

‘A Patchwork from the Ragbag of History’
**The Contribution of British Artists to Garden
Design 1890-1980**



Volume 1

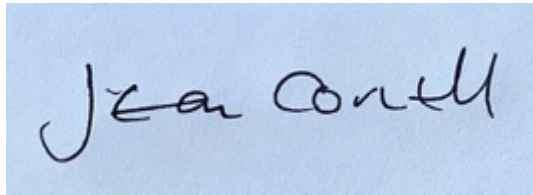
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Thesis Submitted for the Award of PhD

Institute of Historical Research

January 2021

I certify that this this is my own work

A rectangular area with a light blue background containing the handwritten signature "Jean Cornell" in black ink.

.....

Jean Cornell

17 January 2021

Date:

Acknowledgments

This thesis would not have been possible without the help, encouragement and support of a number of people to whom I would like to express my gratitude and thanks.

First to my supervisors: Dr Barbara Simms and Professor Lawrence Goldman.

I would also like to thank the staff of the British Institute in Florence, Emmanuel College, Cambridge, the Garden Museum, the Lindley Library, the Paul Mellon Centre and Penshurst Place for their assistance, as well as the county records offices in Kent, Somerset and Wiltshire.

However much of the information for my research remains in private ownership and I am indebted to those, who have given me access to their personal archives and gardens:

Robin Alderson
Lawrence Banks
Anthony Beevor
Angela Caccia
Jane Page
Christopher Palmer-Tomkinson
Graham Pearson
Frances and Patience Shone
Charles Whitbread and James Collett-White
Tony Venison

William Waterfield and his wife, Judy Pilsbury, have continued to support my research and have given me unrestricted access to their uncle's memorabilia and paintings.

I have valued the encouragement given to me by John Galloway, Martin Gorham and Anne Kaile, who have accompanied me to gardens and art galleries.

Abstract

‘A Patchwork from the Ragbag of History’

The Contribution of British Artists to Garden Design 1890-1980

Many books and articles have been written about art in the garden, artists who painted gardens and artists who gardened. In recent years several British art galleries have held exhibitions that have featured garden paintings. However, the focus has been on the paintings and their artists, rather than the design of the gardens depicted.

During the period under study, a time of social, cultural and economic change, many British artists designed gardens for themselves and for others. Although earlier studies have assessed the garden designs of some British artists during this period, there has been no overall assessment of their contribution to garden design and garden history. This study has sought to address this and to consider whether artist-gardeners as a distinct group should be accorded greater recognition.

Key words: artist-gardeners, garden artists, garden paintings, garden design, garden history

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Description	Abbreviation
Black/white photograph	BW
<i>Country Life</i>	CL
Liddell Hart Centre	LH
Lindley Library	LL
National Trust	NT
Paul Mellon Centre	PMC

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References: the source is given the first time an archive is referenced. Subsequently, only the document number is used.

All family records: come from [<http://www.ancestry.co.uk>].

Unless stated otherwise, all inflation figures were updated in March 2020 and come from: [<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>].

Introduction



Evelyn Dunbar: *The Garden* (1930s)

‘In general garden design this century has been a patchwork from the ragbag of history’.

Russell Page¹

This was the world-renowned garden designer, Russell Page’s (1906-1985) opinion about twentieth-century garden design, a period in which Britain experienced not only two world wars, but the impact of considerable economic, social and cultural upheaval, the consequences of which shaped the country today. Page’s statement can be interpreted in various ways. Garden design may comprise a number of unconnected styles that are innovative or retrospective, formal or informal, blend harmoniously into the countryside beyond or are confined to the site itself. He was, no doubt, alluding to the different approaches taken by different garden designers.

During this period an appreciable number of British artists were involved in garden design and, although some have been studied previously, there has been no overall assessment of their important contribution to garden history. The purpose of this study is to assess the contribution of these artist-gardeners, not just individually, but collectively as a specific group to determine whether or not their achievements should be accorded greater recognition.²

At the outset, the criteria by which artists would be included in the study had to be determined. A decision was taken that artists, irrespective of their success, including those who viewed painting as little more than a hobby, would be considered, provided they also gardened. Within this broad

¹ Garden Museum, RP 3/1/1, Russell Page, ‘Design Notes’ (Unpublished handwritten undated manuscript), p. 1.

² They followed in the footsteps of William Kent (1685-1748), Humphry Repton (1752-1818) and William Andrews Nesfield (1803-1881).

definition, artist-gardeners are a disparate group, as some specialised in painting gardens, whilst others preferred landscape, still-life, book illustration, or were botanical artists. The group, which forms the principal focus of this study, comprises those artist-gardeners who not only made their own gardens, but also undertook garden commissions for private clients. For them, the criterion for inclusion was that they had not undergone any professional horticultural training.

Some artists were excluded, such as Charles Paget Wade (1883-1956), who painted, but whose garden at Snowhill Manor in Gloucestershire was designed by M H Baillie Scott (1875-1945). Stanley Spencer (1891-1959) occasionally painted gardens, but did not garden. The most notable exclusion here is Page, who gave up art to become a career garden designer. Thus, artists who painted gardens, but did not garden themselves, have been included only where their work was relevant.

A particular complication concerned terminology, which altered during the period under study. In the latter years of the nineteenth century some architects seeking to establish themselves as best qualified to design not only houses but gardens, referred to themselves as artist-gardeners.³ This distinguished them from other designers, who were designated 'landscape gardeners' a term derived from seventeenth-century painting, which they thought was responsible for perpetuating a style that had destroyed the formal garden.⁴ By the beginning of the twentieth century, some architects

³ John Dando Sedding, *Gardencraft Old and New* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Trübner, 1895), p. 187.

⁴ Miles Hadfield, *A History of British Gardening* (London: John Murray, 1979). Originally, 'landscape' or 'landskip' was used as a term to describe a style of painting that included Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), Nicolas Poussin (1594-1666) and Salvator Rosa (1615-1673).

specialised exclusively in garden design, notably Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861-1933), who referred to himself as a 'landscape architect', which is how such practitioners came to be known.⁵

Historiography

Once the criteria by which artist-gardeners would be included had been determined, it was necessary to identify them. Some were sourced in books about gardens in art and exhibitions. However, to ensure this study was as comprehensive as possible, websites and reference books were also consulted.⁶ Primary and secondary material relating to artist-gardeners was discovered in organisations specialising in art and garden history and in county records offices.⁷ National and local newspapers and family history websites were trawled for details about artist-gardeners and their clients. However, much of the archival information that informs this study remains in private ownership and has not been studied previously.⁸ Owners were often surprised to discover their garden and the records relating to it were of historical significance, but they were enthusiastic in their support of this research. As gardens frequently disappear, written and photographic evidence in

⁵ Thomas Hayton Mawson, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making* (London: B T Batsford, 1900, 4th Edition 1912), p. 107.

⁶ Christopher Wood, *The Dictionary of Victorian Painters* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1989), Ray Desmond, *Dictionary of British and Irish Botanists and Horticulturalists including Plant Collectors, Flower Painters and Garden Designers* (London: Taylor & Francis & The Natural History Museum, 1977), Ray Desmond, *Bibliography of British Gardens* (Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies, 1984), Dictionary of National Biography (<http://www.dnb.com>), British Library's theses (<http://www.ethos.bl.uk>) and the archives hub (<http://www.archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk>).

⁷ The Lindley Library, The Garden Museum, The National Trust, <http://www.tategallery.uk/art/archivecollections>, <http://www.discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk>, <http://www.historicengland.co.uk> and <http://www.parksandgardens.org>.

⁸ Full details of sources are given in the relevant chapters.

magazines and newspapers is often the only record of their existence.⁹ In this study, wherever possible, contemporary photographs and paintings have been used for illustrative and analytical purposes.

Although a few women artists were identified in the research, Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932) is the only female artist-gardener who designed gardens for clients, even though over the period of this study many more women studied art. When Jekyll attended the National School of Art in Kensington in 1861 this was not the norm for young women.¹⁰ By comparison, Ottiwell Charles Waterfield (1831-1896) had two children who became artist-gardeners. Aubrey William Waterfield (1874-1944) was educated at New College, Oxford and the Slade School of Art, whilst the only education his sister, Margaret Helen Waterfield (1863-1953) received was at home.

Literature Review

As several art and garden historians have attempted to explore the relationship between art and gardens, a review of these works was undertaken. Most authors considered artists worldwide, with works about the French Impressionist painters being of particular interest.¹¹ The German gardener and author, Marie-Luise Gothein (1863-1931), has studied garden

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- ⁹ The British Library has electronic access to *The Times* and *Sunday Times*, *Daily Telegraph* and *Sunday Telegraph*, *The Observer*, *The Guardian* and the *Financial Times*. For local newspapers, the British Library and <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> and <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>. From its inception in 1897 to the present day, *Country Life* publishes articles about country houses and gardens and the British Library has electronic records of *Country Life* until 2005. Its image collection includes unpublished photographs (<http://www.countrylifeimages.co.uk>). Other magazines include *Studio*, *House & Garden*, *Homes & Garden* and *Ideal Home* and dedicated garden magazines, such as *Gardeners' Chronicle*, *The Gardener* and *The Garden*.
- ¹⁰ Michael Tooley, 'Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932)', *Dictionary of National Biography* 23 September 2004 [<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/37597>]
- ¹¹ Caroline Holmes, *Impressionists in their Gardens* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2012) and Judith Bumpus, *Impressionist Gardens* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1990).

painting from the earliest times, but as her book was published in 1913, the only information on the topic after the end of the First World War was included in a later addendum.¹² The art historian, Sir Roy Strong, described the changes in artists' garden paintings from 1540, but did not include those who painted gardens in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹³ Jackie Bennett's recent book, *The Artist's Garden*, provides an overview of artists' depictions of their own gardens, but this was not confined to British artists.¹⁴

Whilst these studies concentrated on how gardens were depicted over time, in *Painted Gardens: English Watercolours 1850-1914*, published in 1988, the garden designer and writer, Penelope Hobhouse and the art historian, Christopher Wood (1961-2009), described the work of British garden artists who painted between 1850 and 1914, some of whom are included in this study.¹⁵ Wood described the paintings, Hobhouse, the gardens.

Exhibitions

The foreword to the catalogue for the Tate Gallery's exhibition, *Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the Present Day* in 2004, pointed out that gardening is 'the most popular leisure activity in contemporary Britain' and displayed paintings that show how gardens have changed over

¹² Marie-Luise Gothein, *A History of Garden Art*, Volumes I and II (First published in German, 1913, English translation, 1925, Edited Walter Hind (Cambridge: Cambridge Art Collection, 2014).

¹³ Roy Strong, *The Artist and the Garden* (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, Yale University Press, 2000).

¹⁴ Jackie Bennett, *The Artist's Garden* (London: White Lion Publishing, 2019).

¹⁵ Penelope Hobhouse & Christopher Wood, *The Painted Garden: English Watercolours 1850-1914* (London: Pavilion, 1988).

time. However, the exhibition did not discuss how individual artists influenced garden design.¹⁶

The popularity of garden paintings is seen in the number of exhibitions that have been held in recent years, but major exhibitions need to be successful commercial ventures and, for this reason, they are more than likely to feature works by world-renowned artists. Although art historians have expert knowledge of artists and their paintings, they are not garden historians, and if garden design is discussed, it is only superficially.

‘Painting the Modern Garden: From Monet to Matisse’, a 2016 exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art, included only one painting by a British artist which, was not a garden, but Ben Nicholson’s (1896-1982) painting of *Miss Jekyll’s Gardening Boots*.¹⁷ Another exhibition held at the Queen’s Gallery in 2016, ‘Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden’, exhibited paintings from the Royal Collection.¹⁸ It explored the changing character of gardens from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century but, although the Royal Collection holds works by the late Victorian garden painters, none were shown.¹⁹

The Garden Museum frequently holds exhibitions featuring artist-gardeners. In 2015, ‘The Education of a Gardener: The Life and Work of Russell Page’, covered his garden designs, but failed to show any of his

¹⁶ Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels & Martin Postle, *Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the Present Day* (London: Tate Gallery, 2004), p. 6.

¹⁷ Clare A P Willsdon, Monty Don, James Priest, Heather Lemonedes & Lucy I Zimmerman, *Painting the Modern Garden: Monet to Matisse* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2015).

¹⁸ Vanessa Remington, *Painting Paradise: The Art of the Garden* (London: Royal Collection Trust, 2015).

¹⁹ Alfred Parsons, Beatrice Parsons and Ernest Arthur Rowe.

paintings.²⁰ In 2018, the show ‘Cedric Morris: Artist and Plantsman’ was held in conjunction with the Philip Mould Gallery’s exhibition, ‘Cedric Morris: Beyond the Garden Wall’ and included Morris’ paintings, as well as information about his life and gardens. To mark 200 years since Humphry Repton’s death, in 2018 ‘Repton Revealed’ comprised twenty-four of his Red Books, which showed before-and-after paintings of his clients’ gardens. In 2019, ‘Painting in the Woods’ featured Ivon Hitchens (1893-1976), who painted his Sussex garden for nearly forty years, but never gardened.²¹ In 2020, two exhibitions were held. ‘Sanctuary: Artist-Gardeners 1919-39’ included some of the artists in this present study, although none of them designed gardens other than for themselves. Nor was any distinction made between artists who painted gardens occasionally and those who painted and gardened.²² Phyllis Dodd (1899-1885), whose painting *Summer Doorway with African Lilies* was included, is best known as a portrait painter. From summer until mid-December 2020, ‘Derek Jarman: My Garden’s Boundaries are the Horizon’ not only included paintings and information about Jarman (1942-1994), it re-created Prospect Cottage at Dungeness in Kent including its approach across a shingle beach and the view of the sea from its windows, which he designed in the eight years before his death.²³

A small exhibition in 2019 at the Paul Mellon Centre, ‘Painter, Gardener, Scholar’, outlined the life of the little-known artist-gardener, Derick

²⁰ Lucy Inglis & Christopher Woodward, 'The Archive of Russell Page', *Garden Museum* (London: Garden Museum, 2015).

²¹ In 2019, the Pallant House Gallery in Chichester exhibited his work in ‘Space Through Colour’.

²² *Sanctuary: Artist-Gardeners 1919-1939* (London: Liss Llewellyn, 2020). The exhibition runs from 25 February to 5 April 2020.

²³ ‘Derek Jarman: My Garden’s Boundaries are the Horizon’, Exhibition Catalogue (London: Garden Museum, 2020).

Humphrey Waterfield (1908-1971). One of his watercolours, a vase of *Magnolia soulangeana*, was included, but the display's purpose was to highlight an addition to the centre's archive.²⁴

As exhibitions tend to focus on artists' interest in their own gardens, in particular the flowers they painted, the reason why garden design has been overlooked or thought to be of little importance has been a prime research aim of this study. In a recent television programme, the garden historian Tim Richardson provided an insight when he highlighted the cultural gap between painting and gardening.²⁵ Unlike fine art, gardening is designated as an applied art like weaving and embroidery, thus ranking considerably lower on the cultural scale.²⁶

Structure

The present study covers a period of almost a hundred years, so a number of approaches were deployed to present its findings. After deliberation, a decision was made to consider artist-gardeners in separate chapters within three historical sections, each with its own introduction. These comprise the period before 1914, the interwar years from 1918 to 1939 and the post-war period from 1945 to 1980. Although some artist-gardeners' lives and work fall within more than one chronological section, the most productive part of their careers was usually carried out within one of them. Each section compares and contrasts artist-gardeners' responses to changing circumstances and contemporary cultural movements in art and garden design through the work

²⁴ These are part of the art historian, Giles Waterfield's (1948-2016) papers.

²⁵ Royal Academy's exhibition 'From Monet to Matisse' shown as part of the ITV series, 'Great Art' on 23 May 2019, but televised previously on Sky Arts.

²⁶ By the fifteenth century, painting had been designated as 'fine art' or 'high culture', thus giving artists status among the social élite, whilst crafts were confined within Guilds, which represented a different section of society.

of other practitioners. The sections consider whether the artist-gardeners' paintings and their gardens were influenced by or had a significant influence on others.

Assessment

As gardens are usually created on a virgin site, 'should it not be remembered', as Jekyll commented, that 'in setting a garden, we are painting a picture, only it is a picture of feet or yards instead of so many inches, painted with living flowers and seen by open daylight'.²⁷ Thus garden design, like painting, allows experimentation within a framework, and consideration has to be given to what distinguishes artist-gardeners from architects and others when they design a three-dimensional picture. It poses the question: is it simply a difference of approach, or is there something more?

The qualities artists possess is the ability to observe, not only on a large scale, such as when viewing a landscape, but also the detail of a tree or flower. These, as well as the effects of light on their subject, are transferred to canvas or paper to produce a picture. The choice of setting and the ability to replicate it are also skills garden designers employ. When he was planning a garden, Page, who had trained at the Slade School of Art, never forgot that the site had to be seen as a whole and the sight lines and vista had to be used as a starting point for any design. Initially, he saw this as 'an exercise in monochrome – to set the form only and, for the moment let the colour ride'.²⁸ Yet he also displayed close attention to detail, as he liked to see every plant for a scheme laid out on the ground before it was planted.

²⁷ Gertrude Jekyll, 'Colour', *The Garden*, 22 (25 November 1882), p. 177.

²⁸ Russell Page, *Education of a Gardener* (London: William Collins & Co, 1962), p. 207.

Artists need to have an awareness of colour and the effects of light, and Jekyll, who had copied Joseph Mallord Turner's (1775-1851) paintings, understood how to use colour effectively. In her view:

When the eye is trained to perceive pictorial effect, it is frequently struck by something – some combination of grouping, colour – that is seen to have that complete aspect of unity and beauty that to the artist's eye frames a picture. Such are the impressions that the artist-gardener endeavours to produce in every portion of the garden.²⁹

Jekyll experimented with colour not only in her planting schemes but, like Cedric Morris (1889-1982), bred her own strains of plants in colours she desired.

Relationship between Art and Gardens

The art historian, Sir Kenneth Clark (1903-1983) noted that during the nineteenth century landscape painting 'came to hold a more secure place in popular affection than any other form of art' and by the end of the century many artists, including the artist-gardener Alfred Parsons (1847-1920), were painting in the English landscape tradition epitomised by John Constable (1776-1837) and Turner.³⁰ Yet, although a house and its garden can be seen as an entity completely separate from its surrounding landscape, it can also be regarded as something that blends seamlessly into it. It is the relationship

²⁹ Gertrude Jekyll, *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1982, First published Country Life Ltd & George Newnes, 1908), p. 294.

³⁰ Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (London: John Murray, 1949, Fourth edition, 1966), p. 74.

with gardens and landscape that artist-gardeners explored which is a particular research focus of this study.

The style of landscape painting changed after the First World War, when artists like Paul Nash (1889-1946), who had seen the devastated Belgian and French countryside and depicted it in stark reality, influenced his students at the Royal Academy of Art – Edward Bawden (1903-1989), Eric Ravilious (1903-1942), Charles Mahoney (1903-1988) and his brother, John (1893-1977) – to look at landscape differently. The Post-Impressionists Roger Fry (1866-1934), Duncan Grant (1885-1978) and Vanessa Bell (1879-1961), who were influenced by the late nineteenth-century impressionist French painters, reduced their portrayal of landscape to the bare essentials. During the Second World War, the Recording Britain project employed artists to record the countryside.

However, there is another development which was discussed before the First World War that has had a lasting impact on twentieth-century art. In a lecture in January 1914, the critic, T E Hulme (1883-1917), referred to the German art historian, Wilhelm Worringer's (1881-1965) ideas about abstraction.³¹ Hulme wrote:

The new art is geometrical in character whilst the art we are accustomed to is vital. [.....] There seems to be a desire for austerity

³¹ Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1997). First published, Germany, 1908, but only translated into English in 1953.

and bareness; a stirring towards structure and away from the messiness and confusion of nature and natural things.³²

Abstract art explores the ways in which colour and shape can be used to address the problems of infinite space. In theory everything is possible, but as the artist John Minton (1917-1957) explained, 'All art forms create and fight for order out of chaos, and it is in this that lies their supreme social value', with the result that artists made rules for themselves and experimented with the shapes and colours they used.³³ Shape, colour and texture are essential features of garden design, and during the twentieth-century garden designers followed a similar experimental path, using plants with a variety of leaf and flower shapes, often in a restricted palette of colours. To do this effectively requires a sound knowledge of plants, something that artist-gardeners possessed.

Alfred Parsons commented that in a painting an artist is trying 'to make others feel the emotions that he himself feels', and this is 'intensified by the fact that it is shared by many.'³⁴ Thus, what is important in a painting is that it conveys the essence of the garden. This also applies to garden design, for when a garden is designed for a client, as Page said, 'I can't really do anything that's better than the clients are. The garden is going to be their portrait as much as mine. And when it's done it has to look as if it couldn't ever have been

³² T E Hulme, Herbert Read (Edited), *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art* (London: Keegan Paul, Trench. Trübner, 1924), p. 76-77. Quest Society Lecture, 'Modern Art and Its Philosophy', 20 January 1914.

³³ John Minton, *Speculations on the Contemporary Painter* (Birmingham: City of Birmingham College of Arts and Crafts, 1952), p. 5.

³⁴ Lindley Library, GB 803/WRO/1, Letter, Alfred Parsons to William Robinson, The Swan Inn, Thatcham, Tuesday am, possibly August 1880.

any other way.³⁵ This study considers the role played by artist-gardeners as a discrete group for the first time and, in so doing, presents a view of their important contribution to garden design and sets their place within garden history.

³⁵ John Russell, 'Russell Page: The Master of the Superlative Garden', *New York Times* (22 June 1983), p. 77.

Section I: Introduction

All in a Golden Afternoon, Artist-Gardeners 1890-1914



Alfred Parsons. *Sundial in a Rose Garden* (1905)

‘The vivid and repeated evocations of English rural things – the meadows and lanes, the sedgy streams, the old orchards and timbered houses, the stout individual, insular trees, the flowers under the hedges and in it and over it, the sweet rich country seen from the slope.’

Henry James³⁶

In 1889, the American author, Henry James (1843-1916) wanted to give Americans a vision of the English countryside he had experienced at Broadway in Worcestershire, where a number of his fellow countrymen had settled including the artists Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911), Francis Davis Millet (1848-1912) and John Singer Sargent (1856-1925). By coincidence, James was also connected to the two main protagonists of the heated debate about garden design that took place between the gardener and writer, William Robinson (1838-1935) and the architect, Reginald Blomfield (1856-1942) (Figure 1 and Figure 2).



Figure 1: Francis Derwent Wood, Caricature of Sir Reginald Blomfield (1922) and Figure 2: Francis Dodd, *William Robinson* (1906)

³⁶ Henry James, ‘Our Artists in Europe’, *Harper’s*, LXXIX (June 1889), p. 55.

In summer 1897, before James found Lamb House in Rye, he rented Blomfield's summer retreat, Point Hill at Playden near Rye in East Sussex. Although Robinson and Blomfield held opposing views, both looked to history to argue their case and support their views about English garden design.³⁷ Eventually, during a period when many new gardens were being made and others redesigned, a compromise was found. This section assesses the artist-gardeners role in helping to set the scene for twentieth-century garden design.

Although the landed gentry still retained most of Britain's country estates, those who had become wealthy through industry and commerce sought to gain social acceptance by emulating them. As the countryside became more accessible by train, the newly wealthy chose to move there and restore or build large houses with extensive gardens. More importantly, these houses and gardens were designed along traditional lines and the ideas of the artist, designer, craftsman, writer and socialist, William Morris (1834-1896) were central to this.³⁸

Morris' influence changed the ideology of this period and influenced Robinson and Blomfield, who used his ideas to support their point of view (Figure 3).³⁹

³⁷ Robinson invited Blomfield to Gravetye Manor and they became friends.

³⁸ Today these houses are regarded as large, but in comparison with landed estates, they were classed as small country houses.

³⁹ <http://www.williammorrissociety.org> [Accessed 3 April 2018].



Figure 3: Charles Fairfax Murray, *William Morris* (1870)

As a young man, Morris had been inspired by the artist and critic, John Ruskin (1819-1900). Throughout his life, he sought to protect traditional crafts and those who produced them. He looked to the past for inspiration and this was one reason he founded the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings in 1877. Later in 1884, the Art Workers Guild, which formed the basis for the Arts and Crafts Movement, incorporated many of his ideas.⁴⁰

Morris spent part of his childhood at the 50-acre Woodford Hall estate in Essex where he explored Epping Forest.⁴¹ When he selected the site for the Red House at Bexleyheath in Kent in 1859, he was attracted by its mature trees and an apple and cherry orchard (Figure 4). Integration of the house and its garden was planned from the outset and Blomfield used this to support his argument that architects should be responsible for designing both.⁴²

⁴⁰ H L J Massé, *The Art-Workers' Guild 1884-1934* (Oxford: Shakespeare Head Press, 1935), p. 154. Alfred Parsons was a founder member

⁴¹ After his father, a wealthy broker died in 1847, the family moved to the Water House in Walthamstow, now the home of the William Morris Museum.

⁴² Reginald Blomfield, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making* (London, MacMillan & Co, 1892, 3rd Edition, 1901), pp. 8-9. In Hermann Muthesius, *The English House* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007, First published in Germany, 1904), p. 17. 'The



Figure 4: Red House, Bexleyheath (1880)

Morris' intention was that the Red House would be built on medieval principles, with the garden replicating the trellised enclosed gardens seen in medieval manuscripts. Four small square gardens, each enclosed by a rose covered fence were set within a large square. As Morris wrote, 'the garden large or small, should look both orderly and rich, and it should be well fenced from the outside world [.....]. It should look like part of the house' (Figure 5).⁴³

German architect, Hermann Muthesius (1861-1927) described the Red House as 'the first house to be designed and built as a unified whole, inside and out, the very first example of the modern house.'

⁴³ William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art* (London: Ellis & White, 1882), p. 128. From 1871, he rented Kelmscott House in Oxfordshire. From 1891 he also lived at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith.



Figure 5: William Morris, *Frontispiece, The Earthly Paradise* (1895)

Climbing plants – jasmine, honeysuckle, roses, passion flowers – were all marked on Philip Webb’s elevational drawings.⁴⁴ Morris also challenged accepted opinions about what should be planted, and it was these ideas that appealed to Robinson, who denounced the Victorian fashion for carpet-bedding, of which Morris wrote, ‘when I think of it, even when I am quite alone, I blush with shame’.⁴⁵ Morris, like Robinson, preferred the simple, species flowers that he grew in his gardens and which were depicted in his wallpaper and fabric designs (Figure 6).

⁴⁴ Fiona MacCarthy, ‘Garden of Earthly Delight’, *The Guardian* (26 July 2003), p. 86.

⁴⁵ Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art*, p. 128.



Figure 6: William Morris, *Wallpaper Design featuring Dog Roses*

The Design Controversy

The architect, John Dando Sedding (1838-1891) and Blomfield both thought that late Victorian landscape gardeners were continuing the English landscape style of the eighteenth century.⁴⁶ Sedding emphasised the difference between these gardens, which he called ‘Nature’, and ‘Art’, and gardens designed by architects.⁴⁷ In his view:

Where the past gardeners have erred, it has been through a misconception of the proportions of realism and idealism to be admitted into a garden’.⁴⁸ An architect, the artist-gardener, knowing good and evil, exercising freewill in his gardencraft, must choose only what he may rightly have, and employ only what his trained judgment or the unwritten commands of good taste will allow.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Sedding only designed his garden at West Wickham in Surrey. A respected church architect, he also designed wallpaper and embroidered.

⁴⁷ John Dando Sedding, *Gardencraft Old and New* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Trubner, 1891, Reprinted edition 1895), p. 36. It was published posthumously.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 187.

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*.

Sedding's argument was encapsulated by Blomfield, who thought that 'garden design took its place in the great art of architecture, with the result that well-ordered harmony was characteristic of the house and garden', had been destroyed by landscape designers.⁵⁰ He argued that a garden had to be in harmony with the house to prevent it being 'an excrescence on the face of nature'.⁵¹ Thus the house and garden formed an entity that was distinct from the adjoining landscape. From 1898, he redesigned the garden at Godinton House in Kent, which included an Italian-style garden (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Pan in the Topiary Garden, Godinton House

Although Blomfield conceded there were problems with the previous formal style, this was caused by 'nursery gardeners', who used too much topiary, pleaching and statuary.⁵² He was contemptuous of landscape gardeners like Lancelot 'Capability' Brown (1716-1783), who was dismissed as

⁵⁰ Reginald Blomfield, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making* (London, Macmillan & Co, 1892, 3rd Edition, 1901), p. vi.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

⁵² *Ibidem*, p. 82.

‘starting as a kitchen gardener’.⁵³ As Robinson started his career as a gardener in Ireland, his opinions were also denigrated.

After working as a gardener for several years in Ireland and London, Robinson, a self-educated man, became a horticultural correspondent for *The Times* in 1867. Then in 1871, *The Garden* was published, the first of a number of magazines he produced. Whether or not Robinson thought he was continuing in the eighteenth-century English landscape style, his main concern was the mid-nineteenth fashion for carpet-bedding using the newly introduced half-hardy annuals that are seen in William Andrews Nesfield’s (1793-1881) designs (Figure 8). Robinson described himself as ‘a flower gardener and not a mere spreader-about of bad carpets done by reluctant flowers’.⁵⁴ Like Blomfield, Robinson expressed his views about garden design uncompromisingly, recommending a more natural style of gardening:

The gardener should follow the true artist, however modestly, in his love for things as they are to delight, in natural form and beauty of flower and trees if we are to be free from barren geometry, and if our gardens are ever to be pictures.⁵⁵

⁵³ Blomfield, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making*, p. 85.

⁵⁴ William Robinson, ‘The Flower Garden at Gravetye Manor’, *Country Life*, 32 (28 September 1912) p. 409.

⁵⁵ Robinson, *The English Flower Garden*, p. 7.



Figure 8: Nesfield's Formal Bedding, Welcombe Hall, Stratford-upon-Avon

In contrast to Blomfield, he thought gardens should relate to the countryside beyond. Yet in 1870 when *The Wild Garden* was published, the preface stated that his purpose was 'to plead the crusade of the innumerable hardy flowers against the few tender ones, put out in the formal way'.⁵⁶ When he was told he could not go back to the 'mixed border', he reconsidered how plants should be displayed and reached the conclusion that 'we could not only grow thus a thousandfold lovely flowers than are commonly grown, but also a number which by any other plan have no chance whatever of being seen around us'.⁵⁷ He was clear that his wild garden was not a 'wilderness' and that plants should be placed where they would thrive. Nor was it 'a picturesque garden, for a garden may be thought picturesque, yet in every part be the result of ceaseless care'.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ William Robinson *The Wild Garden* (London, Timber Press, 2009, First edition, London: John Murray, 1870, Third edition, 1883), p.5.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

Unlike Blomfield, who in his youth had hoped to become an artist but was dissuaded by his parents, Robinson collected paintings and after he purchased Gravetye Manor, an Elizabethan manor house, set in 200 acres of pasture and woodland in 1884, he encouraged artists to paint his garden. These included Beatrice Parsons, who is discussed in Chapter 1 and Alfred Parsons, whose relationship with Robinson is outlined in Chapter 3. George Henry Moon (1857-1905) was also invited to paint the landscape around Gravetye and select plants for his botanical drawings (Figure 9).



Figure 9: George Henry Moon, *Lane at Gravetye* (1892)

However several architects, who designed gardens supported Blomfield's opinion that garden design was the province of architects. Francis Inigo Thomas, (1865-1950), an artist and architect, who illustrated *The Formal Garden in England*, also designed a number of gardens, notably Barrow Court in Somerset and Athelhampton Hall in Dorset (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Part of the Formal Garden, Athelhampton (1899)

Although Thomas was an artist, he was primarily an architect and for this reason consideration of his garden designs have not been included in this study.⁵⁹ Thomas outlined his ideas on garden design in five articles for *Country Life* in 1900.⁶⁰ The first article made his position absolutely clear:

Garden making has always been an architectural matter, except during a comparatively short period, when the mother art was all but forgotten in our own country, and the art patrons of the day conceived the brilliant idea of dispensing with all form and order.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Gareth Edwards, 'The Gardens of Francis Inigo Thomas, 1865-1950' (Unpublished MSc Dissertation, University of Bath, 2015) considered this.

⁶⁰ 'On Garden Making' *Country Life*, 7 (24 February 1900), pp. 235-237. F Inigo Thomas, 'On Garden Making' *Country Life*, 7 (10 March 1900), pp. 293-296; F Inigo Thomas, 'On Garden Making' *Country Life*, 7 (21 April 1900), pp. 489-492; F Inigo Thomas, 'On Garden Making' *Country Life*, 7 (24 February 1900), pp. 235-237; F Inigo Thomas, 'On Garden Making' *Country Life*, 7 (24 March 1900), pp. 364-366; F Inigo Thomas, 'On Garden Making' *Country Life*, 7 (7 April 1900), pp. 424-426.

⁶¹ Thomas, 'On Garden Making' (24 February 1900), p. 235.

In the same year, the architect and academic, Edward Schroeder Prior (1852-1932), who only designed three gardens including Home Place at Kelling in Norfolk, wrote three articles about garden design for *The Studio* (Figure 11).⁶²



Figure 11: The Garden, Home Place, Kelling, Norfolk

Like Blomfield, Prior thought the garden's immediate connection was with the house and should not be allowed to 'blend in with 'the less orderly countryside'.⁶³ He justified this view:

Where in the eighteenth century, there were fair stretches of beauty in England, such as the eye might well love to look upon, now in too many cases there is but the desolation of ugliness; our building methods have left little inducement to look over our garden walls everything beyond the close circuit of one's own enclosure is at the mercy of the

⁶² E S Prior, 'On Garden Making' I, *Studio*, 21 (October 1900), pp. 28-36; E S Prior, 'On Garden Making II: The Condition of Practice', *Studio*, 21 (November 1900), pp. 83-85; E S Prior, 'On Garden Making III: The Condition of Material', *Studio*, 21 (December 1900), pp. 176.

⁶³ Prior, 'On Garden Making' (28 October 1900), pp. 31-32.

builder and threatened with the unseemly squalor of spreading suburbs.⁶⁴

Whereas Blomfield wrote little about how gardens should be planted, referring only to 'a border of old-fashioned flowers'.⁶⁵ Thomas Hayton Mawson (1861-1933), who called himself a landscape architect, suggested extensive lists of trees, shrubs and flowers in *The Art & Craft of Garden Making*.⁶⁶ He considered that 'All architectural gardening is, in fact, designed from first to last either as a background or skeleton for flowers and climbers'.⁶⁷

In many ways, Mawson represented all that Blomfield despised. Until his father died, he had worked for the nurseryman, John Mills in Onslow Gardens, London and for two years on a smallholding. Yet his career in garden design developed to the extent that he established one of the largest practices in Britain.⁶⁸ Whilst Mawson supported Blomfield's view that there were problems with the old formal style of garden design, he also agreed with Robinson that the 'new plants took away the garden's restfulness and placed it out of sympathy with the surrounding rural scenery'.⁶⁹

Whilst Mawson attempted to be conciliatory, it is Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), who is credited with resolving the argument. The architectural historian, Christopher Hussey (1899-1970), described the combination of

⁶⁴ Prior, 'On Garden Making' (28 October 1900), pp. 31-32.

⁶⁵ Blomfield, *The Formal Garden in England*, p. 135.

⁶⁶ Thomas Hayton Mawson, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making* (London: B T Batsford, 1900, 4th Edition 1912).

⁶⁷ Mawson, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making*, p. 107.

⁶⁸ Ken Lemmon, 'Landscape of the World: Thomas Hayton Mawson, A Self-Help Victorian', *Country Life*, 175 (10 May 1984), pp. 1318-1320.

⁶⁹ Mawson, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making*, p. 5.

Jekyll's naturalistic planting and Edwin Luytens' (1869-1944) geometry at the Deanery Garden, Sonning:

House and garden are a single interpenetrating counterpoint - parts roofed over, others open to the sun, with the garden walks leading right into and about the house, and the windows placed to catch the sparkle of the of a pool or complete the pattern of a terrace.⁷⁰

Thus the Deanery garden 'at once formal and irregular, virtually settled that controversy'⁷¹ (Figure 12).



Figure 12: View from the Orchard, The Deanery, Sonning (1903)

However the architect, Harold Falkner (1875-1963), who trained at Blomfield's practice and became one of Jekyll's friends, used to recall her reflections on Robinson and Blomfield, 'She used to relate with great glee that

⁷⁰ Christopher Hussey, *The Life of Sir Edwin Luytens* (London: Country Life, 1953), p. 96.

⁷¹ *Ibidem*.

Robinson designed a garden all squares and Reggy [Blomfield] a garden on a cliff with no straight lines in it' (Figure 13 and Figure 14).⁷²



Figure 13: The Flower Garden, Gravetye Manor, East Grinstead (1912) and Figure 14: Point Hill, Playden from the South West (1913)

Jekyll and Luytens' collaboration has attracted considerable attention, notably from the garden historian, Jane Brown, as the gardens they designed together are seen to embody the essence of the pre-1914 'golden afternoon' gardens (Figure 15 and Figure 16).⁷³

⁷² Quoted in Sam Osmond, *Harold Falkner: More than an Arts & Crafts Architect* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003), p. 60.

⁷³ Jane Brown, *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon: The Story of a Partnership: Edwin Luytens & Gertrude Jekyll* (London: Allen Lane, 1982).

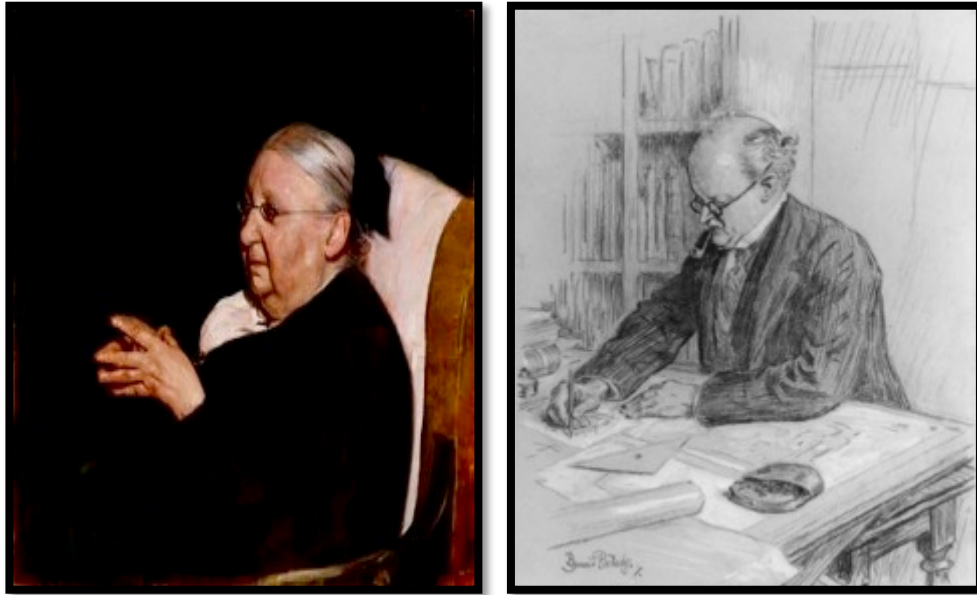


Figure 15: William Nicholson, *Gertrude Jekyll* (1920) and Figure 16: Bernard Partridge, *Sir Edwin Luytens* (1927)

When they met in 1889, Jekyll was already regarded as a noted craftswoman, gardener and writer, whilst he was embarking on his architectural career.⁷⁴ She was forty-five, he was twenty. He had studied architecture at South Kensington School of Art between 1885 and 1887 and for a short time worked at the architectural practice of Ernest George (1839-1922) and Harold Peto (1864-1933). Jekyll, who had met Morris and Ruskin, was still living with her mother at Munstead House, near Godalming. Jekyll knew Robinson and the horticulturalist, Samuel Reynolds Hole, Dean of Rochester (1819-1904) and had many influential contacts. She introduced him to vernacular buildings as they went around the Surrey countryside. Their rapport resulted in him designing her home at Munstead Wood in 1896, where she had already started to make the garden, which is discussed in Chapter 2.

⁷⁴ She started writing for *The Garden* in 1881.

The Deanery, one of Luytens early commissions, was built for Edwin Hudson (1854-1935), the editor of *Country Life*, between 1899 and 1901, which later featured many of their houses and gardens (Figure 12).⁷⁵ After 1900, Jekyll rarely travelled far from Munstead Wood, but The Deanery is one of the few places she visited. She devised planting schemes from Luytens' plans and site analysis. It was the combination of his elegant, curving designs in brick or soft coloured stone, softened further by her choice of plants that resulted in their success.

The Deanery's garden shows some of the formal features that were typical of Luytens' style (Figure 17).



Figure 17: Small Circular Pool, The Deanery (1980)

The semi-circular arch seen in Figure 18 was a design that Luytens often used, for example at Hestercombe in Somerset, designed between 1903 and 1906 for the Honourable Edward Portman (1856-1911) (Figure 19).

⁷⁵ They worked for him at Lindisfarne Castle in Northumberland and Plumpton Place in Sussex.



Figure 18: Terrace Above an Arched Pool and Rill (1980)



Figure 19: Pool Within an Arched Wall, Hestercombe (1908)

At Folly Farm near Reading, designed between 1906 and 1912, Luytens' formal features can be seen, as well as Jekyll's exuberant planting in the purple and blue borders in the background (Figure 20).



Figure 20: Pool and Formal Beds, Folly Farm (1922)

Jekyll's planting complemented Luytens' design at Hestercombe. The Plat, viewed from above, shows not only its design, but its relationship to the countryside beyond (Figure 21).



21: The Plat, Hestercombe (1927)

The pre-war years were the most productive years of their partnership. In 1918, Jekyll was seventy-five-years-old and rarely left Munstead Wood.⁷⁶ Brown's opinion of Lutyens is 'with the coming of peace, he soon regained his aplomb, but the gardens, where his inner-self had found expression in the real joy of creation, were never to be quite the same.'⁷⁷

By 1914, several styles had been established that came to represent the English Garden: those designed along formal lines usually by architects, which usually did not relate to the adjacent countryside; more informally designed gardens with abundant planting, which blended into to the wider landscape; and gardens which combined both aspects.

In this section, consideration is given to how artist-gardeners responded to Blomfield and Robinson's ideas, and importantly whether they developed styles of their own. Chapter 1 focuses on the specialist garden artists' paintings including George Samuel Elgood, Beatrice Parsons and Ernest Arthur Rowe. It assesses how they represented gardens in this period and whether this affected their preferences in their own gardens. The chapters on Jekyll, Alfred Parsons and Lawrence Johnston discusses their approach to garden design for themselves and others. Part of the chapter on Edward Augustus Bowles, Reginald Farrer and Frank Galsworthy, who were botanical artists, includes the design of rock gardens, which became fashionable and contentious before 1914 and after.

⁷⁶ She designed about ten gardens a year until 1929 and continued to provide planting plans for some of Lutyens' commissions.

⁷⁷ Brown, *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon*, pp. 132-152 shows he was working in New Delhi and for the War Graves Commission, p. 108.

Art Before 1914

In the opinion of the art historian, David Peters Corbett, the late nineteenth century ‘marked a turning point in the rise of a modern sensibility and modern modes of representation in England’.⁷⁸ It was characterised by the continuation of the English landscape painting style, as favoured by Alfred Parsons and rural life, as depicted by Helen Allingham (1848-1926). One of Parsons’ close friends, the American artist, John Singer Sargent (1856-1925), who is best known for his portraits, also painted landscapes.⁷⁹ *Landscape with Roses* gives a slightly impressionistic view of an expanse of water behind the roses, whereas *The Boating Party*, painted three years later depicts a popular leisure activity of the period, and one favoured by Parsons and Sargent’s friends (Figure 22 and Figure 23).



Figure 22: John Singer Sargent, *Landscape with Roses* (1886)

⁷⁸ David Peters Corbett, Ysanne Holt & Fiona Russell, *The Geography of Englishness: Landscape and the National Past 1880-1940* (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2002), p. viii.

⁷⁹ He organised Parsons’ Memorial Exhibition at the Leicester Gallery in June 1920.



Figure 23: John Singer Sargent, *The Boating Party* (1889)

Although two of Parsons' artist friends, Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836-1912) and Sir Frederic Leighton (1830-1896) were linked to the pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood founded in 1848, he does not appear to have been influenced by them or Sargent.⁸⁰ His 1918 painting of Bredon remains in the English landscape style (Figure 24).



Figure 24: Alfred Parsons, *A Summer View of Bredon on the Avon* (1918)

⁸⁰ Founded by Morris' close friend, Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) with the artists, William Holman Hunt (1827-1901) and John Everett Millais (1829-1896).

Not only were ideas about garden design changing before 1914, landed estates, too, faced threats that would have an impact on garden design. For the first time, their social and financial position was threatened. By 1890, country estates, which had been self-sustaining, were unable to compete with cheaper imported grain and meat and needed alternative sources of income.⁸¹ The introduction of Estate Duty in 1896 exacerbated their financial difficulties.⁸²

Furthermore, the Liberal politician, Charles Masterman (1873-1927), attacked what he regarded as the new 'super-wealthy'.⁸³ In his opinion, their wealth had not benefitted the country, but had financed fashionable country houses, which hosted 'weekend' parties where guests were entertained by hunting, shooting, golf, horse racing and tennis.⁸⁴ It was this way of life that necessitated a beautiful garden, which their owners could afford to have designed.

Although the garden artists' popularity continued until the outbreak of war, there were signs of change that were to have a significant impact on British art after 1918 and threaten its cultural position. When the artist and critic, Roger Fry (1866-1934), organised 'Manet and the Post-Impressionists' in 1910, it caused a sensation that is difficult to understand today.⁸⁵ Although artists like Alfred Parsons and others, who visited Paris regularly would have

⁸¹ Clive Aslet, *The Edwardian Country House: A Social and Architectural History* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2012), p. 11. In 1886, 30,000 tons of mutton were imported, but by 1914 this had risen to 250,000 tons.

⁸² This unified death duties on personal property and real estate. Their traditional way of life was threatened further with the, the 1909 People's Budget and the 1911 Parliament Act.

⁸³ Charles Masterman, *The Condition of England* (London: Methuen, 1900).

⁸⁴ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2016). The 'country house weekend' gained popularity in the 1890s and continued with the advent of the motor car.

⁸⁵ It attracted 25,000 visitors from 8 November 1910 to 15 January 1911.

seen these paintings, *The Times* criticised not only the paintings, but Parisian artists who were ‘trying to prove that the pictures are not only art, but almost the only logical art, the only possible art, at the present day’.⁸⁶

The second Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1912 was received more favourably and *The Times* suggested that the pictures should be considered on their individual merits.⁸⁷ It was conceded that although the paintings were still representative, the artists, some of whom were British, simplified their forms.⁸⁸ This can be seen in the painting used for the exhibition’s catalogue by Duncan Grant (1885-1978), whose paintings of landscapes and gardens are discussed in Chapter 8 (Figure 25).



Figure 25: Duncan Grant, *Second Post-Impressionist Exhibition* (1912)

⁸⁶ Anonymous, ‘Post-Impressionist Painting’, *The Times*, 39423 (7 November 1910), p. 12. It comprised one hundred paintings by French artists including Paul Cézanne (1839-1906), Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) George Seurat (1859-1891) and the Dutch artist, Vincent Van Gogh (1843-1890).

⁸⁷ Anonymous, ‘The Post-Impressionists’, *The Times*, 40035 (21 October 1912), p. 10. It was held at the Grafton Galleries from 15 October to 31 December 1912

⁸⁸ Anonymous, ‘The Post-Impressionists’, *The Times*, 40035 (21 October 1912), p. 10.

However, Grant's painting along with those by Georges Braque (1882-1963) and Pablo Picasso (1881-2973) signalled another change that would have an even greater impact on art and cause controversy throughout the period under study. This was abstract art, which the critic, T E Hulme (1883-1917), discussed during a lecture in January 1914, when he explained the German art historian, Wilhelm Worringer's (1881-1965) ideas.⁸⁹

Thus although this period has been regarded as the 'golden afternoon', it was also an age of uncertainty. Whilst the wealthy made efforts to preserve the *status quo*, they saw their incomes declining as the result of political and social change. Not only did the Boer War from 1898 to 1902 underline the problems and immense cost of managing Britain's overseas Empire, its pre-eminence as an economic and political world leader was being challenged. Yet although change had begun when the First World War started, many people remained unaware and as Montague Cooke wrote:

As I closed the gate on my little garden on my departure south for the Great War, I popped over the hedge and said 'Good-bye, roses. I little knew as the gate closed that I was saying good-bye to very much more than my lovely roses; for nothing has ever been the same the little gate closed'.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ T E Hulme, Herbert Read (Edited), *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art* (London: Keegan Paul, Trench. Trübner, 1924), p. 76-77. Quest Society Lecture, 'Modern Art and Its Philosophy', 20 January 1914. Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction and Empathy: A Contribution to the Psychology of Style* (Chicago: Elephant Paperbacks, 1997). First published, Germany, 1908, but only translated into English in 1953.

⁹⁰ Montague Cooke, *Clouds That Flee* (London: Hutchinson & Co), 1935, p. 138.

Chapter 1:
The Garden Artists



Margaret Waterfield, E V B's Garden (1910)

‘Pursuing the past or the picturesque corners of reality into the fey realms of fantasy [and that] this whole rich haul of genre painting, the nostalgic Victorian garden, can constantly be called charming, enchanting, delightful, attractive, delicate – all these flattering adjectives – until the end of time, and they will remain just that.’

Jane Brown⁹¹

Today paintings by the late Victorian garden artists, George Samuel Elgood, Beatrice Parsons and Ernest Arthur Rowe are often seen on greetings cards and as seen in Figure 1.1 they show a blissful, but illusory view of tranquil, sunny gardens with the implication that life during this period was idyllic and one we should aspire to, but which in reality existed only in the gardens of the wealthy.



Figure 1.1: Beatrice Parsons, *Summer Flowers, Oxhey*

⁹¹ Jane Brown, *The Pursuit of Paradise: A Social History of Gardens and Gardening* (London: Harper Collins, 1999), p. 121.

This nostalgia is an unexpected consequence, as the paintings which were much sought at the time, depicted an English countryside and a way of life that many feared was disappearing. Although these can be dismissed as representing nothing more than pretty pictures that are easy to look at, they can also be studied to see how they reflect British garden design during this period.

Based on the title of Elgood's exhibition at the Fine Art Society in 1891, 'A Summer Among the Flowers', it has been suggested that a new 'school' of garden painters emerged.⁹² The American art historian, Anne Helmreich thought this pointed to a 'loose-knit' artistic community where artists might share ideas. Yet although these artists would have been aware of each other, there is little evidence there was any association between them.⁹³ Beatrice Parsons and Rowe met at Lambeth College of Art, but neither became part of the art establishment.⁹⁴ Elgood was a loner and anti-establishment, but may have known Alfred Parsons.⁹⁵

There has been debate about which artists should be designated 'specialist' garden painters, as distinct from those who depicted them occasionally. *Victorian Flower Gardens* includes paintings by both,⁹⁶ but Christopher Wood considered only Elgood, Beatrice Parsons and Rowe were

⁹² Fine Art Society, George S Elgood, 'A Summer Among the Flowers' (January-February 1891), p. 3.

⁹³ Anne Helmreich, 'Contested Grounds: Garden Painting and the Invention of National Identity in England 1880-1914' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Northwestern University, 1994), p. 17.

⁹⁴ As a woman, Beatrice Parsons was unlikely to have been included.

⁹⁵ Elgood's sister, Elizabeth married the artist, John Fulleylove (1845-1908), who knew Parsons.

⁹⁶ Andrew Clinton-Payne & Brent Elliott, *Victorian Flower Gardens* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1988).

specialist garden painters.⁹⁷ In her assessment, Helmreich also included Helen Allingham and Alfred Parsons. Allingham did paint gardens, notably Gertrude Jekyll's garden at Munstead Wood, but she is usually remembered for her depiction of cottages in the Surrey countryside (Figure 1.2). Although she enjoyed her garden at Sandhills at Witley in Surrey, she only lived there between 1881 and 1888 and spent the rest of her life in Hampstead.⁹⁸



Figure 1.2: Helen Allingham, *A Cottage near Brook, Witley* (1880s)

Parsons' obituary in *The Times*, was entitled, 'Painter of Flowers and Gardens'.⁹⁹ Whilst he painted gardens, often for his friends, he always referred to himself as a landscape painter.¹⁰⁰ His only exhibition devoted solely to garden paintings, 'Gardens and Orchards' was held at the Fine Arts Society in 1891. His paintings and design style are discussed in Chapter 3.

⁹⁷ Penelope Hobhouse & Christopher Wood, *The Painted Garden: English Watercolours 1850-1916* (London: Pavilion Books, 1988), p. 13.

⁹⁸ Anne Helmreich, *The English Garden and National Identity: The Competing Styles of Garden Design, 1870-1914* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. iii. This was based on her thesis, Helmreich 'Contested Grounds'.

⁹⁹ Anonymous, 'Painter of Flowers and Gardens', *The Times*, 47200 (21 January 1920), p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ Census records.

Elgood, Rowe and possibly Beatrice Parsons designed their own gardens, but did not design gardens for others. Some of their paintings may have been commissions, but most were speculative to be shown and sold at exhibitions. A study of their paintings reveals their different styles and preferences in the gardens they chose to depict. They have been considered to see how they represented the different styles of the period.

George Samuel Elgood (1851-1943)

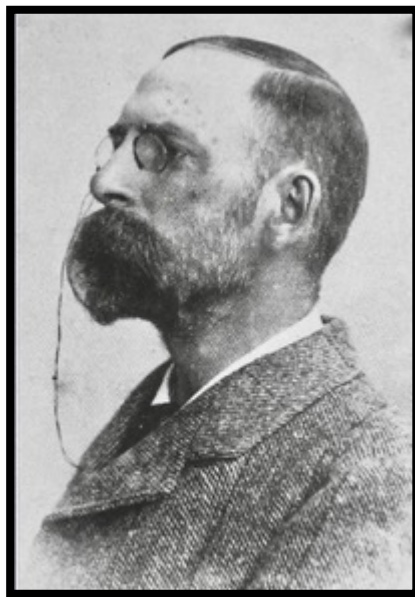


Figure 1.3: George Elgood

Elgood's biography was written by his niece, Eve Eckstein, who had access to the family archive (Figure 1.3).¹⁰¹ He was born in Leicester and started to study architectural drawing in London. After his father died in 1874, he returned home to manage the family business, but continued to paint and in 1877 exhibited at the Walker Gallery in Liverpool. After he married Mary

¹⁰¹ Eve Eckstein, *George Samuel Elgood: His Life and Work 1851-1943* (London: Alpine Fine Arts Collection, 1995). Eckstein died in 2016 and the location of this archive is unknown.

Wellington Clephan (1852-1925), a wealthy artist in 1881, he was able to devote his life to painting.

Elgood became friends with the horticulturalist, Samuel Reynolds Hole, Dean of Rochester and illustrated two of his books.¹⁰² It may have been Hole, who introduced Elgood to Jekyll, and he painted her garden (Figure 2.18). He also collaborated with her on *Some English Gardens* in 1904, which included a painting of herbaceous plants in Hole's garden (Figure 1.4).¹⁰³



Figure 1.4: George Elgood, *The Old Deanery Garden, Rochester* (1904)

Gardens that exist today can still be recognised from his painting, for example the steps at Penshurst Place in Kent (Figure 1.5 and Figure 1.6).

¹⁰² S Reynolds Hole, *Book about Roses* (London: E Arnold, Edition 1896) and S Reynolds Hole *Our Gardens* (London: J M Dent, 1899).

¹⁰³ Gertrude Jekyll & George Elgood, *Some English Gardens* (London: Longmans Green & Co, 1904).



Figure 1.5: George Elgood, Terrace Steps at Penshurst Place (1904)



Figure 1.6: Penshurst Place (2019)

However, his paintings also record gardens that have disappeared, like the topiary garden at Compton Wynnyates in Northamptonshire. The trees were cut down and replaced by a rose garden in the 1980s (Figure 1.7).



Figure 1.7: George Elgood, *Topiary Garden, Compton Wynnyates* (1904)

Elgood painted throughout Britain and after his marriage he and his wife spent winters in Italy, the results as Jekyll suggested were ‘Mr Elgood delights to paint gardens that come to us through the influence of the Italian Renaissance.’¹⁰⁴ In 1907, *Italian Gardens* demonstrated not only a knowledge, but appreciation of their architectural features and statuary (Figure 1.8).¹⁰⁵



Figure 1.8: George Elgood, *Italian Garden* (1907)

¹⁰⁴ Jekyll, *Some English Gardens*, p. 1.

¹⁰⁵ George S Elgood, *Italian Gardens* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1907).

Many of Elgood's English paintings depict the more formal aspects of design. Figure 1.9 at shows a path, defined by a tall yew hedge beyond the circular pool and fountain Melbourne Hall in Derbyshire. Although the garden was laid out in the late seventeenth century, it reflects the spirit of the time (Figure 1.9).



Figure 1.9: George Elgood, *The Fountain Walk, Melbourne Hall* (1892)

Elgood's first garden was Markfield in Leicestershire, which he sometimes referred to as Raunsccliffe or Ramscliffe. *In Some English Gardens*, an insight to his approach was suggested:

The size and grandeur of the garden may suit the great house as a design – it may be imposing and costly, and yet it may lack all the qualities that are needed as for simple pleasure and refreshment.¹⁰⁶

Jekyll suggested that Markfield's 'simple borders of hardy flowers, planted and tended with constant watchfulness and loving care by the owner's

¹⁰⁶ Jekyll, *Some English Gardens*, p. 58.

own hand' resulted in a garden of 'delight and companionship'.¹⁰⁷ His paintings show not only its herbaceous borders with a glimpse of the countryside beyond, but his love of hardy plants, like foxgloves and lupins (Figure 1.10 and Figure 1.11).



Figure 1.10: George Elgood, *The Garden at Ramscliffe* and Figure 1.11: *Foxgloves, Ramscliffe* (1909)

Markfield remained his summer home after he bought Knockwood, a sixteenth-century timber-framed house near Tenterden in Kent in 1908. He lived there until his death and the narcissus planted in the orchard were a feature William Robinson would have enjoyed (Figure 1.12). Elgood is reputed to have designed gardens in later life, but no evidence has been found to support this.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Jekyll, *Some English Gardens*, p. 58.

¹⁰⁸ David Marsh, 'Enchantment of the Highest Order' (<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2015/04/18/enchantment-of-the-highest-order>) [Accessed 20 May 2018]. Eckstein, *George Samuel Elgood* makes no mention of this.



Figure 1.12: George Elgood, *Knockwood in Spring* (1918)

Elgood is the only garden artist who expressed opinions about garden design. He told Eckstein's father that, 'A good landscape gardener, there is no such person. Arrange your garden to suit yourself. It will be as good as or better than any landscape gardener will arrange.'¹⁰⁹ As he grew older, he became critical of landscape architects, annotating his books and newspapers:

Most of the Well known designers know nothing about design or gardens except to run up huge bills. The Great Luytens for instance would spend £2000 to £3000¹¹⁰

He criticised Thomas Mawson as 'the man who balances balls of stone on the tops of walls and gate piers. He gets his balls wholesale at so much a dozen. He never improved any garden!'¹¹¹ His sarcasm was not reserved for architects and the art critic, Arthur Lys Baldry (1858-1939) was a man, who

¹⁰⁹ Eckstein, George Samuel Elgood, p. 174.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem, p. 188. Luytens is reputed to have asked Viscount Portman for £10,000 to design the garden at Hestercombe. Today, £1,225 million.

¹¹¹ Ibidem, p. 188.

‘knows little of planning beyond what he has “picked” up from Country Life, Mawson and other equally valuable authorities.’¹¹²

Before 1914, Elgood exhibited frequently, but he was sixty-seven years old when he exhibited at the Fine Art Society in 1918 and only exhibited again in 1923.¹¹³ Although Elgood and Rowe both lived in Kent, loved Italy and often painted the same gardens, it appears they did not know each other.

Ernest Arthur Rowe (1863-1922)



Figure 1.13: Arthur Rowe (1899)

A biography of Rowe using family records was self-published by his grandson.¹¹⁴ He was born at Stratford, then in Essex, and in comparison with the other garden artists, came from a relatively humble background. In October 1878, his father paid £55 for him to be indentured at the print lithographer, Montague Chatterton and Co in Gray’s Inn Road, London. In

¹¹² Eckstein, George Samuel Elgood, p. 188.

¹¹³ Anonymous, ‘Art Exhibitions’, *The Times*, 43521 (11 December 1923), p. 12 and Anonymous, ‘Small Water-colours’, *The Times*, 46182 (11 July), p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Derrick R Rowe, *Ernest Arthur Rowe: The Life and Work of a Victorian Garden Painter* (Kent: Self-published, 2009). Rowe’s website has disappeared and the location of the archive is unknown.

1884 he submitted two paintings to the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours and was invited to study there.¹¹⁵ Later he attended evening classes for several years at Lambeth College of Art. After his father died, Rowe used his £200 bequest to buy a house for his mother and sister, Florence, in East Dulwich.¹¹⁶

In 1885, Rowe decided to earn his living as an artist and went to paint in Devon. There he met Christine Hamlyn (1856-1936), who lived at Clovelly Court. She commissioned him to paint several pictures of the garden and also recommended him to her friends. For a number of years, his family supported him, but by 1895, he was able to settle his debts.

Throughout his life, Rowe suffered from chest problems and in 1896 whilst recovering from tuberculosis at Davos in Switzerland, he met Sophy Ann Slater (1870-1943), a nurse who became his wife.¹¹⁷ After 1896, Rowe spent winters in Italy or Spain for his health (Figure 1.14). He also moved to Southborough in Kent with his mother and sister in 1898 and lived in Kent for the rest of his life.¹¹⁸

His first solo exhibition was held in 1897 and until 1913, he had eight further exhibitions at the Dowdeswell and Greatorex Galleries. Whilst he never exhibited at the prestigious Fine Art Society like Elgood and Alfred Parsons, his paintings were purchased by Queen Alexandra and Queen Mary.

¹¹⁵ Rowe, *Ernest Arthur Rowe*, p. 4. Today, £6,394.

¹¹⁶ Today, £25,873.

¹¹⁷ They married in 1899.

¹¹⁸ He continued to support them. When his sister, Isabel died, Florence looked after her three children.



Figure 1.14: E Arthur Rowe, *Menton and Monte Carlo from Capo Bordighera*

He and Elgood often painted the same gardens, for example Melbourne Hall (Figure 1.15). In Rowe's painting, the fountain forms the central feature whereas Elgood placed more emphasis on the walk behind.



Figure 1.15: E Arthur Rowe, *Fountains in the Garden, Melbourne Hall*

Rowe chose to paint gardens' more formal features, which provide insight into a designer's style. His depiction of *The Willows*, a garden Mawson designed between 1898 and 1902 shows a quarter-circle of steps in

the Arts & Crafts style, as well as heavy stone arches in the background, a less attractive aspect of Mawson's designs (Figure 1.16).



Figure 1.16: E Arthur Rowe, *The Willows, Preston* (1912)

As Rowe also enjoyed Italian gardens, he often painted English gardens with Italianate features like Brockenhurst Park in Hampshire, which was described as ‘one of the best nearly Italian gardens’ (Figure 1.17).¹¹⁹ It was designed at the beginning of the twentieth century and although its designer is unknown, Rowe's painting reflects the popularity of clipped arches, topiary and sundials.

¹¹⁹ Jekyll, *Some English Gardens*, p. 2.



Figure 1.17: E Arthur Rowe, *Grey Day, Brockenhurst Park*

Rowe also painted the Italian Garden at Hever Castle in Kent, designed for William Waldorf Astor (1848-1919) by Joseph Cheal & Sons between 1904 and 1908. It displayed Astor's large collection of Italian statuary and ornaments (Figure 1.18). It is still recognisable today (Figure 1.19).



Figure 1.18: E Arthur Rowe, *The Italian Garden, Hever* (1920)



Figure 1.19: Italian Garden, Hever (2012)

Wherever he lived, Rowe made a garden, but when he designed the garden at his Elizabethan-style house, Ravello, at Rusthall near Tunbridge Wells in 1907, it is not surprising that it included a number of large Italian pots (Figure 1.20). However, Figure 1.21 shows a rose bower and simple, cottage-style flowers, like hollyhocks.



Figure 1.20: E Arthur Rowe, *Ravello, Rusthall* (1909)



Figure 1.21: E Arthur Rowe, *The Garden, Ravello*

Rowe's life underlines the uncertainty of pursuing art as a career. After his early financial difficulties, he became affluent, but during the war his income disappeared and he had to sell Ravello and move into rented accommodation. Although his finances improved after 1918, at his memorial exhibition in 1925, attended by Queen Mary, only twenty-eight of the ninety-four paintings were sold.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Rowe, *Ernest Arthur Rowe*, p. 99.

Beatrice Emma Parsons (1869-1955)



Figure 1.22: Beatrice Parsons

Although no biography has been written about her life, a dissertation in 2001 explored Parsons' life and painting (Figure 1.22).¹²¹ She was born in Peckham in south London and her father was a translator for Lloyds.¹²² Unusually for a woman at this time, she was educated at the Haberdashers' Aske's School for Girls, King's College, London and at the Royal Academy Schools, where she won three prizes. In 1907, she moved with her mother and her sisters, Grace (1870-1952) and Minna (1875-1968) to 63 Kingsfield Road at Oxhey, near Watford in Hertfordshire where she lived until her death. Many of her paintings depict Oxhey and possibly her garden (Figure 1.1). In 1889, she started to exhibit at the Royal Academy, but she did not concentrate on painting gardens for some time. Like Rowe, she exhibited at the Dowdeswell and Greatorex Galleries and a number of her paintings were bought by Queen

¹²¹ Susan R Selwyn, 'Garden of England: Myth and Meaning in Edwardian Garden Paintings Through the Work of Beatrice Parsons (1869-1955)' (Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of London, 2001).

¹²² Her brother, Karl Parsons (1884-1934) designed stained-glass.

Mary, the Duchess of Westminster and the Countess of Harewood. As well as twenty-two solo exhibitions, she also illustrated a number of books including *The Gardens of England* in 1908.¹²³

Parsons' often painted the natural gardens that Robinson championed. Although she painted Gravetye Manor, it appears he did not own any of her paintings (Figure 1.23).



Figure 1:23: Beatrice Parsons, *Spring Woods at Gravetye*

Two paintings of Oxford Colleges also show the less formal parts of their gardens in spring (Figure 1.24 and Figure 1.25). Yet Parsons is remembered for her depictions of billowing flowers in herbaceous borders. Whilst these reflect the pre-war style of planting, even when the gardens are named, they are barely recognisable (Figure 1.26).

¹²³ E T Cook, *The Gardens of England* (London: A & C Black, 1908).



Figure 1.24: Beatrice Parsons, *Wild Garden, St John's College, Oxford* and
Figure 1.25: Beatrice Parsons, *Wild Garden, St Hilda's College, Oxford*



Figure 1.26: Beatrice Parsons, *August Flowers, The Pleasaunce, Overstrand*

However, her paintings of Blickling Hall in Norfolk and Gravetye Manor depict the house as well as the flower borders (Figure 1.27 and Figure 1.28).



Figure 1.27: Beatrice Parsons, *Borders at Blickling* (1920s)



Figure 1.28: Beatrice Parsons, *Gravetye Manor*

After Japan opened its borders for trade in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the architect Josiah Conder (1852-1930) published a book about its gardens. They became fashionable in Britain and Parsons depicted a Japanese tea house at Heale House in Wiltshire, designed by Louis Greville

(1856-1941), a former diplomat in Tokyo, at the beginning of the twentieth century (Figure 1.29).¹²⁴



Figure 1.29: Beatrice Parsons, *Teahouse at Heale House*

Parsons was the only specialist garden artist, who continued to exhibit in the interwar period. One reason, as an obituary recorded, was that ‘what she earned by her art was devoted to the care of the invalid members of her family, and she worked until the very end of her life, though often in great disability and pain.’¹²⁵ Between 1917 and 1921, Eyre & Spottiswoode sold prints of her paintings,¹²⁶ and she continued to illustrate books.¹²⁷ In 1920 and 1921, the cover of Suttons & Sons seed catalogues used one of her paintings (Figure 1.30).¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Josiah Conder, *Landscape Gardening in Japan* (Tokyo: 1893, Edition Leopold Classic Library).

¹²⁵ W, ‘Miss Beatrice Parsons’, *The Times*, 53171 (21 February 1955), p. 10.

¹²⁶ Advertisement, ‘Beautiful Flower Gardens’, *The Sphere* (1917 to 1921). Prints were 15½ x 11½ inches and cost 7s 6d.

¹²⁷ J G Millais, *Rhododendrons* (London: Longmans & Co, 1924) and Richard Sudell, *The Complete Book of Gardening* (London: Longmans & Co, 1930), which also included paintings by Ella du Cane and Elgood.

¹²⁸ Advertisement, Suttons Flower Seeds, *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, LXXXV (January 1921), p. xiv.

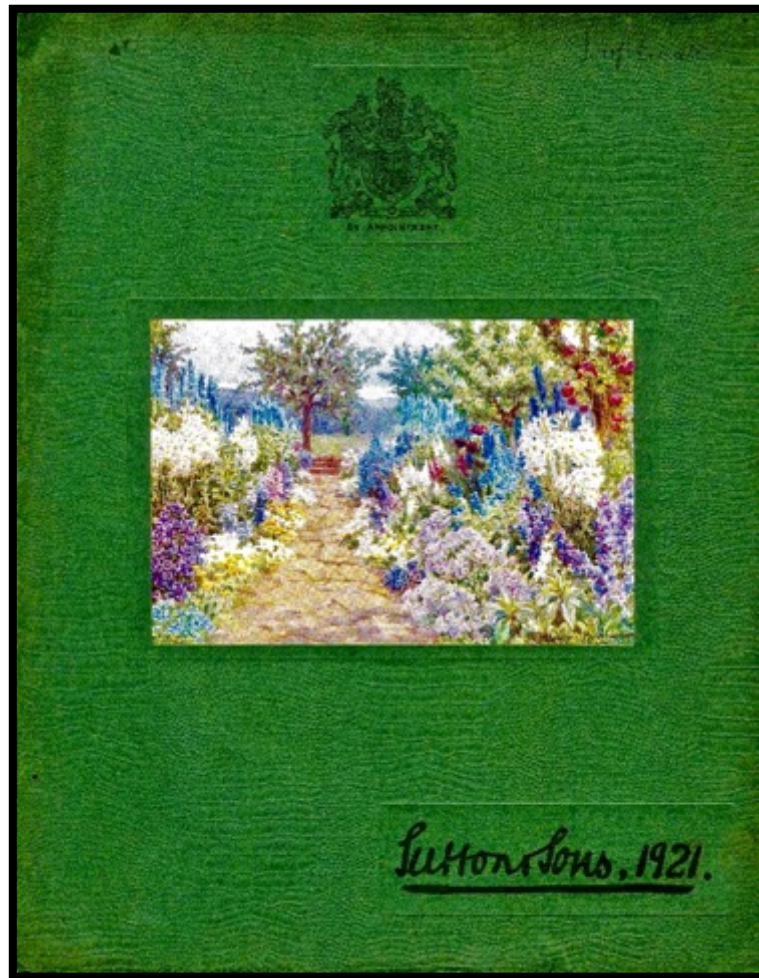


Figure 1.30: Sutton & Sons Catalogue (1921)

Reviews show her style never changed and she continued to paint flowery scenes, which were described in 1924 as ‘a kind of still-life picture out of doors’.¹²⁹ Figure 1.31, her portrayal of the architectural plants, yuccas and agapanthus, was representative of Jekyll’s style.

¹²⁹ Anonymous, ‘Flowers and Fish’, *The Times*, 43597 (11 March 1924), p. 12.



Figure 1.31: Beatrice Parsons, *Lilies, Agapanthus and Yucca*

Edith Helena Adie (1864-1947)

Edith Adie may also have needed an income after the war, as in 1920 she advertised in the Royal Horticultural Society's catalogue, 'If you want a LOVELY WATERCOLOUR Painting of your own garden, write to Miss Edith H Adie ARWS. Exhibitor at the Royal Academy, 4 Suffolk Place, Sevenoaks, Kent'.¹³⁰

Until 2018, little was known about Adie's career.¹³¹ She studied art at the Kensington, Westminster and Slade Schools and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1893 and 1894, but there is no evidence to suggest she gardened. Before 1914, she painted in Italy and taught painting in Bordighera near the Italian/French border, where a number of British women lived (Figure 1.32).¹³² She had two solo exhibitions at the Fine Art Society in 1907, 'Gardens and Italian Rock Villages' and 'Sunshine in England' in 1910.

¹³⁰ Advertisement, Catalogue and Schedules, *Royal Horticultural Society* (1920-22), p. 64.

¹³¹ Ray Crozier, Sandra Crozier & John Devonshire, 'Edith Helena Adie 1864-1947', *Occasional Papers of the Royal Horticultural Society*, 16 (June 2018), pp. 77-94.

¹³² She lived in Sevenoaks, Kent for the last thirty years of her life



Figure 1.32: Edith Adie, *A Blaze of Flowers, Villa Capponi, Florence*

Adie also painted the gardener and plant collector, Reginald Radcliffe Cory's (1871-1934) garden at Dyffryn in South Wales, which Mawson designed in 1906. Cory commissioned her to paint the garden and between May and September 1923, she painted eighteen pictures, which were used when the National Trust restored the garden. Whilst Figure 1.33 shows her depiction of the swimming pool, Figure 1.34, shows it after restoration.¹³³ Figure 1.35, the fountain garden, shows Mawson's extensive use of stonework, which appears more elegant in Adie's depiction than the heavy stonework seen today (Figure 1.36).

¹³³ These and five paintings of Italian gardens are part of the Cory Bequest, donated to the Royal Horticultural Society in 1936. Cory instructed that his papers should be destroyed after his death.



Figure 1.33: Edith Adie, *The Swimming Pool, Dyffryn* (1923)



Figure 1.34: Swimming Pool, Dyffryn (2019)



Figure 1.35: Edith Adie, *The Fountain Garden, Dyffryn* (1923)



Figure 1.36: Fountain Garden, Dyffryn (2019)

Margaret Helen Waterfield (1865-1953)

Margaret Waterfield also painted until her death in 1953 when over a hundred paintings, many of which were damaged, were found in a garden shed. The American academic and gardener, William Frederick Junior (1927-2018), who

owned some of her paintings and the art historian, Diana Baskervyle-Glegg both described her paintings.¹³⁴

Waterfield came from a wealthy family and unlike her brother, Aubrey, whose work is discussed in Chapter 7, she was taught at home. Between 1898 and 1911, she exhibited in Birmingham, Liverpool and London, but she is best known for her garden books, which she illustrated.¹³⁵ *Garden Colour*, was published in 1905, three years before Jekyll's, *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*.¹³⁶ However, its focus is not on the use of colour, but planting for a succession of colour.¹³⁷ Three further books illustrated with her watercolours were published before the war.¹³⁸

Until 1914, she lived with her parents at Nackington House on the edge of Canterbury cricket ground, where she gardened. It often featured in her paintings and Figure 1.37 shows daffodils and trees in blossom in a natural area of the garden with the house in the background. Her taste was very much in tune with Robinson's ideas and like Beatrice Parsons, her paintings display borders of hardy garden flowers at Nackington House and Milton Court, near Dorking (Figure 1.38 and Figure 1.39).

¹³⁴ William Frederick, 'Margaret Helen Waterfield', *The Garden*, 112 (August 1987), pp. 351-356 and Diana Baskervyle-Glegg, 'Painter with a Gardener's Eye', *Country Life*, 184 (25 October 1990), pp. 72-75.

¹³⁵ Baskervyle-Glegg, 'Painter with a Gardener's Eye', p. 72.

¹³⁶ Gertrude Jekyll, *Colour Schemes of the Flower Garden*, Woodbridge, Suffolk, Antique Collectors Club edn (London: George Walmsley, 1908).

¹³⁷ Margaret H Waterfield, *Garden Colour*, (London: J M Dent, 1905).

¹³⁸ Margaret H Waterfield, *Flower Grouping in English, Scotch and Irish Gardens* (London: J M Dent & Co, 1907), Margaret H Waterfield, *A Book of Gardens* (London: T N Foulis, 1910) and Margaret H Waterfield, *Corners of Old Grey Gardens* (London: T N Foulis, 1914).



Figure 1.37: Margaret Waterfield, *Daffodils and Forget-Me-Not, Nackington House, Canterbury* (1907)



Figure 1.38: Margaret Waterfield, *Oriental Poppies and Lupins at Nackington*

In 1921, Waterfield moved to Aldergate Wood at Lympne in Kent, where she made a garden and lived until her death.¹³⁹ Although she continued

¹³⁹ Adjacent to Port Lympne, it is now the home of Lord Howard of Lympne, former leader of the Conservative Party.

to paint, she illustrated only one book.¹⁴⁰ Figure 1.40 shows the landscape near Aulla where her brother, Aubrey, lived.



Figure 1.39: Margaret Waterfield, *Phlox and Hollyhocks, Milton Court, Dorking (1911)*



Figure 1.40: Margaret Waterfield, *Gulf de Lerici (1938)*

¹⁴⁰ Reverend N Paterson, Margaret Waterfield (Illustrated), *The Manse Garden* (London: T N Foulis, 1926).

As rail and road links improved, the wealthy as well as the garden artists spent the winter in the warmer parts of Europe, like Italian Riviera and the Côte d'Azur. In 1860 Dr James Henry Bennet recommended Menton for those with medical conditions and travel guides started to appear.¹⁴¹ Its reputation was enhanced further after Queen Victoria spent several winters there between 1882 and 1899. Thus the garden artists' paintings provided people with mementos of their winters.¹⁴²

A number of other artists also their painted gardens. Eleanor Vere Boyle (1825-1916) depicted her home at Huntercombe Manor in Buckinghamshire where she lived from around 1870 (Figure 1.41).¹⁴³



Figure 1.41: Eleanor Vere Boyle, *Parterre, Huntercombe Manor* (1884)

¹⁴¹ James Henry Bennet, *Winter and Spring on the Shores of the Mediterranean* (London: J & A Churchill, 1861). William Chambers, *Wintering in Mentone* (London: W & R Chambers, 1870) and Henry James Miller, *Wintering in the Riviera with Notes of Travelling in Italy and France*.

¹⁴² Michael Nelson, *Queen Victoria and the Discovery of the French Riviera* (London: I B Tauris, 2001).

¹⁴³ Eleanor Vere Boyle, *Days and Hours in a Garden* (London: Elliot Stock & Co, 1884).

The garden historian, Brent Elliott, has suggested that her garden was an early example of designing ‘garden rooms’, which became ‘the style’ in twentieth century British gardens (Figure 1.42).¹⁴⁴



Figure 1.42: Garden Rooms, Huntercombe Manor

Marianne North (1830-1890), whose botanical paintings caused controversy as she painted in oils rather than the ‘accepted’ watercolours depicted her garden at Mount House, Alderley, Gloucestershire (Figure 1.43).

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¹⁴⁴ Brent Elliott, ‘A Sense of Enclosure’, *Country Life*, 190 (23 May 1998), p. a36.

¹⁴⁵ Marianne North, Mrs John Addington Symonds (Edited), *Recollections of a Happy Life*, Volumes I & II (London: Macmillan & Co, 1892).



Figure 1.43: Marianne North, *Mount House, Alderley* (1890)

Garden paintings by Thomas Henry Hunn at Gravetye Manor (1857-1928) and Henry Moon at Munstead Wood (1857-1905) have also been used to illustrate this study. Undoubtedly, this period was the garden artists' heyday and after the war their paintings lost their popularity. Only Beatrice Parsons exhibited regularly.¹⁴⁶ Alfred Parsons died in 1920, Rowe in 1922 and Allingham in 1926. In recent years, some interest in their work has returned, but small watercolour paintings remain unfashionable.¹⁴⁷ Yet their work provides a commentary on garden styles in this period.

¹⁴⁶ Anonymous, 'Miss Beatrice Parsons: Painter of Gardens', *The Times*, 53169 (16 February 1955), p. 10. By 1942, she had held nineteen solo exhibitions.

¹⁴⁷ Christopher Wood promoted their work.

Chapter 2:

Gertrude Jekyll, A Woman of Exceptional Talent



Helen Allingham, *Michaelmas Daisies at Munstead Wood*

‘I can think of few English gardens made in the last fifty years which do not bear the mark of her teaching whether it is in the arrangement of a flower border, the almost habitual collection of certain plants or the planting of that difficult passage when a garden merges into wild’.

Russell Page¹⁴⁸



Figure 2.1: Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood (1920s)

This was Russell Page’s assessment of Gertrude Jekyll’s contribution to garden design in 1962. No other early twentieth-century designer’s work has attracted more attention (Figure 2.1). Her partnership with Edwin Luytens was outlined in the introduction to this Section.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Russell Page, *The Education of a Gardener* (London: William Collins & Co, 1962, Edition 1983), p. 94.

¹⁴⁹ It was explored by Jane Brown, *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon: The Story of a Partnership, Edwin Luytens and Gertrude Jekyll* (London: Allen Lane, 1982).

There is a plethora of secondary information about her including three biographies. The first, written two years after her death, by her nephew, Francis Jekyll, was based on her diaries, which he bequeathed to the Lindley Library.¹⁵⁰ Betty Massingham's biography used information provided by her friend, the architect, Harold Falkner.¹⁵¹ Another account was written by Sally Festing.¹⁵² The American garden historian, Judith Tankard has also published a number of books and articles.¹⁵³

Primary sources, which include some of her paintings, are held at the Surrey History Centre and the Godalming Museum. Jekyll's personal papers and garden designs were donated to the College of Environmental Design at the University of California in Berkeley in 1955 and can be accessed online.¹⁵⁴ Jekyll, herself, was a prolific author and her books are still in print. She also contributed regularly to *Country Life* and to William Robinson's magazines, *The Garden* and *Garden Illustrated*.¹⁵⁵

Early Life

In 1848, Jekyll and her family moved from London to Bramley House, four miles south of Guildford in Surrey. Here, after her brothers went to school,

¹⁵⁰ Francis Jekyll, *Gertrude Jekyll: A Memoir* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1934).

¹⁵¹ Betty Massingham, *Gertrude Jekyll* (Princes Risborough: Shire Publications, 1975).

¹⁵² Sally Festing, *Gertrude Jekyll* (London: Viking, 1991).

¹⁵³ A comprehensive list is included in the Bibliography.

¹⁵⁴ Judith Tankard, 'An American Perspective on Gertrude Jekyll's Legacy', *Journal of the New England Garden History Society*, 6 (Fall 1998), pp. 42-51, describes how the American garden designer, Beatrix Farrand (1872-1959), Edith Wharton's niece, acquired her papers in 1948.

¹⁵⁵ Gertrude Jekyll & Sir Lawrence Weaver, *Gardens for Small Country Houses* (London: Country Life, 1914), Gertrude Jekyll, *Wall and Water Gardens* (London: Country Life, 1902), Gertrude Jekyll, *Garden Ornament* (First published London: Country Life & George Walmsley, 1918, Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1982). A full list is given in the Bibliography.

she developed an interest in wildflowers and the surrounding countryside.¹⁵⁶ She and her sister were also given a small plot to make a garden where they grew primroses, forget-me-knots, columbines, monkshood and roses (Figure 2.2).¹⁵⁷

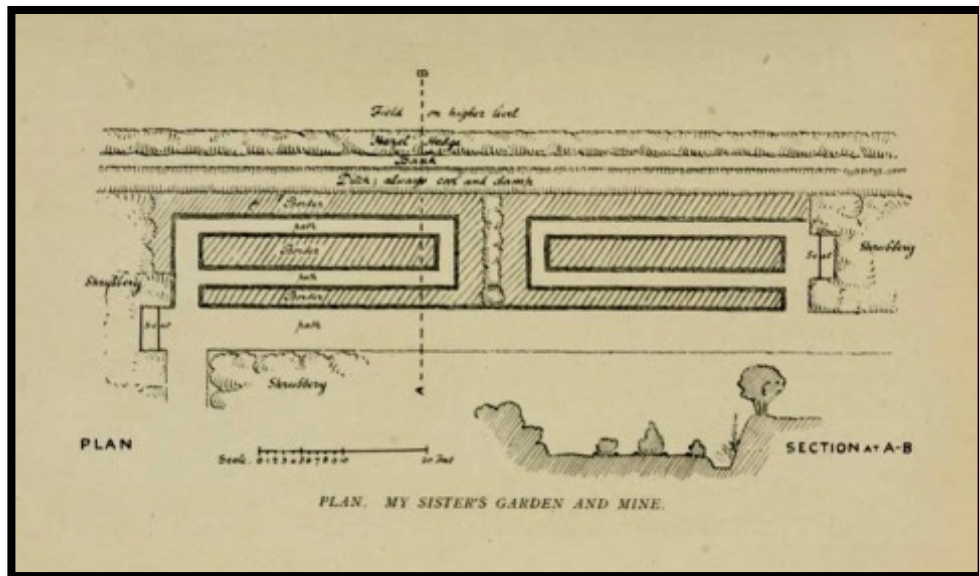


Figure 2.2: Gertrude Jekyll's First Garden at Bramley House (1908)



Figure 2.3: Gertrude Jekyll, *View at Wargrave*

¹⁵⁶ Gertrude Jekyll, *Children and Gardens* (London: Country Life Limited, 1908), p. 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 65-66.

In 1868, the family moved to Wargrave House in Berkshire where Jekyll re-designed parts of the garden and painted the countryside (Figure 2.3). After her father died in 1878, she and her mother returned to Surrey, where she designed their garden at the newly-built Munstead House near Godalming.¹⁵⁸

The Artist

Unusually for a young woman at this time, Jekyll enrolled at the National School of Art in Kensington in 1861. Here she learned about colour theory from Richard Redgrave (1804-1888), whose lectures outlined the principles of colour harmony propounded by the French chemist, Michel-Eugène Chevreuil (1786-1889).¹⁵⁹ She also studied Turner's painting and saw how he experimented with the effects of light and colour on shape. In 1861, she copied his painting, *The Sun in Venice Going to Sea* (Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5).



Figure 2.4: Gertrude Jekyll, *The Sun in Venice* (after J M W Turner) (1870)

¹⁵⁸ A large collection of Jekyll's plants was brought from Wargrave House to Munstead Place.

¹⁵⁹ Michel-Eugène Chevreuil, *The Simultaneous Contrast of Colour and its Application* (London: Bell & Daldy, 1860. First published in France in 1839).



Figure 2.5: J M W Turner, *The Sun in Venice Going to Sea* (1843)

Around 1870, Jekyll became acquainted with the landscape painter, Hercules Brabazon Brabazon (1821-1906), who also had an interest in colour and painted in Turner's style (Figure 2.6).



Figure 2.6: Hercules Brabazon Brabazon, *Les Rochers Rouges*

Brabazon introduced Jekyll to Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon (1827-1891), who was not only an artist, but an early advocate for women's rights,

including being able to divorce and vote. Bodichon's husband worked as a doctor in Algeria and Jekyll visited and painted there (Figure 2.7).¹⁶⁰



Figure 2.7: Gertrude Jekyll, *Algiers* (1873-1874)

Jekyll described her joy at seeing the plants in Algeria, which she collected including *Iris stylosa*:

What a paradise for flower rambles, among the giant Fennels and the orange marigolds, and the summer bulbs of *Scilla maritima* standing almost out of the ground, and the many lovely Bee-orchises and the fairy-like *Narcissus serotinus* and the groves of Prickly Pears wreathed and festooned with the graceful tufts of bell-shaped flower and polished leave of *Clematis cirrhosa*!¹⁶¹

She also painted in Italy, Greece and Turkey, where she collected plants and seeds to add to those she gathered in Britain. During her travels she acquired her knowledge of architectural Mediterranean plants, like yuccas,

¹⁶⁰ Jekyll designed Bodichon's garden, Scaland Gate, near Hastings.

¹⁶¹ Jekyll, *Wood and Garden*, p. 30.

which became a feature of planting (Figure 2.8). They were planted in the South Border at Munstead Wood, as they provided ‘something to make a handsome full-stop to the sections of the border’ throughout the year (Figure 2.15 and Figure 2.16).¹⁶²



Figure 2.8: Gertrude Jekyll, *Yuccas in Algiers* (1873-1874)

Between 1865 and 1870, Jekyll exhibited nine pictures at the Royal Academy of Art and the Society of Female Artists.¹⁶³ Although her failing eyesight is given as the reason she stopped painting, it can be seen from her approach to other crafts that she was a perfectionist.¹⁶⁴ She sought the best teachers, but continued them only if she thought she was successful. The artist, George Dunlop Leslie (1835-1921) summed up Jekyll’s versatility, writing that she was:

¹⁶² Jekyll, *Wood and Garden*, p. 272.

¹⁶³ Twigs Way, *Virgins Weeders and Queens: A History of Women in the Garden* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2006), p. 198.

¹⁶⁴ Joan Edwards, *Gertrude Jekyll: Embroiderer, Gardener and Craftsman* (Dorking: Bayford, 1981), p. 7. She continued to embroider until 1881 and was commissioned by the 1st Duke of Westminster (1823-1899) and the artist, Sir Frederic Leighton.

