10	0
			2		Garden Scythes		7	0
			2		Moors Strickles		1	6
			1		Garden Hoe & Large		1	6
			½	oz	Mignonett seed		1	0
13	May	1794	3		Load of Irish apple Potattoes		18	0
19	May	1794			Stock seed			3
17	July	1794	½	lb	Burdock spinage			6

			4	oz	Welch Onion		1	0
			2	oz	Strasburgh Onion			6
			1	oz	Mixed Cabbage Lettuce			8
			1	oz	Mixed Coss Lettuce		1	0
			4	oz	Stone Turnip			4
			1	oz	Early dwarf Cabbage R		1	0
21	Oct	1794	1		Garden Pruning Knife		1	3
			1		Budding Knife		1	6
			3	Pints	Double Early Frame Pease		1	6
			3	Pints	Superfine Early Pease		1	0
	Feb	1795			A Parcel of Trees etc. see day book		8	8
			1		Large matt		1	4
			2	Pks	Early Kidney Pottatoes		2	0
			2	Pks	Brewerton Dwarf Pottatoes		2	0
			6	qrts	Windsor Beans		2	6
			2	qts	Green Beans		1	0
			2	qts	Toker Beans			10
			4	Qts	Charlton Pease		2	0
			2	Qts	Pearl Pease		1	0
			4	Qts	Dwarf Marrow Pease		2	0
			4	Qts	Green Marrow Pease		2	4
			2	Qts	Dwarf Prolific Pease		1	4
			1	Qrt	Negro' dwf Kidney bean		1	6
			1	Pint	Scarlet climbing bean		1	0
			1	Pint	White scarlet speckled dwf bean		1	6
			1	Oz	Early carrot			3
			½	Lb	Orange carrot		1	6
			½	Lb	Parsnips			9
			½	Lb	Spanish onions		2	0
			½	Lb	Strasburgh onions		2	0
			½	Lb	Deptford onion		2	8
	Enter		½	Lb	James' long keeping onion		4	0
	357		½	Oz	Red onion			3
						7. 3. 10		
	p. 357							

	Feb	1795			Brought from page 282			
			2	Oz	Leek	0	1	0
			1	Oz	Early turnip			
			1	Oz	Stone turnip			
			1	Oz	Yellow turnip			4
			½	Lb	Early short top radish		1	0
			½	Lb	Dwarf salmon radish		1	0
			2	Oz	White turnip radish			6
			2	Lb	White Mustard			
			½	Lb	Common cress		2	6
			½	Lb	Curled cress		1	0
			½	Oz	Hardy Green Lettuce			4
			½	Oz	Egyptian Coss Lettuce			6
			1	Oz	Red beet			6
			1	Oz	Green beet			4
			1	Oz	Solid Celery			8
			4	Oz	Curled Parsley			6
			1	Oz	Curled Green Borcole			
			1	Oz	Curled Brown Borcole		1	0
			1	Oz	Green & Yellow Savoy			6
			1	Oz	Collyflower Brocoly		1	0
			½	Oz	Early Purple Brocoly			6
			½	Oz	Late Purple Brocoly			6
					Summer & Pot Marjoram			6
			½	Oz	Scorzenera			4
			½	Oz	Salsify			4
			35	Sorts	Flower seeds		5	0
			2	Oz	Mignonettes		4	0
					Brussel Sprouts			
11	March	1795	600		Asparagus plants Large		14	0
			12		Dutch Hyacinths by Name		12	0
			2		Striped late Tulips		1	0
			2		Tulips dark late		1	0
			3		Double Yellow Tulips		1	6
			3		Double striped yellow tulips		1	6
			10		Mixed Tulips		1	3
			30		Crocuses of sorts		2	0

			9		Pinks of sorts		3	0
			12	Oz	Anemones		6	0
			6		Golden Antwerp Rasps		1	6
			1		Mulberry		2	6
			1	Cwt	Carrots		3	4
			2		White Provence Roses		6	0
			2		Dwarf Burgundy Roses		3	0
			2		Double Marbled Roses		2	0
			6		Red Provence Roses		2	0
			2		Moss Provence Roses		3	0
			2		Double Velvet Roses		2	0
		Entered	2		Full double sweet Brier		2	0
		New book	2		Common sweet brier		0	6
		Page 29	6		Weeping Willows		1	6
6	Dec	1795			Early frame pease		4	15 8

Tinker's (Vauxhall) Gardens

The following is reproduced from Swindells (Fifth Series, p.149-153)

To two generations of Manchester people Tinker's Gardens, or Vauxhall Gardens as they were latterly called, were a popular holiday resort; and to perhaps another generation they were a tradition, or little more than that. Today there remains no trace of them, but occasionally as we come across one who in childhood's days was taken there, we may hear some account of their glories. To the present generation the institution is not even a name. It is therefore necessary to say something concerning this one-time popular resort. The ground once covered by the gardens is on the left hand side of Rochdale Road, some little distance away from that road, and lying between it and Collyhurst Road. The approach to them was near to the end of Osborne Street.

The proprietor for about forty years was Robert Tinker, who in Scholes's Directory for 1797 as "Robert Tinker, Grape and Compass Coffee House and Tea Gardens, Collyhurst. In later years he became a victualler and in 1814 he changed the name of his establishment to Vauxhall Gardens. For a fuller account of the glories of the gardens I must refer the reader to Alexander Wilson's *Johnny Green's Description of Tinker's Gardens* with which this chapter will be closed. On holidays and Sundays great crowds of people resorted to the gardens, where they could promenade or dance (except on Sundays) to the music of a brass band, and where they could partake of tea and other refreshments at small tables standing under overhanging trees or in alcoves covered with creepers. The situation of the gardens seems to have been very favourable to plant growth, and an announcement made in 1814 reads very curiously to-day. It ran thus:— "To the admirers of cucumbers. At these gardens may be seen a cucumber which measures seven feet eight inches long. One from the same plant was sent for the Prince Regent's inspection. It is allowed by all gardeners, and others who have seen it, to be the greatest curiosity of the kind Nature ever produced in this kingdom".

From time to time balloon ascents were made from the gardens, the last of these being made by Lieutenant Gale in 1847. Robert Turner died on February 1st, 1836, but the gardens were continued until about 1852 when their glories having departed they were closed. The subsoil consisted of a valuable bed of sand of a peculiar quality, used by iron moulders, and in the course of a few years the site was literally carted away. After the removal of the sand houses were built, and to-day the spot whereon Tinker's Gardens stood is indistinguishable in the maze of streets and rows of houses that now cover the district.

Mr. Procter in his volume *Manchester in Holiday Dress*, refers to an advertisement issued by Mr. Tinker in 1812, in which he announces special attractions to celebrate Wellington's great victory. The grounds were to be illuminated by means of three thousand variegated lamps which were to transform the gardens to an Elysian retreat. Popular vocalists were to supplement the efforts of the band, and the charge for admission was to be 1s. 6d. The entertainment, it was said, would render the evening "at once intellectual, rural, and delightful".

The following is Alexander Wilson's song, "Johnny Green's Description of Tinker's Gardens".

