with Arcadia

A Selective Time Line of the History of Gardening

2500 BCE Figs, grape vines, pomegranates, and dates in cultivation in Egypt and Asia. The first garden art was probably decorated grape arbors [Gothein 1928].

1495 BCE One of the oldest surviving garden plans is for the garden of a court official in Thebes.

540 BCE Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Built by slaves and peasants directed by King Nebuchadnezzar II.

485 BCE King Darius the Great (521-485) and his paradise garden in Persia.

271 BCE Epicurus (341-271) used a large garden for gatherings and walks.

207 BCE The opulent and extensive gardens and palace of the first Chinese emperor Ch'in Shih Huang-ti were burned by peasants and Confucian rebels.

100 BCE The Shang Lin (Great Grove) immense imperial garden of the Chinese emperor Wu-ti.

87 BCE The royal park and gardens of the Chinese Emperor Wu Ti (140-87) in West China, Chang-an

400 The Palace Garden at Sigiriya in Sri Lanka

618 The Chinese emperor Yang-ti constructs the vast imperial garden called The Western Garden.
Suzho, China - "City of Gardens"; Pi Jiang Garden.
Arabs in Persia are impressed by gardening concept of *chahar bagh.*

1050 *Tale of Genji.* Japanese court novel describes aristocratic gardens.

1094 *Sakuteiki.* Tachibana no Toshitsuna. Japan treatise on garden design.

1120 The Chinese emperor Hui-tsung has the famous Ken Yeh Garden "The Impregnable Peak" constructed.

1180 Al-Awwam writing on Andalusian agriculture and garden design.

1227 Vatican botanical garden founded. A medicinal or physic garden which still exists today, although in a different location.

1350 The great formal gardens of the Moorish Arabs (e.g., Generallife in the Alhambra, Granada, Spain) set standards.
Decameron. Giovanni Boccaccio. County gardens provide a retreat for those fleeing the plague.

1357 Alcazar gardens in Seville, Spain.

1450 *Illustrations for Designing Mountain, Water, and Hillside Field Landscapes.* Zoen, Japanese landscape architect.

1490 Temple garden of Royanjii, Japan.

1513 Daisen-in garden in Koyoto, Japan. Designed by So-ami. This is a famous dry garden (*Kare-Sanuui*).
Hampton Court Gardens, England.

1529 *Historia General de Nueva Espana.* Bernardino de Sahugun. Aztec gardening arts reported

1543 Europe's first bontanic garden, established in Pisa by botany professor Luca Ghini.

1570 Villa d'Este, Little Rome, constructed at Tivoli, Italy. Elaborate water garden

The Enchanted Gardens of the Renaissance Facts about three Renaissance gardens near Rome: Villa D'Este - Tivoli, Villa Lante - Bagnaia, Bomarzo's Sacred Groves.

1580 Villa Lante, Renaissance garden, Bagnaia, Italy

1586 Gardens in the Netherlands.
Vicino Orsini's garden at Bomarzo, Italy.

1593 First French botanic garden in Montpellier. Influenced by Moorish Spain.

1603 Hyde Park, London, opened to the public by King James I.

1618 *The Country House-Wife's Garden.* William Lawson. Includes knot garden designs.

1621 First botanic garden in England, the Oxford Physic Garden.

1635 *Yuan Yeh.* Chi Ch'eng. Treatise on Chinese rock gardens.

1642 In Japan, Matsudaira Yorishige greatly improves the Ritsurin Koen estate and gardens in Takamatsu City, Shikoku island, Japan.

1652 Gardens in the Netherlands.

1654 Taj Mahal in India.

1656 The Tradescants' botanical garden at Lambeth, England, had over 1600 named plants in cultivation.

1663 *The Compleat Gard'ner.* John Evelyn.
Kalendarium Hortense. John Evelyn. Popular gardening almanac.

1670 First Scottish botanic garden, in Edinburgh.
The English Garden. Leonard Meager

1673 Chelsea Physic Garden in England founded by the Society of Apothecaries.

1682 Heligan ("The Willows") Gardens, Cornwall, England. Lost Gardens of Heligan.

1686 American kitchen gardens from 1600-1800 were planted based on astrology, featured many herbs, used raised beds well dunged and dug in the autumn, and were fenced in to keep animals out.

1700 Andre Le Notre (1613-1700) French landscape designer for Louis XIV: Versailles, Chantilly, etc.

1709 Chinese Imperial Garden Yuan Ming Yuan (Garden of Perfect Brightness) near Peking.

1730 Kew Royal Botanical Gardens designed by William Kent.

1750 *Story of the Stone.* Cao Xuequin. A Chinese novel with numerous descriptions of Chinese gardens.

1768 *Essay on Design in Gardening.* W. Mason.

1783 Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783) Renowned English garden designer and architect.

1789 First People's Park in Munich, Germany, designed by Ludwig von Skell.
William Paxton's work on botanical gardens in England.

1795 *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening.* Humphry Repton.

1808 Botanical Gardens in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, (Kew Garden Associate) established.

Kew National Botanical Gardens transferred from Crow to British government. William J. Hooker appointed director of Kew NBG. 250 acres. Opened to public on weekends.

