

the CALDWELL'S NURSERIES project

With this project **Cheshire Gardens Trust** aims to share the horticultural heritage of Caldwell's Nurseries of Knutsford. The nurseries were a family business operating for over 200 years finally closing in 1992.



Caldwell's shop beside the main nursery on Chelford Road, early 1900s



The extended shop in the 1960s



The main Nursery shop about 1966



The location of the main nursery



William Caldwell (1855 – 1918) surrounded by his family c. 1908

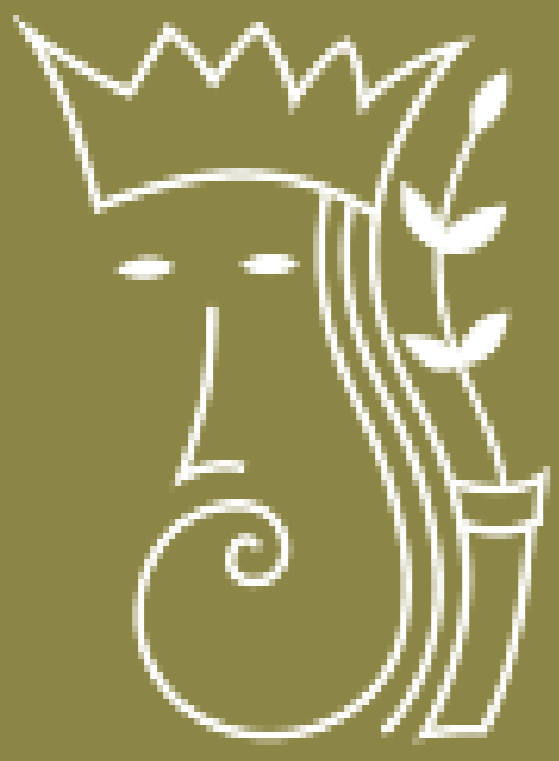
The nurseries passed through six generations of 'William Caldwells'.



William (1887-1953) and Arthur Caldwell in partnership 1918 - 1939

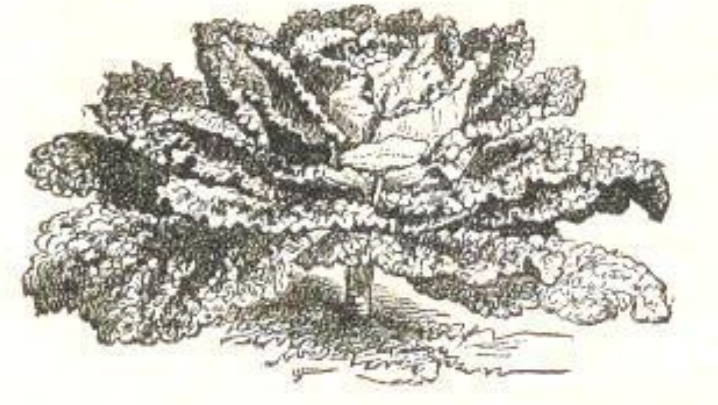


William Caldwell (1922 – 2001) and Don Leaman, co directors, 1975



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Caldwell's Nurseries was a very labour intensive business with nursery sites in Knutsford and at Ollerton and Barnshaw employing a significant workforce.



The long border at the main nursery where mature plants were displayed, "with the shadow of a *Leylandii* that had been put on the border deliberately to show customers how quickly and large it grew." David Caldwell



Caldwell's seed measures

"You'd dip the seed spoon into the seed and draw it back under the bar so you'd end up with a level teaspoon of that particular seed. You'd open the packet, in it goes, lick it, seal it – that's the way the seeds are packeted." Don Leaman



The main nursery about 1959.

From left to right - Mr Crimes, Mr Alec Harrop, Sid Taylor hidden behind Alec Harrop, Jack Painter, Arthur Chorlton, an unknown person in front of Arthur Chorlton, Mr Bill Shard, Sid Holland at the back then John Walton and Mr Bill Coleman, and at the front David and Jane Caldwell, aged 8 and 6.



The main nursery about 1935



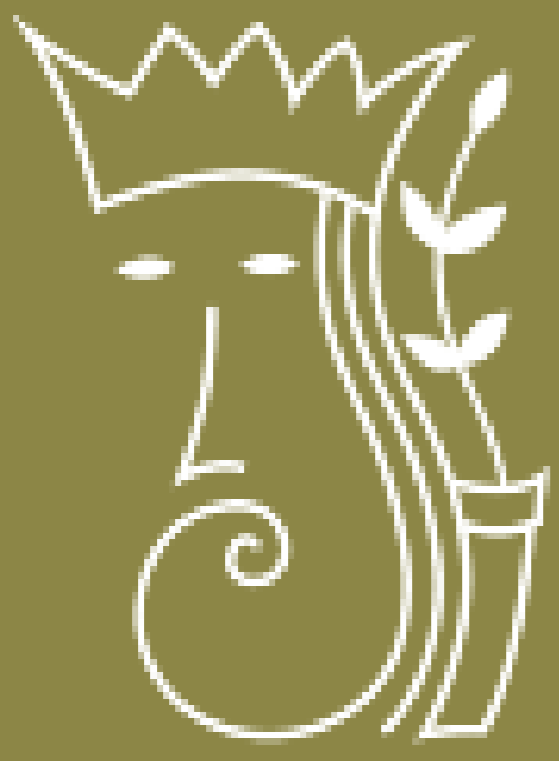
From '1884 descriptive catalogue of Vegetable and Flower Seeds'

"They used to grow about 75,000 roses a season. It was lovely to see just a field of colour."

David Cooke, employee

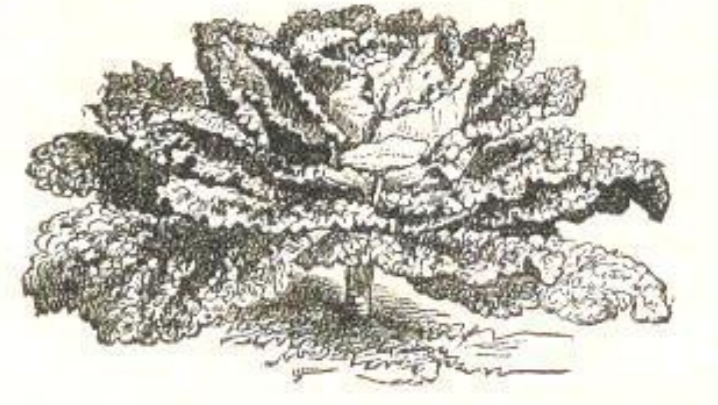


Budding the rose stocks was a back breaking job



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The main nursery about 1935



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Cheshire Gardens Trust volunteers are using the surviving records and the memories of family, staff and customers to develop a website, exhibition, publication and talks.



An illustration from Caldwell's '1884 descriptive catalogue of Vegetable and Flower Seeds'.



Caldwell's letterhead with King Canute logo

Customer orders were recorded in business ledgers. Fourteen ledgers survive recording customer orders and are held by Cheshire Archives.



Hervey Aston of Aston Hall orders in 1791



Customers used the catalogues to place their orders.



Jack Daniels, manager of Caldwell's King Street florist shop presents flowers to the Knutsford May Queen Monica Drinkwater in 1949.

Cheshire Gardens Trust are grateful to volunteers and funders for making this project possible



The Royal Botanical and Horticultural Society of Manchester and the Northern Counties