Possessed of artistic talents of no common order [.....] there is hardly any useful handicraft the mysteries of which she has not mastered—carving, modelling, house painting, carpentry, smith's works, *repoussé* work, gilding, wood inlaying, embroidery, gardening, and all manner of herb and flower knowledge and culture, everything being carried on with perfect method and completeness.¹⁶⁵

Whilst undoubtedly her eyesight was a problem, Jekyll may have realised her talent was limited. However, when she was forty-one, she started to take photographs, many of which were used in her articles and books.¹⁶⁶ *Wood and Garden* used eighty-four of her photographs and illustrations.¹⁶⁷

The Gardener

Most of Jekyll's garden plans were produced in collaboration with Lutyens and other architects. They designed the gardens and she suggested the planting. Unlike Alfred Parsons, who visited all his commissions and played an active role until the scheme was completed, she seldom visited. However, she also designed gardens, notably her mother's at Munstead House and her own home, Munstead Wood, which demonstrates her philosophy.¹⁶⁸ Figure 2.9 depicts the view of the house and an informal part of the garden not long after the house was completed.

¹⁶⁵ George D Leslie, *Our River* (London: Bradbury Agnew & Co, 1881), p. 35.

¹⁶⁶ Judith B Tankard, 'Gertrude Jekyll, Photographer', *Country Life*, 184 (4 January 1990), pp 40-41. After 1908, she rarely photographed.

¹⁶⁷ Judith B Tankard, 'Where Flowers Bloom in the Sands', *Country Life*, 192 (12 March 1998), pp. 82-86.

¹⁶⁸ Judith B Tankard, *Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood* (Godalming: Bramley Books, 1996) describes the garden's development.



Figure 2.9: Munstead Wood (1900)

The site was planted with Scots pine, but after they were felled in the 1870s, a self-sown woodland developed, which Jekyll encouraged after she acquired the fifteen acres of land in the 1880s.¹⁶⁹ The lawn from the front of the house led through a path of ‘masterful rhododendrons’ and azaleas, whose colour needed ‘a special place of their own’ to a woodland, planted with narcissus and lily-of-the-valley (Figure 2.10 Figure 2.11 and Figure 2.12).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Tankard, *Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood*, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ Jekyll, *Wall and Water Gardens and Woodland Gardens*, p. 420.



Figure 2.10: Azaleas, Munstead Wood (1901)

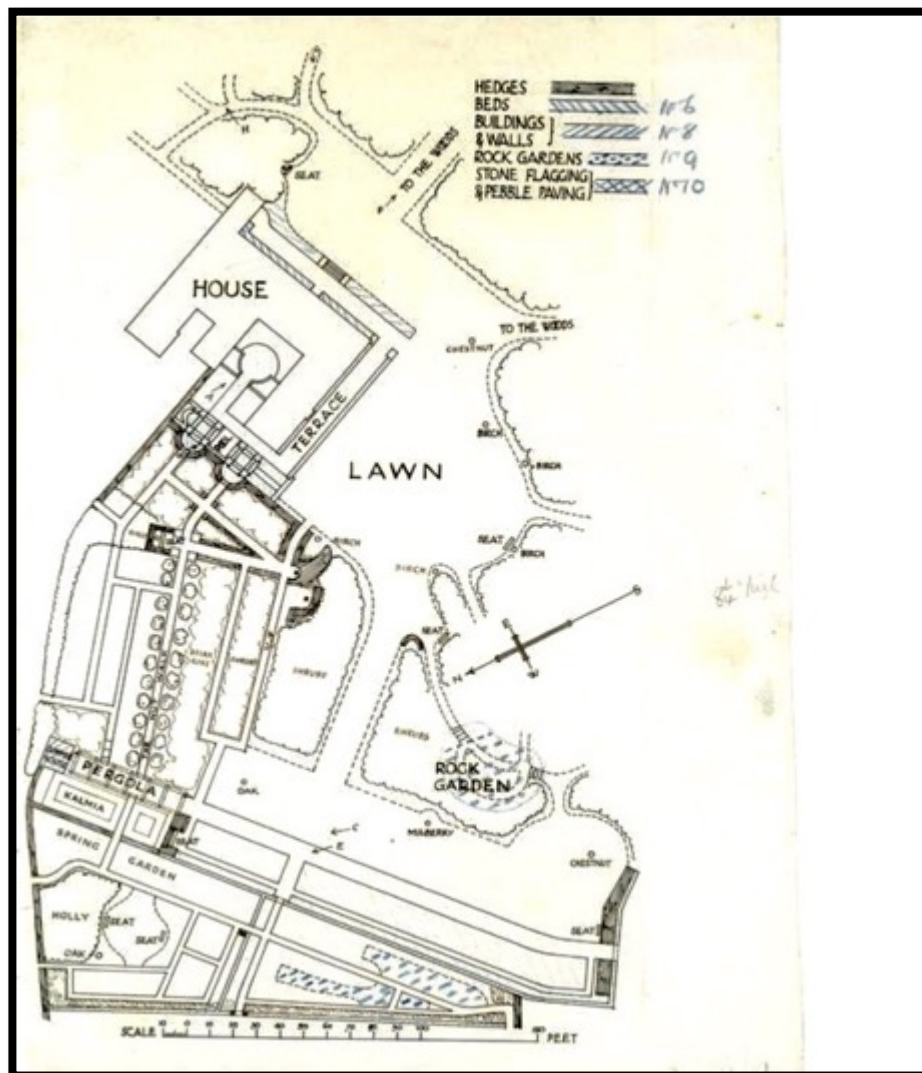


Figure 2.11: Azaleas and Rhododendrons, Munstead Wood (2014)

The garden plan does not include the woodland area, but shows that the garden was divided into discrete areas that were less formal than Gravetye Manor (Figure 2.13).



Figure 2.12: Daffodils in the Green Wood Walk (1890s)



2.13: Garden Plan, Munstead Wood

In comparison with Luytens' other garden designs, depicted in the Introduction to this Section, the only formal areas surrounded the house and were relatively simple and unobtrusive (Figure 2.14 and 2.15). Thus overall, the garden's design represented Robinson's rather than Blomfield's ideas.



2.14: Garden Court, Munstead Wood (1900)



Figure 2.15: The Tank (1900)

Many of the garden's discrete areas were designed to be seen at specific times of the year, like the spring borders, depicted by Thomas Hunn (Figure

2.16). Although today, gardens are no longer large enough to accommodate areas dedicated to one plant or season, it was not unusual at this time, particularly for rose gardens. Jekyll's rationale was that the only way to maintain a 'good scheme for colour' for about three months, was to 'devote certain borders to certain times of year'.¹⁷¹



Figure 2.16: Thomas Hunn, *The Pansy Garden* (1900)

Although Jekyll photographed Munstead Wood's garden, she no longer painted. However, comparisons can be made between her photographs and other artists' contemporary paintings, for example the borders of Michaelmas daisies in Elgood's painting. (Figure 2.17 and Figure 2.18).

¹⁷¹ Gertrude Jekyll, *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1982, First published Country Life/George Newnes, 1908), p. 16.



Figure 2.17: Michaelmas Daisy Border (1899)



Figure 2.18: George Elgood, *Michaelmas Daisies, Munstead Wood* (1904)

A similar comparison can be made between Jekyll's photograph of the South Border and Allingham's painting (Figure 2.19 and Figure 2.20). Both show Jekyll's use of architectural plants like the yucca with its sword-like leaves. The photograph shows one of Jekyll's signature edging plants, the bergenia, which remains evergreen in winter. Allingham's painting also depicts tall, cream, pink and red hollyhocks.



Figure 2.19: South Border Door in August (1899)



Figure 2.20: Helen Allingham, *South Border, Munstead Wood* (1900-1903)

Henry Moon painted Jekyll's delphiniums, possibly *Delphinium x belladonna*, which was 'so lovely in colour that it is quite indispensable' (Figure 2.21, Figure 2.22 and Figure 2.23).¹⁷²

¹⁷² Jekyll, *Wood and Garden*, p. 135.



Figure 2.21: Henry Moon, *In the Flower Border, Munstead Wood* (1896)



Figure 2.22: Delphiniums, Munstead Wood (1899)

The illustrations show that Jekyll planted in clumps or drifts rather than in the accepted practice of rows. Her criticism of the fashion for planting hardy annuals was that they were displayed in ‘ribbon borders’, and planted with red geraniums and yellow calceolarias, echoing William Morris’ dislike of

them, and then edged with blue lobelia and feverfew.¹⁷³ In her words, ‘Could anything be more tedious or stupid?’¹⁷⁴



Figure 2.23: *Delphinium x belladonna*

Approach to Colour

Jekyll is renowned for her use of colour in her schemes. In subsequent chapters, it will be shown that experimenting with colour has preoccupied garden designers throughout this study. Although *Colour Schemes in the Flower Garden*, published in 1907, is regarded as the beginning of the fashion to plant in harmonious or single colours, she wrote the chapter about colour in *The English Flower Garden* in 1893.¹⁷⁵ Her aim was ‘to show some delightful colour combination without regard to the other considerations that go to the making of a more ambitious picture.’¹⁷⁶ Her 200-foot long hardy plant border was designed to look its best from mid-July to October. Its colours graduated

¹⁷³ William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art* (London: Ellis & White, 1882), p. 126.

¹⁷⁴ Jekyll, *Wood and Garden*, p. 266.

¹⁷⁵ William Robinson, *The English Flower Garden* (London: First edition, John Murray, 1893).

¹⁷⁶ Jekyll, *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, p. 295.

from blue and grey, soft pinks and pale yellows through to reds and oranges, and is still planted as she designed it (Figure 2.24 and Figure 2.25).



Figure 2.24: Long Hardy Plant Border (1912)



Figure 2.25: Long Hardy Plant Border (2019)

In contrast, Jekyll's late spring borders comprised white and cream lupins, irises and foxgloves, interspersed with a few blue and pink flowers (Figure 2.26).



Figure 2.26: Spring Border (1912)

Although Jekyll foresaw that gardens would be planted in a single or restricted colour schemes, she could not have envisaged the extent it would continue to inspire gardeners to this day. As she described:

I hear of a garden for blue plants, or a white garden, but I think such ideas are but rarely worked out with the best aims. I have in mind a whole series of gardens of restricted colouring, though I have not, alas, either the room or means enough to work them out for myself, and have to be satisfied with an all too short double border for a grey scheme. But besides my grey garden I badly want others, especially a gold garden, a blue garden and a green garden; though the number of these desires might be multiplied.¹⁷⁷

Her grey borders comprised grey plants like *Hippophae rhamnoides* at the back, with *Stachys lanata* and silvery *Artemisia*s as edging. However, to ensure the effect was not too opalescent, pale blue *ceanothus*, *echinops* and

¹⁷⁷ Jekyll, *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, p. 218.

the purple *Clematis jackmanii* ensured a contrast with the white flowers, the lilies, hollyhocks and achillea seen in Figure 2.27.



Figure 2.27: Grey Border (1912)

Not only was Jekyll meticulous in her selection of plants, but as early as 1873, she started to breed her own strains to achieve the precise colour and form she desired.¹⁷⁸ These included white flowers, like *Aquilegia vulgaris* ‘Munstead White’ and *Digitalis vulgaris* ‘Munstead White’, seen in her woodland fern garden (Figure 2.28).

¹⁷⁸ Michael Tooley & Primrose Arnander (Edited), *Essays on the Life of Gertrude Jekyll* (Witton-Le-Wear: Michaelmas Books, 1995), pp. 130-144 lists these.



Figure 2.28: White Foxgloves at the Edge of the Fir Wood (1899)

Considerable time elapsed before she was satisfied and she recalled selecting seed for twenty-five years from primroses discovered in a cottage garden¹⁷⁹. The resulting Munstead Bunch primroses were displayed in a circular Primrose Garden surrounded by mature trees. (Figure 2.29, Figure 2.30 and Figure 2.31).



Figure 2.29: Primrose Garden (1901)

¹⁷⁹ Jekyll, *Wood and Garden*, p. 295.



Figure 2.30: Primrose Garden (1899)



Figure 2.31: Primrose Garden Today (2019)

The Munstead polyanthus were white and shades of cream, yellow and orange and although she considered plants bred by John Waterer (1851-1924) at Knap Hill Nurseries in Woking, she preferred her own (Figure 2.32).¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ Tooley & Arnander (Edited), *Essays on the Life of Gertrude Jekyll*, p. 139. Carters Seeds advertised her Munstead strain in 1933. Seeds are no longer available. Barnhaven Primroses offered seeds bred from her plants until 1985.



Figure 2.32: Munstead Strain Primroses

Not only did Jekyll's garden have areas which were best seen at a particular time of year, her hardy plant border shows she employed various methods to ensure its effects continued for several months.¹⁸¹ Its planting was devised so new plants came into flower as others finished, for example *Gypsophila paniculata* followed on from *Papaver orientalis* and then later nasturtiums, sown from seed came into bloom. Tall plants were trained forward to cover finished flowers, and plants from her nursery also filled any gaps. As maintaining this type of border requires intensive attention from a number of gardeners, after the war it became difficult and costly to employ them. However, her idea that there should be a continuity of interest in borders, albeit rather differently, is a key theme of today's designs.

Until 1929, Jekyll continued to design around ten gardens a year and this included planting schemes for Lutyens. However, as she no longer visited

¹⁸¹ Richard Bisgrove, 'The Colours of Creation: Gertrude Jekyll and the Art of Flowers', *Journal of Experimental Botany*, 64 (18) (2013), pp. 5783-5789.

these gardens, problems occurred. At Gledstone Hall in Yorkshire, which Luytens designed for Sir Amos Nelson (1860-1947), a Lancashire mill owner in 1923, she recommended her favourite yuccas, which did not survive the cooler northern winters.

Page criticised her planting scheme for the garden Luytens designed for the Viceroy's House at New Delhi. As someone who always carried out a thorough site survey, he explained what could happen when you did not:

She [Jekyll] made enchanting plans for the new garden in Delhi, full of flowers with beautifully worked out colour schemes. The result was a multicoloured Persian carpet covering many acres. But she had never visited India and obviously did **not know to** provide cool walks in the shade of trees and the sight and sound of running water. Her great garden is a spectacle to look at from the house. There is no shade and under the hot sun, a walk round her garden is an ordeal rather than a pleasure.¹⁸²

Yet overall, Page was impressed with Jekyll's ideas and thought 'the principles she defined are still valid', although 'the repercussions of her influence have been differently and indifferently understood'.¹⁸³ Undoubtedly, Jekyll's designs have continued to attract and influence people for over a hundred years. In the opinion of her friend, the architect, Harold Falkner,

¹⁸² RP/28/3/1/3, Unpublished writing.

¹⁸³ Russell Page, *Education of a Gardener* (London: William Collins & Co, 1962), p. 95.

this was because ‘She differed from all other gardeners in the fact that she was an artist. Gardening was not a craft or even a science to her - it was an art’.¹⁸⁴

Thus although Jekyll embraced Robinson’s ideas, she developed a style of her own, and it is this that has continued to inspire future generations of gardeners. As an artist and a plantswoman, she linked art to gardening both in colour and design. As she wrote:

The duty we owe our gardens and to our own bettering of our gardens is so to use plants that, they shall form beautiful pictures; and that while delighting our eyes, they should be always training those eyes to a more exalted criticism; to a state of mind and artistic conscience that will not tolerate bad or careless combination of any sort of misuse of plants, but in which becomes a point of honour to be always striving for the best.¹⁸⁵

Chapter 3: Gardens and Orchards

Alfred William Parsons (1847-1920)

wander in some Elysian garden.’¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Sam Osmond, *Harold Falkner: More than an Arts & Crafts Architect* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2003), p. 65.

¹⁸⁵ Jekyll, *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, p. 17.

¹⁸⁶ De Navarro, *A Few More Memories*, p. 257.

Chapter 3: Gardens and Orchards
Alfred William Parsons (1847-1920)



Alfred Parsons, *On the Terrace, Belvoir Castle* (1906)

‘The gardener should follow the true artist, however modestly, in his love for things as they are to delight, in natural form and beauty of flower and trees if we are to be free from barren geometry, and if our gardens are ever to be pictures.’

William Robinson ¹



Figure 3.1: Edward Austin Abbey, *Alfred Parsons* (1886)

Alfred Parsons met William Robinson in early 1878 after he made enquiries about one of his paintings:

I happened to see a sketch in oil of an English meadow in flower in June. A bold thing to attempt, but I liked it so well I sought the author in town, and we went in quest of lost flowers. Alfred Parsons had a fine eye for flowers in the open.¹

¹ William Robinson, *The English Flower Garden* (London: First edition, John Murray, 1893), p. 7.

¹ William Robinson, *The Wild Garden*, Seventh Edition (London: John Murray, 1929), p. xii. Nine years after Parsons' death, Robinson explained why he chose him to illustrate the second edition in 1881.

In response, Parsons invited Robinson to visit him, ‘I do not exactly remember the drawing you mention and if you can come to my studio [.....] it will give me great pleasure to show you what sketches and studies I have’ (Figure 3.1).² Their friendship continued until Parsons’ death and he not only illustrated Robinson’s books and magazines, he painted Gravetye Manor and possibly gave advice on its garden (Figure 3.2).



Figure 3.2: Alfred Parsons, *The Terrace Wall, Gravetye* (1893)

It is not known whether Parsons met Jekyll or visited Munstead Wood, although Robinson knew her well.³ Unlike her, Parsons was a successful landscape artist, who continued to exhibit until his death. He became an associate member of the Royal Academy in 1897 and an Academician in 1911. Only eighty-one of his garden projects have been identified, many less than Jekyll, but he remained fully involved with them until they were completed.

² GB 803 WRO/2/160, ‘Letter, Parsons to Robinson’, 3 February 1878.

³ Parsons probably read her chapter on colour in *The English Flower Garden*.

There is no definitive biography of Parsons' life, but Nicole Milette's thesis provides a detailed overview.⁴ Few personal records remain, as his papers disappeared after his death.⁵ Information has been gathered from the correspondence and records of his friends including Robinson,⁶ Henry James, Mary Anderson de Navarro and Alice Comyns Carr all wrote about his gardens.⁷ Marc Simpson explored his relationship with the the artists, Edward Austin Abbey, Francis Davis Millet, and John Singer Sargent whose lives have been recorded.⁸ The Houghton Library at Harvard University has a collection of letters written by Parsons to James Osgood, *Harper's* representative in London between 1887 and 1888.⁹

Somerset Heritage Centre holds the Tudway family's archive, which comprises correspondence from Captain Walter St Ives Croker Partridge (1856-1924), who managed the day-to-day side of Parsons' garden commissions, to Charles Clement Tudway (1846-1926) of The Cedars, Wells

⁴ Nicole Milette, 'Landscape-Painter as Landscape-Gardener: The Case for Alfred Parsons' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of York, 1997, updated 2012).

⁵ Anonymous, 'Sale of Residence and Old English Furniture', *Cheltenham Chronicle* (19 October 1940), p. 1. His brother, Clement Parsons, inherited his home, Luggershill in Broadway in trust for his lifetime.

⁶ Lindley Library GB 803 WRO/1/161-170 comprises a small collection of Parsons' letters to Robinson.

⁷ Henry James, *The Portable Henry James* (London: Penguin Books, 2004), Mary Anderson de Navarro, *A Few More Memories* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1936) and Alice J Comyns Carr, *Mrs J Comyns Carr: Reminiscences* (Edited) Eve Adam (London: Hutchinson & Co, Second Edition, 1926).

⁸ Marc Simpson, 'Reconstructing the Golden Age: American Artists in Broadway' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Yale, 1993). Edward Verrall Lucas, *Edward Austin Abbey* (London: Methuen, 1921). Abbey's correspondence also disappeared. The biography was based on this and Parson's notes; the Smithsonian Museum holds the Millet family's archives.

(<https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/francis-davis-millet-and-millet-family-papers-9048> [Accessed 1 April 2017]. Letter, John A P Millet to James Hunt, 14 March 1982 was quoted by Simpson', p. 93. After his death, Lily Millet asked his biographer, James Hunt, to return his personal files and diaries, which she destroyed; Stanley Olson, *John Singer Sargent His Portrait* (London: Barrie & James, 1989, First edition, Macmillan, 1986).

⁹ Rogers Memorial Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University: Papers of James R Osgood & A V S Anthony 1853-1912, MS Thru 470 (46) and (21).

from 1894 to the end of 1905.¹⁰ The letters, comprising eight boxes, probably represent only part of their interchange, as they were discovered accidentally in 1971.¹¹ The Centre also holds records for Tudway's Cedars Hardy Plant Nursery, which supplied plants for many of Parsons' projects, but contains little relevant information and a Parsons' archive, comprising mainly articles.¹² The Swindon & Wiltshire History Centre has the drawings and correspondence between Major Robert Fuller (1875-1955), Partridge and Parsons for the project at Great Chalfield Manor at Melksham in Wiltshire from 1907 until 1912.¹³ Worcestershire Records Office has a collection of letters written to Parsons that are unrelated to gardens.¹⁴

The Tudway correspondence confirms that Partridge retained the partnership's records. In December 1902, he sent Tudway a plan of the garden at Down Hall in Essex and asked him to return it. Milette failed to find Partridge's records and despite further extensive searches, none have been discovered.¹⁵ The London Metropolitan Archive lists records for Maximilian Rooper, Partridge's solicitor, which might have shed light on his financial

¹⁰ Somerset Heritage Centre, DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Tudway of Wells Manuscripts c 1895 – c 1905. A letter dated 9 August 1901 suggests that they knew each other in 1885 or 1886, 'I bought your pony as a 4-year-old 15 or 16 years ago!! So who are you going to sell it to?'

¹¹ Mary Gleadhall, *The Tudway Letters* (Alicante: Lightning Source, 2016), p. 159. The letters were found two safes after The Cedars was sold to Wells Cathedral School in 1967. During their transfer to Somerset Records Office, some were stolen for their stamps and postal history.

¹² Somerset Heritage Centre, A\DGD 'Records of Cedars Hardy Plant Nursery, Wells, 1902-32'.

¹³ Swindon & Wiltshire History Centre, 3591/bx/17125, Great Chalfield Manor Correspondence, 1907-1912', 3581 MS, 'Drawings'.

¹⁴ Worcestershire Records Office, BA 11302/705:1235.

¹⁵ Thake & Paginton Advertisement, 'Battledene, Newbury', *The Times* (2 June 1923), p. 6, and *Country Life*, 54 (21 July 1923), p. xxxviii. When Partridge left Battledene to live at Coopers at Eversley, Hampshire in 1923, he may have destroyed them. In 1930, his widow and eldest daughter went to live in Australia, but returned in 1932. In 1918, her younger daughter, Evelyn, married an Australian, Harry McConnell and she emigrated in 1926.

affairs.¹⁶ Partridge's nephew, Montague Cooke (1877-1957) often stayed at Battledene and wrote about his wife's family, the Mackenzies of Fawley Court, but made no mention of its garden or Partridge's involvement in garden design.¹⁷

Two studies have considered Parsons' life. 'Landscape-Painter as Landscape-Gardener: The Case for Alfred Parsons' discusses Parsons' roles as a landscape artist and as a landscape designer.¹⁸ Milette concluded that painting landscapes was his primary motivation, as it continued throughout throughout his life.¹⁹ In 'Painting in Three Dimensions: Alfred Parsons in Broadway', Marion Mako suggests the gardens Parsons designed for himself and his friends differed from those for his clients.²⁰

Early Life

Unlike Jekyll, who came from a wealthy family, which enabled her to meet influential people like John Ruskin and William Morris, Parsons' grandfather was a maltster. His father, Joshua Parsons (1814-1892), practised as a general medical practitioner in Somerset from 1862 until his death in 1892.²¹ As one of fourteen children, Parsons needed to earn a living and, as an artist would have known this would not be easy.

Parsons was reticent about his education. Entries in *Who Was Who* and his obituaries state he was educated privately.²² It was assumed that like

¹⁶ London Metropolitan Archive, B/RAW, 'Rooper & Whately Ledger and Accounts 1894-1905'. Email, 15 August 2017 stated they were marked 'lost' in 2009.

¹⁷ Montague Cooke, *Clouds that Flee* (London: Hutchinson & Co), 1935.

¹⁸ Milette, 'Landscape-Painter as Landscape-Gardener'.

¹⁹ From 1871, he always referred to himself as a landscape painter.

²⁰ Marion Mako, 'Painting in Three Dimensions: Alfred Parsons at Broadway' (Unpublished MA Dissertaton, University of Bristol, 2004).

²¹ Anonymous, 'Joshua Parsons, MRCS, LSA', *British Medical Journal* (2 July 1892), p. 55. He became Medical Officer of Health for Frome after the 1872 Public Health Act.

²² *Who Was Who 1916-1928* (London: A & C Black, 1967).

his younger brothers, he went to King's School at Bruton in Somerset. However, a letter in the School's archive states his only connection with the school was as a 'drawing master' whilst the Reverend Arthur Gill was headmaster (Figure 3.3).²³ In the 1861 Census, Parsons and his brother, Joshua [Fred] were living in London with their maternal uncle, Reverend Edward Valentine Williams (1826-1912), the curate of St James' Hampstead, who ran a school for nine boys aged between ten- and sixteen-years-old.²⁴ Thus, instead of coming to London in 1865 to join the General Post Office Savings Bank and attend classes at the Kensington School of Art, Parsons was living there. In May 1867, Williams' wife died, leaving him with six young children to look after and this may be why Parsons left the General Post Office Savings Bank and returned to Somerset in August 1867.²⁵

²³ DD/BRU/10/5, 'King's School Bruton 1903-21', Letter, Alfred Parsons to Archibald D Fox', 27 October 1910. Gill was headmaster between 1869 and 1872.

²⁴ In the 1861 Census his address was 4 Amphyll Square, Camden. Reverend Williams was also Vice-Principal of North London Collegiate School, which taught girls.

²⁵ British Postal Service Appointment Books 1737-1969 confirm Parsons left in August 1867 and was probably based at St Martin-le-Grand.

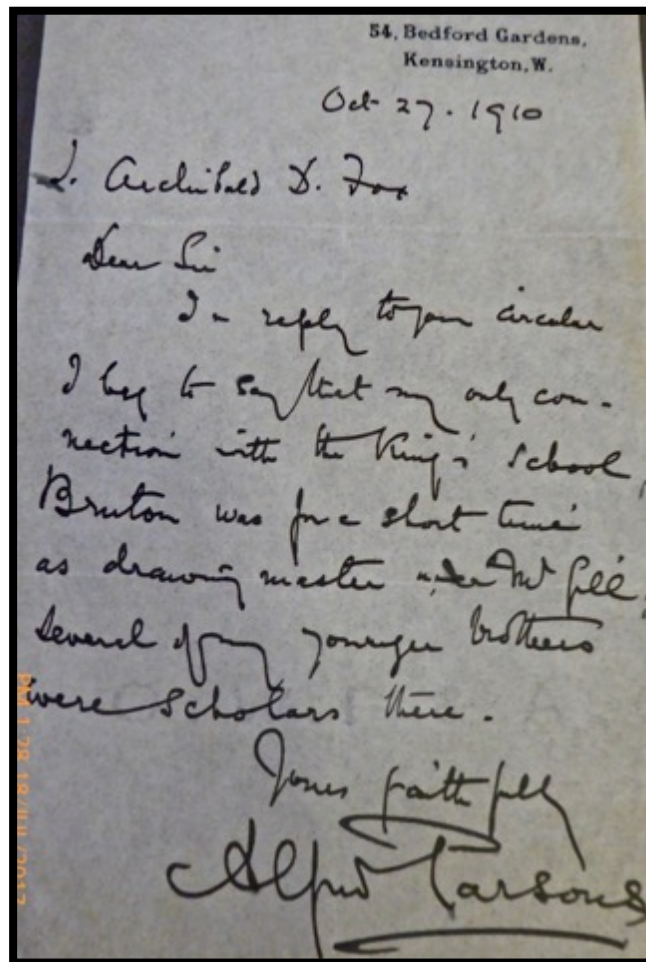


Figure 3.3: Alfred Parsons' Letter to Bruton School (1910)

The Artist

Parsons' father painted as a hobby, but his parents were concerned that he wanted to be an artist. Despite their misgivings, when he returned to Somerset they supported him until he could return to London.

It is unclear when Parsons returned to London, but he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1871.²⁶ During 1872, he travelled in Europe, but exhibited his paintings at the Suffolk Street Gallery in 1873 and 1874.²⁷ However by February 1878, he was sharing a studio at Hayter House in Marylebone Road with the artist William Holyoake (1834-1894). As his reputation grew,

²⁶ Milette, 'Landscape-Painter as Landscape-Gardener', p. 83.

²⁷ Ibidem.

Parsons exhibited at more prestigious London galleries.²⁸ When the Chantrey Bequest purchased *When Nature Painted All Things Gay* in 1887, a pastoral scene with magnolias in bloom in the foreground and a tree-lined path stretching into the distance, it confirmed his reputation (Figure 3.4).²⁹ Figure 3.5 depicts trees in bloom on the slopes of the Cotswolds overlooking Broadway in Worcestershire, but includes spring flowers in the foreground. As Parsons explained to Robinson, ‘I put flowers in the foreground because they are lovely & add to the sentiment of the place, & not to teach the flora of the district’ (Figure 3.6).³⁰



Figure 3.4: Alfred Parsons, *When Nature Painted All Things Gay* (1887)

²⁸ Milette, 'Landscape-Painter as Landscape-Gardener', p. 376 provides a comprehensive list of his exhibitions. He exhibited at the Grosvenor Gallery in 1878-1887, the New Gallery in 1888, and the Fine Arts Society from 1885.

²⁹ It was bought for £400, today £52,911.

³⁰ GB 803, WRO/1/163, Letter, Parsons to Robinson, 5, 12, 19 or 26 October, probably 1880.



Figure 3.5: Alfred Parsons, *The Pear Orchard* (1903)



Figure 3.6: Alfred Parsons, *Daffodils and Trees by a Lake* (1899)

Garden Painting

As outlined in Chapter 1, in 1891 Parsons held an exhibition devoted to garden paintings, 'Garden and Orchards'. *On the Terrace, Belvoir Castle*, the painting on this chapter's frontispiece is atypical, as he tended to depict his

friends' gardens, like Ludvig Messel (1847-1915) at Nymans in West Sussex (Figure 3.7).³¹



Figure 3.7: Alfred Parsons, *The Garden at Nymans* (1914)

However, Figure 3.8 shows an unknown garden that illustrates many of the features he deployed in his designs. The walled garden overlooks a church and houses and the wider countryside places the house and garden in context. The walls are planted with espaliered fruit trees and other climbing plants, probably roses, with white narcissus, a favourite bulb, in the borders.

³¹ Parsons was working on the illustrations for Messel's book, *A Garden Flora: Trees and Flowers in the Gardens at Nymans 1890-1915* (London: Country Life and George Newnes, 1918).



Figure 3.8: Alfred Parsons, *Garden Scene*

Book Illustration

After Robinson enquired about his paintings, Parsons suggested ‘a study of blackthorn in blossom with some daffodils in the fore-ground’ and possibly this is the illustration in the preface of *The Wild Garden* (Figure 3.9).³²

Between June 1878 and 1906, his illustrations featured eighty-five times in *The Garden*.³³ Although his ability to depict flowers is shown in Figure 3.10,³⁴ it is his skill as a botanical artist that he deployed in *The Genus Rosa* for his friend, the gardener, Ellen Willmott (1858-1934) (Figure 3.11).³⁵

Parsons also illustrated *The Warwickshire Avon* for his friend, Arthur Quiller-Couch (1864-1944) and *The Danube from the Black Forest to the*

³² GB 803 WRO/2/160, ‘Letter, Parsons to Robinson’, 3 February 1878.

³³ Milette, ‘Landscape-Painter as Landscape-Gardener’, p. 354.

³⁴ Robinson, *The Wild Garden* and *The English Flower Garden*. His illustrations were used in all subsequent editions during Robinson’s lifetime.

³⁵ Ellen Willmott, *The Genus Rosa* (London: John Murray, 1910-1914).

Black Sea for his lifelong friend, the American artist and writer, Francis Davis Millet (1848-1912).³⁶



Figure 3.9: Alfred Parsons, *Coombe in Somerset with Primroses, Kingcups and Daffodils* (1881)



Figure 3.10: Alfred Parsons, *Tiger Lilies in the Wild Garden, Great Tew* (1881)

³⁶ Arthur Quiller-Couch, *The Warwickshire Avon* (London: James R Osgood & McIlvaine, 1892) and Francis Davis Millet, *The Danube from the Black Forest to the Black Sea* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1893).



Figure 3.11: Alfred Parsons, *Rosa chinensis* (1910)

Knowledge of the English Countryside

When Parsons returned to Somerset in 1867, he expanded his knowledge of the countryside, for which he became renowned, and as his letters to Robinson show:

Perhaps the river flowers are better than usual this year, owing to there being no floods and plenty of bank to grow on; the succession of blossom is so good. The meadowsweet is still blooming on the side shoots and the purple loosestrife is in its glory. The arrowheads [*Sagittaria latifolia*] have come out and the *Achillea ptarmica*; and the flowering rush goes on sending up heads of buds. Creeping Jenny is very successful, but you want to be in a boat to see it.³⁷

³⁷ GB 803 WRO/2/1 of 2, Letter, 4 August, undated. but probably 1882, from The Swan Inn, Thatcham, Berkshire.

His reputation was established when he met the American artist, Edwin Austin Abbey (1852-1911, who became his close friend, in 1879 (Figure 3.12).³⁸ Abbey came to England to learn about its history and culture, ‘One great bond was this England of ours which [Parsons] knew so deeply and lovingly and [Abbey] so longed to know’.³⁹ During the summer, their holidays included visiting Lechlade, a boating holiday from Oxford to London and visits to his parents in Somerset.

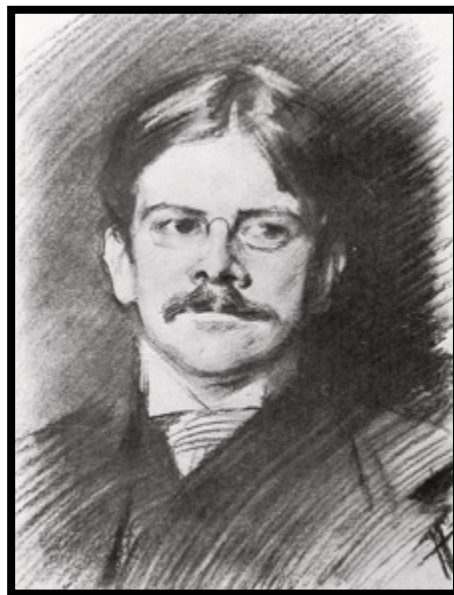


Figure 3.12: John Singer Sargent, *Edwin Abbey* (1888)

Abbey introduced Parsons to Millet and when he decided to rent a house in the country, Parsons, who had visited Broadway with the American writer, Laurence Hutton (1843-1904), probably suggested it.⁴⁰ In 1885, Millet

³⁸ Henry James, Leon Edel (Edited), *Henry James Selected Letters* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 184. Letter to Elizabeth Booth, 1 December 1883, described them ‘dear little Abbey and Alfred Parsons, the landscapist, his *fidus achates*’ (faithful friend).

³⁹ Lucas, *Edward Austin Abbey*, p. 73.

⁴⁰ Academy of American Art, Hilda Millet Booth & John A P Millet, ‘Millet: A Versatile American’ in ‘Francis Davis Millet’s Papers, 1853-1984’ (Unpublished Account, 1939) [<https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/francis-davis-millet-and-millet-family-papers-9048/subseries-4-3/reel-5906-frames-414-785>] suggested both these ideas.

rented Farnham House and then, Russell House with Abbey in 1886 (Figure 3.13).⁴¹ Parsons went too 'equipped not only with friendship, but with the credentials of an experienced cicerone of the English countryside.'⁴²



Figure 3.13: Russell House, Broadway (1877)

John Singer Sargent was introduced to Abbey, Millet and Parsons in April 1884 by Henry James. He was an early visitor to Broadway where he painted *Carnation Lily*, *Lily Rose* between 1885 and 1886 (Figure 3.14).

⁴¹ Abbey and Millet became friends around 1878. In 1890, Millet took over the lease of Russell House and later bought it.

⁴² Simpson, 'Reconstructing the Golden Age', p. 226.



Figure 3.14: John Singer Sargent, *Carnation Lily, Lily Rose* (1886)

When the Chantrey Bequest purchased the painting in 1887, it attracted considerable publicity and ultimately Broadway lost its tranquillity, as an article in 1889 noted:

His name [Sargent] has been associated principally with the little group of artists who for several years have met in the summertime at Broadway. [.....] Frank Millet makes his home in this delightful midland village [.....] with Alfred Parsons, the truest English painter of landscape since Constable, with Edwin Abbey. [.....] But last summer the old Broadway life seemed broken up. Mr Parsons deserted it for Wargrave where his sailing boat and canoe became the most familiar feature of the Thames.⁴³

⁴³ Anonymous, 'The Artist Colony at Broadway', *Evesham Journal* (4 May 1889), p. 6.

Millet settled in Broadway and continued to entertain, but after 1886, the original group apart from Parsons, whose association with Broadway continued until his death, visited less.⁴⁴ Yet before her marriage, Mary Anderson (1867-1940) and her brother stayed with Millet and Abbey.⁴⁵ When she took her husband, Antonio de Navarro (1860-1932) there, he 'lost his heart to the village' and they bought Court Farm in 1892.⁴⁶

The Gardener

Parsons' interest in gardens came from his father, who exhibited roses at the Frome Rose Society and became its President:

A prominent characteristic of Mr Parsons was his love of flowers, and his name is well known to many lovers of hardy perennials and rock plants of which he continued to cultivate a great variety at a time when the fashion of 'carpet bedding' had almost banished them from many gardens.⁴⁷

Figure 3.15 with its flowering tree could have been Joshua Parsons' garden:

⁴⁴ In 1889, Sargent rented Fladbury Rectory near Pershore in Worcestershire and after his marriage to Gertrude Mead in 1890, Abbey stopped going. James bought Lamb House in Rye.

⁴⁵ De Navarro, *A Few More Memories*, p. 53.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 54.

⁴⁷ Anonymous, 'Dr Joshua Parsons', p. 55.



Figure 3.15: Alfred Parsons, *Kitchen Garden, Frome*

54 Bedford Gardens, Kensington

In 1879, Parsons moved to a semi-detached villa, 54 Bedford Gardens, off Kensington Church Street, which he shared with Abbey. It remained his home until 1914.⁴⁸ Although no records exist, it is probable that Parsons designed the garden. After Robinson recommended Rose ‘Alfred Colomb’, when Parsons saw it at the Cricklade Flower Show, he hoped to buy one.⁴⁹ Potential clients, like Mrs Frances Dallas Yorke were invited to his studio.⁵⁰ It had ‘a large walled rear garden planted with fruit trees’, and is similar to the one depicted in Figure 3.8.⁵¹ Abbey described it in spring:

⁴⁸ (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>), Survey of London, 37, Northern Kensington, Chapter 5, Bedford Gardens To Uxbridge Street, pp. 77-88. [Accessed 17 August 2017]. It was one of several semi-detached villas built by Robert and Charles Jearrad around 1830.

⁴⁹ GB 803 WRO/2/2 of 2, Letter, 4 August 188?, probably 1882 from The Swan Inn, Thatcham, Berkshire. Jeffries Nurseries stocked the rose, a deep carmine, repeat flowering, scented double shrub rose.

⁵⁰ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, Parsons to Mrs Frances Dallas-Yorke, the Duchess of Portland’s mother, 10 March 1899.

⁵¹ (<http://www.british-history.ac.uk>), pp. 77-78.

It is so nice and warm and blossomy here now. Some angel many years since prompted the layer out of Bedford Gardens to plant pear and almond trees in the back and front gardens of the houses, and these last few days here the whole street is a mass of blossom pink and white.⁵²

Garden Design 1884-1895

Parsons enjoyed gardening and when his friends asked him for advice, he gained experience in design. He knew the writer Henry Austin Dobson (1842-1921), one of the original Broadway set, and possibly designed his garden, as its sundial and flowering trees are typical of his style (Figure 3.16).

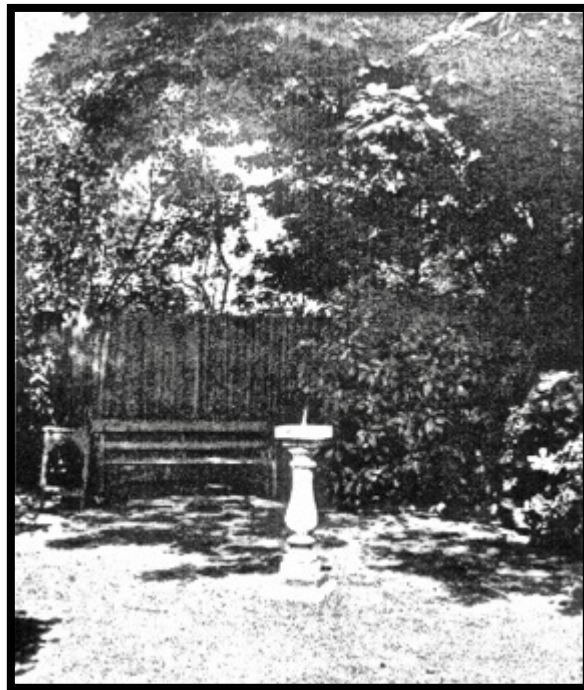


Figure 3.16: Dobson's Garden, 75 Eaton Road, Ealing (1883)

⁵² Lucas, *Edward Austin Abbey*, p. 144.

In 1887 Parsons designed the porch at Moat Cottage, where Robinson lived until the manor was restored (Figure 3.17).⁵³ As they were friends, it seems probable they discussed plants and planting schemes.



Figure 3.17: Moat Cottage, Gravetye Manor (1887)

Parsons could have been involved in the unusual oval kitchen garden, built between 1898 and 1901, as the walls are planted with espaliered fruit trees, a feature of his designs (Figure 3.18).

Clouds House, East Knoyle, Wiltshire

In 1884, Parsons carried out his first known commission at Clouds House, designed by Phillip Webb (1831-1915), for the Honourable Percy and Madeline Wyndham. It is not known how he became involved, but as Wyndham knew Sargent, perhaps as his friend, Parsons was asked to advise.⁵⁴ As *Country Life* described, 'On the east side is a formal garden, enclosed by yew hedges, the

⁵³ Milette, 'Landscape-Painter as Landscape-Gardener', p. 111. Historic England, ALO356/038/01, 'Alfred Parsons, Porch, Gravetye Manor'.

⁵⁴ Caroline Dakers, *Clouds: The Biography of a Country House* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 163-164.

design of which was given by Mr Alfred Parsons'. This was another feature of his designs (Figure 3.19).⁵⁵



Figure 3.18: Espaliered Fruit Trees, Gravetye Manor (2018)



Figure 3.19: Clouds House from Mrs Wyndham's Dressing Room (1904)

⁵⁵ Wilfred Scawen Blunt, 'Clouds, Salisbury: The Residence of the Hon Mrs Percy Wyndham', *Country Life*, 16 (19 November 1904), p. 440.

Tower Cottage, Winchelsea, Kent

Tower Cottage was the costume designer Alice Comyns Carr (1850-1927) and her husband, the art and drama critic, Joseph's (1840-1916) weekend home, 'Our little cottage was perched on the side of a cliff, there was little scope for a real garden, but when Alfred [Parsons] came down, he laid it out charmingly and christened it 'The Quarter Deck'.⁵⁶ After it was sold to the actress, Ellen Terry (1847-1928) in 1892, the garden featured in *Strand Magazine*.⁵⁷ Figure 3.20 shows the garden's box-edged paths, roses and honeysuckle, giving an impression Robinson would have enjoyed, 'You walk along gravel paths of the garden and every blossom on the branches peeping out from the grassy beds appears just to have come there of its own free will'.⁵⁸



Figure 3.20: Ellen Terry and her Daughter in the Garden (1892)

⁵⁶ Comyns Carr, *Reminiscences*, p. 116.

⁵⁷ Harry How, 'Illustrated Interiors: Ellen Terry', *Strand Magazine*, IV (1892), pp. 489-503.

⁵⁸ How, 'Illustrated Interiors', p. 495.

Russell House and Abbot's Grange, Broadway

After Millet bought Russell House and Abbot's Grange, Parsons designed the gardens (Figure 3.21). In 1887, he was gardening there, 'It is quite lovely down here, warm breeze and blue sky every day and I am digging in the garden most of my time'.⁵⁹ As the two properties were some distance apart, Millet bought land to make a path between them. A contemporary description noted it was backed by a brick wall, 9 feet high, planted with fruit trees. The planting of the 12-foot wide 'broad and luxuriant border' was 'well-selected and thoughtfully-grouped' (Figure 3.22).⁶⁰



Figure 3.21: The Abbot's Grange (1890-1900)

⁵⁹ Papers of James R Osgood & A V S Anthony 1853-1912, 'Letter, Alfred Parsons to James Osgood, 28 November 1887'.

⁶⁰ T, 'The Abbot's Grange and Russell House, Broadway, Worcestershire: The Home of Mr F D Millet', *Country Life*, 29 (14 January 1911), p. 59.



Figure 3.22: The Flowery Way, Abbots Grange to Russell House (1911)

Figure 3.23 shows the main garden laid out in grass paths and herbaceous borders with a loggia at one end. An 1896 description gave the impression of a well-established garden planted with cottage garden flowers:

In that day when wishes come true I shall have a garden just like Mrs Millet's, where every present old-fashioned flower runs riot, tall poppies nod along the path by hundreds as you pass them by, roses bloom sixty dozen at a time. [.....] One creamy rose has climbed up to peep at the Abbot's window, but the great company of them is in the secluded precincts of the high-walled garden that surround the house.⁶¹

⁶¹ Henrietta C Lathrop, 'The Real Broadway', *The Outlook*, 22 (30 May 1896), pp. 996-998.



Figure 3.23: Loggia and Hardy Plant Borders, Russell House (1911)

Parsons painted Russell House's garden and Figure 3.24 shows clumps of hollyhocks in subdued colours. Comyns Carr's description is also encapsulated in this picture:

Being primarily a flower and landscape-painter, Alfred Parsons concentrated his attention on the walled-garden. He first laid it out, and afterwards spent much of his time painting the rare roses and every other blossom in season against the grey walls or in the cobble-paved old courtyard or beside the yew hedges, with the background and the rising hills of the Cotswolds.⁶²

⁶² Comyns Carr, *Reminiscences*, pp. 172-173.



Figure 3.24: Alfred Parsons, *The Courtyard, Russell House*

In 1895, Parsons secured a commission that launched his career as a garden designer.

Bishopswood, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire

Bishopswood House was built around 1824 amidst woodland and ponds, originally formed by the ironworks (Figure 3.25).⁶³ All that remains today is Bishopswood Tower, a folly, probably built at the same time (Figure 3.26).⁶⁴

In 1888, Colonel Harry Leslie Blundell McCalmont (1861-1902) purchased the estate comprising 1,328 acres, possibly as a home for his mother.⁶⁵ Not only was he ‘the richest man in England’ and one of Charles Masterman’s ‘super-wealthy’, he was a friend of Edward, Prince of Wales.⁶⁶

⁶³ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk>, p.231. It was damaged by fire in 1883, restored in 1886 and demolished after another fire in 1918.

⁶⁴ Philip Anderson, ‘The Bishopswood Tower’, Ross-on-Wye & District Civic Society, 93 (Autumn 2007) (www.rosscivic.org.uk> page=civic_510-the_bishopswood_tower).

⁶⁵ Anonymous, ‘Sudden Death of Colonel McCalmont MP’, *Ross Gazette* (11 December 1902), p. 4, ‘circumstances prevented her from living there’.

⁶⁶ Anonymous, ‘Mr Harry McCalmont’s Fortune: The Richest Man in the Kingdom’, *Gloucestershire Citizen* (2 October 1894), p. 3. In 1887, his great-uncle, Hugh McCalmont left an estate valued at £3,121,931, today over £413, 583 million. McCalmont an annual income of £2,000, today, £265,000.



Figure 3.25: Bishopswood House in Sales Particulars (1898)

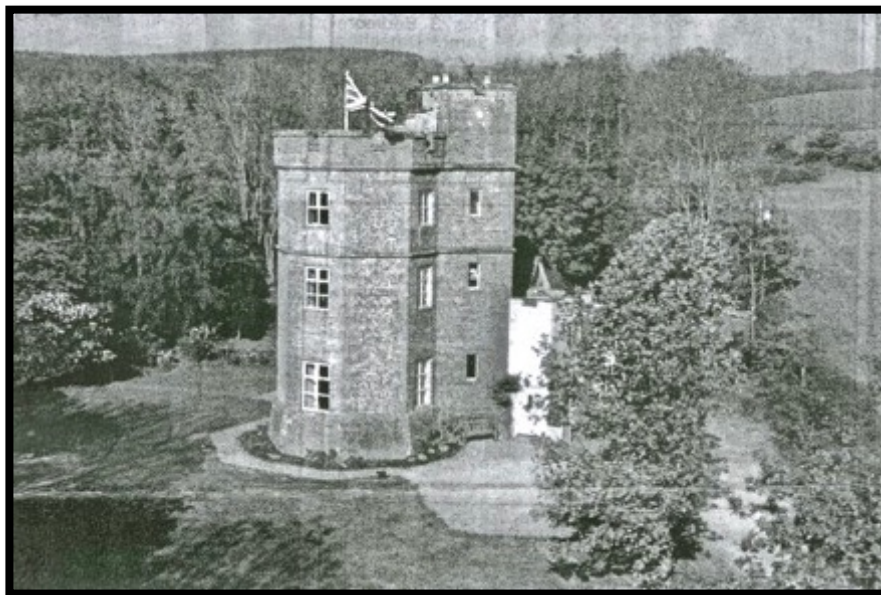


Figure 3.26: Bishopswood Tower (2007)

Captain Walter Partridge, whose family had been associated with the estate since the early nineteenth century, introduced McCalmont to Bishopswood,⁶⁷ and was appointed to manage the estate's restoration.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ William Partridge (1749-1819), a Monmouthshire ironmaster, formed the estate around 1800, but his son sold it in 1874 and it was put it up for sale again in 1884. 'Ruardean' (<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/glos/vol5>), p. 231.

⁶⁸ Anonymous, 'The Comet Coach Reception at Ross and Monmouth', *Monmouthshire Beacon* (16 November 1889), p. 3. In 1890, Partridge's father

Partridge lived at The Coppice situated above Bishopswood House.⁶⁹

Confusingly, it is now called 'Bishopswood House' (Figure 3.27).



Figure 3.27: The Coppice (1908)

S

The *Ross Gazette* provides the only account of how Partridge transformed the estate:

He [Partridge] has been solely responsible for the laying out of the Park, 900 acres and garden. [.....] By his taste and skill, acres of dull, wild waste land have been converted into 'glimpses of paradise' and uninteresting spots have been improved and made to charm the eye – to become beautiful and a joy forever (Figure 3.28).⁷⁰

and McCalmont's mother, both widowed, married and they became step-brothers.

⁶⁹ *Kelly's Directory of Herefordshire* (London, Kelly & Co, 1895). It was built in 1845 as a vicarage.

⁷⁰ Anonymous, 'Departure of Captain Partridge from Bishopswood', *Ross Gazette* (10 November 1898), p. 4.



Figure 3.28: The Estate, Bishopswood (1900)

In December 1894, Partridge decided to improve the gardens and asked Tudway for help.⁷¹ In his words:

What I want is a man who will tell me what trees to cut down and where to plant others and see all plantations etc and give me a rough sketch of how to lay out the garden here.⁷²

Robinson declined an invitation to design the gardens, but his confidence in Parsons ensured he was involved:

You know that any landscape-gardener in our sense is not to be had. There is so much to know and so few know it & how can a man design a garden if he doesn't know trees and flowers.⁷³

⁷¹ Tudway, who was nine years older and had managed his estate since he was twenty-one, acted as Partridge's mentor.

⁷² DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 6 December 1894. Tudway contacted Sir John Hall, a member of the Royal Horticultural Society who responded on 10 December 1894 'best Landscape-Gardener? [.....] if there was such a person, Alfred Parsons would know.'

⁷³ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, Robinson to Parsons, 14 December 1894.

As Parsons had only designed gardens as a hobby, this was a considerable personal achievement. On his first visit in April 1895, his impression of Bishopswood is not known, but the slow drive upwards from the River Wye to The Coppice along a steep, narrow winding road would have revealed the beauty and the extent of the estate (Figure 3.29).



Figure 3.29: View from the Coppice (2018)

They established a mutual rapport as Partridge recorded:

I have been busy the last three days with Parsons. I like him very much and I am sure he is clever, he isn't only an artist in design and conception but he has what most of them lack, the art of detail. He thought very highly of the place and saw every idea at once.⁷⁴

When Parsons agreed to lay out the estate as part of a three-year project, Partridge decided fees of between twelve and fifteen guineas a day for

⁷⁴ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 15 April 1895.

his monthly visits.⁷⁵ First, he marked trees that needed to be felled.⁷⁶ By August 1896, the garden was being laid out and work continued in early 1897, when Partridge bought a hundred *Azalea mollis* and Parsons selected roses for the rose garden.⁷⁷ In April, McCalmont announced he wanted to sell Bishopswood if he could get £100,000, but nothing came of it and work continued.⁷⁸ However, in July 1898, Partridge was dismissed and left homeless and without employment.⁷⁹

Very little remains of the garden today. The area in front of the house is lawn. Figure 3.30 with its view to the distant hills shows semi-circular steps and a path leading to a small circular pool and fountain. This may have been the rose garden, as a number of beds are cut into the lawn. Possibly, there was another terraced garden beyond the one depicted (Figure 3.31)



Figure 3.30: Steps to the Formal Garden (2018)

⁷⁵ About £200 per annum for three years plus travelling expenses. Today, £26,000 per annum.

⁷⁶ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 16 April 1895.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, Letter, 5 February 1897 and Letter, 1 March 1897.

⁷⁸ Ibidem, Letters, 13 April 1897, 2 May and 7 May 1897.

⁷⁹ Ibidem, Letter, 23 July 1898 acknowledged his dismissal.



Figure 3.31: Looking Towards Another Terrace (2018)

Figure 3.32 shows the formal garden from another angle looking towards woodland, but with a closer view of the small beds. A sundial, given by Tudway is at one end (Figure 3.33).⁸⁰



Figure 3.32: Formal Garden (2018)

⁸⁰ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 3 February 1897.



Figure 3.33: Sundial, The Coppice (2018)

A large oval pond, which originally had a fountain and could be the remains of the ironworks is the only other remaining feature (Figure 3.34). Overall, the impression is a woodland garden with formal areas around the house.



Figure 3.34: Oval Pond and Fountain (2018)

Garden Commissions 1895-1899

Whilst he was working at Bishopswood, Parsons undertook other projects, some of which were for his friends.

Court Farm, Broadway

In 1895, Parsons designed Mary Anderson de Navarro's garden at Court Farm, which was built in the seventeenth century, but had become derelict.⁸¹

Comyns Carr's memories were:

Doors lead into the really wonderful garden laid out by Alfred Parsons RA. In front of the windows, a large marble-tiled swimming bath lies amid the green lawns, flanked on one side by the garden and on the other side by a long pergola, over which climb rare roses, clematis and other trailing plants.⁸²



Figure 3.35: Garden and Pool, Court Farm

⁸¹ James introduced Parsons to Mary Anderson in 1883.

⁸² Comyns Carr, *Reminiscences*, p. 116.

As well as the formal garden near the house with its topiary and herbaceous borders, filled with verbena, larkspur, helenium, monkswood and lilies, poppies and pinks in pale shades, there was a more natural, wild garden planted with anemones and martagon lilies (Figure 3.36).⁸³



Figure 3.36: View Towards the Wilder Area of Court Farm (1924)

Lamb House, Rye, East Sussex

James had little interest in gardening, but when he bought Lamb House in 1897, he expressed his appreciation of Parsons' suggestions for his garden:

Ten days ago, [November 20th] Alfred Parsons, best of men as well as best of Landscape-Painters-and-gardeners went down with me and revealed to me the most charming possibilities for the treatment for the tiny out-of-door part – it amounts to about an acre of garden and lawn, all shut in by the peaceful old red wall, to which the most flourishing

⁸³ Diana Baskervyle-Glegg, 'Bulbs Shine Brightly in Broadway', *Country Life*, 192 (29 January 1998), p. 41.

old espaliers, apricots, pears, plums and figs, assiduously grow (Figure 3.37).⁸⁴



Figure 3.37: Garden, Lamb House (1912)

Sunningdale Park, Ascot, Berkshire

Sunningdale Park, built by James Wyatt in 1786, was bought by Major William James Joicey (1838-1912) in 1890.⁸⁵ In August 1897, Partridge told Tudway, '[Parsons] is going to Joicey in September about laying out his garden and a good word or two might help.'⁸⁶ Partridge visited Sunningdale in 1901 and was impressed, particularly with the rose garden:

It is really astonishing what he has done there, and shows what can be achieved in a few years' time. The rose garden is about the best I have ever seen and there are other parts that are equally good. [.....] I think

⁸⁴ Edel, *Henry James Selected Letters*, Letter to Alice James, 1 December 1897, p. 270.

⁸⁵ Graham O'Connell, 'History of Sunningdale Park' (<https://bkthisandthat.files.wordpress.com/2018/07/history-of-sunningdale-park-notes-2018.pdf>). Redesigning the lake was carried out by James Pulham, Email 12 September 2020 confirmed that he was unaware of Parsons' involvement.

⁸⁶ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 12 August 1897.

the general scheme is excellent and the ultimate effect will be capital. I must say Parsons is a thorough garden artist.⁸⁷

Provost's Lodge, Worcester College, Oxford

Dr Henry Olive Daniels, whose wife was Parsons' cousin, moved into the Provost's Lodge for the start of the academic year in October 1903. Parsons designed a rose garden within a rectangular lawn measuring 50 square yards.⁸⁸ Ten beds were created in a symmetrical design and planted with a mixture of cottage roses, with the silver *Stachys byzantina*, violas, aubrietia and old-fashioned pinks as groundcover (Figure 3.38).



Figure 3.38: The Provost's Rose Garden (1908)

⁸⁷ DD\TD/48/1/1-8,, Letter, 30 August 1901.

⁸⁸ Francis Lys, *Worcester College, 1882-1943: And Some Account of a Stewardship* (Oxford, 1944), p. 47. Quoted by Edward Wilson, 'The Provost's Rose Garden' (Worcester College Record, 2007), pp 40-47, 'The bit of lawn in the Provost's Garden nearest the quadrangle was made into a formal garden on a happy design by Alfred Parsons, the artist.'

In 1917, it was restored using Parsons' original plan, which is now lost.⁸⁹ The garden was restored again in 2007 using historic photographs. Figure 3.39 shows its symmetrical layout from above and Figure 3.40, its rectangular surround of clipped yew pillars.



Figure 3.39: Rose Garden from above (2007)



Figure 3.40: Yews Pillars Surrounding the Provost's Rose Garden (2019)

⁸⁹ Wilson, 'The Provost's Rose Garden', p. 42. Parsons selection of roses was replaced by ones created after 1910.

Parsons & Partridge 1899-1914

Towards the end of 1898, Parsons and Partridge started to discuss a garden design business, 'Parsons was here the other day and he seems keener than ever about joining up forces.'⁹⁰ They had little difficulty agreeing the basis for the partnership. Partridge would be responsible for the day-to-day management, whilst Parsons would design the gardens and their planting.⁹¹ In early 1899, Parsons started to acquire commissions, mainly through his influential friends. During their first year, eight projects were secured and eight other gardens visited.⁹²

Milette's list of commissions was used as the starting point for further research.⁹³ The Tudway Letters were allocated to each project with internet searches used to verify their identity. Eighty-one gardens were identified, of which seventeen were Parsons' sole commissions.⁹⁴ Of the sixty-four Parsons & Partridge gardens, thirty-one were no more than consultations or site visits, some work was carried out in ten and twenty-three had significant schemes implemented.⁹⁵ It is not possible to assess the extent of their work after the end of 1905, and only Bryngarw House, Great Chalfield Manor, Milton Lodge and Florham in the USA were identified.⁹⁶ Yet in March 1910, Partridge asked

⁹⁰ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letters, 5 and 17 December 1898.

⁹¹ Partridge wanted Tudway to join them, but he and Parsons could not agree how any profits should be apportioned. Yet Tudway remained involved, recommending clients and giving advice. From 1901, his Cedars Hardy Plant Nursery supplied plants.

⁹² DD\TD/48/1/1-8. Letter, 28 April 1899, Parsons knew Daisy, Countess of Warwick (1851-1938). This probably resulted in the project at Wiseton Hall for General Sir Joseph Laycock, her intimate friend. He also knew Princess Louise at Rosneath and worked on her garden in Argyll.

⁹³ Milette, 'Landscape-Painter as Landscape-Gardener', p. 478.

⁹⁴ Appendix 2 provides details of the known projects.

⁹⁵ Other gardens are mentioned, but may be duplicate as details are vague.

⁹⁶ Somerset Heritage Centre, A\ASM/5/20, DD\TD/49/9, 'Milton Lodge and The Coombe, Wells' and Swindon & Wiltshire History Centre, 'Great Chalfield Manor Correspondence, 1907-1912', 3591/bx/17125 and 'Drawings', 3581 MS.

Robert Fuller, ‘Is the garden flooded out, most of those we are at work on are.’⁹⁷ They were still working in 1913, ‘I saw Parsons in town on Tuesday and talked over your garden steps with him.’⁹⁸

Garden Designs 1899-1905

In January 1899, whilst Parsons was giving Princess Louise painting lessons in Cannes, he secured a prestigious commission from William Cavendish-Bentinck, 6th Duke of Portland to redesign the garden at Welbeck Abbey. This was a considerable achievement, not only because of the Duke’s high social standing, but for the size and grandeur of his estate.⁹⁹

Welbeck Abbey, Nottinghamshire

The house depicted in Figure 3.41 dates from the eighteenth century. After the Duke of Portland inherited the 17,000 acre estate in 1879, he started to redevelop its gardens.



Figure 3.41: Welbeck Abbey from the Lily Pool

⁹⁷ 3591/bx/17125, Letter, Partridge to Robert Fuller, 1 March 1910.

⁹⁸ DD\TD/49/9, Letter, 27 February 1913.

⁹⁹ DD\TD/48/1/1-8 Letter, 31 March 1899, Mrs Dallas-Yorke approached Parsons and later asked him to advise her at Walmsgate Hall, near Louth in Lincolnshire. Details of the scheme are not known.

Parsons worked at Welbeck between 1899 and 1905. His designs needed to be in keeping with its historic house and are more formal than his subsequent projects. However, there were grassy areas planted with daffodils, bluebells and other plants, which made ‘a series of pictures of wondrous beauty’.¹⁰⁰ The south and east terraces were re-designed between 1899 and 1900 (Figure 3.42 and Figure 3.43).¹⁰¹ These were described in the *Gardeners’ Magazine*:

On the east side the terrace is of sufficient area to allow of the formation of a geometrical garden of large size, and a considerable breadth of grass. On this terrace there is a magnificent fountain surrounded by formally cut hedges of golden yew, with spacious beds of roses and lilies.¹⁰²



Figure 3.42: Design of the Flower Beds, South Terrace (1917)

¹⁰⁰ George Gordon, ‘Some Gardens in the Dukeries – I Welbeck Abbey’, *Gardeners’ Magazine*, 53 (11 June 1910), p. 449.

¹⁰¹ DD\TD/48/1/1-8 Letter, 7 May 1899, confirmed the agreement had been signed at a cost of 650 guineas, today, £88,425.

¹⁰² Gordon, ‘Some Gardens in the Dukeries’, p. 451. Parsons often used golden yew.



Figure 3.43: Golden Yews and Flower Beds, East Terrace (1910)

From 1900 to 1902, Parsons designed the double herbaceous borders and a small rose garden, which Partridge described as ‘a perfect design, absolutely original with a grove of mulberries worked into it’ (Figure 3.44).¹⁰³

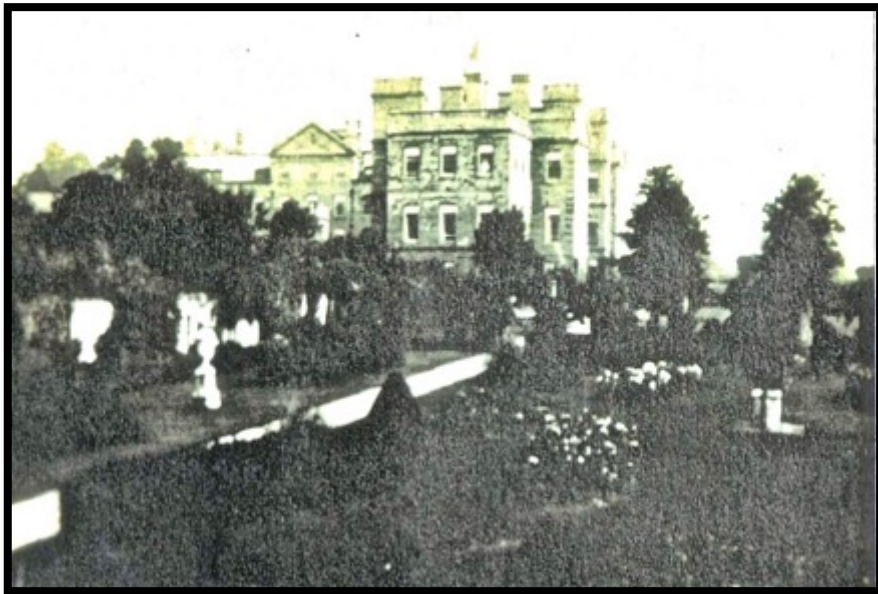


Figure 3.44: Postcard showing the Rose Garden

¹⁰³ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letters, 22 January 1900 and 4 October 1900. There were four mulberries, one of Parsons’ signature trees.

The extensive double herbaceous borders were 440-yards long and 18-feet wide and backed with high yew hedges.¹⁰⁴ Plants included foxgloves, delphiniums, phlox, rudbeckia, dahlias, evening primroses, campanulas and salvias and were ‘a kaleidoscope of colour’ (Figure 3.45).¹⁰⁵



Figure 3.45: Herbaceous Borders (1911)

In autumn 1902, an existing sunken garden, measuring 120 by 80 yards was transformed into a spectacular garden comprising 110 beds, each 4 feet by 15 feet, a lily pool and a circular stone pergola (Figure 3.46 and Figure 3.47).¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ In 1915, the border was planted with potatoes and not reinstated after the war.

¹⁰⁵ D R Williamson, ‘Welbeck Abbey’, *Gardeners' Chronicle*, LXXVI (July-Dec 1924), pp. 216-217.

¹⁰⁶ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 27 August 1902. A similar pergola was part of the scheme at Florham (Figure 3.78).



Figure 3.46: Lily Pool and Pergola (1928)



Figure 3.47: Section of the Pergola (1911)

By contrast, another early commission at Harleyford Manor, whilst incorporating similar ideas, was simpler in conception.

Harleyford Manor, Marlow

Harleyford Manor, the home of Partridge's brother-in-law, Sir William Clayton, was 'delightfully situated on a private backwater of the Thames' and

was featured in the *Gardeners' Magazine* and *Country Life*.¹⁰⁷ As can be seen in Figure 3.48, there was a rose garden with rose arches (Figure 3.49). Rose gardens also featured in at Shiplake Court, near Henley-on-Thames and Wightwick Manor in Wolverhampton, where the design was circular.¹⁰⁸ In 1902, at Preston Hall, Uppingham, the Pump House Garden comprised a trellis and rose bower (Figure 3.50).¹⁰⁹

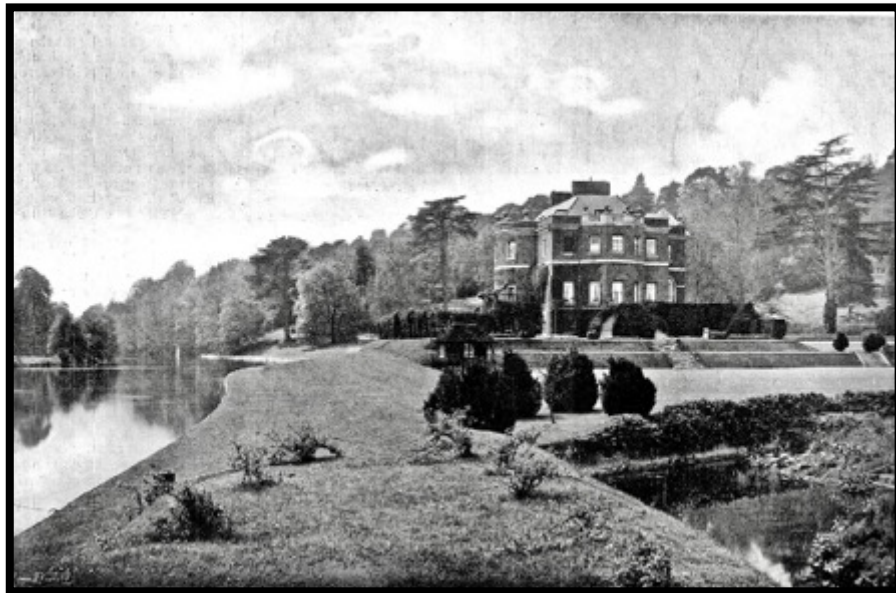


Figure 3.48: Harleyford Manor (1910)

¹⁰⁷ Charles H Curtis, 'Harleyford', *Gardener's Magazine* (30 January 1904), pp. 87-90. T, 'Harleyford, Buckinghamshire, The Seat of Sir William Clayton', *Country Life* 27 (6 June 1910), pp. 810-819.

¹⁰⁸ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 26 August 1899. Theodore Mander (1853-1900), a varnish manufacturer, made his fortune with his brother. Unlike other clients, Mander visited Parsons' gardens before giving them the commission.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*, Letter, 10 December 1901. General & Mrs Alfred Codrington were the parents of the artist-gardener, Lieutenant-Colonel John Alfred Codrington (1898-1991), whose garden designs are discussed Chapter 14.



Figure 3.49: Rose Arches, Harleyford Manor (1904)

Parsons also designed a double herbaceous border at Harleyford Manor and Robinson would have enjoyed the description of its planting:

It is a layout of the simplest, a gardener's garden, depending not on the architecture, but the horticulture. [.....] There is just enough garden making, just enough straight lines and walls and objects to give point and effect to the general planting, but they are for the sake of the plants and not the plants for the sake of them (Figure 3.51).¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ T, 'Harleyford, Buckinghamshire, The Seat of Sir William Clayton', *Country Life* 27 (6 June 1910), p. 819.



Figure 3.50: Rose Bower, Preston Hall (1904)



Figure 3.51: Double Herbaceous Border (1910)

Whilst studying the Tudway correspondence, a similar double herbaceous border was discovered at a previously unidentified garden, Abbots Ripton Hall, Huntingdon.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ DD\TD/48/1/1, Letter, 9 December 1900. Milette listed this as Honington Hall, Shipston-on-Stour where Mrs Gilliatt moved after her husband died in 1907. Their son, Lieutenant L H Gilliatt, was killed in the Boer War and is buried at St Andrew's Church, Abbots Ripton (<https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/150>).

Abbots Ripton Hall, Huntingdon

In June 1899, Partridge noted ‘Parsons and I go to Huntingdon on Tuesday next to see the Gilliatt’s garden’.¹¹² There were no details of the scheme, but the 3rd Lord De Ramsay’s description in 1982 confirmed that, ‘The Gilliatt’s moved the kitchen garden nearly 400 feet and made a double herbaceous border, backed with alternate twelve feet columnar yews and low golden philadelphus bushes’ (Figure 3.52).¹¹³ Columnar yews, like those at Worcester College were often part of Parsons schemes.



Figure 3.52: Double Herbaceous Border, Abbots Ripton Hall

A garden, which includes different aspects of his ability was Partridge’s garden at Battledene, where he sometimes implemented his own schemes, having learned from Parsons’ example.¹¹⁴

¹¹² DD\TD/48/1/1, Letter, 19 June 1899. Partridge’s head gardener at Bishopswood, William Hibberd had moved there.

¹¹³ Alvilde Lees-Milne & Rosemary Verey, *The Englishman’s Garden* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 1982), p. 48.

¹¹⁴ Although Parson provided the initial design, in 1903 Partridge complained that he had to do things himself.

Battledene, Wash Common, Berkshire

As Battledene's garden sloped gradually down to the river, this was incorporated into its design and clients were invited to see the results. It is possible that the painting of an unidentified garden with a winding path could be Battledene (Figure 3.53).¹¹⁵



Figure 3.53: Alfred Parsons, *A Garden near the Thames*

A terrace around the house was made soon after Partridge moved there in November 1899 and Mrs Harvey was invited to see it when Parsons proposed one at East Burnham Lodge in Buckinghamshire (Figure 3.54).¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Baskervyle-Glegg, 'Bulbs Shine Brightly in Broadway', p. 42, commented that one of Parsons' strengths was his ability to design gardens on a sloping site

¹¹⁶ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 29 October 1901.



Figure 3.54: Battledene, Wash Common (1923)

Parsons often incorporated cordoned or espaliered fruit trees in his designs, for example at Great Chalfield (Figure 3.55).¹¹⁷ In 1904, Partridge planted an elaborate fruit garden, comprising a metal tunnel with four espaliers, 14-feet high between the arches, around a small central pond.¹¹⁸



Figure 3.55: Espaliered Apple Tree, Great Chalfield Manor (2017)

¹¹⁷ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 2 January 1903.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem Letter, 14 November 1904.

Figure 3.56 shows that the garden also had 'natural' areas. In 1904, Partridge planted a 'wild' garden of rhododendrons and azaleas, which, Charles Lucas visited this when he was planning a wild garden at Warnham Court.¹¹⁹ When Battledene was for sale, the advertisement read, 'The grounds include a wild garden of uncommon beauty'.¹²⁰



Figure 3.56: The Wild Garden, Battledene (1923)

Commissions 1905-1914

The three known designs carried out in this period were all on sloping sites.

Bryngarw House, near Bridgend

Partridge visited Bryngarw House whilst Parsons was in hospital and they secured the commission in May 1905, 'Traherne has given us the job which he

¹¹⁹ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 2 September 1904.

¹²⁰ Thake & Paginton, 'Advertisement', *The Times* (2 June 1923), p. 6.

wants done bit by bit, and the valley part first.¹²¹ The garden may have been laid out between 1910 and 1918.¹²² In Partridge's opinion:

It would be absolute folly and madness if he attempts to interfere with those levels again. If he does as he suggests he would get in a worse mess than at present. In my opinion it is absolutely necessary to restore that part of the ground to its natural level, otherwise he will not get the proper effect in the garden below the river.¹²³

Bryngarw has a Japanese-style garden, comprising a series of pools, which Parsons may have designed, as he spent nine months in Japan in 1892 (Figure 3.57).¹²⁴ As Partridge recalled, 'He wanted a water garden. [...] It is a point Parsons would excel in.'¹²⁵



Figure 3.57: Japanese-style Water Garden, Bryngarw (1940)

¹²¹ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 29 May 1905. Bryngarw House (<https://coflein.gov.uk/en/site/265728/details/bryngarw-bridgend>).

¹²² CADW/ICOMOS, Register of Landscapes, Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Wales Register, PGW (Gm) 5 (BRI).

¹²³ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 2 May 1905.

¹²⁴ Alfred Parsons, *Notes in Japan* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1896, Edition Leopold Classic Library).

¹²⁵ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, 20 April 1905.

The complexity of the levels at Great Chalfield Manor proved to be a considerable challenge and it was two years before Robert Fuller, an exacting client, was satisfied with the design.

Great Chalfield Manor, Melksham, Wiltshire

Great Chalfield Manor, a fifteenth-century manor house, was bought by Fuller's father for farmland.¹²⁶ A photograph its restoration had been completed shows retaining walls around the house (Figure 3.58).



Figure 3.58: Great Chalfield Manor (1908)

The garden was laid out in a series of terraces descending from the house to a grassy area that led to the moat. Figure 3.59, a view from the moat shows this, as well as a series of steps leading up the house.

¹²⁶ 3591/bx/17125, Partridge's Letter, 21 January 1907. The house was restored by Sir Harold Brakespear (1870-1934).



Figure 3.59: View from the Moat (2017)

A site plan, dated 6 June 1907, shows the initial design. A flower garden and croquet lawn were included (Figure 3.60) Figure 3.61 shows the instructions on how the levels and steps should be created. By December 1908, the plan showed details about the layout of the terrace near the house and the grassy area is marked as lawns, Many letters during 1907 and 1908 discussed the siting of a 120-foot-long tennis court.

The upper terraces were planted with roses and herbaceous plants and a 1907 plan of the formal paved area in front of the house sets out Parsons' suggestions (Figure 3.63).

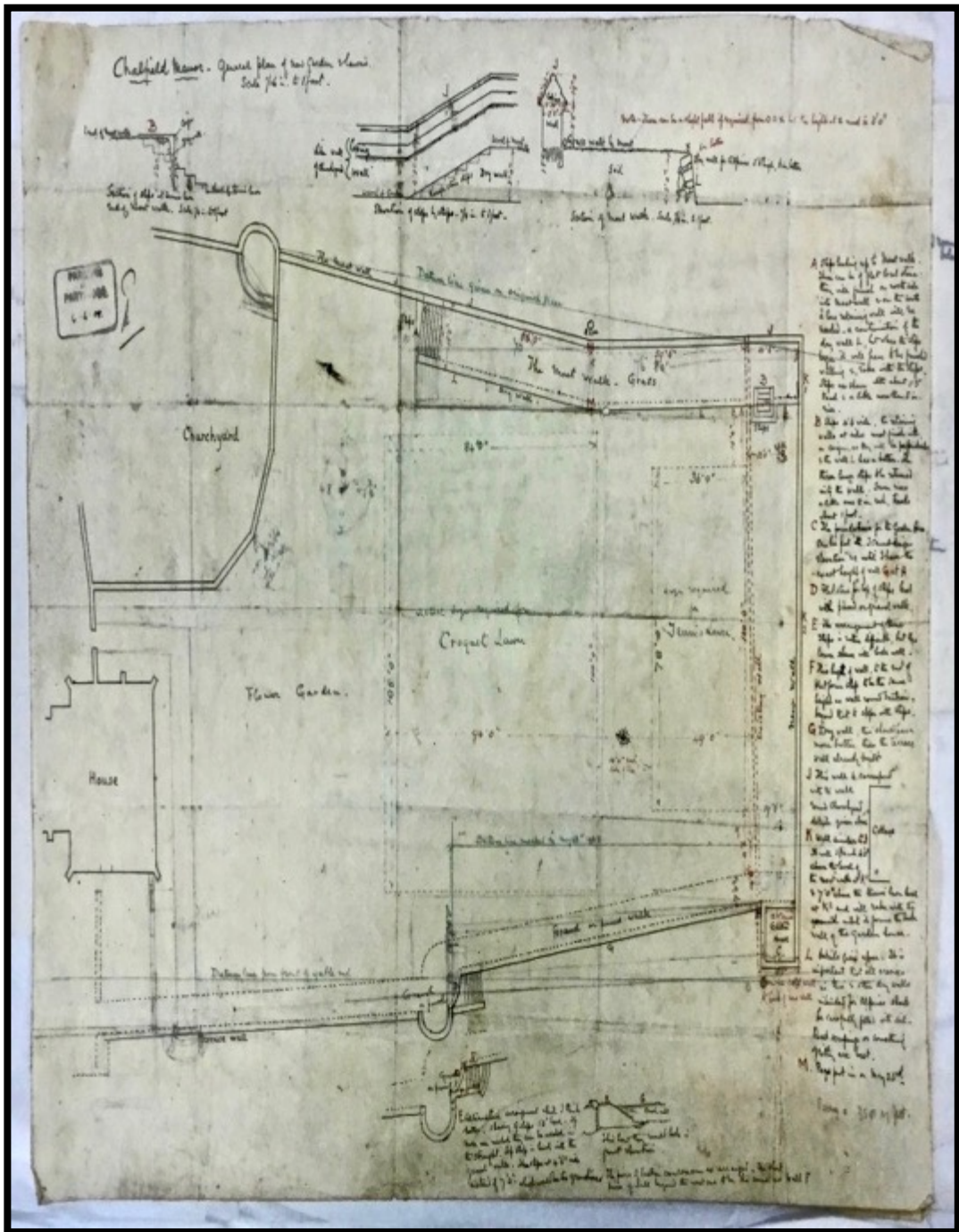


Figure 3.60: Alfred Parsons, *Site Plan* (1907)

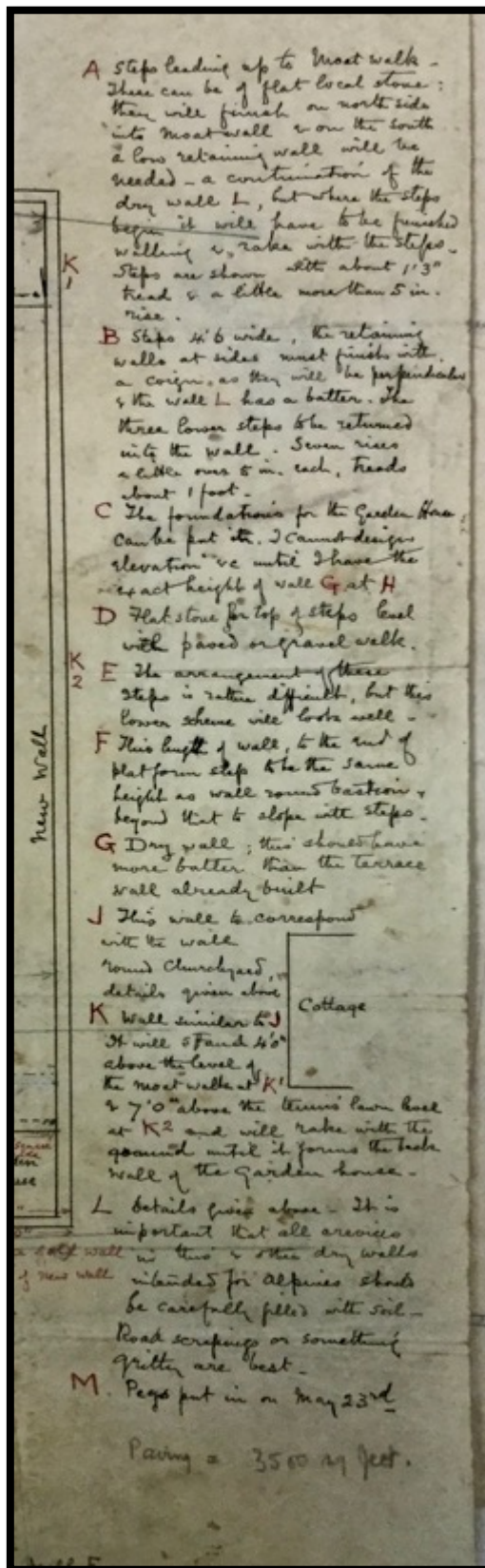


Figure 3.61: Details about the Levels (1907)

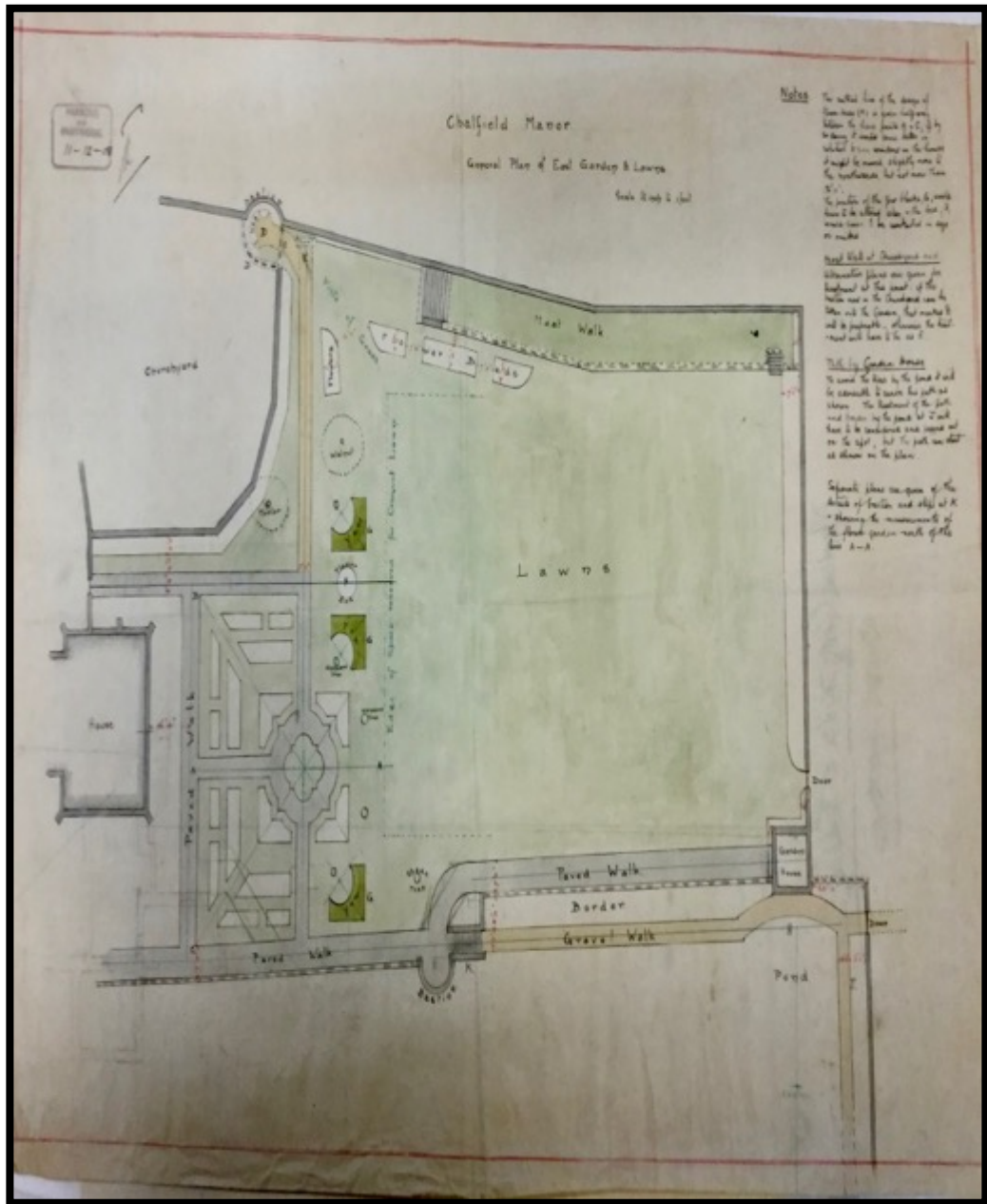


Figure 3.62: Alfred Parsons, *Site Plan* (December 1908)

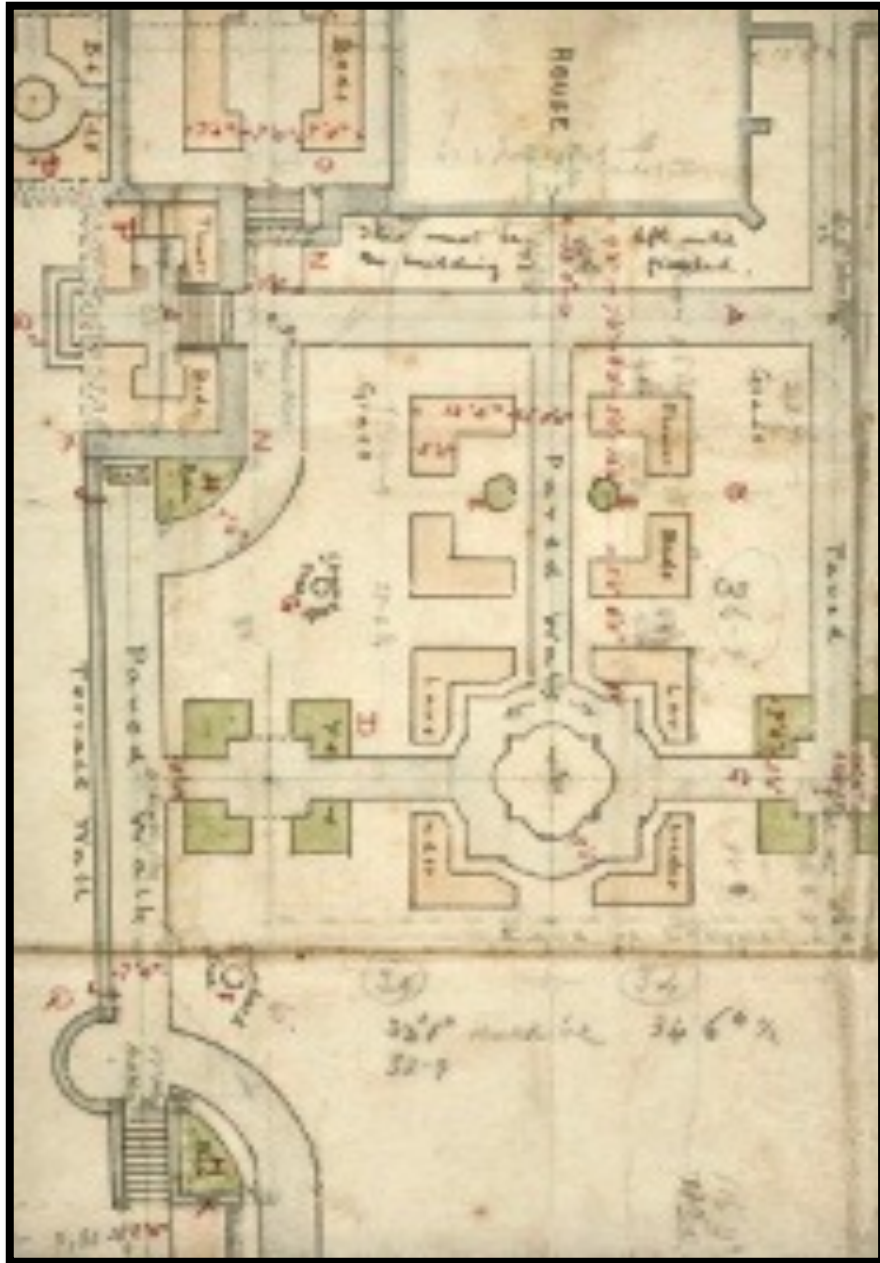


Figure 3.63 Alfred Parsons, *Plan of Upper Terrace* (1907)

Figure 3.64 depicts this area today with its pink roses and a small well. To one side, in front of four columnar yews that have merged together, there is a second water feature with a small fountain, which is seen in his drawing (Figure 3.65 and Figure 3.66). Parsons also proposed a fountain, which Fuller thought was too ‘Italian’ for the garden (Figure 3.67).¹²⁷

¹²⁷ 3591/bx/17125, Letter, Parsons to Fuller, 17 April 1910.