1843 Birkenhead Park, Wirral, Merseyside, a people's park, designed by Joseph Paxton.

1846 Queen's park, Manchester England, designed by Joshua Major.

1851 The Crystal Palace in Hyde Park constructed. Designed by Joseph Paxton

1858 Central Park in New York City is designed by Frederick Law Olmstead and Calvert Vaux.

1892 *The Formal Garden in England.* By Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942), English landscape architect, and illustrated by Francis I. Thomas (1866-1950) English artist and garden designer.

compiled from http://www.gardendigest.com/

http://www.gardenvisit.com/

1650-1740

1. Enclosed Style

Gardening has been popular in England at least since Roman times but no complete gardens and few records survive from the period before 1650. Such evidence as we do have about the condition of pre-Civil War gardens comes from books, archaeology, estate records, traveller's tales, topographical drawings and occasional glimpses in the corners of portrait paintings. There are also a number of garden walls and a few fountains, grottos, steps and related features which survive from Tudor and early Stuart times.

All the evidence shows that early British gardens were essentially rectangular walled enclosures which provided their owners with a place to grow plants and an opportunity to enjoy some of the pleasures of outdoor life. In the middle ages a garden of this type was known as a *hortus conclusus* (L. *hortus*, a garden or orchard, and *conclusus*, closed off). Its most important ornaments were flowers, herbs and trellis work.

The history of British garden design after 1500 and before 1650 is a history of the stages by which the *hortus conclusus* of the middle ages evolved into a British version of the Italian Renaissance garden. The accession of Henry VIII in 1509 marks the point at which gardens became a symbol of the power and prestige of the court. For two centuries after this date the kings and queens of England were leaders of taste in garden design and used their gardens, and those of their nobles, as the settings for parties, masques and other courtly festivities of the type which took place in Italian gardens. To begin with knowledge of Italian gardens arrived via France, but by 1600 travellers were returning from Italy with personal knowledge of their wonders.

Roy Strong has identified four styles of garden design which flourished in England between 1509 and 1642. He names them:

- the Heraldic garden (c.1509-1558),
- the Emblematic garden (c.1558-1603),
- the Mannerist garden (c.1603-1625)
- the Eclectic garden (c.1625-1642).

The physical details and the symbolic significance of these styles are analysed by Strong with great skill but he aknowledges that even the sophisticated Mannerist garden 'essentially remains, however, the old *hortus conclusus*. It is a walled enclosure within which nature tamed by art is made to fulfill the wildest of Mannerist fantasies, above all by means of the new hydraulics'. The influence of the renaissance on British gardens was of great importance but its main impact was on the gardens of the aristocracy, and even here, as Strong notes, it was 'a piecemeal affair' and 'never altogether logical and doctrinaire'.

From the point of view of the future development of British gardens the most important of the styles identified by Strong was the Eclectic garden. It is well represented by Moor Park in Hertfordshire..

2. French Style

The art of garden design did not flourish under the Commonwealth but revived after the Restoration. For half a century after 1660 royal patronage recovered its pre-Civil War importance. England was ruled by monarchs with French and Dutch sympathies and they looked across the Channel for inspiration. Charles II had been exiled in France for nine years and admired both the style of the French court and the gardens which Le Notre made at Vaux le Vicomte (1656-1661) and Versailles (1661-1715). William of Orange, who reigned in England from 1688 to 1702, was a Dutch prince with Dutch tastes. There was also a distinct tendency for families with Royalist and catholic sympathies to favor French gardens and for families with Parliamentarian and protestant sympathies to favor Dutch gardens. It is not however at all easy to determine the relative importance of the two sources of design ideas.

The stylistic differences between France and Holland in the second half of the seventeenth century were largely matters of emphasis. France was a well wooded and agriculturally backward country where land was plentiful and the monarchy possessed of absolute power. It could afford the space for large hunting forests and for avenues radiating towards distant horizons. The avenues made it easier to hunt the stag and symbolized both man's domination of nature and the King's dominion over his people.

In Holland, there was no desire to proclaim the monarch's absolute power and the polder lands had been won from the North Sea at great cost. It was inconceivable that they should be used either for hunting forests or for vast unproductive gardens.

Avenues were valued in Holland for aesthetic reasons but they could not be created on a French scale by clearing vistas through ancient hunting forests. Dutch avenues were often no more than lines of newly planted trees extending through agricultural land. The two styles are shown diagramatically on figs 2 and 3. Both owe a great deal to Andre Mollet's *Jardin de Plaisir* which recommended the use of straight walks, statues, fountains, water-works, canals, turf parterres and *parterres de broderie*. This book was a vital influence on Le Notre and on formal gardens in France, Holland and England.

The popularity of the French style in England undoubtedly received a great boost from the restoration of Charles II. Charles had spent most of his exile in France and when he returned home he wished to rule as a 'Sun King' and adopt the French style of garden design. Neither ambition was realized to a significant degree. He is thought to have taken advice from Le Notre himself on St James's Park and Greenwich Park but even these projects, among the best examples of the French style in England, were pale shadows of their French predecessors. They were small in size and the avenues were formed with single lines of trees. The earthworks were carried out for the a parterre, to Le Notre's design, but the beds were not made.