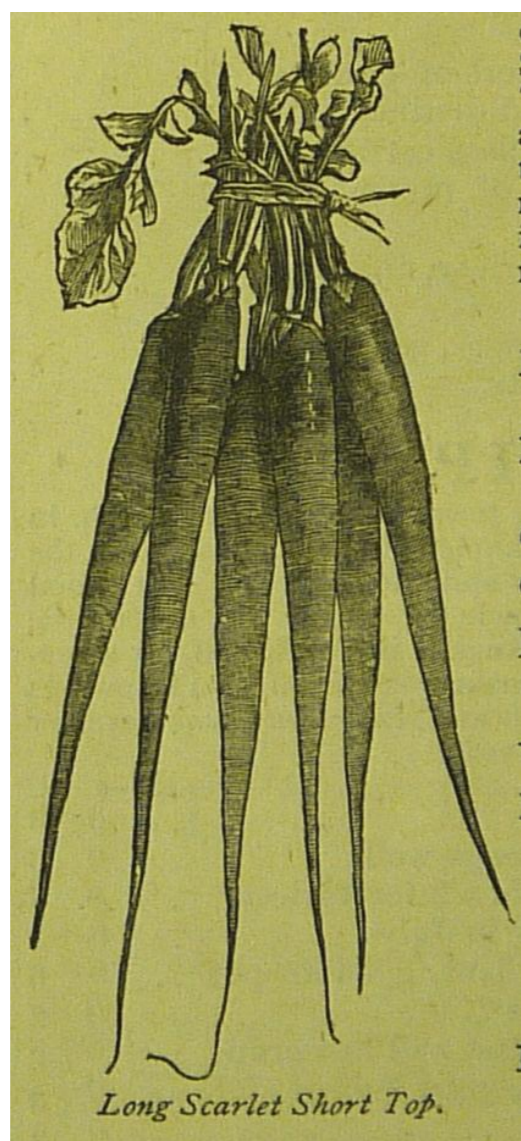
<http://www.caldwellarchives.org.uk/>





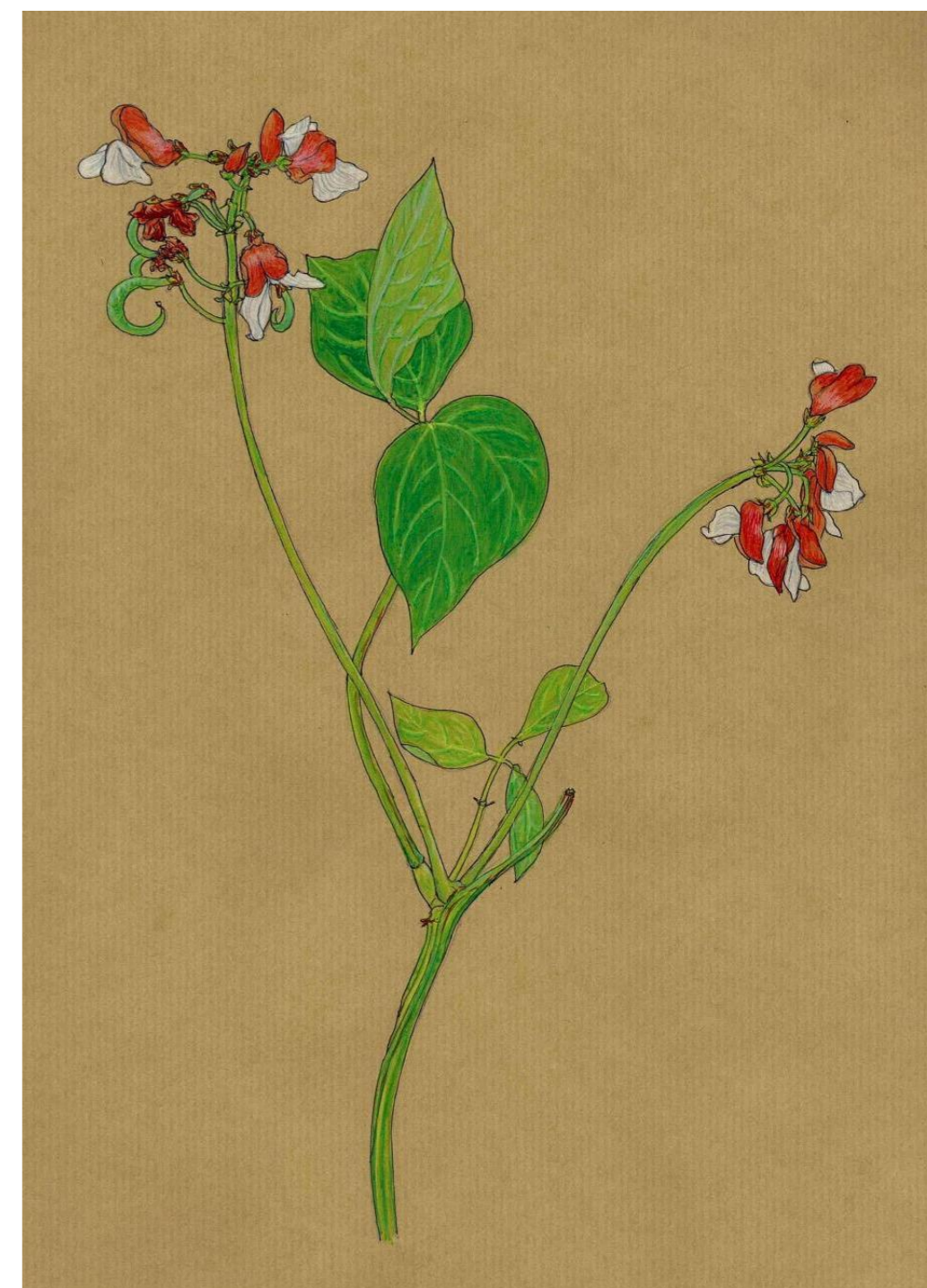
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The plants sold by Caldwell's, and indeed by all nurserymen, can be divided into the 'useful' and the 'decorative'. Useful plants included vegetables, fruit and trees for timber.



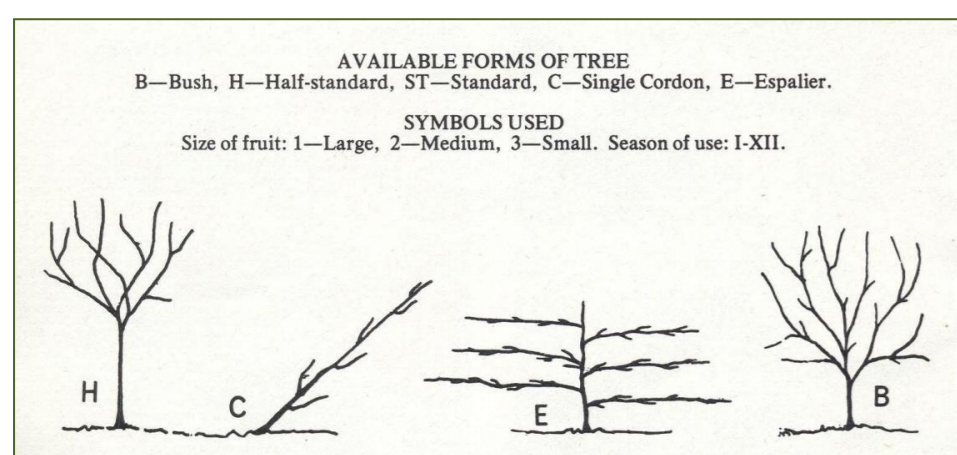
The nursery always sold large numbers of vegetable plants and seeds. In 1880 they produced six Caldwell strains of vegetables. By 1946 they were using names associated with Knutsford and their logo such as Caldwell's 'Cranford' peas and Caldwell's 'King Canute' tomato.

Images of celery and Long Scarlet Short Top radish from W. G. Caldwell and Sons 1884 Vegetable and Flower Seed Catalogue. Courtesy of Cheshire Archives and Local Studies

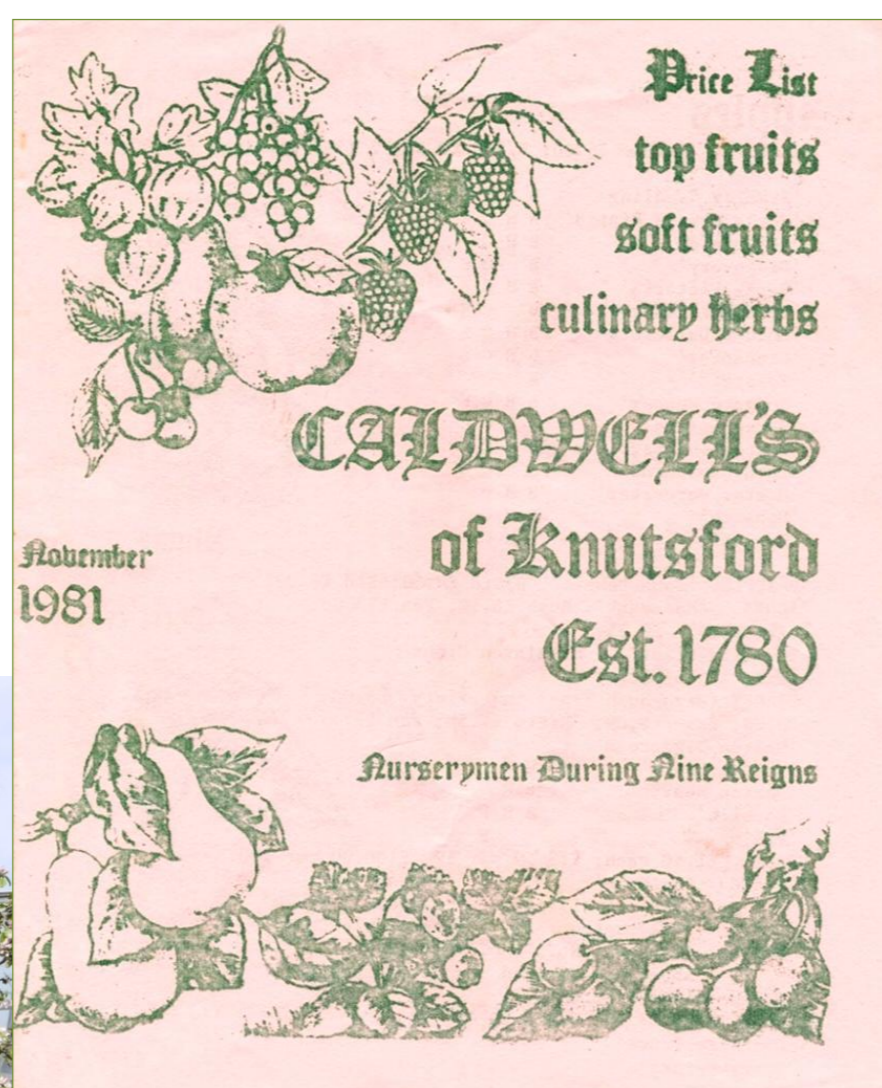


Runner bean Painted Lady by Christine Wilcox-Baker

The Caldwell ledgers from the 1790s and 1830s contain many orders for fruit trees. These included varieties of apricot, nectarines and peaches for growing on sheltered walls or in glasshouses. In the 1960s staff at Caldwell's Barnshaw Nursery, near Goostrey, were taught how to bud, graft, prune, train and spray the trees.



