

Update to 2011 Shakkei Articles

Shinto Shrine

Since the original articles were written for Shakkei 17.4 further information has come to light. The visitors book at Tatton has an entry for 24th September 1912 which has signatures of the visitors and two 35mm contact prints which show elegantly dressed visitors viewing the garden, which looks as if it might be a showing of the finished garden. It is not known who took the photographs, but could have been either Alan de Tatton (3rd Baron Egerton), or, more likely in my view Maurice, the future 4th Baron.

One of the images shows a view along the garden towards where the shrine is today, but clearly the shrine is not there. Furthermore, while the torii gate appears to be roughly in the position it is today, it is turned through 90 degrees so that it faces the garden. It has a set of steps going straight up to it, unlike the steps today. This view is confirmed by close study of one of the glass plate photographs, where it is quite clear that the torii gate was originally positioned facing the garden when it was constructed.

My speculation is that the torii gate may have been originally used as an entrance to the garden from the island, which would have been accessible from the main path over the rustic looking bridge. The bridge disappeared into the Golden Brook some years later to be replaced in 2001 by a replica, which restored the possibility of accessing the Japanese garden from the main path via the island.

There are no records of when the shrine was built but it is known that it was constructed by a small Japanese team of carpenters. The space the shrine now occupies required a section of the slope to be excavated to accommodate the shrine's sub-structure. My speculation is that this necessitated the original steps to the torii gate to be moved, leading to the torii gate being re-orientated and the steps altered to being the L-shaped flight we see today.

JGS working at Tatton

Since the articles, Sam Youd, former Head Gardener, has retired, with Simon Tetlow replacing him in 2012 as Head of Gardens.

JGS first became involved in working on the garden in 2014 following a conversation I had with Simon while we were assisting Tatton in building a display garden at the 'Dig the City' garden show in St Anne's square in Manchester city centre. With reducing staff numbers due to lower funding from Cheshire East, he was willing to allow a working party to assist with pruning and general

garden tidying. This was perceived as being very successful and led over time to the situation we have today, with gradually increasing involvement from JGS volunteers.

Graham Hardman
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Image above from 2012 showing Torii gate facing the garden and a single flight of steps up to it with a wide area of stones on the bank to the left of them (where the shrine should be).



The shrine and steps today