At Greenwich even the visual continuity of the main axis is broken by two sharp changes of gradient along its length and a giant flight of grass steps had to be made to carry the eye up the gradient. John Evelyn, whose *Sylva* gave a great impetus to British forestry, lived near Greenwich and may have advised on the layout. The avenues were made out of lines of trees, like the walks in Evelyn's own garden at Sayes Court, and were enclosed within a boundary wall. Since no forest trees were planted in Enclosed gardens, the ancient Sweet Chestnuts in Greenwich may be the oldest planted forest trees in any English park or garden.

At St James's Park a long rectangular canal occupied the centre of the design and the Mall, which is the only feature of the original layout to have survived, was laid out on the north side to provide a space in which to play a type of croquet known as Pal-Mal. As at Greenwich the avenues were contained within the park boundary.

The intended use of Charles II's parks was however decidedly French. He wished them to be a focus for court life and St James's Park, like Versailles, was a place for high society to meet and catch an occasional glimpse of the king:

Charles also liked to walk his dogs in the park. St James's was the heart of London's social life and even in cold foggy weather the most beautiful society ladies were to be seen 'taking the air' in flimsy dresses. This was an English version of the Versailles where Louis XIV's attendants used to go before him to clear a path through the large crowds in his park and a man had only to wear a sword to gain admittance. Greenwich Park was a country estate in the seventeenth century but it was a popular place to visit. Samuel Pepys often went there and recorded in his diary a pleasant afternoon in 1662 when he went 'with all the children by water to Greenwich, where I showed them the King's yacht, the house, and the parke, all very pleasant'. He later went with Lady Carteret who walked up the hill and down again with a page carrying her train.

3. Dutch Style

The Dutch style in England was characterised by an emphasis on parterres, topiary, water features, orchards and the planting of avenues in the countryside(see fig 4). Little survives of London and Wise's executed work but sufficient drawings exist to give an impression of their design practice. It was more Dutch than French. The parterres were simple by French standards. They had water features, statues and topiary but little 'embroidery' or 'scroll-work'. The avenues were occasionally formed by cutting through existing woods but more often by planting lines of trees.

London's most important commissions were the gardens at Longleat and Chatsworth. Both were dominated by extensive parterres and had lines of trees projecting into farmland. At Longleat there was also a small star of avenues. It occupied a smaller area than the parterre and could not be compared to a French hunting forest.

The best surviving example of London and Wise's work is at Melbourne Hall in Derbyshire. The garden at Melbourne Hall was made between 1696 and 1705 by Thomas Coke who also had a hand in its design. Almost half the site is given over to a large parterre. The other part is occupied by a grove of irregularly planned avenues which display a taste for axial vistas but not the will to align them with the main axis of the house and garden. As at Longleat the grove appears to be as an addition to the layout rather than its main feature. The parterre has now become a lawn which is marred by a variety of specimen trees which have replaced London and Wise's topiary.

There is another recent 'Dutch garden' at Hampton Court in Richmond but the large semi-circular parterre which Wise certainly maintained, and may have designed, has been replaced by a grotesque semi-circle of yew trees. It is also probable that Wise designed the famous maze at Hampton Court.

The painting of 'The south east prospect of Hampton Court in Herefordshire ' by L Knyff gives a better impression of London and Wise's work than any surviving garden. The design has been attributed to London and is essentially Dutch. Parterres flank the house on all sides and a canal with two summer houses runs across the front of the garden. The avenues do radiate from the house but they are clearly an afterthought and have been made with lines of trees running through agricultural land. They appear to lose all sense of purpose on reaching the hills.

The drawing of the Moor Park shows six large enclosures and numerous sub-divisions. One of the enclosures is laid to grass and was probably used for bowling. Three of the other main enclosures at Moor Park are laid out as knots and parterres and the remainder are used for growing fruit and vegetables. Some topiary can be seen which takes the form of small pyramids and cubes of the kind which were later ridiculed by Pope, who was a catholic with French sympathies. The pleached lime walk and the canal at the bottom of the garden are typically Dutch. On the left of the drawing a serpentine stream can be seen wriggling in its efforts to enter the garden. Hussey has suggested that the presence of this line corresponds to Temple's famous remarks on the desirability of irregularity in gardens

One of the main pleasures of Temple's garden was the dry gravel paths which were so much more convenient to walk on than the muddy unpaved public roads and country paths. The ladies of the house could take the sun and air, safe from wild animals and brigands. After the pleasure of watching the plants grow came the profit of harvesting fruit and vegetables for the kitchen.

There were no forest trees inside the garden at Moor Park, but the avenues outside the garden are very significant. They project outwards into the countryside and thus signpost the future development of British garden design. A careful examination of the avenues in Kip and Knyff's *Britannia Illustrata* reveals that the practice of attaching avenues to enclosed gardens became common in England. Very few of their drawings show a systematic pattern of avenues radiating from a central point. Most are formed by newly planted lines of trees which meet the walls of the enclosed gardens at right angles. The birdseye viewpoint adopted by Kip and Knyff makes these avenues look more radial than they would appear on a a plan. Non-radial avenues of this type are shown on the drawing of Dumbleton and were added to Ham House after the plan of the enclosed garden was drawn in 1671.