From Caldwell's 1975 General Catalogue



Apples from "The Fruit Grower's Guide" 1892 by John Wright, F.R.H.S. with illustrations by Miss May Rivers, J.S. Virtue & Co. Ltd.

WM. CALDWELL AND SON,
NURSERY AND SEEDSMEN,
Knutsford.

PRICED CATALOGUE FOR 1824, AND 1825.

ALDEN, transplanted, 2 feet..... 20 0 Per 1000	Fig, Norway Spruce, 2 years old... 4 0 Per 1000
Ditto, 3 and 4 feet..... 25 0	Ditto, transplanted, 1 foot..... 10 0
Asb, seedling, 2 years old..... 8 0	Ditto, " 2 feet..... 15 0
Ditto, transplanted, 2 feet..... 15 0	Ditto, " 3 feet..... 25 0
Ditto Mountain, seedling, 1 yr old 3 0	Ditto, Bala Filial, transp. 1 foot 50 0
Ditto, " 3 feet..... 12 0	Ditto, transplanted, 2 feet 75 0
Ditto, " 3 feet..... 20 0	Ditto, Weymouth Pine, 11 feet 20 0
Ditto, " 6 and 8 feet..... 20 0	Ditto, " " " 2 feet 15 0
Beech, seedling, 1 year old..... 3 0	Horseshoe, seedling, 2 years old... 4 0
Ditto, transplanted, 1 foot..... 15 0	Ditto, transplanted, 11 and 2 feet 20 0
Ditto, " 2 feet..... 20 0	Ditto, " 4 feet..... 20 0
Ditto, " 3 feet..... 35 0	Holly, " 6 and 12 inches 40 0
Ditto, " 2 feet..... 25 0	Lauri, seedling, 1 year old..... 3 0
Ditto, " 3 feet..... 40 0	Ditto, transplanted, 11 and 2 feet 12 0
Chesnut Horse, seedling, 2 years old 7 0	Ditto, " 3 feet..... 20 0
Ditto, transplanted, 1 and 2 feet 15 0	Ditto, " 4 feet..... 25 0
Ditto, " 2 years old 20 0	Ditto, " 4 feet..... 25 0
Ditto, " 3 and 4 feet 20 0	Ditto, " 5 and 6 feet 30 0
Ditto, " 5 and 6 feet 40 0	Ditto, Spanish, seedling, 2 years old 7 0
Ditto, Spanish, seedling, 1 year old 17 0	Ditto, transplanted, 11 & 2 feet 50 0
Ditto, " 2 years old 20 0	Ditto, " 3 feet..... 60 0
Ditto, transplanted, 11 and 2 feet 21 0	Ditto, " 4 feet..... 60 0
Ditto, " 2 and 2 feet 30 0	Ditto, " 7 and 8 feet 80 0
Ditto, English, graft, 3 feet..... 12 0	Ditto, " 9 and 10 feet 50 0
Ditto, " 4 feet..... 17 0	Ditto, " 5 and 6 feet 50 0
Ditto, " 5 feet..... 25 0	Fig, Scotch, seedling, 1 year old... 1 0
Ditto, " 6 feet..... 30 0	Ditto, " 2 years old..... 2 0
Ditto, " 7 feet..... 35 0	Ditto, " 3 and 4 feet 25 0
Ditto, " 8 feet..... 40 0	Ditto, " 5 and 6 feet 30 0
Ditto, " 9 feet..... 45 0	Thornapple, 1 year old..... 5 0
Ditto, " 10 feet..... 50 0	Ditto, 2 years old..... 7 0
Ditto, " 11 and 12 feet 60 0	Ditto, transplanted, 4 and 2 feet 75 0
Ditto, " 13 feet..... 70 0	White Birch, 6 and 7 feet..... 12 0
Ditto, " 14 feet..... 80 0	
Ditto, " 15 feet..... 90 0	
Ditto, " 16 feet..... 100 0	
Ditto, " 17 feet..... 110 0	
Ditto, " 18 feet..... 120 0	
Ditto, " 19 feet..... 130 0	
Ditto, " 20 feet..... 140 0	

A Choice Assortment of Standard and Dwarf Fruit Trees.
Standard and Dwarfed PEACHES, NECTARINES, APRICOTS, PEARS, PLUMS, CHERRIES, &c.
FINE TRIPLED VINE, IN BOTTLE, OF THE BEST APPROVED KINDS.
An Extensive Collection of EVERGREENS, and Dutchess Flowering SHRUBS, at the very Lowest Prices.
GARDEN SEEDS, of every description, sown and true; with every other article connected with the Nursery and Seed Business.
W. C. & Son offer 100 named Roses, one Plant of each, for 50s.
GREEN, PRINTER, KNUTSFORD.

WM. Caldwell and Son priced catalogue 1824, the earliest known Caldwell catalogue comprising a single printed list of trees.



Espalier apple James Grieve from Caldwell's

In the 18th century nurserymen grew thousands of trees and "quicks", hawthorn seedlings, for hedging. Tree planting was promoted to provide timber for industry and construction. Trees were also planted as part of estate and agricultural improvement for shelter, game and fox hunting.



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Decorative plants sold by Caldwell's included many trees, shrubs and flowers introduced to Britain by plant hunters.

Camellias had become popular by the 1830s, but at that time they were thought to be tender and so were grown under glass rather than in the shrubbery.



A camellia bought from Caldwell's in the 1970s and still thriving in a sheltered Knutsford garden.



Yucca Gardener's Magazine 1826, Courtesy: Chetham's Library

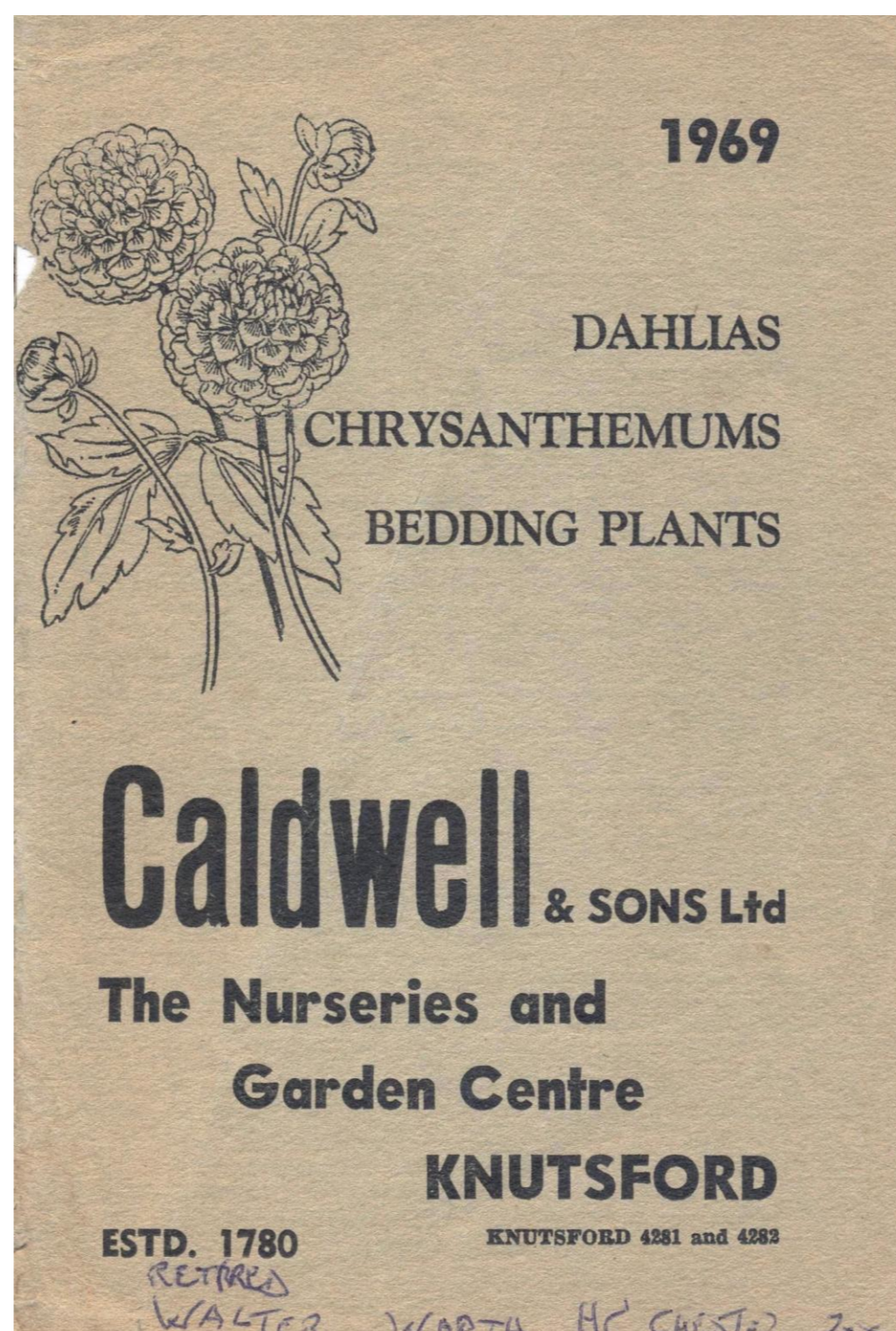
Donovan Caldwell Leaman discovered a field maple seedling with exceptional autumn colour. He named it Acer campestre William Caldwell, after his cousin.