Heigh! Hall o' Nabs, an' Sam, an' Sue,
Why, Jonathan, art tew there too?
W're aw aloike, there's nought to do,
 So bring us a quart before us.
Aw're at Tinker's gardens yesternoon,
An' whot aw seed, aw'll tell yo soon,
In a bran new song, boh it's to th' owd tune
 Yo'st ha't if yo'll join meh chorus
Aw geet some brass, fro' uncle Nat,
Eawr David lent mea his best hat,
Then off fur th' teawn aw seet full swat,
 Mich faster nor Pickfort's waggin.
Aw paid meh brass, an' in aw goes,
An' eh ! what shady beawers i' rows,
Wheer lots o' ladies an' their beaus
 Wurn set to get their baggin.
There's bonfeoirs fix't at th' top o' pows,
To leet yor poipes, an warm yor nose;
Then a thing to tell which way th' wind blows,
 An' the' fish pond too did pleas mea;
Boh th' reawnd-heawse is the rummest shop,
It's fix't on here an' there a prop,
Just loike a great umbrella top;

If it's not, Jimmy Johnson squeeze me.
 Aw seed a cage as big, aw'll swear,
 As a wild beast show i' Sawfort fair,
 There's rabbits, brids, and somethings there,
 Aw couldn'a gawm, by th' mass, mon;
 Aw thowt o' pullink one chap's wigs,
 For tellink me they're guinea pigs,
 Says aw, 'Meh lad, aw' up to yor rigs,
 They're noan worth hawve o'th' brass, mon."
 Aw met wi' a wench aw'd often seen,
 When aw wi' meh wark to th' teawn had bin,
 Hoo're drest as foine as ony queen,
 So aw just stept up behind hur;
 Says aw, 'Yung miss, dun yo work for Kays?
 Aw've wove their crankys scores o' days
 Hoo wouldn'a speak, boh walk'd hur ways,
 An' hoo're nowt but a bobbin woinder.
 Boh th' band o' music caps owd Nick,
 Aw ne'er seed th' loikes sin aw wur wick;
 Thern drest like soldiers, thrunk and thick,
 As merry as hey-makers.
 Up in a tree, foive yard fro' the' Greawnd,
 On a greyt big table, rail'd aw reawnd,
 While lads an' wenches jigg'd to the' seawnd,
 'Oh, merrily danced the Quakers.'
 Then next aw seed a swing, by gad!
 Where th' ladies flock'd loike hey-go-mad;
 They wanted a roide far wor than th' lads,
 They really did, for sure.
 Ther'n one wur drest so noice i' blue
 An' loike an' angel up hoo flew,
 Hoo'd noice red cheeks, an' garters, too,
 So aw thowt aw'd buck up to hur.
 Aw made hur link wi' mich ado,
 An' mounted up a greyt heigh brow
 Wheer folk run up, an deawn it too,
 Just loike March hares, for sure.
 So when eawr Kate coom we begun,
 An' started off, twur glorious fun!
 Mich faster than Cock Robin run,
 When he won at Karsy Moor.
 What wark we made, aw'm sheawmt to tell,
 We tried, boh could no' stop eawrsel
 Till into a beawer yed first aw fell,
 Where aw th' foine folk wur set, mon
 Some porter run aw deawn my shirt;
 A biscuit stuck to th' ladies skirt,
 An whot wi' th' hurt, an' grease, an' dirt,
 By gum, aw feel it yet, mon.
 Of aw the things that pleast us, John,
 Wur Tinker's house wi' pot dolls on;

There's Blucher an' Lord Wellington.
 An' Blue Beard look'd so glum, surs!
 There's cupids under trees and shrubs,
 An' men wi' harps, an' some wi' clubs,
 An' naked childer up o' tubs,
 Don'd eawt i' lots o' plumbs, surs.
 Reet hungry, aw seet mea deawn at last,
 An' swallow'd cakes an' ale so fast,
 Aw wonder meh waistcoat did no' brast,
 Aw'r full os meh hoide could crom, surs
 When aw wur seen at could be seen,
 They play'd, 'God save eawr noble Queen',
 Aw strid to th' tune reawnd th' bowling green,
 An' asay aw coom straight whoam, surs.
 It bangs booath play heawse, fair an' wakes,
 For gam o' all maks, ale an' cakes,
 Aw'll bet a quart, an' theaw'st howd th' stakes,
 It bangs th' king's creawnation.
 Aw'd ha' yo't goo next Monday noon,
 For if't rains poikels, late or soon,
 Aw'll goo again, if aw goo bowt shoon,
 For it's th' grandest place i' th' nation."

And such was the opinion of many of the folk who lived in Manchester and the district seventy years ago.

* * * * *

The song was also reproduced in Procter's Literary reminiscences and gleanings (pages 86-88). Procter then went on to describe the gardens in their heyday and after their fall:

Of Tinker's Gardens and their Minstrel many a pleasurable recollection may be called forth, and a few facts be worthily collated. Mr. Robert Tinker, the original promoter, and during nearly fifty years proprietor of these gardens, was born in the middle of the last century. Of his 'opening day' as caterer for the amusement of the public there appears to be no printed record; but in 1797 he was in business here as conductor of the 'Grape and Compass Coffee House and Tea Gardens.' A few years later he figured on the same spot as licensed victualler. His trees having increased in size, his flowers in number, his bowling-green in velvet smoothness, he became enamoured of his possessions, and re-christened them the 'Elysian Gardens.' When this flight of fancy seized him he was doubtless seated in one of his leafy arbours, overlooking the then pleasant valley of the Irk. To a gentleman of Mr. Tinker's poetical temperament the dancing figures on his own undulating lawns would typify the rosy Hours in the

Vale of Tempé; the shepherd's reed being denoted by the distant strains of the quadrille band. In 1814 the name of the gardens was again changed: they now became the 'Vauxhall,' like their great metropolitan contemporary. This name they retained until the demise of their owner in the Spring of 1836, at the allotted age of three score years and ten.

When balloon ascents were new and exciting objects Mr. Green, the æronaut, took several skyward trips from these pleasure grounds. On one occasion the removal of a balloon, after inflation, from the adjacent gas-yard, was announced to take place at six o'clock in the morning. A small party that had assembled at our shop stayed up all night to ensure a good view. Brown beer (which was their darling), tobacco, and conversation wiled away the hours cheerily enough until four or five o'clock, when one by one we dropped asleep at our post, as my Lord Tom Noddy and his fast companions have since done in the veritable Ingoldsby Legend. When our watchers awoke to consciousness the sight had been seen,—the balloon had been removed to its destination. At that period Tinker's gardens, having passed their zenith, were not so fascinating to the multitude as they were when Alexander Wilson recorded their glories in his favourite ballad. Gala-days frequently brought forth a band of musicians, aided by a crowd of supernumeraries carrying banners and boards of notification; they thus paraded the town in military fashion, beating up for visitors. Nevertheless, the name of the gardens was still a household word in Manchester and its vicinity.