Figure 3.64: Paved Upper Terrace (2017)

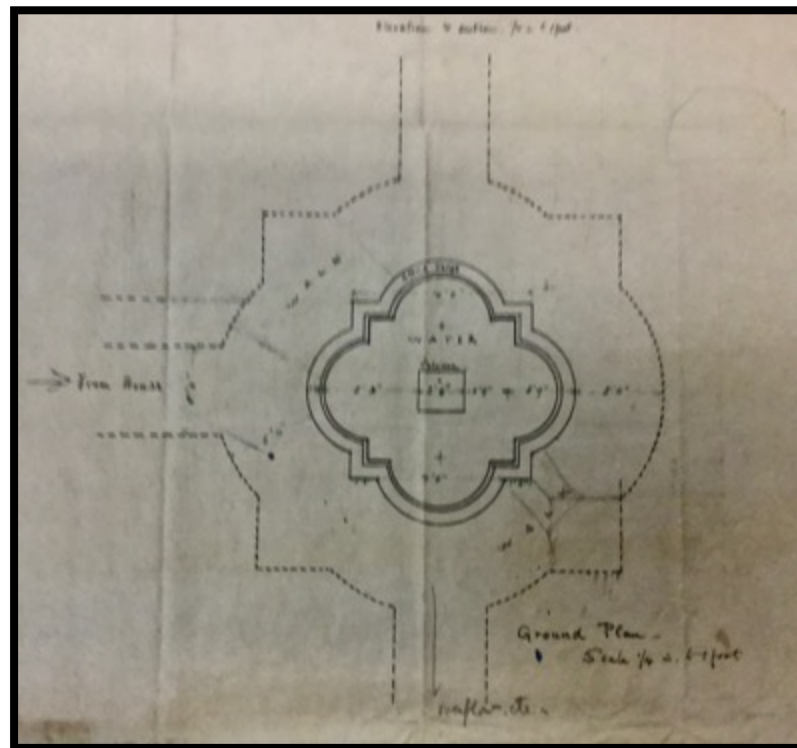


Figure 3.65: Alfred Parsons, *Design for the Pool* (1910)



Figure 3.66: Pool and Fountain (2017)

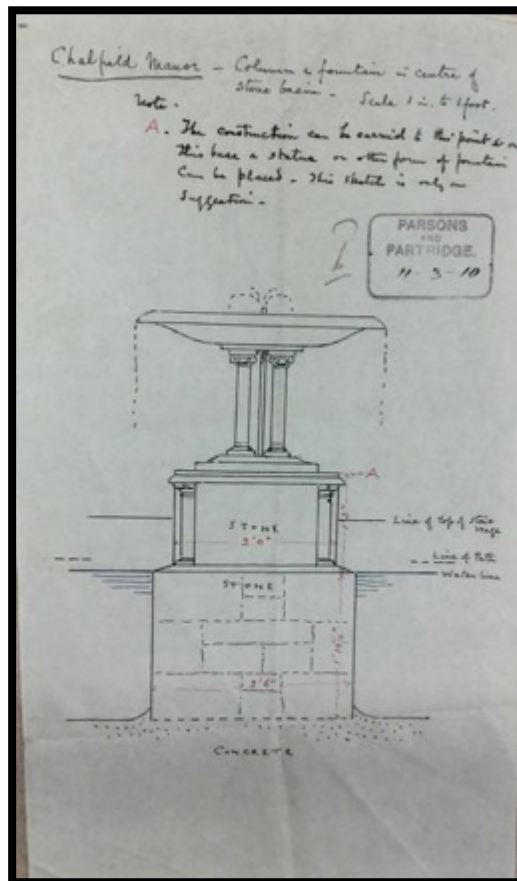


Figure 3.67: Alfred Parsons, *Fountain Design* (December 1910)

The next terrace was planted with herbaceous plants and shrubs and a plan in February 1910 included a plant list (Figure 3.68).



Figure 3.68: Alfred Parsons, *Garden Plan with Plant List* (February 1910)

The shrubs suggested included ones that had autumn colour or berries: *Cotoneaster microphylla*, *Hedera atropurpurea* and other ivies, *Craetagus pyracantha*, *Choisya ternata*, *Kerria japonica*, *Garrya elliptica*, which has

green tassels in winter, *Jasminum nudiflorum* and honeysuckle (Figure 3.69 and Figure 3.70).



Figure 3.69: Terraces near the House (2017)



Figure 3.70: Lateral View of the Planting (2017)

Parsons also included suggestions about how a dry-stone wall should be treated (Figure 3.71). Then in 1909, he suggested how to manage a flight of steps:

The steps can be made with paving stones; the foundations must be well made and well packed with earth, then if there are any cracks, you can fill them with very small rock plants, *Mentha requienii* or *Arenaria balearica*, which do not mind a certain amount of treading on (Figure 3.72).¹²⁸

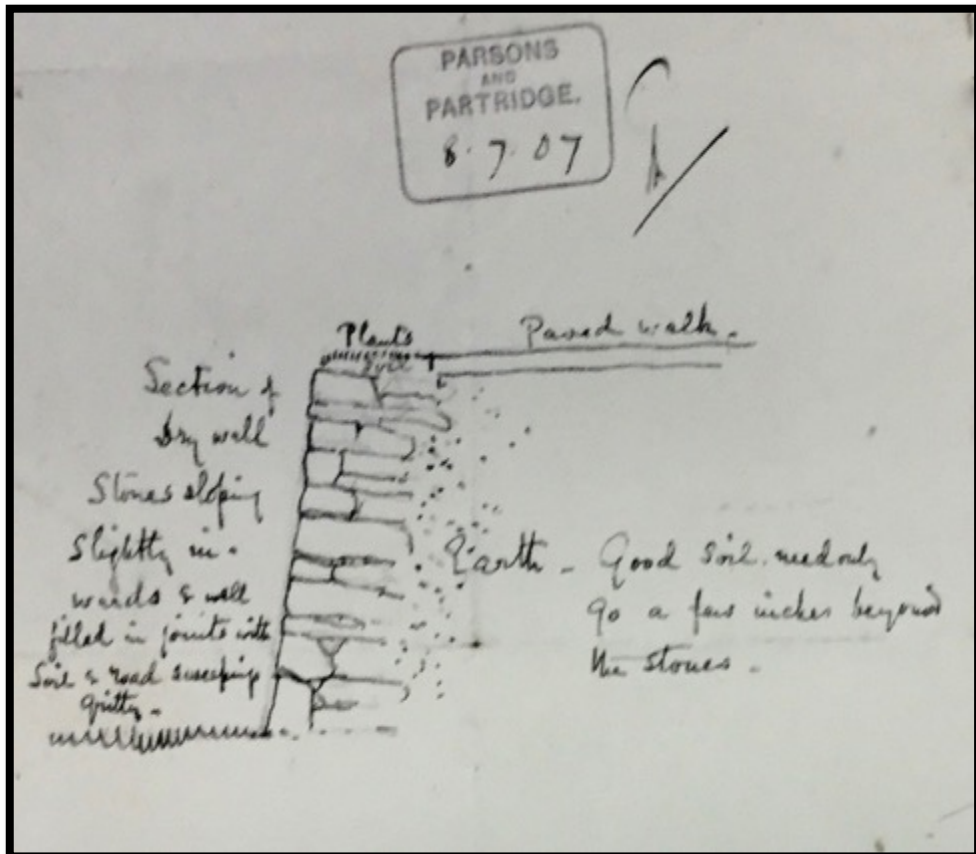


Figure 3.71: Alfred Parsons, *Section of Dry Stone Wall* (July 1907)

¹²⁸ 3591/bx/17125, Letter, 20 January 1909.



Figure 3.72: Steps and Dry Stone Wall (2017)

In some ways, Milton Lodge, their last known project is reminiscent of Great Chalfield, as it is a terraced garden on an extremely steep site, which the garden writer, Avray Tipping described as ‘hanging ground’.¹²⁹

Milton Lodge, Wells

By 1898, Charles Tudway, like many owners of country estates found he was unable to maintain his lifestyle at The Cedars and was considering renting or selling it. Milton Lodge was part of the Tudway estate and the family moved there in 1909. One reason, as the garden writer George Plumptre described was ‘to capitalise on one of the most glorious views imaginable from the south-east facing slopes of the Mendip Hills down to the towers of Wells Cathedral to the Vale of Avalon and the clearly outlined contours of Glastonbury tor’ (Figure 3.73).¹³⁰

¹²⁹ H Avray Tipping, ‘Milton Lodge, Somerset: The Seat of Mr Charles C Tudway’, *Country Life*, 59 (27 March 1926), p. 478.

¹³⁰ George Plumptre, ‘All Points of View’, *Country Life*, 184 (28 June 1990), p. 152.

Tudway had visited Great Chalfield, as his nursery supplied some of its plants. As he was a knowledgeable and experienced gardener, it is not possible to determine the extent of Parsons' involvement, as only one letter and two drawings have been found.¹³¹ It seems probable that he advised on the levels of the lower two of the four terraces.



3.73: View from Milton Lodge across to Glastonbury Tor (2018)

In February 1913, Partridge and Parsons discussed the steps on the west and east side near garden, which were:

To be guarded by a wrought iron railing as per enclosed plan. You will see that I have got him to do away with the dress tearers, and iron scrolls should be substituted as shown in red ink on the plan. [.....] Parsons is now of my opinion that a low wall or coping to stand, say, 6 or 9 inches above the angle of these steps would be a great

¹³¹ Somerset Heritage Centre, DD\TD/49/9, Milton Lodge.

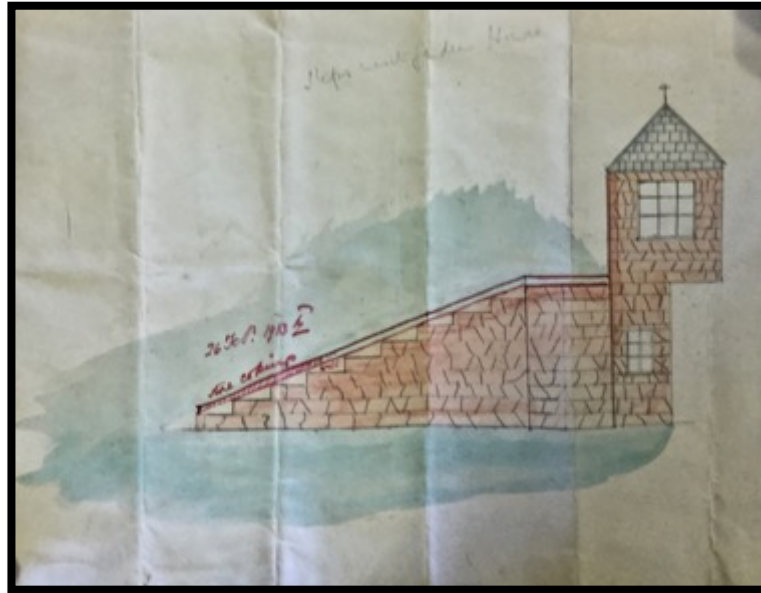


Figure 3.75: Sectional view of the Garden House Steps (1913)

Today, the wall from the garden house is covered with climbing plants (Figure 3.76).



Figure 3.76: Garden House and Stairs (2018)

Although there is a reference to Parsons visiting a possible garden commission in Antibes in 1899, his only known project outside Britain was in the USA.

Florham, New Jersey, USA

In 1903, Parsons was asked to design the garden at Florham for Hamilton and Florence McKown Twombly, 'Parsons got a very good job in America for Vanderbilt's brother.'¹³³ The work was carried out in 1907 and 1908. The design for the elaborate formal Italian Garden with box-edged beds with a stone pergola at the back was designed to be viewed from the house (Figure 3.77).¹³⁴



Figure 3.77: Italian Garden and Pergola, Florham

Figure 3.78 shows a section of the pergola that is similar to the one at Welbeck Abbey (Figure 3.47).

¹³³ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 4 March 1903. Parsons visited America in February 1903. Gertrude Mead, Abbey's wife introduced him to the Twomblys. Florham was designed and built by McKim, Mead & White between 1893-1897.

¹³⁴ Passenger records show Parsons sailed to America on 9 November 1907 and returned on 3 January 1908. The garden was restored in 1998.



Figure 3.78: Section of the Pergola

The final garden Parsons designed was his own at Luggershill in Broadway, which he had continued to visit. In 1903, Millet sold him five acres of land and the architect, Andrew Noble Prentice (1866-1941) designed his house (Figure 3.79). Although the house was completed in 1912, Parsons did not leave Bedford Gardens permanently until 1914.



Figure 3.79: House and Garden, Luggershill

Like Jekyll, Parsons started the garden before the house was completed. It represented the culmination of his gardening career and included many of the features associated with him. There were two rose gardens and a stone pergola at the bottom of the garden. De Navarro described the nut walk, which led to an orchard as ‘a coppice with flowering cherries, lilacs of all colours from the large double white to dark vinous purple, the ground carpeted with anemones, a cool, perfumed place’.¹³⁵ Another account was given when the Garden Club of America visited in June 1929:

Luggershill has a circular courtyard surrounded by a ten foot high hedge with interesting topiary making a fine entrance. [...] [At] the garden side of the house where the lawn stretches out, bordered on either side by this same high, shaped, hedge, in which were breaks, similar to the wings of a theatre – a most interesting treatment – bringing into prominence the two beds of white Violas like a lovely white carpet, directly opposite the house.¹³⁶

This account alludes to Parsons’ preference for planting hedges to form discrete areas. Records show that as well as yew, he recommended holly, beech and hornbeam hedging.¹³⁷ At Callis Court in Kent, 200 hundred yews

¹³⁵ Quotation from de Navarro’s diaries in Marion Mako, ‘Painting with Nature in Broadway, Worcestershire’, *Garden History*, 34 [1] (2006), p. 58.

¹³⁶ Garden Club America Visit to England, 3-16 June 1929 (<https://www.chippingcampdenhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Signpost-9-final-6.pdf>) [Accessed 20 September 2020].

¹³⁷ TD\DD/48/1/1-8, Letter 2 October 1904, Partridge orders 275 x 2 foot high hollies.

were ordered.¹³⁸ The corners of an enclosed area were often accentuated with taller trees, and at Woodcock Lodge in Hertfordshire, twenty-four yews, 6-feet high, were ordered.¹³⁹ The garden historian Mavis Batey (1921-2013) borrowed James' description of Parsons paintings to suggest his gardens had 'nook quality'.¹⁴⁰ This concept of 'rooms' became a significant feature of twentieth-century design, attributed to Lawrence Johnston, whose garden at Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire is discussed in Chapter 4.

James thought that his paintings moved with the seasons 'the tangle of the hardy flowers that comes while the roses are still in bloom, with the blue larkspurs standing high among them'.¹⁴¹ Parsons' depiction of Luggershill in late spring shows blossom and pink tulips along a winding path with views across the distant countryside (Figure 3.80).



Figure 3.80: Alfred Parsons, *The Garden, Luggershill*

¹³⁸ TD\DD/48/1/1-8, 'Letter, Mrs Gordon-Canning to Tudway', 12 October 1901, 'I am writing to ask if you can supply me with the four big beds as soon as possible.'

¹³⁹ Ibidem, Letter, 6 January 1903.

¹⁴⁰ Mavis Batey, *Oxford Gardens* (Amersham: Avebury Publishing), 1982, p. 195. James, *Delphi's Complete Works*, p. 195. 'The nook quality; the air of a land and a life, so infinitely subdivided that they produce a thousand precious privacies.'

¹⁴¹ James, *Delphi's Complete Works of Henry James* (<http://www.books.google.co.uk>, 2013), pp. 195-196.

Unlike the formal architectural gardens that Blomfield, Mawson and Luytens designed, Parsons designs were mainly informal with formal areas around the house. Although he embraced Robinson's ideas, his view of architects' gardens is not known.¹⁴² However, as Partridge commented on this, it is probable Parsons had informed his opinions. Whilst they were working at Woodcock Lodge, the architect, Detmar Blow (1867-1939) was restoring the house and annoyed Partridge, 'What a humbug it is these Architects going in for laying out gardens. He knows as much about gardening as I do about Astronomy judging from the remarks he made to me on the subject.'¹⁴³

During his lifetime Parsons was recognised not only for his painting, but his gardening knowledge, as he was asked to judge rock gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show in 1914 and 1915.¹⁴⁴ Yet it is only in recent years that the extent and versatility of his garden designs has been recognised. Many gardens he designed disappeared relatively quickly. Mander died in 1900 and in 1904, his wife invited Mawson to re-design Wightwick Manor's garden. Other properties were sold: Bishopswood in 1904, Callis Court in 1919, Battledene in 1923, Hartpury and East Burnham Lodge in the 1920s, Walmsgate Hall in 1924, Hardres Court, 1926 and Luggershill in 1940. Russell House and Abbot's Grange have been divided into two properties. The only ones that can still be visited are Milton Lodge, which remains in the Tudway family's ownership, the Provost's Rose Garden, Worcester College

¹⁴² Parsons knew Harold Peto (1854-1933). DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 12 September 1903, 'Lady Warwick wired him to say she was charmed with the Down Hall alterations and asked him to come and look at her garden [Easton Lodge]. Peto is doing the work there, so of course until he knows what she wants he could not go.'

¹⁴³ DD\TD/48/1/1-8, Letter, 8 December 1902.

¹⁴⁴ Another judge was E A Bowles, who is discussed in Chapter 6.

Oxford and the National Trust properties, Great Chalfield Manor and Wightwick Manor.

Yet, he and his gardens were remembered. Writing in 1936, Mary Anderson de Navarro concluded that when Parsons, 'Not a few of the flowers which he gave me, living and lovely, still bloom, while the four winds have scattered the ashes of their doctor whither who shall say [.....]. May his spirit wander in some Elysian garden.'¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁵ De Navarro, *A Few More Memories*, p. 257.

Chapter 4: Contemporary But Historic

Major Lawrence Waterbury Johnston and Hidcote



Lawrence Johnston, *Flower Painting*

‘Highly eclectic, Hidcote presents, very completely, an original synthesis of historic and contemporary garden.’

Russell Page¹

Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire has been acclaimed the most influential garden of the twentieth century.² It is one of the most visited gardens in Britain and its design continues to influence gardeners. During his lifetime, Lawrence Johnston’s garden was visited mostly by his friends, who admired its beauty, and the gardening cognoscenti, who came to see his collection of rare plants. Hidcote was only open to the public once or twice a year and even after its ownership transferred to the National Trust in 1948, its opening times were limited until his death in 1958.³ As Johnston was born in 1871, he lived through most of the period of this study (Figure 4.1). The major part of the garden was created before 1914, but during the interwar period, it was adapted and some new areas developed.

Researchers were hampered by the absence of primary sources, as it was thought his personal papers had been destroyed.⁴ However, in December 2002, the National Trust received his notebook for 1925 to 1928 and his engagement diaries for 1929 and 1932 anonymously.⁵ These provide details about Johnston’s social circle and visits, as well as information about his plant-hunting trip to South Africa in 1928

¹ Russell Page, ‘Hidcote Microcosm’, *The Listener* (22 August 1934), p. 321.

² Brent Elliott, ‘A Sense of Enclosure’, *Country Life*, 190 (23 May 1996), p. 34.

³ Johnston visited only once, but thought longer opening hours would restrict his privacy.

⁴ It has been suggested, but not substantiated, that Nancy Lindsay (1896-1973), Norah Lindsay’s daughter, burnt them.

⁵ National Trust, Lawrence Johnston, ‘Notebook’ (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, 1925-1928), National Trust, Lawrence Johnston, ‘Engagement Diary’ (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, 1929) and National Trust, Lawrence Johnston, ‘Engagement Diary’ (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, 1932). They are discussed in Graham S Pearson & Susan Pearson, ‘The Hunt for Hidcote’s Treasures’, *Country Life*, 198 (19 February 2004), p. 96.

and his trip to Kenya in 1929,⁶ which Johnston described in his only known publication.⁷ As a consequence, secondary sources, written before 2002, have been reassessed.⁸

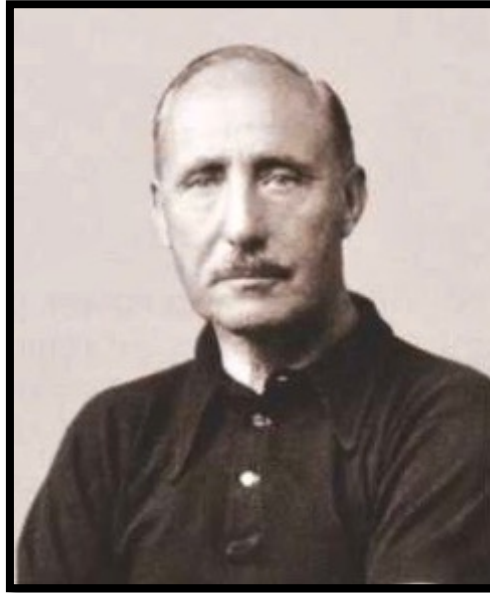


Figure 4.1: Lawrence Johnston

During Johnston's lifetime, the writer and garden designer, Avray Tipping (1855-1933), wrote two articles about Hidcote, as did Russell Page in *The Listener*.⁹ Shortly before her death, his friend, the garden designer, Norah Lindsay (1873-1948)

⁶ The entries were an *aide memoire* and additional research had to be carried out to understand them fully.

⁷ Laurence Johnson (sic), 'Some Flowering Plants of Kilmanharo, *The New Flora and Silva*, 2 (1930), pp. 11-16.

⁸ These include Jane Brown, *Eminent Gardeners: Some People of Influence and Their Gardens 1880-1980* (London: Viking, 1990), Fred Whitsey, *The Garden of Hidcote* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007), Ethne Clarke, *Hidcote: The Making of a Garden* (London: Joseph, 1989); Anna Pavord, *Hidcote Manor Gardens, Gloucestershire* (National Trust, 1993), and Graham S Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston The Creator of Hidcote* (Chipping Campden: Hidcote Books, 2010, Edition 2015).

⁹ H Avray Tipping, 'Hidcote Manor, Gloucestershire: The Seat of Mr Lawrence Johnston', *Country Life*, 67 (22 February 1930), pp. 286-94; H Avray Tipping, 'Early Summer at Hidcote Manor', *Country Life*, 68 (23 August 1930), pp. 231-233; and Russell Page, 'Hidcote Microcosm'.

also described it.¹⁰ New information has been found in letters to her sister, Madeline Whitbread (1875-1979).¹¹ During this study, the artist-gardener, William Shute Barrington's (1873-1960) personal records were discovered and provide information about his friendship with Johnston.¹²

Early Life

Johnston, an American, was born in Paris and spent much of his childhood with his mother in Europe. Although no details are known, he was probably educated by private tutors. In 1893, he came to live in Little Shelford, near Cambridge to prepare for the Cambridge University entrance examination.¹³ He studied history at Trinity College and after he was awarded his degree, he remained in Britain and became a naturalised British citizen in 1900.¹⁴ He fought in the Boer and First World Wars.

The Artist

There is no information about whether Johnston was taught painting or that he regarded it as anything more than a hobby. The garden writer Louisa Jones suggested he was 'a keen painter' when Hidcote was purchased in 1907, but gives no source.¹⁵ As few of his paintings remain, the facts have had to be determined. Lindsay never mentioned his paintings, but she valued his artistic opinion. When her daughter, Nancy was painting a set of carnations, she told her sister, 'Johnny thinks them supremely lovely and rather thinks they will

¹⁰ Norah Lindsay, 'Hidcote Manor: The First Garden to be Taken Over by the National Trust', *House & Garden*, 3 (April 1948), pp. 45-51.

¹¹ W/H 35 is kept by the Whitbread family at Southill Park, Bedfordshire.

¹² His garden designs are considered in Chapter 5.

¹³ <http://www.littleshelfordhistory.co.uk/little-shelford-people/little-shelford-people/lawrence-johnson> [Accessed 23 September 2020].

¹⁴ UK Naturalisation Certificates and Declarations 1870-1912. Johnston's citizenship was granted on 29 January 1900.

¹⁵ Louisa Jones, *Serre de la Madone: Lawrence Johnston's Garden on the French Riviera* (France: Acte Sud, 2003), p. 21.

sell in Peter's shop'.¹⁶ It is probable that he stopped painting in the mid- to late 1920s when he started to spend most of the year in Menton. When Hidcote's contents were auctioned after his death, pictures were listed, but not attributed.¹⁷

Johnston probably had a studio at Hidcote, but apart from speculation, its location remains unknown. The garden writer Fred Whitsey, who knew Johnston in later life, suggested it was at one end of the tender plant house near the kitchen garden. Yet in 1934, Page made no mention that it was designed for anything other than plants.¹⁸

Two pictures depict Hidcote's garden and were painted during its creation. Both are long vistas, emphasise that Johnston regarded them as important. In his bedroom, he hung two large pictures of Hidcote's red border, as viewed from its window (Figure 4.2).¹⁹ The red border and the pavilions seen in the picture were created before 1910 and could have been painted before 1916, as the double, pleached hornbeam 'stilt' garden cannot be distinguished (Figure 4.3). Although the colours have faded, the red areas are clear and show that they were only intended part of its planting.

¹⁶ Southill Park W/H 35/15, Letter to Madeline Whitbread, 12 December 1931. Peter Lindsay was her son. Nancy Lindsay's paintings were botanical, although the one sold to Heather Muir is no longer at Kiftsgate, email 15 March 2019.

¹⁷ 'Sale by Auction of the Valuable and Antique Furniture, China, Glass, Linen, Hidcote Manor, Wednesday 31 October and Thursday 1 November 1958'. An inventory compiled by Graham & Susan Pearson mentions 'sundry pictures' and 'pictures'.

¹⁸ Page, 'Hidcote Microcosm', p. 323.

¹⁹ Whitsey, *The Garden at Hidcote*, p. 22.



Figure 4.2: Lawrence Johnston, *The Red Border, Hidcote*



Figure 4.3: Red Border and Pavilions (1912)

A second picture in Lindsay's bedroom, depicts the view from the garden door, down a tree-lined avenue towards the Farnese Hercules statue (Figure 4.4).²⁰ The garden historian Ethne Clarke, who thought Johnston's

²⁰ Clarke *Hidcote, The Making of a Garden*, p. 25 stated it was in the bedroom, the designer, Nancy Lancaster (1897-1944) stayed. No source given.

artistic temperament manifested itself when a blue carpet was washed and hung outside to fade, described it as ‘a bird’s-eye view of the garden, rather like the map of the garden at Port Lympne’, painted by Rex Whistler (1905-1944) for the politician and art collector, Sir Philip Sassoon (1888-1939), in 1933 (Figure 4.5).²¹ Whilst Johnston knew Sassoon by 1925, it seems probable that the painting was completed earlier.²²

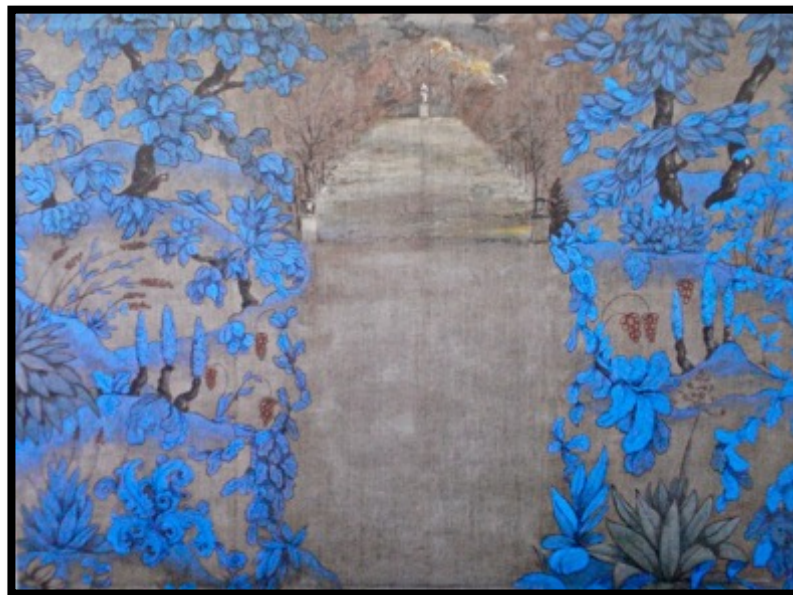


Figure 4.4: Lawrence Johnston, *The Lime Avenue towards Hercules*

²¹ Clarke, *Hidcote, The Making of a Garden*, p. 25. No source is given.

²² W/H 35/10, Letter, to Whitbread, November 1925. W/H 35/20 Norah Lindsay's letter to her sisters, Madeleine Whitbread and Anne Burrowes, February 1933. Johnston knew Whistler, as they were both at Lindsay's home, Sutton Courtenay, when her neighbour, Margot Asquith (1864-1945), the widow of the British prime minister, Herbert Asquith (1853-1928) was holding a sale.

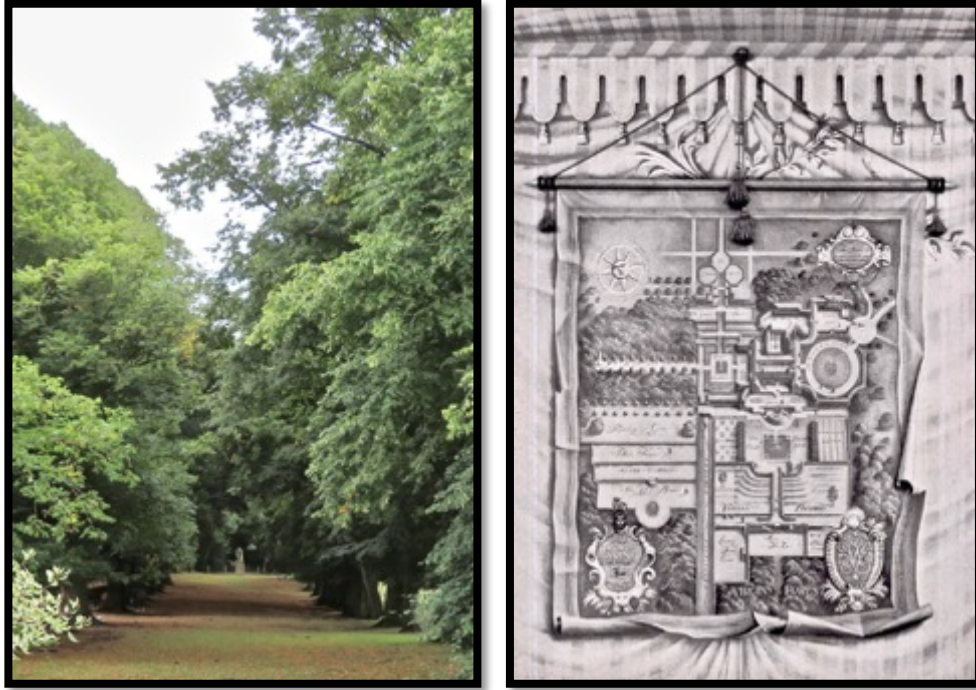


Figure 4.5: View towards Hercules (2018) and Figure 4.6: Rex Whistler, *Map of Port Lympne* (1933)

Perhaps these paintings' significance is they both show long vistas, rather than one of the small enclosed garden 'rooms' for which Johnston is noted. Page emphasised that Hidcote's design ensured 'a sense of space has been given and a tiny garden prolonged into the open countryside.'²³

The painting of flowers in purple, red, pink, cream and white, depicted on this chapter's frontispiece were colour combinations Johnston used in his planting schemes. In the border above the circular lawn, red and pink tulips in spring were followed by foxtail lilies and pink lupins and then, by pink star dahlias and snapdragons.²⁴ The picture was originally part of a mural at Kiftsgate Court, the home of his friend, neighbour and gardener, Heather Muir (1888-1961). As the Muirs did not buy Kiftsgate until 1918, it appears Johnston painted it in the 1920s.

²³ Page, 'Hidcote Microcosm', p. 322.

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 321-322.

In the garden, there are two examples of his paintings. He decorated the two pavilions at the top of the red borders, which Page described, as ‘gaily painted, they suggest in miniature all the mannered garden pleasures of the seventeenth century.’²⁵ Another idea is that these, too, were inspired by Whistler’s murals. Possibly, the decoration on the Tent Room’s ceiling at Port Lympne bears a slight resemblance to those in the pavilions (Figure 4.7 and Figure 4.8).²⁶



Figure 4.7: Tent Room. Port Lympne (1933)

²⁵ Page, ‘Hidcote Microcosm’, p. 322.

²⁶ Allan R Ruff, *An Author and a Gardener* (Oxford: Windgatherer Press, 2014), p. 181. Johnston, ‘Notebook’ (Unpublished handwritten manuscript), 7 December 1932, records he visited Trent Park. Lindsay designed part of Port Lympne’s garden and it is probable he visited.



Figure 4.8: Pavilion Ceiling Decoration (2018)

When Johnston built the Italian shelter adjacent to the Bathing Pool garden, its interior was decorated with pastoral scenes (Figure 4.9).²⁷



Figure 4.9: Murals Inside the Italian Shelter (1930)

It has been suggested he admired the murals at Château d'Auppegard near Dieppe, the home of his cousin, the artist Anna [Nan] Hope Hudson

²⁷ It has been re-painted as the decorations had deteriorated.

(1869-1957) and her lifelong companion, the artist and socialite, Ethel Sands (1873-1962), whom he visited when he drove to Menton. The pastoral scenes were repainted in 1927 by the artist-gardeners Duncan Grant (1885-1978) and Vanessa Bell (1879-1961) (Figure 4.10).²⁸



Figure 4.10: Loggia and Murals, Château d'Auppegard

Yet in July 1928, Johnston visited Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland where Edith Vane-Temple-Stewart, Marchioness Londonderry (1878-1959), redesigned the garden (Figure 4.11). Mount Stewart has two decorated outdoor buildings: a loggia in the Spanish garden with an astrological table (Figure 4.12 and Figure 4.13) and an open-fronted sitting area at one end of the Dodo Terrace, along which Lady Londonderry depicted contemporary politicians and artists as animals (Figure 4.14).²⁹

²⁸ Ruff, *An Author and a Gardener*, p. 185. Regina Walter (Edited), Vanessa Bell, *Selected Letters of Vanessa Bell* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993), Letter to Fry, 21 July 1927, described their stay.

²⁹ A G L Hellyer, 'Fantasy in an Irish Garden', *Country Life*, 146 (15 May 1969), p. 1261.



Figure 4.13: Loggia's Interior (2018)



Figure 4.14: Shelter on the Dodo Terrace (2018)

Another possible painting is a depiction of *Magnolia delavayi* at Nelson Cottage, Cheltenham, the home of his friend, Ruth Peppercorn (1880-1960) (Figure 4.15).³⁰ Johnston grew *Magnolia delavayi* at Hidcote and Serre de la Madone, but the idea cannot be substantiated.³¹

³⁰ Ruff, *An Author and a Gardener*, p. 284. Ruff acknowledged he was guessing.

³¹ Christopher Hussey, 'Nelson Cottage, Cheltenham: The Home of Miss Ruth Peppercorn', *Country Life*, 100 (30 August 1946), pp. 394-397. Johnston's 1932



Figure 4.15: Painting of *Magnolia delavayi* at Nelson Cottage (1946)

Photographs of Serre de la Madone's interior do not show any paintings that can be attributed to Johnston. However, his notebook and diaries include some small pencil drawings, for example an unidentified garden, where the significance appears to be its long avenue or the hangings at Mount Stewart (Figure 4.16 and Figure 4.17).³²

Diary, Peppercorn visited Hidcote on 1 June 1932 and he visited her on 22 October.

³² Lawrence Johnston, 'Notebook' (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, 1925-1928, and 'Diaries', 1929 and 1932).

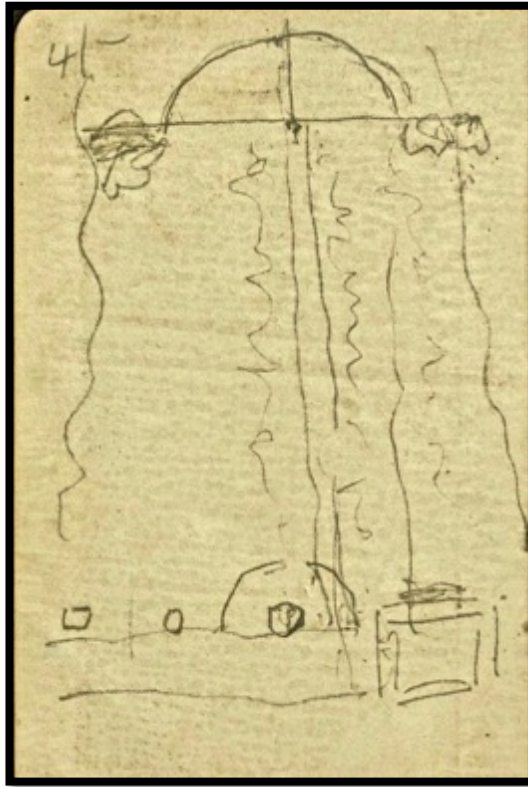


Figure 4.16: Lawrence Johnston, *Unknown Garden* (1928)

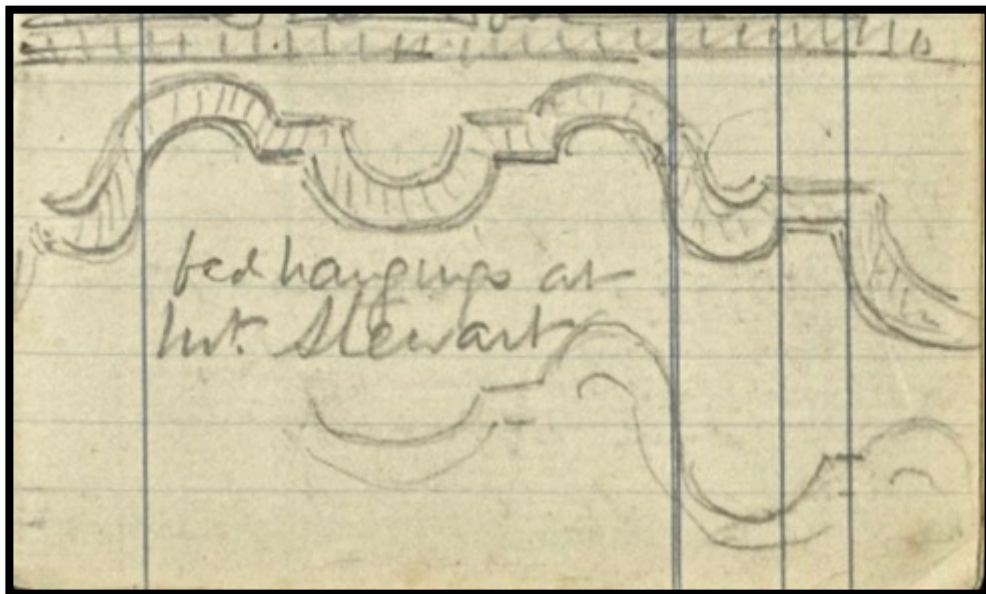


Figure 4.17: Lawrence Johnston, *Bed Hangings, Mount Stewart* (1928)

Little is known about Johnston's artistic taste although the statuary and ornaments he purchased for Serre de la Madone were mostly antique. Hidcote's Farnese Hercules is a copy of a third century Roman statue and the

watering can, one of a pair, shown in Figure 4.18 came from Versailles.³³ He also collected period furniture and Chinese porcelain.³⁴



4.18: Watering Can from the Palace of Versailles (1934)

Yet Sands and Hope Hudson were friends of the artist, Walter Sickert (1860-1942), a leading figure in post-impressionism and a member of the Camden Group of Artists.³⁵ Sands was an important society hostess in the early twentieth century and entertained writers, like Henry James and Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) and the artists, Augustus John (1879-1961) and Roger Fry and members of the Bloomsbury Group.³⁶ Johnston's diary

³³ Page, 'Hidcote Microcosm', p. 322.

³⁴ W/H 35/21, Lindsay, Letter to Whitbread, 19 January 1936.

³⁵ Nicola Moorby, 'Ethel Sands' (<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/research-publications/camden-town-group/ethel-sands-r1105348>). She was a founder-member of the London Group.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

showed he was invited.³⁷ He also knew the gardener and patron of modern art, Vicomte Charles de Noailles (1891-1961).³⁸

The Gardener

It is probable that Johnston visited gardens in France and Italy before he came to England. Whilst he was at Cambridge, he would have enjoyed the colleges' gardens. Possibly, during the Boer War, he saw the wildflower meadows in South Africa. Between 1893 and 1894 and again from 1902 to 1907, when he lived at Woodville Lodge in Little Shelford, he made 'a beautiful small rock-garden to the west side of the house' (Figure 4.19).³⁹ As his interest had become important, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Horticultural Society in 1904.⁴⁰



Figure 4.19: Rock Garden, Woodville Lodge (2013)

³⁷ National Trust, Lawrence Johnston, 'Diary', 22 June 1929, 'By 4 45'.

³⁸ <https://villanoailles-hyeres.com/en/expositions/charles-et-marie-laure-de-noailles-une-vie-de-mecenes-exposition-permanente>

³⁹ Fanny Wale, *A Record of Shelford Parva* (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, c 1917-1939, Limited Edition, 2012), pp. 32-33. (<http://www.littleshelfordhistory.co.uk>) [Accessed 5 November 2018].

⁴⁰ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, pp. 53-54. In 1905, he borrowed books about rock gardens and alpines

Hidcote Manor, Gloucestershire 1907-1918

In the early 1900s, Johnston studied farming at New Etal, Cornhill-upon-Tweed, near to where his friend from the Northumberland Hussars, George Savile Clayton (1869-1922), lived. It has been suggested that farming was the reason his mother, Gertrude Winthrop (1845-1926) decided to buy Hidcote (Figure 4.20).⁴¹ In 1907, she was nearing sixty and may have thought an estate managed by her eldest son, would provide them both with a permanent home.⁴² As Hidcote is only a few miles from Broadway, she could have been attracted by its fashionable American community, which was discussed in Chapter 3.⁴³



Figure 4.20: Hidcote Manor (1907)

⁴¹ Brown, *Eminent Gardeners*, p. 48, suggested she was unwilling to let Johnston out of her sight, although there is no evidence they lived together after he came to England. Her second husband, the wealthy American banker and stockbroker, Charles Winthrop (1827-1898), enjoyed living in Paris and after he died, she divided her time between England and New York.

⁴² Elliott, her younger son, lived in America and died in 1912 when she considered selling Hidcote.

⁴³ Clarke, *Hidcote, The Making of a Garden*, pp. 30-31 and Brown, *Eminent Gardeners*, p. 49.

Johnston's reasons are also unclear, but the decision to buy Hidcote could have been his. He was in his mid-thirties and a home, where he could garden, that was easily accessible to London might have appealed to him. It may be significant that Savile Clayton's sister, Mary Sophia (1863-1923) was married to the keen gardener, Mark Fenwick (1860-1945), who lived nearby at Abbotswood, Stow-on-the-Wold and became his friend. Johnston finalised the estate's purchase after his mother sailed to America on 31 July 1907.

The 1907 sales' particulars described the garden as having:

Lawns in front and on the south side of the House, with fine shrubs and a Summer House, and a large productive Kitchen Garden. Adjoining is a Tennis Lawn and small Nut Orchard' (Figure 4.21).⁴⁴



Figure 4.21: Garden (Early 1900s)

As the greater part of the garden was laid out before the war, consideration has been given to whether Johnston was influenced by the pre-

⁴⁴ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, pp. 61-62. Extract from Hutchings & Deerings' description of the property. The estate comprised 287 acres with just over an acre for the house and garden.

1914 garden designers. As he and his mother were wealthy, it seems surprising that he decided to create the garden himself. Although Fenwick was a knowledgeable gardener, he commissioned Edwin Luytens to redesign part of his garden in 1902.

When Johnston started the garden, the debate between Blomfield and Robinson had been resolved, but as he read Mawson's, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making*, it has been suggested it influenced him.⁴⁵ Mawson's book not only gave ideas about how various parts of the garden could be designed, it provided detailed information about what trees, shrubs and plants to use. However, Mawson's design for a driveway resembles the paths leading off the circular lawn to the Old Garden, the red borders and Bathing Pool garden (Figure 4.22 and Figure 4.23).⁴⁶

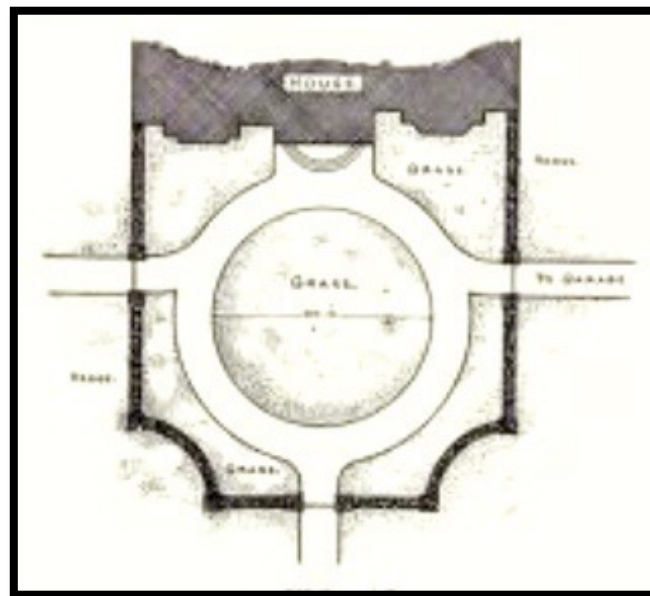


Figure 4.22: Mawson's Design for an Entrance Drive (1900)

⁴⁵ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, p. 84, and p. 73. Johnston borrowed Mawson's, *The Art & Craft of Garden Making* (London: B T Batsford & L G Newnes, 1900) from the Royal Horticultural Society in 1905 and 1911.

⁴⁶ 'Sale by Auction of the Valuable and Antique Furniture, China, Glass, Linen, Hidcote Manor'. Johnston's books were not listed at the auction and only those he borrowed from the Lindley Library are known.



Figure 4.23: Circular Lawn (2018)

Johnston may not have had an overall vision for Hidcote as the garden evolved gradually. As he left no records, a number of ideas have been proposed. Whitsey thought the absence of plans suggested he pegged the design out directly on the ground.⁴⁷ Jones suggested his mother started the garden whilst he served with the Northumberland Hussars, although he only attended their summer camps.⁴⁸ By 1908, records show that he had joined the North Cotswold Hunt and in 1909, he was appointed as a governor at Chipping Campden Grammar School.⁴⁹

It has been suggested when he designed the Old Garden, Alfred Parsons may have advised him as its box-edged beds within a small enclosed garden resembled his ‘nook quality’ style.⁵⁰ Yet Mary Anderson de Navarro,

⁴⁷ Whitsey, *The Garden at Hidcote*, p. 17.

⁴⁸ Jones, *Serre de la Madone*, p. 21 and Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, p. 89.

⁴⁹ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, p. 88. In 1910-1911, he represented Campden District Council on the Board of Governors of Ashbee’s School of Arts and Crafts.

⁵⁰ Brown, *Eminent Gardeners*, p. 51, ‘To have the advice of Alfred Parsons, who was the friend of and adviser of Henry James, must have made Johnston’s ever-present mother, preen with pride.’

whose garden Parsons designed at Court Farm, made no mention of this in her memoirs writing ‘The greater part is divided up into ‘rooms’, as it were, by yew hedges, each ‘room’ containing a wonderful colour scheme’.⁵¹ De Navarro and Johnston were both devout Catholics and it seems probable that he visited Court Farm and admired her garden.⁵² The topiary peacocks in the Old Garden, now known as the white garden and the maple garden, were planted by 1912 (Figure 4.24). Figure 4.25 shows them at Court Farm, but as topiary was a feature of Edwardian gardens, Johnston could have seen them elsewhere.



Figure 4.24: Topiary Peacocks, Hidcote (1914)

The Old Garden shows that initially Johnston ‘borrowed’ ideas and adapted them into something that was subtly different from the original. The stilt garden’s design may have come from an illustration he saw *in Garden*

⁵¹ Mary Anderson de Navarro, *A Few More Memories* (London: Hutchinson & Co, 1936), p. 186.

⁵² Johnston’s army records show that was a Catholic when he enlisted.

Craft in Europe (Figure 4.26).⁵³ In his design, the trees are pleached hornbeams, which were clipped lower with more of the trunks were exposed (Figure 4.27).



Figure 4.25: Topiary Peacocks, Court Farm (2013)



Figure 4.26: Le Petit Trianon, Versailles (1913)

⁵³ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, p. 102. It featured in H Inigo Triggs', *Garden Craft in Europe* (London: B D Batsford, 1878), p. 133, which Johnston borrowed from the Lindley Library in 1914.

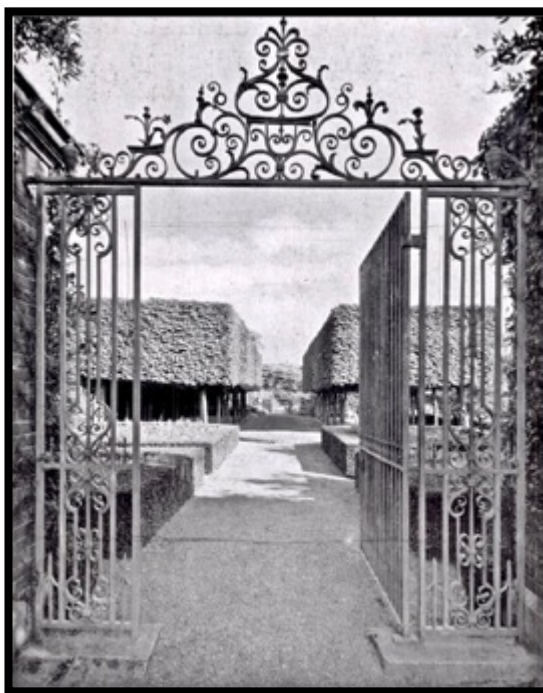


Figure 4.27: Stilt Garden (1930)

Johnston experimented with colour from the outset, but followed his own instincts. Around 1910, a double herbaceous border, another Edwardian feature, was planted with red flowers, which was innovative and unusual. It was not one of the schemes proposed by Jekyll in *Colour Schemes for the Flower Garden*, although in *Some Gardens*, she did promote scarlet flowers:

Forms of pure scarlet flowers are so little common among hardy perennials that it seems a pity that the brilliant *Lilium chalcedonicum* of Greece, Palestine and Asia Minor and its ally the scarlet Martagon of Northern Italy should not be forgotten.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Gertrude Jekyll & George Elgood, *Some English Gardens* (London: Longmans Green & Co, 1904), p. 28.

The initial scheme was less red than it is today, as blue delphiniums, purple monkshood, the creamy fronds of pampas grass and silver-leafed plants provided contrast (Figure 4.28 and Figure 4.29). Lindsay described:

Scarlet is often regarded as an unsympathetic colour for gardens, but Lawrence Johnston has dared to plant a scarlet border with clumps of *Lychnis chalcedonica*, five feet high and five feet broad, mixed with red *berberis*, dahlias and *Sedum atropurpureum*. Yet with all these reds, how well do the dark steely-blues of delphiniums and monkshoods blend.⁵⁵



Figure 4.28: Red Borders with Pampas Grass (1930)

⁵⁵ Norah Lindsay, 'Hidcote Manor', p. 47.



Figure 4.29: Red Borders with Silvery *Lychnis coronaria alba* (1948)

The Garden 1918-1938

After the war, gardening and plant collecting gradually assumed a major role in Johnston's life.⁵⁶ In 1918, a farm manager was appointed, which enabled him to concentrate on his garden.⁵⁷ Then in 1922, Frank Adams was appointed as head gardener and Johnston found someone to discuss his ideas with and who could help him implement them.

During this period Johnston, now more knowledgeable, started to refine the original garden. The sundial in the centre of a circular grass lawn in the Old Garden, an obligatory Edwardian garden ornament. was moved when the area was paved (Figure 4.30 and Figure 4.31).

⁵⁶ The Lindley Library's records show Johnston added to his knowledge whilst he was recuperating in the King Edward VII Hospital. He borrowed books on gardens and garden design, plant hunting and greenhouse plants.

⁵⁷ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, pp. 107-108. In February 1919, his mother bought additional land adjacent to the garden.



Figure 4.30: The Old Garden and Sundial (1915)



Figure 4.31: Old Garden Paved (1930)

Initially, the Bathing Pool garden comprised a small circular pool at ground level surrounded by flower beds (Figure 4.32). Small circular pools were also a feature at Serre de la Madone and influenced his friends' gardens, notably Colonel Reginald [Reggie] Cooper (1885-1965).



Figure 4.32: Bathing Pool Garden (1912)

As Johnston gained more expertise, its design was simplified and it became a green room. The pool was enlarged and raised two feet above the ground, its edges covered in ivy, and as Page noted ‘After so much colour this circle of reflected sky framed in dark green is left without floral content’ (Figure 4.33).⁵⁸ Finally, a yew archway to one of the garden’s entrances was formed during 1929 (Figure 4.34).⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Page, ‘Hidcote Microcosm’, p. 323.

⁵⁹ Garden Club America Visit to Hidcote Manor, 13 June 1929 (<https://www.chippingcampdenhistory.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Signpost-9-final-6.pdf>) [Accessed 20 September 2020].

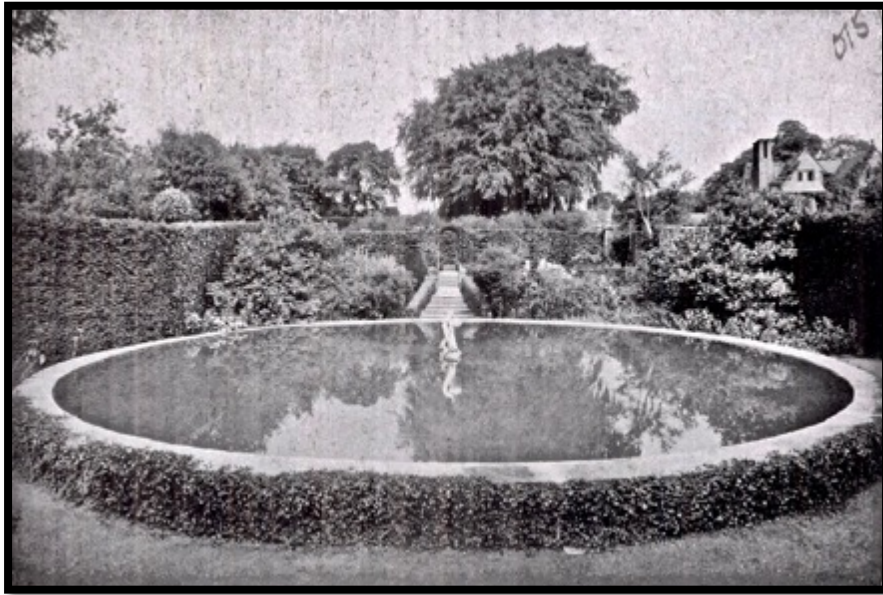


Figure 4.33: Reconstructed Bathing Pool Garden (1930)



Figure 4.34: Entrance to the Bathing Pool Garden (June 1929)

Johnston also designed some new hedge-enclosed, intimate gardens, that provided surprise when they were entered. A garden, designed for his mother, now in her late seventies, was described as ‘grey and gold, with the lily flowers of Yuccas rising from the lace of Lady’s Mantle, and primrose-

coloured *Oenotheras* to give us a faint good evening.⁶⁰ It incorporated her favourite blue and yellow flowers, so that she could recall the south of France.⁶¹ In summer ‘leather cushions in blue and yellow covers were scattered on the low brick steps and pots of standard lemon verbena were placed on the brick pedestals’ (Figure 4.35).⁶² In the middle of the circular paved area, Johnston placed the sundial from the Old Garden (Figure 4.30).



Figure 4.35: Mrs Winthrop's Garden (1920)

The rectangular Pillar Garden, designed in 1922, was also entered with an element of mystery. Framed by *Campanula lactiflora*, the entrance gives a glimpse of the garden's yew pillars (Figure 4.35). Its yew pillars planted on low terraces were reminiscent of ‘a row of obelisks or a set of giant chessmen’ (Figure 4.36).⁶³ The garden was planted with peonies, many of which remain today (Figure 4.37).

⁶⁰ Lindsay, ‘Hidcote Manor’, p. 48. In 1921, Mrs Winthrop visited the USA for the last time and spent winters in Menton.

⁶¹ Clarke, *Hidcote: The Making of a Garden*, p. 49.

⁶² *Ibidem*, pp. 49-50.

⁶³ Lindsay, ‘Hidcote Manor’, p. 47.



Figure 4.35: Glimpse of the Pillar Garden (1948)



Figure 4.36: Pillar Garden (2018)



Figure 4.37: Peonies in the Pillar Garden (1930)

As a contrast, more natural areas were introduced. As Johnston's interest in plants developed, he created areas, which provided the conditions for them to thrive. The rock bank and the terrace for tender alpinists would have interested his local friends, Fenwick and Captain George Simpson Hayward (1875-1936), who both had notable rock gardens: Fenwick at Abbotswood and Hayward at Icomb Place, Stow-on-the-Wold (Figure 4.38).



Figure 4.38: Rock Bank (1930)

In 1926, Johnston designed the Wilderness where ‘the stream that bisects it – invisible from either end – runs on each side through a wild garden where long drifts of shrubs and flowers, primulas, iris and aconites, are, in their season, interwoven sheets of colour’ (Figure 4.39).⁶⁴ One bank was planted solely with blue *Anchusa myosotis*. Although this part of the garden is in Robinson’s tradition, by now Johnston was following his own instincts.



Figure 4.39: The Wilderness (1930)

Here, Johnston kept exotic birds including flamingos and pheasants (Figure 4.40). His 1932 diary noted species he was considering for Hidcote and Serre de la Madone, ‘Kagus, Cusassows, Scarlet Flamingos, Scarlet Ibis, Javanese Peafowl, Military Macaws? and Argus pheasants’.⁶⁵ Little is known about this interest, but Trent Park had flamingos and scarlet ibis.⁶⁶ He also

⁶⁴ Page, ‘Hidcote Microcosm’, p. 322.

⁶⁵ Johnston, ‘Diary’, 1932, adjacent to 1 January. The cucassow, a large pheasant, and the military macaw, a type of parrot are South American. The kagu is a long-legged, crested bird from Australasia.

⁶⁶ Frances Pitt, ‘Water-Fowl at Trent Park’ - II, *Country Life*, 81 (15 May 1937), pp. 542.

knew Guy Falkner, who lived at The Old Forge, Fossebridge, near Cheltenham, where he kept exotic birds and painted them as caricatures.⁶⁷

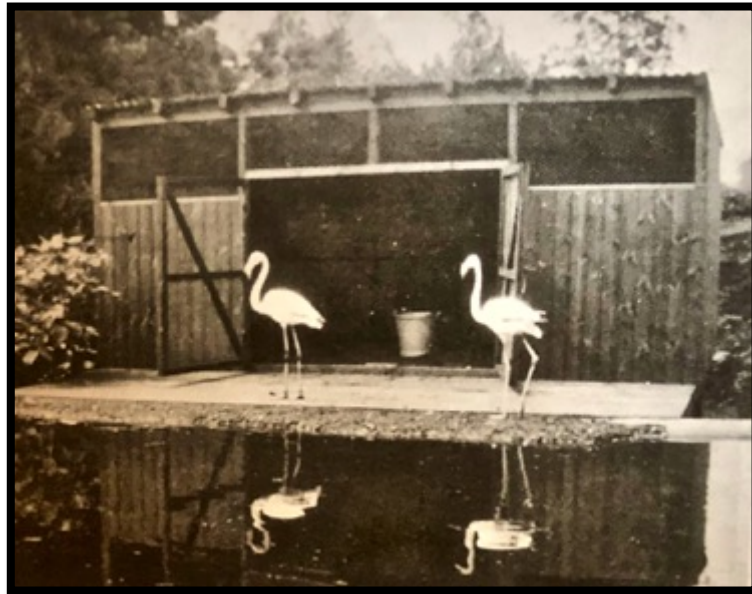


Figure 4.40: Flamingos at Hidcote (1930)

By the 1930s, Johnston was implementing his own ideas and was not bound by accepted gardening conventions in planting as Page noted:

Four beds edged with low-growing variegated *euonymus*, are divided by cobbled paths. These beds are planted in Spring with silver-mauve violas, and now with Earlham hybrid montbretias. In the centre of each is a standard silver-leaved *centaurea*. So unfashionable have variegated plants become, that many people would have destroyed the holly. Mr Johnston, seeing the possibilities, has devised around it an original and charming garden in silver, green and pinky orange.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Viscount Barrington's archive provided this information. Falkner stayed at Hidcote and Johnston gave him plants. Born in 1893, he became wealthy through trade. After 1945, he built a house in Kenya. There are no records after 1960 when he and his friend, Major Edward Fitz-Gerald sailed to South Africa.

⁶⁸ Page, 'Hidcote Microcosm', p. 321.

As well as variegated euonymus, Johnston liked to plant mixed or tartan hedging, blending yew and copper beech together, or planting the scarlet *Tropaeolum speciosum* to run through them.

A few months before Hidcote was given to the National Trust, Lindsay concluded, ‘many elements blend to make a unique and perfect whole. Lawrence Johnston’s sure sense of scale, design, and texture combined with an unusual colour sense, have worked together to produce a garden which, for its size, is unrivalled in England.’⁶⁹

The Plant Collector

As Johnston became more knowledgeable, his interest in acquiring rare and unusual plants increased and this was recognised when he was invited to join the Garden Society in 1922.⁷⁰ In 1927, when he visited Frederick Stern’s garden at Highdown in East Sussex, Lindsay commented ‘Most of the Garden Club were there and the things were all numbered – one heard “is that Forrests 605”, “No it’s Kingdon Wards 84”. A world right above my head.’⁷¹

Until his mother died, Johnston only went on a short trip to the Italian Alps with the artist-gardener, Edward Augustus Bowles (1865-1954), but he probably contributed financially to other expeditions. As well as a terrace for rare alpines, he built a large plant house for sub-tropical plants where:

Exotic climbers romp half in shade and half in the open sunlight; pots and tubs are hidden by masses of sub-tropical plants; sanded paths,

⁶⁹ Lindsay, ‘Hidcote Manor’, p. 48.

⁷⁰ *The Garden Society 1920-1996* (Cornwall: Blackfords, 1996). It was a gentleman’s dining club established in 1920 for forty Fellows of the Royal Horticultural Society, who visited each other’s gardens.

⁷¹ W/H 35/12, Lindsay, Letter to Anne Burroughes, 1927. Lindsay did not share or understand Johnston’s passion for collecting new and rare plants.

pools for rare water-plants, raised stony beds for succulents, *moraines* for difficult alpines and oleanders set about in painted tubs, all combine to make a very gay museum (Figure 4.41).⁷²



Figure 4.41: Winter Plant House (1930)

After his mother died, Johnston travelled more widely. In 1927, he organised a three-month trip to South Africa with the horticulturalist, Collingwood Ingram (1880-1981) and his friend, Reginald Cory, with the botanist, George Taylor (1904-1993) accompanying them as the plant collector.⁷³ He recorded their visits in his notebook, as did Ingram and Taylor.⁷⁴ Plant hunting was combined with garden visits, flower shows and sightseeing, ‘Kirstenbosch Botanic Garden on 20 September and the Darling Flower Show on the 24 September.’⁷⁵ Johnston mentioned *Bauhinia*, a tree

⁷² Page, ‘Hidcote Microcosm’, p. 323.

⁷³ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, p. 157. Sir George Taylor, *Diaries, 1926 and 1927* (<https://digital.nls.uk/catalogues/guide-to-manuscript-collections/inventories/acc9533.pdf>). Taylor received £300 for his six-month trip. He always referred to Johnston as ‘Major’ and Ingram and Cory as ‘Mr’.

⁷⁴ Collingwood Ingram, *A Garden of Memories* (London: H E & G Witherby, 1970).

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 38. They visited the Victoria Falls and Cecil Rhodes’ burial place at World’s View, Matopos.

with purple flowers flowering in January at Tugela in Natal, whereas at Serre de la Madone, it flowers in May (Figure 4.42).⁷⁶



Figure 4.42: Tugela, Natal (1927)

Johnston noted seeing *Arctotis* and *Ixia*, which Bowles later admired.⁷⁷ He collected seeds of *Plumbago capentae*, a blue annual, which grew underneath *Amaryllis belladonna* in Menton, in Mary Sauer's garden at Uityk, a wine estate in Stellenbosch.⁷⁸ There is nothing to suggest that like other plant collectors, he drew the plants he saw and collected.

Towards the end of this trip, Johnston was planning an expedition to Mount Kilimanharo in Kenya, where he went with guides in 1929. He outlined his experiences:

⁷⁶ Johnston, 'Notebook', p. 18.

⁷⁷ Ibidem, p. 19. *Arctotis stoechadifolia* was white, *Ixia flexuosa* and *Ixia maculata* and *Ixia* 1603, 26 seeds.

⁷⁸ Ibidem, p. 22. Mary Sauer was the South African politician, Johannes Sauer's wife.

At last, after what seemed an endless way, we reached the belt of forest and delightful shade. A small stream ran down the side of the path, and nothing could be more fairy-like and enchanting. The ground was covered with delicate Ferns. In damp places there were clumps of brilliant orange-scarlet *Haemanthus* and a bird of the same colour flew among the foliage.⁷⁹

He was impressed by two species of tall lobelia: *Lobelia gibberoa* was 15 feet high and *Lobelia deckenii* with 'great spikes of flowers and leafy bracts, high above the rough Elephant grass were a magnificent sight. Each individual flower is purple, but so covered by its hooded green bract that little of it is to be seen.'⁸⁰ Johnston was disappointed he was not able to collect more, but the 'very fine dwarf *Hypericum*' he discovered is now famous as *Hypericum* 'Hidcote'.⁸¹ He also found corms and seeds of a red *Gladiolus*, red *Impatiens*, *Senecio*, *Tritoma* and violets. He concluded that 'the astounding beauty of the scenery and the novelty of the vegetation and fauna was a continual delight and a great pleasure to look back upon.'⁸²

In 1931 when he was nearly sixty, Johnston's final expedition was to Yunnan with the botanist, George Forrest (1873-1932). This was an ill-fated trip as Johnston had never experienced this type of climate and became so ill that he had to return home. Later, Forrest died. There was also a misunderstanding over their respective roles. It appears Johnston assumed Forrest's role would be like Thompson's in South Africa and that he would do

⁷⁹ Johnson (sic), 'Some Flowering Plants, p. 11.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

⁸¹ Ibidem, p. 15.

⁸² Ibidem, p. 16.

the fieldwork, whereas Forrest expected him to take part in all the day-to-day activities.⁸³ Nevertheless, he collected valuable plants and seeds, notably *Jasminium polyanthum*.

This experience does not seem to have deterred Johnston as he considered going to Formosa, now Taiwan, in 1932, but ultimately only subscribed financially.⁸⁴ In 1933, he subscribed to a trip to the Appalachian Mountains. When Nancy Lindsay made two trips to Persia in 1934 and 1935, Johnston probably helped her financially. Lindsay commented on his enthusiasm, 'Of course, he was dying to see her and hear news of the Persian flora.'⁸⁵

Lindsay also mentioned Johnston was planning a trip in Tenerife in February 1936 with his friends, George and Norah Warre,⁸⁶ but in January 1936, he had decided not to go.⁸⁷ Locally, he walked in the Gorbio Valley with Bowles and Lindsay and probably with the botanist, William [Basil] St Austin Leng (1898-1978).⁸⁸

From the mid-1920s, Johnston turned his attentions to his new garden, Serre de la Madone and in the 1930s spent the summer, as well as the winter months there. He preferred the climate in Menton, where he could grow sub-tropical plants, but the 1929 Wall Street Crash and the subsequent economic

⁸³ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, p. 185. Forrest wrote vociferously about his displeasure, but Johnston never alluded to it. However, Forrest had complained about J B Stevenson's behaviour on a previous expedition.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 189.

⁸⁵ W/H 35/19, Letter to Whitbread, no date ?1934. She also mentioned she was returning in 1935, this time her companion, Alice Fullerton published an account of their travels, *To Persia for Flowers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1938).

⁸⁶ W/H 35/20, Letter to Whitbread, December 1935. George 'Ginger' Warre (1876-1957), a port importer, and his wife, Norah (1880-1979) had a renowned garden, Villa Roquebrune.

⁸⁷ W/H 35/21, Letter to Whitbread, 21 January 1936.

⁸⁸ Leng was also a friend of Cedric Morris and the plantsman, Edward Bunyard.

depression in Britain had a serious effect on his finances. Although Johnston remained wealthy and owned Hidcote and Serre de la Madone, under the terms of his mother's will, he only received the income from her estate of two million dollars.⁸⁹ In 1926, this was \$72,000 per annum, but by 1932, when the value of shares had fallen by eighty per cent, Johnston had to adjust his lifestyle.⁹⁰

By 1932, Hidcote had been let and as Lindsay described, 'You know he never will go anywhere at all, refuses Philip at Trent and indeed I quite understand, for he has barely 2 months in England in his own absolutely perfect place.'⁹¹ Then in December 1935, he told Lindsay, 'he was planning to turn Hidcote into a company so that he can stay in England as long as he likes. And it will save him £2,000 a year'.⁹² He was even more concerned about his finances in 1936, 'He's rather depressed at being so overspent and means to give up travelling to Morocco etc, and stop buying expensive Chinese objects and let Hidcote and trying to get right.'⁹³ Although Johnston returned to Hidcote when war broke out, he may have already decided to live in Menton. By 1941, he was considering letting or selling Hidcote:

The poor dear has always kept his money in France so as to escape all taxation here and now they are taxing it there too, so he's in an awful panic and doesn't know what to do. I think he could easily save on his

⁸⁹ Pearson, *Lawrence Johnston*, pp. 147-148. She arranged her estates in England and the USA to minimise death duties.

⁹⁰ Today her estate would be valued at \$28 million and Johnston's income would be about \$1 million (<http://www.saving.org/inflation/inflation.php?amount>) [Accessed 1 March 2020].

⁹¹ W/H 35/16. Letter to Whitbread, 8 July 1932. Hiatt Cowles Baker(1862-1934) lived at Oaklands, Almondsbury, Gloucestershire.

⁹² W/H 35/20, Letter to Whitbread, December 1935.

⁹³ W/H 35/21, Letter to Whitbread, 19 January 1936.

garden which costs him £500 a year, as he will keep heated greenhouses and the big plant house where he sits. But it's his only delight.⁹⁴

In 1943, he decided to sell Hidcote, but later offered it to the National Trust and it was transferred to them in 1948.

Whilst it appears Johnston's first garden at Hidcote, the Old Garden represented Edwardian garden style with its topiary peacocks and sundial, that resembled Parsons' hedge-enclosed gardens, it was subtly different. Although Jekyll mooted the idea of gardens planted in a single colour, before 1914 he had planted it with white violas in spring and white phlox in summer. Unlike her, his gardens were not reserved for one season of the year. His 'rooms' showed what can be achieved in a small symmetrically designed space when infinite care is taken with its planting. There is no evidence that Johnston's 'rooms' were intended to create a series of individual or linked pictures, but the opportunity to wander from one area to another resulted in anticipation and surprise, something garden designers in the 1960s, notably John Codrington, saw as important. From the enclosed Bathing Pool garden, there is a choice of wandering into the Italian shelter, another enclosed garden or walking into the Wilderness with its paths winding down to the stream.

The absence of hard landscaping suggests his sympathies lay more with Robinson's ideas, as there is little in Hidcote's design to suggest he followed the designs of Blomfield, Luytens or Mawson, who designed his friend, Cory's garden at Dyffryn. It appears that once Johnston formed an idea, he implemented it irrespective of accepted style and taste. As has been shown,

⁹⁴ W/H 35/27, Letter to Whitbread, April 1941.

the double red borders provided an alternative planting style to the Edwardian hardy plant borders. Yet as his style was seemingly conservative, these innovations were accepted without criticism.

Page suggested that Hidcote combined history with modern ideas. Johnston achieved this by using his knowledge of perspective to create a series of long, wide avenues, which Page suggested were reminiscent of Versailles in miniature.⁹⁵ Hidcote has no spectacular views and can appear to be an inward looking garden, but Johnston's avenues, like the view up the red border to the stilt garden or the view from one of the pavilions suggest not only a distant view, but that there is more to come (Figure 4.43)



Figure 4.43: View from the Pavilion (1930)

Perhaps Johnston's legacy at Hidcote is that it fulfils Page's criterion of simplicity. Yet when he started to design the garden in 1907, he would never have imagined the impact it would have. For him, it was solely a personal

⁹⁵ Page, 'Hidcote Microcosm', p. 322.

achievement. Yet in 1948, the Royal Horticultural Society awarded him the Veitch Memorial Medal to recognise his ‘outstanding contribution to horticulture and gardening’.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ (<https://www.rhs.org.uk/about-the-rhs/who-we-are/rhs-council/rhs-awards>) [Accessed 4 October 2020]. Nan Hope Hudson collected it as Johnston was not well enough to attend.

Chapter 5: Influencer or Influenced?
Lawrence Johnston and His Friends



Parceval Hall, Yorkshire (2017)

‘He is such a cosy, companionable creature and has my three passions in Xcelsis - gardening, travelling and reading aloud.’

Norah Lindsay¹

The accepted view of Lawrence Johnston is that he was reticent and unsociable, but Norah Lindsay’s assessment provides a rather different view. Those who knew him when he had dementia in old age would have formed this conclusion. Probably, he was never gregarious and preferred to meet people on a one-to-one basis, but his diaries record he entertained frequently and visited a large number of friends.² Figure 5.1 shows Johnston dressed casually, relaxed and smiling, which is how the French garden writer, Comte Ernest De Ganay, described him, ‘Il vient à vous du fond de ses terrasses en costume de velours, la terre aux mains, tel un jardinier.’³

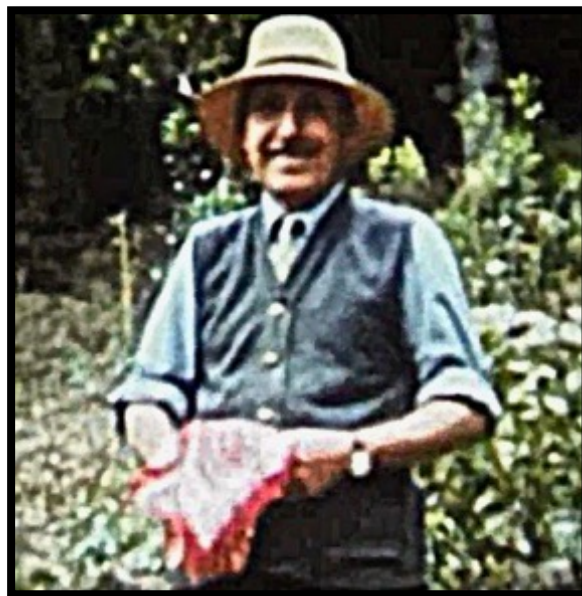


Figure 5.1: Lawrence Johnston (1938)

¹ Southill Park, W/H 35/11, Letter to Whitbread, June 1926.

² Jessica Douglas-Home, *The Lives and Loves of Violet Gordon Woodhouse* (London: Harvill Press, 1996), p. 101.

³ Comte Ernest de Ganay, ‘Coup d’Oeil sur les Jardins de la Méditerranée’, *Gazette Illustrée des Amateurs de Jardins* (1936-37), p. 6. ‘He came to greet me, straight from his terraces, in his corduroys, with dirt on his hands, like a gardener.’

As has been discussed in Chapter 4, Johnston's diaries and the garden designer, Norah Lindsay's letters provide a valuable insight into his life and character.⁴ Both show that his friends came from a wide social spectrum and included keen gardeners with whom he discussed, advised and exchanged ideas and plants. Lindsay was perhaps his closest friend.

Norah Lindsay (1873-1948)



Figure 5.2: George Frederic Watts (1817-1904), *Norah Lindsay*(1890)

Although Johnston and Lindsay may have met before the war, she did not mention him in her letters until 1925. In addition to her letters, the American garden historian, Alysson Hayward, wrote an account of her life in 2007, which outlines her career in garden design.⁵ Theirs was a platonic, but close friendship. When she met Johnston, Lindsay had been estranged from her husband for several years and in 1924 had started to design gardens to earn a

⁴ Southill Park, W/H 35, Norah Lindsay's Letters to Madeline Whitbread and the National Trust, Lawrence Johnston's Diaries, 1929 and 1932.

⁵ Allyson Hayward, *Norah Lindsay: The Life and Art of a Garden Designer* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007).

living. As Johnston's parents divorced when he was a child, he may have been sympathetic to her difficulties. She visited Hidcote and Serre de la Madone, more or less as she pleased. Possibly, she acted as his 'hostess' and when she accompanied him on garden visits, he always paid.

Lindsay lived at Sutton Courtenay in Oxfordshire where she made a notable garden that she described in *Country Life* (Figure 5.3).⁶ Johnston often visited her, 'Johnny suddenly arrived yesterday for one night which was very pleasant, and we went for a long walk and then sat by the fire reading out'.⁷



Figure 5.3: Sutton Courtenay (1904)

Her view of Hidcote was 'here all is beauty, peace and spoiling', Dinner in one of the glasshouses was 'full of lilies and scents and everything quiet and restful and no bother at all'.⁸ When he spent less time in England in the

⁶ Norah Lindsay, 'The Manor House at Sutton Courtenay', *Country Life*, 69 (16 May 1931), pp. 610-14.

⁷ W/H 35/11, Letter to Whitbread, June 1926.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

1930s, she wrote, 'I miss losing Hidcote and Johnny more than anything'.⁹ It has been suggested that she influenced his garden design:

Much of the final glory of Hidcote's garden took shape in the late '30s and during the war when Norah and the Major were happily gardening together. A 'wizard' he may have been, but it probably needed Norah's flamboyant taste to egg him on to the richness of contrasts that made the garden so wonderful.¹⁰

Yet Hidcote's layout was already in place when they became friends and from the mid-1920s, when *Serre de la Madone* became his principal interest, her comments show he designed it, 'Of course in six or seven years he'll have the most marvellous collection of rare things, but such a jungle – already lots of shrubs are dying from being so close. However he loves them passionately and hates the faintest criticism.'¹¹

Their approach was different as Lindsay designed gardens for paying clients, whereas Johnston designed his gardens solely for his own pleasure and satisfaction.¹² Her forte was arranging gardens to look their best at particular times of year, like the double herbaceous borders at Port Lympne for Sir Phillip Sassoon, which were a mass of colour in August (Figure 5.4).

⁹ W/H 35/20, Letter to Whitbread, December 1935.

¹⁰ Jane Brown, *Eminent Gardeners: Some People of Influence and Their Gardens 1880-1980* (London: Viking Press, 1990), p. 73.

¹¹ W/H 35/20, Letter to Whitbread, 11 Sept 1935 (2).

¹² Her list of clients was impressive as it included the Prince of Wales at Fort Belvedere, Nancy Astor at Cliveden and Phillip Kerr, 11th Marquess of Lothian at Blicking.



Figure 5.4: Norah Lindsay Designed Herbaceous Borders, Port Lympne (1936)

Lindsay's favourite flowers were roses.¹³ She may have helped him acquire his collection, which she described as the finest in England.¹⁴ Possibly, she encouraged his planting, but during their friendship, Johnston visited gardens in Britain, France and Italy, as well as the wildflower meadows in South Africa and Kenya.

Locally, as well as Mark Fenwick at Abbotswood, he knew Heather Muir, who acknowledged that at Kiftsgate, she was 'helped and inspired by her lifelong friend'.¹⁵ Captain George Simpson-Hayward at Icomb Manor and George Lees-Milne (1880-1949), who made a garden at Wickhamford Manor in Gloucestershire were also friends.¹⁶ However, one close friend, William Shute Barrington was also an artist-gardener.

¹³ Allyson Hayward, 'The Roses of Norah and Nancy Lindsay', *Rosa Mundi Heritage* (Spring/Summer 2010), p. 19.

¹⁴ Norah Lindsay, 'Hidcote Manor: The First Garden to be Taken Over by the National Trust', *House & Garden*, 3 (April 1948), p. 46.

¹⁵ <http://www.kiftsgatecourt.co.uk/history/heathermuir> [Accessed 11 December 2018]. She continued to visit him Menton until his death.

¹⁶ James Lees-Milne's father.

Viscount William [Bill] Reginald Shute Barrington (1873-1960)



Figure 5.5: William Shute Barrington

For many years, Barrington lived near Hidcote as part of a *ménage à trois* with the harpsichordist, Violet Gordon-Woodhouse (1872-1948) and her husband, Gordon (1870-1951) (Figure 5.5).¹⁷ Unlike many of his generation, Johnston accepted his unconventional lifestyle, as he did those of other friends. Barrington was also an artist, ‘as a watercolourist and architectural historian, Bill was fascinated by the interplay of water, trees, plants and open spaces and of light and shade, of different heights and colours.’¹⁸

Until recently, information about Barrington was restricted to Douglas-Home’s biography of Gordon-Woodhouse and articles in *Country Life* about gardens he was associated with. However, during this study, some letters, drawings and garden notes were discovered. These show that Johnston gave

¹⁷ Jessica Douglas-Home, *The Lives and Loves of Violet Gordon Woodhouse* (London: Harvill Press, 1996), described their relationship. For a time, it was a *ménage à cinq* when Denis Tollemache (1884-1942) and Maxwell Labouchère (1873-1918) were part of the household.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 66.

Barrington plants and provide details about the nurseries he favoured.¹⁹ Most of the information relates to Nether Lypiatt Manor in Gloucestershire, with some details about his final home, Hurstlands Farm at Hartfield in East Sussex, where he moved after Gordon-Woodhouse's husband died.²⁰

Like Johnston, painting was Barrington's hobby and it is not known whether he received any formal teaching. However, the archive includes a few watercolours and sketches. Figure 5.6 shows a tree-lined path leading to an unknown house, whilst Figure 5.7 depicts a pen and ink drawing of a secluded cove.



Figure 5.6: William Barrington, *Unknown Houser*

¹⁹ Personal communication, Robin Alderson, 25 January 2019, who sent relevant information from his records.

²⁰ Two letters from his friend, Vita Sackville-West, written shortly before his death in 1960.

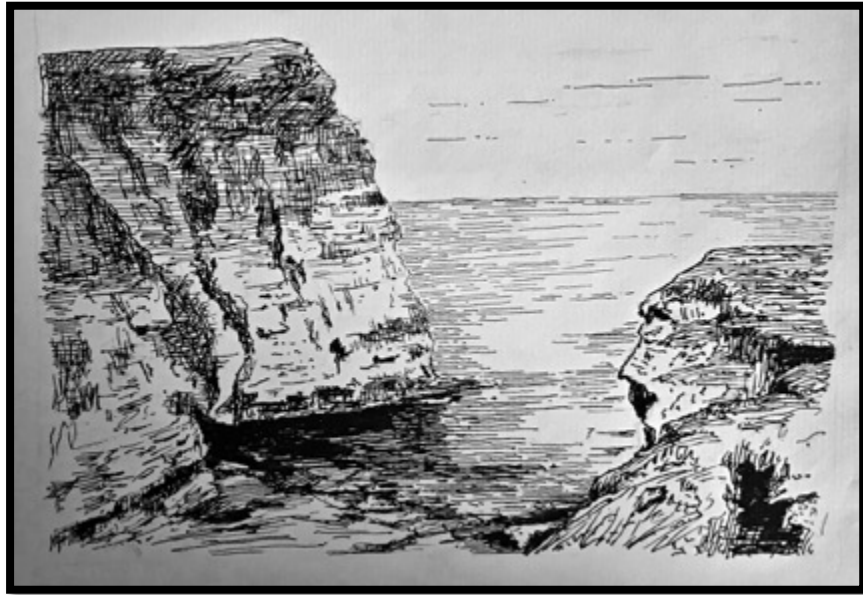


Figure 5.7: William Barrington, *Secluded Cove*

The Gardener

Barrington's interest in gardening began when he moved to Southover Grange, near Lewes in East Sussex in 1901. Gordon-Woodhouse suggested he looked after the garden instead of her husband as 'He had always shown a great interest in plants and herbaceous border at Wootton and he was soon reading gardening books and subscribed to *The Garden*'.²¹ Figure 5.8 shows the seventeenth-century house and garden with standard rose trees and borders, when it was advertised for sale in 1919.

In 1908, they moved to Armscote House, near Stratford-upon-Avon, where Barrington intended to farm.²² By then, he knew Johnston and, 'Bill's experience at Southover and his well-developed ideas on colour tone, balance and design led to exchanges with Johnston which were to play a major part in the creation of the magnificent gardens at Armscote, Hidcote and Nether

²¹ Douglas-Home, *Violet*, p. 66. When he retired from the Hampshire Militia, he needed something to occupy him. Wootton was her childhood home.

²² *Ibidem*, p. 97. The farm was not successful.

Lypiatt.²³ Barrington's philosophy was that 'a garden should give the illusion of having been there forever, its relationship to the surrounding fields, hills and buildings should have a naturalness borne of scrupulous attention to detail'.²⁴

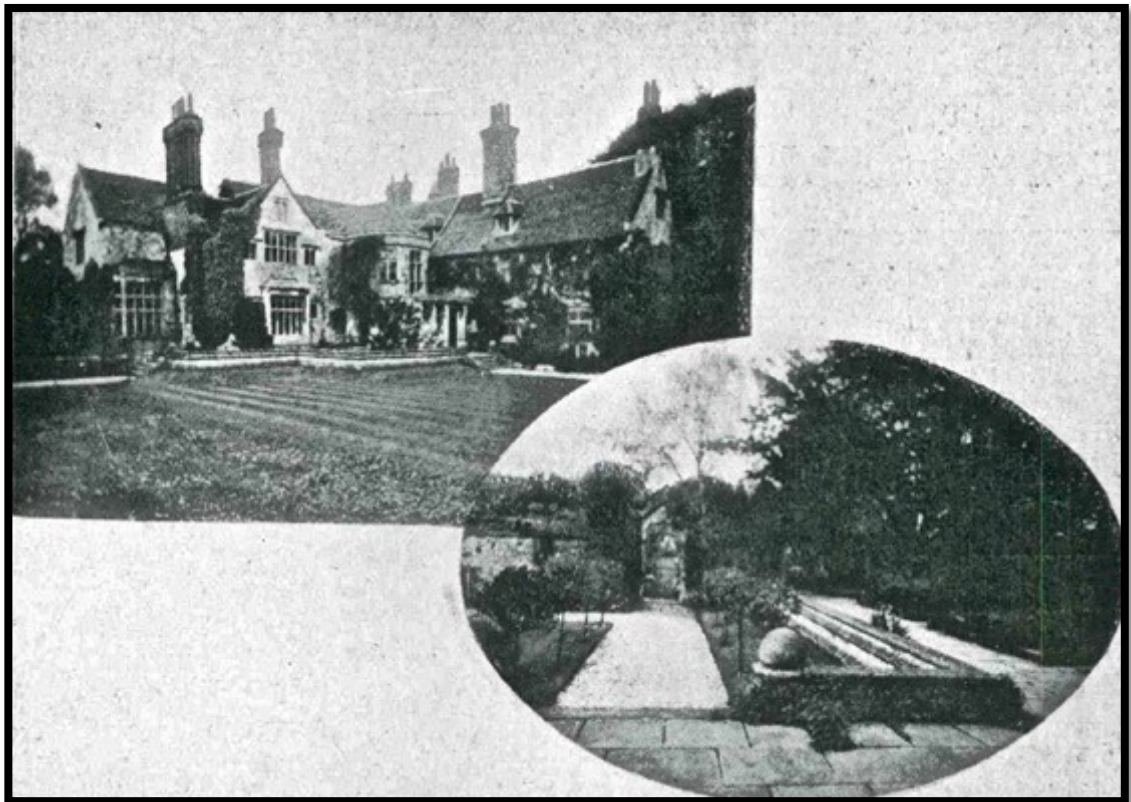


Figure 5.8: Southover Grange (1919)

When they moved to Armscote, the garden was a wilderness that was transformed into 'order and charm, formality without austerity; the borders being planted with rare skill'.²⁵ Whereas Figure 5.9 shows formal borders near the house, whilst the pool in Figure 5.10 is irregular and surrounded by plants of different forms and shapes.