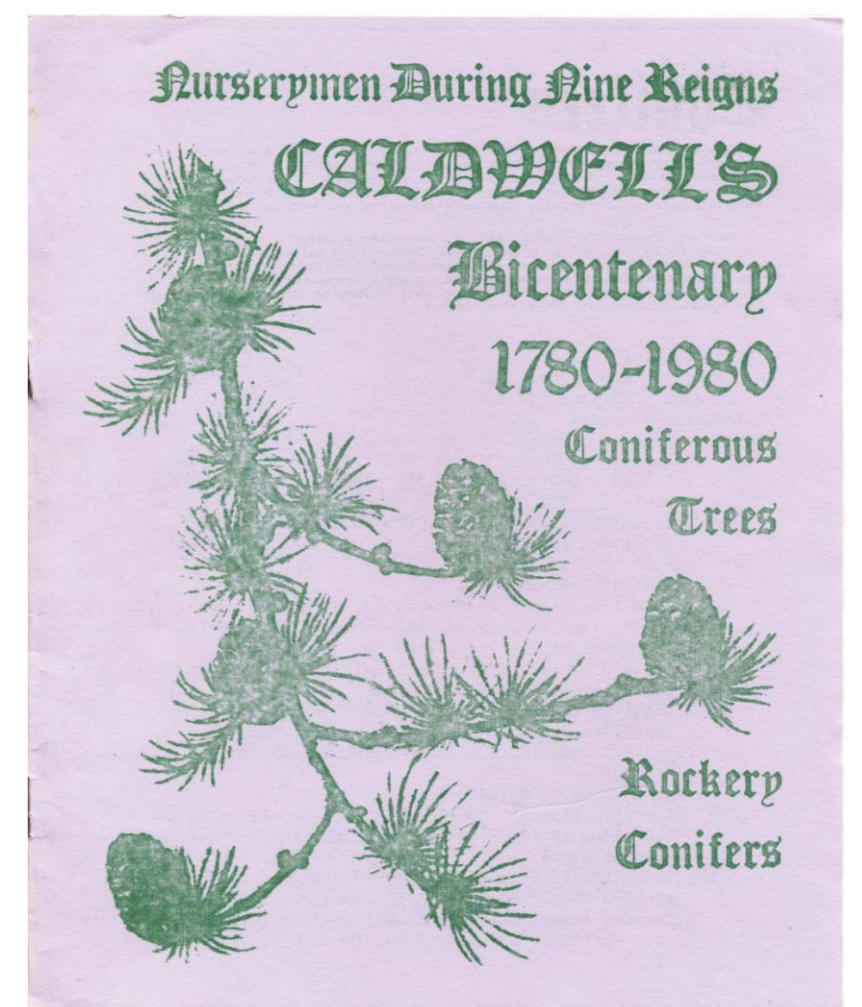
By 1833 Caldwell's stocked several Dahlias cultivars, including Caldwell's Purple Globe. Varieties available in the 1830s were no longer listed in Caldwell's 1969 Dahlia catalogue.



Princess Victoria
The Annual Dahlia Register 1836



W G Caldwell and Sons Vegetable and Flower Seed catalogue 1884

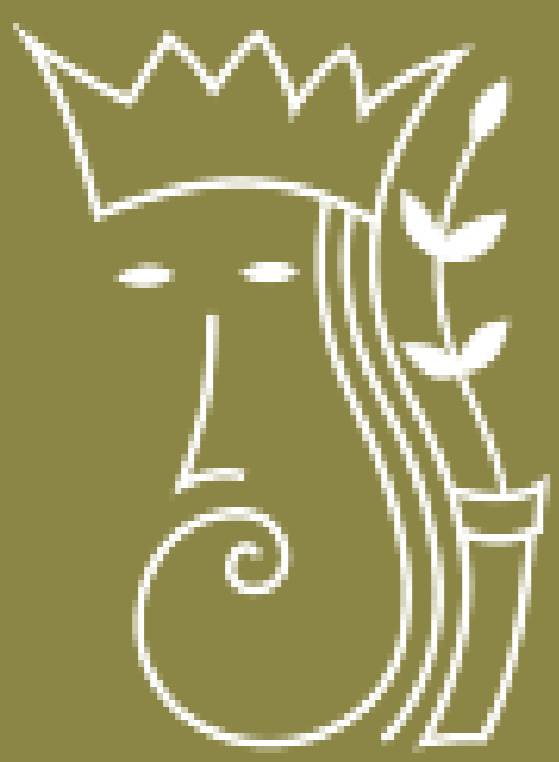


Conifer catalogue 1980

Hilda Osborne and Carol Chapman Courtesy: Knutsford Guardian



Caldwells won 1st and 2nd prize for their hanging baskets at Chelsea Flower Show in 1985.



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Local customers included Mrs Hancock of the George Hotel, Dr Holland and Mr Christmas Governor of Knutsford Gaol.



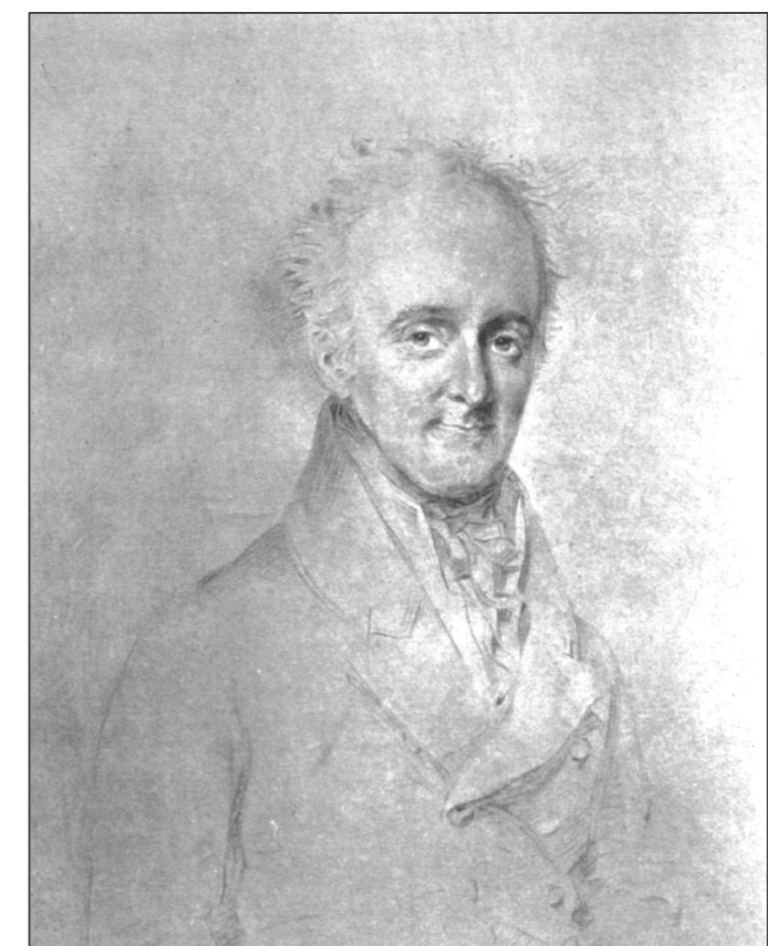
The George & Dragon (now the Royal George) was a coaching inn with mail coaches going to London, Liverpool and Birmingham. Some nursery goods were left at the inn for collection by coach. The innkeeper's wife, Mrs Hancock, bought vegetable and flower seeds from Caldwell's in 1791.