Natural as it is for the declining fortunes of institutions and of men to be deserted, it is no marvel that during several years I saw nothing of Tinker's gardens, although living in their neighbourhood. Rumour had told me, in her fitful manner, of various changes thereabouts: of fields disappearing, of brows being levelled, of new streets displacing the old lanes. One night, after closing my shop, I went to test the truthfulness of those rumours, and found the scene entirely metamorphosed. There is no metamorphoser equal to Time. Ovid sinks into insignificance beside him. Delves of sand and mixers of clay had laid all in waste, scarcely a trace remaining whereby to recognise the features of my early acquaintance. Within the gardens, houses had been built. Bits of hedgerow and patches of verdure surrounded the dwellings; while one solitary tree survived its companions. There was just enough of the dead Past to wear the appearance of a ghost haunting the living Present. I was

disposed to muse—a minor Marius at a minor Carthage,—among those ruins; the more so, as the harvest moon and her constant and respectful attendant, the evening star, were infusing the spirit of poetry into all the prosaic ramifications of our city. But the music of young voices dispersed my moralising ideas. On the highway beneath me a troop of girls were swinging in a merry round, and chorussing a succession of undying nursery rhymes, which seemed to harmonise with the old associations, even while chasing them away.

Belle Vue Gardens

The following report appeared in the Manchester Guardian of 8 August 1849.

If in a bygone age, a thoughtful man with a deep knowledge of human nature, desired to have the making of a people's ballade, it may, in the present day, be with still more reason wished, that one could provide a people's amusements – for it is no longer the ballad, but the right direction of their hours of leisure and recreation, that is the great social problem for solution. Amongst those recreations which they have supported, and in that sense provided for themselves, within the last ten or fifteen years, public gardens, with various modern adjuncts unknown to past generations, hold a prominent place. Thus the faded grandeurs and delights of an eighteenth century Vauxhall, have given place, in the metropolis, to the Regent's Park and Surrey Zoological Gardens; and for the cockneys of various grades, to the Cremorne Gardens, and those of Rosherville, - the latter renowned for their master of the ceremonies, the Beau Nash of cockneydom, *Punch's* own Baron Nathan. Manchester has also its out-door places of recreation, its public parks, and its gardens of public entertainment. Like the metropolis, it had its once-thronged "Vauxhall Gardens" at Collyhurst, or, as they used to be called by their frequenters, "Tinker's Gardens", from the name of their proprietor. But these, once the chief, if not the sole place of recreation of this kind, have ceased to attract, amidst the numerous and novel temptations offered by their more modern rivals. This is also, in part, owing to the fact, that in the rapid extension of the town, each large district or quarter of Manchester, has obtained public gardens in its own suburbs. Thus Chornton-on-Medlock, Hulme, and Salford have their White House Gardens and their Pomona Gardens; Chetham, Strangeways, and Broughton have the Grove Inn Gardens, on the Bury New Road; and Ardwick and Ancoats have the Zoological Gardens, at Belle Vue, on the Hyde Road, a little beyond the toll bar and the Manchester Borough Gaol. It is of these last that we propose to give a brief description in the present article.

Some thirteen years ago – we believe in the year 1836, - the present proprietor, Mr. John Jennison, took 36 acres of land, then in open fields, and in a very rough and imperfect state of cultivation. he at once commenced the arduous task of laying it out, and from time to time improving it, planting, building, excavating, and

constructing, till at length he has made it a place of public entertainment of a popular kind, on a larger scale than perhaps any other in the kingdom, and certainly in most respects superior in its character and regulations to any what we have seen in the provinces. With some recent additions, the whole extent of ground now occupied includes 41 acres, of which 16 or 18 are tastefully laid out in gardens, including a lake, with its serpentine waters, fountains, &c. with maze, dancing-floor, lawns, bowling green, avenues, arbours, grottoes, caves, &c. Twenty-one acres form a spacious race-ground, with an equestrian course along its outer portion, three-quarters of a mile in length; and two courses for foot-races, one with iron palisades, of 500 feet in length, and about 6 yards wide. The first races here took place in August 1847, and though there were some severely-contested matches, and 27 horses were entered, the two days' sport passed off satisfactorily and without the slightest accident, great as was the concourse of people. Mr. Jennison has also recently purchased a field (about four acres) which separates this racecourse from the Longsight Station of the Stockport (Manchester and Birmingham) Railway, so that he will thus have a right of way direct from the railway to his grounds. Being a distance from the Exchange of two miles and a half, they are thus rendered easily accessible, at an insignificant expenditure of time or money, to the thousands who seek a place of recreation for the half-holiday of Saturday afternoon, or at any other leisure or holiday time.

Near the entrance gate from the Hyde Road, is a fine, large weeping ash, its spreading branches covering a space 40 feet in diameter, and forming by its refreshing shade a natural arbour or verandah to the house. The menagerie occupies various detached buildings, of which one is a glass-domed monkey-house, another a long range of dens and cages, with a spacious paddock attached for the deer. Amongst the more notable of the quadrupeds are the Australian Dingo or wolf-dog, which much resembles the wolf, and is so destructive to the flocks of sheep in that distant colony; a fine Indian bull with a hump, (held sacred by the Hindoos), the fallow deer, &c. The aviaries contain a great many choice and rare birds, including the white-crested eagle, the Norway eagle, and the American eagle or osprey, the king vulture, various kites and hawks, owls, &c.; herons, various kinds of pheasants, peacocks, numerous macaws, cockatoos, parrots, parroquets, and a large collection of the smaller birds. We must not omit a tame woodcock. A small show-structure, is like an octagonal Gothic temple, lighted with tastefully stained glass windows, and the

walls panelled in allegorical paintings; the floor of red and blue square tiles, upon which are various grotesque plant stands, &c. Near this, a necessary provision during a shower, or for rest and refreshment, - are 16 arbours, amongst the trees, all slate-roofed, and having a refreshment bar. A spacious bowling green is bounded on one side by five ornamental arbours, decorated internally and externally; and when not used for bowling, this green is occupied by the various round games of the open air, as kissing-rings, &c.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the gardens, is the lake, which is a large piece of water of irregular form; extending at each end into a broad serpentine stream, so as completely to moat round and insulate the ground within it. This lake is about a quarter of a mile in length, and in the middle about 50 yards wide; it was purposely made shallow, and does not contain more than from three to four feet depth of water. In this lake there are several fountains, and a number of aquatic birds, including no fewer than half-a-dozen swans, several white and three being of that "rara avis in terris" the black swan, a pair of which cost £15. Occasionally these birds, which are natives of Australia, have taken wing, extending their flight over Manchester; but, without alighting, they have invariably returned to their own habitation. It has been necessary, however, to clip their wings. They are fed chiefly on grass, mowed and thrown into the lake. There are several varieties of geese and ducks, including the Egyptian geese, most pugnacious birds, which are destructive of ducks and the smaller aquatic fowl. There are on the lake six substantial boats, and water parties form one of the favourite attractions of the place, the shallow depth of the lake preventing any peril beyond that of a ducking. On the margin of the lake are various rockeries and mounds fancifully bordered with shells, &c. A bower, in the Chinese style, with a weeping elm, in the centre, is on one side, and rustic chairs and seats are abundantly placed in suitable situations around. Passing the pond for aquatic birds, a cave or grotto is entered, and through it is a way to a little circular dell, with a rockery, &c. Serpentine walks, amidst flower borders and ornamental clumps, lead to a rustic arbour formed of nine trees, of grotesque forms, the centre one being the celebrated Gorton oak, which was struck and reft by lightning. At the foot of each tree is a garden seat. To the left is a rustic bridge, the open parapet of which is composed of large capitals, "To the Museum". Crossing this bridge, the visitor is on the island within the lake and its stream, and entering the museum, he finds himself in a quiet, cool apartment, with tiled floor, and an ornamental and