²³ Douglas-Home, *Violet*, p. 101.

²⁴ *Ibidem*.

²⁵ R R P, 'A Lesser Country House of the XVIIth Century: Armscote Manor, Ettington, Stratford-upon-Avon and its Additions by Mr E Guy Dawber', *Country Life*, 53 (13 January 1923), p. 64.



Figure 5.9: Borders at the Back of the House (1923)



5.10: Natural Pool and Informal Planting (1923)

In 1923, they moved to their final home, Nether Lypiatt Manor in Gloucestershire, which was built by Charles Core in 1701 (Figure 5.11). The garden had been neglected during the war and Barrington redesigned it. There was a two-acre walled garden to the west of the house, which was

divided into four compartments, each with a medlar or mulberry tree at its centre (Figure 5.11).²⁶



Figure 5.11: Part of the Walled Garden (1934)

Christopher Hussey's description in 1934 included the garden between the two wings of the house.²⁷ In his view, a 'garden court', hardy plant borders on either side of the wide grass path had 'aesthetic value' as it provided 'an element of mystery, of concealment' (Figure 5.12). Figure 5.13 provides a wider view.²⁸

²⁶ Douglas-Home, *Violet*, p. 197.

²⁷ Christopher Hussey, 'Nether Lypiatt – I: The Residence of Mr & Mrs Gordon Woodhouse', *Country Life*, 75 (19 May 1934), pp. 516-517.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 517.



Figure 5.12: Enclosed Garden (1934)



Figure 5.13: View of the Enclosed Garden (1934)

The garden had a series of yew hedges and Johnston provided the seedlings, which were laid out in 33-foot long parallel lines.²⁹ Hussey also referred to ‘a long garden of yew walls and compartments’, a lime avenue and

²⁹ Douglas-Home, *Violet*, p. 197. Barrington’s notebook records that he received 19 seeds, plants and cuttings from Johnston from 1929-1936, although not all acquisitions are dated.

orchard accessed through a yew tunnel.³⁰ Barrington's notebook shows that in 1936, he was buying ferns for the pool from Perry's Hardy Plant Nursery and trees for the arboretum from Hilliers in 1937, which included *Pyrus floribunda* and maples. Like Johnston, Barrington planted tapestry or 'tartan' hedges.³¹

Johnston visited Nether Lyppiatt, sometimes accompanied by Lindsay. He was not demonstrative enough for Gordon-Woodhouse's taste, but she accepted that Barrington enjoyed his company and gardening knowledge.³² She also visited Hidcote with Barrington.³³

After Gordon-Woodhouse's death, Barrington remained with her husband, but after he died, he moved to Hurstlands at Hartfield in East Sussex where he made a small garden.³⁴ The area marked (4) in Figure 5.14 shows that Barrington, like Johnston, was interested in the effects that could be achieved using a restricted palette of colours. The border was to be planted with yellow, pale blue, grey and white plants including blue delphiniums, yellow flowering alyssum, *Rosa hugonis*, *Coreopsis willmottiae*, *Cytisus scoparius* 'Moonlight' and *Cytisus* 'Newry Seedling', *Hemerocallis* 'Winsome', *Knifophia* 'Early Buttercup', the golden barberry, *Berberis stenophylla*, and white flowered peonies, *Cornus capitata*, *Hoheria* and *Philadelphus* 'Mont Blanc'.

³⁰ Hussey, Nether Lyppiatt, p. 517.

³¹ Douglas-Home, *Violet*, p. 197.

³² *Ibidem*, p. 101.

³³ Johnston, 'Diary', 26 July 1932. Barrington came to lunch, 9 November 1932 and stayed, 10 July 1929. Jessica Douglas-Home, *William Simmonds: The Silent Heart of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (London: Unicorn, 2018), p. 109. Barrington took the engraver and puppeteer, William Simmonds' wife, Eve, to visit in spring 1928.

³⁴ Personal communication, Robin Alderson, 1 May 2019.

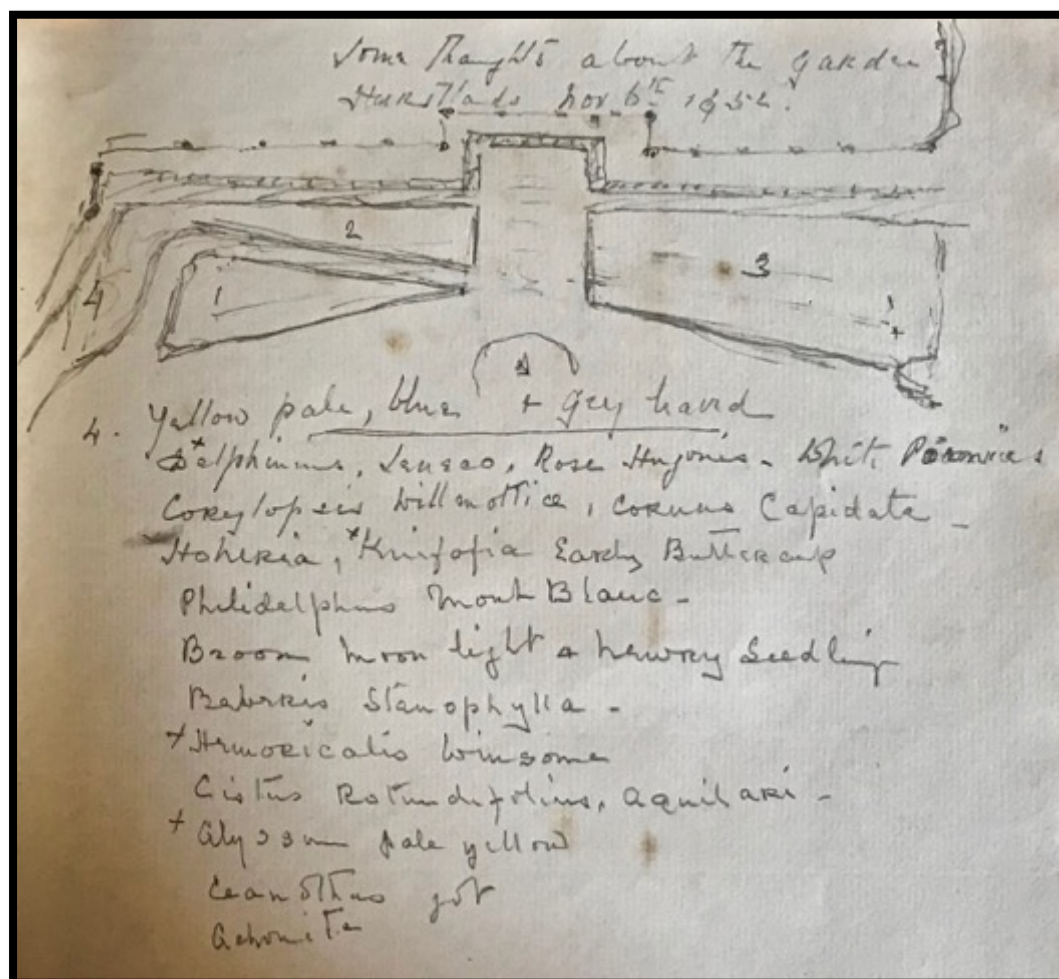


Figure 5.14: Proposed Border, Hurstlands (1952)

Colonel Reginald [Reggie] Cooper (1885-1965)

Lindsay probably introduced Johnston to Cooper. They shared mutual interests in gardening and antiques.³⁵ Apart from Cooper's design for a neo-classical Orangery at Trent Park in 1931 and his restoration of his four homes, little is known about his life.³⁶ In 1923, Cooper bought Cold Ashton Manor, a

³⁵ Cooper visited Serre de la Madone and Johnston's 1932 'Diary' shows he visited Hidcote on 15 September 1932.

³⁶ Helen Langley, 'The Quest for Reggie Cooper' (26 March 2016) <https://www.helenlangley.co.uk/2015/03/quest-reggie-cooper> [Accessed 7 June 2018]. His father was a tea merchant and this was probably the source of his wealth. He was a close friend of the diplomat and writer, Sir Harold Nicolson and may have discussed the garden design for Sissinghurst Castle with him.

Jacobean house near Chippenham in Wiltshire and Figure 5.15 shows a number of pillared yews, planted in front of the house.



Figure 5.15: Cold Ashton Manor (1925)

Cooper moved to Cothay Manor in Somerset, which dates back to medieval times in 1925 and Johnston visited.³⁷ The garden reflects some of his ideas. Figure 5.16 depicts a rectangular bathing pool in a hedge-enclosed flowerless garden, whereas Figure 5.17 shows a sunken garden with a circular raised pool.

³⁷ Johnston, 'Diary', 9-10 January 1930.

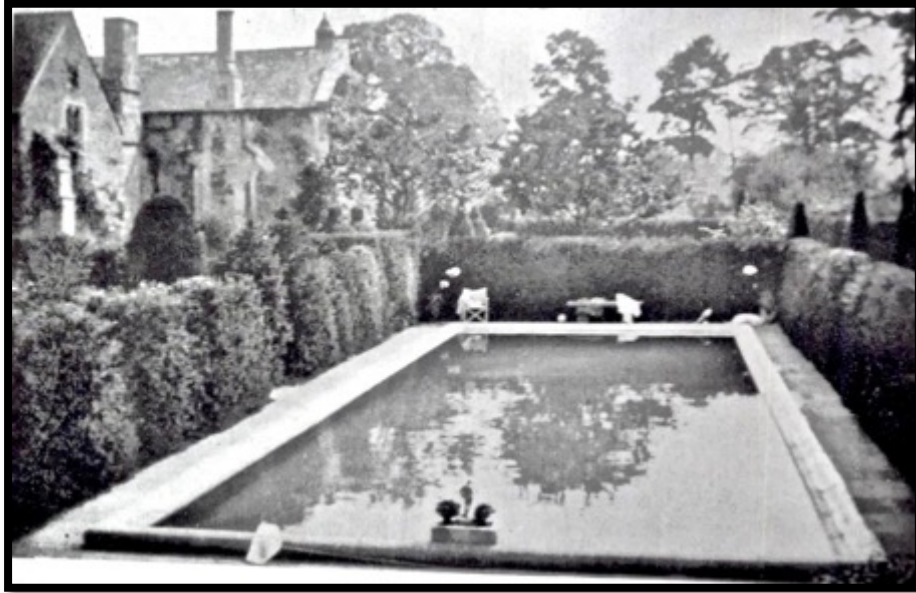


Figure 5.16: Rectangular Yew Enclosed Bathing Pool, Cothay Manor (1933)



Figure 5.17: Circular Pool in a Sunken Garden, Cothay Manor (2017)

In 1937, Cooper moved again, this time to Julians in Hertfordshire and the circular pool is reminiscent of Johnston's designs (Figure 5.18).



Figure 5.18: Circular Pool, Julians (1947)

His final home, Knightstone Manor in Devon, where he lived until his death also had circular pool and pillared trees that are reminiscent of Cothay, Julians and Hidcote (Figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19: Knightstone Manor with Circular Pool and Pillared Trees (1950)

Two friends with whom Johnston shared his gardening ideas lived in Yorkshire. Robert [Bobbie] James (1873-1960), another artist, lived at St

Nicholas near Richmond, where between 1905 and 1925, he designed a long, double herbaceous border and a red and silver garden, which incorporated Johnston's scheme for his red borders (Figure 5.20). Silver plants included *Artemisia*, *Stachys lanata*, *Centaurea* and the reds, *Phlox drumondii*, *Lobelia cardinalis*, *Verbena* and *dahlia*s.³⁸



Figure 5.20: Double Herbaceous, Borders, St Nicholas (1936)

In 1921, Major Edward Compton (1891-1977) started to redesign the garden at Newby Hall, near York, which has a renowned double herbaceous border with pavilions at the bottom (Figure 5.21). Newby Hall also has a number of hedge-enclosed small gardens and Figure 5.22 shows one with a circular pool. Possibly, Johnston visited the architect, Sir William Milner's (1893-1960) garden at Parceval Hall in Wharfedale, which he designed from 1927. It had circular pool, shown on this chapter's frontispiece, and he and Johnston had mutual interests in collecting rare plants.³⁹

³⁸ G C Taylor, 'St Nicholas, Richmond, The Residence of the Hon Robert James', *Country Life*, 80 (12 December 1936), p. 632.

³⁹ Milner was a trustee of the Shrine at Walsingham, which may have interested Johnston.



Figure 5.21: Double Herbaceous Borders, Newby Hall (2017)



Figure 5.22: Enclosed Garden with Circular Pool, Newby Hall (2017)

Edith Wharton (1862-1937)

Johnston's friendship with the American novelist and writer, Edith Wharton (1862-1937) was described in *An Author and a Gardener* (Figure 5.23).⁴⁰ She

⁴⁰ Allan R Ruff, *An Author and a Gardener* (Oxford: Windgatherer Press, 2014). (http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/findingaids/view?doc.view=entire_text&docId=InU-Li-VAC3308) Her letters were edited by Lewis & Lewis, *The Letters of Edith Wharton*. Lewis also wrote, *Edith Wharton* (London: Harper & Row, 1975).

often referred to him in her letters and diaries after they met at a lunch in 1923.⁴¹



Figure 5.23: Edith Wharton (1934)

In October 1924, she told her friend, the American art collector, Bernard Berenson (1865-1959), she had made, ‘a new and very nice gardening friend [.....] Johnnie as his friends call him’.⁴² Wharton visited Hidcote for the first time with two friends, the American historian, Gaillard Lapsley (1871-1949) and Robert Douglas Norton (1868-1939), a former diplomat, who became sufficiently wealthy to retire and paint, in autumn 1924.⁴³ In 1933,

⁴¹ R W B Lewis & Nancy Lewis (Edited), *The Letters of Edith Wharton* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1988). Lewis also wrote, *Edith Wharton* (London: Harper & Row, 1975). Archival records relating to Wharton’s life can be found at Beinecke Library, Yale (<https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/collections/highlights/edith-wharton-collection>) eleven folders comprising letters and photographs and the Lilly Library. Wharton’s ‘Diary’, 12 March 1923, quoted by Ruff, *An Author and a Gardener*, p. 172.

⁴² Hermione Lee, *Edith Wharton* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2007), p. 539.

⁴³ Lee, *Edith Wharton*, p. 641. Norton, known as ‘Beau Norts’, became one of Johnston’s friends. He joined the Foreign Office in 1890 and became Lord Salisbury’s private secretary in 1900. He wrote *Painting in East and West* (London: Edward Arnold, 1913) and exhibited his watercolours. He was Wharton’s neighbour in Hyères, living at Les Vigneaux, Giens.

after a visit to Hidcote, she wrote to Berenson, ‘I was very glad of a long rest at Lawrence Johnston’s, in the green peace of a garden incredibly different from the one at Menton, but equally perfect.’⁴⁴

Johnston’s helped Wharton with her two gardens in France. In 1918, she bought the late eighteenth-century house, Pavillon Colombe at Saint-Brice near Paris where she spent the summer months. Russell Page worked there between 1948 and 1959 and noted:

With Major Johnston’s help, she made a garden setting exactly in the spirit of the house. A formal box garden, called the blue garden still exists. Now its outer beds are filled with delphiniums, galtonias, anchusa and *Salvia patens* and the formal parterre in the middle with *Nepeta fassenii* and ageratum. Height is given by the blue hibiscus ‘coeleste’, which have been kept clipped to about six feet high like pyramidal pear trees (Figure 5.24).⁴⁵



Figure 5.24: Blue Garden, Pavillon Colombe (1925)

⁴⁴ Lee, *Edith Wharton*, p. 562, Letter to Berenson, 10 July 1933.

⁴⁵ Russell Page, *Education of a Gardener* (London: William Collins & Co, 1962), p. 19. Lee, *Edith Wharton*, p. 530 thought Page overstated Johnston’s influence.

Wharton, like Johnston, decided to spend winters in the south of France. In 1915, she leased Château Sainte-Claire in Hyères and bought it in 1927. Figure 5.25 shows the formal terrace garden in front of the house and Figure 5.26 shows a border of orange freesias on one of the terraces.



Figure 5.25: Courtyard, Chateau Sainte-Claire (1928)



Figure 5.26: Border of Orange Freesias (1928)

In 1924, Wharton recorded her appreciation, ‘The angelic Johnston came to spend 2 days with me and helped me incalculably in all my planting plans’.⁴⁶ She also used to visit Serre de la Madone.⁴⁷

Anna [Nan] Hope Hudson (1869-1957)



Figure 5.24: Walter Sickert, *Anna Hope Hudson* (1910)

Only one of Johnston’s relatives was a friend, his cousin, the artist and gardener Nan Hope Hudson (1869-1957) (Figure 5.24).⁴⁸ Chapter 4 discussed the murals at Château d’Auppegard, which she and Ethel Sands bought after the war. Hudson’s painting shows the loggia in the background and a box-edged flower bed, planted with white flowers (Figure 5.25). It is probable that Johnston took them plants when he visited.

⁴⁶ Lewis & Lewis, *The Letters of Edith Wharton*, Letter to ‘Minnie J’, 12 Oct 1924. Her papers list plants sent from Hidcote to both gardens.

⁴⁷ Lee, *Edith Wharton*, pp. 554-555, Letter, August 1929 to Elsinia Royall Tyler (1878-1959) recorded her visit on 14 June 1929.

⁴⁸ He referred to her as his cousin in his will and left her £1,000.

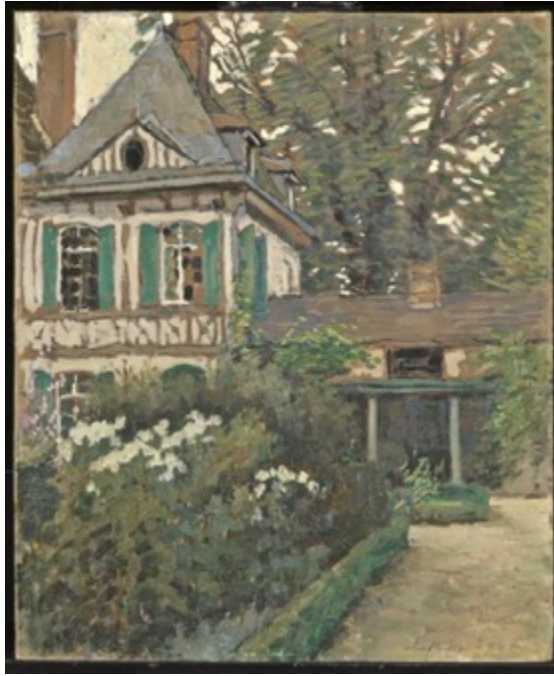


Figure 5.25: Anna Hope Hudson, *Château d'Auppegard*

Although Sands gardened, Hudson was ‘a passionate gardener, who would only abandon Auppegard when nothing required planting, transplanting, pruning, or similar nurture.’⁴⁹ Vanessa Bell described the garden whilst she and Duncan Grant painted the murals there:

Please send us a glimpse of ordinary rough and rumble, dirty everyday existence. I am beginning to be in danger of collapse from rarefaction here. [.....]. The extraordinary thing is that it’s not only the house but also the garden that’s in such spotless order. It’s almost impossible to find a place in which one can throw a cigarette end without it becoming a glaring eyesore.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Wendy Baron, *Miss Ethel Sands and Her Circle* (London: Peter Owen, 1977), p. 165. Sands used to go out at night to hunt snails.

⁵⁰ Regina Walter (Edited), *Selected Letters of Vanessa Bell* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993, Letter to Fry, 21 July 1927.

Johnston was also friends with Sands' brother, Alan, and his wife, Evelyn, who made an Italianate garden at La Bastide de l'Abadie in Cannes and stayed at Hidcote.⁵¹

The garden designs of two of Johnston's friends are discussed in subsequent chapters, Edward Augustus Bowles in Chapter 6 and Aubrey Waterfield (1974-1944) in Chapter 7.

Edward Augustus Bowles (1865-1954)

Johnston and Bowles' friendship was based on plants and both were members of the Garden Society. They may have met in June 1911 when Johnston exhibited, *Primula pulverulenta*, which received an Award of Merit at a Royal Horticultural Society show:

Mr L Johnston (Campden, Glos) won an award with the Hidcote Strain of *Primula pulverulenta*. The Hidcote Strain adds the soft pinks from *Primula japonica*, at the same time retaining the mealy stem of *Primula pulverulenta*.⁵²

Bowles would have noted this, as his experience of growing the species had been disappointing.⁵³

At first sight, this appears an unlikely friendship. Johnston's affluent lifestyle was somewhat different to Bowles, the serious botanist and philanthropist, who lived a spartan life at Myddelton House, near Enfield.⁵⁴ Yet his interest and knowledge of plants must have earned Bowles' respect. In

⁵¹ Johnston, 'Diary', 19 June 1932, Johnston lunched with Alan Sands, After her husband's death in 1936, Evelyn visited Hidcote.

⁵² Anonymous, 'Horticultural Society's Exhibits', *The Times*, 39605 (7 June 1911), p. 13.

⁵³ E A Bowles, *My Garden in Spring* (London: A & C Jack, 1914), pp. 146-147.

⁵⁴ Bowles never had electricity, gas only for cooking and no telephone.

June 1922, they went plant hunting in the Alps and later Bowles visited Johnston in Menton.⁵⁵ Johnston also visited Myddelton House, 'I can't tell you how much I enjoyed myself with you and how grateful I am for the plants. My enjoyment is a little tempered by the thought that I must have bored you awfully.'⁵⁶ Bowles was invited to Hidcote, 'Do take us in on your way anywhere.'⁵⁷ They exchanged plants and seeds:

I am sending you *Styrax Hemsleyanus*, I am very much afraid they are very small seedlings. The seed of *Adenocarpus decorticans* is not ripe and I will send it later with the clematis cuttings. I found both not ready. I wish I could find more cuttings.⁵⁸

Thus during his life, Johnston was known for his generous entertaining, gifts of plants and kindness. Perhaps one surprise is that the renowned cookery writer, Elizabeth David (1913-1992) recalled that in Christmas 1933, when she was staying with her aunt, Violet Gordon-Woodhouse at Nether Lypiatt, Johnston was also there. The 'perfect angel' drove her part of the way home and also showed her Hidcote's garden.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ GB 803 EAB 3/1/2, 'Bowles Travel Diary', March 1928.

⁵⁶ EAB/Appendix 1/1, Johnston, Letter to Bowles, 31 July (no year), p. 2.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, p. 3. Bowles visited in 1925.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, Johnston, Letter to Bowles, 31 July (no year), pp. 1-2. *Styrax hemsleyanus* is a tree with a fragrant white flower in Spring and *Adenocarpus decorticans* is known as the Silver Broom. He also sent Bowles cuttings of *Buddleia colvillei*.

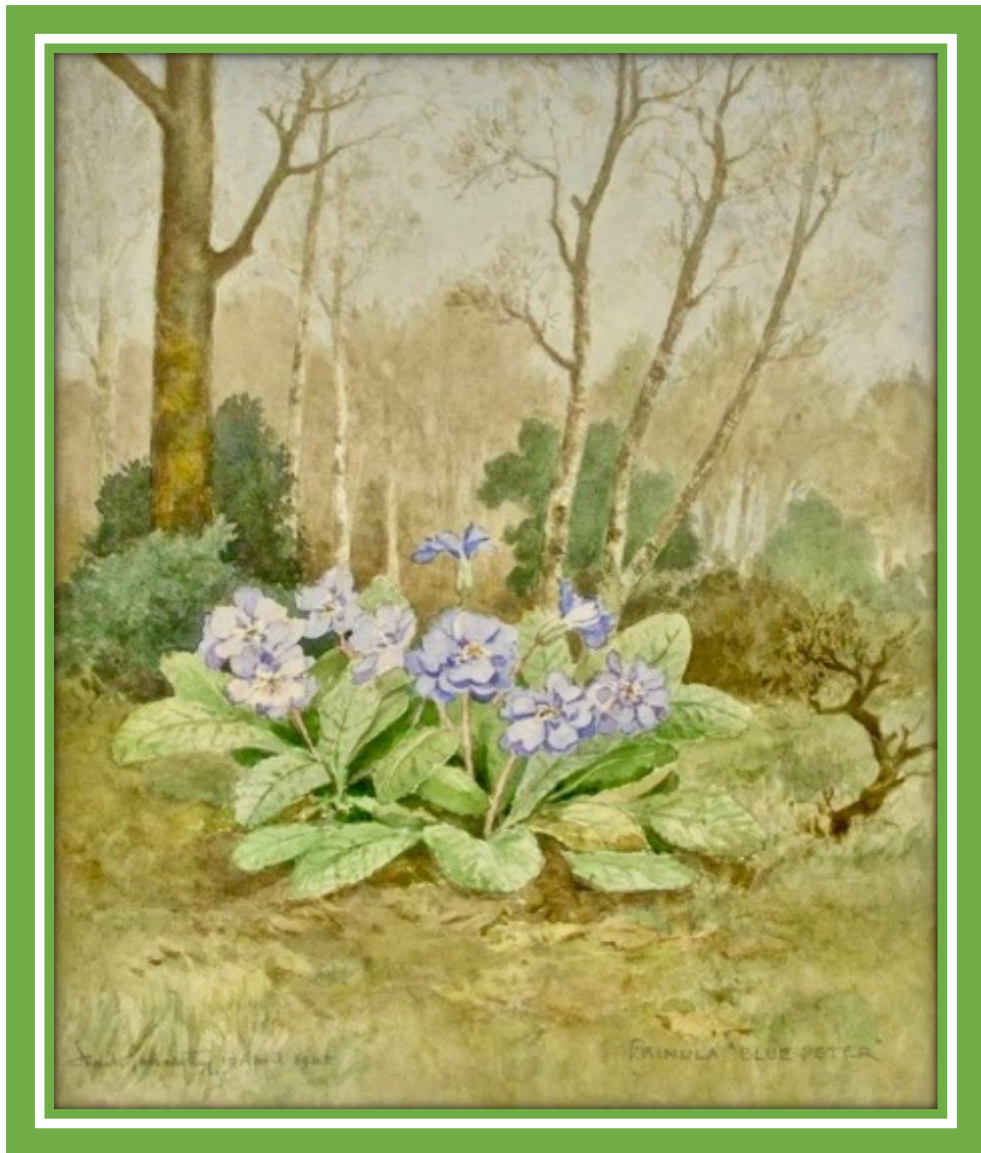
⁵⁹ Lisa Cheney, *Elizabeth David: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1998. Edition Pan Books, 1998), p. 61.

Chapter 6: Gardeners of a Different Kind

Edward Augustus Bowles (1865-1954), Reginald

John Farrer (1880-1920) and Frank Galsworthy

(1863-1959)



Frank Galsworthy, *Primula Blue Peter* (1948)

‘The essence of the real garden is the insignificance of the garden itself; the soul of the real garden lies in the perfect prosperity of the plants of which it is the home, instead of being merely, by the modern reversal of right laws, the expensive and colour-relief of financially compounded cliffs of stucco and Portland cement.’

Reginald Farrer¹

Reginald Farrer caused considerable controversy when he made this observation in the preface of *My Garden in Spring* in 1914. From 1889, Sir Frank Crisp (1843-1919) made a garden in ‘fantastical style’ at Friar Park, Henley-on-Thames,² which included a massive rock garden, comprising 7,000 tons of stone and featured a replica of the Matterhorn (Figure 6.1).³



Figure 6.1: The Matterhorn, Friar Park (1905)

¹ Preface to Edward Augustus Bowles, *My Garden in Spring* (Edinburgh: T C & E C Jack, 1914), p. xiii.

² <https://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/items/sir-frank-crisp-1843-1919>.

³ Brent Elliott, ‘The British Rock Garden in the Twentieth Century’, Royal Horticultural Society’s Lindley Library Occasional Paper, 6 (2011), p. 12. In the early nineteenth, Hoole House, Cheshire included a scale model of the Alps at Chamonix. In the 1880s, the idea began to spread with rockworks based on the Khyber Pass, the Matterhorn, and Mount Fuji.

It attracted criticism from the outset, with the garden writer, Charles Thonger (1882-1954), suggesting ‘it might as well serve as a sixpenny attraction at Earl’s Court.’⁴ Its fame was recognised in 1910, when it was painted by Thomas Henry Hunn (Figure 6.2).



Figure 6.2: Thomas Henry Hunn, *Rock Garden, Friar Park* (1910)

Although Farrer did not name the garden, Crisp, encouraged by Ellen Willmott, who also had a large rock garden at Warley Place, criticised Bowles, but not Farrer, publicly (Figure 6.3).⁵ This argument underlined Farrer’s different approach to the design and planting rock gardens, which is outlined in this chapter.

⁴ Charles Thonger *The Book of Rock and Water Gardens* (London: John Lane, 1907), p. 12.

⁵ Willmott handed out her eight-page quarto pamphlet at the Chelsea Flower Show.



6.3: Ellen Willmott's Rock Garden, Warley Place (1909)

Farrer and Bowles differed from the artist-gardeners discussed in previous chapters, as their paintings recorded the plants they collected and their gardens provided the place for their plants to grow. Frank Galsworthy exhibited botanical paintings at the Royal Horticultural Society's shows until he was almost ninety-two, but was also known for his flower paintings, which were shown in Britain and the USA. Bowles and Galsworthy lived throughout most of this study, but started their gardens before 1914.

Edward Augustus Bowles (1865-1954)

The horticulturist, Clarence Elliott (1881-1969) noted in the preface to *The Garden in Summer*, 'Very little is said about design, and a great deal about individual varieties and cultivars.'⁶ This is probably the way Bowles wished to be remembered (Figure 6.4). When he was unable to fulfil his ambition to become a clergyman, it was important that he was seen to be engaged in

⁶ E A Bowles, *My Garden in Summer* (Edinburgh: E C Jack, 1914), p. viii.

serious pursuits. He would have disliked descriptions by the garden historian, Miles Hadfield (1903-1982) and the botanist, William Stearn (1911-2001).

‘Once again we have the traditional English gentleman of culture and intelligence [.....],’ and ‘a country gentleman following no gainful occupation.’⁷



Figure 6.4: John Gray, *Edward Augustus Bowles* (1945)

The Lindley Library has a comprehensive Bowles’ archive including correspondence, watercolours, botanical drawings and information about his garden at Myddelton House near Enfield (Figure 6.5).⁸ In addition to three books about his garden, Bowles wrote about specific species, crocus and colchicum and narcissus.⁹ He contributed to *The Garden*, *The Gardener*,

⁷ Miles Hadfield, *A History of British Gardening* (London: John Murray, 1979), p. 382 and William T Stearn, ‘E A Bowles [Gussie] (1865-1954): Horticulturalist and Watercolour Painter’ [<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/57209>]. As Myddelton House is only ten miles from London and Bowles went the Royal Horticultural Society most weeks, he may not have considered it countryside.

⁸ Lindley Library, GB 803 EAB/1, Myddelton House c 1867 – c 1950s; EAB/4/1 Watercolours and Pencil Drawings; EAB/AA, Letters and Correspondence.

⁹ Bowles, *My Garden in Spring*; Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*; E A Bowles, *My Garden in Autumn and Winter* (T C & E C Jack, 1915); *A Handbook of Crocus and Colchicum for Gardeners* (Martin Hopkinson & Co, 1924); and *A Handbook*

Gardeners' Chronicle, *The Gardener's Magazine* and the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* for over fifty years.



Figure 6.5: Myddelton House (1908)

Bowles started an autobiography, but never got beyond his childhood.¹⁰ Two biographies have been published: the most comprehensive by the garden historian, Mea Allan.¹¹ In the foreword to Bryan Hewitt's biography of his great-uncle, Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles (1939-2010) thought Allan's work would have been 'deeper' if the Bowles family had been more co-operative. Although a more detailed family history is included, it added little new information.¹² Both emphasised Bowles' role as a plant collector and

of Narcissus (Martin Hopkinson, 1934). Books on anemones and snowdrops were never completed.

¹⁰ Natural History Museum, MSBOW, 'Bowles Opuscula: Set of Periodical Articles and Notes, reprinted from the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*' (1916-1951).

¹¹ Mea Allan, *E A Bowles and his Garden at Myddelton House 1865-1954* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973).

¹² Bryan Hewitt, *The Crocus King, E A Bowles of Myddelton House* (London: Rockingham Press, 1997), p. 11.

botanical artist, as well as his philanthropic work, but gave less attention to his garden's design.

Early Life

Bowles, as a younger son, was expected to earn his own living and in October 1884, he went to Jesus College, Cambridge to study divinity. An eye infection when he was eight years-old had left him virtually blind in his right eye and unlike his brothers, Henry (1858-1943) and John (1860-1887), who went to Harrow, Bowles was educated at home with his sister, Medora (1868-1887).

In 1887, he started to prepare for ordination in the Church of England, but when John and Medora died from tuberculosis within months, his parents asked him to remain at home. Like his father, he attended Jesus Church, Forty Hill, where he encouraged local boys to achieve their potential, firstly by starting a night school in 1888.¹³ Bowles never married and as Hadfield commented 'he devoted himself to social work, painting, and natural history, particularly entomology'.¹⁴

The Artist

Bowles started drawing as a child. In 1889 he accompanied his brother, Henry and Florence Broughton (1867-1935) on their honeymoon to the south of France and on a visit to Thomas Hanbury's garden, La Mortola in Ventimiglia,¹⁵ he saw *Iris stylosa* and *Rosa banksia* flowering for the first time and decided to paint them:

¹³ In 1894, he became a lay reader and was a warden from 1913 until his death.

¹⁴ Hadfield, *History of British Gardening*, p. 383.

¹⁵ The Bowles family were friends of the Capel Hanburys, who lived nearby at Manor House, Waltham Cross.

This was to be his practice to the end of his days, and by then the walls of Myddelton House were covered with beautiful studies of anemones, crocuses, snowdrops and daffodils, reproducing in paint and pencil almost every species that grew in his garden.¹⁶

Bowles was self-taught and never exhibited his work in galleries. However, he was awarded the Royal Horticultural Society's Grenfell Medal for his botanical paintings: silver medals in 1929, 1931 and 1932 and a gold in 1928 (Figure 6.6).



Figure 6.6: E A Bowles, *Crocus aureus* (March 1895)

The Lindley Library's archive also contains paintings of Myddelton House and the places he visited, as well as his flower paintings. Figure 6.7 shows a group of different coloured tulip and auriculas and Figure 6.8 depicts cedars near the front of Myddelton House.

¹⁶ Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, p. 41.



Figure 6.7: E A Bowles, *A Collection of Flowers* (1933) and Figure 6.8: E A Bowles, *Cedars, Myddelton House Garden*

The Gardener

Plants and entomology were Bowles' childhood hobbies.¹⁷ As a boy, he had his own piece of garden, 'For outdoor exercise, [...] I spent all the time I could working in a sunny garden plot filled with bulbous plants.'¹⁸ He learned about wildflowers from his maternal great aunt, Cornelia Solly (1795-1885), who lived in Devon, 'My interest in Geraniums dates from the day when as a small boy in a sailor suit I gathered a bunch of the Pencilled Crane's-bill, *G[eranium] striatum*.'¹⁹ Above all, he remembered her gift of *Geranium striatum* and two seedlings of *Geranium pratense*, which he continued to grow at Myddelton, 'The cloud of blue blossoms is delightful in July, and I always enjoy the long line of blue snow that lies on the path under them.'²⁰

¹⁷ Hewitt, *The Crocus King*, pp. 20-21. At Cambridge, he joined the Entomological Society and went insect hunting in Wicken Fen.

¹⁸ MSBOW (Date unknown, but probably late 1940s-1950s).

¹⁹ Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, p. 92.

²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

Myddelton House

Bowles' father, Henry Carrington Treacher (1830-1918) inherited Myddelton House when his uncle, Henry Carrington Bowles (1801-1852) died without an heir.²¹ The house, built in 1818, was named after Sir Hugh Myddelton, whose scheme in 1613 for a thirty-five-mile canal that linked Hertfordshire to New River Head in Clerkenwell provided London with a fresh water supply.²² In comparison with some nineteenth-century estates, Myddelton House comprised only 8 acres.²³

The Garden 1888-1914

Around 1888, Bowles' father and the plantsman and garden writer, Canon Henry Ellacombe (1822-1916) encouraged him to re-develop Myddelton's garden.²⁴ Most of it was redesigned before 1914, but after his father died in 1918, Bowles introduced some new areas. In February 1908, Bowles outlined the problems he faced, 'The garden is not mine, but my father's, in which I am allowed to garden with limitations.'²⁵ The garden comprised a number of ancient trees including a cedar of Lebanon and a *Taxodium distichum*.²⁶ Not only was the garden in one of the driest parts of Britain, until self-sown trees were removed, Bowles had to plant carefully.

²¹ Hewitt, *The Crocus King*, p. 18. He had to take the name 'Bowles'.

²² (<https://www.londongardenstrust.org/features/myddelton.htm>) [Accessed 20 October 2018].

²³ (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000243>) [Accessed 10 October 2018].

²⁴ As a descendent of Sir Hugh Myddelton, Ellacombe had shares in the New River Company.

²⁵ E A Bowles, 'The Story of My Garden: An Amateur Gardener's Experience', *The Gardener* (15 February 1908), p. 315.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

Bowles would have known about the debate that had taken place between William Robinson and Reginald Blomfield, as Robinson and Gertrude Jekyll were his friends. His own gardening philosophy was:

Except for the Irises I have not massed my plants, being more of a botanist than artistic-gardener, and preferring to have one specimen of as many different genera and species as possible, than a blaze of colour from several hundred of one thing.²⁷

It appears that he used the word, 'artistic' to distance himself from Reginald Blomfield's comments:

The engineer, is no doubt, a man of ability and attainment, but there is nothing in his training to qualify him to deal with a problem which is in the main artistic; and the landscape gardener makes it his business to dispense with serious design.²⁸

Although collecting bulbs and alpine plants in Britain and Europe was Bowles' principal interest, his writing and contemporary articles show that his garden was not just a collection of plants.²⁹ In 1907 he reported, 'Yet another meaningless rabble of Laurels, Snowberry and Horse Chestnuts disappeared last spring to make room for a pergola for the new Chinese vines.'³⁰ In 1909, the horticultural writer, Reverend Joseph Jacob (1858-1926), also a botanical artist and collector of daffodils and tulips, noted, 'The present Lord High

²⁷ Bowles, 'The Story of My Garden', p. 325.

²⁸ Reginald Blomfield, *The Formal Garden in England* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1892), p. 243.

²⁹ EAB/1, Myddelton House and Garden, c 1867 – c 1950s.

³⁰ Bowles, 'The Story of My Garden', p. 315.

Gardener has a weakness for great earthenware oil jars and weird water-jugs which he a-sort-of-half collects, especially if they have a little historical interest attached to them'.³¹ The stone slabs which form the seat in Figure 6.9 came from London Bridge.



Figure 6.9: Stone Seat in the River Terrace (1911)

In 1899, before Gough Park in Enfield, which his father owned, was demolished, Bowles rescued some ornamental features that appealed to him.³² One was a red-brick pillar, 'I had longed for this lovely pillar to live nearer me that I might see it oftener, and so found it easy work to persuade my kind father to let me try to move it.'³³ The pillar was combined with a wall, something Bowles had also wanted for some time.³⁴ To complete it, a stone

³¹ Joseph Jacob, 'Myddelton House: Its Garden & its Gardener', *The Garden* (June 1909), p. 319. A scrapbook comprises articles about pergolas and rose pillars, many from *Country Life* and it seems probable that Bowles read about the gardens it featured.

³² *Transactions of the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society* (London: Bishopsgate Institute, 1860), p. 319. Gough Park was built in the 1720s by Captain Harry Gough (1681-1751), a prominent member of the East India Company.

³³ Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, pp. 140-141.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

ball, also from Gough Park, was placed on top (Figure 6.10).³⁵ Two ‘man-high’ lead ostriches from Gough Park’s roof, made by the Bulbeck Factory in Cambridgeshire in 1724, were placed by the iron-railed bridge over the river (Figure 6.10).



Figure 6.10: The Irishman’s Shirt and Figure 6.11: Lead Ostrich (1909)

Bowles’ design for the pergola and its surrounding garden showed he planned it with considerable attention to detail. Possibly his watercolour of a pergola at Robinson’s Gravetye Manor was painted at this time (6.12). Unlike, many of the elaborate pergolas in Edwardian gardens, Bowles made his with larch poles, but placed a sundial and earthenware oil jars in the surrounding garden (Figure 6.13).

³⁵ Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, p. 67. Called ‘the Irishman’s shirt’ as it reminded Bowles of a story about an Irishman asking a lady to sew a button on his shirt.



6.12: E A Bowles, *Pergola, Gravetye Manor*



Figure 6.13: Pergola and Surrounding Garden (1909)

Bowles described the care he took with its planting, in particular the colour of the roses:

[I] planned most carefully, with all my notes of shows and all the catalogues of the year to help me, so as to begin one with yellows, oranges and lemons both, and those indescribable shades that have

sufficient affinity with a yellow to be flattered in catalogues as copper-salmon, apricot, chamois, nankeen, or straw colour.³⁶

In one bed he planted the Lyon-rose and the orange-yellow 'Madame Ravary' with smaller roses, 'Canarien Vogel', 'Sulphurea', and the white, 'Perle d'Or' in the front. The theme for the opposite bed was pink shading to crimson, but edged with smaller pink and white roses: 'Mrs W H Cutbush', pink, and 'Mignonette' and 'Anna Maria de Montravel', white.³⁷ Larger roses included the rose pink 'Madame Abel Chatenay' and 'Prince de Bulgarie', and the crimson 'Cramoisi Supérieur'.

The small rose garden was typical of Edwardian garden design apart from its centrepiece, Enfield's Market Cross, which Bowles from a scrapyard and planted the single white-flowered *Rosa laviegata* to climb up it (Figure 6.14).³⁸ Eight beds encircled the Cross: four planted with roses, each in a single colour. 'Frau Karl Drushki' was white; 'Madame Caroline Testout' and 'Mrs Henry Bowles', pink; 'Rayon d'Or', yellow; and the single-flowered, *Rosa chinensis* 'Miss Lowe', crimson.³⁹ The remaining four beds were planted with carnations.⁴⁰

³⁶ Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, pp. 48-49.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 49.

³⁸ It was taken down in 1904 and Bowles acquired it a few years later.

³⁹ Also known as 'Sanguinea' or 'Bengal Crimson'.

⁴⁰ Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, pp. 47-48.



Figure 6.14: Market Cross and Rose Beds (1909)

After Bowles admired Canon Ellacombe's irises at Bitton in Gloucestershire, he decided to plant an iris walk (Figure 6.15). The walk along the New River loop was 29-yards long and 8-feet deep and planned to flower between May and June:

A thick mass of *I[ris] florentina* bloom now of blue-grey only relieved by a few Martagon lilies. What strikes me as the greatest change since the last visit is the varied range of colouring now in the beds. Then the show had consisted of the cool lavender grey of the *florentina* and the deep blue purples of *[Iris] germanica* forms, while the Intermediate iris 'Golden Fleece', and a few belated flowers of 'Leander' provided all there was of yellow. Now in some beds, where we have grouped yellow varieties together, there is a rich golden effect, and the mauves, lilacs and pinks of forms of *I[ris] pallida* contrast with white and purple *amoenas*, and the thunderstorm bronzes and lurid buffs of *squalens*

varieties in other beds, to form the rainbow effect one expects in an Iris garden.⁴¹



Figure 6.15 The Iris Walk (1910)

On the opposite bank of the New River, the Tulip Walk was the only part of the garden where Bowles designed a formal bedding scheme, which he painted (Figure 6.16).⁴² Again he commented on the tulips' colours in the fifteen box-edged beds, 'The terrace garden between the Yew hedge by the river is always filled with my favourites of the Darwins, and in May gives a glorious stretch of colour, carpeted with forget-me-nots' (Figure 6.17).⁴³

⁴¹ Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, p. 14. *Amoenas* are bi-coloured irises and *squalens*, brown varieties.

⁴² Bowles' birthday was celebrated with a Tulip Tea.

⁴³ Bowles, 'The Story of My Garden', p. 315.



Figure 6.16: E A Bowles, *New River Terrace*



Figure 6.17: Tulips on the New River Terrace (1915)

Whilst Bowles acknowledged that it was ‘fashionable nowadays to affect a horror of bedding plants’, after the tulips finished, four beds were planted with succulents and other tender plants.⁴⁴ Contrary to his writing that

⁴⁴ Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, p. 196 and p. 252. As a child, Bowles collected cacti and succulents.

he did not favour 'a blaze of colour from several hundred of one thing', he filled the beds with one species:⁴⁵

Nothing is so satisfying to the eye as, *Salvia* 'Pride of Zurich', which goes out in June as nice little bushy plants with fiery scarlet heads, and flares away in ever-increasing, red-hot refulgence until a sharp October frost throws a pailful of cold water on its glowing cinders and puts out their glory.⁴⁶

The Garden 1918-1939

Bowles did not always follow Edwardian garden fashion and although he planned a Japanese garden, he changed his mind when, 'that sort of thing became fashionable, and bronze cranes and stone lanterns met one in all sort of unsuitable surroundings.'⁴⁷ Instead, he designed a garden that was unusual at the time, the 'Lunatic Asylum', for his 'demented plants'.⁴⁸ These were plants that showed unusual forms and shapes: the first, the corkscrew hazel, *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta' (Figure 6.18).⁴⁹

Other trees included a twisted hawthorn, *Cryptomeria japonica* 'Cristata' two laburnums, the oak-leafed, *Laburnum anagroides* 'Quercifolium', and one with curled leaves, *Laburnum anagroides* 'Involutum'. He also planted the double form of the pink hens-and-chicken daisy, the green primrose, the red and variegated forms of the plantain,

⁴⁵ Bowles, 'The Story of My Garden', p. 315.

⁴⁶ Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, p. 256.

⁴⁷ Bowles, *My Garden in Spring*, p. 179. Bowles alluded to the architect, Josiah Conder (1852-1920), who wrote *Landscape Gardening in Japan* (Tokyo: 1893, Edition Leopold Classic Library).

⁴⁸ Ibidem, p. 178.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, p. 179. *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta', found by Henry John Moreton-Reynolds, 3rd Earl Ducie, was given to Bowles by Canon Ellacombe.

Plantago major rubrifolia and *Plantago major variegata*, and the double-flowered strawberry. Bowles' conclusion was, 'Does my Lunatic Asylum appal you? I cannot tear some visitors away from it, and others who do not care about the demented inmates are pleased with the effect of the surroundings.'⁵⁰ Four years after his death, Elliott described his garden and noted that nurseries now stocked some of his treasures.⁵¹



Figure 6.18: *Corylus avellana* 'Contorta'

Today, trees, shrubs and plants with leaves other than green play a large part in garden design, as they create a range of effects that enhance the garden throughout the year. Bowles had reservations, as he was concerned they would be planted more for effect than where they would thrive:

I fear I am a little impatient of the school of gardening that encourages the selection of plants merely as artistic furniture, chosen for colour

⁵⁰ Bowles, *My Garden in Spring*, p. 190.

⁵¹ Clarence Elliott, 'Crazy Plants', *Illustrated London News* (1 March 1958), p. 27.

only, like ribbons on embroidery silks. I feel sorry for plants that are obliged to make a struggle for life in uncongenial situations because their owner wishes all things of those shades of pink, blue or orange to fit in next to the grey and crimson planting.⁵²

Yet unlike many of his contemporaries, Bowles enjoyed plants with different coloured or variegated leaves and a garden, Tom Tiddler's Ground, named after a children's game, was designed for them, 'I have given a hearty welcome to all forms that have come my way. [.....] For the last three years been trying to group the really beautiful forms of variegated plants in an irregularly shaped parcel of ground.'⁵³

Some gardeners still dislike variegated foliage, but many are enthusiastic. Variegated plants are now popular as articles and specialist nurseries promote them. The ambivalence towards variegated plants 'is related to their artifice, and [.....] that they are the result of man's hand in that while many occur in the wild, they would not survive without careful husbandry.'⁵⁴

One corner of Tom Tiddler's Ground was planted with the grey-leaved plants that Jekyll recommended. Other areas were planted with purple, gold or white-variegated plants. Bowles always emphasised his botanical interest and recorded that not all maintained their colour throughout the seasons. As he noted, 'in the grey corner where *Centaurea clementei*, perhaps the most silvery of all white-leaved things, has come through two winters', and the

⁵² Bowles, *My Garden in Spring*, pp. 18-19.

⁵³ Ibidem, p. 192.

⁵⁴ Jan Woudstra, "Striped Plants", First Collections of Variegated Plants in Late Seventeenth-Century Gardens', *Garden History*, 34 [1] (Summer 2006), p. 65.

purple-leafed plants often lost their deep colour in late summer.⁵⁵ These included *Berberis thunbergii atropurpureum*, the purple-leaved hazel, *Corylus maximus* ‘purpurea’; and the purple-leaved plum, *Prunus pissardii nigra*. In summer, there were the golden leaves of *Ribes aureum*, *Acer californica aurea*, *Robinia pseudoacacia* ‘Frisia’, the golden feverfew, *Tanacetum parthenium* ‘Aurea’ and the golden thyme, *Thymus pulegiodes* ‘Aureus’, which gave him great pleasure.⁵⁶ Over time Bowles collected so many variegated plants and shrubs, varieties of *Cornus*, *Weigela* and *Philadelphus*, that he planted them all over the garden.

After Bowles inherited a life interest in Myddelton House, he was able to fulfil his dream of creating an alpine meadow on sloping ground beneath his rock garden. Yet his inspiration did not come from Robinson or Willmott’s alpine garden at Warley Place, near Brentwood, where grassy areas were planted with snowdrops, crocus and daffodils.⁵⁷ It came from his travels:

The alpine meadow is my beau ideal of a large flower bed, and when flowers of every hue are distributed over a waving undergrowth of greenery of all shades from bronze to pea green, and thence to the green of the sea even, the most combative tints are rendered peaceful, and their sharp corners rubbed off to the sensitive eyes, by the wholesome balm of surrounding verdure. I would give up anything possible [.....] to achieve even a quarter of an acre of such a meadow as those I was

⁵⁵ Bowles, *My Garden in Spring*, p. 193.

⁵⁶ Ibidem, p. 196. He planned to continue this gold theme near the river.

⁵⁷ Bowles and Willmott shared plant interests and she proposed his membership of to the Royal Horticultural Society’s Council in 1906.

rushed past on the autobus on the outskirts of Predazzo in the Dolomites.⁵⁸

He had definite ideas about how it should be planted:

Daffodils never make a braver show than when growing in grass, and so arranged that the grass may be seen as well as the Daffodils. Where they are planted too thickly in wide stretches they too frequently suggest a crop instead of natural colonies, and an acre of crowded yellow blossoms resembles a field of Charlock or Mustard.⁵⁹

This differed from Robinson, '[I] planted my many thousands of *Narcissi* in the grass never doubting that I should succeed with them, but not expecting I should succeed nearly so well.'⁶⁰ Bowles thought that only two-thirds of the ground should be planted with daffodils, with the remaining third, grass.⁶¹

As well as daffodils, the meadow was planted with a succession of bulbs, starting with snowdrops and crocus and later, the pheasant-eye *Narcissus* and *Camassia* (Figure 6.19). In summer, it was a mass of meadow cranesbill.⁶²

⁵⁸ Bowles, *My Garden in Summer*, pp. 219-220.

⁵⁹ Bowles, *Handbook of Narcissus*, p. 226.

⁶⁰ Robinson, *The English Flower Garden*, p. 158.

⁶¹ Bowles, *Handbook of Narcissus*, p. 230.

⁶² Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, p. 144.



Figure 6.19: Daffodils in the Alpine Meadow (2017)

During the 1930s, Bowles started to experience financial difficulties. He only had a life interest in Myddelton House and his income came mostly through shares in the New River Company. Myddelton remained as it was during his parents' lifetime with no modern conveniences, which he appeared not to mind. In 1939, he told his friend, Richard [Dick] Trotter (1887-1968) how grateful he was that his friend, William Miller Christie (1869-1939), had left him an annuity of £150 a year.⁶³ In 1944, he discussed his financial problems with Lewis Palmer (1887-1959), one of his executors, and he and Trotter offered to buy part of his book collection for £1,000.⁶⁴

Many of Bowles' friendships stemmed from his knowledge of alpinism, in particular, his important friendship with the artist-gardener and plant hunter, Reginald Farrer. When they met, Bowles had already made a rock garden. Started in 1893, it was completely different to Crisp's at Friar Park

⁶³ Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, pp. 207-208.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 218-219.

and Willmott's at Warley Place and was designed to provide the right conditions for his alpine plants (Figure 6.20). As Bowles described it:

My rock garden is a home-made affair, that is to say I planned, built, and planted it, and have had the chief hand in caring for it for twenty years. When I say I built, I chose out the stone for each position. [.....] It was formed a bit at a time, and always under the belief that the present piece of work was to be the very utmost extent that was likely to be undertaken, and so of necessity it possesses many faults.⁶⁵



Figure 6.20: Rock Garden (1910)

Nevertheless, as Bowles understood the problems of designing rock gardens, others sought his help. Edward Stanhope Rashleigh (1865-1950), one of his closest friends,⁶⁶ lived nearby at Roselands, an eighteenth-century house in Turkey Street, Enfield.⁶⁷ In 1902, Bowles recorded he visited

⁶⁵ Bowles, *My Garden in Spring*, p. 252.

⁶⁶ Rashleigh, a supporter of the local church and community, accompanied Bowles on a plant-hunting trip in 1928.

⁶⁷ Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, D4452/5/7/5/10. Roselands and other properties were transferred to Bowles' father on 24 August 1883.

Roselands on 15 January and the rockery was built on 23 January. In January 1908, he built and planted his brother, Henry's rock garden at Forty Hall, Enfield.⁶⁸

Reginald John Farrer (1880-1920)

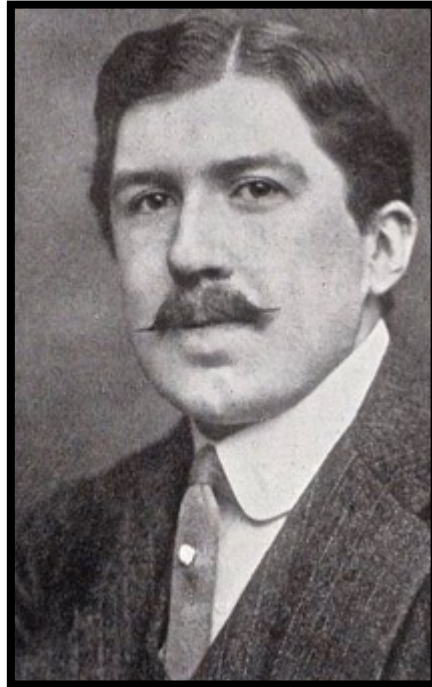


Figure 6.21: Reginald Farrer

Farrer has been described as the dominant figure of the Edwardian Rock Garden. His reputation as a traveller, plant collector and author was established when he met Bowles in May 1909 at the Royal Horticultural Society (Figure 6.21).⁶⁹ Bowles was fifteen years older, but their shared interest in plants resulted in them arranging to meet soon after at Mont Cenis in the Alps, the first of many joint plant hunting trips.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, p. 82.

⁶⁹ Reginald Farrer, *The Gardens of Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011, First published, 1904).

⁷⁰ EAB 2/3/12, has several letters from Farrer to Bowles. Although Bowles travelled in Europe with Farrer, he never accompanied him on his trips to Asia.

Farrer's contemporaries thought him eccentric, in particular when he became a Buddhist on a trip to Ceylon in 1907, or when he made a rock garden on a gorge near Clapham by firing a shotgun of seeds from a boat.⁷¹ He was also controversial, 'Farrer had a compelling charm – for those who got past his brusque manner and could tolerate his piercing voice. A man of strong likes and dislikes, he could not suffer fools gladly, and the fools knew it.'⁷² Bowles took no notice of Farrer's idiosyncrasies, 'what mattered was that Farrer was a superb plant hunter and plantsman.'⁷³ Farrer, too appreciated Bowles as 'an equally valuable friend not simply for his horticultural knowledge, experience and enthusiasm, but also for his wise, tolerant, steady and reliable character and general sense of humour.'⁷⁴

Early Life

Like Bowles, Farrer was educated at home, as he needed several operations to repair a cleft lip and palate.⁷⁵ He was educated at home, but went to Balliol College, Oxford to study Greats in 1898. At Oxford, he met the author and politician, Aubrey Herbert (1880-1923). After he left Oxford, he went to Japan where Herbert was working, but also visited China and Korea.⁷⁶

⁷¹ Reginald Farrer, 'Dalesman, Intrepid Plant Hunter and Gardener' (<https://www.kew.org/read-and-watch/reginald-farrer-dalesman-intrepid-plant-hunter-and-gardener>) [Accessed 24 October 2018]. The experiment was success and was acknowledged as 'the only true natural rock garden in the country'.

⁷² Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, p. 97. Despite being embarrassed, Bowles stood by Farrer when his preface to *My Garden in Spring* caused a furore

⁷³ Ibidem, p. 97.

⁷⁴ John Illingworth & Jane Routh (Edited), *Reginald Farrer: Dalesman, Plant Hunter, Gardener* (Lancaster: Centre for North West Regional Studies, 1991), p. 5.

⁷⁵ Rebecca Pullen, *Reginald Farrer's Rock Garden, Clapham, North Yorkshire: Analytical Study and Assessment*, Research Report Series 7 (2016) [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Rebecca_Pullen/publication/308597992_Reginald_Farrer%27s_private_rock_garden_Influential_innovations_in_Edwardian_horticulture/links/5813395d08aedc7d8961bb38/Reginald-Farrers-private-rock-garden-Influential-innovations-in-Edwardian-horticulture.pdf].

⁷⁶ Farrer, *The Gardens of Asia* described his travels.

The Artist

Like Bowles, Farrer learned to draw as a child, but later used his skill to paint the plants he collected. His painting of *Gentiana farreri*, named after him, depicts not just the plant, but its surroundings (Figure 6.22). However Farrer's depiction of *Meconopsis lepida* with his notes, is painted in the more conventional way (6.23). Unlike Bowles, an exhibition of his watercolours, 'Scenes & Flowers in Western China and Tibet', was held at the Fine Arts Society in April 1918.⁷⁷



Figure 6.22: Reginald Farrer, *Gentiana farreri* (1915) and Figure 6.23: Reginald Farrer, *Meconopsis lepida* (1914)

⁷⁷ Edinburgh Botanic Garden, GB 235 RJF, Reginald Farrer Archive comprises family history, correspondence, including letters from Bowles, and his expeditions to China (1914-1915) and Burma (1919-1920). RJF/2/3 includes 58 watercolours. Apart from two views, the rest depict plants. However, he left instructions that his diaries should be destroyed.

The Gardener

Farrer's family moved to Ingleborough Hall in North Yorkshire in 1889, where he climbed and acquired a knowledge and love of plants (Figure 6.24).⁷⁸



Figure 6.24: Euphemia Farrer (1839-1931), *Ingleborough Hall* (1893)

He became interested in gardening as a child and in 1894 when he was fourteen, he made a rock garden in a disused quarry on the Ingleborough estate, which he continued to adapt until his death, 'I have had to make the whole of this garden anew and anew. Even now, after more than ten years, there is a great deal yet that needs to be properly and thoroughly done before the garden could be called even decently well-made or successful' (Figure 6.25).⁷⁹

In 1901, Farrer opened the Craven Nursery near his home and built another rock garden.⁸⁰ Like Bowles, Farrer remained at his parents' home, as

⁷⁸ Ingleborough Hall, a shooting estate of around 30,000 acres, was inherited from an uncle.

⁷⁹ Reginald Farrer, *In a Yorkshire Garden* (London: Edward Arnold, 1909), p. 126.

⁸⁰ Reginald Farrer, *My Rock Garden* (London: Edward Arnold, 1907).

his father only allowed him a small allowance. This was one reason why he started to write gardening books.



Figure 6.25: Farrer's Rock Garden, Ingleborough Hall

Farrer's ambition was to grow as many alpines as possible in natural surroundings. In part of his rock garden, he created what became known as a *moraine* or scree garden. This provided his alpine plants with drainage in winter and water and humidity in summer.⁸¹ He helped Bowles to plan the *moraine* at Myddelton House.⁸²

Bowles and Farrer's Rock Garden Designs

When the Royal Horticultural Society was planning the rock garden at Wisley, near Guildford, Bowles became involved and in November 1911, he proposed and supervised some alterations (Figure 6.26).⁸³ He donated two collections

⁸¹ Reginald Farrer, *The English Rock-garden* (London: T C & E C Jack, 1919), pp. xxxv-xxxvi. A perforated water pipe about twelve inches was placed below the surface.

⁸² W E Th Ingerswien in F H Fisher, *Reginald Farrer: Author, Traveller, Botanist and Flower Painter* (Pershore: Alpine Garden Society, 1936), p. 37, suggested Farrer did not invent this, but brought various ideas together.

⁸³ Elliott, 'The British Rock Garden in the Twentieth Century', p. 4.

of plants, with one comprising 155 species. Farrer gave them saxifrages and primulas.



Figure 6.26: Upper Waterfall in the Rock Garden at Wisley (1912)

Bowles and Farrer helped Frederick Jansen Hanbury (1851-1935) to make a large rock garden at Brockhurst Park in East Sussex (Figure 6.27).⁸⁴ Hanbury, a botanist, collected rare wildflowers and plants in Britain. The garden was supported by a complex water system, comprising a succession of concrete tanks.⁸⁵ In 1916, Hanbury paid tribute to them, ‘I must mention my indebtedness to Mr Bowles for the valuable hints and suggestions made both at the commencement of our work and later, when Mr Farrer helped with his advice in making the *moraine* garden.’⁸⁶

Hanbury continued to improve the garden-and in November 1928 asked Bowles to ‘redesign a raw double-trenched bank of a dark pond, and in

⁸⁴ Bowles knew the Hanburys socially.

⁸⁵ F J Hanbury, ‘A Sussex Rock Garden’ *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, 42 (1916-1917), p. 273.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*.

the bestial weather it was not easy to stand in the rain and wind and mentally turn it into a picture of summer beauty' (Figure 6.27).⁸⁷



Figure 6.27: Moraine Garden, Brockhurst Park (1924)

As Bowles also knew Sir Frederick Stern (1884-1967), it is possible they advised him on his rock garden at Highdown in West Sussex (Figure 6.28).⁸⁸

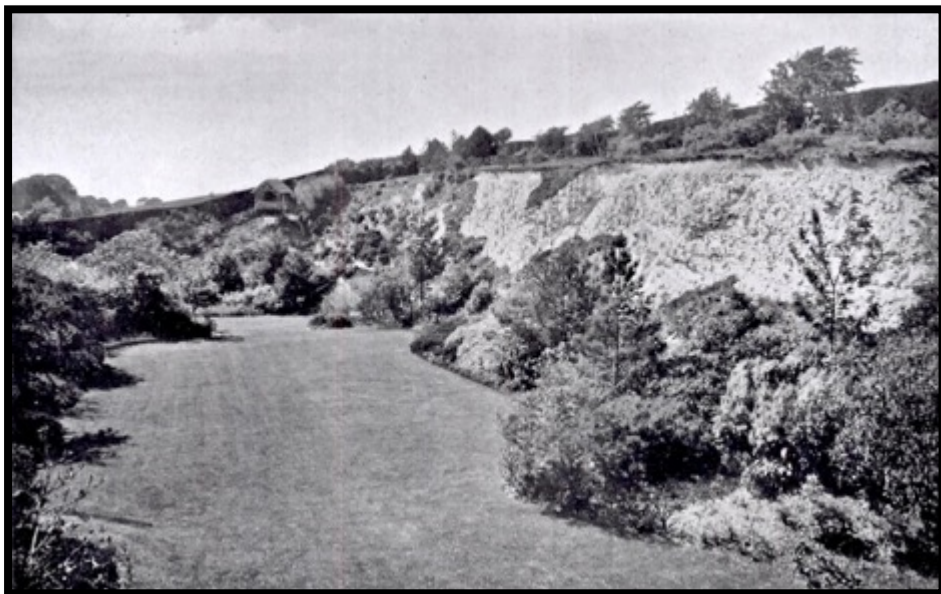


Figure 6.28: Highdown, Goring-by-Sea (1937)

⁸⁷ Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, p. 182

⁸⁸ F C Stern, *A Chalk Garden* (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960), p. 14.

Farrer died on a plant hunting trip to Burma in 1920. In 1932, the alpine plant specialist and writer, Walter E Th Ingwersen (1882-1960) paid tribute to his achievements, 'Every modern Rock Garden with its *moraine* or scree is a memory to him who put the Dog's grave, the Almond Pudding and the Devil's Lapful style of Rock Gardening to derision.'⁸⁹ Farrer's conclusion was, 'A fanaticism for beauty has always been the real key to my life, and all its happinesses and hindrances.'⁹⁰

Most of Bowles' friends were gardeners and although Frank Galsworthy was a keen gardener, he was also a successful artist. Their friendship lasted for nearly fifty years after they met at the Royal Horticultural Society in May 1907.⁹¹

Frank Galsworthy (1863-1959)



Figure 6.29: Frank Galsworthy (1920s)

⁸⁹ Ingerswen in Fisher, 'Reginald Farrer: Author, Traveller, Botanist and Flower Painter', p. 35 and p. 37.

⁹⁰ Reginald Farrer, *The Rainbow Bridge* (London: Edward Arnold, 1926), p. 273.

⁹¹ EAB/2/6/2, Letter, Galsworthy to Bowles, 23 April 1947.

Galsworthy came from a wealthy family (Figure 6.29). His father, Sir Edwin Galsworthy 1831-1920) was a lawyer, who later became a vice-president of the Royal Botanic Society.⁹²

Early Life

Little is known about Galsworthy's education, but he spent a year at the Slade School of Art. For a number of years, he worked as an architect, although no details have been found.⁹³ By 1911, painting had become his main occupation.⁹⁴ During in the 1920s and 1930s, Galsworthy was well-known, particularly in the USA, but information has had to be pieced together from websites, articles and letters in the Lindley Library, which has some of his botanical drawings.⁹⁵ The garden writer Graham Thomas (1907-2003) knew Galsworthy and wrote about his garden and paintings.⁹⁶

The Artist

Galsworthy is known principally for his flower paintings and botanical drawings, but he also painted landscapes in America, France and Morocco. Figure 6.30, an early painting depicts a fountain in the Luxemburg Gardens in Paris, whilst Figure 6.31, painted when he was in the USA, shows the marshes in South Carolina

⁹² The novelist, John Galsworthy (1867-1933) was his cousin.

⁹³ J E Grant-White, 'Flowers, Landscapes, Gardens: Mr Frank Galsworthy's Water-Colours', *Walker's Monthly* (June 1931), p. 3. In the 1891 and 1901 Censuses, he gave his occupation as 'architect', but in 1911 stated 'no occupation'.

⁹⁴ When his father died in 1920, he left him an income of £1,000 a year. Today £45,000.

⁹⁵ Chertsey Museum has articles and photographs of his garden and paintings. Lindley Library, GB 803 EAB/2/3/1, EAB/2/3/5, EAB/2/4/7 and EAB/2/6/2 includes letters to Bowles.

⁹⁶ Graham Stuart Thomas, *Recollections of Great Gardeners* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2003).



Figure 6.30: Frank Galsworthy, *Fontaine de l'Observatoire. Jardin du Luxembourg* (1912)



Figure 6.31: Frank Galsworthy, *Among the Marshes, South Carolina* (1928)

Flower Painting

Little is known about Galsworthy's early exhibitions, but shows in New York at the Anderson and Kinghorn Galleries between 1921 and 1925 confirm that his reputation was established.⁹⁷ A 1924 exhibition included paintings of

⁹⁷ Anonymous, 'Flower Paintings from Old English Gardens', *Art & Decoration*, 21-22 (March 1924), pp. 44-45.

poppies, larkspur, phlox, roses, iris and lupins.⁹⁸ He wrote to Bowles, ‘I had an exhibition of all my garden pictures, flower things and many landscapes. 3 rooms full, such fine rooms. I gathered together crowds of folks every day and all day and I became quite the sensation of the season!’⁹⁹ He also noted that a picture of tulips, painted at Myddelton House, had been greatly admired, ‘I hope to come down to see you and paint in May – more tulips in your old ginger jar! People almost quarrelled over that!’ (Figure 6.32).¹⁰⁰



Figure 6.32: Frank Galsworthy, *Tulips* (1926)

In Britain, Galsworthy exhibited at the Walker Gallery. One in June 1931 included flowers and landscapes.¹⁰¹ When Galsworthy visited Myddelton House, he and Bowles painted together:

⁹⁸ Anonymous, ‘Flower Paintings from Old English Gardens’, p. 44.

⁹⁹ EAB/2/3/1, Letter to Bowles, 29 January 1921, p. 1. He made a profit of £2,000 from selling his paintings, today, £98,640.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem, 29 January 1921, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰¹ Grant-White, ‘Flowers, Landscapes and Gardens’ pp. 2-3.

The two of them would go down to the garden and pick flowers, arrange them in vases and sit down and paint them together, but their styles were quite different. Whereas Galsworthy would often make an arrangement of different kinds of flowers in one vase, Bowles seldom did. His method was to make a group of vases, large and small with a different kind of flower in each (Figure 6.33 and Figure 6.34).¹⁰²



Figure 6.33: Frank Galsworthy, *Anemones* (1920) and Figure 6.34: E A Bowles, *Anemones*

Thomas, also a botanical artist, considered their paintings:

They were both expert artists when it came to flowers. I always think that Bowles got as near to the perfection of an original flower as anyone had ever done, flowers, foliage and often root as well. They both had a wonderful knack of making the shape of a curved petal with one stroke of the brush. Frank used a very wet brush and I have a painting of his

¹⁰² Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, p. 84.

of *Paeonia delawayi* which clearly shows not only the shape and colouring but the glossiness as well. He loved his flowers, but got a bit bored with the foliage.¹⁰³

The Gardener

It is not known when Galsworthy became interested in gardening, but around 1890, he acquired and restored a derelict, six-hundred-year-old cottage, Green Lane Farm in Chertsey with only an apple and a pear tree in the garden. It remained his home for the rest of his life.¹⁰⁴ In some ways, it was an Edwardian garden with formal areas around the house that included a sunken garden and a small rectangular lily pool (Figure 6.35 and Figure 6.36). However, Figure 6.37, the view shows that beyond the formal garden, the planting became informal and natural.



Figure 6.35: Formal Garden, Green Lane Farm (1933)

¹⁰³ Thomas, *Recollections of Great Gardeners*, p. 116.

¹⁰⁴ (<http://chertseymuseum-interactive.org.gridhosted.co.uk/people/frank-galsworthy-1863-1959>).

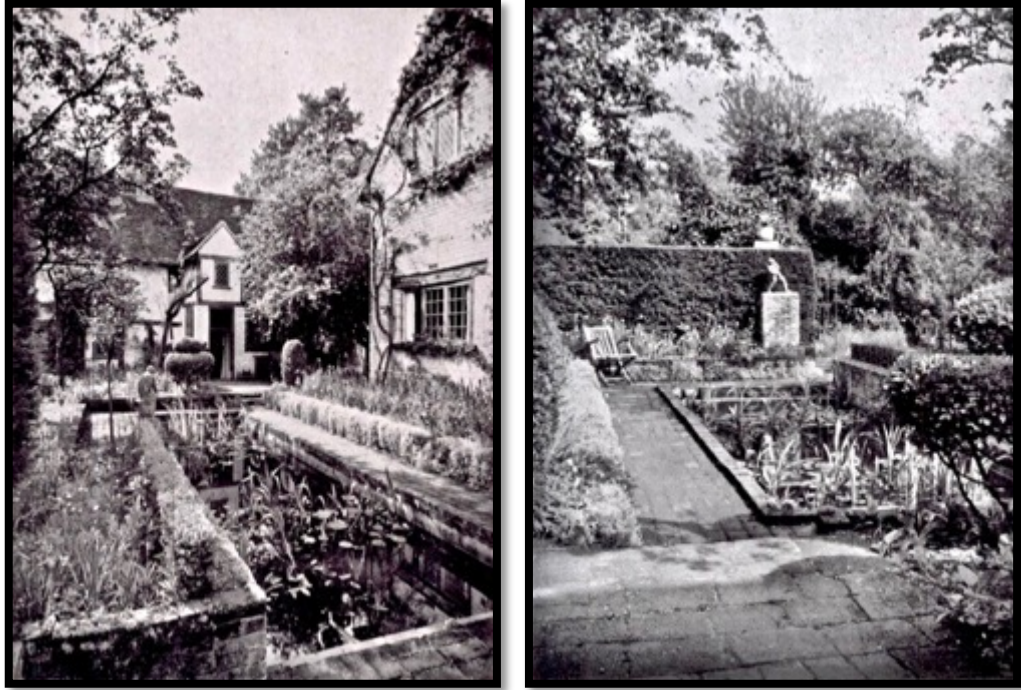


Figure 6.36: Lily Pool and Sunken Garden (1933) and Figure 6.37: Natural Areas Beyond the Formal Garden (1933)

Figure 6.38 shows the informal areas with its winding lawns backed by trees and planted with ferns.



Figure 6.38: Informal Area of the Garden in Summer (1933)

When Thomas visited, he admired ‘the wonderful collections of modern daffodils, auriculas and a huge range of primulas including several forms of *Primula sieboldii* (Figure 6.39).¹⁰⁵



Figure 6.39: Daffodil Walk in Spring (1933)

Although Galsworthy’s writing provides an insight into his ideas, his was a garden made for his own enjoyment where there would always be something of interest:

There are many objects that a person of taste can enjoy in a garden, and he should look for to the utmost. There are the shapes of seed pods and the forms, contours, and varied hue of leaves and stalks, for not only in autumn but all through the year one can observe and study the colors [sic] of foliage alone.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Thomas, *Recollections of Great Gardeners*, p. 116-117.

¹⁰⁶ Frank Galsworthy, ‘A Garden from an Artist’s Standpoint’, *Country Life*, XLI (American edition, March 1922), p. 37.

His philosophy was:

An artist is so accustomed to studying nature's lines that he imaginatively arranges things so that they make pictures and compose themselves into beautiful curves and shapes. In laying out a garden it should be borne in mind that the lines and curves of nature's own making are always harmonious and pleasing.¹⁰⁷

Bowles was always happy to encourage others and when his friend, Lady Beatrix Stanley (1877-1944) lived in India, she painted the local flora.¹⁰⁸ Bowles persuaded her to send him her paintings, and he and Galsworthy gave her advice.¹⁰⁹ She was awarded her first Royal Horticultural Society medal in 1931, 'An unusual feature of the Art display was a selection of paintings of Indian plants by Lady Beatrix Stanley which obtained a silver-gilt Grenfell medal.' These included vivid canna, bougainvillea and euphorbia, such as *Euphorbia pulcherrima* (Figure 6.40).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Galsworthy, 'A Garden from an Artist's Standpoint', p. 36.

¹⁰⁸ Between 1929 and 1934, her husband, Sir George Frederick Stanley (1872-1938) was Governor of Madras. She visited Bowles and he visited her at Sibbertoft Manor, near Market Harborough.

¹⁰⁹ Allan, *Bowles & His Garden*, p. 191.

¹¹⁰ Anonymous, 'Close of Chelsea Flower Show', *The Times*, 45830 (23 May 1921), p. 8. *Euphorbia pulcherrima* is better known as poinsettia. The Lindley Library has a collection of her paintings.



Figure 6.40: Beatrix Stanley, *Canna Lilies* (1931)

During their lives, Bowles, Farrer and Galsworthy's achievements were recognised. In 1916, Bowles was awarded the Royal Horticultural Society's Victoria Medal of Honour for his special contribution to horticulture and in 1926 became and remained one of the Society's vice-presidents. After his death, Bowles Corner, a small garden comprising plants associated with him was made adjacent to Wisley's rock garden. He and Farrer are also remembered for the large number of plants named after them. Bowles was anxious his garden would remain after his death, but one suspects he wanted his plant collection to survive.¹¹¹ Farrer's parents had little interest in his garden. Although Bowles and Farrer's reputations have survived, Galsworthy's has faded. Yet in 1927, in *Meanwhile: The Picture of a Lady*, H

¹¹¹ The garden was transferred to the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the Royal Free School of Medicine, It is now looked after by the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority.

G Wells referred to 'Mr Frank Galsworthy, the painter who has that beautiful cottage garden in Surrey.'¹¹²

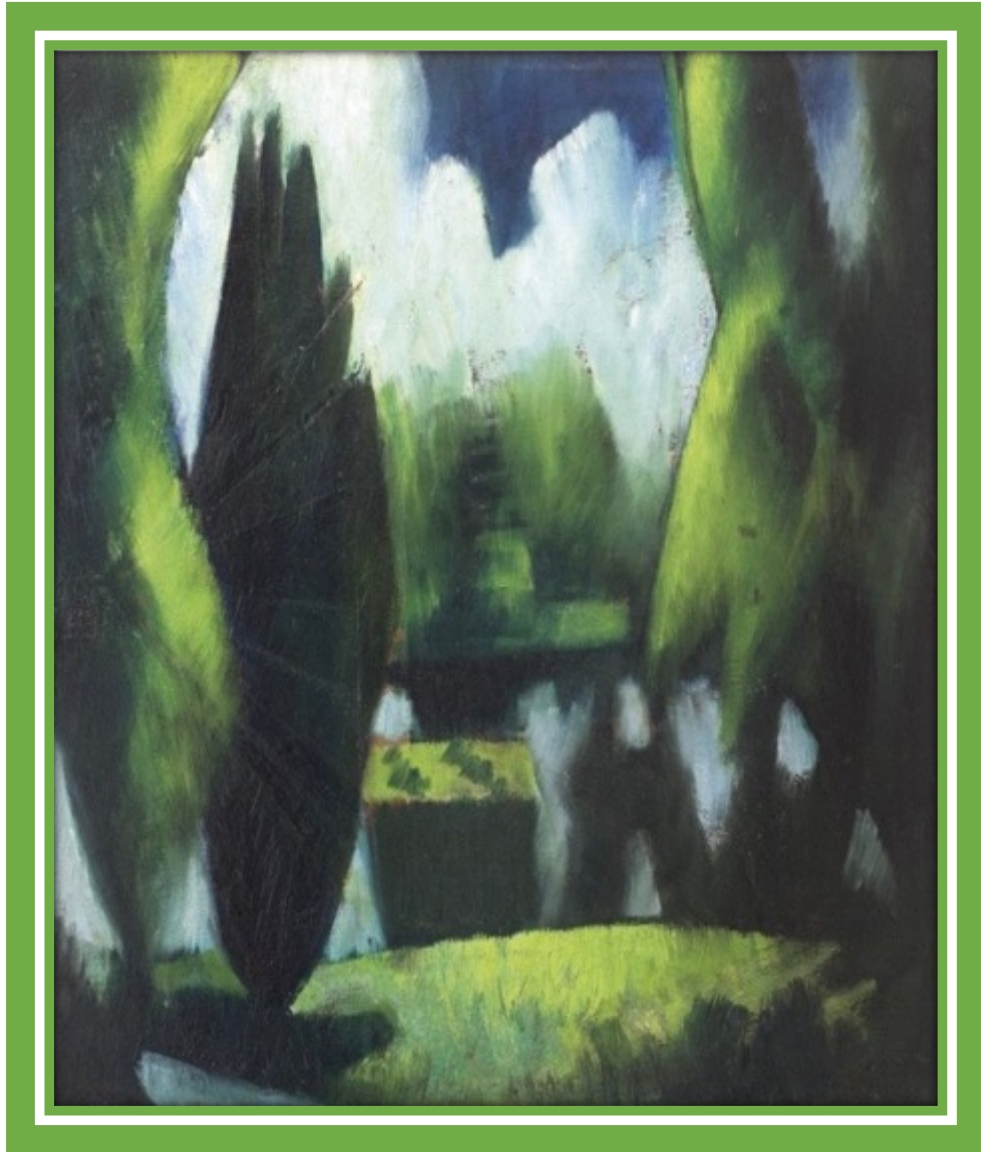
Probably neither Bowles nor Farrer wished to be remembered for garden design, but their concern for 'right plant, right place' has become a mantra for twentieth century gardeners. They had relatively small gardens and it has been shown that their design moved forward from Edwardian garden style. Farrer's ideas about rock gardening demonstrated that an attractive garden could be made without importing hundreds of tons of rocks. Galsworthy used his skill as an artist to emphasise the importance of form and shape, not just flowers, but their leaves, stalks and seed pods, which could provide interest throughout the year. Bowles' interest in collecting unusually shaped plants and ones with foliage other than green is now part of contemporary garden design. He also took forward Robinson's ideas on natural gardening. From the snowdrops and early crocuses in February through to the cranesbills in summer, his alpine meadow had a flowering period of several months. Meadow gardening is now at the forefront of modern design not just in Britain, but further afield.

¹¹² H G Wells, *Meanwhile: The Picture of a Lady* (London: Ernest Benn, 1927), p. 149.

Section II

The Long Afternoon 1918-1939

Introduction



Mark Gertler, *The Pond Garden, Garsington Manor* (1916)

‘There has never been a summer quite like that Indian summer between the two world wars, a period of gentle decline in which the sun set slowly on the British Empire and the shadows lengthened on the lawns of a thousand stately homes across the country.’

Adrian Tinniswood¹

Whilst the historian, Adrian Tinniswood agreed with this statement, he suggested that it was only part of what happened in Britain during the interwar period. In the aftermath of war, ideas about how Britain should go forward varied. One was that the country needed to return to, and maintain the comfortable existence of Edwardian England. Tinniswood emphasised the importance and continuation of the country house weekend in *The House Party*.² Yet the effect of social, economic and cultural changes, which had already started before the war, now had a greater impact and estate owners reacted differently. At the other end of the social spectrum, schemes to provide housing away from crowded and unhealthy cities resulted in a growing interest in gardening. This section considers the response to these changes by artist-gardeners in the interwar period.

Architects and Landscape Architects

After the war, Edwin Lutyens was less involved with garden design, as he was working in New Delhi and became involved with the War Graves Commission, as was Reginald Blomfield, whose practice never returned to its pre-war size. Thomas Mawson transferred the running of his practice to his son, Edmund (1885-1954). In 1929, he became the first president of the Institute of Landscape Architects, which established it as a profession in its own right. However, a new generation of architects emerged, whose designs were to have

¹ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend* (London, Jonathan Cape, 2016), p. ix.

² Adrian Tinniswood, *The House Party* (London, Faber & Faber, 2019).

a significant impact during this period. One was Philip Tilden (1887-1952) of whom it was written, ‘the story of his rise to fame and subsequent decline is a clear reflection of life between the wars’.³



Figure 1: Philip Tilden (1925)

Tilden’s designs epitomised the alternative story Tinniswood suggested, ‘which introduced new aesthetics, new social structures, new meanings to an old tradition, [.....] which saw new life to the country house.’⁴ Although Tilden was associated with Charles Masterman’s ‘super-wealthy’, an early commission was for the society hostess, Lady Ottoline Morrell (1873-1938) at Garsington Manor in Oxfordshire, which she and her husband, Philip (1870-1943) bought in 1913. Morrell was famed for entertaining and her guests included artists like Mark Gertler (1892-1930), whose painting of

³ James Bettley, ‘In the Swing of Fashion: The Architecture of Philip Tilden’, *Country Life*, 181 (1 January 1987), p. 42. Although Tilden became wealthy, he spent freely and invested badly.

⁴ Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend*, p. ix.

Garsington's pond is depicted on the frontispiece, and Dora Carrington (1893-1932), as well as the writers: Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), D H Lawrence (1885-1930), Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and members of the Bloomsbury Group. Around 1916, Tilden helped Morrell design an elaborate Italian garden, which was inspired by her visit to Villa Capponi in Florence. It comprised twenty-four square beds and an ornamental pool, part of which is seen in Figure 2 and which Gertler painted in 1918 (Figure 3). Later, Tilden helped Philip Morrell design the loggia (Figure 4). The garden was planted with roses, many of them standard, and the beds included Morrell's favourite flowers, brightly coloured zinnias, marigolds, snapdragons and sunflowers.



Figure 2: View of the Italian Garden, Garsington Manor (1925)



Figure 3: Mark Gertler, *The Garden, Garsington Manor* (1918)



Figure 4: Loggia and Garden Steps (1925)

Even more influential was Tilden's involvement at Edward, Prince of Wales' weekend home, Fort Belvedere in Windsor Great Park. Here, part of the garden was designed between 1929 and 1933 by Lawrence Johnston's friend, Norah Lindsay. Figure 5 shows one of Lindsay's trademark herbaceous borders.



Figure 5: Herbaceous Border Designed by Norah Lindsay, Fort Belvedere (1930s)

Both Tilden and Lindsay worked for the politician and art collector, Sir Philip Sassoon (1888-1939), who was renowned for his lavish hospitality at Trent Park in Hertfordshire and Port Lympne in Kent.⁵ He was one of Masterman's 'super-wealthy', of whom the Conservative politician, Lord Boothby (1900-1986), wrote 'Throughout the strange and often bewildering interwar period, [he] set the stage, with lavish splendour, for a social scene the like of which we shall never see again' (Figure 6).⁶

⁵ Sassoon's fortune came from the family banking business. In 1939, his estate was valued at £1,946,892, today £128,213,529.

⁶ Robert Boothby, *I Fight To Live* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1947), p. 48.

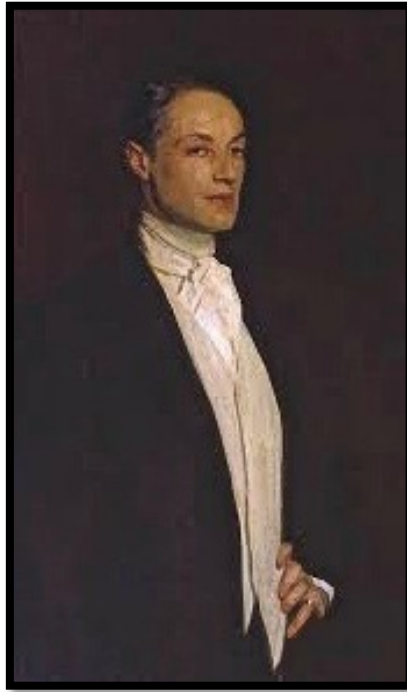


Figure 6: John Singer Sargent, *Sir Philip Sassoon* (1923)

Boothby's description of Trent Park shows the attention to detail this opulent entertaining required:

The beautifully proportioned red-brick house, the blue bathing-pool surrounded by such a profusion of lilies that the scent at night became almost overpowering, the flamingos and ducks, the banks of exquisite flowers in the dressing room, the red carnation and the cocktail on one's dressing table before dinner, were each a perfection of their kind.⁷

At Port Lympne, Sassoon wanted to celebrate the end of the war and Tilden's remit was to ensure that the house and garden signalled a new beginning. Figure 7 shows two enormous marble swimming pools on either side of a square pool with a spectacular central fountain.

⁷ Boothby, *I Fight to Live*, p. 50.



Figure 7: Swimming Pool and Fountain looking towards Romney Marsh (1923)

Lindsay was commissioned to ensure Port Lympne looked its best in August and her vast double herbaceous borders are depicted in Figure 8.⁸ Boothby described Sassoon's gardens, which he considered were his greatest achievement:

He understood better than any landscape architect, how to produce mass effects by the skilful clumping of quite ordinary plants and shrubs and he had a 'flair' for colour. No one who has ever seen the great border at Lympne, stretching from the house to the Marsh in the height of its glory during August and September can ever forget it.⁹

⁸ Allyson Hayward, *Norah Lindsay: The Life and Art of a Garden Designer* (London: Frances Lincoln, 2007), p. 140.

⁹ Boothby, *I Fight To Live*, p. 50.



Figure 8: Double Herbaceous Borders, Port Lympne (1929)

In contrast to the Edwardian style borders, Lindsay's design for a yew-enclosed garden, planted only with yellow marigolds, was more innovative and unusual (Figure 9)



Figure 9: Yellow Marigolds in the Striped Garden (1929)

Port Lympne was criticised by the architectural historian, Mark Girouard, who disapproved of Sassoon's flamboyant home, as it was 'not the

quiet good taste expected of a country gentleman'.¹⁰ However, Christopher Hussey thought Trent Park encapsulated that 'indefinable and elusive quality, the spirit of the country house [.....] an essence of cool, flowery, chintzy, elegant, constructive rooms that rises in the mind when we are thinking of country houses'.¹¹ Here, Lindsay also designed parts of the garden including the herbaceous borders on either side of the simple, but elegant, swimming pool, seen in Figure 10.¹²



Figure 10: Herbaceous Borders and Swimming Pool, Trent Park (1931)

Whilst Lindsay was designing gardens for the super-rich, which included the first female Member of Parliament, Nancy Astor's (1879-1964)

¹⁰ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House: A Social & Architectural History* (London: Yale University Press, 1978), p. 316. Whilst he may have been referring to its interior decorations, he could have been alluding to Sassoon's Jewish heritage and that his fortune came from new money.