This view of Kings Street shows the Royal George on the right and just behind the nearest gentleman is the shop that was Caldwell's Florist shop. *Courtesy: Knutsford Heritage Centre (J. McCappin).*



The rear of the Royal George, formerly gardens where Mrs Hancock would have grown her vegetables. *Courtesy: Knutsford Heritage Centre*



Dr Peter Holland
Courtesy: Knutsford Heritage Centre

Established in Knutsford in 1783 Peter Holland, Elizabeth Gaskell's uncle, was medical practitioner to the Stamfords at Dunham, the Leicesters at Tabley, the Egertons at Tatton and the Gregs at Quarry Bank Mill. He lived at Church House with two acres of land. In 1795 he ordered potatoes, peas, beans, parsley, carrots, radish, turnip seed, garlic, and fennel.

Mr Christmas, Governor of Knutsford Gaol was popular but not entirely honest. He had a habit of pocketing the fines! He was dismissed in 1835.

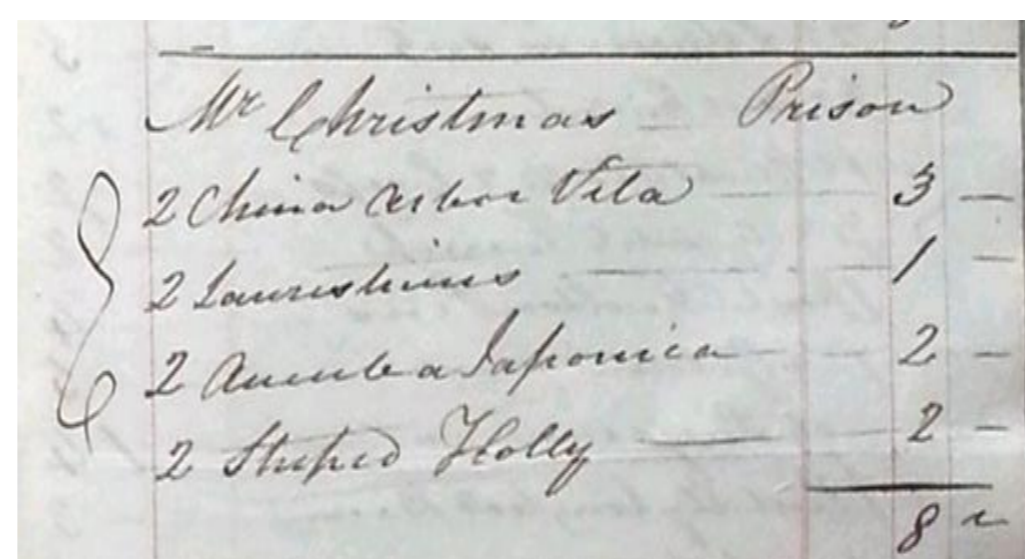


Inside Knutsford Gaol c.1919 when it had ceased being a prison but was being used by the Ordination Test School.

Courtesy: Knutsford Heritage Centre



The Sessions House and prison, taken from the church tower of Church of St. John the Baptist. *Courtesy: Knutsford Heritage Centre.*



Here is Mr Christmas's order dated 1834. *Courtesy: Cheshire Archives and Local Studies*



Church House, former home of Dr Holland. *Courtesy: Knutsford Heritage Centre*



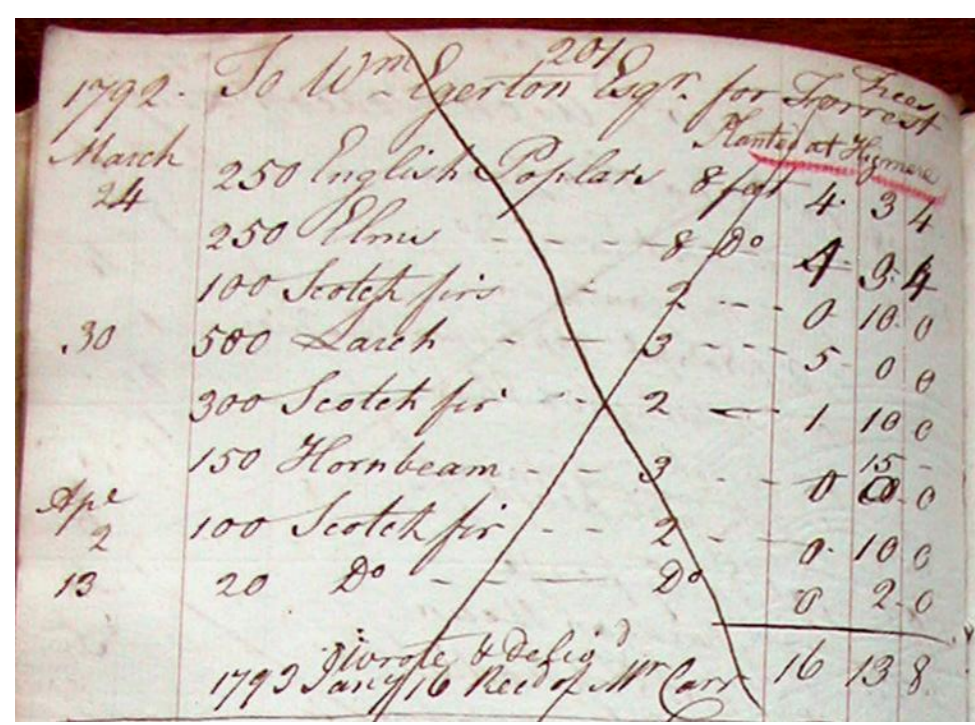
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The Egertons of **Tatton Park** were loyal customers of Caldwell's from 1791 until Maurice Egerton died in 1958.



Sir Thomas Egerton acquired Tatton Park in 1598. Inheritance of a significant fortune enabled the family to build a new hall, landscape the park and lay out gardens in the 18th century.



Order Book
1789-1795
DDX 363/6
Courtesy:
Cheshire Archives
and Local Studies

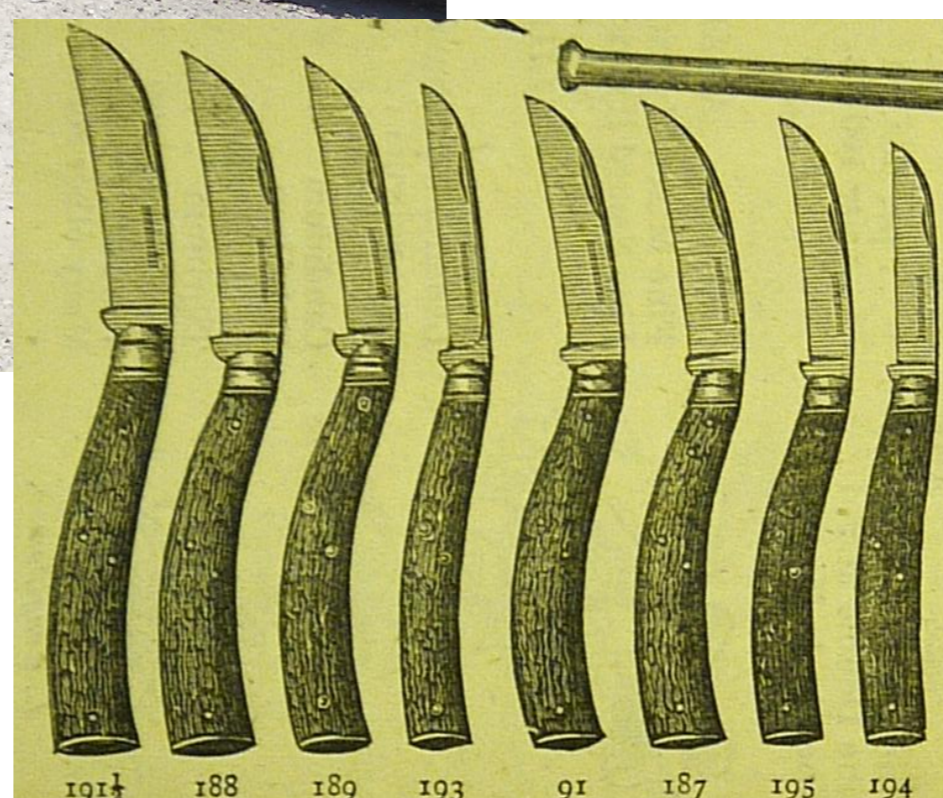
Caldwell's supplied several orders of trees in 1791 when Humphry Repton advised on landscaping.



Information from the Caldwell ledgers was used in restoration of the walled kitchen gardens.



Purchases of Rhododendrons and Azaleas by Lord Egerton (1874 – 1958) during WWII are said to have kept the nursery going.



Pruning knives from Caldwell's 1884
Vegetable & Flower Seed Catalogue

Ken Roe recalls Lord Egerton coming to the nursery to purchase a pruning knife.