refreshing fountain playing in the centre. The walls are lined with glass cases, filled with stuffed specimens of birds, beasts, reptiles, and fishes; and there are also various fossils, minerals, shells, works of art and natural curiosities, ancient armour, and implements of war, Chinese curiosities, &c. There are 11 glass cases; and not the least curious feature of the museum, is the fate of the monkeys, who, having gambolled during life in their trees and cages, are doomed after death to figure as instrumental musicians. One is in the attitude of beating a drum; others have violins, clarinets, trombones, violoncellos, &c. and grouped together they have a very odd appearance. On the island (which is not open to visitors) are various ornamental bridges, rockeries, shell arbours, statuary or carvings, paintings, &c. a Gothic tower and clock, and a cavern which extends from one end of the island to the other. Passing from the museum, we come to a small circular lake for gold and silver fish, in a little islet, which is moated round, and which is reached and quitted by two rustic bridges. A large terraced flower bed, bordered and quaintly ornamented by shells, is near; in its centre a weeping willow, with a great variety of fuchsias, petunias, mimulas, calceolarias, verbenas, &c. We next reach the maze or labyrinth, which is modelled on the same plan, and covers more space, than the celebrated one at Hampton Court. It surpasses that, also, in having two octagonal Gothic aviaries in its centre, with glass domes, green slated roofs, &c. one lighted by stained glass windows, and panelled by mirrors, multiplying indefinitely by their reflection the numerous richly-plumaged birds within; the other embellished with a fine specimen of Chinese needlework, very attractive to female visitors. The large dolphin fountain, at the end of the lake, when in full play, throws a jet d'eau thirty feet in height. A square white tower, visible at a great distance, and resembling the tower of a village church, has various important functions in the economy of the place. Beneath it, at a depth of 24 yards, is a large well of very fine, soft pure spring water, which not only supplies the house, &c. but also the various fountains. To raise it, a steam engine has been erected on the ground floor of this spare building, which forces it sufficiently to produce the jets already noticed. On the side of this building next the race course is a substantial grand stand, capable of holding 1,500 persons; and under the stand is a spacious saloon, used for various purposes, amongst others floral and horticultural shows, assemblages of Sunday scholars, anniversaries of benefit societies, and convivial meetings of friends. On the south side of the grand stand is a long building, 35 feet in height, with a flat top, which will accommodate 1,600 persons, while its

ground floor is a large room or bar, for refreshments, &c. But ascending from the grand stand to the top of the tower, we find an immense cistern, holding 3,000 gallons of water; its top floored over, so as to afford a splendid look-out, from what may be termed the roof or summit of the tower, - a height of from 45 to 50 feet from the ground. From this elevated station, a splendid view is obtained, not only of the gardens, with their lake and numerous ornamental buildings, shrubberies, &c. on one side, and the race course on the other, with the borough gaol, railway &c. beyond, but also of the country round to a great distance. Indeed, on a clear day, with a good glass, may be seen the new church at Gee Cross, the churches of Marple and Mottram, Alderley Edge, Cloud Cop, and even Leek, in Staffordshire. Opposite the grand stand is a paddock, neatly fenced round, where the horses are saddled, preparatory to each race. It is right to state, that the race-course and the gardens are kept quite distinct and separate; there being no communication between them, except at a gate, where any one passing from the one to the other must pay an additional admission. This keeps the visitors to the gardens from the somewhat rough and boisterous assemblages of the race-course. The latter (except for private matches), is only open two days a week, Monday and Saturday, chiefly for foot races, which are numerously attended. The horse course is said to be one of the best in the kingdom for trotting matches, and here the celebrated American trotters have displayed their powers and action in various matches.

In the gardens, near the new stand, which separates them from the race-course, is a very large marquee, 52 yards in length, by seven or eight in breadth, which is now used for large parties of visitors, for Sunday scholars, and for floral and horticultural exhibitions. Near it is what is called the Monster Globe Stand, an elevated orchestral building, surmounted by a huge globe of zinc, painted to represent "this vast terrestrial ball".

Here, during the summer months, "The Belle Vue Quadrille Band" is stationed, from two in the afternoon till dusk, performing a variety of popular music. A compact, smooth flooring or platform of boards has been laid down in front of this orchestra, so as to give an opportunity to parties to enjoy a quadrille, waltz, or country dance, al fresco, and yet on a smooth floor, which is certainly preferable to the green sward. This platform is to be considerably extended, so as to form as spacious a half floor as any in Manchester. Indeed it will, when completed, be larger

than that at the Cremorne Gardens, London, and will have a slated roof, with gallery for spectators, &c. With a view to preserve the decorum and bienséances of the ball room, Mr. Jennison has engaged a skilful and experienced master of the ceremonies, in Mr. Nathan, jun. the son of Mr. Baron Nathan, of the Rosherville Gardens, under whose superintendence we saw a gay party on Monday last, tripping through a quadrille, with due regard to the figure, &c.

Amongst other attractions, there is a fine greenhouse or conservatory abutting on the tower and grand stand; and several greenhouses, &c. in the gardens. There is a long strip of enclosed kitchen garden, where lettuce, onions, and the usual ingredients of salads are grown, with brocoli, eschalots, and other vegetables in request at this establishment, fruit, &c. In the hothouse in this enclosure we saw a large ripe pine, and other fruit.

One delightful shady walk is in progress of formation, by training the branches of two rows of weeping ashes, over a trellised canopy, carried over the avenue. This, when completed, will be more like the avenue from the churchyard gate to the church porch, of Stratford-on-Avon, than anything we have in this part of the kingdom. A dropping-well with its coral rockery and rock plants, as the liverwort, &c. attracts a passing glance. In short, there is scarcely a spot of ground which has not its appropriate tree, or shrub, or flower border; its bower or arbour, or other place for shade and shelter; and it is easy to see that no part of the thirteen years, during which this ground has been in formation and cultivation, has been an idle time with the projector or with his staff of gardeners and workmen.

These gardens are admirably kept; the borders, parterres, &c. are quite trim and neat, and the whole very creditable to the proprietor and to his staff, which, considering the extent of the place, is not a large one, - consisting of about twenty-five men. We asked Mr. Jennison if there was much plucking of flowers by the visitors. His answer was, that many who would not touch anything else would take a flower, especially a rose; but he had found that flower-plucking prevailed most wherever borders were left in a rough, untidy state; and when the visitors saw everything kept with great care, and all around trim and neat, they rarely disturbed or touched any of the shrubs or flowers. Generally speaking, he finds the visitors very orderly; and he assured us that on the Saturday in Whitsuntide, when the gardens

contained sixteen thousand persons, all enjoying themselves in dances, games, and sports, there was not the slightest disorder observable.