1714-1810

4. Forest Style

Royal leadership in the art of garden design began to decline after the accession of George I in 1714. He did not share the Stuart passion for the arts in general or for gardens in particular. Artistic leadership passed to the nobles - especially to the Whig nobles. This was the beginning of the most creative century in the history of British garden design. The first of the new styles was the English Forest style. Its central features were avenues and extensive plantings of forest trees.

The name for the style comes from Stephen Switzer. He was critical of the 'stiff Dutch way' of London and Wise and wrote a three volume book on 'the general designing and distributing of country-seats into gardens, woods, parks, paddocks etc, which I therefore call Forest, or, in a more easy style Rural Gardening'. Switzer admired the magnificent gardens at Versailles, Marly and Fontainbleau and confessed that ''tis to them I owe a great part of that knowledge I have in the designing part of gardening'. Switzer saw himself as the first English author rather than mere translator to advocate the French style. However he had not visited France and the style which he advocated deserves a separate name. It differs from the French style, and the Dutch style, in important respects.

Switzer believed that the Forest Style was more economical and more beautiful than the style of London and Wise. He thought that money should be spent on forest planting and that it should be obtained by reducing the size of parterres or by laying them to grass. Since few avenues could be made by cutting through existing woods in England, massive tree planting was essential to create any semblance of the French style. Switzer also believed that money was being wasted on levelling hills and filling dales to comply with a pre-ordained plan. He distrusted paper plans because they often led to the felling of a noble oak 'to humour the regular and delusive schemes of some paper engineer', and he disliked costly garden walls which so often obstructed views of 'the expansive volumes of nature herself'. These comments come from the 1742 edition of *Ichnographia Rustica* and provide an excellent illustration of the way in which swing from rationalism to empiricism was affecting the art of garden design. Switzer emerges from his writings as a delightful man who may well have played a crucial role in the evolution of British garden design. It is sad that no gardens which he designed are known to be in existence. There are however a number of gardens which were made between 1700 and 1750 and illustrate the principles of the Forest style.

The best examples of the Forest Style are Bramham Park (1700-1731), Cirencester Park (1715-1740), St Paul's Walden Bury (1720-1725), and Wrest Park (1706-1740). Their geometry is 'French' but their other characteristics are sufficiently distinct to justify a separate name. They are quiet rural retreats with extensive woodlands, radiating avenues looking towards distant views and small or non-existent parterres.

The quietness and relative economy of these estates indicates another fundamental difference between the French and the Forest styles: their use. To Louis XIV, Versailles was a symbol of his sun like magnificance. Power radiated outwards into France from Versailles like the great avenues, but extended to the furthest corners of France. All Louis's subjects were drawn into the orbit of his power and crowds milled through the grounds at Versailles. On festival days there were masques, garden parties and firework displays.

British estates which were laid out in the Forest style, like Alan Bathurst's park at Cirencester, served a very different purpose. They were intended not for the grandeur of court life but for a Horatian idyll of rural retirement

5. Augustan Style

The reason for describing this style as the 'Augustan' is that it was closely connected with the English Augustans and their poetry. As Horace and Virgil had celebrated the first Augustan age of peace and security after a period of civil war, so the English Augustans welcomed a second golden age after the troubles of the seventeenth century.

Writers, artists, architects, gardeners and a host of others sought to relive and make anew the glories of Rome in the time of its first emperor, who said, according to Suetonius 'I found Rome built of sun-dried bricks; I leave her clothed in marble' Edward Gibbon's version was that he, 'found the city built of brick, and left it built of marble'. Augustus' reign from 27 BC to 14 AD saw a great flowering of the arts. In eighteenth century England, Palladian architetcure, heroic couplets and the Augustan garden were products of looking backwards.

Alexander Pope was the greatest of the new Augustan poets and had a decisive effect on garden design. He wrote in 1713 that 'the taste of the ancients in their gardens' was for 'the amiable simplicity of unadorned nature, that spreads over the mind a more noble sort of tranquility'.

The best surviving examples of their work are at Claremont, Chiswick House, Rousham and Stowe. The avenues in these gardens remind us of the Forest style, and the delightful lakes and glades are amongst the earliest examples of the Serpentine style. Kent loved to give canals, basins and water bodies a 'natural' shape. In Walpole's words, 'the gentle stream was taught to serpentise seemingly at its pleasure'. However Kent's interest was more in seeing landscape as pictures than as plans. 'The great principles on which he worked were perspective, and light and shade', but as with the other landscape painters of his time the landscape which really interested him was the landscape of antiquity. The gardens designed by Kent and Bridgeman were redolent of ancient times, replete with statuary, temples, grottos, and hermit's caves.

This was the age when garden design was a 'nobleman's recreation', and when many noblemen had a love of antiquity and landscape painting which excelled that of the professional designer. Lord Carlisle was the leading figure in the creation of the park at Castle Howard, which Hussey calls 'the masterpiece of the Heroic Age of English landcape architecture'.

The Temple of the Four Winds at Castle Howard was inspired by Palladio's Villa Capra which Colen Campbell adapted at Mereworth and Lord Burlington at Chiswick.

Charles Hamilton and Henry Hoare were lesser noblemen who had been on the Grand Tour and acquired a passion for the landscape of antiquity. At Painshill, Charles Hamilton installed a Grecian statue of Bacchus in a temple, built a Roman Bath House, and assembled a complete set of busts of the Roman emperors.