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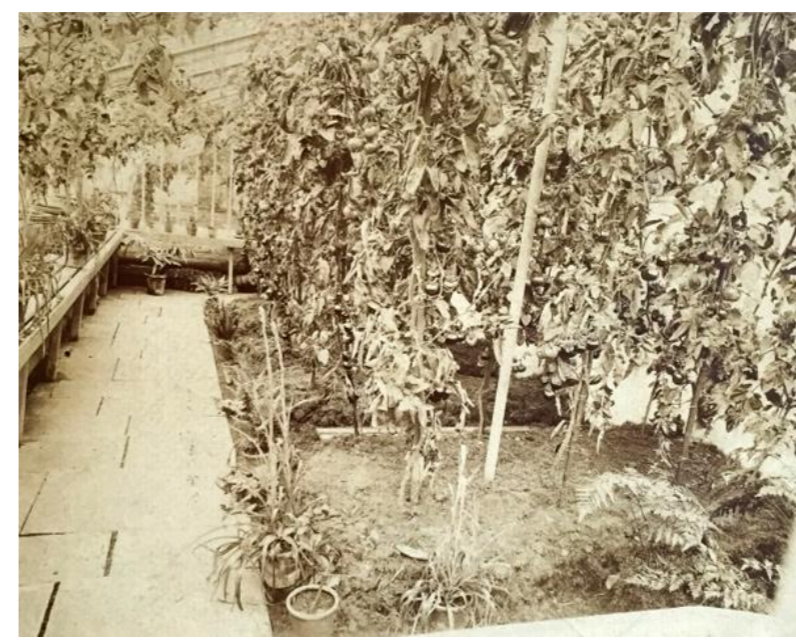
Tabley House was designed by John Carr of York for Sir Peter Byrne Leicester, Bt., and completed in 1767. Caldwell ledgers and invoices record large and varied orders of trees, shrubs, fruit, flowers, bulbs and vegetables for the park and gardens.



An extract from J. Dunn's Map of Tabley Park 1802, showing the new house, stables and walled kitchen garden. Courtesy: Cheshire Archives and Local Studies

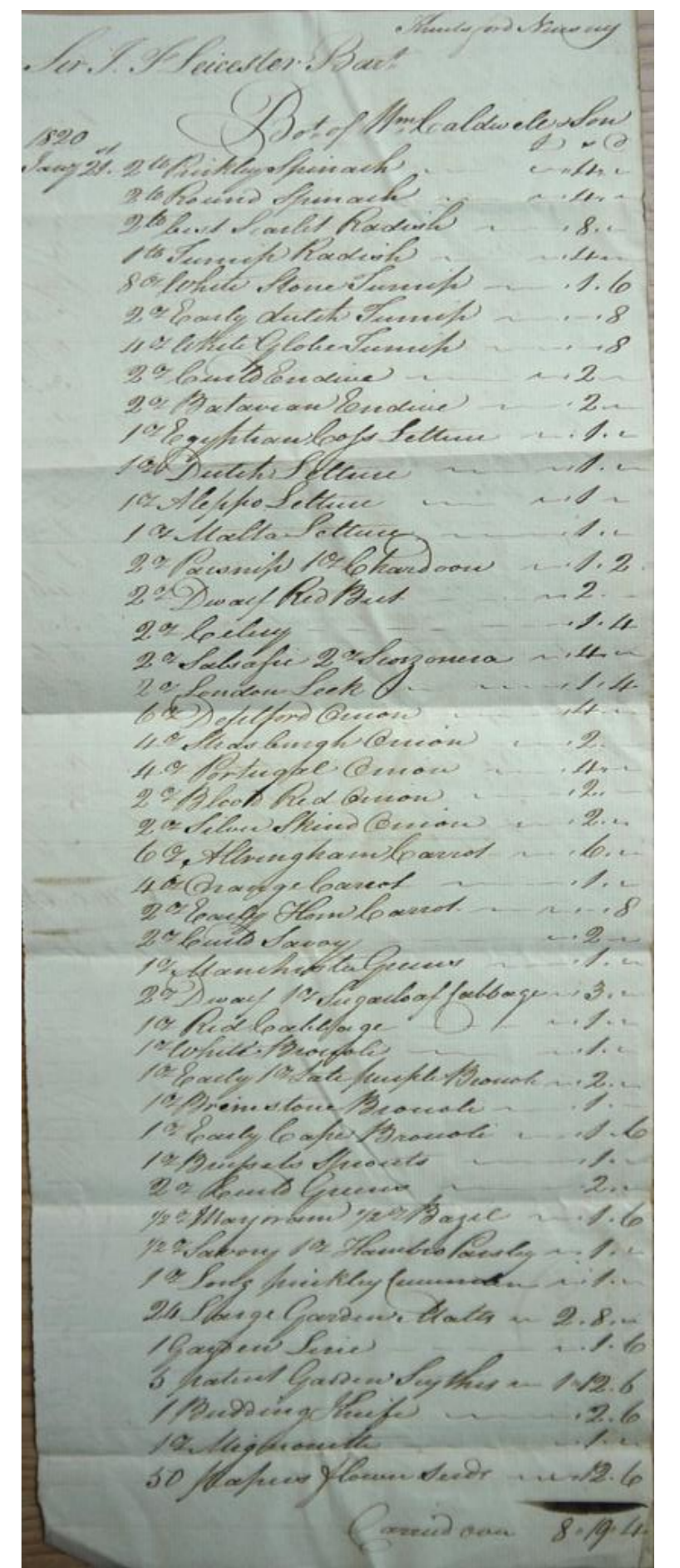


The walled kitchen garden at Tabley
Copyright :The Tabley House Collection Trust



The tomato house, Tabley, July 1890
Copyright :The Tabley House Collection Trust

In 1790 Sir John Fleming Leicester, 1st Lord de Tabley purchased nectarine and peach trees. Rhododendrons ordered in 1835 flower today and cedar trees also purchased in 1835 are still features of the Tabley landscape.



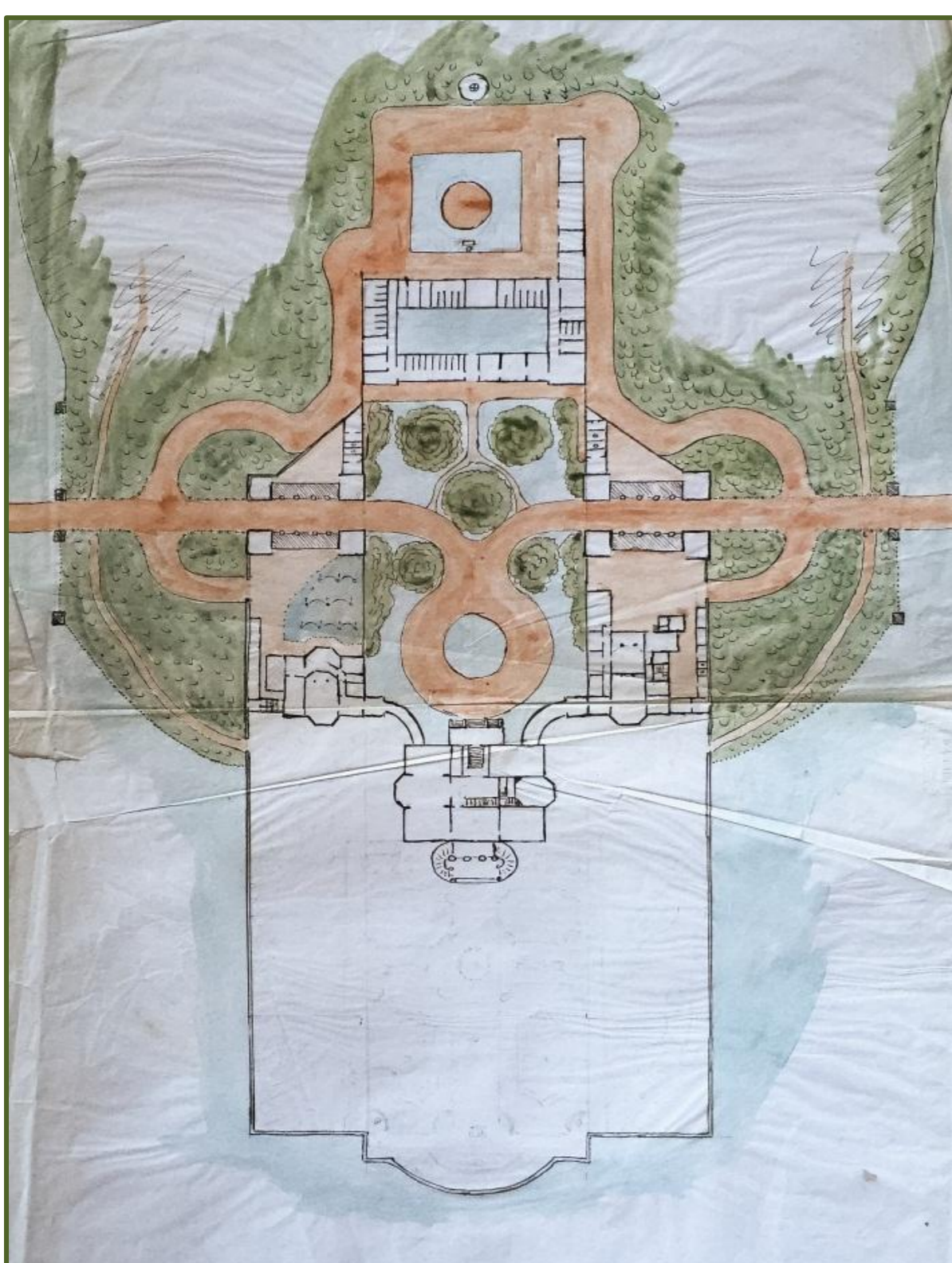
Caldwell invoice 1820 DLT/DI/48/11
Courtesy : Cheshire Archives and Local Studies

In the 1840s the house was re-orientated and a new garden created between the portico and parkland. Plans by the garden designer William Nesfield show parterres and a sun dial.