The gardens are much frequented by Sunday scholars in their recreation trips. On Monday last, about five thousand Sunday scholars came by railway from Macclesfield, and spent the day in these gardens: and for the convenience of such parties, they are landed and taken up again at a siding at the Longsight Station, so as not to impede the regular railway traffic, and to guard against accidents. To encourage visitors by railway, Mr. Jennison, having secured the land between the gardens and the railway station, intends to erect a neat entrance gate and lodge to his grounds, and also to make a good carriage road or drive from the Stockport road; so that Belle Vue will then have good approaches from the railway, and from both the Stockport and the Hyde roads. By railway, it is only a journey of some five minutes from Manchester.

On Monday last we visited the gardens, and found them very numerously attended; some enjoying a dance al fresco, on the platform; others a merry game on the green; while many visited the menageries and aviaries, strolled round the walks, fed the swans in the lake, or took an hour's boating on its water, penetrated the grottoes and caves, threaded the mazy labyrinth, listened to the band, and solaced themselves with salad and bread and butter, lemonade, ginger beer, and other refreshments, in some of the numerous arbours. We saw many family parties; and all seemed to be enjoying themselves, without any of that coarse or indecorous conduct, which we are too apt to imagine inseparable from such assemblages. The great attraction of the gardens on Monday was the performance of Herr Kjellberg, the Water King, who traversed the lake, supported only on a pair of large water-skates, and thus "walked the waters like a thing of life", to the amazement of the gay concourse; loaded and discharged a musket; and drew a boat full of persons after him.

A shortened copy of this report appeared in the Midland florist and suburban horticulturist (1850) p.83-90.

Pomona Gardens

This description appeared in the Manchester Times, 14 May, 1853

One of the chief local attractions of the pleasure seekers in this neighbourhood is the Pomona Gardens, historically known to the inhabitants of the last half century as the "Old Strawberry Gardens", where the well-paid fustian cutters, weavers, spinners, and tradesmen, forty years ago, spent their halcyon days during the summer months, picnicking in the laburnum bowers, from their nicely stored wallets, pregnant with the choicest viands, which were freely shared amongst relations, friends, shopmates, and strangers, and accompanied by copious libations of nut-brown ale and London stout, formed the substantial repast, or, as was then termed, the "baggin", of visitors. It would be no exaggeration, to say that the majority of lads and lasses of the early part of this century stipulated for and agreed to the great charter of their conjugal rights whilst promenading the long vistas, or sipping the well-mashed strawberries and cream, in the alcoves and arbours of this celebrated place. Neither would it be wrong to say that very many happy matrimonial hours were subsequently enjoyed by those whom fortune had blessed with additional joys, in consequences of the due performance of the contracts entered into in these gardens. It was a proverbial expression, forty or fifty years ago, when a couple were seen going to the Old Church to be married, "Strawberry Gardens again!" And why not? There was not a more delightful place round the country at that time. Pleasantly situated on the banks of the river Irwell, which then ran a clear, deep, broad, and rapid stream, tumbling its volume over the noisy weir at the bucolic hamlet of Throstle Nest, below which the fly-fisher plied his playful rod in the turbulent waters, snarling his finny prey. Looking westward on a fine summer evening, the setting sun gilded the antique casements of Ordsal Hall, which reared its gray walls within its moated grounds, some 300 yards distant from the gardens; and as it set upon the purple-tinted hills of Horwich and Rivington Pike, the scenery was beautiful, enhanced by the mellowed sounds of the bells of the Old Church, St. John's, or those of the parish church of Eccles, which were often heard echoing along the glade like the soft airs of an Æolian harp, vibrating upon the breeze. To the north lay the then rapidly-rising town of Manchester (nearly two miles distant), whose cottons, velvets, and cords, were then

becoming justly famous throughout the world. On the east lay a lofty ridge, whose slope was covered with plantation shrubs, at the foot of which, for half a mile in sight, lay the famous canal recently made by the munificence and enterprise of the late Duke of Bridgewater, to convey the commerce of Manchester to Liverpool. On the south lay the majestic park and forest lands belonging to the ancient and venerable house of Trafford, of Trafford, where, in unbroken line, the family hold their Anglo-Saxon lands, and almost unimpaired; in fact, the gardens and grounds, with all the estates for miles to the south are the property of the present baronet, Sir Humphrey de Trafford, including the ancient vill of Stretford, then famous for its pigs, black-puddings, and turf.

The house to which the original strawberry gardens were attached was anciently a roadside inn, of no mean importance, and lay on the right hand side of the old road leading from Manchester to Chester; in the coaching days it was regarded as a good calling place, and was known to travellers as the Grapes Coffee House. Those who remember it forty years ago must have noticed the long straight drive through an avenue of stately ash and elm trees, extending from the house to Throsle Nest; several of these are now standing, and as a suburban walk to the village of Stretford it was, during the summer months, much frequented; no doubt to this may be attributed the rise and establishment of the old strawberry garden. In 1808, it was kept by Wm. Hopper, during whose time the gardens were in the height of their popularity. In 1809, the pedestrian world was much excited by the novel undertaking of Captain Barclay, walking at Newmarket 1,000 miles in 1,000 successive hours; to amuse the people of Manchester, in 1819, a young man, named Berry, undertook to perform the same feat, which he achieved, with considerable *eclat* – at the time it was thought impossible, except for Barclay himself. This brought the gardens into greater note. In 1820, Maria, widow of Wm. Hopper, transferred the house and gardens to John Fairweather, cotton spinner, in whose possession it remained until 1845. On Mr. Fairweather's taking the place it ceased to be a public place of entertainment, and was kept up at a great expense as a private residence and garden. Both house and garden were remodelled in their details in February, 1845. The present proprietor, and his late brother, bought the fixtures and goodwill of the place, and, subsequently, obtained a lease from Sir Thomas Joseph de Trafford, for a considerable period, we believe, subject to renewal. The new proprietors set about re-opening them as public gardens, laying out large sums in widening the walks and

erecting arbours. It was at first opened with a beer licence, but in September, the same year, the magistrate granted, without dissent, a spirit licence, which it now enjoys. The garden is laid out with great taste and ingenuity, and considerable economy is used in apportioning the verdure and foliage to the gravelled walks required by the public. Too frequently proprietors of public gardens make sacrifices of the garden portion to walks, and thus destroy the chief attraction of the place. The walks are spacious, and in good order, the greatest portion of them embowered by the foliage and branches of fruit trees, of which there are several hundreds in the garden, principally apple and pear trees; hence, we conceive, the origin of its name, "Pomona". *Pomum* (Lat.) an apple; *pometum*, a place of apple trees; Pomona, the goddess of fruit or apples. Its classic origin is, therefore, not out of character, and the numerous classic figures, pedestals, busts, groups, and medallions with which the garden is ornamented render the whole contour of the place modest and respectable.