Henry Hoare II, known in the family as 'the Magnificent', returned from Italy in 1741 to take possession of the Stourhead estate. He made the lake in 1744 and surrounded it with a walk which was conceived as an allegory of Aeneas' voyage after the fall of Troy. The grotto marks a stage in his journey, and the Temple of Flora is inscribed with the caution uttered by the Cumaean Sybil, in Virgil's *Aeneid*, before she led Aeneas into the underworld to hear the prophecy of Rome's founding: 'Begone! you who are uninitiated, begone!'. Hoare also based his design for the bridge on Palladio's five-arched bridge at Vicenza and expressed the hope that the whole composition would resemble a painting by Gaspar Poussin.

British patrons and designers sought to re-create the 'landscapes of antiquity'. Their visions of how this landscape might have looked appeared were formed from reading Latin poetry, from places visited on the Grand Tour and from the landscape paintings of Claude, Poussin and others. William Kent met Lord Burlington in the course of a Grand Tour and they later designed Chiswick House. Charles Hamilton went to Italy after leaving Oxford and later designed Painshill. Henry Hoare was in Italy when he inherited Stourhead. All these men admired the Augustan age and, in the course of making gardens, which reflected this taste, the predominant geometry of garden plans became increasingly serpentine.

6. Serpentine Style

The Serpentine Style will be forever associated with the name of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. One could call it Brownian, but there were other practitioners and it seems better to name the style after its most characteristic feature.

The steps by which the Augustan Style evolved into the Serpentine Style constitute a fascinating episode in the history of taste. It has occupied the attention of many historians and is best chronicled by Christopher Hussey in *English Gardens and Landscapes 1700-1750*. One of the most celebrated steps in the progression was the retention of Wray Wood and Henderskelf Lane at Castle Howard. Hussey comments that the low hill on which they lie is 'historic ground, since it became the turning-point of garden design not only at Castle Howard but in England'. He could have added 'and the world'.

The low hill was occupied by an extremely fine stand of mature beech trees. Wray Wood lies immediately to the east the new house which Vanburgh and Hawksmoor designed between 1699 and 1712. George London advised on the layout of the grounds until his death in 1714 and his apprentice, Stephen Switzer, is assumed to have advised Lord Carlisle after London's death. London wished to drive an avenue from the north front of the house up the hill and into Wray Wood. He planned to carve out a network of intersecting avenues inside the beechwood. Switzer wrote in 1718 that London's proposal 'would have spoil'd the Wood, but that his Lordship's superlative genius prevented it'. Wray Wood was retained and furnished with waterworks and labyrinthine paths to make what Switzer judged an 'incomparable Wood the highest pitch that Natural and Polite Gardening can possibly ever arrive to'. Hussey suggests that since Switzer was both a modest man and an expert in waterworks it may in fact have been he, rather than Lord Carlisle, who had the idea of conserving Wray Wood.

Henderskelf Lane survives intact as the path which skirts the southern flank of Wray Wood and joins Castle Howard to the Temple of the Four Winds. The lane was an ancient track which should have been eliminated or straightened according to the logic of George London's layout. In fact it was retained and made into a broad meandering grassy walk which commands a heroic prospect of the landscape. It resembles the grass terrace at nearby Duncombe but it is not known which of the two terraces was the first to be made.

Some of the other well-known steps in the evolution of the Serpentine style are as follows: Vanburgh's suggestion that £1,000 could be saved by keeping Old Woodstock Manor in Blenheim Park as a picturesque feature in the view; the acceptance of site irregularities at Bramham Park so that the garden has an axis of its own and is not dependent on the axis of the house; the formation of the irregular grove at Melbourne which Hussey describes as 'the classic example in England of the first movement away from an entirely regular conception of garden-design which eventually led to landscape' (as at Bramham the axis of the garden was not related to the axis of the house); the use of the accidental diagonal provided by an old lane at Stowe to form the 'Great Cross Lime Walk'(it crosses at 70 degrees instead of the usual 90degrees) the extensive use of a ha-ha (sunk fence) at Stowe to bring the view of the countryside into the garden; and Charles Bridgeman's design for joining up a series of small ponds in Hyde Park to form the large lake which is now known, appropriately, as The Serpentine.

Each of these evolutionary steps, which were taken between 1709 and 1748, marks a slight swing of the pendulum from rationalism to empiricism, from geometrical symmetry and regularity to asymmetry and the use of serpentine curves. But it is not sufficient to analyse the first phase of the Serpentine style in geometrical terms alone: it was rich in symbolism, allusion and allegory.

The maturity of the Serpentine style was heralded by the start of Lancelot Brown 's career as a freelance designer. By 1751 he had been head gardener at Stowe for ten years and had seen great works done there under the overall direction of William Kent. They probably worked together on the design of the Grecian Vale. It had classical overtones but was executed with more feeling for the abstract composition of landform and woods than most of Kent's work. The serpentine shapes became Brown's hallmark. He was not averse to including the occasional temple when it improved the composition but there is no reason to think he had any taste for allegory, symbolism or the landscape of ancient Greece and Rome.