A late 19th century photograph of the parterres
© The Tabley House Collection Trust

An invoice of 1823 includes *Rubus arcticus*, the arctic bramble. Later the 3rd Lord de Tabley discovered a new bramble and wrote on the subject in *The Flora of Cheshire*.

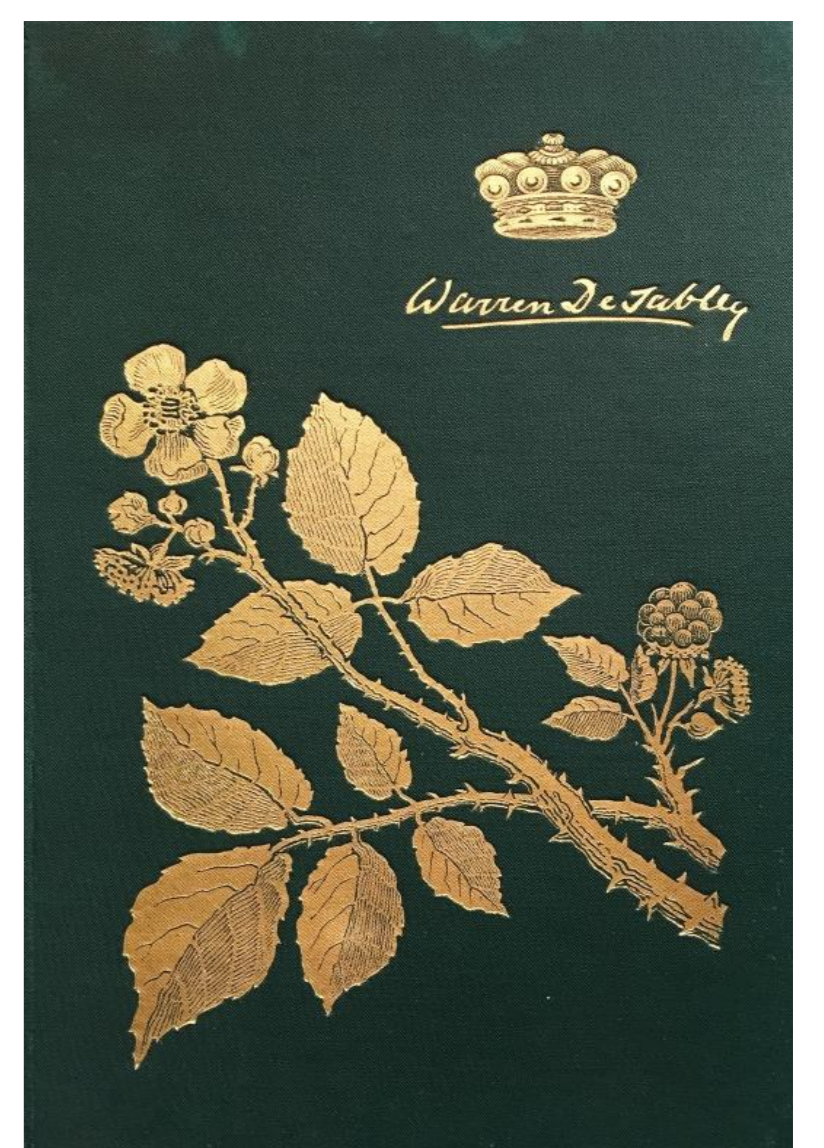


© The Tabley House Collection Trust



The formal parterres were replaced by a hockey field when the house became a school. Thomas Harrison's sundial remains.

The 2nd Lord de Tabley explored ideas for approaches to the new entrance to the house. In the end a simpler scheme was used.



© The Tabley House Collection Trust



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The Warburton family of **Arley Hall** were making purchases from the Knutsford nursery as early as 1760.



In about 1763 the landscape designer William Eames was instructed to advise on improvements at Arley which included gardens near the hall and parkland in the style of Capability Brown.



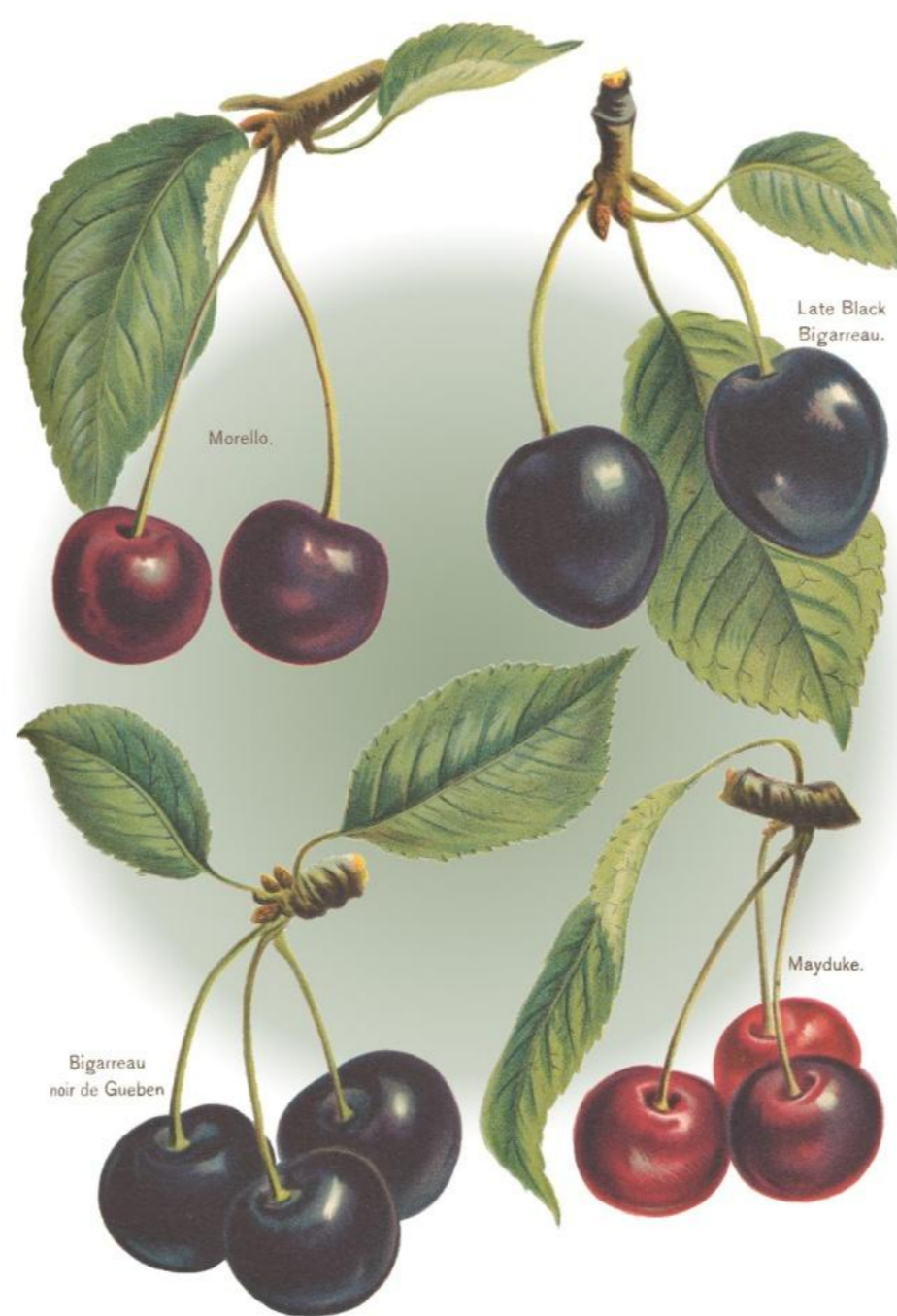
Part of William Eames design for the park at Arley Hall. 1785 Copyright Arley Trustees



Looking south over the parkland designed by Eames



This invoice from 1811 includes the purchase of several peach trees, probably destined for growing in a peach or Glasshouse. It also includes Morello cherries which may have been grown on the walls of the kitchen garden. Copyright Arley Trustees



Invoices in the Arley Archives record purchases of flowers, seeds, trees, shrubs, roses and bulbs from Caldwell's.