In these gardens there is evidently a studious desire to avoid anything that may offend public taste, or outrage the rules of design. The beds are laid out with mathematical precision. The walks are lineal, rectangular, or gracefully curved; the shrubbery variegated in size and colour; the annuals and evergreens harmoniously disposed; and the points of interest in the garden equally and scientifically arranged, so as to add to the pleasures of the promenade. The old vinery and pine pits have been removed to make way for some tasty-looking arbours, of a substantial character. In the centre of the garden, near to the house, there is a beautiful lawn, with centre parterre, surmounted with a classic piece of sculpture, "Pomona"; and round the outer mounds, and beyond the promenade, are a number of figures, such as "Pandora", "Hebe", "Ceres", "Flora", "The Graces", "Psyche", dryades, nymphs, and fauns, tastefully displayed, rendering this part of the gardens the most attractive, at the entrance of visitors through the main gate. Beyond the lawn is seen a capacious orchestra, 45 feet long and 89 feet wide, lofty in proportion to the rules of the Ionic order, and capable of holding above 100 performers. We believe during the summer it is intended to hold large concerts here. The lower storey of the orchestra is devoted to a refreshment-room, or for a ball-room, which, with two wings, each 60ft by 24 ft make a splendid retreat, where at least 100 sets of quadrille parties may enjoy themselves, free from the weather. The whole of these places are lighted with gas, and the walls tastefully decorated. Opposite to the orchestra, there is laid down a spacious flooring of wood, a kind of dais for the accommodation of dancers, and

which we believe is about to be extended to double its size. This is the chief attraction for the young and gay upon summer evenings and gala days; and during Whit Week, if fine, as many as 20,000 or 30,000 persons avail themselves of it by "tripping on the light fantastic toe".

There is an ingenious contrivance here, exhibiting great skill in carpentry, for crossing large rivers at a light expense. It is the invention of Remington, the engineer, and patented by him and Mr. Scott: hence it is called Remington and Scott's magic bridge. The girders of this singular bridge of 100 feet in length are not more than one inch square, over which is laid a light flooring of three quarter inch boarding, and yet will bear, with perfect safety, any number of persons that have courage to pass over it. It affords a rich fund of amusement for the passengers, particularly for males, when leading over their timorous partners, the oscillation and undulation raising peals of laughter to amuse those who are on the ground. Near to the tremulous bridge there is a large and complete gymnasium, the first, we believe, of the kind erected in public gardens; it was built by Mr. Richardson, who subsequently erected those in the Manchester parks, the Deaf and Dumb School, Lady Ellesmere's park at Walkden Moor, Owens College, and numerous other places. Through an embowered avenue we see before us a model of the Elizabethan maze at Hampton Court, which is approached through a portal of trellis work of cast iron, elaborately designed, in scrolls and foliage. To the left of the maze there is a building, 80 yards in length, and 9 yards in breadth, used as a shooting gallery for rifles and pistols extensively patronised in the summer season. Beyond this is the quoiting grounds, the Cumberland and Westmorland wrestling arena and the long regatta field. On the left of the maze runs the river Irwell, which skirts the gardens and grounds nearly half a mile in length, and which portion of the river forms the chief part of the regatta course, being a long straight reach, affording visitors to the gardens during the regatta an excellent sight of the boat racing.

Glancing from the regatta field, across the gardens, we discovered a colossal model painting of the ancient city of St. Jean d'Acre, the scene of so many bloody frays between the Saracen and the Christian armies, between Richard and Saladin, and where, for several centuries, the wood of the veritable cross of Christ was held by the unbelieving Turks. It was at last captured by Richard of England, Philip of France, and Guy of Jerusalem, and the cross delivered to the Holy Sepulchre. The crusaders

lost 100,000 men in taking this place, during the long siege it stood against the armies of the world. It was again besieged by Napoleon, 18th of March, 1799, when it was defended by Sir Sidney Smith, who repulsed the French with great slaughter. It was subsequently besieged by the Turkish army, aided by the British fleet, under Commodore Napier, at a time when Ibrahim Pacha, viceroy of Syria, in the pachalic of Egypt, under Mahommed Ali, held the Turkish fleet (of which he was admiral) in bondage, under the walls of Acre, and refused to pay his annual tribute to the ports. The city was bombarded, the magazine blown up, and the town captured; the Turkish fleet were relieved and given up to the port. It is the intention, we believe, of the proprietor to represent the last siege of Acre, on Monday and Saturday evenings, aided by the usual requirements in the pyrotechnic department, under the superintendence of Mr. R. Richardson, artist to Her Majesty, and Signor Pietro, of Paris. The painting was executed by Messrs Holding and Mathews, and considering the magnitude of the whole, and the difficulty of toning a picture, to stand all weathers, it is a very creditable performance. In front of the picture there is a spacious lake, of course representing the Bay of Acre, which has been considerably enlarged for that purpose during the winter. To the right of the lake there is a large and commodious stand erected, to enable persons to witness the siege operations, free from the pressure of the people below, and beneath which there is an excellent billiard room, one of the best tables of Thurston's make, where gentlemen players retire to spend a few hours at this truly aristocratic game. The walls are covered with the most valuable oil paintings. We may here remark that the proprietor and his late brother were connoisseurs and dealers in paintings and other fine arts; hence it is that the rooms of the Pomona Hotel and billiard room can boast of some of the choicest specimens of the old masters, amongst which we may enumerate a splendid Titian, "Tancred and Clorinda", a gallery picture; a racy specimen by Hogarth, "The Sybil"; a Sir Joshua Reynolds's portrait of Garrick (in the garden); an exceedingly valuable Vandyke, &c. There is also a large collection of the most valuable modern engravings. The visitors to these gardens have the opportunity of entertaining themselves with the higher range of pleasures, and the proprietor never allows any exhibitions or sports of a vulgar description to take place in the grounds.

The chief societies in the town hold their annual festivals here – as the Oddfellows (National and Independent), the Foresters, numerous trade societies, the licensed victuallers, and other respectable public bodies. On ordinary days in

summer select schools would, no doubt, find this a nice retreat for an afternoon's pleasure. Should the weather prove propitious during the coming week, no doubt "The Pomona" will receive a fair share of pleasure-seeking patronage, especially as in case of sudden rain, the goddess provides good shelter for her visitors.

The Zoological Gardens at Broughton

Long before the Zoological Gardens at Broughton were mooted, the Manchester papers had carried many reports of the Regent's Park Zoological Gardens. These may have encouraged the instigators of the Manchester Gardens, with reports of as many as 30,000 visitors in September 1830 alone and receipts for admission for the twelve months to September 1829 of £7,055 increased the following year by 18% to £8,326.¹⁰⁵⁹ From 1833 there was also the Liverpool Zoological Gardens to serve as an example of a municipal treasure, although, like Belle Vue, they had a single owner, Mr. Atkins, who had experience as a travelling menagerie owner.¹⁰⁶⁰ These gardens were set in twelve acres, landscaped by John Shepherd, the curator at the Liverpool Botanic Gardens¹⁰⁶¹ and it is possible that Shepherd would have been the first choice for designing the Manchester Gardens, but he was suffering from poor health and died on 27 September, 1836.¹⁰⁶² Instead, the Directors chose Richard Forrest who had, they said, experience of designing other zoological gardens at Cheltenham and Bristol & Clifton.¹⁰⁶³

Richard Forrest's report as to the suitability of the grounds at Broughton was reproduced in The Gardener's Magazine of April 1837 as well as the Manchester Times of 26 November, 1836. It was relatively brief:

"Gentlemen, - Having surveyed and examined the ground for the intended Zoological Gardens, I have much pleasure in congratulating you on your judicious selection. In arranging for such establishments certain requisites are

¹⁰⁵⁹ Manchester Courier, 23 October, 1830. The example of the London Gardens were also noted at Bristol, where the May and June attendance figures of 1835 (30,526 and 41,801) were noted: "Of course nothing like this enormous attendance is to be anticipated in so much smaller a population, but still the above shews the great attraction these institutions have for the public". (Bristol Mercury, 11 July, 1835).