Some of Brown's other designs are so 'natural' and 'English' that it is difficult to appreciate them without a survey of the site as it was and a plan of the works executed by Brown. His lakes lie in comfortable depressions, his woods clothe hills which would resist the plough and his green pastures roll to the rhythm of the English countryside.

A varient of the Serpentine style, known as the *ferme ornee*, is of particular interest to historians of the rural retirement theme. Maren-Sofie Rostvig comments that 'Instead of penning yet another version of Horace's second epode, Southcote translated the literary ideal into a living reality' at Woburn Farm near Chertsey (c1735). It was a working farm ornamented with trees, shrubs and temples, and is usually described as a *ferm ornee* despite the fact that Switzer did not invent the term until 1742. *'ornee'* does not convey adequately the fact that these farms were intended to satisfy the widest possible range of human needs and aspirations. An 'ideal farm' would be a better description. The term ferm ornee was first applied to The Leasowes in 1746 but it is significant that Shenstone did not include it in the threefold classification of types of gardening which he made in 1764 (kitchen-gardening, parterre-gardening, and landskip-gardening

In practice use *was* combined with beauty on many estates laid out in the Serpentine style. They were run as ideal farms whatever the aesthetic beliefs of their owners and designers

Flowering plants were an important component of the *ferme ornee* and, as John Harris has pointed out, they were not excluded from the Serpentine style to the degree which has been supposed. A main feature of Woburn Farm was a walk planted with broom, roses, lilac, columbine, paeonies and sweet william, which wound its way through the fields.

The astonishing degree to which the Serpentine style was adopted between 1740 and 1780 can be seen by comparing the engravings in Kip and Knyff's *Britannia Illustrata* with those in Watts' *Seats of the Nobility and Gentry.* Kip and Knyff show every house surrounded by walled gardens with no forest trees in the enclosures. Watts shows every house in a grazed field with forest trees approaching the house and framing the view. The popularity of the Serpentine style reached fever pitch in the 1780s. Its creators believed their style to be completely natural but the next generation disagreed. A further move to empiricism brought thoughts of a new style.

6. Picturesque Style

Travellers were frightened by wild scenery at the beginning of the eighteenth century. When passing through the Alps they would shut their eyes or pull down the blinds in their coaches to hide the jagged cliffs, the torrents, and the imminent prospect of being catapulted over a precipice. By the century's end this fear had so far diminished that a positive liking for 'Salvator Rosa and Sublimity' had taken its place. Travellers sought for ever-wilder places and garden designers responded to their new visual appetite. In the 1790s they invented the Picturesque Style, and in the century which followed they made 'wild', 'rock', and 'woodland' gardens to accommodate plants, notably rhododendrons, from far-flung lands and even from 'the eaves of the world'.

Sir Uvedale Price believed that the art of laying out real landscape should be based on a study of paintings and natural scenery. He echoed Gilpin's opinion that 'whoever views objects with a painter's eye, looks with indifference, if not disgust, at the clumps, the belts, the made water, and the eternal smoothness and sameness of a finished place'.

Price championed the idea of making wild romantic gardens. He thought it impractical to make them sublime in Burke's sense of 'fitted.....to excite the ideas of pain and danger', but entirely feasible to make them picturesque in the sense of rough, varied, and intricate. He hated 'the tameness of the poor pinioned trees of a gentleman's plantation', and detested artificial lanes with uniform curves, regular gradients and neat grass verges.

The Picturesque Style had a profound effect on planting design. It offered a theory about the use of foreign plants in British gardens and provided a system of compositional principles which could be used to harmonise exotic and native plants.

Price was the first author to write openly in favour of using exotic flowering shrubs outside the narrow confines of the walled garden. He said that if the improver seeks 'an infinite number of pleasing and striking combinations' then he should 'avail himself of some of those beautiful, but less common flowering and climbing plants'. Plantings of furze, wild roses and woodbine might, he suggests, be enlivened with 'Virginia Creeper, pericoloca, trailing arbutus' and 'the choice American plants ....such as kalmias and rhododendrons'. Price was much-read during the nineteenth century and this remark appears to have been widely influential, especially with regard to the planting of rhododendrons..

Price was willing to allow flowering plants to be moved from their traditional positions 'in borders or against walls' but he insisted that they should be grouped to form painterly compositions. He believed that the eye of the landscape painter with its understanding of nature and the principles of composition was the best guide to good planting design.

The Picturesque Style is also of theoretical interest as an extreme application of the idea that art should imitate nature. It made great use of jagged irregular lines and represents the furthest possible remove from geometrical regularity. In the second half of the nineteenth century the Picturesque Style was used in the making of woodland gardens. Owners of gardens on the western shores of the British Isles acquired an enthusiasm for rhododendron woods arranged in 'painterly compositions'. Sir Joseph Hooker's *Rhododendrons of the Sikkim-Himalaya* (1849-51) illustrated and popularised the genus.

1794-1870

7. Landscape Style

The Landscape Style, is arguably the greatest in the history of British garden and landscape design: it combined the best of eighteenth century landscape practice into one magnificent conception. The theory on which the style rests is often described as the 'picturesque theory' because it requires the composition of landscape scenery 'like a picture' into:

- a **foreground**: regular, geometrical and designed for human use
- a **middleground**: a serpentine park in the manner of Lancelot Brown
- a **background**: natural scenery, as little affected by man as possible

The idea was applied to country estates by making a terrace as a 'Beautiful' foreground, and then forming a 'transition' to a 'Picturesque' park, and beyond to a 'Sublime' background which could be a mountain range, an ocean, a river, a forest or a distant view.