Cherries from "The Fruit Grower's Guide" 1892 by John Wright, F.R.H.S. with illustrations by Miss May Rivers, J.S.Virtue & Co. Ltd.



The famous Herbaceous borders at Arley which current research suggests may have been created around 1790, and for which many of the flowers, ordered from Caldwell's, were destined.



Catmint is still grown in the walled garden



Tom Acton became Head Gardener at Arley in 1960 and helped the late Elizabeth, Lady Ashbrook restore the gardens after the war. He recalled Mr Halliburton of Caldwell's recommending Nepeta Six Hills Giant as a hardy variety of catmint.



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Part of William Eames design for the park at Arley Hall. 1785 Copyright Arley Trustees

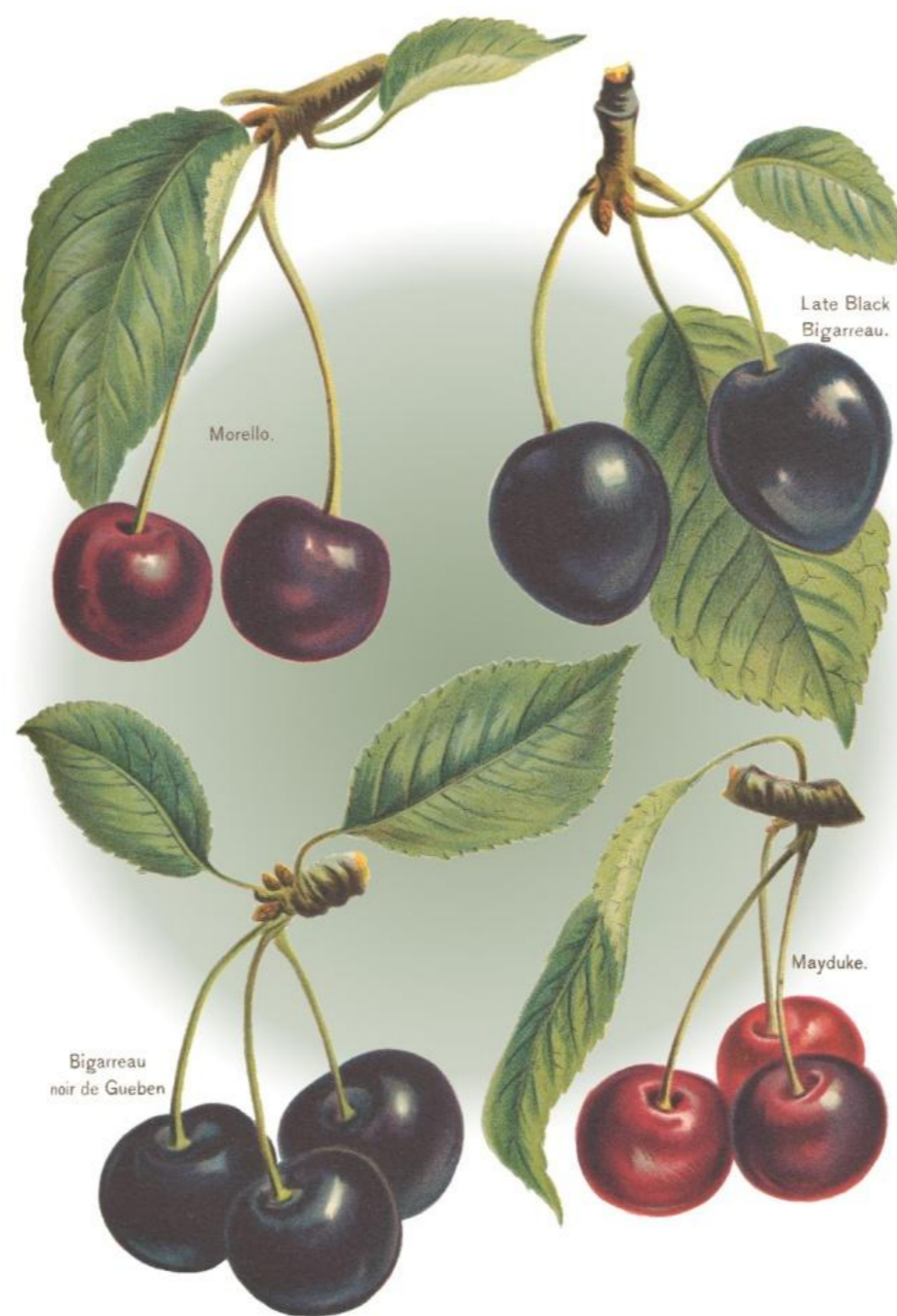


Looking south over the parkland designed by Eames

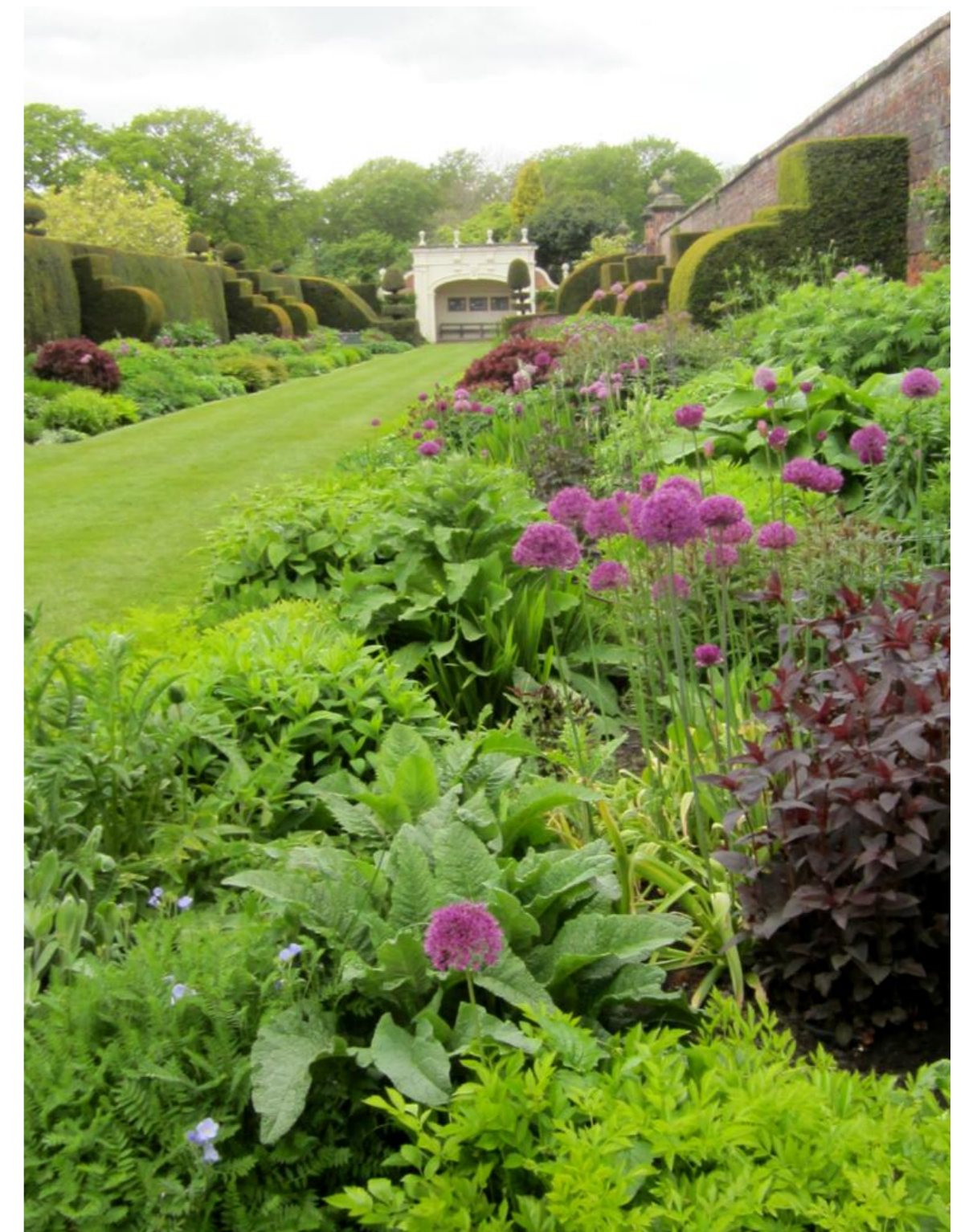


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