¹¹ Christopher Hussey, 'The Words of Philip and Sybil', *Country Life*, 197 (17 April 2003), pp. 66-67.

¹² The orangery in the background was designed by Lawrence Johnston's friend, Reginald Cooper.

home at Cliveden, near Maidenhead in Berkshire, owners of landed estates encountered somewhat different circumstances.

During this period, changes in taxation introduced before 1914 started to have a significant effect on landowners. Death duties were levied at one per cent on estates valued between £100 to £500.¹³ As this threshold remained unchanged until 1945, over time the number of estates liable for tax rose from fifteen to forty per cent.¹⁴ Although a proposal to introduce a twenty per cent tax on profits from the sale of land was dropped in 1910, 'It paralysed all other sections of the real estate market by destroying confidence, it stimulated the sale of land by inducing many large landowners to sell out while the going was good.'¹⁵ Some owners sold land to enable them to keep their homes.

It has been estimated that between 1918 and 1921, one-fifth of England's cultivated land, 6.5 million acres, changed hands.¹⁶ Some large estates did not survive as an entity and, as *Country Life* reported in 1926, 'Some of the largest landed properties that have been sold recently have passed into the hands of buyers, who intend at an early date to have them re-sold in lots.'¹⁷ These sales often occurred after the owner died, for example Lord Alverston, whose executors sold his Winterford estate near Cranleigh in

¹³ The percentage collected was variable. On estates valued at £1 million and over, it was eight per cent. £100 in 1901, today. £12,383; 1918, £5,735; 1939, £6,585; 1945, £4,348.

¹⁴ Tony Atkinson, 'Wealth and Inheritance in Britain from 1896 to the Present', *CASEpapers*, 178 (November 2013), p.8. (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/58087/1/CASEpaper178.pdf>) Liability fell to ten per cent when it was raised to £2,000.

¹⁵ F M L Thompson, *English Society Revisited*, Volume 1 (Brighton: Edward Everest Root, 2017), p. 59.

¹⁶ Michael Thompson, 'The Land Market, 1880-1925: A Reappraisal Reappraised', *Agricultural History Review*, 55 (Issue 2, 2007), pp. 289-300.

¹⁷ Arbiter, 'The Estate Market: Sales and Resales', *Country Life*, 59 (20 March 1926), pp. xcii.

Surrey in 1920.¹⁸ Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, *Country Life* noted that several landed estates were for sale: Wretham Hall near Thetford, Norfolk; Hornby Castle, Lancashire; and Alresford Hall in Essex.¹⁹

Another way estates raised money was by selling some of their architectural features. When Trentham Hall in Staffordshire advertised stone balustrade and urns in 1912, it attracted little comment (Figure 11).²⁰ This practice continued after the war, for example in 1920 at Sutton Scarsdale Hall, the former home of the Arkwright family.²¹



Figure 11: Advertisement, Trentham Hall (1912)

The result was that many country houses with notable gardens, which were discussed in Section I, became schools and hospitals or were demolished. In 1909, Charles Tudway moved to the smaller Milton Lodge and during the

¹⁸ Arbiter, 'The Estate Market: Sale of Famous Old Houses', *Country Life*, 47 (21 February 1920), p. 246.

¹⁹ Arbiter, 'The Estate Market: Sales of Country Houses', *Country Life*, 85 (29 January 1939), p. 104.

²⁰ <http://www.victoriansociety.org/news/trentham=hall-staffordshire> [Accessed 22 September 2018].

²¹ Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend*, p. 19.

war The Cedars became a hospital. After her mother died in 1914, Margaret Waterfield left Nackington House and its beautiful garden in Canterbury. It was demolished during the 1920s (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Nackington House (1914)

After the 1929, the American Wall Street crash and the resulting economic depression in the 1930s, many people's financial position was affected still further. As a response to concerns about the future of Britain's historic houses, the National Trust was allowed to extend its remit. The 1937 Country House Scheme allowed owners to offer their houses to the Trust *in lieu* of death duties, and thus keep their estates intact.²²

In contrast to the difficulties of the wealthy, at the other end of the social spectrum, a number of initiatives took place to address the problems caused by urban expansion in the nineteenth century, which had resulted in people living in overcrowded housing. During the war, soldiers made gardens

²² In 1936, the National Trust appointed James Lees-Milne (1908-1997) to oversee the acquisition of country houses.

in the trenches and it was this interest in gardening in all levels of society, which would have a profound effect on garden design as the twentieth century progressed.

Garden Cities and Rural Development

As troops returned from the war, the government became concerned about civil unrest and ‘the possible consequences of several million highly trained and disaffected servicemen and conscripted industrial workers being let loose when, for the first time in history, rioters would be better trained than the troops.’²³ One way to provide Lloyd George’s ‘Homes fit for Heroes’ was to continue to create garden cities.²⁴ This started before the war after Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928) thought self-contained communities in a rural setting were the way to solve the problem of overcrowded cities.²⁵ The first was Letchworth in Hertfordshire in 1905, followed by Hampstead Garden Suburb in 1906.²⁶ Welwyn Garden City was started in 1920.

The only social housing schemes were charitable ventures, for example the model village at New Earswick, near York, which Joseph Rowntree (1836-1925) commissioned Unwin & Parker to design in 1903. Each home had a garden planted with two fruit trees.²⁷ Successful entrepreneurs like George Cadbury (1839-1922) at Bournville, near Birmingham and William Hesketh

²³ Alison Ravetz, *Council Housing and Culture: The History of a Social Experiment* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 76-77. By 1922, European dynasties had fallen: the Romanovs in Russia, the Hapsburgs in Austria and the Ottoman Empire.

²⁴ Anonymous, ‘Mr Lloyd George on His Task’, *The Times*, 41956 (25 November 1918), p. 13. Report of his speech in Wolverhampton, 23 November 1918.

²⁵ Ebenezer Howard, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1898), Ebenezer Howard, *Garden Cities of Tomorrow* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1902).

²⁶ The 1919 Housing & Town Planning Act allowed local authorities to build houses and also act as landlord. Becontree Estate in Dagenham, Essex built between 1921 and 1935 was one of the largest.

²⁷ The architect Raymond Unwin (1863-1940) was also involved in Hampstead Garden Suburb.

Lever (1851-1925) at Port Sunlight in the Wirral also provided houses for their workers. In the mid-1920s, Francis Henry Crittall (1880-1935) built a model village at Silver End, near Braintree in Essex for the employees of Crittall Windows. The houses, all with gardens, were of a Modernist design.²⁸

When the Metropolitan Line Railway was extended in north-west London from 1915, it promoted the idea of idyllic cottages, wildflowers and country pursuits to encourage people to travel to work (Figure 13 and Figure 14).



Figure 13: London Metropolitan Railway Poster (1914) and Figure 14: Douglas Constable, *Fishing in Metroland* (1932)

Garden Design

As has been shown, Lindsay's garden designs were a continuation of Edwardian style. Her wide herbaceous borders exemplified this and an awareness of Jekyll's ideas on colour was reflected in her planting. This

²⁸ Designed by Thomas Smith Tait (1882-1954) and Frederick Edward Bradshaw Macmanus (1903-1985).

Section explores whether artist-gardeners continued this trend or whether they had different ideas.

However, Morrell's Italian style garden at Garsington Manor demonstrated that garden owners wanted gardens not only in the English style, but ones reminiscent of their travels. In Europe, new ideas about garden design were being suggested. At the 1925 L'Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, the Armenian architect, Gabriel Guevrekian (1900-1970) exhibited *Le Jardin d'eau et de lumière* (Figure 15). A geometric design of an equilateral triangle, divided into smaller triangles, included four pools and a revolving globe.²⁹ It was a visual experience that was intended to be viewed from above (Figure 16).



Figure 15: Gabriel Guevrekian, *Drawing for Le Jardin d'eau et de lumière* (1925)

²⁹ Dorothee Imbert, *The Modernist Garden in France* (London, Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 126-128. In many of Le Corbusier's (1887-1955) designs, the garden was not to stroll in, but was to be viewed from the first floor.



Figure 16: Revolving Globe in *Le Jardin d'eau et de lumière* (1925)

Charles de Noailles, Lawrence Johnston's friend, asked Guevrekian to design a similar garden for his house in Hyères. The garden was framed with orange trees and the chequerboard pattern, edged with white cement and filled with mosaic and tulips, was considered to be 'a modern evocation of paradise', with the eye drawn to the Mediterranean by the statue (Figure 17).³⁰



Figure 17: Cubist Garden, Villa Noailles (1927)

³⁰ Imbert, *The Modernist Garden*, p. 134.

Yet, Noailles tired of his geometric garden and in 1947 created a terraced, nostalgic garden in Grasse (Figure 18).



Figure 18: Villa Noailles (2014)

During this period, Britain became more insular and tended to oppose any idea that appeared 'foreign'. Nowhere was this more apparent than in art. Antipathy to the possible influence of European art in Britain had been seen in the reaction to the 1910 Post-Impressionist exhibition, but intensified during this period when Britain saw its position as a cultural leader threatened by modernist ideas from France and Germany. This resulted in lengthy debates, often vitriolic that were on a par with those between Robinson and Blomfield about garden design.

Art Between the Wars

Apart from challenging Britain's cultural standing, the argument cantered around abstract painting, which became popular in Europe in the 1920s, but was viewed as a threat to England's tradition of landscape painting. Wilhelm Worringer had published his ideas about abstract art before the war, and

these were now seen in the Cubist paintings of Georges Braques and Pablo Picasso.³¹ In the Tate Gallery's opinion, the philosophy of abstract painting stemmed from the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato's ideas that 'the highest form of beauty lies not in the forms of the real world but in geometry', and 'since it does not represent the material world, [it] can be seen to represent the spiritual'.³² As shape, colour and texture are essential features of garden design, consideration has to be given to whether artist-gardeners followed a similar experimental path.

The debate about abstract and representational art continued throughout the interwar period and in 1932, the editor of *The Studio* wrote five articles denouncing what he thought was wrong with modern art.³³ In his view: "Britain is looking for British painters of British people, of British landscapes."³⁴ Yet during this period, not only did the garden artists' nostalgic paintings become unfashionable, the style of landscape painting that Alfred Parsons excelled in also fell out of favour. The art and gardens of the Post-Impressionists artists, Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant are considered in Chapter 8.

³¹ Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraction & Empathy* (Chicago: Elephant Paperback, 1997, First published, Germany, 1908).

³² <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/a/abstract-art> [Accessed 25 August 2019].

³³ The Editor, 'What is Wrong Modern with Painting – I Internationalism?', *Studio*, 103 (February 1932), pp. 63-64; The Editor, 'What is Wrong with Modern Painting – II The Pernicious Influence of Words?', *Studio*, 103 (March 1932), pp. 164-165; The Editor, 'What is Wrong with Modern Painting – III The Superiority Complex?', *Studio*, 103 (April 1932), pp. 183-184; The Editor, 'What is Wrong with Modern Painting – IV False Economics?', *Studio*, 103 (May 1932), pp. 247-248; The Editor, 'What is Wrong with Modern Painting – V Evolution?', *Studio*, 103 (June 1932), pp. 324-325 and The Editor, 'Progress in Modern Painting?', *Studio*, 104 (July 1932), pp. 32-33.

³⁴ 'What is Wrong with Modern Painting– I Internationalism', p. 63.

However, a new generation of artists emerged, who portrayed landscape and gardens differently. They came from less affluent backgrounds and many of them were taught at the Royal College of Art and Design, by the artist, Paul Nash (1889-1946). They included Edward Bawden (1903-1989), Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960), Charles Mahoney (1904-1968) and Eric Ravilious (1903-1942). Nash played an active role in the debate about abstraction and sought to reach a compromise. In the art historian, David Boyd Haycock's opinion, he 'sought to shake up what he considered the conservative myopic English establishment of the 1920s and 1930s, to bring it to its senses after the futile destruction of the Great War, and to help it recognise the thrilling potential of modernism'.³⁵

Nash, who had seen the devastated Belgian and French countryside, depicted it in disturbing reality. In 1919, *The Times* commented on his painting of *The Menin Road*, 'The shapes and colours are controlled not merely by the facts, but by the impact of the facts upon his mind' (Figure 19).³⁶ Yet Nash also found personal inspiration in the tradition of the English mystical painters, William Blake (1757-1827) and Samuel Palmer (1805-1881) and Figure 20 shows Palmer's depiction of a flowering apple tree.³⁷

³⁵ David Boyd Haycock, *Paul Nash* (London: Tate Publishing, 2007, Edition 2010), p. 7.

³⁶ Anonymous, 'Promise of Great Art', *The Times*, 42281 (12 December 1919), p. 15.

³⁷ Anne Anderson, Robert Meyrick, Peter Nahum, 'Ancient Landscapes, Pastoral Vision: Samuel Palmer to the Realists', Exhibition catalogue (Southampton City Art Gallery, 2008), p. 11.



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Figure 19: Paul Nash, *The Menin Road* (1919)



Figure 20: Samuel Palmer, *In a Shoreham Garden* (1830)

Nash shared his ideas about realism and mysticism in the landscape with his students and his brother, John Northcote Nash (1893-1977). They are discussed in Chapter 9. With the exception of Mahoney and Dunbar, whose approach to art and garden is considered in Chapter 10, they lived in Great Bardfield in Essex, which became Bawden and Ravilious' home in 1930.

Later they were joined by the artists John Aldridge (1905-1983), Kenneth Rowntree (1915-1997) and Walter Hoyle (1922-2000). The Great Bardfield artists' work is the subject of Chapter 11. Unlike the Edwardian garden painters, these artist-gardeners did not paint large sunny gardens full of flowers, they depicted gardens with sheds, greenhouses and vegetables.³⁸ Thus, they portrayed the British countryside and gardens that people could relate to in the years before and the Second World War.

³⁸ Lucy Scholes, 'An Outbreak of Talent in Great Bardfield', *Apollo*, 186 (July/August 2017), p. 100, 'Whilst female art students were from good homes, the men were seldom gentlemen'.

Chapter 7: Looking Backwards, Looking Forwards

Ella Mary Du Cane (1873-1943) and Aubrey

William Waterfield (1874-1944)



Aubrey Waterfield, *Lilies*

‘The day of the great pleasure garden with its succession of subdivisions into rose, water, rock, herbs, Chinese, American and anything you like gardens is no doubt of it, over.’

Christopher Hussey¹

During this period, Christopher Hussey emerged as one of the influential and knowledgeable writers on country houses and their gardens for *Country Life*. In different ways, it will be seen that Ella Du Cane and Aubrey Waterfield represented both aspects of his statement. Both had started their careers as artist-gardeners in the last years of the nineteenth century, but continued until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Ella Mary Du Cane (1873-1943)



Figure 7.1: Ella Du Cane (1902)

Ella Du Cane came from a wealthy Essex family. She was born in Hobart in Australia, where her father, Sir Charles Du Cane (1825-1889), was Governor

¹ Christopher Hussey, ‘Mountains, Essex: The Residence of the Hon Lady Du Cane’, *Country Life*, 57 (14 March 1925), p. 388.

of Tasmania (Figure 7.1). In 1841, he inherited Braxted Park a three-hundred acre estate, near Witham in Essex from his uncle (Figure 7.2).



Figure 7.2: Braxted Park (2015)

Early Life

When the family returned from Australia, they lived at Braxted Park and her father played a prominent part in county life. After he died in 1889,² Du Cane and her mother and her sisters, Edith (1867-1921) and Florence (1869-1955) moved to Mountains, near Witham, where they all gardened (Figure 7.3).³ An MA dissertation in 2011 described her life and career.⁴ More recently two blogs have also considered this.⁵

² His eldest son, Charles Henry Copley du Cane (1865-1938) inherited Braxted Park, which was sold in 1919 due to his financial mismanagement.

³ A, 'Lady Du Cane: A Link with the Past', *The Spectator* (19 June 1921), p. 10. This noted she was a gardener with 'a just reputation for knowledge and taste'.

⁴ Alison Redwood, 'Victorian Watercolorist Ella Mary Du Cane: A Study in Resistance and Compliance of Gender Stereotypes, The Professional Art World, Orientalism, and the Interpretation of Japanese Gardens for British Society' (Unpublished MA Dissertation, State University of California, 2011).

⁵ David Marsh, 'Two Essex Girls and the Exotic: Ella & Florence Du Cane – 1' (11 November 2017) [<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2017/11/11/two-essex-girls-the-exotic-ella-florence-du-cane>], David Marsh, 'Two Essex Girls and the Exotic: Ella & Florence Du Cane – 2; (18 November 2017).



Figure 7.3: Mountains from the Dell (1925)

The Artist

Most of the information about Du Cane's career as an artist comes from an interview in 1902.⁶ Her great-grandfather, the artist, James Singleton Copley (1738-1815), was renowned for his portraits and battle scenes. Although Du Cane learned to draw and use watercolours as a child, she did not take up painting seriously until they moved to Mountains. She had a few lessons from the artist, Sir James Linton (1840-1918), who taught her drawing and perspective.⁷ Although she admired Alfred Parsons' painting, it is not known whether they met.⁸ Possibly, Parsons' 1893 exhibition, 'Landscapes and Flowers of Japan' or the book about his travels inspired her.⁹

[<https://thegardenstrust.blog/2017/11/18/ella-and-florence-du-cane-their-own-gardens-in-essex>].

⁶ Alice Stronach, 'A Painter of Gardens: An Interview with Miss Ella Du Cane', *The Girl's Realm*, 4 [2] (August 1902), pp. 775-781.

⁷ Ibidem, p. 777.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Alfred Parsons, *Notes in Japan* (New York: 1896, Edition Leopold Classic Library).

Although she exhibited a landscape painting in 1893, after her first solo exhibition of fifty-seven watercolours at the Graves Gallery in 1898, her work became popular. Not only were her paintings bought by Queen Victoria, Edward, Prince of Wales and his son, the Duke of York, she was commissioned to paint the Queen's favourite residence, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. She also painted the rose garden at White Lodge in Richmond, where it is possible Parsons may have worked, although usually he edged his beds with lavender or box (Figure 7.4).



Figure 7.4: Ella Du Cane, *The Rose Garden, White Lodge, Richmond*

At this time, she painted gardens very much in the style of the garden artists, but only a few examples have been discovered. Before 1902, she painted Cawdor Castle in Nairn, Blickling Hall in Norfolk and Ellen Willmott's garden at Warley Place (Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.6).



Figure 7.5: Ella Du Cane, *Cawdor Castle* (1900) and Figure 7.6: Ella Du Cane, *Blickling Hall* (1900)

During this time Du Cane and her sister also travelled in Europe and Algeria. Before 1902, they spent six months in the West Indies, which included Grenada.¹⁰ In 1904, an exhibition at Graves Gallery recorded her visits to Ceylon and Japan. The landscapes depicted on the catalogue's cover show a style of her painting that she is not usually noted for (Figure 7.7).

Du Cane's success resulted in her being asked to illustrate Richard Bagot's (1860-1921) book, *The Italian Lakes* in 1905.¹¹ As the book was popular, Du Cane decided to produce one of her own and she and her sister returned to Japan in 1907. *The Flowers & Gardens of Japan*, published in 1908, became her most successful book. It was reprinted eleven times until

¹⁰ Stronach, 'A Painter of Gardens', p. 777.

¹¹ Richard Bagot, illustrated Ella Du Cane, *The Italian Lakes* (London: A & C Black, 1905).

1930.¹² One of her paintings was also used for the official guide for the 1910 Japan-British Exhibition (Figure 7.8 and Figure 7.9).

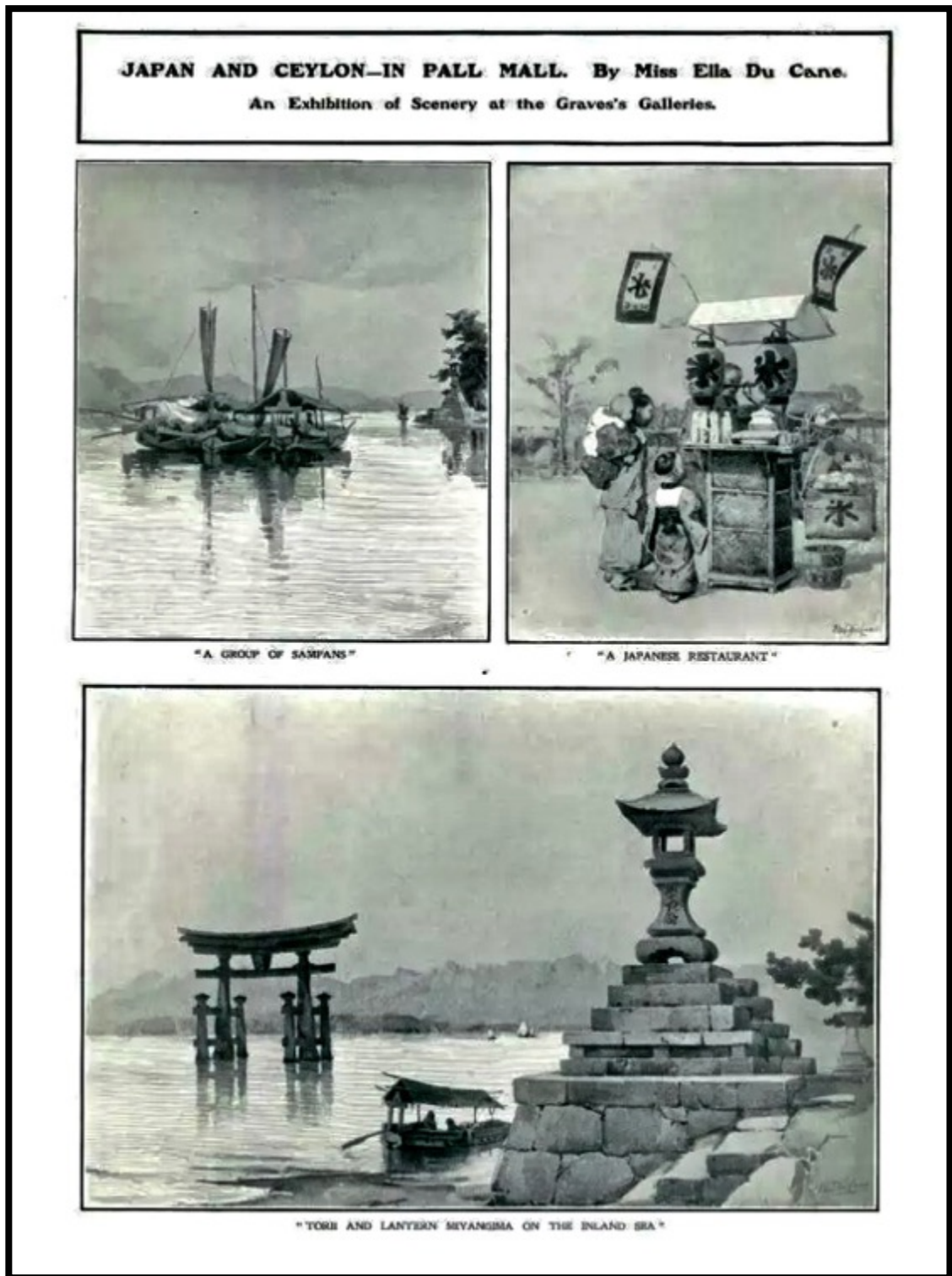


Figure 7.7: Ella Du Cane: *Japan and Ceylon: An Exhibition of Scenery* (1904)

¹² Florence Du Cane & Ella Du Cane, *The Flowers & Gardens of Japan* (London: A & C Black, 1908).



Figure 7.8: Official Guide for the Japan-British Exhibition (1910) and Figure 7.9: Ella Du Cane, *Wistaria Kyomidzu* (1908)

Although Du Cane and her sister published two further travel books about gardens in Madeira and the Canary Islands, they were not as successful.¹³ Her final book, *The Banks of the Nile* was written with John A Todd in 1913.¹⁴ She exhibited at the Fine Art Society in 1908, 1910 and 1912, but it appears that after the war, she, too, found her style of painting unfashionable.

Du Cane's books fulfilled her ambition to write about gardens and two Japanese gardens were inspired by her.¹⁵ She met the traveller, Ella Christie (1861-1949) in Japan in 1907 and they visited gardens together. On her return, Christie employed a Japanese gardener to make her garden at Cowden

¹³ Florence Du Cane & Ella Du Cane, *The Flowers & Gardens of Madeira* (London: A & C Black, 1909), Florence Du Cane & Ella Du Cane, *The Canary Islands* (London: A & C Black, 1911).

¹⁴ John A Todd, illustrated Ella Du Cane, *The Banks of the Nile* (London: A & C Black, 1913).

¹⁵ Stronach, 'A Painter of Gardens', p. 777.

Castle in Clackmannanshire. Although Du Cane was not involved in its design, Christie was delighted when she admired it (Figure 7.10).



Figure 7.10: Ella Christie in her Japanese Garden (1933)

Baroness Marguérite van Brienon (1871-1938), who lived at Clingendael in The Netherlands decided to make her Japanese garden after the 1910 exhibition. She corresponded with Du Cane, who later visited it. The garden was in the style that E A Bowles would have disliked with its Japanese lanterns and scarlet bridge (Figure 7.11).



Figure 7.11: Japanese Garden, Clingendael, The Hague

The Gardener

When the Du Canes moved to Mountains in 1892, they started to develop and extend the two-and-a-half-acre garden, which was small by Edwardian standards. Hussey described it in 1925, when one part had only been created in 1921. Photographs show its design was essentially Edwardian with double hardy plant borders, rose arches, crazy paving and sundials (Figure 7.12 and Figure 7.13).¹⁶ However, this was not a garden like Gertrude Jekyll's where parts could be ignored except during its season, its flowering period extended throughout the garden from April to November.

In some ways, the way the garden's planting was similar to the way seasons are marked and celebrated in the Japanese gardens Du Cane depicted, starting with peach, cherry and plum blossom, then azaleas, wisteria, tulips and irises, through to chrysanthemums and finishing with autumn colour (Figure 7.14 and Figure 7.15).

¹⁶ Hussey, 'Mountains, Essex'.



Figure 7.12: Sundial and Paved Area, Mountains (1925)



Figure 7.13: Double Herbaceous Borders, Mountains (1925)



Figure 7.14: Ella Du Cane, *Azaleas* (1908) and Figure 7.15: Ella Du Cane, *An Iris Garden* (1908)

Hussey described some of the garden's features, which were in the Japanese style, for example a thatched garden house. Figure 7.16 shows the garden house at Mountains with irises flowering in the border. Some irises came from Horikiri Iris Garden in Tokyo, which Du Cane also painted (Figure 7.16).¹⁷

In his blog, the garden historian, David Marsh, commented that although Historic England's entry for Mountains alluded to a Japanese garden, one was not shown on the plan (Figure 7.17).¹⁸ However, it seems probable that the Valley Garden on the left of the plan was inspired by a Japanese woodland garden (Figure 7.18 and Figure 7.19).

¹⁷ Hussey, 'Mountains', p. 391.

¹⁸ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1337335> [Accessed 16 October 2020]. David Marsh, 'Two Essex Girls and the Exotic: Ella & Florence Du Cane – 2'.



Figure 7.16: Thatched Garden House and Irises (1925)



Figure 7.17: Ella Du Cane, *Irises, Hori Kiri* (1908)

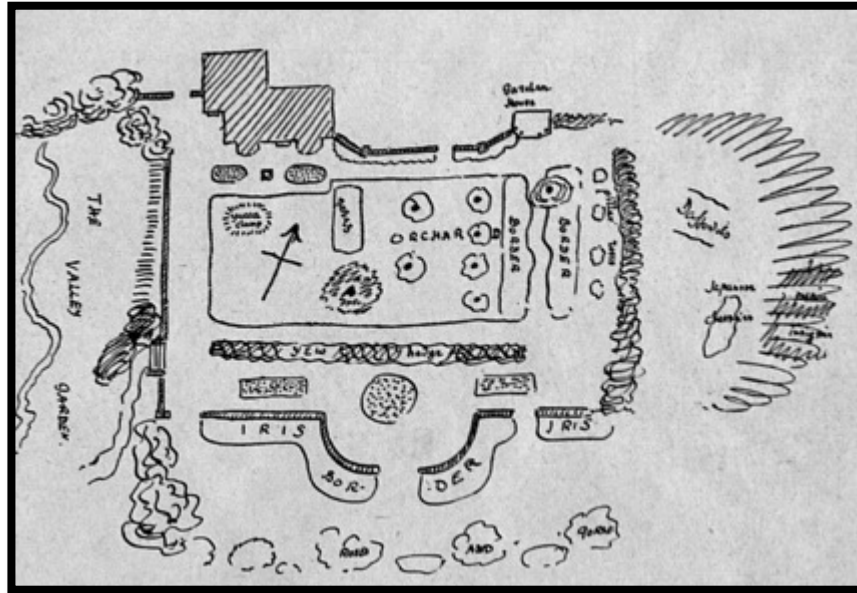


Figure 7.18: Plan of the Garden, Mountains (1925)

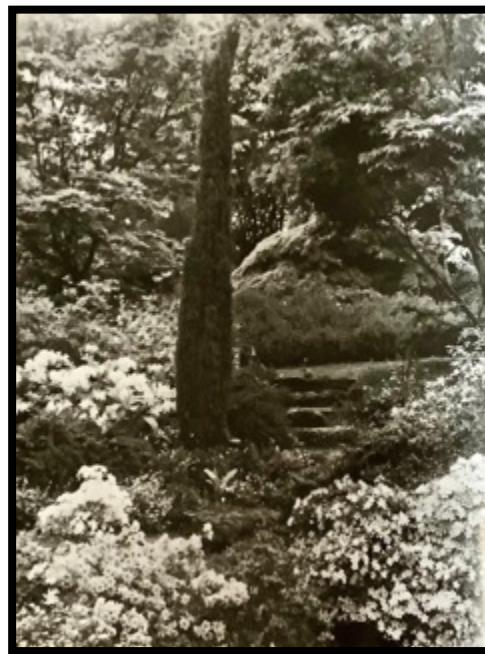


Figure 7.19: Valley Garden, Mountains (1925)



Figure 7.20: Woodland Garden, Kyoto (2017)

Beacon Hill House

Around 1909, Du Cane bought her own home, Beacon Hill House, a few hundred yards from Mountains, where she designed the garden.¹⁹ She had been interested in the house for some years, ‘I passed Beacon Hill which Miss Du Cane has painted’ (Figure 7.21).²⁰



Figure 7.21: Beacon Hill House (1925)

¹⁹ Essex Records Office D/RMa PB2/400 Building Plan for Alterations and Additions to Beacon Hill House, Great Totham, 1909.

²⁰ Stronach, ‘A Painter of Gardens’, p. 775.

Beacon Hill did not have a Japanese garden, but Figure 7.22 shows a thatched Japanese-style thatched garden house. Hussey suggested that Du Cane not only painted in clumps, but planted in them as well.²¹ The half-acre garden was similar to Mountains with a succession of flowering plants. One difference was a small shaped lily pool in the formal garden around the house.



Figure 7.22: Formal Garden and Lily Pool (1925)

Du Cane also painted Beacon Hill's garden and Figure 7.23 shows the garden in spring with white blossom, tulips in shades of yellow and orange and clumps of aubretia. Figure 7.24 is her colourful depiction of a well-head, which is seen *in situ* in a May garden (Figure 7.25). Du Cane did not always attribute her paintings and one of a summer garden shows the Beacon and an old tree stump in the garden (Figure 7.27).

²¹ Hussey, 'Beacon Hill, Essex', p. 692.



Figure 7.23: Ella Du Cane, *Spring Garden, Beacon Hill House* and Figure 7.24: Ella Du Cane, *The Well, Beacon Hill House* (1925)



Figure 7.25: Well-Head in the Wild Garden (1925)

Du Cane's travels influenced not only the design, but the planting of her garden. Her use of bold colours was reminiscent of the azaleas and autumn colours she saw in Japan. At Mountains, pots of standard box balls on either side of the garden door gave it a Mediterranean feel (Figure 7.27). Thus, her

garden, although representing Edwardian style was combined and integrated with her ideas about designing and planting a small gardens where there would always be something of interest.



Figure 7.26: Ella du Cane, *A Summer Garden*



Figure 7.27: Standard Box by the Garden Door, Mountains (1925)

Aubrey Waterfield lived for a considerable part of his life in Italy and although his career in art and gardening differed from Du Cane's, it also reflected the knowledge he gained from living outside Britain.

Aubrey William Waterfield (1874-1944)

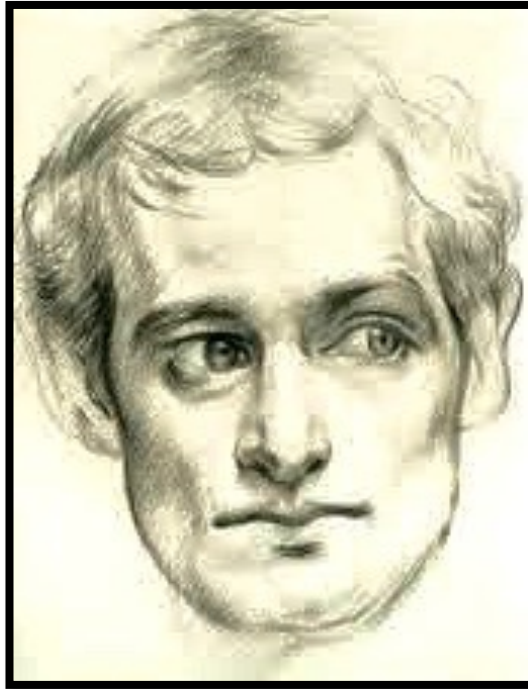


Figure 7.28: Aubrey Waterfield, *Self-Portrait*

Although no biography of Waterfield's life has been written, his wife, Caroline Lucy [Lina] Duff Gordon (1874-1964) wrote about their life at Fortezza della Brunella at Aulla in Italy (Figure 7.26).²² Later, their daughter, Carintha [Kinta] Beevor (1911-1995) described her childhood there.²³ The British Institute in Florence has letters from Waterfield to Duff Gordon outlining his

²² Lina Duff Gordon, Aubrey Waterfield (Illustrated), *Home Life in Italy* (London: Methuen & Co, 1908) and Waterfield, *Castle in Italy: An Autobiography* (London: Thomas F Crowell, 1961).

²³ Kinta Beevor, *A Tuscan Childhood* (London, Viking, 1993).

role in the design of Villa I Tatti 's garden for Bernard and Mary Berenson (1864-1945).²⁴

Early Life

Waterfield was the artist-gardener, Margaret Waterfield's brother and he also spent his childhood at Nackington House in Canterbury. Unlike her, his education was at New College, Oxford where he studied Classics, before going to the Slade School of Art between 1897 and 1900.

In 1902, he married Duff Gordon despite considerable opposition from her aunt and guardian, Janet Ross (1842-1927), who thought him incapable of earning sufficient income to look after her niece.²⁵ This antagonism continued until she died.²⁶ Whenever possible, Ross undermined him and her continuing hostility had a profound effect on his personal and professional esteem. In 1909, when he was working at I Tatti, he wrote:

Then I went to Poggio. Aunt Janet had told several people that with my usual bad manners I had not been to see her. So I went and told her straight that she should have asked me the first day when I saw her at the Berensons.²⁷

Duff Gordon also recalled that when Waterfield was painting a magnolia branch at Poggio Gherado, Ross told him she did not want it

²⁴ British Institute, Florence, ALS, ff3-4, ff 6-8, ff 9-13 (November 1909), Aubrey Waterfield, Letters from I Tatti to Lina Waterfield.

²⁵ Her hostility may also have affected Duff Gordon, who worked as a writer and journalist.

²⁶ Ross and her husband lived at Poggio Gherado, a sixty-acre estate in Florence. Duff Gordon lived there after her mother died in 1890.

²⁷ ALS, ff9-13, Aubrey Waterfield, I Tatti, Letter to Lina Waterfield, 20 November 1909. Duff Gordon was reconciled with her in 1915.

painted. As he continued, next morning, he found the branch had been cut off (Figure 7.29).²⁸



Figure 7.29: Aubrey Waterfield, *Magnolia stellata*, Mural at Poggio Gherado (1930s)

Ross' behaviour was also noted by others. Elisabetta [Nicky] Mariano (1887-1968), the renowned American art historian collector, Bernard Berenson's (1865-1959) assistant, commented that in 1928 when she stayed at Aulla, she enjoyed 'the easy going and picturesque atmosphere', but when she met Waterfield at Poggio Gherado, he was:

Peevish and dissatisfied - perhaps because everything there reminded him of his antagonist, Mrs Ross, but at Aulla, he was at his best looking after his garden, painting his lovely flower compositions and living the unconventional kind of life he loved.²⁹

²⁸ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, pp. 187-188.

²⁹ Nicky Mariano, *Forty Years with Berenson* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1966), p. 147.

The Artist

Professor Henry Tonks (1862-1937) thought Waterfield was ‘a leading student, a man of great natural ability with a delicacy of design and colour’.³⁰ Later, he would recommend his students, including Rex Whistler to visit him in Italy and work with him. Waterfield enjoyed painting informal portraits including one of his lifelong friend, Robert Calverley Trevelyan (1872-1951) and Emald Lane, Dean of Rochester (1836-1913) (Figure 7.30 and Figure 7.31).



Figure 7.30: Aubrey Waterfield, *Robert Calverley Trevelyan* (1900) and Figure 7.31: Aubrey Waterfield, *Emald Lane, Dean of Rochester* (1908)

However, he preferred painting still-life, landscapes and flowers and as Beevor recalled, ‘His most striking pictures captured not just the terrain of the Lumigiana but the skyscape too, with its dramatic contrasts of sunlight and

³⁰ Quotation from Derek Clifford, *English Watercolour Painters* in (<https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/aubrey-waterfield-painting-1908-245670033>) [Accessed 11 November 2018].

storm-cloud'. Figure 7.32 of the Carrara mountains is menacing showing a broken tree against the mountain range.³¹



Figure 7.32: Aubrey Waterfield, *Carrara Mountains from Ligastrella Campsite*

At Waterfield's first exhibition at the Woodbury Gallery in November 1903, his pictures were commended:

A number of watercolour drawings of landscape, the themes being Sicilian, Italian and English. All are very sincere in feeling, and show a genuine gift for selection and for colour. The Palermo sketches are perhaps the most attractive of all.³²

Before 1914, he illustrated Duff Gordon's books about Rome and their life in Italy.³³ However, he was sensitive to criticism and only exhibited twice

³¹ Beevor, *Tuscan Childhood*, p. 66.

³² Anonymous, 'Art Exhibitions', *The Times*, 37227 (2 November 1903), p. 7.

³³ Lina Duff Gordon, *Rome and its Story* (London: J M Dent, 1904) and Lina Duff Gordon, *Home Life in Italy: Letters from The Apennines* (London: Macmillan, 1908).

after the war, in 1927 in Florence,³⁴ and *Alpine Plants* at the Royal Academy in 1931.³⁵ Like Cedric Morris, he disliked agents and thought gallery owners were unscrupulous, ‘My father certainly made no effort to be rated, for he loathed and despised the commercial end of painting.’³⁶ He refused to exhibit ‘perversely bearing out Aunt Janet’s scepticism to earn a living’.³⁷

Yet he painted continuously and at Aulla decorated the walls with murals. The main bedroom was painted to look like a loggia with pillars and arches looking out on to an orange tree and blue sky. Downstairs, he painted the mountain villages of the Lumigiana, ‘Each lunette became a *trompe d’oeil* window with the appearance of marble columns on either side’ (Figure 7.33).³⁸ Waterfield described them in a letter to Elena Richmond:

I have decorated all the big rooms. Gay flowers in vases, all the things I grow and below silvery monochrome landscape, v[ery] misty, mostly rivers. It is called ‘The Sound of Many Waters’, and there is a waterfall in a cave beside the piano. I long for you and Bruce to see it. The slender columns round the room are of *lapis lazuli* made by me – very fine.³⁹

³⁴ Peter Gunn, *Vernon Lee: Violet Paget 1866-1935* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 224. Lee wrote the notes and commented that it was not mentioned in *Castle in Italy*.

³⁵ Royal Academy of Arts, ‘Exhibition Catalogue’ (1931), p. 17.

³⁶ Beevor, *Tuscan Childhood*, p. 67.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 66-67.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 67.

³⁹ University of Liverpool Special Collections RP xxxv.1.385, Letter to Elena Richmond, 11 February 1933. Her husband, Sir Bruce Lyttleton Richmond (1871-1964) studied classics at Oxford with Waterfield and was editor of the *Times Literary Supplement* from 1902-1937.



Figure 7.33: Aubrey Waterfield Painting Murals, Aulla

In 1933, Waterfield was commissioned to paint a large screen for Sybil Lubbock's bedroom at Gil Scafari at Spezia:

I took the drawings with me to show her, but she was imprisoned in the dark. I do hope she will like what I brought because she is not easy to please and her bedroom is all blue, even the curtains. We thought the big silver grey panels of *Dahlia imperialis* and *Datura* looked very well and they exactly fitted the screen (Figure 7.34).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ RP xxxv.1.385, Letter Richmond, 11 February 1933. Waterfield found the land for Gil Scafari where their friend, Cecil Pinsent, designed the garden in 1926. Percy Lubbock (1879-1965) was Sybil Lubbock's (1879-1943), third husband. Her daughter by her first marriage was Iris Origo (1902-88).



Figure 7.34: Aubrey Waterfield, *Daphne imperialis* (1933)

As the painting on the frontispiece of a mass of lilies in oils against a dark background shows, Waterfield depicted flowers differently to Du Cane and the garden artists. Figure 7.35 shows a branch of magnolias in front of the castle's doorway.



Figure 7.35: Aubrey Waterfield, *Magnolias*

During the war as part of the 'Recording Britain' initiative, Waterfield made several paintings of Kent. Nonington Mill is seen as a small building amid the billowing clouds (Figure 7.36).



Figure 7.36: Aubrey Waterfield, *Nonington Mill, Kent* (1942)

At a retrospective exhibition at the Beaux Art Gallery in 1945, most of Waterfield's paintings sold on the first day. The art historian, Sir Kenneth Clark (1903-1983), who knew him concluded:

Aubrey Waterfield's whole life was devoted to beauty and I imagine that in Aulla he managed to create and enjoy more beauty than is given to most men. He was an under-rated artist - under-rated that is by the world, for anyone of real perception recognised his gifts.⁴¹

⁴¹ Quoted about his portrait of *Emald Lane, Dean of Rochester*. (<https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/aubrey-waterfield-painting-1908-245670033>) [Accessed 21 March 2019].

The Gardener

Apart from his mother, the Waterfields all gardened at Nackington House with its views of Canterbury Cathedral, which his sister, Margaret, often depicted (Figure 7.37).⁴²



Figure 7.37: Margaret Waterfield, *May Tulips, Nackington* (1905)

Duff Gordon's first impression was 'I loved the house from the first rose-coloured bricks with French windows opening onto the lovely garden, which led to an elm wood.'⁴³ After their marriage, they lived at River House in Sandwich, which did not have a garden. Then in 1906, Waterfield asked their neighbour, Walter John James, 3rd Lord Northbourne (1869-1932) if they could rent Northbourne Court. He agreed on condition they looked after its garden.⁴⁴

⁴² Beevor, *Tuscan Childhood*, p. 66. It was nicknamed 'Nagginton' House, as they were always arguing.

⁴³ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, p. 84.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 126. They paid a 'peppercorn rent'.

Northbourne Court was a late eighteenth-century house with a walled garden.⁴⁵ Here Waterfield built an open-fronted loggia, which he roofed using bricks from demolished pigsties. The loggia can be seen at the back of the upper terrace in the walled garden in Figure 7.37 and gave them a view of the terraced garden below.⁴⁶



Figure 7.37: Loggia in the Walled Garden, Northbourne Court (1925)

During the summer, they ate and sometimes slept there and, ‘Aubrey was happy to have “his” garden, and it was a garden so full of enchantment, its great walls sheltering the plants and giving an amazing sense of peace to all who entered.’⁴⁷ They remained there until 1919 when Northbourne needed it for his son

When they married they had hoped to buy Heronden House, a Queen Anne house, at Eastry in Kent, but their trustees objected as ‘the wild and

⁴⁵ <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000180>. [Accessed 5 December 2018]. The walled garden is dated to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

⁴⁶ Ibidem. The loggia is noted, but not attributed to Waterfield.

⁴⁷ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, p. 116.

unkempt garden did not impress them. When later we settled there, they refused to believe it was the same house'.⁴⁸ At the same time, the Waterfields spent part of the year at Fortezza della Brunella at Aulla in Lumigiana, sixteen miles from La Spezia.

Fortezza della Brunella, Aulla

Waterfield first visited Aulla in June 1896 whilst he was staying with Lord Stanmore at Villa Paraggi in Portofino.⁴⁹ It was love at first sight, 'My father instantly fell in love with its wild beauty and wonderful views. They never left his thoughts.'⁵⁰ He saw the unoccupied castle as somewhere that 'promised an enchanted world far from English formality' (Figure 7.39 and Figure 7.40).⁵¹



Figure 7.39: La Fortezza della Brunella

⁴⁸ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, p. 174.

⁴⁹ Its owner, Montague Yeats-Brown (1834-1921), the British consul to Genoa, lived at Castello Brown in Portofino. He bought the castle and an acre of rocky ground in the 1860s, and roofed it.

⁵⁰ Beevor, *Tuscan Childhood*, p. 9.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 1. He was invited to stay and paint whenever he wanted.



Figure 7.40: Aubrey Waterfield, *Fortezza della Brunella*

He took Duff Gordon to see it at sunset in 1903, 'One day in March three years ago, we climbed the mule track by a grass slope carpeted with violets and the leaves of autumn cyclamen and reached the terrace just as the sun was setting.'⁵² Her impression was:

The castle looked forbidding and seemed to frown on us; I felt dispirited. But when I entered the lofty rooms so full of sunshine with the immense windows opening on to the view of the river and mountain valley I felt a sense of joy, gaiety and friendliness which no other house had ever given me.⁵³

They asked Yeats-Brown for a lease and went to live there the following spring. Neither Waterfield's family nor Ross approved, but later his mother

⁵² Duff Gordon, *Home Life in Italy*, p. 17.

⁵³ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, p. 121.

fell in love with it and visited every year.⁵⁴ In Duff Gordon's opinion, 'We never regretted our folly. Looking back we both always felt that the happiest days of our life were spent at Aulla.'⁵⁵ Figure 7.41 shows the entrance, covered in wisteria.

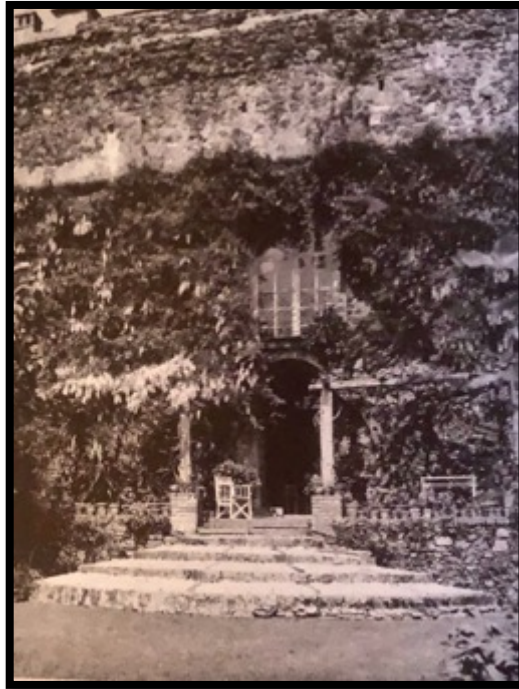


Figure 7.41: Wisteria Clad Entrance

Waterfield's vision was to make a garden on the castle's roof and its concept was in the Edwardian style. The roof had been a cornfield and as Duff Gordon noted, 'Aubrey was a wonderful gardener and everything he touched grew and flourished'.⁵⁶ Figure 7.42 shows the simple pergola surrounded by flower beds and low box hedges.

⁵⁴ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, p. 121. Ross never visited, but sent her steward who said it 'wasn't fit for Christians'.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 125.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 126.



Figure 7.42: The Castle's Roof Garden and Pergola

They decided to build a marble pool or *vasca*, planted with waterlilies and filled with goldfish.⁵⁷ The marble came from Avenza and when it arrived 'we deemed the final possession of the *Vasca* such a triumph that we have erected over it a trellis dome surrounded by a pergola for Wicheriana roses, and Ferruccio, our peasant lad, has named it *Il Tempietto*.⁵⁸ In 1905, Waterfield designed the trelliswork, which Beevor described as, 'a fantastic rose-covered *tempietto* of white trellis-work with a dome in the middle and a pinnacle on either side My father's design must have been inspired by the Brighton Pavilion' (Figure 7.43).⁵⁹ Yet, it also resembled Harold Peto's wooden pergolas at Easton Lodge in Essex and West Dean House in Sussex (Figure 7.44).

⁵⁷ Beevor, *Tuscan Childhood*, p. 5.

⁵⁸ Duff Gordon, *Home Life in Italy*, p. 101.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 13.

Beevor did not visit Aulla until 1916 when the garden had matured, but emphasised that her father ‘was almost as dedicated to gardens as he was to his painting.’⁶⁰



Figure 7.43: *Il Tempietto*



Figure 7.44: Wooden Pergola, Easton Lodge (1907)

⁶⁰ Beevor, *Tuscan Childhood*, p. 1.

When the Italian government requisitioned Aulla during the First World War, Duff Gordon and her children went to live with Ross at Poggio Gherado:

I never felt so miserable and hopelessly depressed as during the days spent in our paradise. [.....] It was just the time of year when I had been there with Aubrey. The roof garden was a mass of pale Florentine irises, pink stocks with a few tulips to give a splash of colour among the clumps of dark iris.⁶¹

They could not return until 1924 as it was used to house homeless families after the Garfagnana earthquake in September 1920.⁶² When Duff Gordon was left a life interest in Poggio Gherado after Ross' death in 1927, Aulla became their holiday home and they rented it out.⁶³

Poggio Gherado, Florence

Ross and her husband, Henry (1820-1902) acquired the villa with its views of Florence and the surrounding countryside in 1888 (Figure 7.42).⁶⁴ Duff Gordon thought Waterfield was happy that 'I should return to my old home and soon the beauty of the place, the garden of rare flowers and the interest in Tuscan farming compensated him for the loss of our former carefree life.'⁶⁵ As at Aulla, he decorated the walls with murals (Figure 7.29).

⁶¹ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, p. 159.

⁶² They purchased the castle in 1924.

⁶³ RP xxxv.1.385, Letter to Richmond, 11 February 1933. Colonel Vere Hodges was renting it until May.

⁶⁴ Downing, *Queen Bee of Tuscany*, p. 170. Flagstones and marble banquettes were repaired; a pergola was replanted with grapevines; there was a wisteria-covered double staircase; and a parterre planted with fruit trees.

⁶⁵ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, p. 230.



Figure 7.45: Poggio Gherado

In 1931, they started a girls' 'finishing' school to maintain the house and Waterfield taught art.⁶⁶ His pupils included the artist, Mildred Eldridge (1909-1999), who studied there after she left the Royal Academy of Art.⁶⁷ Two of Heather Muir's daughters also went there and Waterfield painted Diany Muir (1915-2006) (Figure 7.46).⁶⁸ In 1933, Waterfield reported, 'we are very full up with students and they all seem radiantly happy. I don't expect them to set Bloomsbury on fire.'⁶⁹

They had to leave Florence in 1939, but returned for five months in February 1940. Waterfield hoped they would be able to visit Aulla and 'threw himself into painting and gardening to keep our equilibrium during these

⁶⁶ Ross' will caused financial problems as her estranged son, Alick, contested it. She left it to Waterfield's son, John, who under Italian law did not qualify as part of family circle. Succession duties of 30 per cent had to be paid.

⁶⁷ Eldridge worked with the artist and gardener, Charles Mahoney on the Brockley Murals in 1933.

⁶⁸ Diany Muir, later, Diany Binny, Jack and Heather Muir's daughter.

⁶⁹ RP xxxv.1.385, Letter to Richmond, 11 February 1933.

momentous days. He was painting a large decoration of peonies and leaves by the lily pool' (Figure 7.47).⁷⁰



Figure 7.46: Aubrey Waterfield, *Diany Muir* (1930s) and Figure 7.47: Aubrey Waterfield, *Paeonia x lemoinii 'L'Esperance'*

Villa I Tatti, Florence

Aulla's garden was admired by the expatriate Florentine society including the American, Mary Berenson (1864-1945), who liked its 'English' style and thought it was 'the most beautiful and romantic thing I have ever seen'.⁷¹ In 1909, she asked Waterfield to advise her on Villa I Tatti's garden at Settignano, just outside Florence (Figure 7.48).⁷² She acquired her love of English gardens when she came to England after her marriage to Benjamin

⁷⁰ Waterfield, *Castle in Italy*, p. 248.

⁷¹ Berenson's letter to her mother, quoted in Downing, *Queen Bee of Tuscany*, p. 224.

⁷² <https://itatti.harvard.edu/blog/100-years-ago-weekly-selection-mary-berensons-diaries-11> [Accessed 11 December 2018]. Mary Berenson's diary recorded she visited Aulla with Geoffrey Scott on 20 August 1906.

[Frank] Costelloe (1855-1899) in 1888.⁷³ Waterfield was probably aware of the Berensons' difficult relationship, but may not have known how manipulative Berenson could be.⁷⁴ At the time, they were renovating I Tatti and Bernard Berenson [BB] criticised her for the refurbishment's slow progress:

For nearly fifty years, Mary and Bernard Berenson lived at I Tatti in a state of mutual despair, each lamenting the other's failings – with Berenson blaming the turmoil of their lives on his wife's lapses of judgment or meddling in the affairs of others.⁷⁵



Figure 7.48: Villa I Tatti (1900s)

⁷³ She moved to Italy when she started her relationship with Berenson.

⁷⁴ Barbara Strachey & Jayne Samuels (Edited), *Mary Berenson: A Self Portrait from Her Letters and Diaries* (London: W W Norton & Company, 1983), p. 151. Both Berensons had other relationships. Berenson wanted her current 'friend', the architectural historian, Geoffrey Scott (1884-1929), Cecil Pinsent's business partner, to remain at I Tatti.

⁷⁵ Ethne Clarke, *An Infinity of Graces: Cecil Ross Pinsent, An English Architect in the Italian Landscape* (London: W W Norton & Company, 2013), p. 59.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the British architect, Cecil Pinsent (1884-1963) was responsible for the garden's design, the absence of records has resulted in discussions about the contribution made by Waterfield and the Berensons. When Berenson engaged Waterfield, she did so without consulting Pinsent, who was already designing the garden. The problem was, as the garden historian Katie Campbell concluded, 'the architects' inability to control the egos competing to shape the garden as Mary fought for English exuberance and Berenson for Italian austerity.'⁷⁶ In the garden writer, Charles Quest-Ritson's opinion, '[Mary Berenson] was an unenthusiastic convert to the Tuscan ideal! Her own predilections were for flowers, woodlands and natural gardening in the Robinsonian manner.'⁷⁷ Unfortunately, BB preferred Princess Ghyka's formal garden, La Gamberaia, which he described as 'the loveliest of all villas' (Figure 7.49).⁷⁸



Figure 7.49: La Gamberaia (1900s)

⁷⁶ Katie Campbell, 'The Paradise of Exiles: The Anglo-Florentine Garden' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, May 2007), p. 198.

⁷⁷ Quest-Ritson, *The English Garden Abroad*, p. 128.

⁷⁸ Rollin Van N Hadley (Edited), *The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Isabella Stewart Gardner 1887-1921* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1987), p. 99. The garden was remade between 1896 and 1898.

Waterfield and Pinsent also had different ideas about the design and both thought they were in charge:

It will not be an ideally easy job. BB and Pinsent think a garden should have no flowers in it. Coloured earths or different coloured pebbles for preference! Poor little me the only position I can take up is one of abject humility otherwise an impasse. Pinsent has already drawn out a plan for the garden. He proposes Himself willing to hand over the whole thing to me, but next minute he is laying down the law and saying such and such cannot be altered.⁷⁹

Unlike Pinsent, Waterfield knew about plants and flowers. Although he thought Pinsent was ‘a good fellow and I hope by a talk we should work together all right’, he realised that Pinsent wanted him:

To be head gardener and stand over the men, sort the bulbs and say where plants are to go. I explained to Mary the difficulty this morning and they evidently want me to have a sort of role in it, but it is a bit ignominious at present if you have a clear idea what you feel sure would look right as a garden and the architect opposes.⁸⁰

Since its completion, I Tatti’s design has been criticised for being out of proportion to the house. Mariano noted this on her first visit in 1913:

I was surprised to find the villa was not a monumental one in the usual Florentine style with an imposing façade, but an unassuming well-

⁷⁹ ALS ff 3-4, Letter to Lina Waterfield, I Tatti, 8 November 1909.

⁸⁰ Ibidem.

proportioned Tuscan house with a small enclosed lemon garden to the south and groups of old cypresses to both sides. [.....] It looked out of proportion, the statues in the new formal garden ridiculously large compared with the tiny box and cypress hedges.⁸¹

Waterfield also recognised this and demonstrated his knowledge of Italian gardens and his awareness of architects and garden designers' different approach, "This is not a villa [.....] but a "*padlione*" and though the garden should be on formal lines, it must be a country affair and not on the lines of Villa d'Este."⁸² Initially it appeared Berenson accepted his opinion:

She has been a brick and made it clear that as far as the laying out is to go, my ideas were to override Cecil Pinsent's. It is a difficult pill for him to swallow because I am only a person with a flare (sic) for gardens and no technical knowledge of laying levels and surveying. And any architectural garden he regards and rightly as mostly the architect's business.⁸³

Waterfield adapted Pinsent's plan, 'Anyway I must be saving them vast sums as I have shortened the formal garden by 1/2!'⁸⁴ In his letter, Waterfield enclosed a rough sketch of Pinsent's, which he described:

The building at the bottom is the mill and pond. There is a long *grand viale* with cypresses something like the Gamberaia running past the house as a short cut to the road from the drive. He proposed to hide all

⁸¹ Mariano, *Forty Years with Berenson*, p. 7.

⁸² ALS ff9-13, Letter to Lina Waterfield, I Tatti, 20 November 1909.

⁸³ Ibidem.

⁸⁴ Ibidem.

the mill with a wood and move the pool opposite the *stanzone* so no longer any idea of mill existed.⁸⁵

He did not think Duff Gordon would consider his plan as landscaping, 'It looks more or less as I sketch it below. My object was instead of driving narrow lines in a wide landscape view from Poggio to Settignano, to keep horizontal lines running with that view' (Figure 7.50 and Figure 7.51).⁸⁶ His proposal was 'to have lots of poplars all at the bottom and sides and quince, medlars and flowering trees beyond the dark pergola. It will be very exciting working it all out, and Pinsent is delightful to work with and willing to explain all the technical side of it to me.'⁸⁷

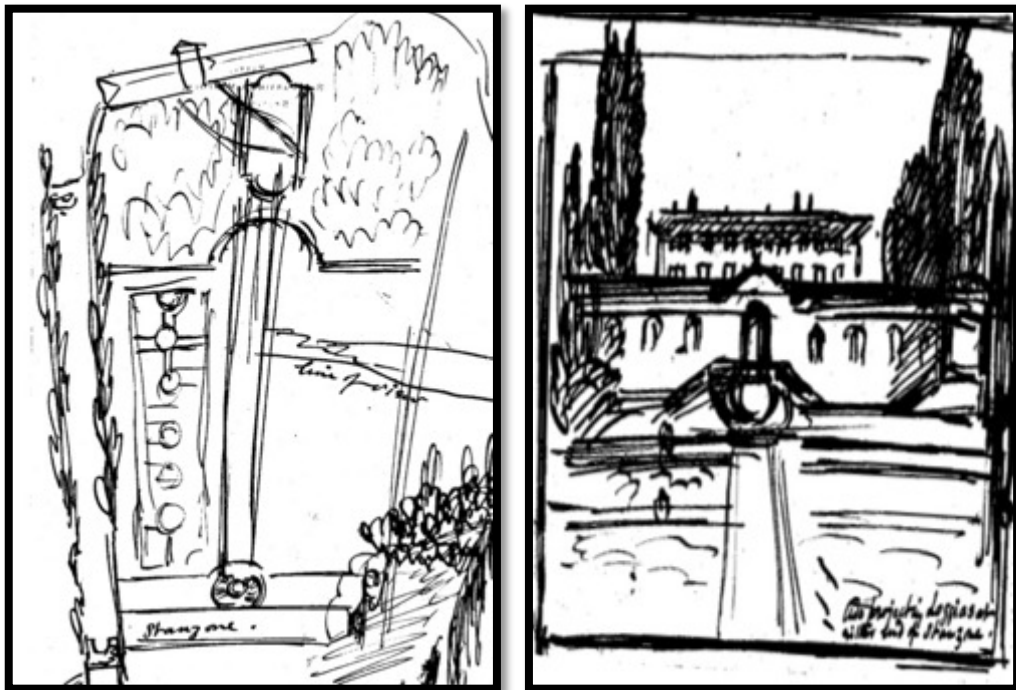


Figure 7.50: Aubrey Waterfield, *Pinsent's Proposed Plan for I Tatti* and Figure 7.51: Aubrey Waterfield's, *Plan*

⁸⁵ ALS ff9-13, Letter to Lina Waterfield, I Tatti, 20 November 1909.

⁸⁶ Ibidem.

⁸⁷ Ibidem.

A few weeks later, the situation had deteriorated and he was planning to leave:

I cannot possibly stay to see the plants planted. I must simply draw up plans of the different bits of the *poderi* and mark where I want the plants to go. The difficulty lies in that Mary is so made that for her to see to anything really herself is an intolerable imposition.⁸⁸

In autumn 1910, Waterfield returned to I Tatti to find that BB had become involved and Pinsent's ideas were now thought preferable. Waterfield was left to plant what has become known as the English Meadow, a sloping site planted with wildflowers, hellebores, species tulips, grape hyacinths, daffodils and anemones (Figure 7.52)



Figure 7.52: English Meadow

⁸⁸ ALS ff6-8, Letter to Lina Waterfield, Thursday 1909, possibly 22 November, but probably 29th.

Yet it was Waterfield's knowledge of Italian gardens that resulted in him being asked to design them in Britain. In the 1920s, he designed an 'Italian' garden for his friend, Robert Holland-Martin (1872-1944), the Director of Martin's Bank, at Overbury Court, Tewkesbury, Worcestershire.⁸⁹

Overbury Court

Holland-Martin inherited Overbury Court in 1916 from his uncle, Sir Richard Biddulph Martin, but did not move there 1922 (Figure 7.53).⁹⁰



Figure 7.53: Overbury Court

Although Holland-Martin's descendants still live at Overbury Court, they did not respond to requests for information, but the alterations made in the garden at this time were described. It appears that the lawn to the south of the house was levelled and several Wellingtonias which shut out a magnificent view were felled and 'replaced by a formal pool and rose-garden

⁸⁹ Email, 31 June 2017 from Antony Beevor, who was not aware of other garden commissions.

⁹⁰ Robert Holland-Martin, *A Symposium* (London: Frederick Muller, 1947), p. 31. Overbury Court is a Georgian house, built in the 1730s, stands on the lowest slopes of the river Bredon.

designed by Aubrey Waterfield, an old family friend'.⁹¹ Historic England notes:

During the 1920s several leading garden designers worked at Overbury: Geoffrey Jellicoe (1900-96) and Guy Dauber (1861-1936) remodelled parts of the gardens, and Aubrey Waterfield helped design the Italian Garden.⁹²

Kiftgate Court

As has been noted Waterfield knew the Muirs and painted a mural at Kiftgate Court in 1936. He, like Lawrence Johnston who he also knew, offered advice about the garden.⁹³ One of his paintings depicts a summerhouse he thought would suit the garden (Figure 7.54).

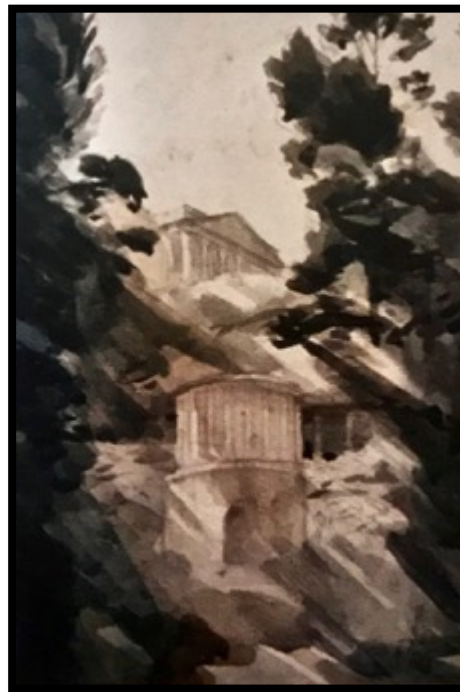


Figure 7.54: Aubrey Waterfield, *Kiftgate Court* (1930s)

⁹¹ Holland-Martin, *A Symposium*, p. 31.

⁹² <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000892> [Accessed 15 December 2018]. The Italian Garden was about 70 metres by 50 metres. In 1968 Russell Page simplified the gardens, but Email, 2 December 2019 from the Garden Museum's archivist stated they do not have his plans.

⁹³ Personal communication, 20 June 2019.

When Waterfield died in 1944, one of his friends, the diplomat, Victor Cunard (1898-1960) described his love of Italy:⁹⁴

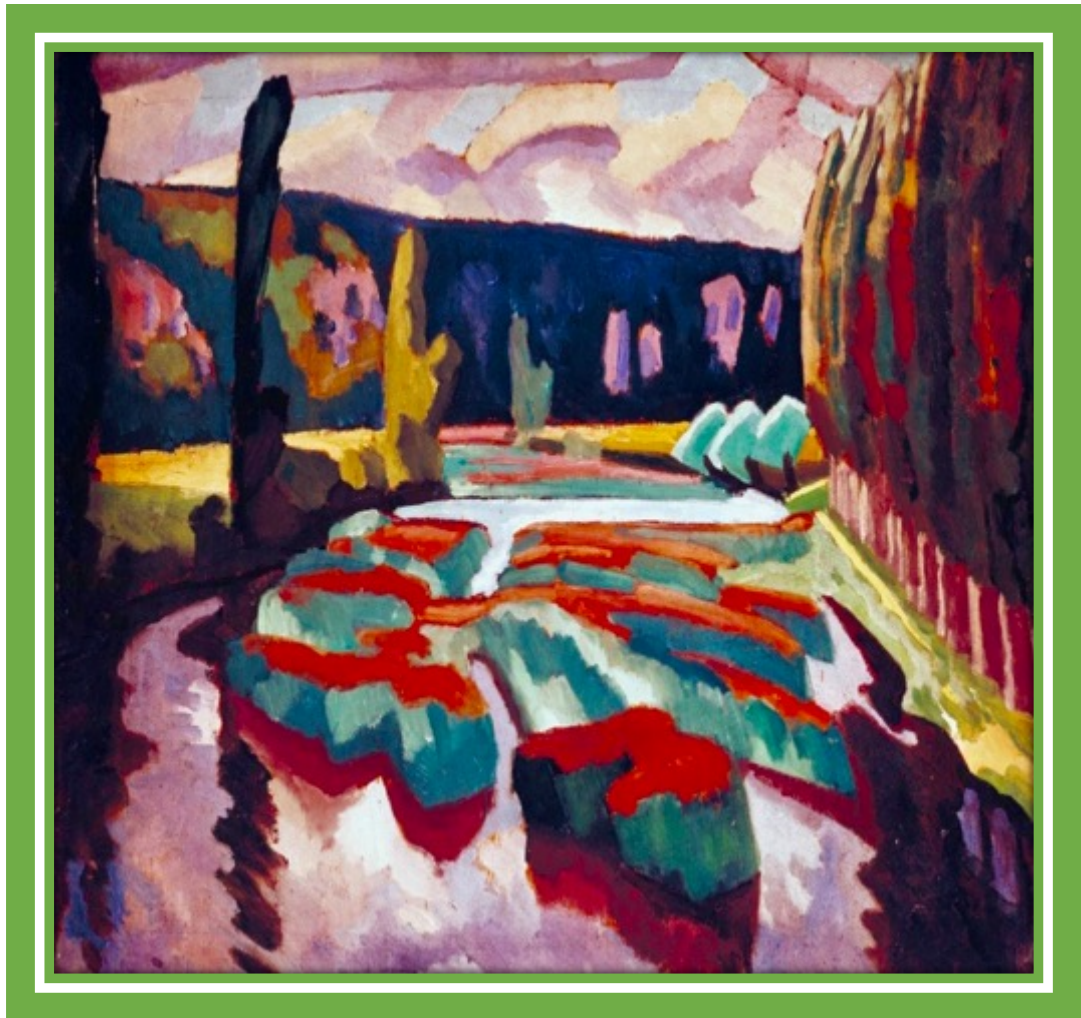
Few Englishmen can have loved that country more than Aubrey Waterfield, but, his love was never blind. It was born of a sense of beauty, and nourished on sympathy with, and understanding of, Italian weakness as much as of Italian strength. [.....] He brought something of Italy to London in the war years. The swags of gourds and fruit which decorated. His studio walls, his pictures of the countryside he understood so well, provoked a profound nostalgia for the Lumigiana and the Tuscan hills.

Cunard summed up what Waterfield epitomised: an ability to design and plant English-style gardens in Italy, which he adapted to suit the landscape and he transferred his knowledge of Italian gardens to a British setting. Thus both he and Du Cane pointed to a future where ideas from gardens overseas would be incorporated and assimilated into British gardens.

⁹⁴ V C, 'Mr Aubrey Waterfield', *The Times*, 49913 (20 July 1944), p. 7.

Chapter 8: Bloomsbury in Sussex

Vanessa Bell (1879-1961), Duncan Grant (1885-1978) and Roger Eliot Fry (1866-1934)



Roger Fry. *River with Poplars* (1912)

‘Incomparably the greatest influence on taste since Ruskin. [.....]
In so far as taste can be changed by one man, it was changed by
Roger Fry.’

Kenneth Clark¹

As an art historian, Kenneth Clark was referring to the impact, both at the time and subsequently that resulted from Roger Fry’s exhibition, ‘Manet and the Post-Impressionists’ at the Grafton Gallery in 1910. This and the second Post-Impressionist exhibition in 1912 introduced the British public to a new style of painting that was gradually accepted in the interwar period. Fry’s friendship with Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant began in 1910 and continued for the rest of his life. Bell and her sister, Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) had already formed what became known as the Bloomsbury Group in 1905, a group of artists and writers, who met weekly at their home in Gordon Square. It continued to be their circle of friends for about thirty years and its principal members comprised Bell and Woolf’s brother, Thoby Stephen (1880-1906), Bell’s future husband, the art critic, Clive Bell (1891-1964), Woolf’s future husband, the publisher, Leonard Woolf (1897-1969), the writer, Lytton Strachey (1880-1932), the economist, John Maynard Keynes (1883-1946) and Duncan Grant.² They shared ideas, supported each other’s creative activities and formed close, unconventional and often complex relationships, which still

¹ Quoted in Ian Chilvers, *Oxford Dictionary of Art and Artists* (Online Edition 2015) (<https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=HFExDwAAQBAJ&pg=PT553&dq=Kenneth+clark+%27incomparably+the+greatest+influence+on+taste+since+Ruskin&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjE1rfr09fsAhXxmFwKHcgSCQgQ6AEwAnoECAkQAg#v=onepage&q=Kenneth%20clark%20'incomparably%20the%20greatest%20influence%20on%20taste%20since%20Ruskin&f=false>) [Accessed 28 October 2020].

² <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/b/bloomsbury/lifestyle-lives-and-legacy-bloomsbury-group> [Accessed 29 October 2020].

continue to fascinate people. This interest in the Bloomsbury Group has resulted in a plethora of literature about their lives. The Tate Gallery and King's College, Cambridge have extensive archives which includes correspondence and photographs.³ It might be assumed their gardens would reflect their reaction to Victorian art and lifestyle and this is explored in this chapter.

Roger Eliot Fry (1866-1934)

Fry came from a wealthy Quaker family and spent his childhood in Highgate in London (Figure 8.1). He was educated at Clifton College in Bristol and then went to study Natural Sciences at King's College, Cambridge in 1885.

Although he was awarded a first class degree, he had decided to pursue a career in art and his father arranged for him to attend Francis Bate's (1858-1950) art school in Hammersmith.



Figure 8.1: Roger Fry, *Self-Portrait* (1928)

³ <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/archive/tga-8010/charleston-trust-correspondence-and-other-papers-relating-to-roger-fry-vanessa-bell-clive> and <https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/roger-eliot-fry-1866-1934>.

Artist and Art Historian

In 1891, Fry's father paid for him to go to Italy where he spent several months travelling. Afterwards in 1892, he went to Paris to study at the Académie Julien where he experienced modern French painting, but his essay describing it, 'A Philosophy of Impressionism' was not accepted for publication.⁴ Around 1894, Fry started to become known as a lecturer on art history, in particular after his book about the Italian Renaissance painter, Giovanni Bellini (1430-1516) was published in 1899.⁵ His later books included works about Paul Cézanne and Henri Matisse and a collection of essays, *Vision and Design*.⁶ He also taught art history at the Slade School of Art.

He did not think he was a great artist, 'only a serious one with some sensibility and taste', but he painted throughout his life.⁷ An early landscape painting with its sombre trees in the foreground shows that in 1892, his style already differed from the Victorian landscape artists (Figure 8.2). His first solo where he exhibited twenty-four watercolours and seven oil paintings exhibition was held at the Carfax Galleries in 1903.

⁴ Francis Spalding, *Roger Fry: Art & Life* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1980), p. 44.

⁵ Roger Fry, *Giovanni Bellini* (London: The State of the Unicorn, 1899).

⁶ Roger Fry, *Vision and Design* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930), Roger Fry, *Cézanne: A Story of His Development* (London: Hogarth Press, 1927), Roger Fry, *Henri Matisse* (London: A Zwemmer, 1935).

⁷ Letter, Roger Fry to Marie Mauron, 20 January 1920.



Figure 8.2: Roger Fry, *The Estuary at Blythborough* (1892)

Fry became interested in Cézanne's paintings in 1906. He admired his simple forms and bold colours, which inspired not only his painting, but those of Bell and Grant. This is seen in his painting of the Côte d'Azur when he was staying in Roquebrune in 1916.



Figure 8.3: Roger Fry, *View of the Côte d'Azur, Menton* (1916)

Fry's painting of Virginia Woolf shows that in his portraits, he also maintained a simple style with the background colour nearly matching her jacket (Figure 8.4).



8.4: Roger Fry, *Portrait of Virginia Woolf* (1932)

The Gardener

Fry started to garden as a child when he lived at 6 The Grove in Highgate. Previously, the family had lived at number 5, where Fry noted that from its small oblong garden, he could see its kitchen garden.⁸ He retained vivid memories, 'this garden is still for me the imagined background for almost any garden scene that I read of in books'.⁹ Figure 8.5 shows the garden had a narrow terrace in front of the house, but most of it comprised a lawn with flower beds on one side.

⁸ King's College, Cambridge, REF/1/18, 'Untitled Memoir of Childhood', p. 4.

⁹ Virginia Woolf, *Roger Fry: A Biography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1940), p. 3.



Figure 8.5: Garden, 6 The Grove, Highgate

Fry had a small plot where ‘My first passion was for a bushy plant of large red oriental poppies, which by some blessed chance was actually within the limits of the square yard of bed which had been allotted to me as my private and particular garden’.¹⁰ Although he sowed seeds and planted them, it was the poppies that entranced him and continued to do so:

The poppies were always better than my wildest dreams. Their red was always redder than anything I could imagine when I looked away from them. I had a general passion for red. [.....] Anyhow the poppy plant was the object of a much more than I was at all able to give ‘gentle Jesus’.¹¹

¹⁰ <https://www.kings.cam.ac.uk/archive-centre/roger-eliot-fry-1866-1934> Woolf, *Roger Fry*, p. 9.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, p.10.

He marvelled in the green flower buds with ‘little pieces of crumpled scarlet silk showing through the cracks’, and wanted to watch to see them burst into flower, which he did one morning much to the amusement of his family.¹² In 1929, he painted poppies, both in flower and in bud, in what was a traditional floral arrangement (Figure 8.6).



Figure 8.6: Roger Fry, *Poppies and Peonies* (1929)

In the early years of the twentieth century, Fry travelled extensively in Europe and north Africa, but he borrowed £1,500 from his father in 1908 to purchase the land to build Durbins in Guildford.¹³ Fry hoped it would help his wife, the artist Helen Coombe (1864-1937) recover from recurring mental health problems, but she was admitted to The Retreat in York in 1910, where she remained for the rest of her life

¹² Woolf, *Roger Fry*, p. 16.

¹³ King's College, Cambridge, REF/3/57/36, Letter, Fry to his father, 8 April 1908. Today, £182,000.

Durbins, Guildford

Durbins was built above the town and had views to the river at the back and the town from the side (Figure 8.7).



Figure 8.7: View from Durbins (1913-1919)

The art historian, Christopher Reed, described Durbins.¹⁴ In his opinion, its north façade was a typical Arts and Crafts design, but the south ‘pushes the Arts and Crafts movement’s claims to simplicity and serviceability to dramatically new levels’.¹⁵ This is seen in Figure 8.8, which shows its ‘industrial-scale’ windows and views of the garden. Later Fry admitted that the cypresses on either side of the garden door were a mistake, as they obscured the south façade.’¹⁶

¹⁴ Christopher Reed, *Roger Fry’s Durbins: A House and its Meanings* (London: Cecil Woolf, 1999).

¹⁵ Reed, *Roger Fry’s Durbins*, pp. 4-5.

¹⁶ Spalding, *Roger Fry*, p. 111.



Figure 8.8: South Façade, Durbins

It seems surprising that Fry asked Gertrude Jekyll to design his garden, when he designed the house himself, but perhaps he wanted to reproduce his childhood memories. Although Jekyll's plans have disappeared, Fry's daughter, Pamela Diamand (1902-1985) reproduced a its layout in 1949 (Figure 8.9).¹⁷ Diamand recorded that her father consulted Jekyll frequently about its design and 'complete plans from her specified the minutest details with every species of plant indicated on her neat drawings'.¹⁸ Historic England suggest that Jekyll visited Durbins several times.¹⁹ When they went to live there in December 1909, Diamand recalled that the garden had not been laid out.²⁰ Plants were supplied by Jekyll's nursery in 1911 (Figure 8.10).²¹

¹⁷ REF/13/24, 'Papers of Roger Fry'.

¹⁸ Pamela Diamand 'Durbins', in Hugh Lee (Edited), *A Cézanne in the Hedge* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), p. 54.

¹⁹ Historic England, Entry 1178005: (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1178005>) [Accessed 15 December 2018].

²⁰ Diamand, 'Durbins', p. 54.

²¹ Godalming Museum, Gertrude Jekyll Archive.

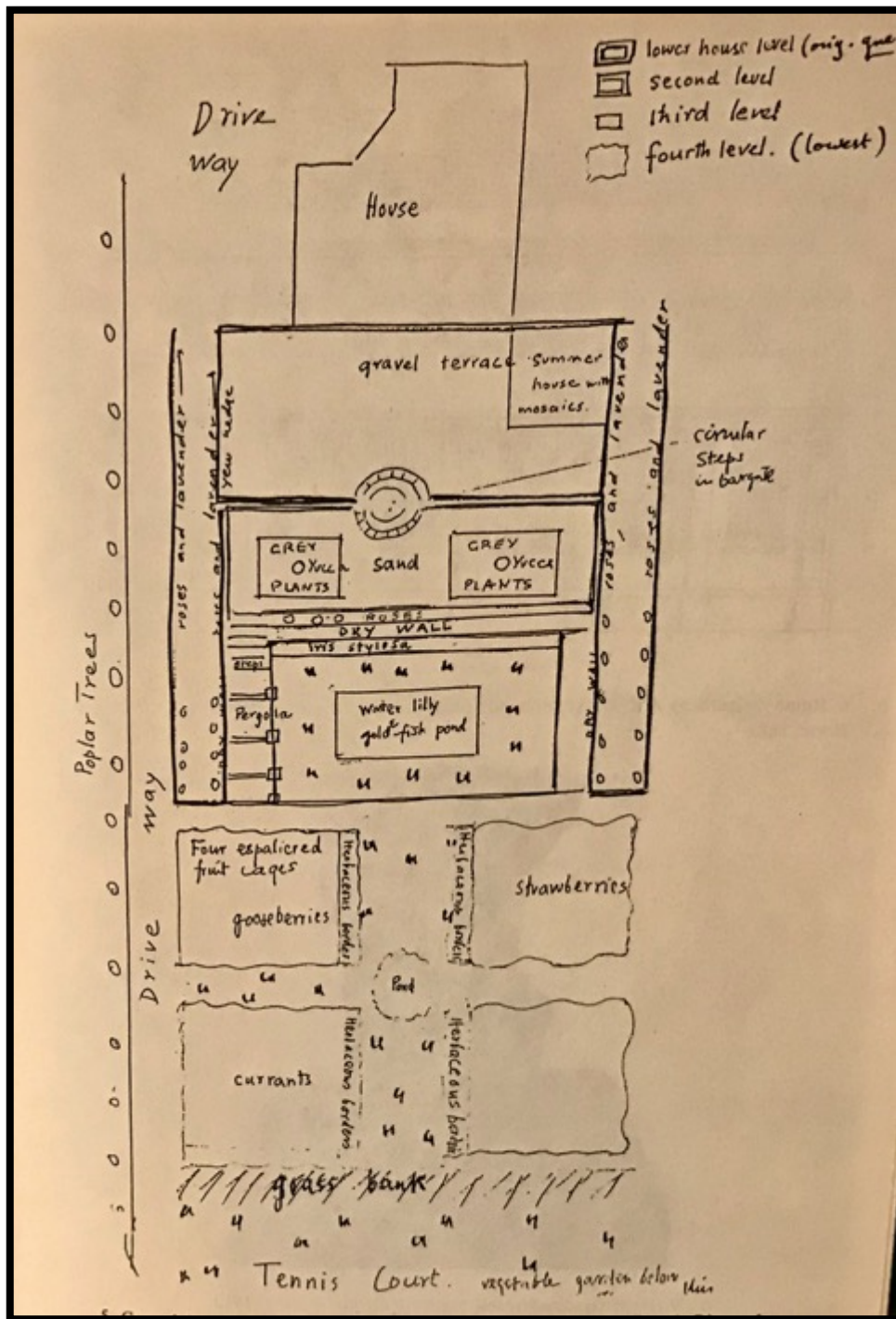


Figure 8.9: Plan of Durbin's Garden (1949)

Durbins			
1. Large bed 2/1			4
4 Rosemary	2 Rose planted		11 8
6 Penny ^{1/2}	3 White Phlox ^{2/8}		16 2
8 yucca fol ^{12/1}	10 Iris fol ^{4/2} Del.		16
21 Santolina	27 Noheta ^{9/1}		2 7 10
16 Snap out pink	16 int. shai		
16 tall pale pink	10 tall shai		
1 The seed large bed the same . 2 7 10			
2 8 Santolina			2 8
3. 6-7 Iris Slayton	8.5 Phlox ^{7/4}		11 4
8 White Pink ^{1/4}	9 pink Pink ^{4/6}		2 10
6 Barri ^{3/1}	3 Stobaea ^{2/3}	2 yucca fol ^{8/3}	8 3
6 Snap out sh 6 pale pink tall			
4 6-14 Iris Slayton	5 ferax. sm ⁵		5
5 chelone Lyoni	1 Clem ^{1/8} Baid		2 8
1 Acanth ⁹	7 Eryng ^{5/3}	5/3	6
5 Pentstemon	2 OC ^{3/1} Gidim ^{4/8}	5 libertha	3 8
1 Lavender	12 Sedum ^{3/2}	5 sweetb ³	6
9 Phlox ^{4/6}	12 White ^{3/4}	2 pink ^{3/4} Pink	7 10
6 Brim ^{2/1}	6 Snap ^{2/1} common shai		2
5 tall pink			
2 15 9			

Durbins			
wall 4			
9 Othonia	5 Cam ^{2/6}		6
15 Cordal ^{3/8}	18 Phlox ^{1/8} tall		6 5
12 Rock ^{3/1} pink	3 ^{3/8} Sedum spur.	6 minor	
24 Sedum ^{4/1} Entersii		7 Snap ^{4/1} tall	
9 pink 7 down shai			
5 6 Veronica ^{4/6} tricolor			4 6
7 Hastel ^{2/4}			2 2
bill			
By an oversight the Pentstemon			
+ Snapdragons were overlooked;			
offer them 1912			
offer to fill the wall 4 Sept 1911			

Figure 8.10: Plants for Durbins from Munstead Wood Nursery (1911)

The sloping garden comprised six rectangular levels. A narrow terrace, surrounded by flower beds, planted with lavender and pink china roses, was built around the house and can be seen in Figure 8.8. Amidst roses, lavender, irises, phlox Canterbury bells and white pinks, Fry grew his favourite oriental poppies, 'it's a mass of blue anchusa and red poppies and red and yellow waterlilies'.²²

There were two reflecting pools in the upper garden: a rectangular goldfish pond planted with waterlilies and a small circular one (Figure 8.11 and Figure 8.12).²³

²² Quoted in Spalding, *Roger Fry*, p. 98. Letter to his friend, the political scientist and philosopher, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (1863-1932).

²³ Diamand, 'Durbins', p. 54.



Figure 8.11: Rectangular Goldfish Pool, Durbins (1913-1919)



Figure 8.12: Circular Pool (1913-1919)

The flower beds in Figure 8.12 were surrounded by espaliered fruit trees and a brick pergola can be seen on the left of the photograph. Figure 8.13 shows the pergola and the steps leading down from the terrace.



Figure 8.13: Pergola (1913-1919)

In keeping with Edwardian life, there was a lawn for tennis, but the garden was intended to be an extension of the house and part of everyday life (Figure 8.14).



Figure 8.14: Fry's Children, Pamela and Julian with Duncan Grant and Troth Swinburne (1910)

There was a kitchen garden on the bottom level, where not only vegetables were planted, but gooseberries, currants and strawberries were grown in cages, surrounded by espaliered apples and pears.²⁴

Fry painted the garden and Figure 8.15 depicts it from the terraces above the circular pool, looking to the countryside beyond.



Figure 8.15: Roger Fry, *The Artist's Garden at Durbins* (1915)

In 1911, Bell had painted a similar view from the terrace, but in her picture, the circular pool can be clearly seen (Figure 8.16).

²⁴ Unusual vegetable varieties were grown.



Figure 8.16: Vanessa Bell, *Hog's Back from Durbins* (1911)

Whilst the garden's design was in the Edwardian style, its planting with its red oriental poppies was probably more colourful than many Jekyll-designed gardens. Where Fry displayed a more modern approach was his decision to place contemporary sculptures in the garden, which Reed thought gave it a 'strong primitivism'.²⁵ Two of these works were by young sculptors, who Fry encouraged, including the controversial sculptor, Eric Rowton Gill (1882-1940). Fry bought *The Virgin* after it was exhibited at the 1912 Post-Impressionist Exhibition (Figure 8.17).²⁶ He commissioned the French sculptor, Henri Gaudier-Brzeska (1891-1915) to design a bird bath, but as he was killed during the war, only a model was made (Figure 8.18).²⁷

²⁵ Reed, *Roger Fry's Durbins*, p. 13.

²⁶ Fry paid £60, today, £6,904. When Fry considered placing Gill's sculpture of lovers in the garden, his sister, Joan (1862-1955) decided it was too explicit.²⁶

²⁷ Reed, *Roger Fry's, Durbins*, p. 13.



Figure 8.17: Eric Gill, *The Virgin* (1912) and Figure 8.18: Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, *Model for a Bird Bath* (1914)

In 1916, Fry had financial problems and Durbins was rented to Lady Jane Strachey (1840-1928), Lytton Strachey's mother.²⁸ After she left in 1919, he could no longer afford to live there and the house was sold.

7 Dalmeny Avenue, London

In 1919, Fry went to live in Dalmeny Avenue, just off the Holloway Road. The Victorian terrace house where his studio looked out on the garden had 'a beautifully designed garden which stretches away for ever'.²⁹ Its most notable feature, which Fry painted was a fountain, 'presided over by a Chinese deity' (Figure 8.19 and Figure 8.20)³⁰.

²⁸ Spalding, *Roger Fry, Art and Life*, p. 207.

²⁹ Woolf, *Roger Fry*, p. 226.

³⁰ Ibidem.



Figure 8.19: Roger Fry, *The Ornamental Garden, 7 Dalmeny Avenue* (1929)



Figure 8.20: Roger Fry, *The London Garden* (1921)

Bell and Fry were lovers briefly, but remained friends until his death. They met in 1910 and when Fry founded the Omega Workshop in 1913, she and Grant were part of his venture to produce well-made crafts in the post-impressionist style. Whereas this was similar in concept to William Morris' ideas, Fry wanted to see decorative arts to receive the same status as fine art.

Vanessa Bell (1878-1981)



Figure 8.21: Vanessa Bell, *Self-Portrait* (1961)

Bell was the eldest child of the writer, Sir Leslie Stephen (1832-1904). Like Fry, hers was a wealthy family and after her father died, she sold their house at 23 Hyde Park Gate and she and her siblings moved to 46 Gordon Square in Bloomsbury.