In geometrical terms the Landscape Style made use of elements which derive from four earlier styles of British garden design: the foreground terrace came from the Enclosed style, the taste for extensive prospects from the Forest style, the middleground park from the Serpentine style, and the background scenery from the Picturesque Style

8. Italian Style

The first nineteenth century author to praise the style of Italian and French renaissance gardens was J C Loudon. His admiration for what he called the 'ancient or geometrical style' was based on both observation and theory. In 1813, at the age of 30, he sold his *ferm ornee* for a magnificent profit and set off to tour Europe. His admiration for the old formal gardens of Europe grew during a number of tours between 1813 and 1819, and his opinion of English gardens was correspondingly diminished.

Loudon drew support for his unpatriotic views from the French Neoplatonic philosopher, Quatremere de Quincy, whose *Essay on The Nature, The End and the Means of Imitation in the Fine Arts* was published in 1823. Quatremere was an art-scholar, sculptor, antiquarian and encyclopaediast who believed that artists should imitate nature, and that 'nature' meant the Platonic world of ideas and forms. Quatremere criticised English gardens for not making use of the primary geometrical forms and for being more or less indistinguishable from raw nature:

Loudon fully agreed and wrote that 'forms perfectly regular, and divisions completely uniform, immediately excite the belief of design, and with this belief, all the admiration which follows the employment of skill'.

Loudon's conversion to the Italian style is one of the great turning points in the history of British garden design. He was the first theoretician to realise that the century-long quest to imitate ever wilder versions of 'nature' had led into a dead end. When it was found that Irregular gardens were indistinguishable from nature it became necessary to turn back and to re-evaluate the traditional concern of the fine arts with abstract shapes and forms. Loudon's ill-health persuaded him to withdraw from the practice of landscape design but the designers who reintroduced the Italian style to England during the nineteenth century were all familiar with his work and his writings.

One of the first designers to make full use of Italian garden ornament in England was the architect William Atkinson. He had done some architectural work at Scone Palace in 1803 when Loudon was working there on his Irregular layout for the estate. In 1825 Atkinson was employed by Thomas Hope at Deepdene and Loudon praised his work as an example of 'landscape architecture' in the 1829 issue of the *Gardener's Magazine*. Loudon's 1833 *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture* gave further examples of 'landscape architecture' and Loudon observed that in modern Italian villas 'The regularity of the garden is, as it were, an accompanying decoration and support to the Architecture. The Architecture, sculpture, and gardens of these villas are often designed by the same hand, and concur in the general effect to produce perfect harmony'.

The term 'landscape architecture' had been invented by G L Meason in 1828 to describe a style of building which could be found in Italian landscape paintings. This was its first use in relation to garden design. The garden at Deepdene had terraces at different levels, balustrades, flights of steps, repeated urns, alcoves and sculpture but no central axis. Hope had written an essay on gardens in 1808 which reveals him as an enthusiastic supporter of the Landscape Style. The Italian garden at Deepdene was the first stage in a transition which ran through the park and over the lake to a distant view of Box Hill.

Most of the Italian gardens which were made in Victorian England were conceived as the first stage in a transition. Charles Barry, who was a contributor to Loudon's *Architectural Magazine* designed his first Italian terrace at Trentham 1834, one year after the publication of Loudon's encyclopaedia. Trentham appears to have set a fashion for adding Italian terraces to Brownian parks and Barry was comissioned to design similar terraces at Holkham, Cliveden and Harewood. Barry also designed the Italian terrace in Trafalgar Square. W A Nesfield, who worked at Trentham with Barry, was responsible for a number of Italian terraces. Most of them have disappeared but the terrace in front of the plant house at Kew gardens and the parterre on the south side of Castle Howard are well maintained. In 1848 Barry designed an Italian garden at Shrubland Hall in Norfolk which has a full axial layout. It was a significant departure from the Landscape Style.

9. Mixed Style

Garden historians are wont to say that J C Loudon invented the 'Mixed or Gardenesque style', and that Alton Towers is the best surviving example of his taste. This is false. Their reasoning appears to be that Alton Towers is described in the *Gardener's Magazine*, which Loudon edited, and that it looks like a physical counterpart to his encyclopaedias on gardening and architecture: a vast assemblage of plants and garden buildings in styles from all parts of the known world.

> Alton Towers *is* the best example of the Mixed style but it was severly criticised by Loudon and the planting design is not Gardenesque. The plants at Alton Towers are in irregular groups but the collection is of very marginal interest to plantsmen and there is no evidence of a botanical zest for identification, classification and variety. Loudon was appalled by the mixture of styles at Alton Towers - it offended him in the same way that encyclopaedia entries on 'rakes and roses' or 'French and Finnish' architecture would have offended him.

It is difficult to conceive of a garden with a greater mixture of stylistic features than Alton Towers. Loudon most certainly did not consider it a model to be imitated and concluded : 'we consider the greater part of it in excessively bad taste, or rather, perhaps, as the work of a morbid imagination, joined to the command of unlimited resourses'.