¹⁰⁶⁰ There is a reference to Gilman and Atkins' Menagerie in the Cheltenham Chronicle, 24 April, 1817 and an earlier report (Morning Chronicle, 20 August, 1816) refers to the lioness which had given birth to four cubs (three of which survived) plus the tigers, zebra and pelican, which, with others were on show at Smithfield .

¹⁰⁶¹ Lancaster Gazette, 2 March, 1833.

¹⁰⁶² A lengthy obituary which appeared in the Liverpool Mercury, 30 September, 1836, was reproduced in The Gardener's Magazine, 1837 (p. 724).

¹⁰⁶³ Manchester Times, 26 November, 1836. The Bristol Zoo is still operating, but, like Manchester, the Cheltenham Gardens faded and were put up for sale in May, 1841 (The Era, 9 May, 1841).

indispensable, and the success or failure depends wholly upon them. The situation you have fixed upon contains so many of these essential properties that while it reflects the greatest credit upon the directors, cannot fail in claiming that support which will promote its interest and carry speedily into execution so laudable an undertaking. The elevation of the ground, the purity of the air, the kindly nature of the soil, and the dryness of the subsoil, will ensure the health of the animals and at the same time promote the growth of all those ornamental trees and shrubs so essential in garden scenery.

"The more elevated portion of the ground, consisting of a fine mellow sandy loam, and the lower part, around the margin of the intended lake, or a dry and fertile surface, peat earth, affords an opportunity of combining in your arrangements an arboretum, which seldom occurs, and which, I hope, the Directors will not overlook; for as you have wisely given up all idea of a Botanical Garden being connected with this establishment, nothing can be more appropriate as an accompaniment to these gardens than a collection of all the interesting trees and shrubs that will bear the open air of this country properly named and arranged.

"The inclination of the ground from north to south, being well sheltered from the prevailing winds, having a general surface delightfully undulating, a powerful supply of water from an upper level, and a diversity of soil for every purpose, form a combination of advantages rarely met with in a space of fifteen acres.

*"Having your instructions to prepare your general plan it shall be gone into forthwith, and in three weeks from thence will be submitted for your approval.
– I am, gentlemen, your most obedient servant, RICHARD FORREST.*

"Royal Hotel, November 21st, 1836"

Less than two years later the gardens were described by the Manchester Times, although most of the description consisted of a listing of the animals:

THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

"These gardens are equal in extent to the largest in the kingdom, covering fifteen acres of ground; and though not yet entirely finished are in rapid progress towards completion. Under the able directions of Mr. John Mearns (late head gardener to the Duke of Portland, at Welbeck), the grounds have been planted, and though this has been done within the last half year, yet owing to the liberality of noblemen and gentlemen to whom Mr. Mearns was known, he has been able to obtain donations of a large variety of trees of advanced growth, which give to the grounds the appearance of having been several years under culture. The class of hardy plants is extremely numerous, and to many of them are attached their botanical names. Among the first objects which attract attention, on entering the gardens, is a miniature lake,

tenanted by a number of aquatic birds, and crossed by a rustic bridge, leading to a building containing a refreshment saloon (40 feet by 30) and tea room of equal dimensions. A building (90 feet long) erected as an aviary for eagles, vultures, peafowls, &c. is also completed and partially inhabited; and beyond it is a bear pit (33 feet in diameter) with four dens, three of which are inhabited. Two large menageries have also been erected, but the grand menagerie, the pond and island for pelicans, and a pit and bath for polar bears, have not yet been commenced. The present erections, however, already contain among their tenants the following collection of animals, &c: - A lion and lioness: young, black manes, obtained from Mr. Wombwell; grand sire, Wallace, great grand sire Nero. These are considered very fine animals. Three royal Bengal tigers. Leopards (male and female): these are beautiful specimens of the leopard tribe, the spots being very large. Obtained from Mr. Cross, of the Surrey Zoological Gardens. There were three other leopards purchased in the same lot with the elephant, and another was presented to the gardens by Mrs. Ripley, of Liverpool. There is a fine puma from South America. The striped hyænas were purchased from Mr. Cross. The Burmese female elephant was purchased in Liverpool of Captain Holmes, of the ship Cornwallis. This animal is about six years old. The Indian rhinoceros was purchased in Liverpool on the 26th ult. The dromedary was obtained in London. A couple of red deer (stag and hind) were presented to the gardens by Mr. John Law, of this town. Other brown and red deer were purchased in Liverpool on the 26th ult., together with the Axis deer. A pair of zebus (bull and cow) have been some time in the gardens: the bull is considered a very fine specimen of this animal. The pair of wolves deserve notice, as being the first animals brought to the gardens. They were bred in the Dublin Zoological Society, and were quite young cubs when they reached Manchester, so that it was necessary to rear them for some time with the spoon. Amongst the smaller quadrupeds, we may notice the porcupines; the kangaroos, male and female – the latter now carrying their young in the pouch; three racoons, three ichneumons, gennet cat, cavy, about fifteen monkeys of the common species; a specimen of the Entellus monkey, having a white body and black face; some Oranderow monkeys, which are exceedingly scarce; three marmosets (the smallest known species of monkey), with the young one bred during the last severe winter, these animals having then been five months in the gardens. – Amongst the ornithological specimens in the gardens may be noticed a pair of fine emus, presented to the gardens by Earl Fitzwilliam; four eagles, of different kinds (one pair presented by the Rev. J. Clowes); an ostrich, purchased from Mr. Cross; the white, pied, and common pea-fowl; gold, silver, white, and common pheasants; and about ninety other birds, including a number of macaws, lories, cockatoos, parrots, and parroquets, of various kinds and of almost every colour; oriokeets of various kinds and of almost every colour; ortolans and other small foreign birds, five ringdoves, &c. – Of aquatic birds there are a couple each of pelicans, white swans, Canadian geese, barnacle geese, Spanish geese (with young one); ... Egyptian geese, and five couple of small water fowl. – The only reptiles yet in the collection are a very fine large boa constrictor, and a small snake that was found in a log of Campeachy logwood. – The gardens have in this festive week attracted several thousand people to view their wonders. On each race-day the walks have been crowded by ladies, gentlemen, and children; and we have been much gratified in observing that a large number of the working classes, with their families,