The Artist

Bell and her sister, Virginia, were educated by private tutors, but in 1896, she went to Sir Arthur Cope's (1857-1940) School of Art in Kensington and then to the Royal Academy School in 1901, where she was taught by John Singer Sargent. At this time she was influenced by the American artist, James Abbott McNeill Whistler's (1834-1923) use of colour. As she wrote:

My method is the same as Whistler's – only he used many more layers than I should because he painted very thinly – which I can't, now at any rate, get myself to do. But the important point, which I believe I haven't realized before, is that he didn't put the right colour on at once.

It was probably almost a monochrome to start with & I suppose he only got the right colour at the end.’³¹

Colour remained important throughout her life. After she met Fry, he encouraged her to experiment and in 1914, she started to paint abstracts. Figure 8.22 shows the use of a restricted number of geometric shapes and colours.

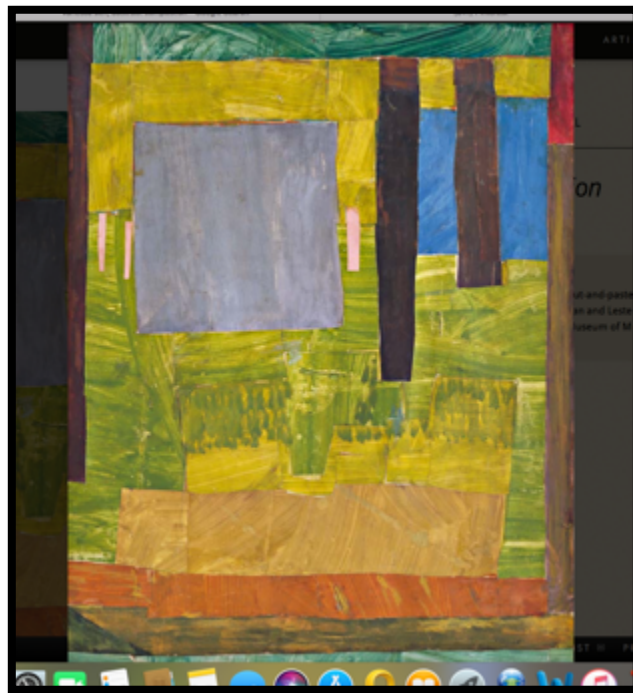


Figure 8.22: Vanessa Bell, Abstract Composition (1914)

Although later she returned to a more representational painting, Bell retained a more modernist approach, where form and contour were more important than detail. As she wrote to Fry in 1923:

I think Duncan [Grant] and I have changed extraordinarily over the past 10 years or so I hope for the better. But also it seems to me there

³¹ Letter, Vanessa Stephen (Bell) to Margery Snowden, 14 August 1905 (<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/b/bloomsbury/art-bloomsbury>) [Accessed 1 November 2020]

was a great deal of excitement about colour then – 7 to 10 years ago – which has perhaps rather quieted down now I suppose as a result of trying to change everything into colour. [.....] I wonder now whether we couldn't get more of that sort of intensity of colour without losing solidity of objects and space.³²

In 1907, Bell married the art critic, Clive Bell. After their two sons were born, the relationship changed to one of friendship, but they never sought a divorce. From 1916, she had a lifelong relationship with Duncan Grant. Although their daughter, Angelica, was born in 1918, Grant's sexual preference was for men. Yet he always reassured her that she was an essential part of his life.³³ It was their relationship that resulted in them moving to Charleston Farmhouse in 1916

Duncan Grant (1885-1978)

Grant is probably the best known of the Bloomsbury Group artists. He had a somewhat different childhood to Fry and Bell, as his early years were spent in India where his father was a major in the British army (Figure 8.23). When he returned to England, he was educated first at Rugby School from 1895 to 1899 and then, St Paul's School in London until 1901. Although his parents hoped he would join the army, he went to Westminster School of Art in 1902. Before 1910, he travelled in Italy and studied art in Paris where he met Matisse and visited Picasso's studio. His cousin, Lytton Strachey introduced him to the Bloomsbury Group.

³² *Letter, Bell to Fry, 19 September 1923.*

³³ Clive Bell was registered as Angelica's father and she was not told about her parentage until she grew up.



Figure 8.23: Duncan Grant, *Self-Portrait* (1909)

The Artist

Like Bell, Grant experimented with various styles and techniques, as can be seen in the way he depicted his lover, David Garnett (1892-1981) and in his use of geometric shapes and colour palette (Figure 8.25).



Figure 8.24: Duncan Grant, *David Garnett in Profile* (1914) and Figure 8.25: Duncan Grant, *Collage* (1916)

In the First World War, Grant and Garnett were conscientious objectors and Bell and her children moved to Charleston Farmhouse in 1916, where they could work in the surrounding farmland (Figure 8.26).

Charleston Farmhouse, West Firle, East Sussex

In 1916, whilst they were living at Wissett Lodge at Halesworth in Suffolk, Leonard Woolf discovered the farmhouse, 'I wish, you'd leave Wissett and take Charleston. [.....] It has a charming garden, with a pond, and fruit trees, and vegetables, all now rather run down and wild, but you could make it lovely'.³⁴ As children, Bell and Woolf had made a small garden at Hyde Park Gate and in the years before the war, members of the Bloomsbury Group spent summer holidays at Asheham House at Beddingham in Sussex.



Figure 8.26: Charleston Farmhouse (1900)

Shortly after they moved there, Bell described Charleston to Fry and asked him to visit:

³⁴ Quoted in <https://thecharlestonattic.wordpress.com/2015/01/29/the-garden-at-charleston>, Letter, Virginia Woolf to Bell, May 1916.

Anyhow its mostly lovely, very solid and simple, with flat walls in that lovely mixture of brick and flint they use about here, & perfectly flat windows in the walls & wonderful tiled roofs. The pond is most beautiful with a willow at one side & a stone – or flint – wall edging it all round the garden part, & a little lawn sloping down to it, with formal bushes on it. Then there’s a small orchard & the walled garden...& another lawn or bit of field railed in beyond. There’s a wall of trees – one single line of elms all round two sides which shelters us from west winds.³⁵

Fry designed the garden in 1917, but until the war ended, Bell grew vegetables. Then she and Grant made the garden, which was simple in concept, but like Durbins retained an Edwardian style (Figure 8.27). Until 1939, it was their summer home where they entertained their friends.



Figure 8.27: Rectangular Pool, Charleston Farmhouse (2019)

³⁵ Letter, Bell to Fry, 16 October 1916, Vanessa Bell, *Selected Letters of Vanessa Bell*, Edited Regina Walter (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993)

The rectangular semi-walled garden was divided by a grid of intersecting gravel paths. The lawn, surrounded by box hedging, had a small rectangular pool, similar to the one at Durbins. At its centre was a torso, a modern sculpture by John Skeaping (1901-1980).³⁶ Where the garden differed was Bell and Grant's choice of planting. Bell enjoyed profusion and in 1922, Woolf noted, 'Nessa emerges from a great variegated quilt of aster & artichokes.'³⁷ Bell often alluded to its exuberant planting, writing 'the garden is an overwhelming blaze of colour [.....] pinks out in masses, roses,'³⁸ or 'you can't conceive the medley of apples, hollyhocks, plums, zinnia, dahlias, all mixed up together' and, 'a mass of flowers & as gay as possible'.³⁹ Grey and silver-leaved plants like the architectural artichoke, *Cynara scolymus*, that grows to 8-feet or an edging of *Stachys byzantina* provided a background for Bell's description of a garden 'full every kind of red from red lead to black'.⁴⁰ Bell also enjoyed 'tobaccos & stocks smell strong in the evening. I often wander about for the pleasure of the sights and smells.'⁴¹ In 1926, she told Fry 'It's so divine here now one can't bear leaving. [.....] The garden is full of dahlias and red admirals and one can sit out all day if one chooses'.

³⁶ He was Barbara Hepworth's (1903-1975) first husband.

³⁷ Quoted in Nuala Hancock, *Charleston & Monks House: the Intimate House Museum of Virginian Woolf and Vanessa Bell* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 98.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 100.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 98.

In the 1930s, Bell noted, ‘The house seems full of young people in very high spirits [.....] lying about in the garden which is simply a dithering blaze of flowers, butterflies and apples’ (Figure (8.28 and Figure 8.29)).⁴²



Figure 8.28: Friends in the Walled Garden



Figure 8.29: Quentin, Julian and Angelica Bell Performing a Play (1935)

⁴² (<https://thecharlestonattic.wordpress.com/2015/01/29/the-garden-at-charleston>) [Accessed 1 November 2020].

The garden was a recurrent theme in Bell and Grant's paintings, which portray it as an integral part of their lives. As early as 1917, Grant portrayed Julian and Quentin Bell doing their lessons in the orchard (Figure 8.30). In the 1930s, Bell painted their daughter, Angelica reading in the garden amidst a profusion of pink-orange flowers (Figure 8.31)



Figure 8.30: Duncan Grant, *Lessons in the Orchard* (1917)



Figure 8.31: Vanessa Bell, *Angelica Reading by the Studio Door* (1930s)

Soon after they moved to Charleston, Bell painted the pool at the bottom of the garden. Figure 8.32 demonstrates her emphasis on the shape and contours of the pool, trees and the wider landscape. At this time, Bell and Grant often chose the same subject and in 1920, Grant painted the pool from a different angle, but in a more representative style (Figure 8.33). Fry, too, painted the pond, but his depiction looked towards the barns (Figure 8.34). Figure 8.35 shows the pool today.



Figure 8.32: Vanessa Bell, *The Pool* (1916)



Figure 8.33: Duncan Grant, *The Pool* (1920)



Figure 8.34: Roger Fry, *The Barn and Pond* (1918)



Figure 8.35: The Pool, Charleston Farmhouse (2019)

They continued to paint the garden for the remainder of their lives. After Charleston became their main home, Grant painted the garden full of blossom in spring (Figure 8.36).



Figure 8.36: Duncan Grant, *Garden Path in Spring* (1944)

They both of painted different aspects of the rectangular pool, but only Grant's picture shows Skeaping's sculpture (Figure 8.37 and Figure 8.38).

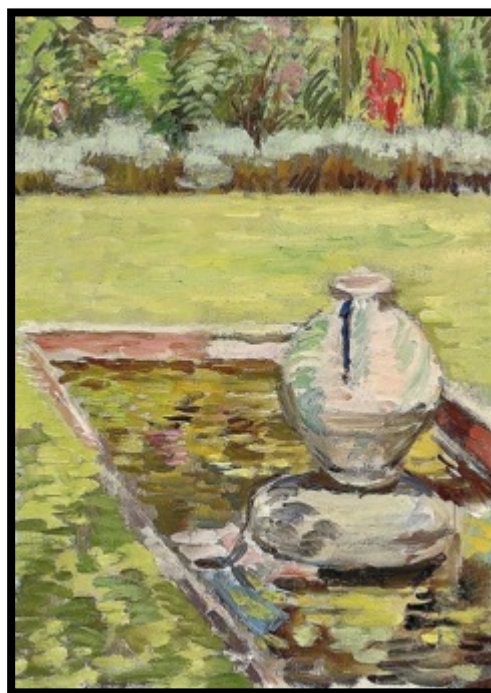


Figure 8.37: Vanessa Bell, *The Goldfish Pond* (1939)



Figure 8.38: Duncan Grant, *The Walled Garden* (1965)

In 1939, Bell moved from her bedroom to the studio, which had French windows that opened into the garden, but she also painted outside. She brought the garden into the house, which was adorned with vases of flowers. In 1923, Woolf noted that Bell and Grant were sitting with ‘one jar of flowers & one arrangement of still life in front of them’.⁴³ Figure 8.39 and Figure 8.40 show their flower arrangements in a similar vase. Bell’s includes red poppies and other flowers, whilst Grant’s has poppies which are contrasted against silver artichoke leaves.

⁴³ Hancock, *Charleston*, p. 99.



Figure 8.39: Vanessa Bell, *Poppies and Other Flowers* (1950) and Figure 8.40
Duncan Grant, *Still-Life on a Painted Table*

Thus it can be seen that for over fifty years, not only did Charleston's garden play a full part in their lives, their children and friends also enjoyed it. The garden was small, its design simple and it was planted with the brightly coloured flowers they both liked, often grown from seeds: Wallflower 'Persian Carpet', cosmos, nasturtiums, sweet peas and zinnias.⁴⁴ It is unlikely they were influenced by trends in garden style and probably neither would have called themselves a 'plantsman'. However, their garden showed the way forward, that anyone could make an attractive garden for their family's enjoyment. As Angelica Garnett (1918-2012), concluded the garden was 'never a gentleman's garden or a gardener's garden, it was always an artist's garden'.⁴⁵

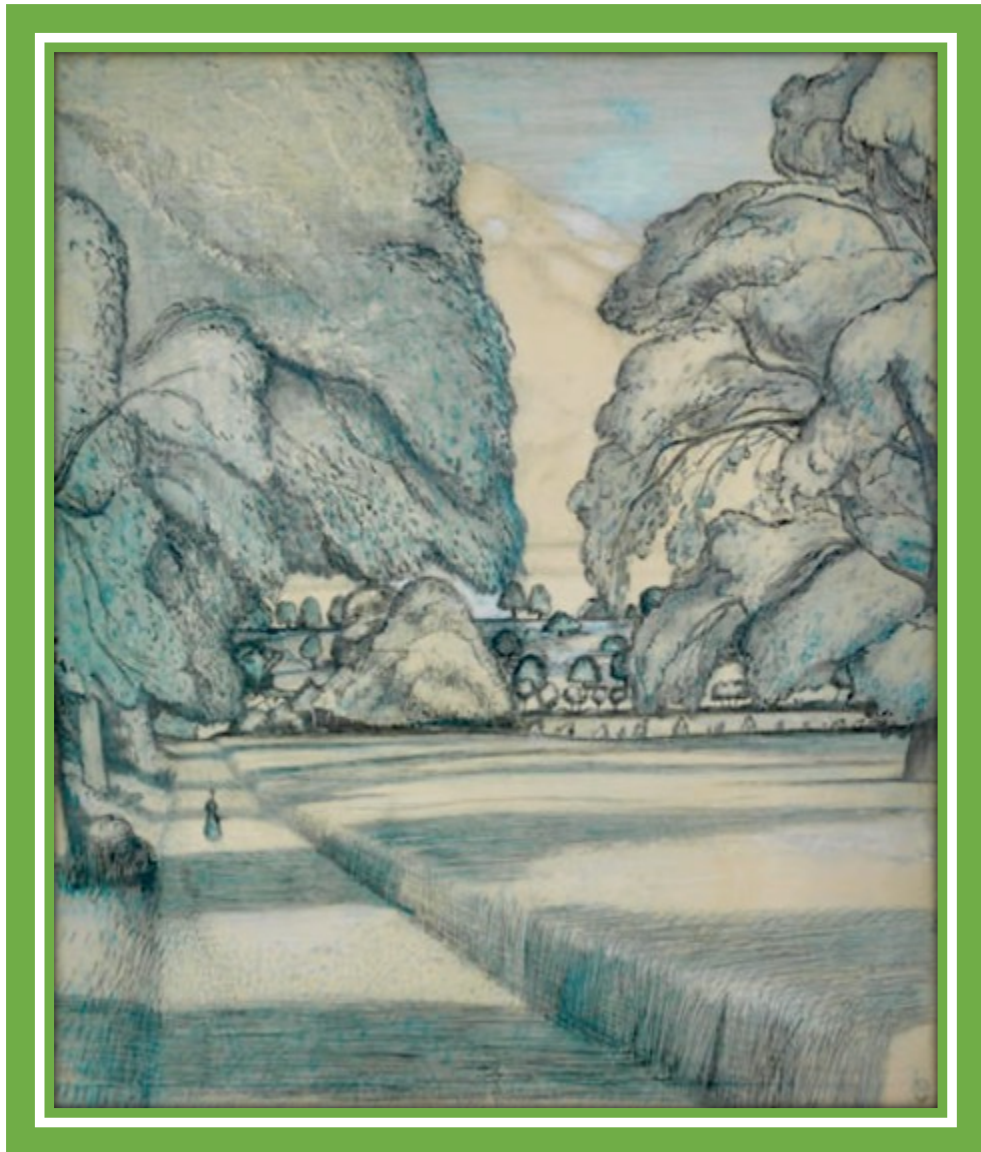
⁴⁴ (<https://thecharlestonattic.wordpress.com/2015/01/>) [Accessed 2 November 2020]. Grant used to order Carters seeds.

⁴⁵ <http://www.charlestonfarmhouse.org> [Accessed 15 June 2017].

Chapter 9: Contemporary and Reactionary

Paul Nash (1889-1946) and John Northcote Nash

(1893-1977)



Paul Nash, *The Peacock Path* (1912)

‘The landscapes I have in mind are not part of the unseen world in a psychic sense. They belong to the world that lies visibly about us. They are unseen merely because they are not perceived, only in that way can they be regarded as invisible’.

Paul Nash¹

At first sight, Paul Nash’s statement in 1938 appears surprising when he is remembered for his graphic depictions of the Western Front and who wrote, ‘I shall not forget it as long as I live. I have seen the most frightful nightmare of a country more conceived by Dante or Poe than by nature, unspeakable, utterly indescribable.’² Yet maybe ‘nightmare’ is significant, as from 1908 he experienced nocturnal visions, which influenced not only how he saw the world, but how he depicted it. He may also have been alluding to what is not noticed or is obscured from view. This is how his paintings of landscape and gardens have been considered.

Just as Roger Fry challenged accepted taste before the war, during the 1920s and 1930s, Nash sought to portray the landscape in different ways and experimented with abstract and surrealist painting. This chapter explores Nash’s influence during the interwar period and in particular, whether this was reflected in his brother, John’s [JN] painting and garden design.

¹ Paul Nash, ‘Unseen Landscapes’, *Country Life*, 83 (21 May 1938), p. 526.

² Paul Nash, *Outline: An Autobiography & Other Writings* (London: Faber & Faber, 1949).

Paul Nash (1879-1946)



Figure 9.2: Paul Nash, *Proud Paul* (1922)

As Nash is regarded as one of the influential artists of the first half of the twentieth century, a number of books have been written about his life. His autobiography was published posthumously.³ The Tate Gallery has correspondence with his wife, Margaret Odeh (1888-1961) and the surrealist artist, Eileen Agar (1909-1991), with whom he had an extra-marital relationship between 1935 and 1944.⁴ Yale University has his correspondence with his friend, Mercia Oakley (1893-1957).⁵ A collection of his drawings is held by the British Museum.⁶ In recent years, exhibition have featured his paintings including one at Tate Britain in 2016.

³ Paul Nash, *Outline: An Autobiography & Other Writings* (London: Faber & Faber, 1949).

⁴ Tate Gallery, TGA/8313, Letters to Margaret Nash and TGA/8712, Letters to Eileen Agar.

⁵ Yale University, MSS 26, Letters, Paul Nash to Mercia Oakley (<https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/2/resources/30>).

⁶ (<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/term/BIOG39888>).

Nash was born in Kensington in London, but at the end of 1901, the family moved from Ghuznee Lodge to the newly built Wood Lane House at Iver Heath in Buckinghamshire, which had a one-and-a half-acre garden.⁷ His parents hoped he would join the navy, but when he failed the entrance examination, he finished his education at St Paul's School.

In 1907, Nash went to study art at the South-Western Polytechnic, followed by two years at London County Council's School of Photography and Lithography. Although he went to the Slade School of Art in October 1910, he only spent a short time there, but met the artists, Dora Carrington, Mark Gertler, Ben Nicholson (1894-1982), Stanley Spencer and Edward Wadsworth (1889-1949), all of whom had a significant impact on twentieth-century British art.

The Artist

Whilst he was at the Slade, Nash decided to concentrate on landscape painting. Woodland, ponds and trees had inspired him from childhood and their importance is reflected in his pictures. One of his earliest shows three of the elms on the boundary of Wood Lane House (Figure 9.2). They appear as a silhouette at dusk and Nash described that from 'their rigorous cropping [they] had emerged into a singular grace. Their feathered bodies mingled together as they thrust upwards and their three heads fused in cascades of dense leaves spreading out like the crown of a vast fountain'.⁸ Figure 9.3, painted around the same time, shows the boundary of Wood Lane with the

⁷ It was hoped the move would help his mother would recover from mental illness, but she died in a mental hospital in 1910.

⁸ Nash, *Outline*, p. 95.

countryside beyond. In indeterminate light, a man walks into the trees behind the partly mown field.



Figure 9.2: Paul Nash, *The Three* (1911-1912) and Figure 9.3: Paul Nash, *The Wanderer* (1911)

At this time Nash visited his father's cousin, Alfred Dodd Wells (1837-1923), who lived at Sinodon House at Wallingford in Berkshire, where he explored the Wittenham Clumps. Not only did the two chalk hills with beech trees on their summit appeal to Nash, he was intrigued by the site's archaeological history that dated from to the Bronze Age, 'A beautiful legendary country haunted by old gods long forgotten'.⁹ As Nash acknowledged, 'I wanted an image of them which would express what they meant to me. [...] For the first time, perhaps, I was tasting fully the savour of my own pursuit. The life of a landscape painter' (Figure 9.4).¹⁰

⁹ Quoted in (<https://www.nashclumps.org/early.html>) [Accessed 6 November 2020].

¹⁰ Letter to his friend, Mercia Oakley (1892-1957). Nash made several drawings from 1911.



Figure 9.4: Paul Nash, *Wittenham Clumps* (1913)

Nash held his first solo exhibition at the Carfax Galleries in November 1912. Reluctantly, he joined the Artists' Rifles in 1914 and as a 2nd lieutenant in the Hampshire Regiment, he was not sent to the Western Front until 1917. When he fell in a trench and sustained broken ribs just before the Battle of Ypres, he was sent home. As an official war artist, his paintings in the Imperial War Museum depict the effect of war on the landscape. Like his earlier paintings, they represent more than is visible at first sight. Figure 9.5 shows canvases in the trenches as well as the ravaged countryside. Yet, there are buds on the trees reflecting that life continues. In a letter to his wife, Nash noted that 'Here in the back garden of the trenches, it is amazingly beautiful'.¹¹ He noted that grass had grown through the sandbags and that among more than twenty plants, there were dandelions, clover and thistles.¹²

¹¹ TGA 8318/1/1/136, Letter, Nash to his wife, 7 March 1917.

¹² Ibidem.



Figure 9.5: Paul Nash, *Spring in the Trenches Ridgewood* (1917)

In 1917, Nash also painted, *The Cherry Orchard*, which was a metaphor. The bare fruitless trees in formation represented the loss of young lives and was based on a drawing in the *Officer's Handbook* for 'high wire entanglement' (Figure 9.6 and Figure 9.7).¹³

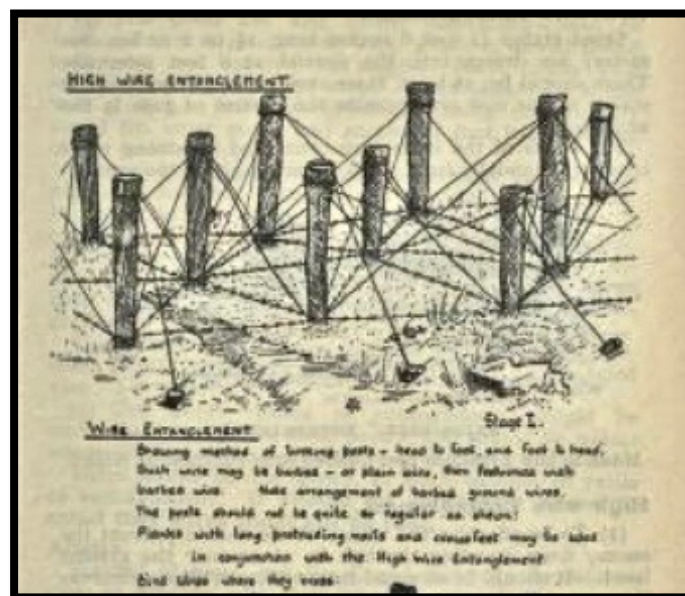


Figure 9.6: Diagram High Wire Entanglement (1916)

¹³ Captain H C Blake, *Officer's Handbook: Knowledge for the Western Front* (London: Harrison & Sons, 1916).



Figure 9.7: Paul Nash, *The Cherry Orchard* (1917)

The Gardener

Nash was not an avid gardener like his brother, but it appears that when he was at living at Iden in Sussex, he gardened, 'I have become a gardener to my surprise and spend my time between painting and digging'.¹⁴ His paintings show that gardens were important, as they, too, marked his sense of place. His early memory of what he called, 'my first authentic *place*' came from walks in Kensington Gardens (Figure 9.8).¹⁵

¹⁴ Quoted in Andrew Lambirth, *John Nash: Artist & Countryman* (Norwich: Unicorn Press, 2019), p. 199.

¹⁵ Nash, *Outline*, p. 35.



Figure 9.8: Paul Nash, *Kensington Gardens*

Wood Lane House remained his father's home until he died in 1928 when Nash sold it. His depiction of its garden, where his brother first gardened, show lawns, flower beds and a rose covered arch (Figure 9.9 and Figure 9.10). Yet their importance to Nash was that 'it was the first place which expressed for me something more than its natural features' and he painted it more than any other garden.¹⁶

His depiction of it in summer shows that what interested him was its trees: laburnum, chestnuts, acacia and a silver fir rather than the flower borders his brother may have planted (Figure 9.11). It is probable that Figure 9.12 and Figure 9.13 were also painted at Iver Heath. Whilst *The Edge of the Wood* appears to be a tranquil scene, there is something unnerving about the trees. *The Pond* represents Nash's idea that not everything is always visible with its contrast between the trees' framework and those which are still in leaf.

¹⁶ Nash, *Outline*, p. 10



Figure 9.9: Paul Nash, *Wood Lane House* (1912) and Figure 9.10: Paul Nash, *The Field Before the Wood* (1914)



Figure 9.11: Paul Nash, *Summer Garden* (1914)



Figure 9.12: Paul Nash, *The Edge of the Wood* (1919)



Figure 9.13: Paul Nash, *The Pond*

After the war, whilst he recovered from post-traumatic stress, Nash lived at Dormers Cottage and Rose Cottage in Dymchurch in Kent, before

moving to Pantile Cottage (Figure 9.14).¹⁷ Figure 9.15 shows the garden and when he moved to Iden, plants from the garden went with him.¹⁸



Figure 9.14: Pantile Cottage, Dymchurch (1920s)



Figure 9.15: Paul Nash, *Pantile Cottage* (1925)

¹⁷ Lambirth, *John Nash*, p. 199.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

In the late 1920s, whilst Nash lived at The Cottage at Iden in Sussex, he bought plants from Clarence Elliott's, Six Hills nursery and JN designed a rock garden (Figure 9.16).¹⁹



Figure 9.16: The Cottage, Iden (1930)

When he painted the view from his studio, it included the garden with its lawn and fruit trees. However, his style now incorporated his interest in modern European painters, in particular the Italian artist, Giorgio De Chirico (1891-1976), who influenced Surrealism (Figure 9.7).

Although Nash is renowned for his depiction of trees, he also enjoyed flowers, which is shown in his long association with crocuses. Whilst he was living in Hampstead between 1936 and 1939, he photographed them in his garden, but twenty year earlier he had portrayed them in John Drinkwater's (1882-1937) book of poems (Figure 9.18 and Figure 9.19)²⁰

¹⁹ Lambirth, *John Nash*, p. 199. JN knew Elliott and their relationship is discussed on pp. 22-23.

²⁰ John Drinkwater, *Loyalties: A Book of Poems* (London: Beaumont Press, 1918).



Figure 9.17: Paul Nash, *Landscape at Iden* (1929)



Figure 9.18: *Crocuses*, 3 Eldon Road, Hampstead (1935)

Towards the end of his life, Nash painted sunflowers in a series of four paintings to represent the wheel of the sun (Figure 9.20).²¹ Yet in another aerial painting, Nash's depiction of *Magnolia grandiflora* shows that

²¹ Denys Sutton, 'Artist in Search of the Invisible', *Country Life*, 129 (13 April 1961), pp. 818-819. He died before the series was completed.

although he was not a botanical artist, he had studied the flowers closely (Figure 9.21).



Figure 9.19: Paul Nash, *Crocuses* (1918)



Figure 9.20: Paul Nash, *Solstice of Summer* (1945)



Figure 9.21: Paul Nash, *Flight of the Magnolia* (1944)

Throughout his life, Nash's dreams and nocturnal visions were an integral part of his painting. Unlike William Blake, who he admired, he did not see elemental beings of fairy funerals, his dreams related to the natural world. JN was four years younger and although Nash played an important part in his life, his feet were firmly on the ground.

John Northcote Nash [JN] (1893-1977)

Whereas Nash became involved in the political debates about the future direction of British art in the 1930s, JN was more concerned with his painting and his garden (Figure 9.22).²²

²² Nash wrote for *The Listener* and in 1933 founded Unit One to promote modern art, architecture and design.



Figure 9.22: Peter Coker (1926-2004), *John Nash* (1970)

Nash wrote about his life as an artist and his lifelong fascination with plants.²³ Many of his papers are in the Tate archive.²⁴ His garden was described by his friends, the writer, Ronald Blythe, who knew him and his wife, the artist, Christine Kühnenthal (1895-1976) for many years and cared for him at the end of his life,²⁵ and John Lewis (1912-1998).²⁶ Sir John Rothenstein and Allen Freer wrote biographies and more recently, Andrew Lambirth's detailed biography and critique of his illustrations and paintings

²³ John Nash, *The Artist Plantsman* (London: Anthony d'Offay, 1976). Edition limited to 450 copies.

²⁴ <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/archive/items/tga-8910> comprises 31 boxes and includes correspondence with other artists including Bawden and two letters from Mahoney on 28 April 1948 and 5 September 1967.

²⁵ Ronald Blythe, 'Art Imitates Nature at Bottengoms', *Country Life*, 194 (6 July 2000), pp. 114-117 and Ronald Blythe, *John Nash at Wormingford* (Wormingford: Parish Church Appeal Fund, 1992).

²⁶ John Lewis, *The Painter as Illustrator* (Godalming: Pendomer Press, 1976).

has been published, as has Andy Friend.²⁷ In 1979, Nash co-operated with an MA dissertation that considered his paintings.²⁸

Early Life

JN's education differed from his brother's, as he went first to Langley College in Slough and then as a boarder at Wellington College in Berkshire. Initially he considered a career in journalism. However, Nash encouraged him to develop his talent for drawing and painting, but advised him not to go to art school as it would 'ruin an exciting originality in his vision of landscape'.²⁹

The Artist

In 1913, JN exhibited with his brother at the Dorien Leigh Gallery and the illustration on the catalogue's cover shows the Wittenham Clumps' two hills (Figure 9.23). JN often complained that as a requirement of Edwardian social life, his father's only interest in Wood Lane House's garden was its full-size croquet lawn, which 'dominated everything' and which he portrayed in an early painting (Figure 9.24).³⁰

²⁷ Sir John Rothenstein, *John Nash* (London: Macdonald & Co, 1983) and Allen Freer, *John Nash: The Delighted Eye* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993). Andrew Lambirth, *John Nash: Artist & Countryman* (Norwich: Unicorn Press, 2019), Andy Friend, *John Nash: The Landscape if Love and Solace* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2020).

²⁸ Roderick Jones, 'John Nash: Paintings and Watercolours' (Unpublished MA Dissertation, Sheffield City Polytechnic, now Sheffield Hallam University, March 1979).

²⁹ Ronald Blythe, 'John Northcote Nash' (2004). (<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001>).

³⁰ Nash, *The Artist Plantsman*, p. 2.

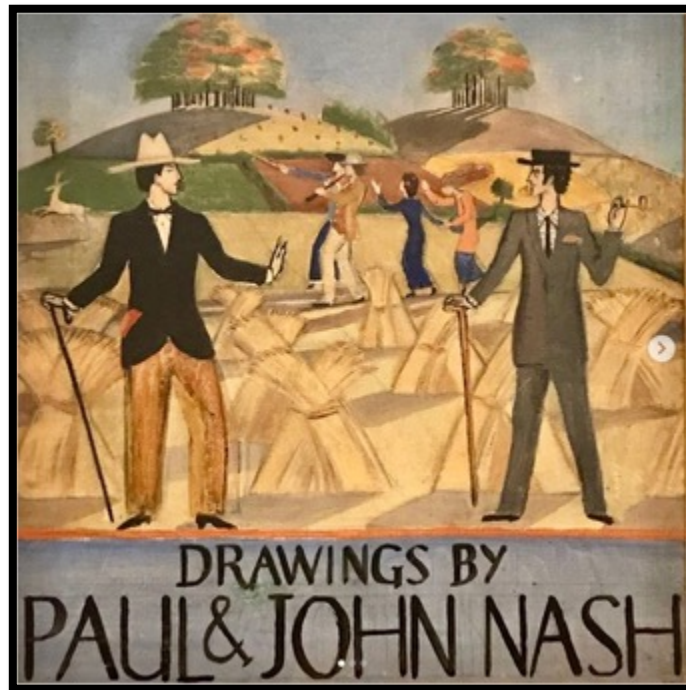


Figure 9.23: Exhibition Catalogue (1913)



Figure 9.24: John Nash, *A Game of Croquet* (1913)

In 1916, JN also joined the Artists' Rifles and was an official war artist. Although some of his paintings depict the horror of war, he also painted the landscape in France and Belgium. Whereas Figure 9.25 was painted from memory and the rising sun signifies a new dawn, Figure 9.26 shows bean poles at Houdkirk in Belgium.

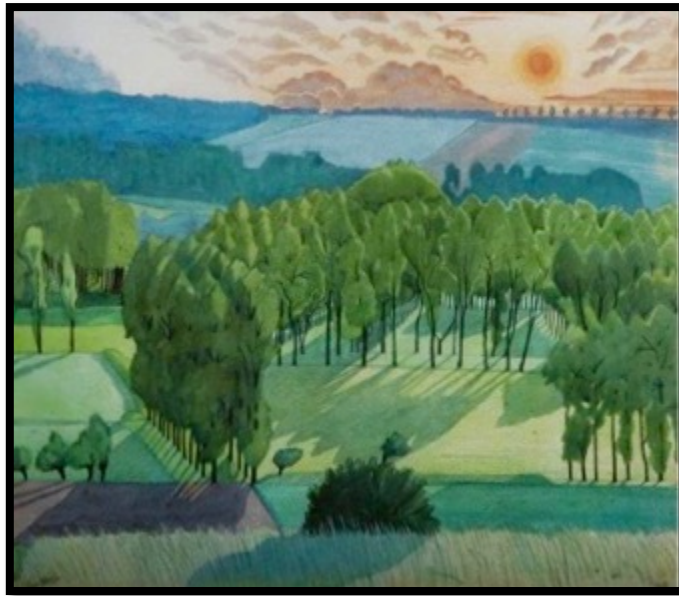


Figure 9.25: John Nash, *French Landscape* (1918)



Figure 9.26: John Nash, *Bean Poles in a Field* (1918)

After the war ended, JN returned to painting the countryside and continued to do for the rest of his life. Figure 9.27, one of the first paintings executed after the war shows harvested fields in their full glory.



Figure 9.27: John Nash, *The Cornfield* (1918)

Like his brother, JN had a sense of place and in the years before the Second World War, he lived in Meadle in Buckinghamshire where he explored the Chilterns (Figure 9.28).



Figure 9.28: John Nash. *Meadle in Summer* (1930s)

From 1923, his wife explored Britain to select places for them to spend holidays, which had the colours and the trees JN enjoyed painting. Figure 9.29 was painted on a trip to Bath and shows a number of huge trees.



Figure 9.29: John Nash, *Canal Bridge, Sydney Gardens, Bath* (1927)

After 1929, Nash and his wife visited East Anglia every summer and moved there permanently in 1944. For the rest of his life, Essex and Suffolk landscapes were his inspiration. Like his Essex contemporaries, Edward Bawden and John Aldridge, whose work is discussed in Chapter 11, Nash found his painting received little acclaim after the Second World War. In 1967, *The Times*' review of his retrospective exhibition at the Royal Academy was unfavourable, describing him a 'modest painter', whose 'approach has hardly changed in fifty years'.³¹ Yet he continued to paint what the art historian, Christopher Neve, described as 'the sources that delighted him, the ground, his flowers'.³²

Book Illustration

From the 1930s, JN became noted for illustrating books. In 1926, Clarence Elliott Nash asked him to illustrate his Six Hills Nursery's catalogue (Figure

³¹ Guy Brett, 'Painter of Rural England', *The Times*, 57036 (12 September 1967), p. 7.

³² Christopher Neve, 'John Nash's Home-Grown Vision', *Country Life*, 142 (7 September 1967), p. 519.

9.30).³³ Their friendship started after Elliott replaced an incorrectly named plant and JN sent him a drawing of a bee orchid.³⁴ His knowledge of plants expanded, as he drew the plants Elliott discovered on his plant hunting expeditions.



Figure 9.30: John Nash, *Six Hills Nursery Catalogue* (1926)

Nash illustrated gardening books: for the botanist, William Dallimore (1871-1959), the author, H E Bates (1905-74), the botanist and writer, Patrick Syngé (1910-1982) and the psychiatrist, Dr Frank Kennedy (1888-1967), who wrote under the pseudonym, Jason Hill (Figure 9.31).³⁵ Before and after the

³³ Nash, *The Artist Plantsman*, pp. 4-5. A limited edition of one hundred copies, which had nine hand-coloured line-engravings on eight plates. One was advertised in 2019 for \$975 (£738). (<https://www.johnnycakebooks.com/pages/books/011437/john-nash/catalogue-of-alpine-and-herbaceous-plants-1926>) [Accessed 2 January 2020].

³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

³⁵ William Dallimore, *Poisonous Plants Deadly, Dangerous and Suspect* (London: Etchells & Macdonald, 1927), H E Bates, *Flowers and Faces* (London: Golden Cockerel Press, 1935), Patrick Syngé, *Plants with Personality* (London: Lindsay Dutton, 1939), Jason Hill, *The Curious Gardener* (London: Faber & Faber, 1932) and *The Contemplative Gardener* (London: Faber & Faber, 1940).

war he worked with Robert Gathorne-Hardy (1902-1973), a friend of Cedric Morris (Figure 9.31).³⁶



Figure 9.31: John Nash, *Antique Flowers* (1932)

The Gardener

JN's interest in gardening came from his mother and he described how as a child, he had tried to improve Wood Lane's garden, 'which was never planned and contained few plants' apart from a few rose beds edged with the old white, clove scented, *Dianthus* 'Mrs Sinkins' (Figure 9.32).³⁷ His inspiration came from a nearby garden where five unmarried ladies lived and although it was unkempt, low-edged borders were 'full of treasures'.³⁸

³⁶ Robert Gathorne-Hardy, *Wild Flowers* (London: B T Batsford, First published May 1938, 3rd Revised edition, 1948), *The Tranquil Gardener* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1958), and Robert Gathorne-Hardy, *The Native Garden* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1961).

³⁷ Nash, *The Artist Plantsman*, p. 2.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 3.



Figure 9.32: John Nash, *The Garden, Wood Lane House* (1912)

When JN visited Sinodon House, he painted the view from the house rather than Wittenham Clumps and described it, ‘acres of orchards surrounded the house [.....] and the flowerbeds were full of summer annuals – salpiglossis, phlox drummondii and tobacco plants’ (Figure 9.33)³⁹



Figure 9.33: John Nash, *Sinodon House* (1913)

³⁹ Lambirth, John Nash, p. 22.

When he lived at Meadle, JN became an enthusiastic gardener. Figure 9.34 and Figure 9.35 show the garden and countryside from the house.⁴⁰ He also painted the open countryside from the rose garden (Figure 9.36)



Figure 9.34: John Nash, *The Garden in Summer* (1925) and Figure 9.35: John Nash, *The Garden under Snow* (1935)



Figure 9.36: John Nash, *The View from the Rose Garden* (1925)

⁴⁰ Lewis, *The Painter as Illustrator* p. 16.

Bottengoms, Wormingford, Essex

In 1944, JN and his wife bought Bottengoms for £750.⁴¹ It was an Elizabethan former yeoman's house, situated at the bottom of a mile long unsurfaced track (Figure 9.37). With help from neighbours, he cleared the four ponds in the two-acre garden. Its design was essentially 'organised nature' and winding paths linked the ponds (Figure 9.38 and Figure 9.39). Its streams and springs and different soils of loam, sand, clay and marsh enabled JN to grow a wide range of plants.⁴²

The house was approached through an orchard planted with quince, greengages and plums.⁴³ Blythe, who inherited Bottengoms and still lives there, noted about a dozen varieties, comprising russet apples, 'Comice' pears, 'Victoria' plums, a Portugal quince and an old 'Blenheim Orange' apple tree near the kitchen door.⁴⁴



Figure 9.37: Bottengoms Farm, Wormingford (2015)

⁴¹ Today £33,508.

⁴² Blythe, 'Art Imitates Nature', p. 116.

⁴³ Lewis, *John Nash: The Painter as Illustrator*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Blythe, 'Art Imitates Nature', p. 114.



Figure 9.38: Profusion at Bottengoms (2014)



Figure 9.39: The South Wall (2000)

JN preferred species plants, but unlike E A Bowles, who would have appreciated his corkscrew willow and *Gunnera* around the ponds, he was not a collector. Lewis' description was:

John created the most beautiful garden, filled with rare and unusual plants. The garden lay in a steep-sided valley. There were various ponds around which he grew all kinds of willows including *Salix tortuosa* whose twisted branches, twigs and leaves looked as if the tree had been struck by lightning. At the head of the top pond *Petasites japonica* and *Gunnera manicuta*, looking like giant rhubarb with six-foot stems and yard-wide leaves, added an even more exotic note to the surroundings.⁴⁵

Yet Nash still grew his childhood favourites, ‘There were always lots of old-fashioned pinks including a prim one with white flowers blotched with pink markings called “Painted Lady”, and another called “Dad’s Favourite”.’⁴⁶ He described ‘a colony of *Campanula rapunculoides*, wisely imprisoned between the morning room and the path, while *Eccremocarpus scaber* ran into [Rose] “Gloire de Dijon” nearby. I still have this latter combination in my garden today.’⁴⁷ He also continued to grow alpines and succulents in old sinks near the house.

As at Meadle, JN grew old roses, which Blythe remarked, ‘entangle everywhere’. These included the dark purple ‘Cardinal de Richelieu’, the creamy-white ‘Madame Alfred Carrière’ and the cerise pink and thornless ‘Zéphirine Drouhin’.⁴⁸ Lewis’ description included the pink-striped *Rosa gallica* ‘Versicolor’ or *Rosa Mundi* and the delicate shell-pink ‘Madame Pierre Oger’.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Lewis, *John Nash: The Painter as Illustrator*, p. 19.

⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 20.

⁴⁷ Nash, *The Artist Plantsman*, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁸ Blythe, ‘Art Imitates Nature’, p. 116.

⁴⁹ Lewis, *John Nash: The Painter as Illustrator* p. 20.

In Nash's opinion, gardens 'were for walking in, for smelling, for studying and for a kind of reverie.'⁵⁰ Only the vegetable garden behind the orchards was formal and 'in great contrast to the romantic layout of the rest of the garden, was an immaculate kitchen plot with ordered rows of vegetables and fruit divided by wide paths.'⁵¹ His garden is notable, as it was one of the first to show that a designed 'wild garden' could be how to show plants to best effect.

JN never painted the house, but the garden featured in his paintings. Figure 9.40 shows the barns in the Essex countryside from the garden's boundary and Figure 9.41 shows one of the ponds in winter



A
Figure 9.40: John Nash, *The Barn, Wormingford* (1964)

⁵⁰ Blythe, 'Art Imitates Nature', p. 116.

⁵¹ Lewis, John Nash: *The Painter as Illustrator*, p. 20.



Figure 9.41: John Nash, *Wild Garden in Winter* (1959)

The garden also provided flowers for the house and plant material for JN's teaching. From 1924 to 1929, he taught at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford.⁵² Then before and after the war, he lectured at the Royal Academy of Art and later, Colchester School of Art. An obituary concluded, 'His garden and his flower paintings were perhaps uniquely linked among English artists as an expression of artistic personality.'⁵³

At the Royal Academy, Paul Nash taught Charles Mahoney, who is considered in Chapter 10, as well as Bawden and Eric Ravilious and they, too, understood his emphasis on the importance of place. He introduced them to JN, who visited and exchanged plants with them until the end of his life. As the art curator Samantha Manton, concluded:

[He] became a leading figure in this new generation of artist-gardeners, having formed close friendships with noted horticulturalists of the

⁵² He probably met Humphrey Waterfield when he studied art there in the late 1920s.

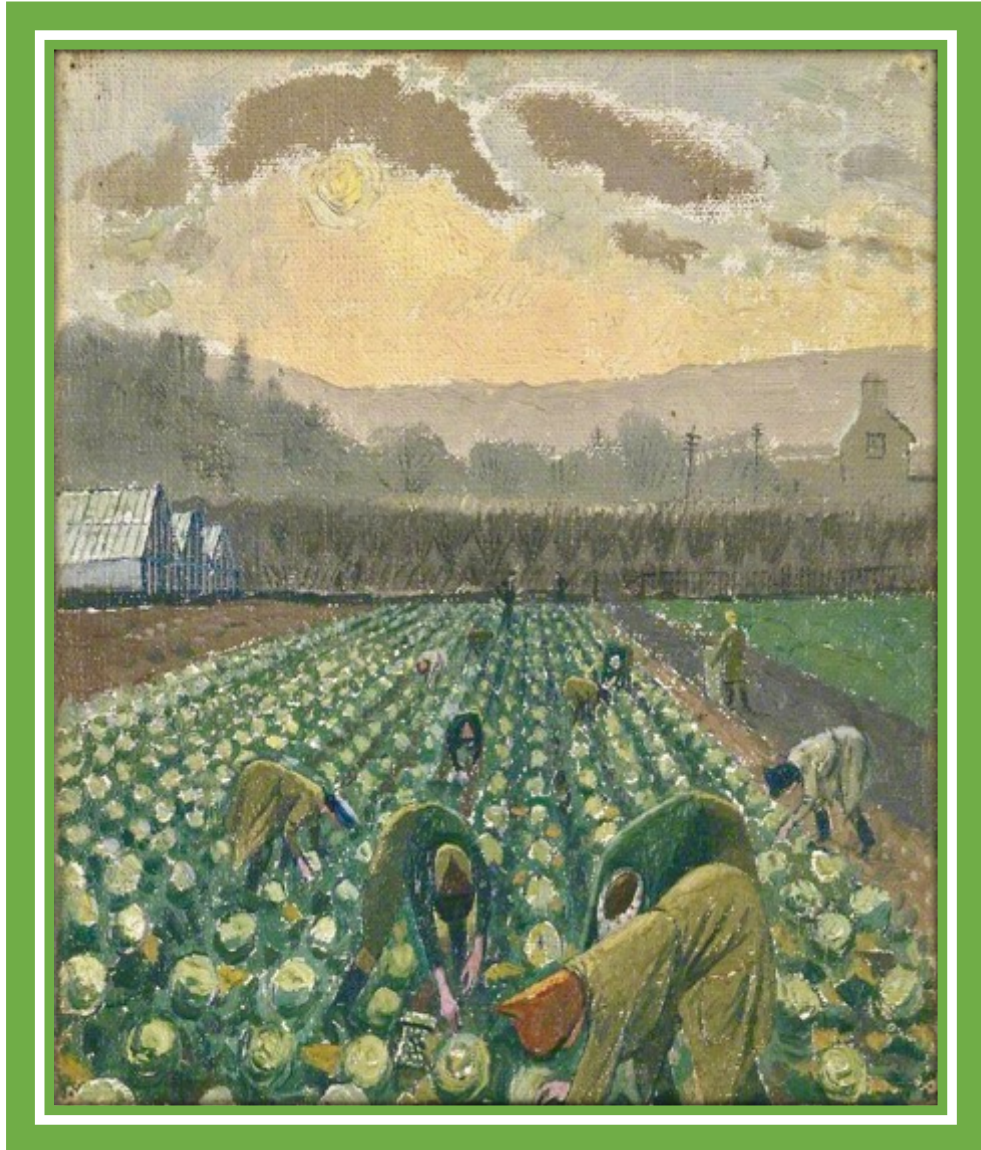
⁵³ Anonymous, 'Mr John Nash: A Painter Who Saw for Himself at All Times', *The Times*, 60117 (24 September 1977), p. 14.

time. Through concurrent drawing and gardening activities he too strove to celebrate the robust nature of plants, focusing on the more sinister of garden inhabitants and taking pride and pleasure in the viscous capabilities of poisonous species he acquired such as foxglove and herb paris.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Samantha Manton, 'The Gardener Digs in Another Time' (2015) [<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=29677>].

Chapter 10: Ordinary Gardens

**Charles Mahoney (1903-1968) and Evelyn
Mary Dunbar (1906-1960)**



Evelyn Dunbar, *Sprout Picking in Monmouthshire* (1943)

‘Throughout the depression-wrought inter-war period of the 1920s and 1930s a well-cultivated garden plot indicated a positive and progressive work ethic and frugal living in a time of economic hardship; they had become a signifiers of dignity, self-reliance and integrity.’

Samantha Manton¹

In the interwar years, there were initiatives to encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles by living or visiting the countryside and enjoying outdoor pursuits (Figure 10.1 and Figure 10.2).

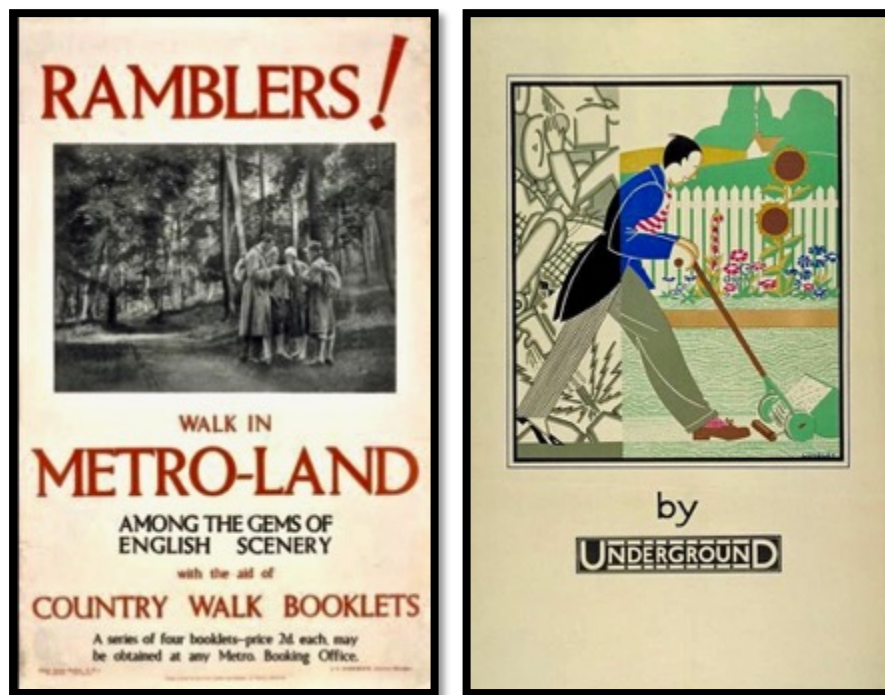


Figure 10.1: London Underground Poster (1932) and Figure 10.2: London Underground Poster (1933)

Gardens became part of everyday life, where children played games on the lawn, or were given a small plot of their own. Whilst there were flower borders, there were also vegetables, and these gardens had sheds, cold frames

¹ Samantha Manton, ‘The Gardener Digs in Another Time’ (2015) [<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/DocuInfo.aspx?DocID=29677>].

and greenhouses. Charles [Cyril] Mahoney, a painter and muralist and his lover, Evelyn Mary Dunbar, epitomised a new generation of artists, who painted gardens that were typical of many British homes.² They also represented a suggestion that students attending art schools now came from different backgrounds and that ‘whilst female art students were from good homes, the men were seldom gentlemen’.³ Whilst Dunbar’s father ran a successful drapers shop at Strood in Kent, Mahoney was born in Lambeth and his father was a self-employed untrained mechanical engineer. As one of Paul Nash’s students, he understood his sense of place and after he moved to Kent permanently in 1937, he spent the rest of his life there.

Charles Mahoney (1903-1968)

Until recently information about Mahoney was limited, as the art historian Sir John Rothenstein (1901-1992) explained, ‘of his two best known works - one was destroyed and one unfinished and thus he was best known as a teacher’ (Figure 10.3).⁴ In recent years, his paintings have featured in a number of exhibitions. The Fine Arts Society exhibited his paintings in 1988 and 1999 and also included his work in their 2013 exhibition of murals. The 1989 Exhibition, ‘The Last Romantics: Burne Jones to Stanley Spencer’ featured ten of his paintings in the ‘Fairyland’ section. In 2020, his paintings were included in the Garden Museum’s exhibition, ‘Sanctuary: Artist-Gardeners

² He was named Cyril, but after he went to the Royal College of Art, he became known as Charles.

³ Lucy Scholes, ‘An Outbreak of Talent in Great Bardfield’, *Apollo*, 186 (July/August 2017), p. 100.

⁴ Sir John Rothenstein, ‘Charles Mahoney: A Tribute on the Occasion of a Memorial Exhibition’ (London: 1 October to 25 October 1975, Parkin Gallery, London and The Ashmolean Museum 6 November to 7 December 1975), p. 5. His murals at Morley College were destroyed in the Blitz and he died before the Lady Chapel, Campion Hall, Oxford was finished.

1919-1939'. The Tate Gallery has a collection of his and Dunbar's papers.⁵

Articles about his life were also published in *Country Life*.⁶

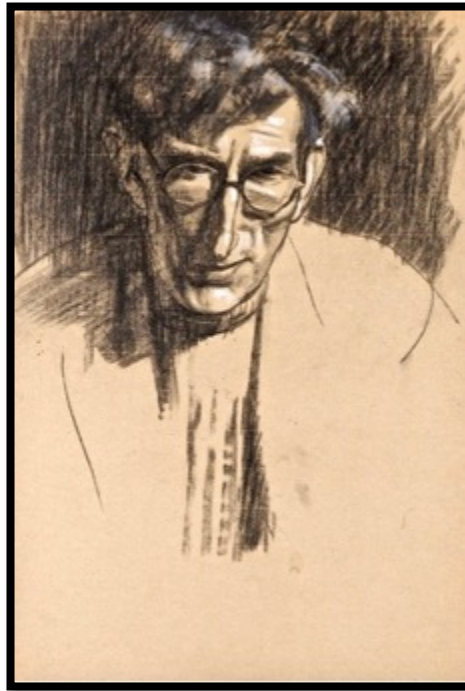


Figure 10.3: Charles Mahoney, *Self-Portrait* (1960)

Early Life

By 1911, Mahoney's family had moved from Lambeth to 58 Stembridge Road in Anerley, near Croydon. He was the eldest of five brothers, two of whom died in childhood. Throughout his life, Mahoney suffered periods of ill-health and was exempted from military service, as he lost an eye in a childhood accident and nearly died from diphtheria.⁷ Although his father invented and patented his engineering discoveries, his parents' found raising a family in a

⁵ Tate Gallery, TGA/20091, 'Papers of Charles Mahoney' (1920-1959) and TGA/201522. 'Papers of Evelyn Dunbar' (1906-1960).

⁶ Alan Powers, 'Labour of Love', *Country Life*, 181 (30 April 1987), pp. 120-121 and Michael Dennison, 'Finding the Ordinary in Formality', *Country Life*, 194 (23 March 2000), pp. 110-111.

⁷ Dorothy Bulkeley, 'Charles Mahoney 1903-1968', *Fine Arts Catalogue* (London: Fine Arts Society, 1999), p. 9). Bulkeley is his daughter.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 9.

small terraced house a struggle.⁸ These financial difficulties and his attendance at a socialist Sunday School resulted in Mahoney's lifelong socialism.⁹ Although many of his paintings and murals had a religious theme, he veered between agnosticism and atheism.

His talent for drawing was encouraged when he was a pupil at Oakfield Road School in Anerley. Although his parents wanted him to have a career in banking, between 1917 and 1918 he became a trainee draughtsman at a City advertising agency.

Artist and Teacher

In 1918, despite parental opposition, Mahoney went to study at Beckenham College of Art. In 1922, he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art & Design where he was taught by Paul Nash. He became a tutor at the College in 1928 and remained on its staff until 1953. Mahoney then taught at Byam Shaw School of Art from 1954 to 1963 and from 1961 until his death at the Royal Academy Schools.

Early in his career, Mahoney became known for painting murals. In 1928, the principal of the Royal College of Art, William Rothenstein (1872-1945), recommended him and his fellow students, Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious to paint murals representing 'The Pursuit of Love' for Morley College at Vauxhall in London.¹⁰ His mural at the back of the stage was completed in 1930 and seven muses were depicted in a pastoral setting.¹¹ In

⁸ Bulkeley, 'Charles Mahoney 1903-1968', p. 9.

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Douglas Percy Bliss, *Edward Bawden* (Godalming: Pendomer Press, 1981), p. 70. Students were paid £1 a day, today £65.86.

¹¹ (<http://www.boroughphoto.org>lambeth>mural-by-charles-mahoney-morley-college>) [Accessed 1 January 2019].

Rothenstein's opinion, the mural demonstrated that '[Mahoney's] interest in the flowers and trees was at least equal to that of the figures' (Figure 10.4).¹²



Figure 10.4: Charles Mahoney, *Seven Muses*, Morley College (1930)

When Mahoney was asked to paint murals for the Assembly Hall at Brockley County School for Boys in Kent in 1932, Dunbar, his former student, volunteered to work with him. In 1933, they formed a close relationship, which lasted until 1937.

¹² Rothenstein, 'Charles Mahoney: A Tribute, p. 7.

Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960)



Figure 10.5: Evelyn Dunbar, *Self-Portrait* (1930)

Like Mahoney, information about Dunbar was scant until one of her paintings was hailed as a masterpiece on the BBC's 'Antiques Roadshow', which led to renewed interest in her work.¹³ Her family then discovered five hundred paintings stored in a loft. In 2016, her nephew published a biography about her life and paintings.¹⁴

Early Life

Dunbar's father, William Dunbar (1863-1932), established a drapers shop and tailoring business in Reading, but in 1906 the family moved to Kent where he developed a successful business in Strood, near Rochester. In 1924, they moved to The Cedars, a six-bedroomed detached house, seen in Figure 10.6, which Dunbar painted (Figure 10.7).

¹³ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-england-33678427/wartime-artist-s-lost-collection-found-in-attic>. After she died, her husband packed up her paintings and they remained in storage until 2013.

¹⁴ Christopher Campbell-Howes, *Evelyn Dunbar: A Life in Painting* (Olargues: Romarin, 2016).



Figure 10.6: The Cedars (1930)



Figure 10.7: Evelyn Dunbar, *The Cedars, Strood*

Dunbar won a scholarship to Rochester Grammar School for Girls and was encouraged by her mother, Florence (1872-1944) to draw and paint. After two years at Rochester School of Art from 1925 to 1927, she spent two years at Chelsea School of Art and in 1929 won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art. Her maternal aunt, Clara (1864-1946), who had married a wealthy wool

trader, Josiah Stead Cowling (1864-1932), helped to finance her studies between 1930 and 1940.¹⁵

The Artist

The Cedars had a two-and-a-half-acre garden, where Dunbar inherited her love of plants from her mother, a keen gardener. The Cedars' garden is seen in some of her earliest work. Figure 10.8 shows the family in the garden. Her father, dressed formally in jacket and waistcoat and wearing a trilby hat, is handing eggs to her mother. In Figure 10.9, her mother wears a smart hat to weed the long herbaceous border.



Figure 10.8: Evelyn Dunbar, *Family in the Garden* (1928)

¹⁵ Clara Cowling was also an amateur artist and keen gardener. They moved to Sussex after her husband retired.



Figure 10.9: Evelyn Dunbar, *Herbaceous Border, The Cedars* (1934)

Figure 10.10 shows that not only did the garden have an Edwardian style herbaceous border, a sundial was placed where paths intersect.



Figure 10.10: Evelyn Dunbar, *Apple Blossom at the Cedars* (1938-1939)

Dunbar and Mahoney's Collaboration

In 1932, Dunbar volunteered to be part of the Brockley murals project.¹⁶ Its theme was 'Kent and the Garden of England'. Although its background was the local hilly fields, its depictions were based principally on Aesop's fables (Figure 10.11).¹⁷



Figure 10.11: Brockley Murals

In Figure 10.12, *Fortune and the Boy at the Well*, Mahoney depicts Fortune with his trademark wheel, waking the sleeping boy, as he fears he will be blamed if the boy falls into the well. The background is a pastoral setting and includes some of Mahoney's favourite sunflowers. In the background of Dunbar's representation, *A Country Girl and the Pail of Milk*, a girl dreams that after her milk is sold, she can buy eggs and then chickens. As she dreams, the pail falls off her head, leaving her to look aghast at the spilt milk. The tulips in the foreground show their joint interest in flowers (Figure 10.13).

¹⁶ The artist, Mildred Eldridge (1909-1991) later went to study with Aubrey Waterfield in Florence.

¹⁷ The school is now called Hilly Fields.



Figure 10.12: Charles Mahoney, *Fortune and the Boy at the Well* (1933) and Figure 10.13: Evelyn Dunbar, *A Country Girl and the Pail of Milk* (1933-1934)

As their relationship developed, Mahoney visited The Cedars, but her parents disapproved of their relationship. Probably his background and prospects were not what they hoped for in a son-in-law. At this time, Dunbar had a piece of ground in the garden where they grew plants together, ‘the little patch is beginning to form (with your help) into a lovely place, I think with all the new things will be a perfect heaven of varied greys and greens and aromatic odours’.¹⁸

Their final collaboration, *Gardeners’ Choice*, was published in 1937.¹⁹ It provided advice for a new audience, the owners of small suburban gardens.

¹⁸ Letter, Dunbar to Mahoney, September 1933. Quoted in (https://www.lissllewellyn.com/show-6290-w_Artist-Evelyn-Dunbar__A_19__r.htm) [Accessed 14 November 2020\].

¹⁹ Evelyn Dunbar & Cyril Mahoney, *Gardeners’ Choice* (London: G Routledge & Sons, 1937).

The garden they suggested was quite different in concept and design to The Cedars, but was based on their ‘practical knowledge’ of gardening.²⁰

Their plan shows a small rectangular garden, 188-feet long and 44-feet wide that would ‘serve as an extension to the house, and as such must be designed for the convenience of the human being first’, and be used for several activities (Figure 10.14).²¹ It comprised a chapter entitled, ‘Planning a Garden’ and included detailed essays about forty plants.

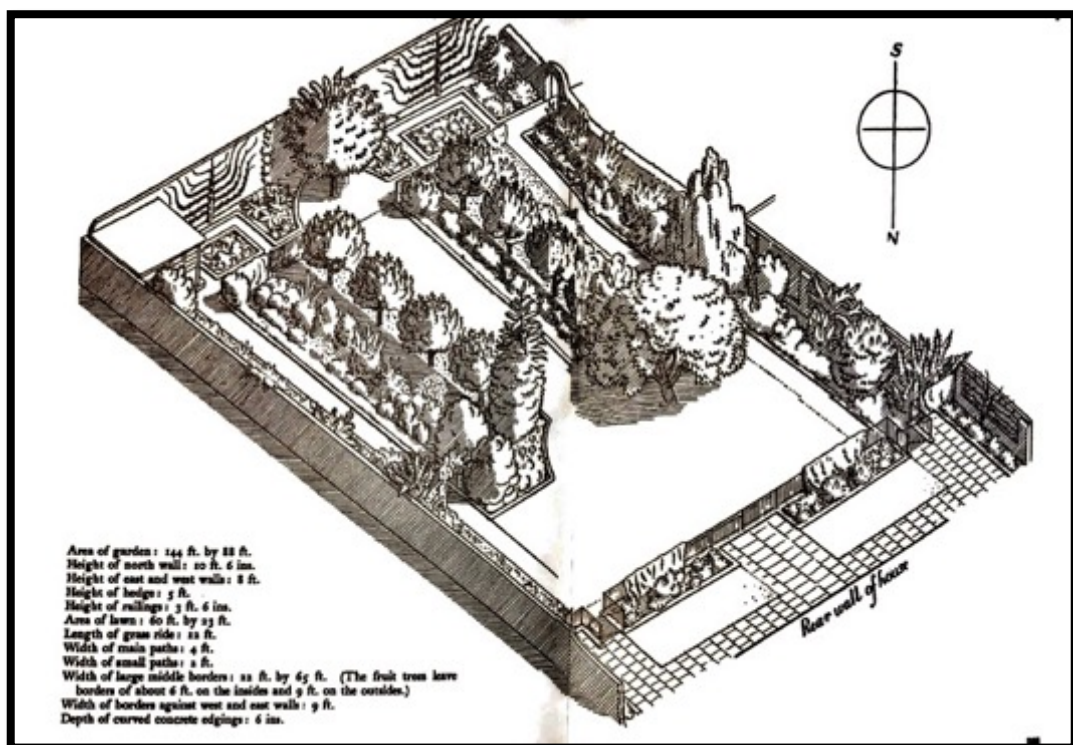


Figure 10.14: Garden Plan, *Gardeners' Choice* (1937)

In his introduction, Bawden commented that the selection of plants provided interest throughout the year and were:

²⁰ Dunbar & Mahoney, *Gardeners' Choice* (Edition, Persephone Books, 2015). Bawden's introduction arrived too late to be published in the first edition.

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 205.

Of reasonably easy culture, though this is not the final criterion to influence the selection: more important is their aesthetic consideration; it is the habit of the plant, the form, colour, texture of the leaf, stem & flower, even of the shoot, bud & seed pod or fruit, which are observed critically, and upon which are observed critically & upon which their judgement if any particular plant is formed.²²

Plants included *Angelica archangelica*, *Eryngium agavifolium*, *Senecio greyi*, *Bocconia cordata* and *Bergenia crassifolia*, which Dunbar sketched Mahoney drawing at The Cedars (Figure 10.15 and Figure 10.16).



Figure 10.15: Charles Mahoney, *Bergenia crassifolia* (1937) and Figure 10.16: Evelyn Dunbar, *Charles Mahoney* (1936)

One of their ideas, which is now accepted as a feature of today's perennial planting, was that plants should not only be admired only when they flower, but as 'A plant is a living thing, and a garden the community in

²² Dunbar & Mahoney, *Gardeners' Choice*, Introduction by Edward Bawden, p. 5.

which it plays its part. Every stage in the life of a plant has its significance, and the vitality of the garden depends on the interplay of these states and stages among the plants which form it.’²³ Green as a colour was important, ‘We place a great value on *green* in the garden, for it is a controller and harmonizer of all the other colours, and is a rest to the eye in a place where peace should be an essential quality.’

As space was limited, fruit trees were half-standards with espaliers on the rear wall. In their garden, owners worked, and vegetables were grown. Figure 10.17 shows a man is working in his vegetable patch behind a large cold frame.

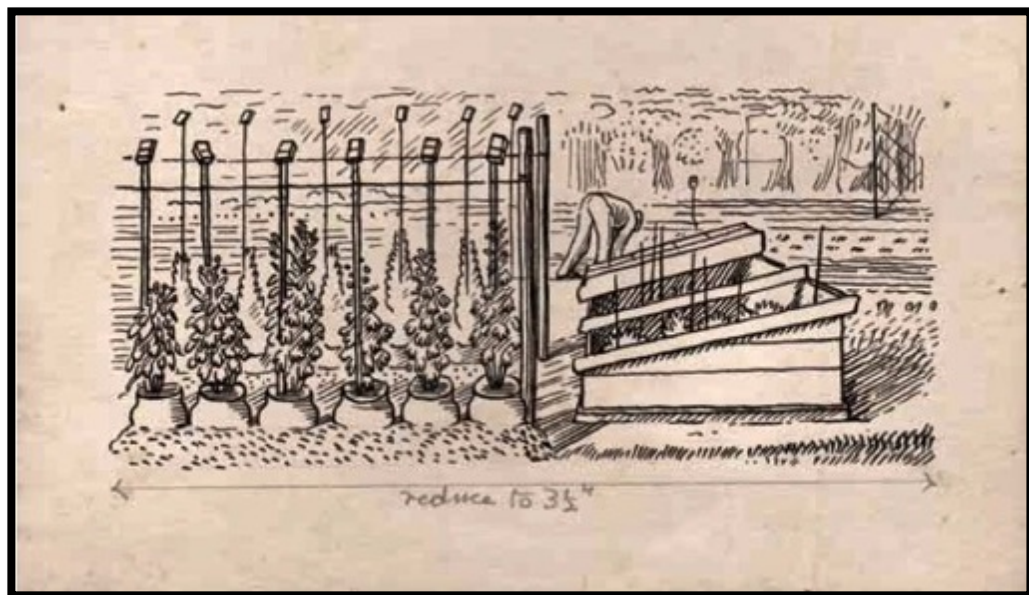


Figure 10.17: Charles Mahoney, *Illustration, Gardeners' Choice* (1937)

By the time the book was published, their relationship was over although they remained friends. Dunbar had hoped they would marry, but their different political and religious views caused irreconcilable problems and

²³ Dunbar & Mahoney, *Gardeners' Choice*, p. 2.

when Mahoney and his brother bought a cottage in Wrotham in Kent, she realised he would not propose marriage.²⁴

Their mutual love of flowers was expressed in Dunbar's letters to Mahoney, which were decorated with drawings of plants and flowers. Figure 10.18 shows a 'special vegetable garden' with topiary, whilst written at the top of Figure 10.19, notes it was inspired by the Victorian garden writer, James Shirley Hibberd (1825-1890), whose work Mahoney admired.²⁵ It depicts florist flowers, auriculas, ranunculus and tulips.²⁶ Mahoney's letters to Dunbar have not survived, but when he wrote to his daughter, he decorated them.

Until the outbreak of war, Dunbar continued to paint gardens, which now represented *Gardeners' Choice's* ideas rather than The Cedars Edwardian-style garden.²⁷ Figure 10.20 shows her aunt's vegetable garden at Strawberry Hill.

²⁴ Dunbar, a Christian Scientist did not agree with his socialism.

²⁵ Campbell-Howes, 'Afterword', *Gardeners' Choice*, p. 226. Mahoney kept the letters in two suitcases in his bedroom at Oak Cottage. Eighty letters are now in the Tate archive.

²⁶ Laura Gascoigne, 'Secret Garden', *The Tablet* (17 December 2015) [<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/7563/secret-garden>]. Hibberd founded *Amateur Gardening*, which Mahoney thought challenged the landed gentry's dominance of gardening and showed it could flourish anywhere.

²⁷ Some of the illustrations in *Gardeners' Choice* were drawn at her main home, Steellands, near Ticehurst in Sussex.



Figure 10.18: Evelyn Dunbar, *Envelope* (1935) and Figure 10.19: Evelyn Dunbar, *Letter* (1935)



Figure 10.20: Evelyn Dunbar, *Vegetable Garden, Strawberry Hill* (1938)

After their relationship ended, Dunbar rarely exhibited her work.²⁸ The frontispiece to this chapter when she was an official war artist depicts women

²⁸ Campbell-Howes, *Evelyn Dunbar*, p. 234. Campbell-Howes thought one reason was that she no longer belonged to Mahoney's circle of friends.

in the Land Army picking Brussel sprouts. Painting remained the main focus of her life, but she concentrated on landscapes.

Mahoney, The Gardener

In the art historian, Peyton Skipwith's opinion, '[Mahoney's] passion for gardening was almost as strong a link as painting'.²⁹ Until Mahoney bought Oak Cottage in Wrotham, near Sevenoaks, he did not have a garden, but as Rothenstein explained, 'He always had a passion for gardening and he became a horticulturist of some erudition and he had been given a little garden of his own at the family home at Anerley', which he painted Figure 10. 21 and Figure 10.22 show the garden with spring blossom.³⁰



Figure 10.21: Charles Mahoney, *View from the Rear Window, Anerley* (1922) and Figure 10.22: Charles Mahoney, *View from the Window at Anerley* (1930s)

²⁹ 'Charles Mahoney 1903-1968', p. 6.

³⁰ Rothenstein, 'Charles Mahoney: A Tribute, p. 7.

Soon after Bawden and Ravilious moved to Brick House at Great Bardfield in Essex in 1930, Mahoney visited and helped to dig and plant his garden.³¹ Bawden wanted Mahoney to move to Great Bardfield, but he preferred the Kentish landscape.³² They remained lifelong friends and exchanged seeds, plants and cuttings, ‘What is your gardening news? Are you in the same feverish enthusiasm – I feel worn & thin & enervated by constant excessive study of plant lists.’³³

Oak Cottage, Wrotham

Oak Cottage, a small sixteenth-century timbered house was purchased for £350 (Figure 10.23).³⁴ It remained Mahoney’s home, first with his mother and after the war with his wife, the artist and calligrapher, Dorothy Bishop (1902-1984), until his death.



Figure 10.23: Charles & Dorothy Bishop at Oak Cottage (1955)

³¹ His friend the artist, Geoffrey Rhoades (1898-1980), also helped.

³² ‘Charles Mahoney 1903-1968’, p. 6. Quoted a letter from Bawden in August 1930.

³³ Nicholas Alfrey, Stephen Daniels & Martin Postle, *Art of the Garden: The Garden in British Art, 1800 to the Present Day* (London: Tate Gallery, 2004) p. 18, quoted Bawden’s letter to Mahoney, August 1934.

³⁴ Today around £24,000.

The garden was a frequent subject in his paintings and as his daughter, Elizabeth Bulkeley recalled:

It provided him with the perfect setting to explore his other great love, namely plant life and gardening. This was the first time he had his own garden and he relished being able to grow and study a large variety of plants and flowers (Figure 10.24).³⁵



Figure 10.24: Charles Mahoney, *Evening at Oak Cottage* (1938-1939)

In many ways, the garden represented the plan depicted in *Gardeners' Choice*. Bulkeley described her childhood garden:

The layout of the garden was unfashionably formal, though within this formality plants grew freely and exuberantly; only the hedges of lavender and box that confined the beds were clipped. A large bed of old roses, which at that time were unusual, concealed the studio.

³⁵ Stephen Ongpin Fine Art, 'Charles Mahoney' (<https://www.stephenongpin.com/artist/236828/charles-mahoney>).

Cottage flowers and many less familiar filled the beds between house and studio, while at the end of the garden there flourished an eclectic mix of fruit trees and shrubs. Interwoven with these were my father's huge specimen herbaceous plants which he grew in order to draw them: giant hogweed, *Cephalaria gigantea*, sunflowers, and plume poppies (Figure 10.25).³⁶



Figure 10.25: Garden Oak Cottage (1940s)

Mahoney always emphasised that gardens were somewhere people worked and enjoyed life outdoors. Figure 10.26 shows Miss Edith, elegantly dressed, watching the gardener, who unlike Dunbar's father is wearing a short-sleeved shirt, with his suntanned arms suggesting this was a regular occurrence. In Figure 10.27, Mahoney shows *brassicas* growing in a well-tended plot. By the outbreak of the Second World War, it appears that shorts were now acceptable gardening attire, as Mahoney is wearing them to dig his vegetable garden (Figure 10.28).

³⁶ 'Charles Mahoney 1903-1968', pp. 14-15.



Figure 10.26: Charles Mahoney, *Miss Edith Inspects the Sweet Peas* (1934) and Figure 10.27: Charles Mahoney, *Allotment, Wrotham* (1938)



Figure 10.28: Charles Mahoney, *Vegetable Garden, Oak Cottage* (1940)

As Mahoney's illustrations in *Gardeners' Choice* demonstrated, he enjoyed drawing and painting the plants he grew. One of his favourite flowers, which he often depicted, were sunflowers (Figure 10.29 and Figure 10.30). They were also included in paintings of his garden (Figure 10.31).



Figure 10.29: Charles Mahoney, *Sunflowers at Oak Cottage* and Figure 10.30: Charles Mahoney, *Studies of Giant Sunflowers*



Figure 10.31: Charles Mahoney, *The Garden* (1950)

In his still-life paintings, Mahoney made no differentiation between cultivated flowers and what are usually regarded as weeds, providing he found

them interesting and attractive. Whilst Figure 10.32 shows anemones in a vase, Figure 10.33 depicts thistles in a glass jar.



Figure 10.32: Charles Mahoney, *Study of Anemones* and Figure 10.33: Charles Mahoney, *Thistles in a Glass Jar*

From 1942 to 1952, Mahoney's last major work was a commission to design murals for the Lady Chapel at Campion Hill College in Oxford, but ill-health prevented its completion.³⁷ As well as the murals, Mahoney painted Father Martin D'Arcy (1888-1976) talking to two students in the college's garden beside some bearded irises (Figure 10.34 and Figure 10.35).

³⁷ Gascoigne, 'Secret Garden'.



Figure 10.34: Charles Mahoney, *The Coronation of the Virgin (Our Lady of Mercy, Autumn)* (1942)



Figure 10.35: Charles Mahoney, *Father D'Arcy with Two Undergraduates in the Garden*

Although gardening was a major part of his life and he continued to exchange plants and seeds with Bawden and John Nash, there is no evidence that he designed gardens for others. However, in 1947 when Rothenstein

bought Beauforest House at Newington in Oxfordshire, he advised his American wife, Lady Elizabeth (1903-2002) about the roses she should buy:

It was Mahoney who introduced Lady Rothenstein to the old roses. He produced for her a nursery catalogue from Hillings of Chobham, Surrey, where Graham Thomas grew his collection of old roses. Against some of the names in the catalogue Mahoney pencilled one, two or three stars. These were the ones for Lady Rothenstein's special attention.³⁸

Mahoney's friend, the artist, Bernard Dunstan (1920-2017) summed up his life's achievement:

A village 'back-garden in Eden' in which weeds, cabbages and sunflowers were treated with equal love and respect. Plants dismissed by most gardeners were prized as 'lilies of the field' by the artist, who strove to promote the beauty found in the most commonplace of settings, not least the ordinary suburban back-garden.

³⁸ Tony Venison, 'From Rectory to Roses', *Country Life*, 182 (16 June 1988), p. 150.

Chapter 11: Essex Montmartre

Edward Bawden (1903-1989), Eric William Ravilious (1903-1942), John Malcolm Arthur Aldridge (1905-1983) and Other Great Bardfield Artists



Thomas Hennell, *Planting Cabbages* (1940)

‘The idea that a painter might design and make a garden and, in the process, make it the chief subject of his paintings has gone into temporary eclipse.’

Alan Powers¹

When John Aldridge (1905-1983) was called ‘the poet of the East Anglian back garden’, this description could also have applied to Edward Bawden, as like Charles Mahoney, his garden paintings resembled ones that people could relate to.² In 1930, as former students of Paul Nash, Bawden and Eric Ravilious decided to look for landscapes that were relatively unknown where they could paint at weekends. On a bicycle trip from Great Dunmow to Thaxted, they reached Great Bardfield, which had no railway station and was a three-and-a-half hour bus trip from London. They spent the night at Brick House, which Bawden decided to rent.³ Later in 1932, Bawden’s father bought it as a wedding present for him and his wife, the artist, Charlotte Epton (1902-1970). They continued to live there until her death in 1970 (Figure 11.1 and Figure 11.2).⁴

¹ Alan Powers, ‘Quiet Magic of the Quotidian’, *Country Life*, 193 (26 August 1999), p. 54.

² Eric Newton, ‘Current Exhibitions’, *Sunday Times*, 6495 (5 October 1947), p. 2.

³ Janet Dyson, *Artists of Great Bardfield* (Great Bardfield: Between The Line Press, 2017), p. 2. There were two staircases and the house was divided into two vertically.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 7. Epton’s father, a solicitor, carried out the legal work. After her death, he moved to Park Lane, Saffron Walden.



Figure 11.1: Edward Bawden, *The Market Cross and Brick House, Great Bardfield*



Figure 11.2: Eric Ravilious, *Envelope to Welcome Bawden's Wife to Brick House* (1932)

Although Great Bardfield is only a few miles from one of Britain's most photographed villages, Finchingfield, where the village green and duck pond are surrounded by Georgian and medieval cottages, it comprises little more than houses on either side of the main street. Yet Bawden and Ravilious were

attracted by the beauty of the surrounding Essex countryside, in particular the Pant Valley (Figure 11.3).

They could never have envisaged that in 1958, the success of its artistic community would result in it being described, ‘The Montmartre Village’.⁵ Yet it was unlike St Ives in Cornwall, which from the mid-nineteenth century had become renowned for its painters. Whilst Great Bardfield’s artists were mostly representational painters, during the 1930s St Ives attracted those who favoured abstraction, including Ben Nicholson, his wife, Winifred (1893-1981) and the sculptor, Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975).⁶



Figure 11.3: Eric Ravilious, *The Pant Valley, Shalford*

Eric Ravilious (1903-1942)

By his own admission, Ravilious was not a gardener, but from 1930 to 1934 he and his wife, the artist, Tirzah Garwood (1908-1961) lived at Brick House (Figure 11.4). Her book, *Long Live Great Bardfield*, provides insights into their life

⁵ Anonymous, ‘The Montmartre Village’, *Tatler* (6 July 1958), p. 20. It was the last exhibition.

⁶ Hepworth became Nicholson’s second wife.

there and importantly, its garden.⁷ One of his lovers, Helen Binyon (1904-1979) and two further books described his life.⁸ In 2017, Ravilious' paintings were exhibited at the Towner Gallery in Eastbourne and in 2019, the Fry Gallery in Saffron Walden's summer exhibition was 'Mr & Mrs Ravilious'.⁹



Figure 11.4: Phyllis Dodd (1899-1995), *Eric Ravilious* (1927)

Early Life

Ravilious was born in London, but his family moved to Eastbourne where his father, Frank Ravilious (1858-1948), had an antique and second-hand bookshop.¹⁰ He was educated at Eastbourne Municipal Boy's School and

⁷ Tirzah Garwood (Edited) Anne Ullmann, *Long Live Great Bardfield: The Autobiography of Tirzah Garwood* (Huddersfield, Fleece Press, 2012, Edition, Persephone Books, 2016).

⁸ Helen Binyon, *Eric Ravilious: Memoir of an Artist* (London: Lutterworth Press, 1983). Alan Powers, *Eric Ravilious: Imagined Realities* (London: Imperial War Museum, 2004) and Freda Constable, *The England of Eric Ravilious* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2003).

⁹ 'Ravilious & Co: The Pattern of Friendship', which went on tour in 2018.

¹⁰ 'Eric Ravilious', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-35687>) [Accessed 18 November 2020]. Previously he had been a coach builder and had a furniture and upholstery business. In the 1911 Census, he described himself as a 'cut price dealer'.

Eastbourne School of Art. In 1922, he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art & Design.

Ravilious returned to teach at Eastbourne College where he met Eileen Lucy [Tirzah] Garwood, who was the daughter of a retired lieutenant colonel in the Royal Engineers. When he returned to teach at the Royal College of Art, she joined him there. Neither set of parents approved of their marriage in 1930 as:

Class distinctions were rigid in the 1920s and the Garwoods felt socially embarrassed at her choice, whilst the Eric's parents were equally perplexed that their son should be marrying above his station.¹¹

Although Ravilious was intrigued by the Sussex landscape and returned to paint it from the mid-1930s, he and Garwood probably regarded Great Bardfield as a place of refuge during the early years of their marriage.

The Artist

Ravilious nearly always painted in watercolour and had exhibitions at the Zwemmer Gallery in 1934 and 1937, but like Charles Mahoney, he became known as a muralist. After his work on the Morley College murals, he carried out two further mural projects, one depicting fireworks in the Rotunda at the art deco Midland Hotel in Morecombe in 1933, the other showing seaweed and shells in the café at the Victoria Pier Pavilion at Colwyn Bay (Figure 11.5 and Figure 11.6).¹²

¹¹ Preface, *Long Live Great Bardfield*, p. xi.

¹² His murals were thought to have been destroyed, but *Fireworks* at the Midland Hotel has been restored recently and the one at Colwyn Bay has been discovered under wallpaper and paint.



Figure 11.5: Eric Ravilious, *Fireworks*, Midland Hotel, Morecombe (1933)



Figure 11.6: Eric Ravilious, *Mural*, Victoria Pier, Colwyn Bay

Whilst he spent the weekends at Brick House, Ravilious painted the local landscape. Figure 11.7 shows a rural scene and Ravilious, like his teacher, Paul Nash, always emphasised the tree's framework, as well as its crown.



Figure 11.7: Eric Ravilious, *Newt Pond* (1932)

In 1935, Ravilious and Garwood decided to move and bought Bank House, a sixteenth-century terraced house, at Castle Hedingham, a nearby village. Here Ravilious continued to portray local landscapes and Figure 11.8 depicts the rural road leading to the mill, but again the trees' structures are emphasised.



Figure 11.8: Eric Ravilious, *Hull's Mill, Sible Hedingham* (1935)

Although Ravilious and Garwood continued to live in Essex, he found its landscape restrictive. In the mid-1930s, he began to visit and stay with another artist, who had been taught by Nash, Peggy Angus (1904-1993) at Furlongs, near Beddingham in Sussex, on the edge of the South Downs. This he said:

Altered my whole outlook and way of painting, I think because the colour of the landscape was so lovely and the design so beautifully obvious [.....] that I simply had to abandon my tinted drawings.¹³

Whilst Figure 11.9 shows the two caravans he purchased and had towed to the South Downs in his early style, Figure 11.10 portrays a starker and more simplified depiction of the landscape.



Figure 11.9: Eric Ravilious, *Caravans* (1936)

¹³ Quoted in Ravilious' biography (<http://www.fryartgallery.org/the-collection/search/viewer/839/technique/21/Wallpaper/55>) [Accessed 20 November 2020].



Figure 11.10: Eric Ravilious, *The Vale of the White Horse* (1939)

Ravilious and Bawden remained close friends until his death in 1942.

Edward Bawden (1903-1989)



Figure 11.11: Eric Ravilious, *Edward Bawden in his Studio* (1930)

Like Alfred Parsons, Bawden became well-known in the British art establishment (Figure 11.11).¹⁴ A number of institutions hold primary archival

¹⁴ In 1946, he was awarded a CBE for his work as an official war artist and from 1951 to 1958, served as a Trustee of the Tate Gallery.

information.¹⁵ Before he died, Bawden donated the contents of his studio to the Higgins Galley in Bedford, but the Fry Gallery also has a collection of his work. His friend, the artist, Douglas Percy Bliss (1900-1984) wrote an account of his life.¹⁶ Dulwich Art Gallery mounted an exhibition of his work in 2018, as did the Fry Gallery.¹⁷ He also featured in articles in *Country Life*.¹⁸

Early Life

Bawden, an only child, was the only Great Bardfield artist, who lived in Essex throughout his life. His childhood was spent in Braintree, where his father owned a successful ironmonger's shop, just under ten miles from Great Bardfield. After attending Braintree High School, his parents sent him to the private Friends' School in Saffron Walden. From 1919 to 1921, he attended Cambridge Municipal Art School and then, like Mahoney and Ravilious, he won a scholarship to the Royal College of Art & Design in 1922.¹⁹

The Artist

Bawden had a long career as an artist and worked in many different mediums. Thus, discussion of his work in this chapter covers his representation of the Essex countryside and gardens. His depiction of the countryside near his home in Figure 11.12 arouses peaceful and rather dreamlike emotions.

¹⁵ These include the National Archives at Kew, the Bankside Gallery and the British Museum. The Tate Gallery has his correspondence with John Nash, TGA 8910. Information about his commercial designs is held at the University of the Arts London Archives & Special Collection.

¹⁶ Douglas Percy Bliss, *Edward Bawden* (Godalming: Pender Press, 1981).

¹⁷ James Russell, *Edward Bawden* (London: I B Tauris, 2018), Exhibition Catalogue. 'Bawden at Home', Exhibition Fry Gallery 1 April to 28 October 2018.

¹⁸ Christopher Neve, 'First Thoughts in the Essex Landscape: Edward Bawden at Colchester', *Country Life*, 154 (14 June 1972), pp. 1720-1721; Alan Powers, 'Marvelling at Life', *Country Life*, 183 (10 August 1983), pp. 90-91, and Alan Powers, 'At Odds with England', *Country Life*, 186 (23 July 1992), p. 86.

¹⁹ Like Mahoney and Ravilious, he became a tutor there.



Figure 11.12: Edward Bawden, *Untitled Essex Landscape* (1935)

Three years after he moved to Great Bardfield, Bawden held his first solo exhibition in 1933 comprising mainly pictures of Essex. Although *The Times'* art critic admired them, he noted somewhat disdainfully that:

All the watercolours appear to have been made in the same part of Essex, and - accepting that Essex is the true Cockney - they may be said to have an Essex accent. [.....] In a sense the subjects are trite - but the rendering of them is poetical.²⁰

Before the war, Bawden had another exhibition at the Leicester Gallery. In this period, many of his paintings featured scenes near his home. Figure 11.13 depicts trees as they are losing their leaves in an autumn gale, whereas Figure 11.14 shows that in winter although the trees are leafless and the earth bare, there is colour in the landscape.

²⁰ Anonymous, 'Art Exhibition: Mr Edward Bawden', *The Times*, 46569 (7 October 1933), p. 10.