The real inventor of the Mixed style was Humphry Repton. His last book contains proposals for a variety of 'different kinds of gardens' which were restrained by the standard of Alton Towers but very mixed by the refined standards of the eighteenth century.

Declining, Repton's powers may have been, but his reasoning had a most potent effect on Victorian gardens. The Ashridge Red Book proposed no less than fifteen different types of garden. They included a holy well in an enclosure of rich masonry, a winter garden, a monk's garden, a sheltered garden for foreign trees, an American garden, raised beds, and a rosarium which was 'supplied from the holy well, and then led into the grotto, from whence it is finally conducted into the drinking-pool in the park'. The suceeding fragment from the red book on Woburn Abbey proposed another American garden and a Chinese-dairy 'decorated by an assemblage of Chinese plants, such as the Hydrangea, Aucuba, and Camellia japonica'. Since *Repton's Fragments on the theory and practice of landscape gardening* was published in 1816, and Alton Towers was made between 1814 and 1827, it seems certain that Repton, as the most famous landscape designer and gardening author of his day, was the predominant influence on the Earl of Shrewsbury. However Repton's different types of garden were only intended to make the foreground more Beautiful; the Earl and many subsequent designers applied the style to whole estates

Kemp advocated 'the mixed style, with a little help from both the formal and the picturesque'. Fearing that this might not be a sufficient mixture he went on to say that 'an absolute adherence to one style.... is not to be rekoned among the paramount virtues of the art', and even individual styles should be adapted to fit in with the peculiarities of individual sites.

Believers in stylistic purity may never appreciate the Mixed style but its popular appeal has always been great. Surprisingly few good examples remain, though two good examples survive within thirty miles of Alton Towers: Biddulph Grange, and Tatton Park.

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10. G~~r~~andenesque Style

The aesthetic considerations which led Loudon to priase Italian gardens also led him to devise a style of planting design which he named the 'gardenesque'. Loudon believed that there were two ways of evading the anomaly of making 'gardens' which could not be distinguished from 'nature'. The first was to base their layout on abstract shapes. The second was to make exclusive use of plants which are not native to the area in which the garden was made, and to keep the plants well separated from each other so that they can be recognised as exotics. This is the intellectual origin of the 'specimen' trees and shrubs which are still dotted around in British gardens.

Loudon described the main idea behind the Gardenesque style of planting as the Principle of Recognition and asserted that 'Any creation, to be recognised as a work of art, must be such as can never be mistaken for a work of nature'. His rules for applying the principle to landscape gardening were of the utmost rigour:

> The gardenesque is found exclusively in single trees, which have been planted in favourable situations; not pressed on during their growth, by any other objects; and allowed to throw out their branches equally on every side, uninjured by cattle or other animals; and, if touched by the hand of the gardener, only to be improved in their regularity and symmetry.
>
> The brook, lake, or river, is readily appropriated as a work of art, by planting exotic, woody, and herbaceous plants along the margins, in a natural-looking manner; carefully removing all that are indigenous.
>
> Even the turf should be composed of grasses different from those of the surrounding grass fields.

Loudon also discussed the problem of making a natural outcrop of rocks look artificial.

> By what means are the perpendicular rocks on the banks of the river Wye, at Piercefield in Monmouthshire, to be rendered a work of art? By substituting another kind of rock for the indigenous one? No; for not only is the scale too large to render this practicable, but, if it were accomplished, the very largeness of the scale would make it be still considered as the work of nature; unless, indeed, rocks, which every one knew did not exist in the country at all, were substituted for the natural ones'.

His solution was to remove *all* indigenous vegetation and replace it with 'foreign vegetation of a similar character'. Given the impracticality of such expedients it is no cause for wonder that Loudon prefered regular gardens. However he also liked to see exotic plants arranged in naturalistic groups - providing they were well grown and well labeled.

Floral bedding, or mosaiculture, is another famous Victorian style of planting design, intended to make the gardener's work 'recognisable'. Its distant origins lie in the knots and parterres of renaissance Europe. Its immediate origins can be found in the flower gardens designed by Humphry Repton at Valleyfield, Ashridge, Woburn and many of his other later projects. They were part of the plan for making Beautiful foregrounds as the first stage in the Landscape Style. The patterns which were used for these gardens bear a distinct resemblence to Victorian bedding patterns but since Repton does not say that they were stocked with tender plants and changed at regular intervals they cannot be reckoned as true examples of carpet bedding.

Loudon prefered to see bedding plants in circular beds. He considered the circle to be the purest geometrical shape and also the most practical for flowerbeds of all kinds:

> We wish we could strongly impress on the mind of every amateur, and of every gardener, that, for all general purposes of planting beds of shrubs, or beds of flowers on a lawn..... the best form is the circle, provided that it be always kept of small size, say from 18 in. to 6ft., in diameter, one circle never placed neareer to another than 2ft., and these beds be thrown together in groups or constellations, as stars are in the firmament.

Loudon's wish was granted. Almost a century and a half has passed since he wrote the above passage and the circular flowerbed retains its popularity in suburban gardens and public parks. The flower garden in Greenwich Park is a fine example. The star has also been brought down from the firmament and used as a shape for flowerbeds.