*have selected the gardens as the place of their holiday recreation, in preference to the beer-shop or public-house. The animals, birds, and the well laid out grounds seem to have astonished those who had not previously visited the gardens; and numberless proofs have been given, in the rational pleasure thus afforded to so many individuals, of the importance and value of the establishment in a moral and intellectual point of view. By some unaccountable oversight, the name of Mr. Richardson, the able superintendent of the zoological department of the gardens, was omitted in our report of the proceedings of the opening day. We regret this omission, because we find that Mr. Richardson is a clever, practical man, fully acquainted with his duty, and that to his judgment and zeal may be principally ascribed the admirable arrangement of the menageries and aviaries, and the beauty and variety of the animals and birds. It is a fact deserving of record, that not a single bird or beast was deposited in the places they at present occupy until after twelve o'clock the night before the opening of the gardens; so that the menageries and aviaries were quite as new to their inmates as to the numerous company who viewed them on that day. The exhibition of animals has given general satisfaction to the Public; and the Directors will consult their own interest, and add to the popularity of the gardens, by rendering their best attention to this main department. The gardens being zoological, only secondary attention must be paid to geology and other branches of science. The increase, variety and rarity, of animals and birds, beasts and reptiles, should be the leading objects of the Directors, and we trust they will not lost sight of those cardinal points. A Foxopholite Club, as there is beautiful archery ground within the gardens, might be established, in connexion with the gardens, with great advantage."*¹⁰⁶⁴

It might be expected that the attractions of seeing exotic wild animals would have ensured high attendance at the gardens. However, that is to ignore the fact that the population had long had the opportunity to see the more exciting creatures. The Knott Mill Fair had started before 1800 and had grown in size and popularity, until in 1822 it was described as "*emulating to complete rivalry, the famous Bartholomew Fair, held in Smithfield, London*".¹⁰⁶⁵ It was held in Easter Week¹⁰⁶⁶ and the population was treated to shows such as Mr. Cooke's circus and Mr. Wombwell's Menagerie. Cooke paid his fifth visit to Manchester in 1826.¹⁰⁶⁷ The previous year he had advertised his equestrian team, including (among others) Miss King "*she will go through the Broad Sword Exercise*", Paul Pietro, the Peruvian Equestrian who

¹⁰⁶⁴ Manchester Times, 9 June, 1838.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Manchester Herald, quoted by Westmorland Gazette, 20 April, 1822. "*The Holiday Fair, which thirty years ago only occupied a few square yards at the upper end of Deansgate, by the display of a little gingerbread and a few nuts, under the mock title of Knott Mill Fair, has been this year unusually full of life, whim, and bustle; emulating to complete rivalry, the famous Bartholomew Fair, held in Smithfield, London*".

¹⁰⁶⁶ Love, Manchester As It Is, p.161.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Manchester Courier, 18 March, 1826.

exhibited "... *the whole routine of a War Indian going to combat*" and a pyramid of nine riders on three horses. There was also a tightrope walker¹⁰⁶⁸ and clowns.¹⁰⁶⁹

For exotic animals, however, the person to look for was Wombwell. He had been in Manchester in 1818 and took out a lengthy advertisement, with exciting looking headlines, to attract business, promising the animals which would be in Manchester during the Easter Week.¹⁰⁷⁰ It began:

"INDISPUTABLY the most rich, grand, and complete Collection of rare and beautiful living Animals that was ever known to travel through any part of the world, is now offered for the inspection of amateurs, connoisseurs, and the public, which affords an opportunity of viewing, at one glance, every kind of extraordinary, rare, and valuable Quadruped and Bird that ever crossed the ocean, such as have always been considered leading objects of exhibition, exclusively of several animals entirely new to this country."

Listed were a total of nine lions (including a pair of cubs); an Indian rhinoceros (which had cost 800 guineas and was the only living one in the country at the time); a male elephant; pumas ; a recently-arrived alpaca; a South American river cow (possibly a capybara); hyænas (spotted and striped); a pair of leopards; a Bengal tiger; antelope; porcupine; opossums; an ursine sloth; racoons; civit cat; jackals; coati-mondis; macaws; cockatoos; lories and pheasants plus "*A great variety of Smaller Animals and Birds, too numerous to mention*". Admittance to the menagerie was 1s. but for 2s. it was possible to be there for feeding time.

Twenty years later, Wombwell was still visiting and this time had the new Zoo to contend with – on the same day that Wombwell's advert appeared, so too did the one from the Zoological Gardens announcing that, though unfinished, the gardens would be open to the public until Whitsun. Wombwell addressed himself to the "*Nobility, Gentry, the Inhabitants of Manchester and its environs*" and begging

"...to assure them that there never has been seen Travelling or in any Zoological Establishment in Europe, so rare and valuable a collection of

¹⁰⁶⁸ Manchester Courier, 2 April, 1825.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Manchester Courier, 23 April, 1825 which carried a report on Kean's performance, criticising "*the low buffoonery of tumbling about the stage, as the little boys do to amuse stage-coach passengers on the Liverpool road; and feats of the posture-master that might rival the most expert of Cooke's clowns at Knott Mill fair!*" The fair ran until it was abolished in 1876 (Manchester Evening News, 30 May, 1914).

¹⁰⁷⁰ Manchester Mercury, 10 March, 1818.

Animated Nature as his ample Menagerie now affords, and he trusts to receive on this occasion a share of their support."¹⁰⁷¹

The animals were similar to those previously shown but with some additions: three elephants (the largest required a huge wagon with "six roller wheels to support it, and twelve horses to propel it"); lions and cubs; pumas; leopards (with cubs); panthers; cheetahs; Bengal tigers; north-American black and brown bears; ursine sloth; Polar bear ("just arrived"); hyænas; wolves; huskies; jackals; racoons; coati-mondi; ichneumons (mongoose); musk cats; porcupines; squirrels; gnu; zebras; kangaroos; monkeys; birds; snakes and a replacement rhinoceros. The advertisement was headed with an engraving to entice customers:



The Directors of the new zoo both bought from Wombwell – a lion and lioness (see above) – and sold to him. When the animals were put up for auction in 1842, Wombwell purchased "the large boa constrictor... two emus ... the large Bengal tiger ... the handsome leopard ... a lioness, two-years old ... [another] lioness ... the female rhinoceros".¹⁰⁷² Altogether, these cost him £537, ranging from the two emus for £8

¹⁰⁷¹ Manchester Courier, 14 April, 1838.

¹⁰⁷² Manchester Times, 26 November, 1842.

through the Bengal tiger, a snip at £45 (it had cost the company £80) to the rhinoceros at 265 guineas. In 1845 Wombwell, after an absence of several years, and without the competition of the Zoological Gardens, returned to Knott Mill for the Easter fair:

*"This, the largest, and most valuable, of Mr. Wombwell's menageries, has not been exhibited in Manchester for several years, and is literally crowded with every species of quadruped and bird capable of existing in these climes. The extraordinary productions of nature, the Great ONE-HORNED RHINOCEROS, with several other rare animals, which were purchased by Mr. Wombwell at the late sale at the Manchester Zoological Gardens, are in this unequalled collection of animated nature. The Rhinoceros is considered to be the finest specimen of the kind in Europe. The beautiful and highly-trained group of performing Lions, Tigers, and Leopards, will be put through their extraordinary feats several times during each day of the fair. They excite the astonishment of every beholder at the power possessed by man over the lordly lion, the king of the brute creation; and the ferocious tiger, the scourge of the jungle. To enumerate the various animals and birds contained in this immense establishment would far exceed the limits of an advertisement."*¹⁰⁷³

¹⁰⁷³ Manchester Times, 22 March, 1845.

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