Figure 11.13: Edward Bawden, *Autumn Gales* (1932)



Figure 11.14: Edward Bawden, *Winter Landscape* (1938)

After the war, Bawden's linocut of *The Road to Thaxted* shows a policeman bicycling into a cottage with flowers in its garden in a closer and more intimate scene (Figure 11.15).



Figure 11.15: Edward Bawden, *The Road to Thaxted* (1958)

However, Bawden showed an interest in gardens from the time he went to London as a student.

The Gardener

Bawden had a lifelong fascination with Kew Gardens, which he visited for the first time in 1922 and painted many times. In 1923, he produced a ‘mock guide’, dedicated to Ravilious, which was published in 2014 in *Edward Bawden’s Kew Gardens*.²¹ In the 1930s whilst he was working part-time for the Curwen Press, he designed posters for London Underground. Figure 11.16 shows Kew’s Palm House with exotic plants in the foreground and the Pagoda at the back. In 1950, in a limited edition of prints, Bawden depicted the Palm House and its Hercules fountain, designed by Decimus Burton (1800-1881) and built between 1844 and 1848 (Figure 11.17).

²¹ Peyton Skipwith, ‘An Enduring Passion’, *Country Life*, 188 (17 November 1994), p. 56.



Figure 11.16: Edward Bawden, *London Underground Poster* (1939)



Figure 11.17: Edward Bawden, *The Palm House, Kew Gardens* (1950)

Brick House

As Brick House was built on the main street, its garden is behind the house. Before Bawden could make a garden, rubbish from its time as a girls' school, coffin maker's and saddler's businesses had to be cleared away.²² Although Bawden's watercolour from the side entrance to the garden was painted after it was cleared, the abandoned hansom cab gives an impression of how the back garden may have been.



Figure 11.18: Edward Bawden, *Derelict Cab* (1935)

It is not known how much gardening experience Bawden had when he moved there, but during his first winter there, Mahoney and Geoffrey Rhoades advised and helped him.²³ As Garwood described:

In the spring, Mahoney supervised the digging and planting of the garden insisting on two spits deep, and Edward with his usual thoroughness bought lavishly the best of everything interesting or

²² Garwood, *Long Live Great Bardfield*, p. 222.

²³ *Ibidem*, p. 223.

unusual in the seed catalogues so that when we came back from Morecambe (the following season) the garden was already quite changed.²⁴

The garden comprised about one-acre and Garwood concluded it was ‘A particularly nice one with a paddock behind it containing a lovely big walnut tree. It adjoined a field which sloped down to a willow grove of regularly planted trees and the winding River Pant’.²⁵ As a wedding present, Ravilious had ‘an ornamental house of trelliswork built in the garden and it was painted white and had one of Eric Townsend’s revolving soldiers on top’ (Figure 11.19).²⁶



Figure 11.19: Eric Ravilious, *Garden Path* (1934)

As well as Ravilious, Bawden, Mahoney and Rhoades all painted Brick House before the war. Ravilious painted the view from the roof, which was

²⁴ Garwood, *Long Life Great Bardfield*, p. 223.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, pp 229-230.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 238. Townsend was a local builder, who helped repair the roof.

being repaired (Figure 11.20), but Bawden depicted the builders on the roof, as well as a small piece of lawn and the foundation for the gazebo (Figure 11.21).



Figure 11.20: Eric Ravilious, *Prospect from the Attic* (1932)



Figure 11.21: Edward Bawden, *They Dreamt Not of a Perishable Home, Who Thus Could Build* (1932)

Mahoney's portrayal has been dated as 1950, but it has been suggested it was painted before the war as there is no gazebo. As Brick House was

damaged during the war, the gazebo had to be replaced (Figure 11.22).²⁷

Rhoades' watercolour, probably painted in summer, shows the gazebo and the garden, planted and is in bloom (Figure 11.23).



Figure 11.22: Charles Mahoney, *Barnyard* (1930s)



Figure 11.23: Geoffrey Rhoades, *Brick House, Great Bardfield* (1935)

²⁷ Robjn Cantus, 'Brick House from Behind' (15 July 2020) (<https://inexpensiveprogress.com/1936/brick-house-from-behind>) [Accessed 20 November 2020].

Bawden's approach to gardening could be considered unusual, but like Mahoney, he valued all plants. After his neighbour suggested 'the hedge dividing Brick House from [his] garden was being gradually choked by a large white-flowered convolvulus. Edward refused to pull up this bindweed [.....] and Mahoney and he both made drawings of it'.²⁸ Figure 11.24 shows the convolvulus growing on the right of the picture. His fondness for wildflowers remained and is seen in his linocut of pink campions and columbines (Figure 11.25).



Figure 11.24: Edward Bawden, *The Garden at Brick House* (1930s)

²⁸ Garwood, *Long Live Great Bardfield*, p. 222.



Figure 11.25: Edward Bawden, *Campion and Columbine* (1947)

Ravilious portrayed the garden as somewhere to relax. In Figure 11.26, Epton is reading a book, as Garwood prepares vegetables for a meal that could be eaten under the walnut tree.



Figure 11.26: Eric Ravilious, *The Garden, Brick House* (1933)

Many years later in a comic picture, Bawden showed that although a garden is somewhere to relax, it has to be looked after. As his wife enjoys a summer's day in a deckchair, her husband whose thoughts are elsewhere, is spraying her and their cat with cold water (Figure 11.27).



Figure 11.27: Edward Bawden, *The PVC Hose Garden* (1961)

During the war, Bawden's wife and children moved to Cheltenham and Brick House was occupied by the home guard and suffered bomb damage. When they returned, the garden had to be remade and although Aldridge's painting shows one of the workmen, amongst the assorted building supplies, a climbing rose is in bloom at the side of the house (Figure 11.28).

Both Bawden and Ravilious painted greenhouses. Bawden's depiction shows a greenhouse crammed full of plants, possibly young cucumbers, whereas Ravilious' painting has carnations and geraniums in flower (Figure 11.29 and Figure 11.30).



Figure 11.28: John Aldridge, *Brick House* (1946)



Figure 11.29: Edward Bawden, *Greenhouse* (1932)



Figure 11.30: Eric Ravilious, *Greenhouse with Geraniums and Carnations* (1938)

After his wife died in 1970, Bawden moved to Park Street in Saffron Walden, where he continued to paint his garden. Figure 11.31 shows cats in his greenhouse full of flowers.



Figure 11.31: Edward Bawden, *Cat and Greenhouse* (1986)

The Times' obituary concluded that 'although [Bawden] enjoyed an international reputation he was, in a very special sense, a local artist revealing his deep attachment to the Essex countryside.'²⁹

After Cedric Morris, who knew *Aldridge* socially, suggested that East Anglia was somewhere he could paint, he visited and moved to Great Bardfield in 1933, where he remained until his death.³⁰ He and Bawden collaborated on wallpaper designs in the late 1930s and were friends until the breakdown of Aldridge's marriage in 1960.

John Arthur Malcolm Aldridge (1905-1983)

Relatively little has been written about Aldridge's life (Figure 11.32).³¹ Some of his correspondence is held in the Tate's archive and he left papers and drawings to the Fry Gallery.³² His first wife, the designer and rug maker Cecilia [Lucie] Saunders' (1889-1975) memoirs have been found recently.³³ As Aldridge had private means, he did not have to sell or show his work, but like Bawden and Mahoney, he taught art, but at the Slade School between 1949 and 1970. As Andrew Lambirth commented 'artists go in and out of fashion even during their own lifetimes, but those who have made little effort to exhibit their work often disappear from public view altogether after their deaths'.³⁴

²⁹ Anonymous, 'Edward Bawden, Artist and Book Illustrator', *The Times*, 63559 (23 November 1989), p. 16.

³⁰ Gill Saunders & Malcolm Yorke (Edited), *Bawden, Ravilious and the Artists of Great Bardfield* (London: V&A Publishing, 2015), p. 93.

³¹ Conversation with David Oelman, Chair, Fry Gallery, 29 January 2019, who revealed that a publisher could not be found for a proposed biography.

³² Tate Gallery, TGA 9914/3/4. Aldridge's papers include information about Place House. The Fry Gallery has five hundred of his drawings.

³³ Her memoirs were thought to have been lost, but are to be published in March 2021. ([brhttps://inexpensiveprogress.com/new-book](https://inexpensiveprogress.com/new-book)) [Accessed 20 November 2020].

³⁴ Andrew Lambirth, 'Fresh Airing for the Artist who Loved the Outdoors', *Sunday Telegraph* (28 September 2013), p. 28.



Figure 11.32: John Aldridge, *Self Portrait* (1946)

Early Life

Unlike Bawden, Ravilious and Mahoney, Aldridge came from a wealthy military family. His father, John Barttelot Aldridge (1871-1909) was part of the Aldridge family, who owned the St Leonards Forest estate at Horsham in West Sussex.³⁵ He was a major in the Royal Horse Artillery and died in India when Aldridge was three-years-old. In the 1911 Census, Aldridge and one of his older brothers were being educated by a governess, but later he won a scholarship to Uppingham School.³⁶ After he won another scholarship, he went to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, where he obtained a second in classical honour moderations in 1926 and a third in *literae humaniore* in 1928.³⁷ He was regarded there as an aesthete, who liked opera, but also played

³⁵ The estate had been in the Aldridge family from 1747 (<https://landedfamilies.blogspot.com/2013/09/74-aldridge-of-st-leonards-house-and.html>) [Accessed 20 November 2020].

³⁶ 1911 Census.

³⁷ 'John Aldridge', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30755>) [Accessed 20 November 2020].

rugby.³⁸ At Oxford, he met and remained friends with John Betjeman (1906-1984). Two other close lifelong friends were the Scottish poet, Norman Cameron (1905-1953) and the author, Robert Graves (1895-1985).

The Artist

Aldridge decided to become artist whilst he was at Oxford, but never had any formal training. He differed from Bawden and Ravilious as he preferred to paint in oils.

One of his early paintings was Coolhurst, which was part of the family's St Leonards Forest Estate, and was painted whilst he was at Oxford (Figure 11.33). It might have been thought he would settle in Sussex, but unlike Ravilious, it appears he preferred the gentle Essex countryside.



Figure 11.33: John Aldridge, Coolhurst (1924)

In 1928, Aldridge moved to London, but also travelled widely in Europe, including Mallorca where Graves lived at Deya. In 1931, Nicholson invited him to exhibit with the Seven and Five Society, which he did in 1931

³⁸ Lambirth, 'Fresh Airing for the Artist who Loved the Outdoors', p. 28.

and 1933. Many of the Seven and Five Society's members including Nicholson favoured abstract painting, but Aldridge was a representational artist, whose painting was based on the English landscape tradition.³⁹ In his words:

Landscape painting differs from any other sort of painting because a landscape is almost by definition a scene in which the spectator can imagine himself being present. Other kind of pictures are complete things in which there is no room for anything more, certainly no room for the spectator to squeeze in: a landscape should be complete in itself – not just a bit of a place but a little world of its own – but it still invites the spectator to enter it.⁴⁰

Aldridge had his first solo exhibition at the Leicester Gallery in 1933 and was invited to exhibit *Deya, The Valley*, a Mallorcan landscape showing Spanish moss, *Tillandsia usneoides*, growing on the trees, at the Venice Biennale in 1934 (Figure 11.34). In 1935, he also exhibited at the Brussels International Exhibition.

After the war, like many of the artists featured in this Section and in Section III, he found it difficult to build on his early success, but continued to paint the Essex landscape until his death and exhibit at the Royal Academy. Figure 11.35 is his depiction of the Pant Valley after the harvest. Two further exhibitions were held at the Grosvenor Galleries in 1971 and 1975.⁴¹ A retrospective exhibition to celebrate his seventieth birthday was held at the Radlett Gallery in Hertfordshire in 1975.

³⁹ It was why Morris resigned from the group.

⁴⁰ Quoted in (<http://www.cassone-art.com/art-news/2013/09/john-aldridge-retrospective-at-the-fry-gallery>) [Accessed 20 November 2020].

⁴¹ Dyson, *Artists of Great Bardfield*, p. 19.



Figure 11.34: John Aldridge, *Deya, The Valley* (1933)



Figure 11.35: John Aldridge, *The Pant Valley, Essex* (1960)

The Gardener

For Bawden and Ravilious, Great Bardfield's attraction was that it had been 'unexplored by painters' and initially, they were unhappy about Aldridge's

arrival.⁴² However, a mutual interest in gardening led to their friendship, as Aldridge, like Bawden was a dedicated gardener.⁴³ He bought Place House, a fifteenth-century timber-framed house, a few hundred yards from Brick House on the opposite side on the road towards Saffron Walden.⁴⁴ As the house, the former home of the sculptor Herbert Hampton (1860-1929) had been unoccupied for some time, its garden had run wild.⁴⁵

Whilst his friend, Betjeman, called Aldridge, ‘the gardener’s artist’, the art historian, Malcolm Yorke, thought he regarded gardening as a metaphor for his work, describing it as ‘a process which combines selection, precision and an understanding of the nature and possibilities of the material in a way that is analogous with that of painting’.⁴⁶

The south facing two-acre garden sloped down to Bardfield Brook and its large cedar of Lebanon often featured in his paintings. Figure 11.36 not only gives a general view of the house and garden, but in the foreground, Aldridge, a plantsman, had chosen plants with a variety of flower and leaf form.

⁴² Betjeman’s notes for Aldridge’s 1971 exhibition at the Grosvenor Galleries and Yorke, *The Inward Laugh: Edward Bawden and His Circle* (Huddersfield: Fleece Press, 2005), p. 7.

⁴³ Garwood, *Long Live Great Bardfield*, p. 254.

⁴⁴ It is often referred to as The Place.

⁴⁵ Garwood, *Long Live Great Bardfield*, p. 256. Ravilious could have bought Place House, but did not like it.

⁴⁶ Yorke, *The Inward Laugh*, p. 107.



Figure 11.36: John Aldridge, *Garden at Place House* (1948)

The garden writer, Tony Venison (1930-2019), described Place House two years after Aldridge's death as 'an English country garden billowing with flowers and unblemished by any unsympathetic inclusions such as floribunda roses or spiky *chamaecyparis*'.⁴⁷ Two long borders ran the length of the garden, edged with box clipped to the edge of the path (Figure 11.37).

In May, herbaceous plants flowered: blue-flowered borage, single and double *Aquilegia vulgaris*, peonies, *Dranunculus vulgaris*, sweet rocket, honesty and forget-me-nots. These were followed by *Geranium ibericum* and *Geranium armenum*, pinks, sedum, *Saponaria ocymoides flore pleno*, phlox and Michaelmas daisies.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Tony Venison, 'An Artist in the Garden', *Country Life*, 178 (17 October 1985), p. 1140. During a telephone conversation on 17 February 2019, he recalled that Morris recommended it as a garden to visit.

⁴⁸ Venison, 'An Artist in the Garden', p. 1140.



Figure 11.37: John Aldridge, *Path to The Place* (1973)

Figure 11.38 shows the water garden where Aldridge placed plants of varying heights, but also shows different leaf shapes, silver, gold and variegated foliage, as well as umbelliferous and plumed flowers.



Figure 11.38: John Aldridge, *Water Garden, Place House* (1969)

Towards the end of the garden, there was a vegetable garden and an old orchard, which Aldridge painted in spring when it was full of blossom (Figure 11.39).



Figure 11.39: John Aldridge, *The Orchard* (1948)

Aldridge was never part of the gardening world, but his circle of friends included the Scottish poet, Ruthven Todd (1914-1978), who was noted for his knowledge and illustrations of fungi and the composer, Gerard Finzi (1901-1958), who created an orchard of old apple varieties at Church Farm, Ashmansworth near Newbury. He also knew Hugh Johnson, who lived at Saling Hall in Essex and for many years wrote a monthly article as ‘Tradescant’ in *The Garden*. Perhaps the greatest compliment he received came from Morris, who recommended Place House’s garden as one to visit.

Other Great Bardfield Artists

Other artists came to live in Great Bardfield although not all of them stayed. Thomas Hennell (1903-1945), whose *Planting Cabbages* is shown on this chapter’s frontispiece visited Bawden during the 1930s. From 1942 until the 1950s, Kenneth Rowntree (1915-1997) lived there with his wife, the architectural historian, Diana Buckley (1915-2008). Rowntree was a friend of Humphrey Waterfield, whose work is discussed in Chapter 13. Michael

Rothenstein (1980-1983), Sir William Rothenstein's son moved to Ethel House in 1941 with his wife, Duffy Ayers (1915-2017), a portrait painter.

After the war, a new generation of artists arrived and included Walter Hoyle (1922-2000}, whose painting of *Great Bardfield Essex Barn* is the frontispiece for Section III. It depicts cow parsley, which Aldridge grew on the path to his garden, 'through a side gate from the village street down high structures of cow-parsley like Sweet Cicely led round to the garden'.⁴⁹ It became a symbol of the Great Bardfield Open House Exhibitions in 1954, 1955 and 1958, which Aldridge encouraged, and where paintings and other crafts were exhibited in artists' homes. Cow parsley is shown on the catalogue's cover (Figure 11.40).⁵⁰ Larger shows were held in Cambridge in 1956 and Bristol in 1959.

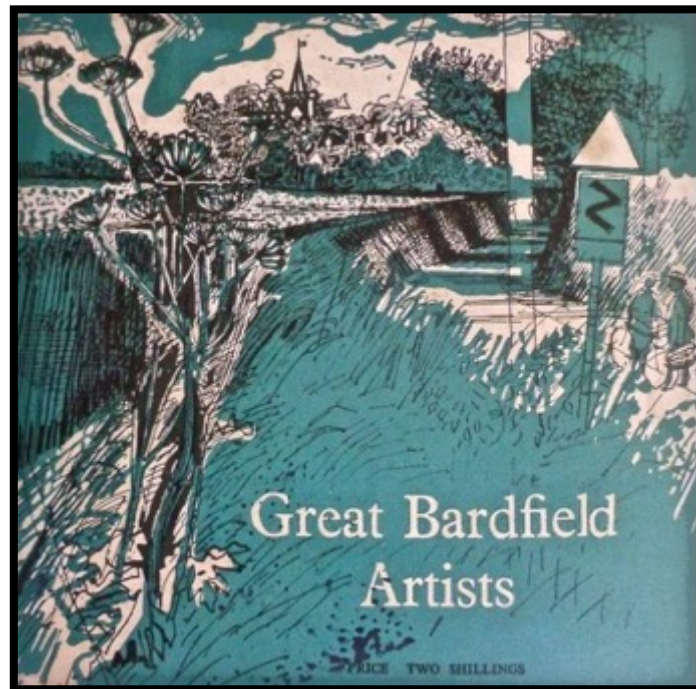


Figure 11.40: Catalogue, Great Bardfield Open House Exhibition

⁴⁹ Venison, 'An Artist in the Garden', p. 1140.

⁵⁰ Blondes Fine Art, 'Walter Hoyle, John Aldridge , Great Bardfield and Cow Parsley' (1 February 2018) (<http://www.blondesfineart.com/blondes-blog/walter-hoyle-john-aldrige-great-bardfield>) [Accessed 20 November 2020].

Depicting cow parsley, whose delicate umbels turn the countryside white in May was then unusual. At best it was called a wildflower, but more likely, a rampant weed. With the popularity today for wildflower meadows and as fields and grass verges have stopped being cut down before mid-summer, it and a number of similar plants, like *Ammi majus*, are grown widely. Thus, Great Bardfield was pointing the way to the future.

‘A Patchwork from the Ragbag of History’

The Contribution of British Artists to Garden Design 1890-1980



Volume 2

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Thesis Submitted for the Award of PhD

Institute of Historical Research

January 2021

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Section III

Towards The New Dawn 1945-1980

Introduction



Walter Hoyle, *Great Bardfield Essex Barn* (1957)

‘A garden is a work of art, and it remains a vision for guidance as one tries to extend the garden’s benefits of rest, recreation, and aesthetic pleasure to a wider public, in the larger landscape.’

Lawrence Halprin¹

This was the opinion of the American landscape architect, Lawrence Halprin (1916-2019). who early in his career was influenced by the ideas of the Canadian landscape architect, Arthur Coney [Christopher] Tunnard (1910-1979), who published his ideas about the future of garden design in 1938, just before he left Britain, where he had lived for almost ten years.² In the post-war period, Tunnard’s ideas were only one of several approaches suggested by landscape architects, garden designers and others as a response to changing lifestyles and expectations.

A generation, who had experienced the 1930s Depression and the hardship of war, now expressed themselves differently. Whilst some continued or reinterpreted the past, others embraced more novel ways. For artists, who witnessed the debate about the relative merits of abstract and representational painting, their chosen style was how they expressed these ideas. John Minton (1917-1957) saw painting as ‘an experiment in beauty’, and explained that art was the way he translated his feelings ‘to create and convey some arrangement of shape, line and colour.’³

This generation also grew up amidst the ideas of psychoanalysis, promoted by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Jung (1875-1961) and

¹ Quoted in Peter Walker & Melanie Louise Sims, *Invisible Gardens and the Search for Modernism in American Landscapes* (London: MIT Press, 1994), p. 150.

² Christopher Tunnard, *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* (London: Architectural Press, 1938).

³ Anonymous, ‘Seven Artists Tell Us Why They Paint’, *Picture Post*, 42 (12 March 1949), p. 16.

some chose to include a deeper meaning in their work. The landscape architect, Geoffrey Jellicoe's (1900-1996) designs have to be considered on a philosophical as well as a pictorial level, whereas the garden designer, Russell Page used his spiritual beliefs to inform his designs.

Yet this was a period when ideas to achieve a more equitable society were taken forward, particularly in education, where greater access to qualification and a university education gradually became a reality for many, who previously could only dream of it. With it, came enhanced career prospects and the possibility of a home of one's own with a garden.

This Section considers whether the contribution of the artist-gardeners, Lieutenant John Alfred Codrington (1898-1901), Sir Cedric Lockwood Morris (1889-1982), and Derick Humphrey Waterfield (1908-1971) to garden design in this period influenced these ideas or were affected by them.

Consequences of War

At the beginning of the war, when Britain faced destruction by bombing and possible invasion, the country had to consider what it was fighting for. A series of articles in *Picture Post* in July 1940 epitomised what Britain was trying to preserve, 'The villages whose resistance civilisation itself depends. [.....] Something our fathers fought for all through the centuries, something we must fight for today' (Figure 1).⁴

⁴ Anonymous, 'The Land We are Fighting For', *Picture Post*, 8 [1] (6 July 1940, pp 28-29).

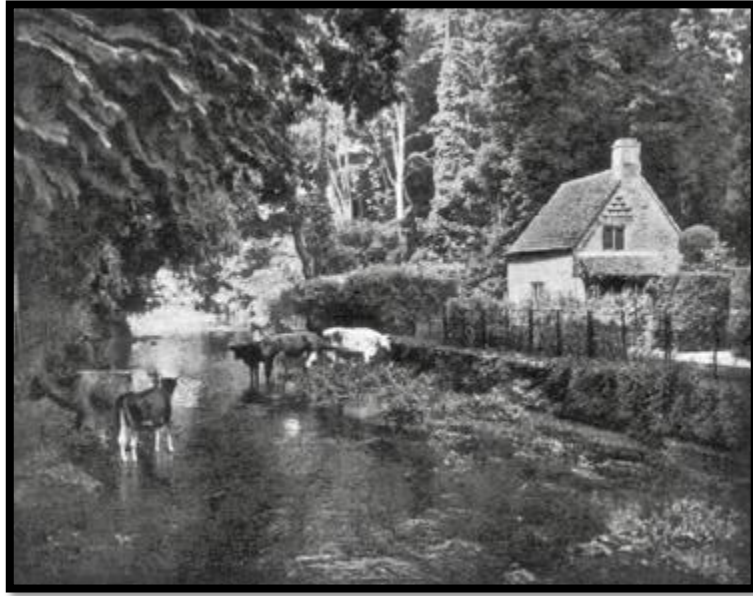


Figure 1: 'England Where Each One Can Work Out His Own Life' (1940)

It was not only the British press, who emphasised the importance of protecting Britain's countryside. In 1942, a series of posters from the Army Bureau of Current Affairs by the artist, Frank Newbould (1887-1951) showed villages and landscape. Figure 2 shows a shepherd with his dog checking his flock. The fear that the countryside might disappear was the reason Kenneth Clark proposed the 'Recording Britain' project, a scheme in which British artists recorded the landscape in watercolours.⁵ As a result, owners of historic country houses also decided to record their estates and John Piper (1903-1992), an official war artist, was commissioned by the writer, Osbert Sitwell (1892-1969) to paint his family home, Renishaw Hall, near Sheffield (Figure 3).⁶ The Royal Family also asked Piper to paint several views of Windsor

⁵ 'Recording Britain' (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/r/recording-britain-collection>) [Accessed 1 December 2020]. It included several artist-gardeners, who were discussed in Section II Evelyn Dunbar, Aubrey Waterfield and the Great Bardfield artists: Thomas Hennell, Michael Rothenstein and Kenneth Rowntree.

⁶ The Sitwell family made their fortune as iron masters and colliery owners. Sitwell's father laid out the gardens including Italianate terraces at the end of the nineteenth century. Edwin Luytens worked there in 1908.

Castle (Figure 4). The dark colours used in both paintings reflects the sombre mood of the time.



Figure 2: Frank Newbould (1887-1951), *Britain Fight for it Now, South Downs* (1942)

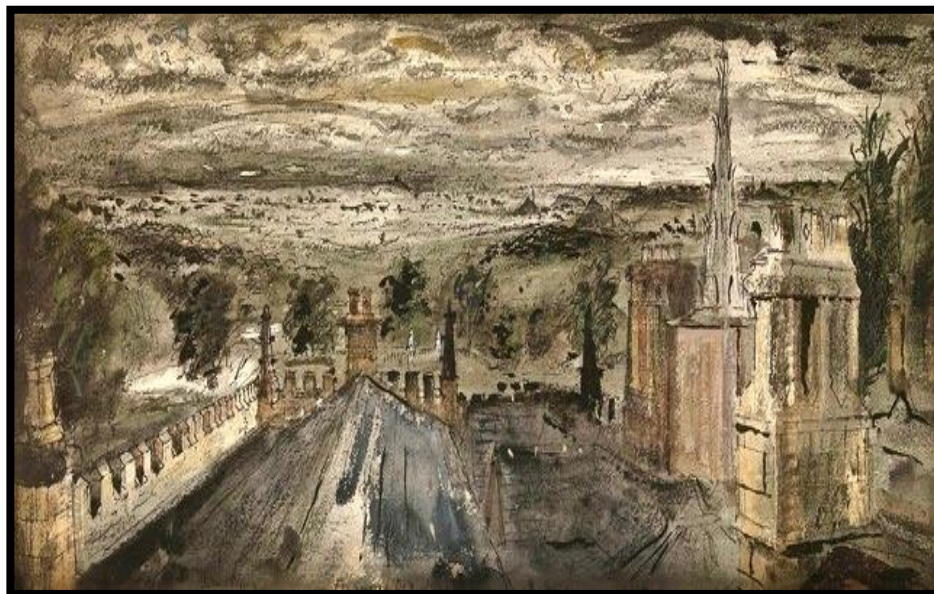


Figure 3: John Piper, *Roofscape, Renishaw Hall* (1942-1943)



Figure 4: John Piper, *View from the Roof of St George's Tower* (1941-1944)

After the war ended, the government wanted to mark their appreciation to those who had lost their lives protecting Britain and in 1946 set up the National Land Fund to acquire sites of beauty and history.⁷ However, it also wanted to lift the country's morale. The aim of the Festival of Britain in 1951 was to commemorate the centenary of the 1851 Great Exhibition, but more importantly signal that Britain could look towards a better future. It included a celebration of British art and sculpture. Piper was asked to design a mural for one wall and whilst his theme was the Englishman's home, Edward Bawden chose to depict British country life in three sections, *Country Life*, *The English Pub* and *Garden Delights*, which was based on an earlier design (Figure 6).

Bawden's mural demonstrated that gardens played an important part in British culture, but landscaping was also a key part of the Festival and Page designed the Festival's gardens in Battersea Park, a large site of 200 acres.

⁷ Robert Hewison, *Culture and Consensus: England, Art and Politics since 1940* (London: Methuen, 1995, Second edition, 1997), pp. 22-23. The £50 million fund also benefitted the National Trust, p. 59.

His remit was ‘to make a dazzling break from the bleak rationed world of post-war Britain’.⁸



Figure 5: John Piper, *The Englishman's Home* (1951)



Figure 6: Edward Bawden, *Earthly Delights* (1946)

The garden comprised blocks of vibrant colour that changed with the seasons: in spring 20,000 yellow tulips were followed by crimson and pink

⁸ ‘The Festival of Britain Gardens’, Friends of Battersea Park (<https://batterseapark.org/gardens/russell-page-garden>).

floribunda roses and summer bedding, predominantly in red, white and blue, the colours of the Union Jack (Figure 7).



Figure 7: Summer Bedding, Festival of Britain Gardens (1951)

Although the Festival was intended to celebrate the past and look to the future, anything regarded as ‘modern art’ was excluded. When the Scottish artist, William Gear’s (1915-1997) abstract painting, *Autumn Landscape*, a tree-like form painted in seasonal colours, was awarded the Arts Council’s purchase prize, it was denounced by the Royal Academy’s president, Sir Alfred Munnings (1878-1959) as a ‘scheming, self-conscious, anglicised, fifty-year old repetition of the *École de Paris*’ (Figure 8).⁹

⁹ National Gallery for Scotland (<https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/517/autumn-landscape>) [Accessed 30 November 2020]. It was denounced in the press and the House of Commons



Figure 8: William Gear, *Autumn Landscape* 1950)

As the Festival of Britain showed, antipathy towards abstraction remained, but this rather than representation, continued to be art's focus. Whereas Paris had been at the forefront of modern art in the 1930s, the impetus now moved to the USA.¹⁰ Despite this a number of British artists continued to paint the landscape in what was termed 'neo-romanticism'. They took forward Paul Nash's ideas and they, too, were inspired by the visionary paintings of Samuel Palmer and William Blake's. Minton, Piper, Keith Vaughan (1912-1977) and Graham Sutherland (1903-1980) were part of this group, whose paintings became more colourful after the war and is seen in Minton's depiction of exotic plants in Jamaica (Figure 9).

¹⁰ Artists like Bawden, Aldridge and John Nash found that their work was unfashionable and the Tate Gallery only acquired one of Cedric Morris' paintings in 1981.



Figure 9: John Minton, *Landscape, New Kingston, Jamaica* (1950)

Whilst Piper's paintings often featured nostalgic views of country houses, Vaughan saw painting as 'a way to communicate by forms and visual symbols, ideas, which, I feel strongly about and which, cannot be expressed on words (Figure 10 and Figure 11).¹¹

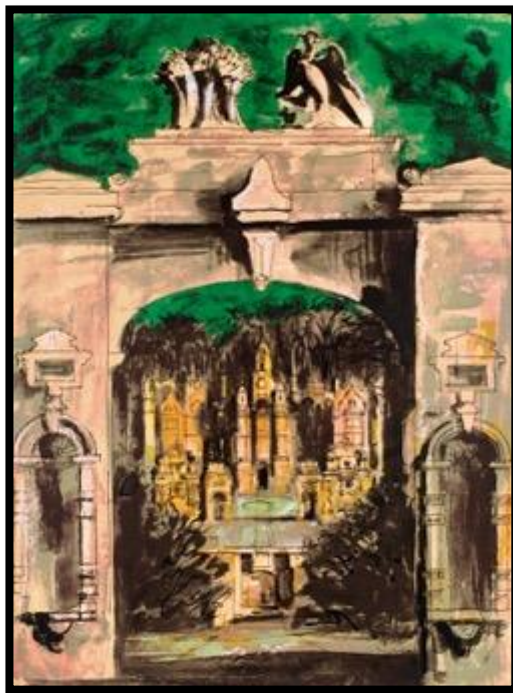


Figure 10: John Piper, *Harlaxton Manor Through the Gate* (1977)

¹¹ Anonymous, 'Seven Artists Tell Us Why They Paint', p. 18.



Figure 11: Keith Vaughan, *Untitled* (1968)

Patrick Heron (1920-1999), who with Minton and Vaughan, was interviewed by *Picture Post* in 1949, noted he was ‘frequently unaware of anything more definite than unease’ when he started a painting.¹² After he moved to Eagle’s Nest, near St Ives, where his garden was full of azaleas and camellias, his style became more abstract (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Patrick Heron, *Azalea Garden, May 1956* (1956)

¹² Anonymous, ‘Seven Artists Tell Us Why They Paint’, p. 18.

He continued to paint geometric compositions using a restricted palette of colours (Figure 13).



Figure 13: *Patrick Heron, Emerald, Violet, Brown, Blue, Orange* (1971)

Heron's emphasis on depicting shape and colour was also displayed by Ivon Hitchens (1893-1979), whose paintings comprised blocks of colour. For nearly forty years, he lived at Greenleaves, near Petworth in West Sussex, where he painted his garden continuously, but paid for it to be tidied. Whilst Figure 14 shows woodland near his home, where the shapes of upright trees and fields ready to be harvested can be determined, Figure 15 represents how he viewed his garden with the irises' strap-like leaves and lemon flowers appearing larger than life at the front of the painting.



Figure 14: Ivon Hichens, *Woodland Walk and Farm Fields* (1972)



Figure 15: Ivon Hichens, *Iris, Greenleaves* (1952)

Although the government wanted to emphasise Britain's bright future, its immediate problem was how to repair the bomb damage that had destroyed many towns and cities. Figure 16 shows Bond Street in central London where 'if the streets of London were not paved with gold, it may at least be said that the bomb sites were clothed with the golden flowers of

ragwort from Mount Etna and the silver of fleabane from Canada' (Figure 16).¹³

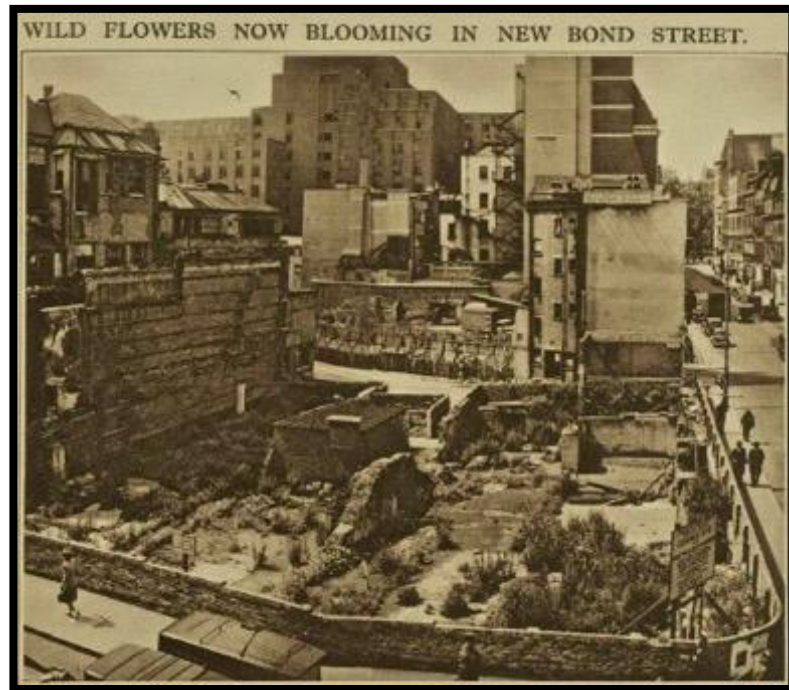


Figure 16: A Flowery Wilderness, London (1945)

It was estimated that 750,000 new homes were needed and by 1951, this figure had risen to 1.5 million.¹⁴ In 1946, the New Towns Act proposed a series of new towns, which echoed the garden city movement's ideas with its emphasis on green spaces, where people would live and work. The first schemes included Stevenage and Hemel Hempstead in Hertfordshire and Harlow in Essex.¹⁵ Architects and landscape architects including Frederick

¹³ J E Lousley, 'Wild Flowers in the City of London', *Geographical Magazine*, 18 (1945), pp. 413-422.

¹⁴ University of the West of England, 'Meeting the Post-War Housing Shortage', in *The History of Council Housing* (2008) [https://fet.uwe.ac.uk/conweb/house_ages/council_housing/print.htm]. The Labour Party won a surprise landslide election victory in July 1945, but faced considerable financial problems about how to address the housing shortage as the country was almost bankrupt. A low interest loan of \$3.75 million was secured from the USA to fund this programme and meet Britain's debts.

¹⁵ The second was between 1961-1966 and the third, 1967-1970. Although new towns provided homes for two million people, they failed to create self-contained economies and later developments in Telford and Milton Keynes were built as overspill for existing towns.

Gibberd (1908-1984) and Jellicoe were involved in their landscaping (Figure 17 and Figure 18). Harlow in Essex, the first new town to be built was designed by Gibberd.

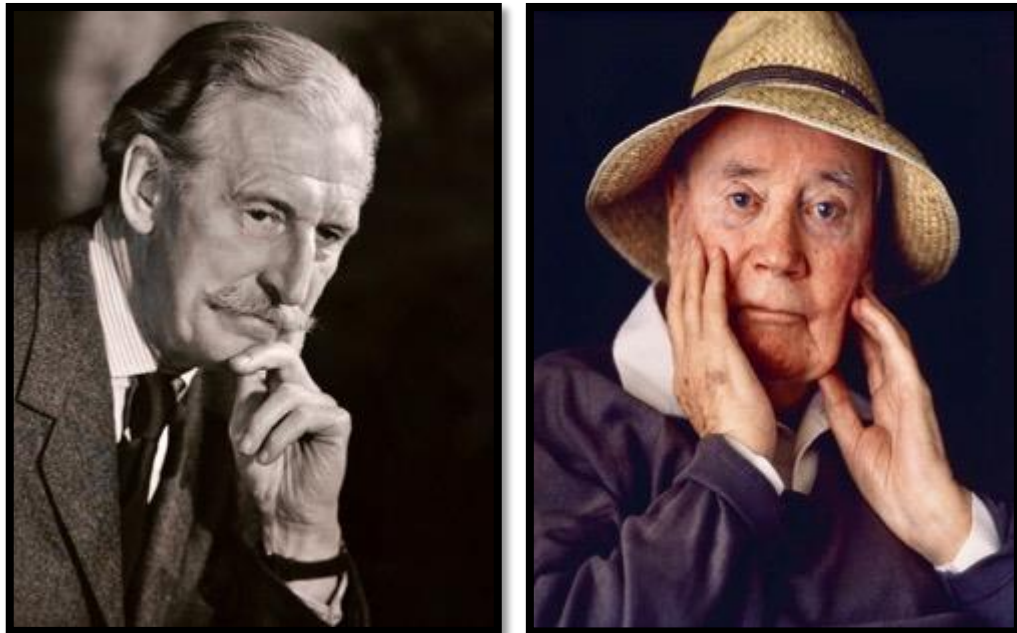


Figure 17: Frederick Gibberd (1967) and Figure 18: Geoffrey Jellicoe (1992)

Harlow New Town, Essex

Gibberd trained as an architect, but was noted for the attention given to landscaping his projects. Born in Coventry, he was educated at the King Henry VIII School. He decided not to join his father's gentleman's outfitting business and was articled to an architectural practice. In 1925, he went to Birmingham School of Architecture and then moved to London in 1930 to join Ernest Berry Webber's (1896-1965) practice. In 1932, his own practice was established to promote his interest in modernist architecture. His experience in Nuneaton, where designed the civic centre and the housing project at the Somerford Estate in Hackney resulted in his appointment at Harlow.¹⁶ Its

¹⁶ 'Sir Frederick Ernest Gibberd', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001>)

initial plan was to provide homes for 60,000 people, but was increased to 80,000. The emphasis Gibberd placed on the design for the town's wider landscape continues today as:

Existing features including trees and buildings were preserved to give variety to the new town and provide a link with Harlow's historic past. The layout of building groups was arranged to preserve woods and tree belts, these were used to separate built-up areas. Old lanes with hedgerows and grass verges were preserved within the master plan to become foot and cycle paths.¹⁷

Figure 19 shows low- and high-rise housing built amongst existing mature trees and open spaces.



Figure 19: Harlow New Town (1963)

Perhaps the most notable feature of Gibberd's design is the Civic Square with its Town Hall and surrounding water gardens. It comprised a

/odnb-9780198614128-e-31144?rskey=0WG1tF&result=1) [Accessed 24 November 2020].

¹⁷ 'Harlow New Town' (<http://www.gibberd.com>) [Accessed 29 December 2018].

series of three concrete-lined parallel terraces, into which canals, fountains and ponds were inset. The scheme, designed in 1952, was not completed until 1963. Figure 20 shows the view from the upper terrace down the gardens is one of lawns, stretching to the wider Essex countryside. The upper terrace comprised a 250-yard canal, with a similar one on the middle terrace, where fountain jets came out of the mouths of seven lions' heads. Each head, sculpted in a different abstract design by William Mitchell (1925-2020), was set in a York stone surround (Figure 21 and Figure 22).



Figure 20: Harlow Water Gardens (2002)



Figure 21: Top Terrace, Harlow Water Gardens (1965)

The lower terrace had six flower beds and seven small pools, originally with fountains (Figure 23). As Gibberd was not a landscape architect, unlike Reginald Blomfield in Edwardian England, he asked the landscape architect, Sylvia Crowe (1921-1997) to design the landscaping and she was involved in the project between 1948 and 1958.



Figure 22: Middle Terrace, Harlow Water Gardens (1963)



Figure 23: Flower Beds on the Lower Terrace (1963)

Gibberd was interested in modern art and sculpture and with his encouragement, the Harlow Art Trust was formed in the 1950s to acquire sculptures of national importance for the town.¹⁸ These included works by Henry Moore (1898-1986), who lived a few miles away in Much Hadham. As Gibberd wrote to Moore in 1964, 'So often sculpture is a sort of cultural concession that has little relevance to the real life of a town, but in your case it has become an integral part of it' (Figure 24).¹⁹

¹⁸ Harlow has 80 outdoor sculptures sited throughout the town.

¹⁹ Letter, Gibberd to Moore, 13 February 1964 (<https://www.henry-moore.org/henry-moore-archive/adhoc/henry-moore-and-harlow-new-town>) [Accessed 29 December 2018].



Figure 24: Henry Moore Unveiling, *Harlow Family Group* (1958)

Primarily, Gibberd was an architect with an interest in landscape and art, but he was an enthusiastic gardener, who combined these interests to create a garden when he moved to Marsh Lane in Harlow in 1956. He laid out the 9-acre garden, where he lived until his death. His vision was that ‘it was not to be a flower garden, a natural garden, a formal garden, a sculpture garden. All I wanted to make was an original garden.’²⁰ Figure 25 shows the formal pool in front of the house, whilst Figure 26 is an informal area where Gibberd displayed sculptures and objects from architectural scrapyards. The two Doric columns in a woodland setting from Coutts Bank in the Strand in London are behind a row of eighteenth-century urns.

²⁰ Garden Museum, Frederick Gibberd, ‘On Making the Garden and Landscape’ (<https://gardenmuseum.org.uk/the-gibberd-garden>).



Figure 25: Gibberd beside the Formal Pool (1977)



Figure 26: Doric Columns and Urns (2015)

Gibberd shared his interest with others and when Jellicoe saw his paintings by the German artist, Paul Klee (1879-1940) and Ben Nicholson, he became inspired by modern art and sculpture, which he not only included in his designs, but used as allegories.

Jellicoe was one of Britain's most eminent twentieth-century landscape architects, not only in Britain, but worldwide. His designs were complex as he incorporated the ideas that influenced him. After he was inspired by Jung, he wrote about the connection between art, landscape and hidden ideas.²¹

Unlike Gibberd, he disliked gardening.²² He was born in Chelsea and lived in London throughout his life, mainly in Highgate. When he left Cheltenham College, he studied at the Architectural Association's School of Architecture from 1917 to 1923.²³ He then spent time in Italy with fellow architect, John Chiene [Jock] Shepherd (1896-1979) and wrote the text for their book on the gardens of the Italian Renaissance.²⁴ Although Jellicoe started his own architectural practice in Bloomsbury in 1931, he also taught at the Architectural Association from 1929 to 1934.

Jellicoe made the first designs for Hemel Hempstead in 1947, but construction did not begin until 1957.²⁵ His vision was to create 'a city in a park with gardens surrounding the River Gade'.²⁶ His design, a serpent, was formed by a lake, representing its head and the fountain, its eye. A flower garden was designed on the serpent's back, and his wife, Susan (1907-1986), provided the plan for its planting (Figures 27 and Figure 28).²⁷

²¹ Geoffrey Jellicoe, *Studies in Landscape Design*, Volumes 1-3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960, 1966, 1968).

²² Fay Sweet, 'Obituary, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe', *The Independent* (19 July 1996) (<https://www.independent.co.uk/incoming/obituary-sir-geoffrey-jellicoe-5607830.html>) [Accessed 27 November 2020].

²³ 'Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-40519>) [Accessed 27 November 2020].

²⁴ G A Jellicoe & J C Shepherd, *Gardens of the Italian Renaissance* (London: Ernest Benn, 1925). They collaborated on a further book, G A Jellicoe & J C Shepherd *Gardens & Design* (London: Ernest Benn, 1927).

²⁵ The gardens were opened in 1962.

²⁶ <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/regeneration/hemel-evolution/jellicoe-water-gardens/history-of-the-water-gardens> [Accessed 30 December 2018].

²⁷ They were restored with Heritage Lottery Fund funding in 2017.

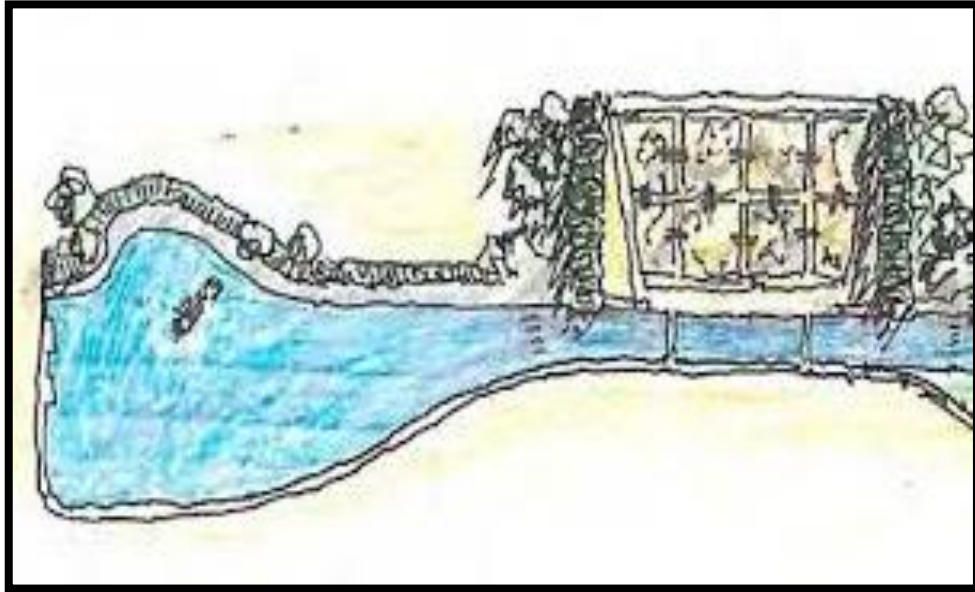


Figure 27: Geoffrey Jellicoe, *Hemel Hempstead Water Garden* (1947)



Figure 28: Water Garden (1963)

His design for the memorial to John F Kennedy at Egham in Surrey, completed in 1965, 'gave me my first serious opportunity to put a subconscious idea into a work, so that it is more important and more lasting than the purely visual impression the eye receives'.²⁸ Although visitors walk

²⁸ Sheila Harvey (Edited), *Reflections on Landscape: The Lives and Work of Six British Landscape Architects* (Aldershot: Gower Technical Publishing, 1987, p. 17.

up the hill through woodland, everything is allegorical. The granite setts represent pilgrims making their way upwards and the woodland is the cycle of life. When they emerge into the light at the top, they see the curved memorial stone, which appears to float above the ground (Figure 18).



Figure 29: John F Kennedy Memorial, Egham

Jellicoe also designed gardens for private clients and as was customary, his wife devised the planting schemes. In 1969, he designed the gardens at Shute House, near Shaftesbury in Wiltshire where water is a predominant feature. Figure 30 shows a series of formal descending pools in a tranquil green setting of lawns and trees.

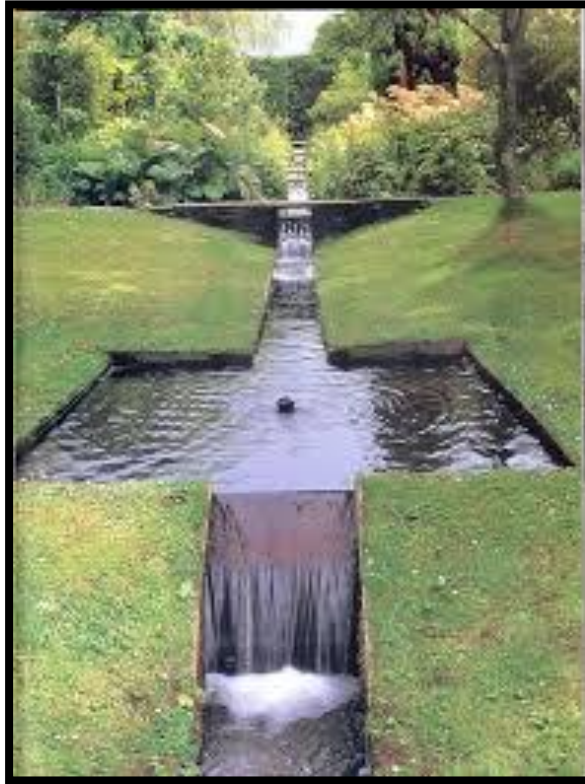


Figure 30: Shute House, Wiltshire

Jellicoe's interest in abstract art influenced his designs in two ways. The rose garden at Cliveden, near Taplow in Berkshire, which William, 3rd Viscount Astor (1907-1966) commissioned in 1959, was inspired by Klee's painting, *The Fruit* (Figure 31). The rose beds were planted in the painting's colours, with each bed representing the leaves of a cabbage (Figure 32).



Figure 31: Paul Klee, *The Fruit* (1932)



Figure 32: Rose Garden, Cliveden

When the American art collector, Stanley Seeger (1930-2011) asked Jellicoe to design the garden at Sutton Place in Surrey in 1980, Jellicoe used abstract art for its design, an allegory for the evolution of human life, and also incorporated modern sculpture. Its design was based on a series of reliefs that Nicholson, whom he knew, painted in the mid-1930s (Figure 33). The

sculpture, a simple white relief, was placed behind a formal geometric reflective, but contemplative pool (Figure 34).

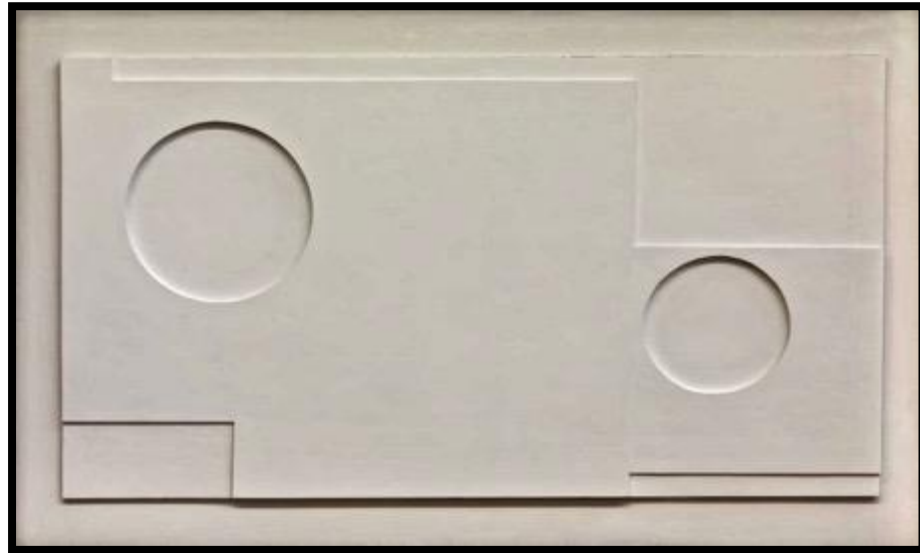


Figure 33: Ben Nicholson, *Relief* (1935)



Figure 34: Nicholson Wall, Sutton Place (2011)

Thus Jellicoe introduced a different way of thinking about gardens, which is similar to Nash's idea of seeing the unseen, as design has to be considered not only visually, but philosophically.

Throughout his career, Jellicoe promoted landscape architecture. After being President of the Institute of Landscape Architects from 1939 to 1949, he was instrumental in establishing an International Federation of Landscape Architects and was its first president from 1948 to 1954. During this period, two women became prominent landscape architects, Crowe, who worked with Gibberd in Harlow, as well as a number of public and private commissions, and Brenda Colvin (1897-1981). Colvin was a keen gardener, who lived at Peacocks at Filkins in Gloucestershire from the 1960s until her death. Figure 35 shows her informal garden style with shrubs and hardy plants in subdued colours.



Figure 35: Peacocks, Filkins, Gloucestershire (2015)

Whereas Gibberd and Jellicoe's landscapes and gardens were contemporary and have a resonance with Tunnard's ideas that gardens are a way to connect houses to the wider landscape and thus, did not continue what he referred to as 'romantic trivialisation', garden designers were influenced by other ideas. Although Tunnard worked with the garden designer, Stephen

Percival [Percy] Cane (1881-1976), from 1932 to 1935, he would probably have used this phrase to describe some of his commissions.²⁹

Cane referred to himself as a ‘garden architect’.³⁰ He was born in Braintree and spent his childhood at Bocking Mill in Essex, where his father was a corn merchant (Figure 35). After being educated privately at College House School in Braintree, he worked for Crittall Windows from 1903 to 1908.³¹ After a visit to Easton Lodge at Great Dunmow in Essex, designed by Harold Peto, he decided to become a garden designer and studied at Chelmsford College of Science and Art and Architecture until 1919. He was also a pupil of the architect, Stephen Ronald Pierce (1896-1996).³²



Figure 36: Percy Cane

²⁹ Quoted in Tim Richardson, *English Gardens in the Twentieth Century* (London: Aurum Press, 2005), p. 126. No source given.

³⁰ 1939 Census.

³¹ ‘Stephen Percival Cane’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-46397?rskey=Farugn&result=1In>) [Accessed 29 November 2020].

³² During this time, he wrote for *My Garden Illustrated*.

In 1919, Cane established his own practice and by 1929 was one of the most sought after designers. During his long career, which continued until 1972, he worked not only in Britain, but in France, Austria and Greece. In 1926, he outlined his ideas about design:

The inclusion of formal terraces and gardens suitable to the character of the house, and the relation and contrast of these with beautifully balanced glades and planting. [...] It is the harmonious relation of the garden to the house, and of the gardens to the surrounding scenery.³³

After 1945, Cane undertook a number of prestigious commissions including a long association at Dartington Hall in Devon, where he designed parts of the garden for Leonard Elmhirst (1893-1974) and his wife, Dorothy (1887-1968) from 1945 to 1954. At Dartington, his remit was to open up the gardens' vistas 'to create a visual relationship with the scenery beyond and strengthen the links between areas of the garden'.³⁴ Figure 37 shows The Glade, a woodland walk comprising mostly deciduous trees, which linked the garden to the wider landscape, as did the Azalea Dell (Figure 38).

³³ Percy Cane, 'Modern Gardens, British and Foreign', *The Studio* (Special Winter Edition, 1926–1927), pp. 1–2.

³⁴ Katherine Ross & The Garden Committee, 'Dartington Hall Virtual Report' (2016) (<https://www.dartington.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Historical-Report-on-Dartingtons-Gardens.pdf>), p. 35.



Figure 37: Dartington Hall, View Through The Glade (1957)



Figure 38: Azalea Dell (1950s)

Cane's design for the High Meadow, formerly a cutting garden, ensured a succession of colour using trees and hardy plants in harmonious shades in summer and autumn (Figure 39). The planting included the trees: *Magnolia sieboldii*, which has large white flowers with crimson stamens from May to September, *Malus hupehensis* with white spring blossom and red fruit in autumn, *Stewartia* for autumn colour and tree peonies. The borders were

planted with delphiniums in shades of blue, mauve and purple and phlox in shades ranging from pale to deepest pink. There were also white, orange and reds flowers to accentuate the peonies' foliage.³⁵



Figure 39: Border, High Meadow (1950s)

At Westfield at Oakley near Bedford, where Cane worked between 1953 and 1954, he designed water gardens that included a formal, rectangular pool and Luytens-style canal, seen in Figure 40, but which extended into streams and pools.³⁶ His design for the rose garden was also reminiscent of Edwardian style with its series of beds round a central hexagonal pool (Figure 41).

³⁵ Percy Cane, 'The Gardens at Dartington Hall', *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society* (June 1954), pp. 246-256.

³⁶ Arthur Hellyer, 'A Percy Cane Period Piece: The Garden at Westfield, near Bedford', *Country Life*, 170 (2 July 1981), pp. a22, a27, a28.



Figure 40: Formal Water Garden, Westfield (1981)



Figure 41: Rose Garden (1981)

At Sutton Park, near York, Cane's design combined a romantic and nostalgic garden, as well as a woodland planted with silver birches to connect the garden to the countryside beyond (Figure 42 and Figure 43).



Figure 42: Formal Garden and Pool, Sutton Park (1990)



Figure 43: Silver Birches in a Woodland Setting

After the war, one British gardener became world-renowned. Russell Page was the only artist-gardener studied, who gave up art to become a professional garden designer. As he said, ‘I hadn’t the right kind of “hell-

bentness” which would take me really far as a painter.’³⁷ Page has been called ‘the most famous garden designer no one’s ever heard about’, an unusual reflection about a man, who designed gardens for some of the world’s wealthiest people and who, in the 1970s, could charge his clients \$1,000 dollars a day (Figure 44).³⁸ From 1945 to 1962, he lived in France, working mainly in Europe, but even after he returned to Britain, he continued to work worldwide including the USA. His career shows that after the war, successful garden designers, like landscape architects, worked internationally. Like Cane, Page wrote about what motivated his garden design and how his ideas evolved.³⁹

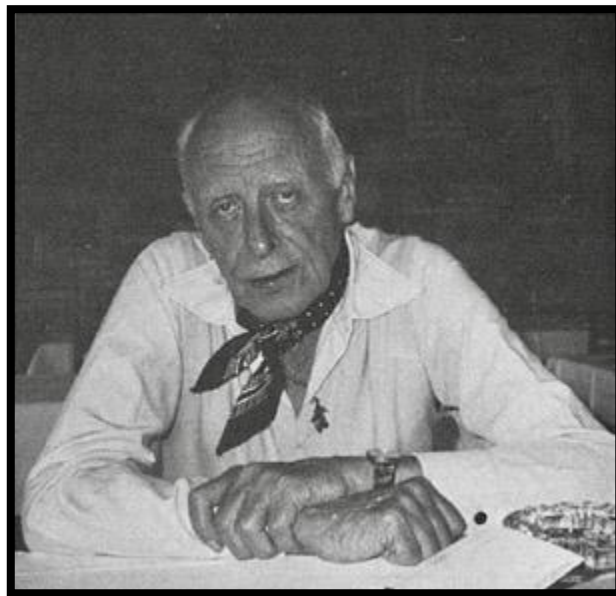


Figure 44: Russell Page

³⁷ Tom Dewe Mathews, ‘Russell Page: An Interview’, *House & Garden* (American edition, November 1985), p. 253.

³⁸ Christopher Woodward, ‘The Most Famous Garden Designer No One’s Ever Heard About’, *Daily Telegraph* (21 March 2015) [<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/11483478/Russell-Page-the-most-famous-garden-designer-no-ones-ever-heard-of.html>].

³⁹ He wrote for *The Listener* and *Landscape & Garden* in the 1930s and in the 1960s for *Maison et Jardin*. He set out his ideas in Russell Page, *Education of a Gardener* (London: William Collins & Co, 1962, Second Edition, Collins, 1983). Garden Museum, RP 28/3/1-4, Russell Page Archive includes his unpublished notes.

Page grew up near Horncastle in Lincolnshire, where his father was a solicitor. He was interested in gardening as a child and was given a small piece of garden.⁴⁰ He acknowledged the influence of the artist-gardeners, Reginald Farrer and Gertrude Jekyll, whose books he read, and throughout his life, he admired Hidcote, Lawrence Johnston's garden with its carefully chosen planting in a strong, but simple framework, which was a feature of his own designs.⁴¹

When Page left Charterhouse School, he went to the Slade School of Art from 1923 to 1925. He went to study in Paris where he met the American philanthropist, Amos Laurence (1874-1948), who lived Château de Boussy St Antoine, where he learnt about French gardens. After he met Henry Thynne, 6th Marquess of Bath (1905-1992), who asked him to redesign the park at Longleat near Warminster in Wiltshire, he decided to concentrate on garden design. He also worked with Jellicoe on the Caveman Restaurant project in the Cheddar Gorge.

Like Jellicoe, Page had a belief system that was central to his thinking. During the war, he learned about Islamic architecture and gardens, as well as Islam's more mystical observance, Sufism.⁴² The Armenian religious philosopher, George Gurdjieff's (1877-1949) ideas were a significant influence, as were those of Idries Shah (1924-1996), who promoted a modern approach

⁴⁰ Conversation with his niece, Jane Page, 31 March 2017, who owns Page's painting of his childhood home, Kirkstead House.

⁴¹ Page, 'Hidcote Microcosm', *The Listener* (22 August 1934), pp. 321-323. Guy Fenwick, who Page worked for at North Luffenham Hall, Oakham, Rutland introduced him to Johnston.

⁴² Russell Page 'Climate in Relation to Garden Design', *Landscape & Design*, III [1] (Spring 1936), p. 50.

to Sufism.⁴³ Shah's and Gurdjieff's emphasis on a hidden harmony in the universe underpinned Page's approach to design:

There is a relation of one object to another and if the objects and pieces of stone or a growing plant on a mountain as against the clouds, against a lake in the foreground there are space relationships which are as important in gardening as they are in painting. Even more so as they are in three dimensions and they imply a fourth dimension.⁴⁴

Like Cane, Page never designed a garden for himself, but his approach was:

I know that I cannot make anything new. To make a garden is to organise all the elements present and add fresh ones, but first of all, I must absorb as best I can all that I see, the sky and the skyline, the soil, the colour of the grass, and the shape and nature of the trees.⁴⁵

In 1964, Page began designing the garden Casa March at Ratjada in Mallorca, a project which continued for fifteen years. Its owner, Bartolomé March (1917-1998) collected modern art and sculpture, and forty-two were displayed in the garden. Page suggested twelve should be placed in a clearing of Aleppo pines, *Pinus halpensis*, as 'sculptures have to have room to

⁴³ Other followers were the writers, Robert Graves (1895-1985) and Doris Lessing (1919-2013). Page left £5,000 in his will to care for Shah.

⁴⁴ Dewe Mathews, 'Russell Page: An Interview', p. 176. Not everyone appreciated his ideas which were dismissed as 'cuckoo teachings and mystic baloney', Robin Lane-Fox, 'Russell Page's Garden at Villar Perosa and a Tale of Two Masters', *Financial Times* (13 March 2016).

⁴⁵ Page, *Education of a Gardener*, p. 45.

breathe'.⁴⁶ He placed them on three levels 'where their spatial relationship will set up an invisible geometry of tensions' (Figure 45).⁴⁷



Figure 45: Eusebio Sempere (1923-1985), *Dodecaedro* (1974)

The garden had three existing terraces where cut flowers were grown. On each terrace, Page made paths using alternating squares of pebbles that showed his preference for abstract shapes, 'I broke them up by formal geometrical designs in the Persian, Arab or Moorish fashion' (Figure 46).⁴⁸ Each terrace was planted differently, from July to mid-September when the house was occupied: one had yellow, orange and blue plants, such as *Lantana* and *Ageratum* 'Blue Mink', another a combination of scarlet and white striped petunias and the third terrace's planting varied each year (Figure 47).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ RP/28/1/1/3, Unpublished writing.

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Ibidem.



Figure 46: Paved Beds in a Geometric Design (2019)



Figure 47: Terrace, Casa March (1992)

In 1977, Page was commissioned to design the small 70th Street Garden for the Frick Museum in New York, which measured only 54-feet by 76-feet.⁵⁰ He had to address the problems of shady garden surrounded by high buildings. The garden is viewed from inside, a large rectangular pool created

⁵⁰ Russell Page, 'The Shaping of a Garden', *House & Garden*, 149 (July 1977), p. 34

an illusion of distance and space.⁵¹ Page specified that the paving surrounding the pool had to be flush with the lawn, but its lining should be coated with a grey-brown slurry-mix to ensure the water was the right colour (Figure 48).⁵² The garden was planted with specimen trees, but the flower beds' planting varied with the seasons. In Figure 49, the spring garden is planted with pink tulips.



Figure 48: Reflecting Pool (2019)

At Leeds Castle, near Maidstone in Kent, Page designed a small garden between late 1979 and 1980. Formerly a kitchen garden, it was surrounded by walls on three sides. Page was able to take advantage of the sunny site and incorporate the borrowed view across the lake to the surrounding countryside (Figures 50).

⁵¹ Page, 'The Shaping of a Garden', p. 34.

⁵² RP/28/3/1/1, Frick Museum, Unpublished notes.



Figure 49: Frick Garden, Late Spring



Figure 50: Culpeper Garden, Borrowed View towards the Lake (2018)

The design comprised a series of formal box-edged beds and a central feature of four Irish yews (Figure 51). Whilst curves softened some of the box-edging, others were inset with box spheres.



Figure 51: Central Feature (2018)

John Brookes (1933-2018) called himself a landscape designer. After he completed a four-year apprenticeship with Nottingham Parks Department, he worked for four years with Crowe and Colvin before setting up his own design practice. Although he was influenced by Tunnard and the Brazilian, architect and garden designer, Roberto Burle Marx (1909-1994), it was an American landscape architect, Thomas Church (1902-1978), who inspired his interest in seeing the garden as a room outside. Brookes believed it was important that a garden was designed to meet his clients' needs.⁵³ Like Gibberd and Jellicoe, he had an interest in modern art, in particular Nicholson and the Dutch artist, Piet Mondrian (1872-1944).

Brookes designed both public and private gardens worldwide and based his designs on his interpretation of gridlines, whereby he connected the vertical lines of the house with the garden's horizontal lines to create a pattern for the garden. From 1980, he lived at Denmans at Fontwell in West Sussex

⁵³ This was the title of one of his books, John Brookes, *The Room Outside: A New Approach to Garden Design* (London, Thames & Hudson, 1969).

where he helped the plantswoman, Joyce Robinson (1903-1996) restore the garden she and her husband created from 1947 (Figure 52).



Figure 52: Denmans, Fontwell

Essentially Brookes designed informal gardens, but his association with Robinson characterises a factor that influenced garden design after the war, the amateur garden designer and gardener, who was knowledgeable about plants. As owning a home with a garden became one of life's ambitions, many new gardeners emerged, including some who had grown fruit and vegetables during the war.⁵⁴ *The Small Garden*, published in 1952 and reprinted numerous times, provided comprehensive advice for these aspiring gardeners.⁵⁵

In 1947, the BBC started a weekly programme, Gardeners' Question Time and during the 1950s as television ownership became widespread, gardening programmes were broadcast, particularly after colour sets were

⁵⁴ The 'Dig for Victory' initiative was introduced by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1941.

⁵⁵ C E Lucas-Phillips, *The Small Garden* (London: William Heinemann, 1952).

introduced in the late 1960s.⁵⁶ Percy Thrower (1913-1988), who had worked in public and private gardens became a household name. Newspapers and magazines covered the interests of all sections of society. These included weekly women's magazines, as well as specialist ones like *Amateur Gardening* and *Popular Gardening*.

Country Life continued to feature articles about country houses and their gardens and although Arthur Hellyer and Christopher Hussey were still writing, new writers emerged including the American garden designer and writer, Lanning Roper (1912-1983), who wrote for them from the late 1950s until his death. Christopher Lloyd (1921-2006), wrote a weekly gardening column for forty years from 1963. Although he wrote about his garden at Great Dixter at Northiam in East Sussex, where Luytens had designed the formal garden, he liked to challenge accepted views. Another long-standing weekly columnist was Tony Venison (1930-2019).

Monthly magazines like *House & Garden* and *Homes & Garden* included articles about garden style. One, known as the 'country house' style, was promoted by John Fowler (1906-1977), who designed a notable garden at his home, the Hunting Lodge at Odiham in Surrey.⁵⁷ The style of these gardens, considered as romantic, was a reinterpretation of late nineteenth and early twentieth century gardens. Elements comprised:

[A] formal layout of walls and edgings, decorated with statues, topiary, gazebos, ornaments, tanks and pools to discipline and contain a seemingly artless exuberance of plant groups. It is a scheme of informal

⁵⁶ Initially called, 'How Does Your Garden Grow'.

⁵⁷ He was part of the interior designers, Colefax & Fowler, first with Sibyl Colefax (1874-1950) and after 1948 with Nancy Lancaster (1897-1994).

and beautiful plantings held within the confines of a skilful architectural garden.⁵⁸

Many of these features were included at Sissinghurst Castle's garden in Kent, which became famous during this period and with Hidcote is considered to be one of the twentieth century's most influential gardens. It was the home of the writer, Vita Sackville-West and her husband, the diplomat and writer, Harold Nicholson (1886-1968). Not only was it open to the public, but Sackville-West wrote a weekly column in *The Observer* from 1947 to 1960. Nicholson is credited with the garden's overall design, which comprises a series of rooms, most of which have a formal structure. Unlike many garden designers in this period, Sackville-West, who knew Jekyll, was content that areas of the garden had their season. The formal Lime Walk, Nicholson's exclusive area, comprised an avenue of pleached limes underplanted with a succession of spring bulbs (Figure 53). The rose garden with its old-fashioned species bloomed in early summer and in July, the White Garden, designed in 1952, was at its best when *Rosa filipes* was in bloom (Figure 54 and Figure 55).

⁵⁸ Ruth Petrie, 'Art And Nature' *The Guardian* (4 August 1962) reproduced in Ruth Petrie (Edited), *Notes From The Garden* (London: Guardian Books, 2000), pp. 127-128.



Figure 53: The Lime Walk. Sissinghurst Castle (1995)



Figure 54: Part of the Rose Garden (1942)



Figure 55: The White Garden (1960)

As Crowe and Colvin showed, women could have successful careers, but for many marriage and children were still the norm. Some, for whom tending the garden formed part of running the home, became enthusiastic gardeners. Rosemary Verey (1918-2001) became interested in garden design after she and her husband, David (1912-1984) moved to Barnsley House, near Cirencester in 1951.⁵⁹ Although they consulted Cane, she designed the garden herself and its formal structure of paths, statues, borders and vistas were typical of the country house style (Figure 56).

⁵⁹ 'Rosemary Verey', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-75986?rskey=udVcr2&result=2>) [Accessed 5 December 2020]. The seventeenth century house was David Verey's family home.



Figure 56: Formal Garden near the House (1974)

Figure 57, the Laburnum arch, was inspired by the gardens at Bodnant in north Wales and shows the attention given to her selection of leaf form and colour. Its underplanting of *Allium giganteum* is followed by the attractive leaves of *Hostas*.



Figure 57: Laburnum Arch, Barnsley House

After her husband died, Verey needed to secure an income to maintain the house and garden. She had already become known as a writer and

lecturer, but started to design gardens, notably the cottage garden for the Prince of Wales at Highgrove in Gloucestershire (Figure 58).



Figure 58: Cottage Garden, Highgrove

Penelope Hobhouse (1929-), another self-taught gardener, has designed gardens in Britain, Europe and the USA. From 1952, when she married Paul Hobhouse (1927-1994), she lived at his family home, Hadspen House in Somerset, where she restored and enlarged its garden. In 1979, she moved to Tintinhull, also in Somerset and owned by the National Trust, and for seventeen years she restored the garden, designed by Phyllis Reiss in the 1930s.

In 1972, the then director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, Roy Strong (1935-) and his wife, the theatre designer, Julia Trevelyan Oman (1930-2003) bought The Laskett in Herefordshire where they created a formal garden in the romantic style, comprising a series of discrete areas which Strong continued to develop after his wife's death (Figure 59). Its formal structure can be seen in Jonathan Myles-Lea's painting, a modern interpretation of the

Kip and Knyff seventeenth-century illustrations of country estates (Figure 60).⁶⁰



Figure 59: A Formal Garden, The Laskett

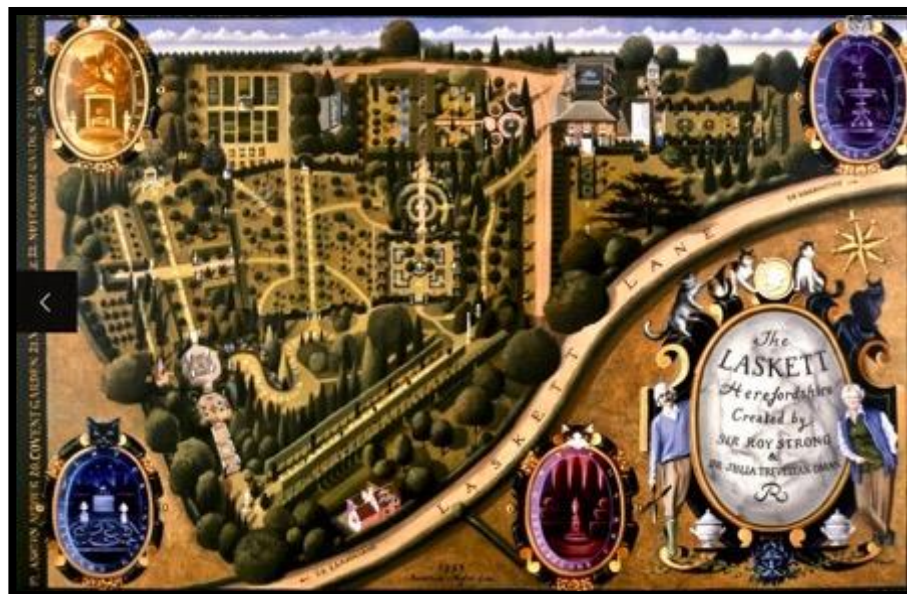


Figure 60: Jonathan Myles-Lea (1959-), *The Laskett* (1995)

⁶⁰ Jan Kip (1652-1722 and Leonard Kip (1650-1722) produced 'aerial' style paintings of English estates.

Innovative Planting

Hobhouse is noted for her varied use of plant combinations and is one of a number of mainly women, who became interested in unusual hardy plants. An early proponent was the flower arranger, Constance Spry (1886-1960), who opened Winkfield Place with the cook, Rosemary Hume (1907-1984) in 1946 to teach flower arranging and cookery to young women from wealthy families.⁶¹ Her arrangements comprised plant material like the furry buds of *Salix discolor*, better known as Pussy Willow, grasses and ornamental leaves, including vegetables. As a result a new generation of flower arrangers started to grow plants for their shape and colour.

Margery Fish (1892-1969) moved to East Lambrook Manor at South Petherton in Somerset with her husband, Walter (1874-1947) in 1938. After his death, she designed the garden (Figure 61). Fish's articles were published regularly in *Amateur Gardening* and *Popular Gardening* in the 1950s and 1960s and she published a number of books including *Cottage Garden Flowers* in 1961.⁶² Her garden was informal and provided the conditions where plants would thrive. Fish, like E A Bowles, looked for plants with unusual forms, but also sought ones that were thought to have disappeared from cultivation, like double, hose-in-hose and Jack-in-the Green primroses. She favoured grey and silver-leafed plants and as the trend to design white or 'moonlit' gardens gained momentum, they were increasingly grown. In the 1960s, Pamela Underwood (1910-1978) opened Ramparts Nursery in Colchester, which specialised in silver foliage plants.⁶³

⁶¹ She opened a florist's shop, Floral Decoration, in 1929 and from 1934 wrote numerous books about flower arrangement.

⁶² Margery Fish, *Cottage Garden Flowers* (London: David & Charles, 1961).

⁶³ Mrs Desmond Underwood, *Grey and Silver Plants* (London: Collins, 1971).



Figure 61): East Lambrook Manor (1964)

Whilst Beth Chatto (1923-2018) started to garden traditionally, her involvement with the Flower Club movement resulted in her keen interest in plants. She was encouraged by Cedric Morris and when she and her husband, Andrew (1909-1999) moved to White Barn at Elmstead Market, near Colchester in 1960, she designed an informal garden around two large ponds (Figure 62). As Essex is one of the driest parts of Britain, she planted a dry garden in the 1970s with plants selected to survive without additional watering (Figure 63). Its success encouraged her to design a gravel garden for drought resistant plants (Figure 64).



Figure 62: White Barn, A Pond under Construction (1960s)



Figure 63: The Dry Garden (1978)

In 1967, Chatto opened a nursery, Unusual Plants. She is noted for being the first exhibitor to display plants in a garden setting at the Chelsea Flower Show in the 1970s. Her planting style remains at the forefront of garden design today.



Figure 64: The Gravel Garden (2017)

It is within this period of considerable change that the artist-gardeners in this Section have been considered. Chapter 12 discusses the gardens Morris designed in Suffolk, whilst Chapter 13 considers Waterfield, who lived for over thirty years at Broxton in Essex, not far from Great Bardfield. He and Codrington, whose garden designs are the subject of Chapter 14 designed gardens for a range of clients, often professional people, who would never have considered having their garden designed in the years before either the First or Second World Wars.

Chapter 12: Unintentionally Influential
Sir Cedric Lockwood Morris (1889-1982)



Cedric Morris, *Monkshood with Tulips and Bluebells*

‘Every picture is an abstraction whether it represents the objects of the external world or not. A portrait, just as a landscape is simply an arrangement of forms, lines and planes. [...] To do this it is essential to give the forms the maximum expression, to discover the lines that can sustain the rhythm and the plastic relations so that they can give the best sensation of mass, volume and textures that correspond to the very things one is trying to represent’.

Cedric Morris¹

This was Cedric Morris’ view in 1924 when he was experimenting with abstraction. Although his style soon reverted to representational painting, his emphasis on the importance of shape, form and texture remained with him, not just in his art, but in his gardening. During the interwar period, Morris’ painting was exhibited widely and acclaimed (Figure 12.1). However after the war, he also found that his work was unfashionable, although towards the end of his life he saw a revival of interest. In recent years, however, his reputation as an artist and a plantsman has gained momentum. Morris’ popularity saw three exhibitions of his work in 2018. Whilst the Garden Museum exhibited his flower paintings, the Philip Mould Gallery in London charted his travels through his landscape paintings. Gainsborough House at Sudbury in Suffolk concentrated on his time in Paris.²

¹ Quoted in Richard Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, Exhibition Catalogue (London: Tate Gallery, 1984), p. 92. Originally published *La Nacion*, 17 August 1924.

² The Garden Museum’s exhibition, ‘Cedric Morris Artist Plantsman’, Philip Mould Ltd, ‘Beyond the Wall’ and Gainsborough House, early pen-and-ink drawings.



Figure 12.1: Cedric Morris (1941)

The Tate Gallery's archive comprises photographs, correspondence and information about his gardens.³ In 2017, Gainsborough House acquired a collection of paintings, drawings and photographs, which had been part of his estate.⁴ Morris would not co-operate in a biography as he considered that only his paintings were relevant, but a number of books and articles have covered his life.⁵ Articles in *Country Life* and *The Plantsman* outlined his

³ Tate Gallery, TGA 8317/11, Cedric Morris, Gardening Papers, TGA 8317/4, Journal, 8317/3/1/4, Notebook, 8317/3/2, Photographs of Cedric Morris' Garden; TGA 8317/11/7/261-332, Photographs of Cedric Morris' Garden, TGA 8317/11/7/348-388 and Photographs of Gardens, TGA 9211/9/6/432-893. Information is also included in the archive of the artist, Joan Warburton (1920-1996), TGA 968 including TGA 986/2/29, Joan Warburton, 'A Painter's Progress, Part of a Life 1920-1987' (Unpublished autobiography).

⁴ Gainsborough House, 'Cedric Morris' (<http://www.gainsborough.org/collection/cedric-morris>). It was donated by Maggi Hambling and Robert Davey.

⁵ Andrew Lambirth, *Cedric Morris: Artist Plantsman* (London: Garden Museum, 2018), Morphet, *Cedric Morris and Cedric Morris (1889-1982): Beyond the Garden Wall* (London: Philip Mould, 2018), Gwynneth Reynolds and Diana Grace (Edited), *Benton End Remembered* (London: Unicorn Press, 2002), Nathaniel Hepburn, Cedric Morris & Christopher Wood: *A Forgotten Friendship* (London: Unicorn Press, 2012), Ben Tufnell (Edited), *Cedric Morris & Lett Haines: Teaching, Art and Life* (London: Unicorn Press, 2003), Hugh St Clair, A

achievements as a gardener and plantsman.⁶ Tony Venison, who knew Morris, wrote about his gardens and the plants he grew.⁷

Early Life

Morris came from a wealthy Welsh family, who had made their fortune from iron and coal. In 1911 his father, Sir George Lockwood Morris (1859-1942) was living on independent means.⁸ His mother, Wilhelmina Cory (1864-1948) came from a gardening family. She was interested in plants and had studied painting.

Morris was educated at Charterhouse School, but when he failed to get an army commission, he went to Canada and on his return went to the Royal College of Music. Although he studied art at the Académie Delécluse in Paris in 1914, he was largely self-taught. In 1918, Morris met the artist, Arthur Lett-Haines (1894-1978), with whom he shared a lifelong partnership (Figure 12.2).

Lesson in Art & Life: The Colourful World of Cedric Morris & Arthur Lett Haines (London: Pimpernel Press, 2019) and Janet Waymark, *Cedric Morris: A Life in Art and Plants* (London: Whitelaw, 2019).

⁶ Christopher Neve & Tony Venison, 'A Painter and his Garden', *Country Life*, 165 (17 May 1979), pp. 1532-1534; Christopher Neve, 'The Outsider: Cedric Morris as Painter and Gardener', *Country Life*, 175 (20 April 1984), pp. 1166-1167; Venison, 'The Artist who Created Flowers', *Country Life*, 194 (23 March 2000), pp. 104-109 and Janet Waymark, 'Cedric Morris 1889-1982'. *The Plantsman*, 15 (June 2016), pp. 126-131.

⁷ Tony Venison, 'Art and Irises: Cedric Morris at Benton End', *Hortus*, 78 (Spring Number 2, 2006), pp. 55-68, Tony Venison 'Hidden in Irises', *Hortus*, 82 Summer 2007 pp. 56- 73, Tony Venison, 'Bulbs at Benton End', *Hortus*, 91 (Autumn 2009), pp. 91-103, Tony Venison, 'The Benton End Experience', *Hortus*, 97 (Spring 2011), pp. 34-47 and Tony Venison, 'Hidden and Forgotten: Cedric Morris's First Garden', *Hortus*, 113 (Spring 2015), pp. 52-69.

⁸ 1911 Census.



Figure 12.2: Cedric Morris, *Arthur Lett-Haines* (1926)

The Artist

In 1919, Alfred Munnings suggested Morris might benefit from spending time in Newlyn in Cornwall where Stanhope Forbes (1857-1947) had established an art school. They remained there until 1920 and Morris started to paint in oils. Figure 12.3, one of his earliest paintings, shows the Cornish landscape around Newlyn, but Morris started to experiment with a more abstract style. Figure 12.4, a still-life, comprises a bird and plant material in a vase against an abstract background.

Morris and Haines travelled extensively in Europe and North Africa in the 1920s, starting in Paris where they embraced the exciting developments in 'modern' art. In 1925, a series of paintings explored lines, shape and texture, but by 1927, Morris' still-life of variegated leaves and a butterfly against an abstract background shows that he was reverting to more representational painting (Figure 12.5 and Figure 12.6).



Figure 12.3: Cedric Morris, *Landscape at Newlyn* (1919)

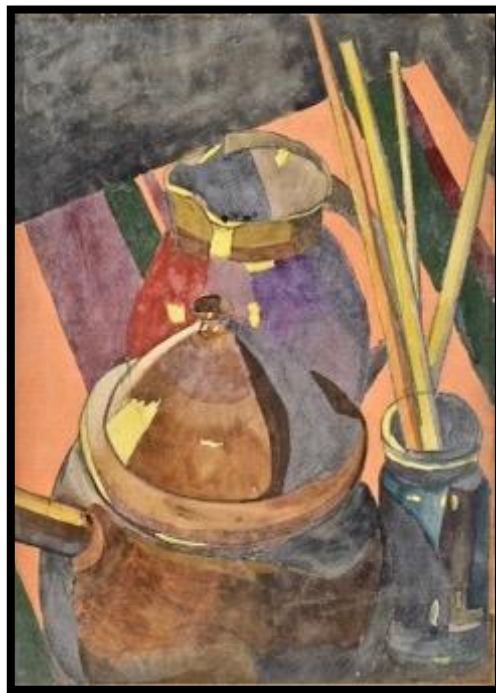


Figure 12.4: Cedric Morris, *Still-Life, Newlyn II* (1920)



Figure 12.5: Cedric Morris, *Experiment in Texture I* (1925)



Figure 12.6: Cedric Morris, *Plant Design* (1927)

Morris did not have a garden until 1929, but told Venison, 'I have gardened all my life, if not in a garden of my own, then in other peoples' including my sister Nancy's'.⁹ His landscape and still-life paintings in the

⁹ Tony Venison, 'Art and Irises: Cedric Morris at Benton End', *Hortus*, 78 (Spring 2006), p. 56.

1920s show that trees, flowers and leaves played an important part of his life and would become intrinsically linked with gardening. Figure 12.7 shows an arrangement of wildflowers, seed heads and berries, whereas Figure 12.8 shows a selection of summer wildflowers including poppies and a large *Opuntia* in the foreground.



Figure 12.7: Cedric Morris, *Italian Wildflowers* (1922) and Figure 12.8: Cedric Morris, *Les Fleurs du Midi* (1923)

Morris visited Tunisia where he depicted an olive grove and a garden with date palm and an olive tree (Figure 12.9 and Figure 12.10). Whenever he could, Morris spent winters abroad where he painted the landscape and collected plants and seeds.

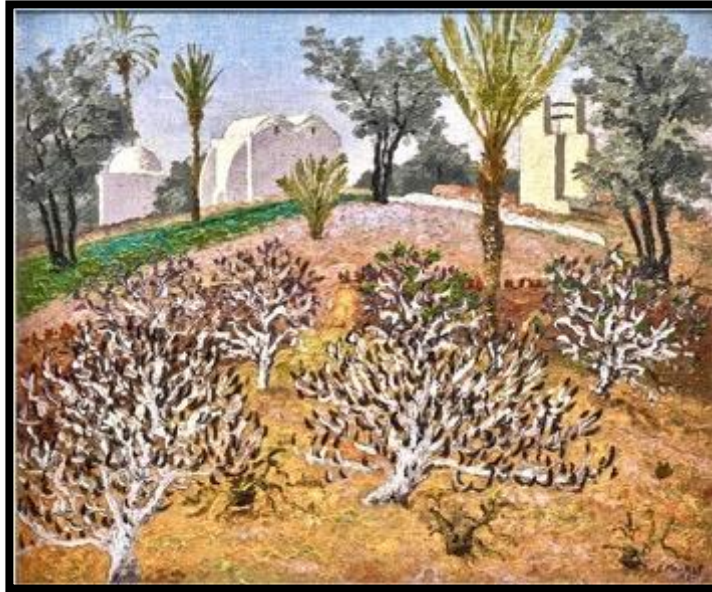


Figure 12.9: Cedric Morris, *Pays de Lotophages, Djerba* (1926)

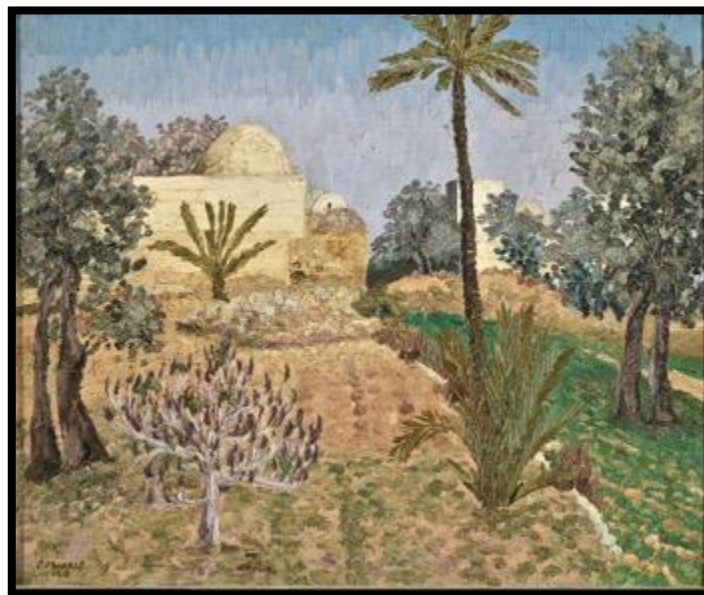


Figure 12.10: Cedric Morris, *Garden by the Lake* (1926)

After they returned to Britain, Morris and Haines lived in London before moving to Suffolk. Morris found London's social life interrupted his painting and they realised that living in the country would cost them less.¹⁰

¹⁰ Tony Venison, 'Hidden and Forgotten: Cedric Morris's First Garden', *Hortus*, 113 (Spring 2015), p. 52.

The Gardener

An article, written in 1942, provides an insight into how Morris viewed the plants he painted and grew.¹¹ He suggested painters could:

Express the blowsy fugitiveness of the poppy as could Jan van Huysum, the slightly sinister quality of fritillarias as Breughel the Elder, or the downright evil of some arums, the elegance, pride and delicacy of irises, the strident quality of delphiniums, the vulgarity of some double peonies, chrysanthemums, roses, and of most dahlias; again to be able to find the individual line of the clematis, of *Iris hoogiana* or *Lobelia fulgens*, to find the form of *Gladiolus primulinus*, of the snake's head fritillaria, or the colours of a magnolia or auricula; to search for the endless textures and sub-textures, to experiment with the use of juxtapositions of lines, forms and colours.¹²

He also had decided views about what should be grown and was disparaging about the plants commercial nurseries promoted:

Those who believe our national taste is evident in our gardens might take a look at most public gardens or go to the Chelsea Flower Show where it would be surprising that such a hideous result can be contrived out of such abundant choice of material that the predominating objectives are commercial and not aesthetic display.¹³

¹¹ Cedric Morris, 'Concerning Flower Painting', *Studio*, LXXV111 (May 1942), pp. 121-132. Bowles' painting, Figure 3.49, was in the style of Van Huysum.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp. 121-122.

¹³ *Ibidem*, 'Concerning Flower Painting', p. 130.

By way of contrast, the article included one of his flower paintings, probably collected from the garden and included blue and lilac bearded irises, the yellow *Glaucium flavum*, a silvery-blue Eryngium and pale purple and white, *Papaver rhoeas* (Figure 12.11).



Figure 12.11: Cedric Morris, *The Serpentine Pot* (1938)

Although Morris designed two gardens to display his plants, he had little interest in famous ones. He visited gardens to see its plants, like Vita Sackville-West's collection of old roses at Sissinghurst.¹⁴ The greatest compliment he paid a garden's plants was 'not a boring thing'.¹⁵

The Pound, Higham

In 1929, Morris and Haines rented The Pound at Higham in Suffolk from the wood engraver, Vivien Doyle Jones (1888-1932), who left Morris the house when she died (Figure 12.12).¹⁶

¹⁴ Conversation with Tony Venison, 17 February 2019.

¹⁵ Reynolds & Grace, *Benton End Remembered*, p. 158.

¹⁶ Venison, 'Hidden and Forgotten', p. 52.



Figure 12.12: The Pound, Higham (1930s)

Figure 12.13 is Morris' depiction of The Pound in 1933.¹⁷ Not long after they moved there, Morris also painted the countryside around his home (Figure 12.14).



Figure 12.13: Cedric Morris, *The Pound, Higham* (1933)

¹⁷ Venison, 'Hidden and Forgotten', p. 67. Morris sold it in 1965 to Lawrence Ogden, who had rented it for several years and lived there until he died.



Figure 12.14: Cedric Morris. *Autumn Landscape, Higham* (1929)

The house and its 8-acre garden were at the end of an unmade track with steep banks on either side. His student and friend, Joan Warburton (1920-1996) described it:

The garden was a paradise – you approached it down a tunnel of trees to come out in sunlight. A black marble torso by John Skeaping graced the forecourt. By a wall was a small greenhouse where Cedric grew cacti and geraniums. Set in the pink walls were abstract heads and faces by Lett. At the back of the house, which faced south, lay the garden that ran down the slope to a pond. In the middle of this stood a smaller torso by John Skeaping, and beyond was a marvellous view of the Stour Valley. The garden was a series of low-hedged beds.¹⁸

Figure 12.15 shows *The Pound*, set in the Suffolk countryside, with hardy plants including ones with silver foliage with the front garden.

¹⁸ Tufnell, *Cedric Morris & Lett Haines: Teaching, Art and Life*, p. 6. Quoted from Warburton's unpublished memoir. When John Skeaping's marriage to Barbara Hepworth (1903-1975) ended, he lived at *The Pound*.



Figure 12.15: Cedric Morris, *The Pound* (1935)

Venison visited The Pound when it was for sale in 2012. He found that although Morris' garden had little hard landscaping, its design was still recognisable. Photographs taken to advertise the property confirm this. Figure 12.16 shows the front of the house and Figure 12.17, part of the garden showing a pond.



Figure 12.16: The Pound (2012)



Figure 12.17: The Pound (2012)

From the kitchen window, ‘the view was south across the garden, past the pond and down the grassy hillside to the bottom of the valley’ (Figure 12.18).¹⁹



Figure 12.18: View from the House (2012)

¹⁹ Venison, ‘Hidden and Forgotten’, p. 54.

The deep pond, which Haines helped to dig, had a Catalpa at one end (Figure 12.19).²⁰ In 1933, A dolphin, mounted on a plinth, was placed in the middle, but no longer survives.²¹ Skeaping's shiny black torso, named Tarquin, remained at the front of the house, but the large plaster torso, seen in Figure 12.20 had disintegrated.²²



Figure 12.19: Catalpa Lawn (2012)



Figure 12.20: John Skeaping's, *Torso* in the Garden (1930s)

²⁰ Venison, 'Hidden and Forgotten', p. 55.

²¹ Ibidem, p. 56.

²² Ibidem, p. 54.

A mixed border was designed along the length of the lawn. Its planting included old roses although Morris may not yet have been collecting them.²³ He also made a series of parallel oblong box-edged borders, which no longer exist, but their outlines were still apparent in 2012 (Figure 12.21).



Figure 12.21: Evidence of Borders

Little information remains about The Pound's planting, but as he became more knowledgeable, he grew those he bred himself or collected from the wild.²⁴ Venison determined some plants from his contemporary paintings and those he grew at Benton End. *Colutea arborescens* was still growing at The Pound in 2012. Figure 12.22, painted in 1931, depicts an arrangement of late summer plants: *Nicotiana sylvestris*, red *Potentilla*, *Verbascum chaixii*, *Tigridia*, *Lobelia cardinalis*, *Catanache*, sunflowers, *Aconitum napellus*, and *Cardocrinum* seed heads.²⁵

²³ Venison, 'Hidden and Forgotten', p. 56.

²⁴ Venison, 'The Benton End Experience', p. 34 gained from discussions with Morris.

²⁵ Venison, 'Hidden and Forgotten', p. 57.



Figure 12.22: Cedric Morris, *Paysage du Jardin No 2* (1931)

Morris had ‘a lifelong penchant for poppies’, whose colours and the texture of their petals he enjoyed.²⁶ Figure 12.23 shows a selection of different coloured *Papaver rhoeas*. Figure 12.24 and Figure 12.25, painted in 1931 and 1935 respectively, show he was already interested in bearded irises. In 1936, he saw seedlings of American-bred irises, grown the New Zealand journalist and horticulturalist, Angus Wilson at Tidcombe Manor in Wiltshire and started to breed them.²⁷

²⁶ Venison, ‘Hidden and Forgotten’, p. 58.

²⁷ Wilson was born in New Zealand in 1898, but no records exist after 1959. He lived with Morris’ former lover, the wealthy ballet dancer and artist, Graham Griswald [Paul] Odo Cross (1898-1963) and they moved to Jamaica after the war.



Figure 12.23: Cedric Morris, *Poppies* (1926)



Figure 12.24: Cedric Morris, *Mottled Irises* (1931)



Figure 12.25: Cedric Morris, *Iris Seedlings No 2* (1935)

In 1937, Haines and Morris founded the East Anglian School of Painting and Drawing in Dedham in Essex. After it was destroyed by fire in July 1939, they found Benton End at Hadleigh in Suffolk, which had a walled garden and had been empty for about fifteen years. They intended to remain at The Pound, but by 1943 their precarious financial situation resulted in it becoming their final home.²⁸

Benton End, Hadleigh

When Morris moved to Benton End, its three-and-a-half-acre garden was overgrown and was cleared by friends and the School's pupils (Figure 12.26). Vegetables were sown to cleanse the ground and also fulfilled the wartime, 'Dig for Victory' initiative (Figure 12.27).

²⁸ Venison, 'Hidden and Forgotten', p. 67. Odo Cross bought Benton End for them for £1,000, today £56,400. It took three years to complete the move from the Pound. Even when he sold it in 1965, he retained the right to build a studio.

Not long after they moved there, Morris painted the countryside around Hadleigh, probably from the garden (Figure 12.28 and Figure 12.29).



Figure 12.26: Benton End (1950s)



Figure 12.27: Cedric Morris, *Wartime Garden* (1944)



Figure 12.28: Cedric Morris, *Landscape (Hadleigh)* (1940s)



Figure 12.29: Benton End and the Suffolk Countryside (1940s)

Although Venison thought ‘The Pound remained closer to Cedric’s heart’, this was the garden that became famous’²⁹ Like The Pound, its design was informal with little hard landscaping apart from the walled garden. Beth Chatto visited Benton End for the first time around 1952 and continued to do so until his death. She was overwhelmed by its plants, many of which she had

²⁹ Lambirth, *Cedric Morris*, p. 28.

never seen. She noted that Morris never discussed the garden design with her and thought ‘Cedric’s garden was an extension of his palette. It was not a planned painting but a collection of colours, shapes and textures emerging and fading with the seasons’.³⁰ As she wrote:

[The garden] was not conventionally designed with carefully selected trees and shrubs creating a background for leading the eye to some premeditated feature or walk. There were surprisingly few trees and shrubs, mostly ancient fruit trees. A tall cherry wreathed in ropes of wisteria made the principal feature. [.....] Other features were pillars of old shrub roses and several clumps of sword-leafed *Yucca gloriosa*.³¹

In Morphet’s opinion, the garden’s heyday was between 1952 and 1957 when Chatto’s friend, the botanist, Nigel Scott (1912-1957) tended the garden, which was enlarged and ‘though still structured, it became less formal with planting in drifts’.³² An area of rectangular box-edged beds disappeared (Figure 12.30).³³ After Scott died, Morris’ preference for informality became more marked:

Cedric’s basic belief, which grew stronger with age, that in a garden (by contrast, significantly, with a painting) design was of minor importance so long as the plants were happy. [.....] Nevertheless visual relationships, and the setting of plants individually, remained important.³⁴

³⁰ Beth Chatto, ‘A Painter’s Palette’ in Erica Hunningher (Edited), *Gardens of Inspiration* (London: BBC Books, 2001), p. 64.

³¹ Chatto, ‘A Painter’s Palette’, pp. 61-62.

³² Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p. 69.

³³ Beth Chatto, ‘A Sage in Suffolk’, *The Guardian* (14 September 2001), p. 16.

³⁴ Morphet, *Cedric Morris*, p. 69.

Figure 12.31 shows its informal borders with Hadleigh church in the distance, whilst Figure 12.32 emphasises that the garden was part of the School, where Morris and the students painted.



Figure 12.30: Box-edged Beds, Benton End (1950s)



Figure 12.31: Borders, Benton End



Figure 12.32: Border and an Easel

Although Morris is noted for his still-life pictures of flowers and vegetables he grew, he also painted the garden. Figure 12.33 shows a pool merging into the landscape.



Figure 12.33: Cedric Morris, *Pool at Benton End* (1947)

In the foreground of Figure 12.34, painted in early autumn, a large clump of red hot pokers, *Kniphofia*, a silver-blue leafed plants, possibly young cabbage leaves, and some white autumn crocus, *Colchicum* can be seen under

the pear tree. Figure 12.35 shows summer flowers including Morris' favourite, *Papaver rhoeas*, behind what is probably a red cabbage plant.



Figure 12.34: Cedric Morris, *Landscape from Under a Pear Tree* (1967) and Figure 12.35: *Back Garden, Benton End* (1970)

As Figure 12.34 and Figure 12.35 show, Morris was not only interested in bulbs and flowers. He had become interested in herbs and unusual vegetables when he illustrated *Herbs, Salads and Seasonings*, which had seventeen silver-point drawings (Figure 12.36).³⁵ At Benton End, he grew a wide range of then uncommon varieties, which provided the School's pupils with exotic meals, cooked by Haines.³⁶

³⁵ Marcel X Boulestin & Jason Hill (Illustrated Cedric Morris), *Herbs, Salads and Seasonings* (London: William Heinemann, 1930). There were sixteen black-and-white illustrations and a signed edition of 30 copies with silver point hand-coloured drawings.

³⁶ He ordered seeds from Kathleen Hunter, who had a plant nursery in Truro, Cornwall in the 1950s. Haines was friend of the cookery writer, Elizabeth David (1913-1992), who often visited Benton End.



Figure 12.36: Cedric Morris, *Chicory* (1930)

Chatto recalled her introduction to them:

One day, Cedric produced a typewritten, dog-eared catalogue issued by Kathleen Hunter who, immediately after the war, was importing unusual vegetable seeds from the United States. Soon I was growing purple-podded runner beans, a round cucumber called 'Crystal Apple', a little round green squash called avocadella marrow, and something called asparagus pea, *Lotus tetragonolobus*, worth growing for its name, but needing to be picked when tiny to avoid a mouthful of strings.³⁷

Figure 12.37 shows Morris' vegetable garden, whereas Figure 12.38 is a still-life of courgettes and tomatoes with potted plants behind.

³⁷ Chatto, 'A Sage in Suffolk', p. 16.



Figure 12.37: Cedric Morris, *Wartime Garden* (1944)



Figure 14.38: Cedric Morris, *Still-Life of Courgettes and Tomatoes* (1957)

Plant Collecting and Plant Breeding

Morris' approach to plant collecting and plant breeding differed from that of E A Bowles and Lawrence Johnston. Unlike them, there nothing to suggest he sponsored or participated in plant expeditions. He collected his plants and

seeds during his winter travels in Europe and further afield.³⁸ His particular interest was bulbs, including fritillaries and species iris and his notebooks describe the wide range of seeds and plants he collected. Whereas Bowles enjoyed gold, silver and variegated leafed plants, Morris, like Gertrude Jekyll, refined the colour and form of his favourite species, for example *Papaver rhoeas* 'Cedric Morris'. Like Margery Fish, abandoned gardens were a source of interesting plants.

His notebooks show not only the extent of his plant collecting abroad, but his enjoyment of British wildflowers.³⁹ He noted that *Fritillaria meleagris* 'has one of its homes in Suffolk near Framlingham. I have not seen it elsewhere in the county, but at this particular spot it grows by the million, both the usual form & to a lesser extent the white.'⁴⁰ He pointed out that although it grew on an ancient flood plain, 'it is quite happy in the driest situation in my garden'.⁴¹ Morris also described his form of *Fritillaria pyrenaica*:

The form I have is the giant form about 2' & with a very large flower. It varies from the usual dark plum with golden green inside to a golden plum outside heavily speckled. Sometimes it has double flowers & sometimes 2 on a stem. These are not so good looking as the single ones (Figure 12.39 and Figure 12.40).⁴²

³⁸ Mould, *Cedric Morris (1889-1982): Beyond the Wall*, pp. 8-11 provides a chronology of Morris' travels.

³⁹ TGA/8317/3/1/4, Morris, 'Journal', and TGA/8317/3/2, Morris, 'Notebook'.

⁴⁰ TGA/8317/4/1/2, 'Notebook', p. 2. This is the largest meadow in Suffolk.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² Ibidem, p. 3. It was last listed in the *RHS Plant Finder* in 2012.

7. *Pyrenanica* grows ^{up} & increases
 abundantly in any situation. This
 I find one of the most beautiful.
 The form I have is the giant form
 about 2' & with a very large flower
 It varies from the usual dark
 plum with ~~some~~ ^{some} ~~been~~ ^{been} inside &
 a ~~some~~ ^{some} ~~been~~ ^{been} outside heavily
 speckled. Sometimes it has double
 flowers & sometime 2 on a stem.
 These are not so good looking as the
 single ones. The bulb is large
 & has the unusual habit of pushing
 itself out of the ground if it
 gets too crowded.

Figure 12.39: Cedric Morris' 'Notebook' (1950s)



Figure 12.40: *Fritillaria pyrenaica* 'Cedric Morris'

Venison discussed the origins of many plants attributed to Morris' plant breeding including *Papaver rhoeas*.⁴³ Reverend William Wilks (1843-1923) 'patiently and skilfully brought to such perfection of orange and salmon from his original wild find of a white-edged Field Poppy' and Morris, too, became attracted to breeding unusual shades.⁴⁴ His ambition was to create them in the colours of mother-of-pearl shells, particularly lavender-grey.⁴⁵ However, it is unclear whether Morris' strain derived from Wilks' Shirley poppies or from plants he found in a garden at Manningtree in Essex (Figure 12.41).⁴⁶



Figure 12.41: *Papaver rhoeas* 'Cedric Morris'

In recognition of his achievements, Morris received the Royal Horticultural Society's Award of Garden Merit for several of his plant introductions including *Papaver orientalis* 'Cedric Morris', *Zantedeschia*

⁴³ Venison, 'The Benton End Experience', pp. 34-47.

⁴⁴ E A Bowles, *My Garden in Summer* (Edinburgh: E C Jack, 1914), p. 128.

⁴⁵ Venison, 'The Benton End Experience', p. 43.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

aethiopica ‘Green Goddess’, *Elaeagnus angustifolia* ‘Quicksilver’ and *Clematis alpina* ‘Frances Rivis’.

Yet he is probably best known for breeding tall bearded irises, which are seen growing at Benton End in Figure 12.42. Considering his interest in species plants, his passionate interest in these flamboyant flowers, which he pursued for almost thirty years, appears paradoxical. One reason he explained was that ‘Later in life he shared with his maternal grandmother a penchant for speckled flowers, striped and blotched ones which he would recall when looking at Paisley pinks, old *picotee* carnations, gold-laced polyanthus’.⁴⁷ Neither Nash, who thought them too ‘grandiose’ and preferred species iris, nor John Aldridge admired his Benton irises.⁴⁸



Figure 12.42: Irises, Benton End

⁴⁷ Venison, ‘Irises and Art’, p. 56. His maternal grandmother, Elizabeth Cory (1831-1880).

⁴⁸ Venison, ‘The Benton End Experience’, p. 36 and Janet Dyson, *Artists of Great Bardfield* (Great Bardfield, Between The Lines Press, 2008, Edition 2017), p. 18.

The heyday of Morris' iris breeding was between 1942 and 1952 when he was recognised as 'a pioneer in hand pollinating'.⁴⁹ By 1943, irises filled most of the lower garden and *Iris Seedlings* 'illustrates his achievement in raising not only *plicatas*, but a galaxy of other types including the cognoscenti terms self, bicolour, blends and amoenas' (Figure 12.43).⁵⁰ He outlined his experience of growing irises in 1943.⁵¹



Figure 12.43: Cedric Morris, *Iris Seedlings* (1943)

By 1945, Morris was growing over a thousand seedlings a year. He was noted for his *plicata* irises, which have stippled, dotted or stitched edges on a white or yellow ground. In 1947, Wallace & Co's catalogue listed twenty-one of his cultivars, including 'Edward of Windsor', the first pink bearded iris,

⁴⁹ Venison, 'Irises and Art', p. 58.

⁵⁰ Ibidem, p. 59.

⁵¹ Cedric Morris, 'Concerning Plicatas', *Iris Yearbook* (Royal Horticultural Society, 1943), pp. 43-45.

which the catalogue described as ‘the most remarkable colour-break yet evolved in this country’ (Figure 12.44).⁵²



Figure 12.44: Iris ‘Edward of Windsor’

In 1949, the British Iris Society recognised Morris’ achievements and awarded him the Foster Memorial Plaque, ‘a special personal award [.....] to those who contribute to the advance of the genus *Iris*’.⁵³ Then in 1955, he received the British Iris Society’s Dykes Medal, ‘the supreme award given annually to the most outstanding cultivar in the Dykes Trial’. This was for ‘Benton Cordelia’, a pale lilac-pink iris with an orange beard (Figure 12.45). As Morris approached seventy, he could no longer compete with the numerous seedlings being produced in the USA and stopped breeding them. His final iris, registered in 1960, was ‘Benton Clasmont’, a large pink-peach

⁵² Wallace & Co, *Iris Catalogue*, 1947, p. 2. It was priced at £5 5s od, today, nearly £240.

⁵³ <http://www.britishirissociety.org.uk> [Accessed 28 January 2019].

iris, 42-inches high. In total, he registered ninety irises, of which twenty-five are still available today.⁵⁴



Figure 12.45: Iris ‘Benton Cordelia’

Morris’ notebooks provide details about his iris breeding and show that he experimented not only to get the precise colour he wanted, but the shape of each part of the iris also had to be perfect:

[Iris] G P Baker passes on weak stems and whatever crossed with – throws whites, blues and creams – bad shapes and ‘[Iris] Madame Louis Aureau produces a high percentage of plicatas; dark and heavily sanded – not very tall, but large and lots of disgusting dark bronzes.⁵⁵

His garden not only attracted keen gardeners, it also inspired some of the School’s pupils. The artist-gardener, John Morley (1942-), breeds and sells

⁵⁴ Sarah Cook, formerly head gardener at Sissinghurst Castle, collects his irises and exhibited them at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2015.

⁵⁵ TGA 8317/4/1/5, Cedric Morris, Iris Notes, Undated, p. 3.

snowdrops at North Green nurseries at Framlingham in Suffolk. He recalled that:

Cedric's garden gave me an amazing buzz. I hadn't seen a garden quite like it before. It was like an Alpine meadow, a magical place for a plantsman, full of source material. Cedric was not particularly interested in arranging plants, only placing them where they grew happily, yet the effect was always aesthetically pleasing.⁵⁶

Whilst undoubtedly Morris was a dedicated plantsman and may have considered the design of some noted gardens contrived, this does not signify his own gardens were not designed. As both his gardens looked out on open countryside, he had no need to create a view. Yet the gardens were the setting for his plants and Morley's allusion to an alpine meadow suggests that Morris' style of garden design was a forerunner of today's perennial planting, where apparently effortless planting in drifts of colour resemble an abstract painting.⁵⁷ Morris concluded that his approach was 'being a painter by trade, my judgment and bias is rather that of a painter.'⁵⁸

Whilst it is significant that Morris appointed his friend and plantswoman Jenny Robinson (1916-2010), as the executor of his plant collection, he knew that Benton End would be sold after his death and thus, he ensured his plants survived. His garden no longer exists, but it has recently been purchased by the Benton End House & Garden Trust, who intend to restore it and create a centre for art and horticulture (Figure 12.46).

⁵⁶ Reynolds, *Benton End Remembered*, pp. 114-115.

⁵⁷ She invited interested gardeners including the British Iris Society's members to take his plants.

⁵⁸ Cedric Morris, 'Concerning Plicatas', *Iris Yearbook* (Royal Horticultural Society, 1943), p. 43.



Figure 12.46: Benton End (2017)

Although Morris' paintings were unfashionable until the latter part of his life, for him a painting's importance was whether or not it satisfied him. This conviction was one he also applied to his garden and plant breeding. First and foremost, they had to please him. Essentially, he was self-determined and single-minded and some may say selfish, as he followed his own path regardless of others.⁵⁹ So unintentionally, Benton End became a garden to visit. When he held open days when the irises were in bloom, people flocked to see them. This interest in his garden and plants now has been sustained and his paintings are now sought to the extent that *Foxgloves*, sold for £240,000 in October 2019 (Figure 12.47).

⁵⁹ Jean Cornell, 'Janet Waymark, Cedric Morris: *A Life in Art and Plants* and Hugh St Clair, *The Colourful World of Cedric Morris and Arthur Lett-Haines*, *Garden History*, 48 [1] (Summer 2020), p. 114.



Figure 12.47: Cedric Morris, *Foxgloves* (1932)

Chapter 13: An Accidental Garden Designer

Derick Humphrey Waterfield (1908-1971)



Humphrey Waterfield, *View from First Floor Balcony, Clos du Peyronnet*

‘As a painter, I believe in one picture at a time in a frame – which is where evergreens come in – but effects have to be worked gradually’.

Humphrey Waterfield¹

Humphrey Waterfield’s statement in 1953 outlined his approach to designing his garden at Hill Pasture in Essex. It was reinforced when the diplomat, A R Walmsley (1912-2000) noted that when he took visitors round his garden, he would ‘tell them exactly where to stand to see the best picture.’² As well as Hill Pasture, Waterfield redesigned the garden at Clos du Peyronnet in Menton and designed gardens for private clients. This chapter considers whether these designs were innovative or a reinterpretation of past ideas (Figure 13.1).

An assessment of Waterfield’s designs was the subject of a dissertation in 2015, but since then new information has been discovered.³ After his nephew, Giles Waterfield’s (1949-2016) death, his papers were donated to the Paul Mellon Centre.⁴ Information about Clos du Peyronnet is now in the Alpes-Maritime archive in Nice and privately in Menton.⁵ Most of Waterfield’s paintings are also in private collections, but *Rose Celestial*, where roses growing at Hill Pasture are seen in front of the adjoining countryside is

¹ Humphrey Waterfield, ‘Hill Piece’, *House & Garden*, 7 (March 1952), p. 76. This was discovered recently as the garden’s name was incorrect.

² A R Walmsley in Hannah Dissinger Demaray (Edited), *English Gardens in Gardens and Culture* (Beirut, Lebanon: The Eastern Press, 1969), p. 114.

³ Jean Cornell, ‘A Dual Life: An Assessment of the Gardens of Humphrey Waterfield, 1908-71’ (Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Buckingham, 2015).

⁴ This includes Tennant’s letters to Waterfield during the Second World War.

⁵ It is probable Waterfield’s archive in Menton will be given to the Paul Mellon Centre.

exhibited in Lady Brunner's former bedroom at Grey's Court, near Henley-on-Thames, where Waterfield also designed part of the garden (Figure 13.2).⁶



Figure 13.1: Humphrey Waterfield, *Self-Portrait* and Figure 13.2: Humphrey Waterfield, *Rose Celestial* (1969)

Early Life

Waterfield was born in August 1908 at Hagley Hall at Rugeley in Staffordshire, the family home of his mother, Barbara Georgie Gardner (1878-1940).⁷ He enjoyed childhood summers in its extensive grounds overlooking Cannock Chase, but after his aunt, Margaret Elizabeth Gardner (1855-1926) died, his parents gave up the lease and it was sold and mostly demolished (Figure 13.3 and Figure 13.4).⁸

⁶ Now owned by the National Trust.

⁷ It was leased by her father, John Pritt Gardner (1844-1911), a solicitor and land agent for the Earl of Anglesey, who owned it. An only child, who from five-years old was brought up by her father and Margaret Gardner, as her mother eloped with the local doctor.

⁸ Paul Mellon Centre, London, Derick Humphrey Waterfield, 'The Trees' (Unpublished typed manuscript, 1942). He wrote three unpublished essays describing his love for Hagley Hall. Derick Humphrey Waterfield, 'Essay on



Figure 13.3: Hagley Hall and Garden



Figure 13.4: Rising Brook, Hagley Hall

Waterfield's father, Frederick Waterfield (1879-1940) also came from a wealthy family.⁹ Not long before he was born, his father resigned from the

Hagley Hall' (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, March 1929), Private Collection, Menton, France; Derick Humphrey Waterfield, 'Essay on Hagley Hall' (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, 1930, Private Collection, Menton, France), Derick Humphrey Waterfield, 'Essay on Hagley Hall' (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, 1940, Private collection, Menton, France).

⁹ His paternal grandfather, Sir Henry Waterfield (1837-1913) had a distinguished career in the Indian Civil Service.

Indian Civil Service as its climate exacerbated his asthma.¹⁰ In common with many people who returned from India, his parents found the climate at Hagley Hall and then, Marazion in Cornwall too cold.¹¹ After John Pritt Gardner died in 1911, they bought Clos du Peyronnet in Menton, which was the place to spend the winter. particularly if you had chest problems (Figure 13.5).¹²



Figure 13.5: Clos du Peyronnet (1912)

Figure 13.6 shows Waterfield with his father and brother, Anthony (1909-1983), in the garden at Clos du Peyronnet.

¹⁰ Conversation, 20 November 2013 with Giles Waterfield (1948-2016), who suggested she did not like India.

¹¹ 1911 Census.

¹² Barbara Waterfield inherited £83,500, today £9.9 million.



Figure 13.6: Humphrey Waterfield, his Brother and Father, Clos du Peyronnet

After Eton, Waterfield went to Christ Church College, Oxford to study history and whilst he was there decided to become an artist.¹³ From 1930 to 1932, he studied at Ruskin School of Art with Albert Rutherston (1881-1953) and met John Nash and Kenneth Rowntree. Later in 1931, he went to the Slade School.

The Artist

It is not known why Waterfield chose to pursue art. With a congratulatory first, he could have had an academic career or joined the diplomatic service, as his parents intended. Figure 13.7 shows Waterfield with his diploma painting, inspired by a scene in Regent's Park in London.

¹³ His parents agreed to fund him for a year if he was awarded a first.

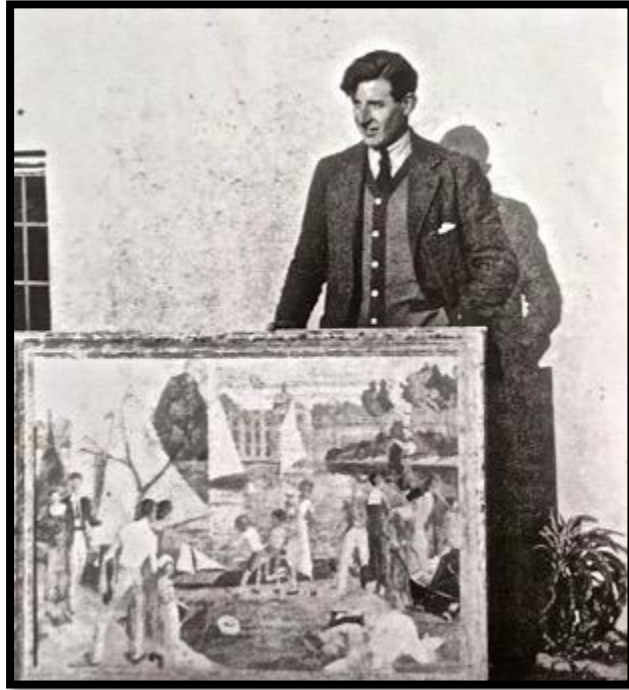


Figure 13.7: Humphrey Waterfield with His Diploma Painting (1933)

When Waterfield exhibited his paintings before the war, they were well received. In 1936, the art critic, Frank Rutter's (1876-1937) review of an exhibition by young Oxford artists at the Cooling Gallery noted, 'one of the most distinguished is Humphrey Waterfield whose Essex Landscape, *Pinchbrook Farm*, has a peculiarly rich sense of colour and an intense vitality. His skill and taste in composition is also shown in the *Portrait* he exhibits.'¹⁴ In December 1937, Waterfield illustrated Humbert Wolfe's translation of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, a limited edition of thirty copies (Figure 13.8).¹⁵ It also appears he was asked to illustrate, Sacheverell Sitwell's (1897-1988) poetry in the mid-1930s, but the poem, 'Pavlownia', was published in a collection of

¹⁴ Frank Rutter, 'A New Group of Oxford Painters', *Financial Times* (January 1936). The exhibition was held at the Cooling Galleries from 3 January to 3 February 1936. Waterfield was its Vice-President and Rowntree, Secretary.

¹⁵ Edmond Rostand, *Cyrano De Bergerac* (Translated Humbert Wolfe and illustrated Humphrey Waterfield (London: Corvinus Press, December 1937, Limited edition).

poetry jointly with his sister, Edith (1887-1964).¹⁶ Figure 13.9 shows his proposed illustration, which is predominantly blue as the poems first lines read, ‘This tree, blue cloud, blue tower, blue cage; in fortress of the flower-age.’ It also recalls the tree’s trumpet-shaped lilac-blue flowers.¹⁷



Figure 13.8: Humphrey Waterfield: *Proposed Illustration, Cyrano de Bergerac* (1937) and Figure 13.9: Humphrey Waterfield, *Paulownia* (1930s)

During the war, as a conscientious objector, Waterfield served in the Friends Ambulance Unit and during 1941 and 1942, worked as a driver and orderly in military hospitals in Syria, Lebanon, Libya and Algeria. Although Figure 13.10 is dated, it has no title, but is probably a desert village in Syria. Figure 13.11 was painted in 1942 at Tobruk, the Libyan port near the Egyptian border, where the British suffered heavy casualties in June that year.

¹⁶ Edith & Sacheverell Sitwell, *Collected Poetry* (London: Duckworth, 1936). It was published originally in the *Cyder Feast* (London: Duckworth, 1927), pp. 16-17.
¹⁷ Sitwell, *Cyder Feast*, p. 16.



Figure 13.10: Humphrey Waterfield, *Syrian Landscape* (19 June 1941)



Figure 13.11: Humphrey Waterfield, *Tobruk* (1942)

Waterfield's early promise did not continue after the war and like many of the artists included in this study, he found his paintings, mostly landscapes and still-life, were no longer fashionable. Although he was aware of the developments in modern art, he acknowledged, 'I suppose no modern painter would hesitate for a moment to pick what he wants, but the shadow of

Matilda's aunt clings to me', and he followed his own instincts.¹⁸ He admired 'their reduction to absolute essentials', but '[One] must put up with oneself as one is'.¹⁹ Waterfield also realised that 'after thirty, one loses the egotistical belief in one's boundless possibilities. It no longer seems so possible nor so important to be great.'²⁰ Nevertheless, he was never reconciled to the lack of recognition for his painting and as his lifelong companion, Agnes [Nancy] Dalrymple Tennant (1897-2003), emphasised:

It is important to remember that what was the overriding factor in his life was painting. This was his *raison d'être*, and the fact that he achieved no recognition of his work was a major disappointment.'²¹

However, she also considered Waterfield's reaction was unhelpful, 'in part this was his own fault as he was too sensitive to criticism, too unwilling to show his pictures to what he felt was an unsympathetic public'.²²

After 1945, Waterfield had one solo exhibition at the Adams Gallery in 1962, which, although successful commercially, received little attention from art critics.²³ Yet his paintings show Hill Pasture's development and as Diana

¹⁸ King's College, Cambridge, Charleston Papers, CHA/1/661[5]), Derick Humphrey Waterfield, Letter to Clive Bell' (1 February 1963), p. 1. Waterfield was referring to the artist, Bernard Buffet (1928-1999). Hilaire Belloc wrote 'Matilda's Aunt' in 1907 and unlike Matilda, who told lies, she was a stickler for the truth. (<https://allpoetry.com/Matilda-Who-told-Lies,-and-was-Burned-to-Death>) [Accessed 10 July 2019].

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 2.

²⁰ Derick Humphrey Waterfield, 'Middle East War Diary' (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, 1942-1943, Private collection, Menton), p. 42.

²¹ Paul Mellon Centre, Agnes Dalrymple Tennant, 'Derrick Humphrey Waterfield' (Unpublished typed manuscript, 1976), p. 22.

²² Tennant, 'Derick Humphrey Waterfield', p. 22. Like his distant relative, Aubrey Waterfield, he stopped exhibiting.

²³ Organised with the help of the art critic, Clive Bell (1881-1964), who stayed several winters at Clos du Peyronnet. The exhibition of fifty-two paintings was held from 22 November to 14 December 1962.

Baskervyle-Glegg commented, ‘Today his paintings provide a commentary on his gardens with their soft colours merging into each other, their architectural features and the ever-present views of the countryside beyond.’²⁴

As well as Hill Pasture, he painted the garden at Clos du Peyronnet where he spent the winter months. Unfortunately, many of these paintings are undated, but Figure 13.12 shows the view from the first floor balcony looking down the drive towards the Mediterranean. Figure 13.13 is a view looking west to Menton with a vase of irises in the foreground.



Figure 13.12: Humphrey Waterfield, *The Drive, Clos du Peyronnet* and Figure 13.13: Humphrey Waterfield, *Vase of Irises*

Waterfield also painted the plants in Clos du Peyronnet’s garden and Figure 13.14 shows a clump of pampas grass in front of the mountains behind the garden, whereas Figure 13.15 depicts a group of sub-tropical plants including agaves growing on *scala nobile*.

²⁴ Cornell, ‘A Dual Life’, pp. 40-104 and Diana Baskervyle-Glegg, ‘Plants in the Picture’, *Country Life*, 185 (23 January 1992), p. 38.



Figure 13.14: Humphrey Waterfield, *Pampas Grass, Clos du Peyronnet*



Figure 13.15: Humphrey Waterfield, *Group of Sub-Tropical Plants*

Waterfield painted still-life at Hill Pasture and Clos du Peyronnet. Figure 13.16 shows an ornament and selection of fruit and Figure 13.17. a coffee pot and jug. Both feature the same ornament, which is still at Clos du Peyronnet (Figure 13.18). The vase in the still-life of apples, which was

Painted at Hill Pasture as the yew allée can be seen from the window is the same as the one in Figure 13.13.



Figure 13.16: Humphrey Waterfield, *Ornament and Fruit* (1958)



Figure 13.17: Humphrey Waterfield, *Still-Life with Ornament, Coffee Pot and Jug*



Figure 13.18: Ornamental Pot, Clos du Peyronnet (2019) and Figure 13.19: Humphrey Waterfield, *Still-Life with Apples*

As Waterfield's paintings show, his gardens and their plants formed an integral part of his life. His mother enjoyed her garden and he had a small plot of his own in Menton when he was a child, This and the garden at Hagley Hall were described in an unpublished short story.²⁵

The Gardener

After Waterfield left Oxford, he moved to London and lived near Tavistock Square. He visited Essex for the first time in 1933, as he was intrigued by an invitation to visit a village named Ugley, where he met Tennant. Theirs was a platonic, but loving relationship and although they never lived together, they saw each other most days and shared mutual interests in art, music, books and gardening.²⁶

²⁵ Waterfield, 'The Trees'.

²⁶ Paul Mellon Centre, Agnes Dalrymple Tennant, 'The Story of a Friendship' (Unpublished typed manuscript, November 1973). She was unmarried and 37, he was 25.

In 1935, he decided to move to Essex, as he wanted to have a home with a studio.²⁷ He bought a three-acre site in Broxton, part of which had been the local rubbish dump. The modernist architect, Ernö Goldfinger (1902-1987) designed single-storey studio and Waterfield moved into Hill Pasture in April 1938 (Figure 13.20).²⁸



Figure 13.20: Hill Pasture (1938)

Before the house was built, Waterfield started to make a small garden.²⁹ However, this soon expanded and became an important part of his life. As he wrote in 1940. 'It is not I think that I am afraid to die. It is mostly that I desire to go on painting, to watch the trees at Broxton grow to something like maturity, to see the cherries and magnolias bloom.'³⁰ Tennant's letters updated him during the war and in 1941, he noted:

²⁷ Money from a family trust provided a small income, as did an allowance from his parents.

²⁸ It cost £1,800, today £122,000. In 1956, a second storey was added.

²⁹ Paul Mellon Centre, Agnes Dalrymple Tennant, 'History of the Garden' (Unpublished typed manuscript, November 1993), p. 2.

³⁰ Derick Humphrey Waterfield, 'War Diary' (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, May 1940, Private Collection, France).

It seems to have been an exciting year in the garden. *Iris stylosa*, the white form flowered for the first time – after about 3 years. One of the magnolias, apparently *Thompsonii*, also seems to have done well, also the trilliums. [.....] The white fritillaries seem to be spreading. On balance, an encouraging report.’³¹

This shows that Waterfield was already planting more unusual forms and his preference for white flowers. In 1946, he described Hill Pasture, ‘mine is a wild garden backed by the wood’.³² Details about its development are set out in his garden notebook, which includes some information about the garden before the war. However from 1946, until 1971, its coverage is comprehensive, comprising drawings of its discrete areas as they were created or altered and their planting.³³ After the neglected areas were restored, he extended the garden until the early 1960s. In 1956, Tennant purchased The Ashgrove next door and its garden was incorporated into his design.³⁴

The garden’s outline before the war is seen in Figure 13.21. It shows the avenue of yews, known as Chatsworth, whose width was determined by the house’s large south window. Figure 13.22 is Waterfield’s depiction of Chatsworth near the house and shows that its areas were defined by yew or *Thuja* hedging.

³¹ Waterfield, ‘Middle East War Diaries’, 21 July 1941, p. 14.

³² National Trust, Grey’s Court, Waterfield, Letter to Lady Brunner’, 7 October 1946), p. 1.

³³ Derick Humphrey Waterfield, ‘Garden Notebook, 1946-1971’ (Unpublished handwritten manuscript with drawings, Private Collection, Essex).

³⁴ One tenant was the garden historian, Edward Fawcett (1920-2013). In 1993, Hill Pasture and The Ashgrove’s gardens were separated.



Figure 13.21: Early Garden (1938)



Figure 13.22: Humphrey Waterfield, *Hill Pasture*

In late 1951, a series of small box-edged beds were made on one side of Chatsworth, which Waterfield continued to refine by extending it to the top of the garden (Figure 13.23 and Figure 13.24). Finally, the eye was drawn up its full length when the swain was placed at the top, which he painted (Figure 13.25 and Figure 13.26).



Figure 13.23: Chatsworth (1952) and Figure 13.24: Chatsworth (1968)



Figure 13.25: The Swain (1969) and Figure 13.26: Humphrey Waterfield, *The Swain*

In 1952, six years after he resumed gardening, Waterfield wrote the only published record about his design philosophy, with the strapline

‘Humphrey Waterfield plans a traditional garden for a modern house’.³⁵ He explained he had tried ‘to evolve a design that would blend with the simple and definitive outline of the house’, and set three main principles:

First to allow the undulations of the ground to suggest the plan.

Secondly, to try to give each part of the garden its own character. [.....]

To the right of the house was a spinney, which I edged with wild cherries, keeping the more sophisticated Japanese ones near the house, and the wilder paler ones by the wood. Thirdly I was careful not to compete with nature.³⁶

One way Waterfield gave each area of the garden its unique character was to enhance its design with ornamental features, which often came from architectural scrapyards. In late 1951, the Temple of Love was built with an adjacent small circular pool and behind it, a balustrade from a London bank was placed and led the eye to the countryside beyond (Figure 13.28). In contrast to the ornate temple, the pool had a simple mown edge (Figure 13.28). Its design was a nostalgic and romantic reinterpretation of a Georgian temple shown in Figure 13.29.

³⁵ Waterfield, ‘Hill Piece’, pp. 74-77.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 75.

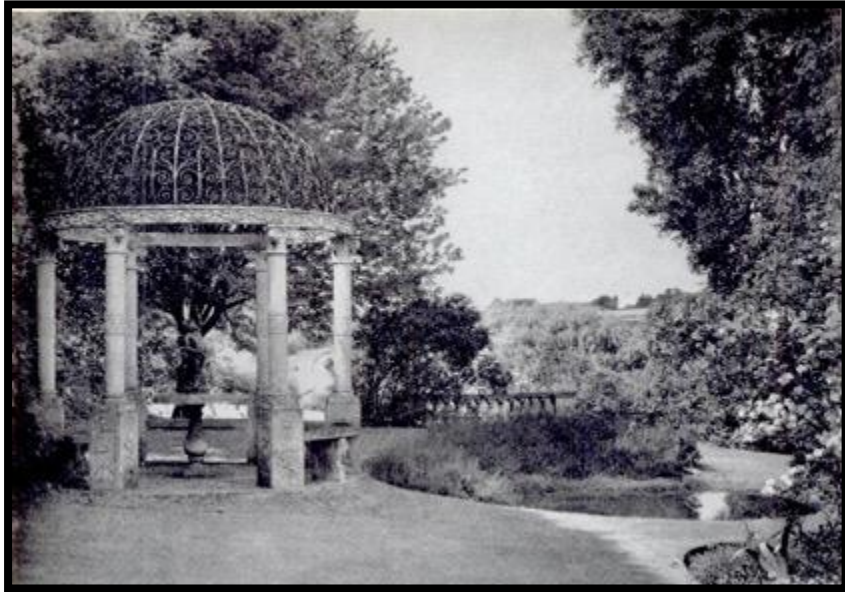


Figure 13.27: Temple of Love (1961)



Figure 13.28: Circular Pool



Figure 13.29: Georgian Temple (1926)

In 1951, Waterfield also designed a rectangular, concrete-lined pool, edged with paving and filled by an underground spring. Like Cedric Morris, Waterfield liked tall bearded irises, which were planted at one end to reflect in the pool (Figure 13.30).



Figure 13.30: Iris Garden (1961)

colours', the standards and fall having different shades.³⁷ Colours ranged from dark purple to lavender and blue with one pink seedling that possibly came from Morris. However, Waterfield grew none of Morris' *plicata* irises, preferring ones bred in the 1920s by the noted iris breeders, William R Dykes (1877-1925) and Arthur J Bliss (1862-1931). Figure 13.33 is Waterfield's impression of the garden.



Figure 13.33: Humphrey Waterfield, *Iris Garden*

Waterfield realised his ambition to have a swimming pool in 1957, although its surround, a semi-circular frame of iron arches, was erected in 1955. It was covered with over thirty varieties of pink and white old-fashioned climbing roses and clematis. It gave the effect that 'up these lines and curlicues of black iron, as if on a pergola, hung clematis, now in bloom, the

³⁷ Appendix 3, List of Irises, which were identified from the Garden Association's iris database (<http://www.historicirises.org>) and The American Iris Society (<http://www.irises.org>).

huge flowers silhouetted against the distant view of fields and sky' (Figure 13.34).³⁸



Figure 13.34: Swimming Pool (1950s)

His last project was a moongate, built on the boundary with The Ashgrove. Set in a brick wall, it was one of the few examples of hard landscaping in the garden. One route from The Ashgrove to Hill Pasture was across stepping stones, set in a circular pond, and through the moongate (Figure 13.35).

Not only did Waterfield use large features to create the effect he desired, he amassed a large collection of mostly antique urns, pots and lead tanks in assorted sizes that enhanced the garden. Figure 13.36 shows a large octagonal lead tank near the garden's boundary, with a statue on a plinth to one side. Figure 13.37, a large urn placed on a wall was depicted in a faded pencil sketch (Figure 13.38).

³⁸ The arches came from a conservatory at Colne Park near Brentwood, Essex which was demolished in 1955. Caccia, 'On Humphrey Waterfield', p. 4.

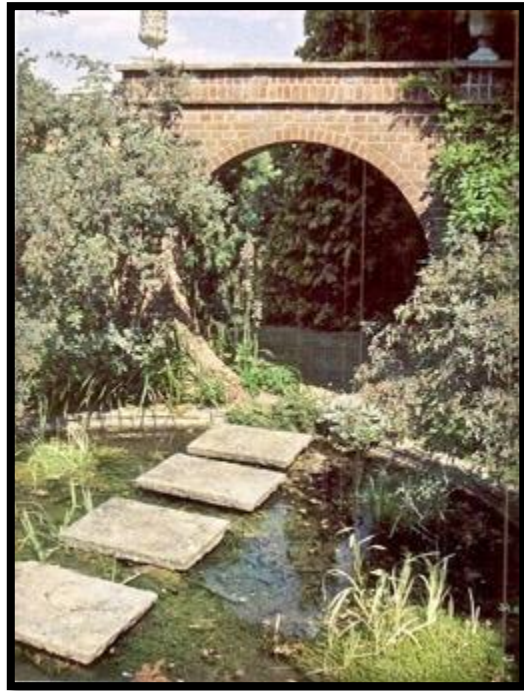


Figure 13.35: The Moongate (1996)



Figure 13.36: Octagonal Lead Tank (1960s)



Figure 13.37: Decorative Urn (1960s)



Figure 13.38: Humphrey Waterfield, *Sketch of a Decorative Urn*

Although the majority of Waterfield's ornaments were antique, he purchased two urns sculpted by Gustav Natorp (1839-1906), a pupil of Auguste Rodin (1840-1917) (Figure 13.39).³⁹

³⁹ These are now at Clos du Peyronnet.



Figure 13.39: Gustav Natorp, *Bronze Urn* (2019)

As Waterfield noted in his article, the garden's planting should not compete with nature. Not only colour, but the shape of its flowers and leaves was chosen carefully. He admired three-cornered flowers, particularly the white, *Tradescantia andersonia* 'Osprey' and trilliums.⁴⁰ In common with many of the artist-gardeners in this study, Waterfield preferred species plants, 'I always choose flowers that are as "unimproved" as possible; I hate the tendency to make everything double.'⁴¹ He explained that one of the boundaries was planted to be in unison with the hedgerow:

The garden's east boundary was a tall neglected hedge, mostly thorn, and elder and predominantly white and green, so I kept all the positive colours for the garden proper, and on the outside perimeter allowed

⁴⁰ Waterfield, 'Hill Piece', p.75.

⁴¹ Ibidem, p. 76.

only whites, pale yellows, and pinks no stronger than those of apple blossom.⁴²

His opinion never changed and in 1968, he referred to his planting as ‘moonlight coloured May’ from Shelley’s poem, ‘The Question’.⁴³ The garden was a succession of predominantly white blossom throughout the year: from flowering cherries and magnolias in spring, to lilacs, *Philadelphus* and old-fashioned roses (Figure 13.40).



Figure 13.40: Magnolias, Hill Pasture (1960s)

White flowers and silver-leaved plants were a feature of his white or moonlit garden that was:

Enclosed in high dark - almost black - hedges. This was devoted to plants with silver foliage or white flowers, including the night-blooming

⁴² Waterfield, ‘Hill Piece’, p. 75.

⁴³ C Gordon Glover, ‘Theme and Variation in an Artist’s Garden’, *Ideal Home* (13 May 1968), p. 50.

nicotiana. The atmosphere even in daylight was mysterious, and I could see that at night, and particularly by moonlight, it would be transformed into a place quite unearthly.⁴⁴

Lanning Roper described the garden when its design was almost complete:

It has been conceived by an artist, who has thought in terms of pictorial landscape compositions with architectural and sculptured features and has executed them with careful attention to form, colour and textures. There is a curious blending of Riviera and English gardening revealing an understanding and affection for the elements of both.⁴⁵

In 1946, whilst Waterfield was restoring Hill Pasture, he returned to his parent's home in Menton, which had been occupied by Italian soldiers and then by refugees. He converted it into six flats and redesigned the garden.⁴⁶

Clos du Peyronnet

Clos du Peyronnet also has a garden book, which is less comprehensive than Hill Pasture's.⁴⁷ Like Lawrence Johnston's Serre de la Madone, it is a terraced garden that formerly produced olives and lemons (Figure 13.41). Waterfield knew Johnston and admired his gardens and he also enjoyed sub-tropical

⁴⁴ Caccia, 'On Humphrey Waterfield', p. 3. She visited Hill Pasture in 1967. His preference was always for muted colours and 'hot' colours were confined to one of Chatsworth's beds.

⁴⁵ Lanning Roper, 'Garden of an Artist Plantsman', *Country Life*, 129 (25 May 1961), p. 1202.

⁴⁶ His brother wanted to accept an offer of £1,000 pounds, today £42,000. Perhaps remembering what happened to Hagley Hall, Waterfield decided against it.

⁴⁷ Derick Humphrey Waterfield, 'Garden Book 1946-1971' (Unpublished handwritten manuscript, Menton, France). William Waterfield has kept detailed records since 1976.

plants.⁴⁸ The garden is situated mainly behind the house on its east side. Unlike Serre de la Madone, Waterfield redesigned and enhanced an existing garden, where new features were created and incorporated into the original design.

The pergola and the pool beneath it were part of the original garden, but Waterfield created a new staircase, *scale nobile* to its left (Figure 13.41 and Figure 13.42). As Tennant noted, ‘Up went the lovely stone arches over terraces of white irises, down went the *scala nobile* with its wide stone steps edged with agaves’.⁴⁹



Figure 13.41: Pergola and Pool (2019)

⁴⁸ William Waterfield, Handwritten note, June 1999. A conversation with Tennant's nephew, Dr James Birley (1928-2013), recalled Waterfield taking him to Serre de la Madone in the 1950s.

⁴⁹ Tennant, 'Derick Humphrey Waterfield', p. 25.



Figure 13.42: *Scala Nobile* looking down to the Pergola (2019)

Figure 13.43 shows a series of nine cypress arches, placed two metres apart on one of the terraces that run parallel to the sea, which give the impression ‘that they are cut neat and narrow, but slightly wayward in shape so that they resemble nothing so much as distorted green smoke rings’.⁵⁰

Figure 13.44 is Waterfield’s depiction with magnolias in bloom and the mountains behind.

Waterfield’s most notable innovation was a water staircase, which he said was inspired after a visit to the eighteenth-century Palace of Caserta, near Naples in 1935 (Figure 13.45).⁵¹ A series of five separate pools, built on each terrace, run down from the top of the garden to beneath the pergola. When viewed from the top of the garden, the vista gives the illusion that the pools reach the sea, whereas it is half a mile away (Figure 13.46).

⁵⁰ Charles Quest-Ritson, *The Englishman Abroad* (London: Viking, 1992), p. 58.

⁵¹ Paul Mellon Centre, Agnes Dalrymple Tennant, ‘Memoirs of Nancy Tennant, Volume 2, 1918-39’ (Unpublished typed manuscript, June 1988), p. 26.



Figure 13.43: Cypress Allée (1974) and Figure 13.44: Humphrey Waterfield, *Cypress Allée*



Figure 13.45: Water Staircase, Palace of Caserta (2015)

Waterfield enhanced his designs with ornamental features including an unusual ‘mock’ wall at the end of the long pool that formed the backdrop to the view of the mountains. Figure 13.47, painted from the first floor before it was built, looks over the pergola to the mountains. Figure 13.48 depicts the

proposed design, whilst the completed wall is seen in Figure 13.49. Figure 13.50 shows it today.



Figure 13.46: Water Staircase (2019)



Figure 13.47: Humphrey Waterfield, *View to the Mountains* (1949)



Figure 13.48: Humphrey Waterfield, *Sketch for the 'Mock' Wall*

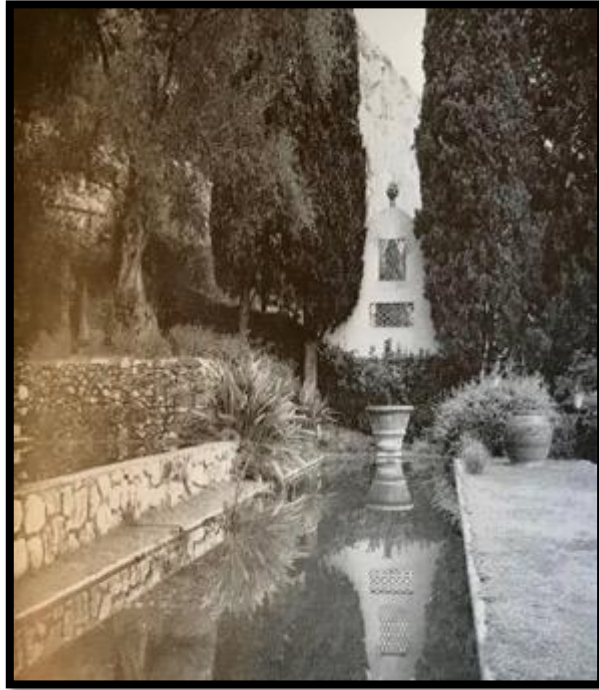


Figure 13.49: Long Pool Looking at the Mountains (1968)



Figure 13.50: Long Pool (2016)

After Johnston died, Waterfield acquired some of his Anduz jars and a seat that had *Il Duce* inscribed on it during the Italian occupation (Figure 13.51 and Figure 13.52).



Figure 13.51: Anduz Jar (2016)



Figure 13.52: Seat from Serre de la Madone

Waterfield spent much of his life designing Hill Pasture and Clos du Peyronnet, which involved considerable expense. He lived on inherited income and help from Tennant.⁵² As she wrote in her memoirs, ‘I am very conscious of how sybaritic and egotistical my life will seem. [.....] Of course

⁵² Conversation with Giles Waterfield, 8 August 2016 ascertained he had refused the opportunity to teach art at Eton.

Humphrey and I were incredibly lucky to be so free, and we knew it. The garden and painting were his life and nothing was allowed to interfere with this'.⁵³

Whereas his own gardens were important, Waterfield considered that garden design was 'rather beneath him, that he was a painter and should be painting, that painting was a noble art and garden designing rather third rate'.⁵⁴ His involvement in garden design started accidentally, when one of Tennant's friends asked for advice.

Commissions

No comprehensive list of Waterfield's commissions has survived as his files were destroyed after his death. What is known has been collected from articles and memoirs. Some gardens may have been designed by him, but have not been documented. Those that remain are mainly historic country houses, which have featured in *Country Life* and other magazines.⁵⁵

Waterfield worked on two gardens near Broxton. He advised his friend and neighbour, William Palmer Mellen (1902-1953), who lived at Church Hall Farm,⁵⁶ and Lady Sonia Binney (1913-1985) at Horham Hall, Thaxted where '[He] had particularly impressed upon her the necessity to use plants to create specific effects; not to associate them indiscriminately; nor even to select them

⁵³ Paul Mellon Centre, Agnes Dalrymple Tennant, 'Memoirs of Nancy Tennant Volume 3, 1939-1971' (Unpublished typed manuscript, 1990), p. 33. When it was suggested that he might become involved with landscaping the University of Essex, he declined, as the bureaucracy involved would encroach on his time.⁵³

⁵⁴ William Waterfield quoted in Vivian Russell, *Gardens of the Riviera* (Boston: Little, Brown & Company, 1993), p. 54. The author discussed this with him between 2014 and 2019.

⁵⁵ A postman told someone that her garden was designed by an artist, who had a house in France and died in a car crash.

⁵⁶ The Elizabethan house is now Whitehall Hotel and the garden has disappeared.

simply because they were the kinds one liked, but to make certain that each had a positive role to play in a scheme already existing in the imagination.’⁵⁷

Grey’s Court, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

Waterfield’s introduction to garden design started by chance in 1946 when Lady Elizabeth Brunner (1904-2003), who knew Tennant through the Women’s Institute wanted advice about flowering cherries.⁵⁸ Like Waterfield, Lady Brunner enjoyed white flowers. Waterfield provided a list of what he called ‘sophisticated’ and ‘unsophisticated’ varieties.⁵⁹ ‘Sophisticated’ varieties were usually double and pink, ‘unsophisticated’, white. He advised her:

If I were you I would first decide whether I wanted sophisticates or non-sophisticates. Having decided that, whether I minded mixing my colours; whether if I decided not to mix them, I prefer the white or the pink – do you plant the six loveliest trees or the six that look best together? Either is defensible and a question of taste.⁶⁰

The cherry tree walk is rectangular and surrounded on two sides by the walls of the dower house and tithe barn. Seven white standard weeping trees including *Prunus* ‘Tai Haku’ were planted on either side of a narrow brick and stone angled path (Figure 13.53). A walk through this ‘moonlight’ garden in

⁵⁷ Arthur G L Hellyer, ‘A Pastel-Coloured Amphitheatre’, *Country Life*, 160 (1 July 1976), p. 28.

⁵⁸ Both played a national role during the Second World War.

⁵⁹ National Trust, Grey’s Court, Waterfield, Letter to Lady Brunner, 7 October 1946, p. 1. He may not have charged for his work.

⁶⁰ Waterfield, Letter to Lady Brunner, p. 2.

the early evening would have been magical with its white canopy and falling blossom, which was not swept up, providing a carpet.⁶¹



Figure 13.53: Cherry Walk, Grey's Court (1989)

In 1953, Waterfield designed the garden for Tennant's thatched cottage, The Chace in Ugley. It comprised nine beds linked by lawns and evergreen hedges and planted with his favourite flowering trees and shrubs, old fashioned roses, irises and grey and silver plants, but blended into the adjoining countryside. Figure 13.54 shows irises growing in one of the beds.

⁶¹ After the original trees got honey fungus, the National Trust planted the same varieties, but half-standards, which are set further from the path. The intended effect cannot now be replicated.



Figure 13.54: Irises, The Chace (1989)

Tennant also knew Lady De Ramsay through her involvement with the Women's Institute.

Abbots Ripton Hall, Near Huntingdon

Waterfield met Lord and Lady De Ramsay when they visited Hill Pasture and they asked him to redesign parts of their garden.⁶² Although he worked there and visited monthly from 1958 until 1971, no records have survived.⁶³

Tennant described it as 'a perfect assignment, lovely surroundings with a river and huge trees, delightful company and money no object. His circle of old fashioned roses backed by grey buckthorn and the long grey border are now quite famous' (Figure 13.55).⁶⁴

⁶² Lady De Ramsay was another friend from the Women's Institute.

⁶³ Email correspondence in October and November 2014 established that the records had been destroyed without the present Lord De Ramsay's knowledge.

⁶⁴ Tennant, 'Memoirs of Nancy Tennant', Volume 3, p. 31.



Figure 13.55: Grey and Silver Border (1974)

Waterfield designed two gardens in Europe, the first near Clos du Peyronnet. At Val Rahmeh, the home of the botanist and gardener Maybud Sherwood Campbell (1903-1982), Waterfield designed a fountain, seemingly based on a re-interpretation of an Italian Renaissance idea: a stream of water falls down a high wall into a pool, surrounded by lush vegetation (Figure 13.56 and Figure 13.57).



Figure 13.56: The Fountain's High Wall, Val Rahmeh (2014)



Figure 13.57: Fountain Basin (2014)

Villa Colfranco, Lucca

In 1970, one of Waterfield's last commissions was Villa Colfranco, a late seventeenth-century house, near Lucca where he helped Angela Caccia (1935-2018) restore the garden (Figure 13.58).⁶⁵



Figure 13.58: Villa Colfranco, Lucca (1960s)

⁶⁵ Caccia and her husband, David (1935-83), bought it in 1969. Waterfield's involvement has never been published. Caccia, then Angela Read Lloyd, a South African writer, was traced from information in Tennant's memoirs, and she gave the author photographs and a commentary on her friendship with Waterfield.

The villa was occupied by the Germans during the war and the garden had become overgrown. When Waterfield went to Villa Colfranco, he would have enjoyed the opportunity to advise on the restoration of an historic garden, as he had visited many renowned Italian gardens and was a founder member of the Garden History Society. As the garden was submerged under brambles, Caccia was unaware of its design, but when Signor Lazzarini, who had lived there before the war, gave her an old photograph, she saw that:

There was only one large cypress tree on the west side of the house, no limes, no deodars, the pergolas were in perfect shape, and covered with vines in full leaf. [.....] In the foreground of the photograph was the greatest surprise - another complete pergola, covered with vines, that seemed to cover a hollow in the terrace (Figure 13.59 and 13.60).⁶⁶



Figure 13.59: Upper Pergola (1960s)

⁶⁶ Caccia, 'On Humphrey Waterfield', p. 32. A *vasca* is a bowl or basin.



Figure 13.60: Cleared Vine Pergola (1960s)

She was impressed by Waterfield's knowledge of the extensive lower pergola, which reminded him of the fifteenth century Castello del Trebbio in Tuscany:

Humphrey was most struck by the pergola that ran the length of the battlement wall. It was, he said, exactly like the castle of Trebbio – in other words in harmony with the Medici. I did not know the castle or any of the other historic gardens of Italy – it was Humphrey who inspired me to begin what became a lifetime's exploration (Figure 13.61 and Figure 13.62).⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Caccia, 'On Humphrey Waterfield', p. 38.



Figure 13.61: Pergola, Castello del Trebbio



Figure 13.62: Vine Pergola, Villa Colfranco (2003)

Caccia discovered that below the loggia amidst the undergrowth, there was the remains of a formal *aiole* and a pond, which was restored as a lily pond with a fountain.⁶⁸ Figure 13.63 shows the outline of the garden and Figure 13.64 shows it in 2003 when the formal beds, which initially was planted with white flowers to match the waterlilies, were pink.

⁶⁸ Caccia, 'On Humphrey Waterfield', p. 23.



Figure 13.63: *Aiole* (1960s)



Figure 13.64: *Aiole* (2003)

Caccia thought swimming pools ‘usually made an ugly intrusion into the landscape’, but when her husband suggested one, she decided to use her memory of Waterfield’s pool at Hill Pasture ‘to make something unusual’ and the rectangular pool was surrounded by roses (Figure 13.65).⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Caccia, ‘On Humphrey Waterfield’, p. 23.



Figure 13.65: Swimming Pool (1970)

During Waterfield's first visit in September 1970, they surveyed the estate and 'Humphrey made a number of suggestions – removing the deodars on the upper terrace, which had grown too large and obscured the view, planting old-fashioned roses including his favourite, 'Blanche Double de Coubert', and white waterlilies for the *vasca* (Figure 13.66).⁷⁰



Figure 13.66: *Vasca* (1960s)

⁷⁰ Caccia, 'On Humphrey Waterfield', p. 38. His fees for the two-day visit were 15 guineas.

They discussed ways to add structure to the garden. Waterfield suggested a division on the north side of the villa with a hedge of roses to delineate the start of the lower terrace.⁷¹ However, Caccia did not like his suggestion that ‘I should follow the idea of the Villa Gamberaia outside Florence, where hedges were grown high as walls, and arches cut in them to show the view (Figure 7.49). From photographs, she thought it was too formal, but later acknowledged that ‘[she] had no idea at the time how magnificent it really was, nor the dramatic views that those arches revealed,’ However, she still thought her decision was the right one, ‘It was perhaps too grand, too much a designer’s vision, whereas I loved the rustic simplicity of the orchard, and he had not seen it in the spring, when the ground was knee-deep in wildflowers. I wanted to keep it like that.’⁷² Waterfield visited again in March and again in September 1971, when the Caccias’ marriage had ended and the project was not completed.

Waterfield was killed in a car accident in October 1971 and it not clear whether he intended to keep Hill Pasture, but it seems probable that he would have retired to Clos du Peyronnet, which has now been awarded historic status.⁷³ Eventually, the garden will transfer to the *Conservatoire du Littoral*, as William Waterfield is the last member of the family. It still features regularly in magazines worldwide, as well as in *Country Life*.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Caccia, ‘On Humphrey Waterfield’, p. 38.

⁷² Ibidem, pp. 39-40.

⁷³ Ibidem, p. 204. Hill Pasture was offered to the National Trust, but withdrawn after they requested a large endowment. The Trust’s papers suggest it was unlikely to have been accepted.

⁷⁴ Charles Quest-Ritson, ‘Pergolas, Pillars and Pencil Cypresses’, *Country Life*, 214 (22 January 2020), pp. 75-80.

Waterfield's view of himself was that he was not a gardener, who could carry out specialist gardening tasks, like grafting onto root stocks, 'What I believe I have got is the eye for a plant and the ability and flair of where to put it'.⁷⁵ His paintings show that his gardens blended seamlessly into the surrounding countryside. His philosophy reflected the influence of Gertrude Jekyll, whose books he read during the war and Johnston. He reinterpreted the past to create a series of formal, but romantic settings, using evergreen hedging and abundant, but carefully chosen planting. Both Hill Pasture and Clos du Peyronnet were designed to be seen along a prescribed route, as Waterfield wanted visitors to see them as he intended.⁷⁶

Waterfield was well known during his lifetime and five years after his death, Hugh Johnson, writing as 'Tradescant' in *The Garden*, described him as. 'The most sensitive and original designer of gardens of the last generation.'⁷⁷ However, he would probably have preferred the title of the Paul Mellon Centre's exhibition in 2019, 'Painter, Gardener, Scholar'.

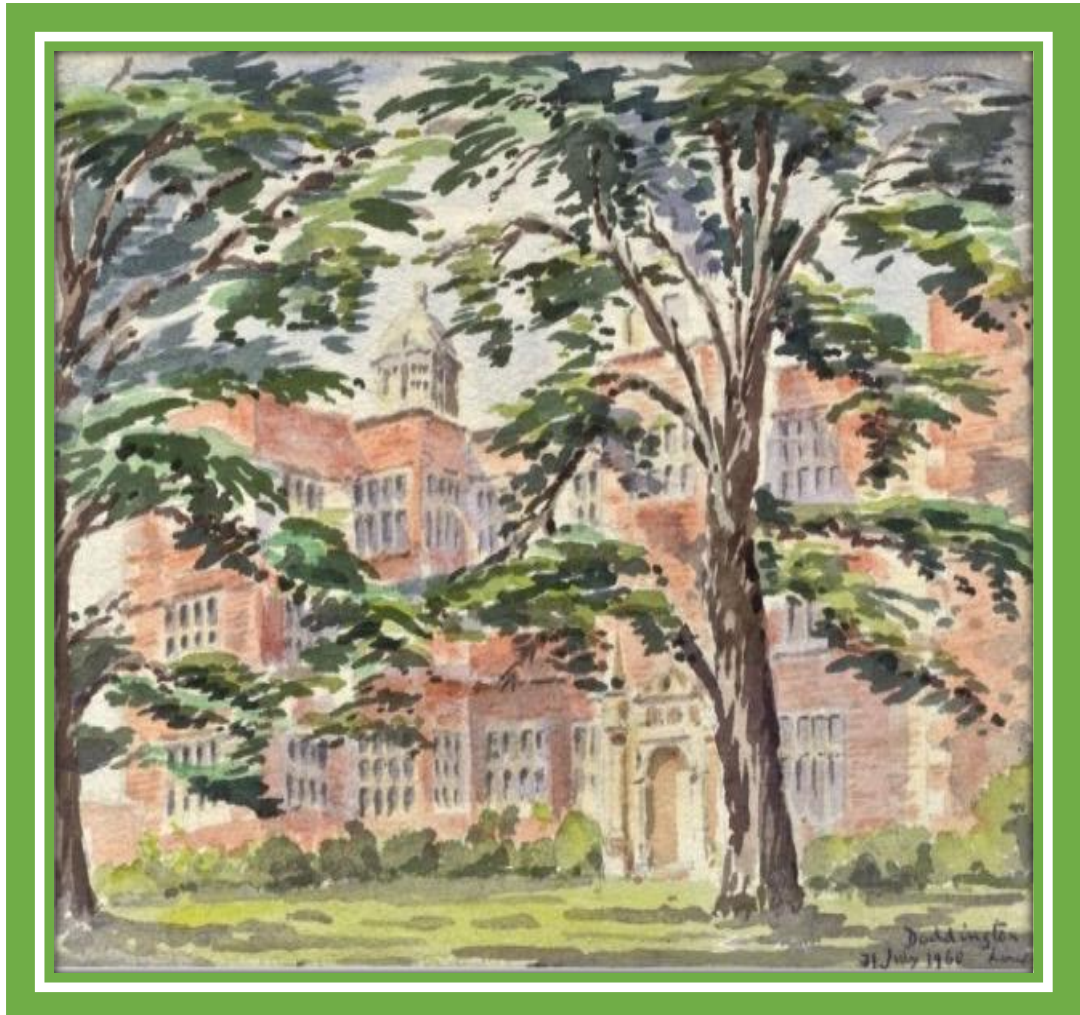
⁷⁵ Quoted in Glover, 'Themes and Variation in an Artist's Garden', p. 50.

⁷⁶ Visitors to Clos du Peyronnet still follow his route.

⁷⁷ Hugh Johnson, 'A Painter's Garden', *The Garden*, 101 (November 1976), p. 446.

Chapter 14: Ahead of His Time?

**Lieutenant Colonel John Alfred Codrington
(1898-1901)**



John Codrington, *Doddington Hall, Lincolnshire* (1960)

My garden is not a normal, civilised garden. It is a mad, wild jungle. It bears about the same relationship to an ordinary garden as an unkempt gypsy would to a bowler-hatted, pin-striped gent.

John Codrington¹

This was John Codrington's assessment of his garden at Stone Cottage at Oakham, which he had designed and extended from 1950 (Figure 14.1). He was well-known as a garden designer from 1960 until his death in 1991 and his chapter considers whether his design philosophy was restricted to his own gardens and whether his commissions demonstrated a similar or different approach.



Figure 14.1: John Codrington (1939)

Perhaps surprisingly as Codrington is referred to frequently in books and articles about twentieth-century gardens, there has been no definitive study of his designs. One reason could be that as Codrington's executors had the discretion to distribute, publish or destroy his personal papers as they

¹ John Codrington, 'My Garden: My Wilderness', *The Garden*, 113 (November 1988), p. 508.

chose, information was destroyed.² His will made no reference to his garden papers and it has not been possible to ascertain what happened to them.³ Thus, details about his life and his garden designs has been pieced together from websites and secondary literature, which revealed primary and other secondary sources.⁴

Between 1945 and 1947, Codrington wrote an unpublished autobiography that covered his early life and army career until he resigned his commission in 1936.⁵ His role in the Secret Intelligence Service before and during the war is not included, nor his relationship with his wife, the artist-gardener, Primrose Harley (1908-78).⁶ It does, however, give details of his numerous overseas attachments and some details of the plants he encountered, usually growing in the wild. His army notebook also includes some, probably speculative, garden designs.⁷ During the 1950s, Codrington surveyed Britain to document the location of its rare wildflowers, and his botanical maps were donated to the Natural History Museum.⁸ Most of his garden commissions were for private clients and have not been described before, but sufficient information has been collected to enable an assessment of his work.⁹

² John Codrington, Probate Document and Will, Brighton Registry, 19 August 1991.

³ Conversation with his niece, Poppet Codrington, 31 March 2019.

⁴ Brent Elliott, suggested Lawrence Banks, RHS Vice-President, who knew Codrington might help. A discussion on 15 February 2017 led to a search of the International Dendrology Society's Yearbooks.

⁵ Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London, GB 0099 KCLMA, John Codrington, 'Gathering Moss' (Unpublished typed manuscript, 1945-47'. Two versions, original and edited).

⁶ He worked for MI6 and MI9.

⁷ Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London, GB 0099 KCLMA, John Codrington, 'Notebook', 1917-36).

⁸ Natural History Museum, BRN 89557 and BRN 92908, John Codrington, 'Two Unpublished Notebooks and Botanical Maps of British Wild Flora, c 1950-1970).

⁹ Appendix 4 gives details of 47 gardens associated with him.

Early Life

Codrington was born in London in October 1898 and his childhood was spent in Eaton Square in London and Preston Hall at Oakham in Rutland where parts of the garden were designed by Alfred Parsons between 1900 and 1902.¹⁰ After he spent time at Wellington House School at Westgate-on-Sea in Kent, he went to Harrow School. As the youngest of three brothers, he knew he had to earn a living and joined his father, Sir Alfred Edward Codrington's (1854-1946) regiment, the Coldstream Guards. His memoirs show he had little interest or aptitude for customary military duties, in particular as the army's system of 'them and us' conflicted with his beliefs:

Class-consciousness was never overly deeply ingrained in my make-up, and the public school theory that boys of a certain class and upbringing were naturally born and trained to rule the so-called 'lower classes' scarcely existed as far as I was concerned.¹¹

However, Codrington realised that if he learned modern languages, he would be posted overseas and foreign travel remained a passion throughout his life. After the war, he took a shortened degree course in modern languages at Christ Church College, Oxford and most of his army career was spent abroad, in particular in the Middle East and India.¹²

¹⁰ It is not known whether Codrington was aware of this.

¹¹ Liddell Hart Archive, John Codrington, 'Gathering Moss' (Edited version), p. 22.

¹² He learned Greek, Italian and probably Arabic in addition to French and German.

The Artist

Codrington's approach to art was entirely different to the other artist-gardeners in this study. He gained his knowledge by studying painters in 'chronological order'.¹³ At Oxford, he met Anthony Eden (1897-1977), who 'broadened my outlook considerably' and introduced him to Cézanne and modern painting.¹⁴ He also became aware of the debate about representation and abstraction and when the soldier and politician, Roger Fleetwood-Hesketh (1902-87) taught him about architecture, this founded the basis of his ideas in later life.¹⁵

Although Codrington painted from childhood, he had no formal training and never exhibited his work.¹⁶ When he was about seven, he painted nineteen watercolours of plants, which were displayed posthumously.¹⁷ As he did not take photographs, he painted the places he visited, 'Everywhere he travelled, he filled his sketchbooks, a series running back to the battlefields of the Somme.'¹⁸ Most of his paintings were landscapes, always in watercolour. His collection of 3,200 watercolours was bequeathed to his nephew.¹⁹

In late summer 1918, Codrington, who had a strong Christian faith, painted a series of churches in northern France. Figure 14.2 shows Eglise Saint-Pierre in Coutances in the distance from the road to Saint-Lô. Although Figure 14.3 depicts the public park in Le Mans, Le Cathédrale de Saint-Julian

¹³ Codrington, 'Gathering Moss', p. 69.

¹⁴ Ibidem, pp. 87-88.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ A memorial exhibition was held at the Michael Parkinson Gallery, London in January 1992.

¹⁷ David McClintock, 'John Codrington', *Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland Newsletter*, 60 (April 1992), p. 55.

¹⁸ Anonymous, Lieutenant Colonel John Alfred Codrington, *The Times*, 64004 (27 April 1991), p. 10.

¹⁹ Conversation with Poppet Codrington, 31 March 2019.

is visible in the background. Figure 14.4 provides a closer view of Eglise Saint-Nicholas in Caen.



Figure 14.2: John Codrington, *Coutances, Normandy* (August 1918)



Figure 14.3: John Codrington, *Le Jardin Publique, Le Mans, Sarthe* (August 1918), and Figure 14.4: John Codrington, *Apex of the Spire of Eglise Saint-Nicholas, Caen* (August 1918)

In Codrington's painting of Place Victor Hugo in Lisieux, Le Cathédrale Saint-Pierre forms a prominent part of the deserted square.



Figure 14.5: John Codrington, *Place Victor Hugo, Lisieux* (August 1918)

During the 1920s, Codrington worked in Turkey and the Middle East and his watercolours included mosques. Figure 14.6 shows the central mosque and the River Serham at Adana in Turkey. Its significance to Codrington would have been that in the early twentieth century, conflict in Adana resulted in a massacre and after its transfer to French rule at the end of the war, the city had to be evacuated. In the late 1920s Codrington was in Iraq, where he met the writer and traveller, Gertrude Bell.²⁰ In Persia, he probably met Harold Nicolson and possibly, Vita Sackville-West. Figure 14.7 is his portrayal of Hamadan, one of Iran's oldest cities.

²⁰ Gertrude Bell, *Letters of Gertrude Bell, Volume II (1917-1927)* (London: Ernest Benn, 1927) [http://gertrudebell.ncl.ac.uk/letter_details.php?letter_id=824]. Letter to her mother, 13 May 1925, She had met Codrington, 'A nice very young guardsman – showed him the delights of Baghdad.'



Figure 14.6: John Codrington, *River Serham, Adana* (March 1925)

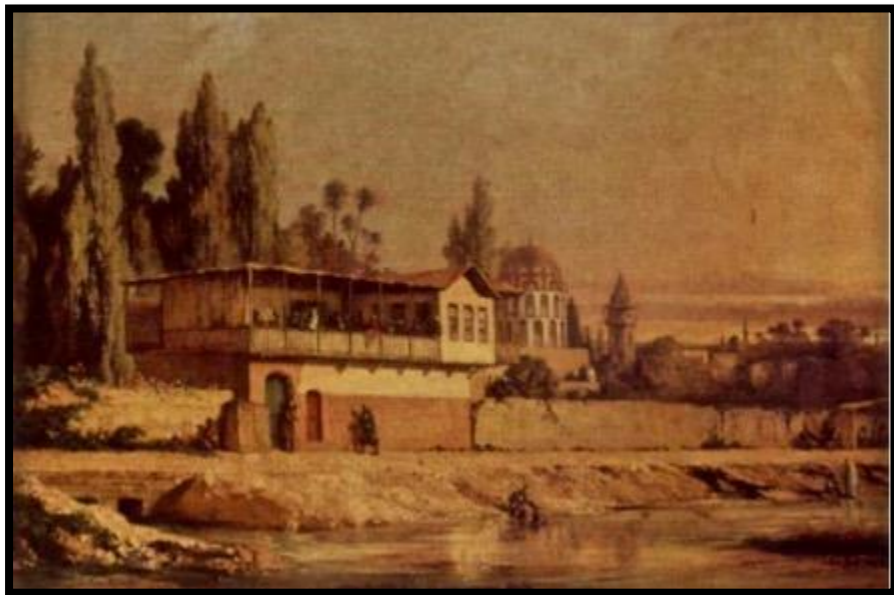


Figure 14.7: John Codrington, *Hamadan, Persia* (1928)

Codrington's final posting in 1933 was as Aide-de-Camp to Sir Philip Chetwode (1859-1950), Commander-in-Chief of British forces in India. Figure 14.8 depicts the seventeenth-century Jamali Mosque, one of the largest in India and one of the last monuments built by the Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan (1592-1666), at dusk.

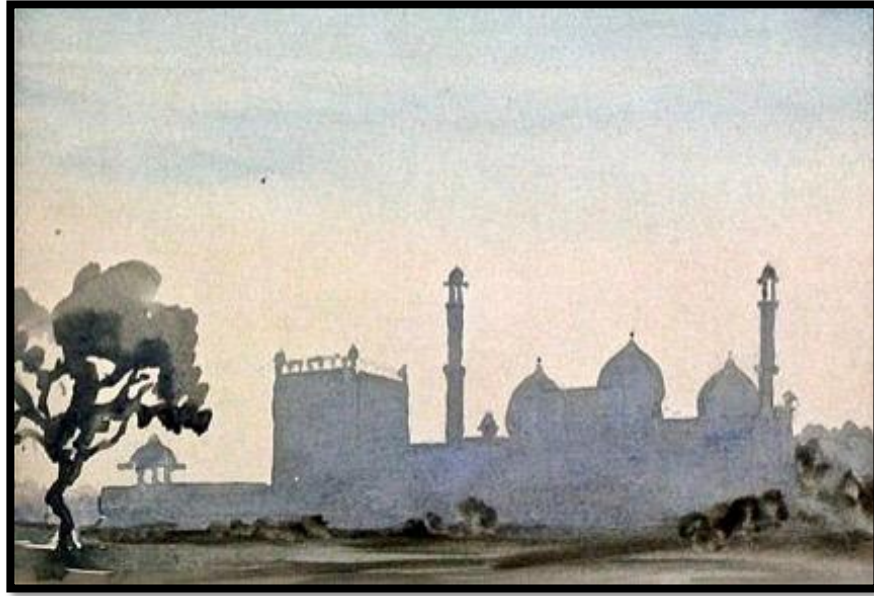


Figure 14.8: John Codrington, *Jamali Mosque, Delhi* (1933-1935)

As most of Codrington's paintings are in private collections, it is difficult to generalise about his style. Apart from a few paintings of wildflowers in the Natural History Museum's archive, no paintings have yet been discovered for the period between the late 1930s and 1960. During this time Codrington was working for the intelligence services and was stationed in Gibraltar and Algiers during the war. From 1947 to 1955, he worked for Alexander Korda (1893-1956) at Lion Films where one of his tasks was to find locations. Then he met important visitors for the British Overseas Airways Corporation at Heathrow Airport from 1956 to 1959.²¹

From 1960, Codrington travelled widely and liked to spend winters abroad. Figure 14.9 depicts Bibi-Khanym mosque in Samarkand in Uzbekistan, built by Timūr Gurkāt (1336-1405) in memory of his wife.

²¹ Nigel West, *Historical Dictionary of British Intelligence* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), p. 373. From 1937, Korda's company acted as a front for British intelligence.

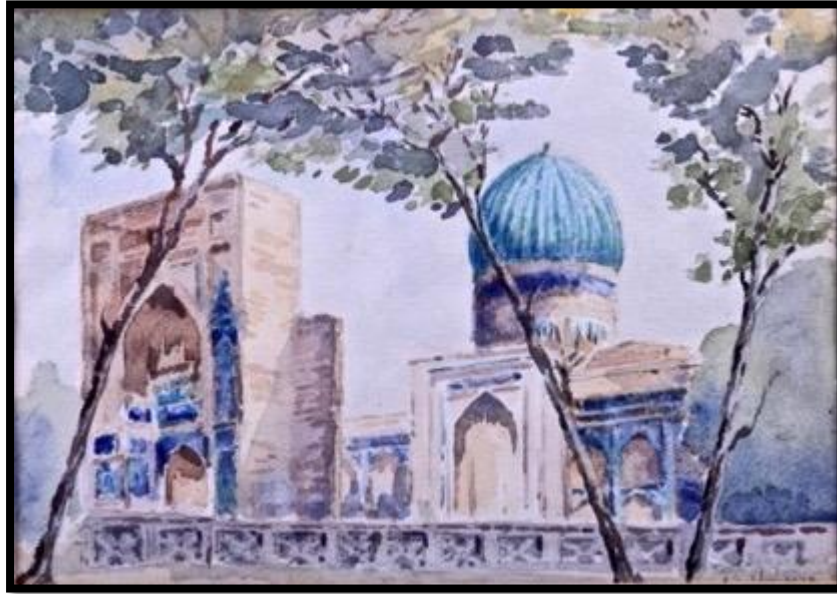


Figure 14.9: John Codrington, *The Blue Mosque, Samarkand* (1960)

In the mid-1960s, two paintings in France show that his style now focussed more on landscape than buildings. Figure 14.10 depicts Estaing, a village in southern France, noted for its beauty, whilst Figure 14.11 depicts one of his few garden paintings. Château de la Garoupe on the Cap d'Antibes was built for Charles McClaren, 1st Lord Aberconway (1950-1932), who also owned Bodnant in North Wales in 1907.²²

Codrington continued to paint until his death and when he was over ninety on a trip to Scandinavia in July 1980, he painted a fiord, near Bergen in Norway (Figure 14.12). His last known painting features the site of the Battle of Crécy in 1346 (Figure 14.13).

²² His wife, Laura (1854-1933), was a keen gardener. The house was designed by Ernest Barnsley (1853-1926).

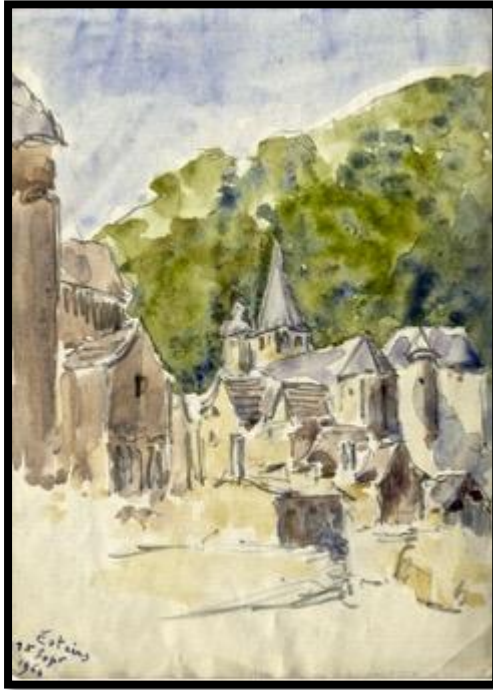


Figure 14.10: John Codrington, *Estaing* (1964) and Figure 14.11: John Codrington, *Chateau de la Garoupe* (1965)



Figure 14.12: John Codrington, *Fjord, Norway* (1989)



Figure 14.13: John Codrington, *View of the Battlefield of Crécy* (1990)

However, when Codrington started to design gardens, his clients were given a series of before-and-after watercolour paintings that illustrated how their garden would look, thus following in the footsteps of Humphry Repton.

The Gardener

As a child, Codrington had a plot where he grew gentians, alpine poppies, saxifrages and pinks, as well as making a water garden in the woods.²³ His mother, Lady Adele Codrington (1854-1945) inspired his interest in wildflowers when she gave him, *Flowers in the Field*, ‘under the auspices of mother I botanised frantically – acquiring thus a passion which once inculcated has remained to this day’.²⁴

²³ Miles Hadfield, Robert Harley & Leonie Highton, *British Gardeners: A Biographical Dictionary* (London: Zwemmer, 1980), p. 74. Codrington, ‘Gathering Moss’, p. 5.

²⁴ Reverend Charles Alexander Johns, Clarence Elliott (Edited), *Flowers in the Field* (London: Routledge, 1907, First Edition, 1853). Codrington, ‘Gathering Moss’, p. 5. His annotated copy was shown at the memorial exhibition.

Like E A Bowles and Lawrence Johnston, he was overwhelmed by the sight of wildflower meadows, which he described on a journey across the Assyrian plain in 1925:

It was April and it was more here than anywhere I realized the truth of the statement ‘Thou makest the desert to blossom as the rose.’ For miles it was like a well-stocked herbaceous border. The flowers were not rich and rare, but growing in such myriads that the effect was unbelievable. The main undercurrent of colour was of golden marigolds, white camomiles, drifts of china-blue geranium and the scarlet of poppies, anemones and adonis. Above this intense blue or violet anchusa or lupins rose above the rest. Little purple iris and gladiolus, their vivid crimson and magenta spires waved in the grass.²⁵

In the 1950s, when Codrington mapped rare wildflowers, depending on the scarcity, they were marked ‘SECRET’ or ‘VERY SECRET’. An example is the small pink, *Dianthus armeria*, the Deptford Pink, which was endangered, but still grows at the Belton Hills Nature Reserve at Hadleigh in Essex (Figure 14.14).²⁶ Figure 14.15 shows it growing there.

²⁵ Codrington, ‘Gathering Moss’, p. 268.

²⁶ Codrington. ‘Two Unpublished Notebooks and Botanical Maps of British Wild Flora’.

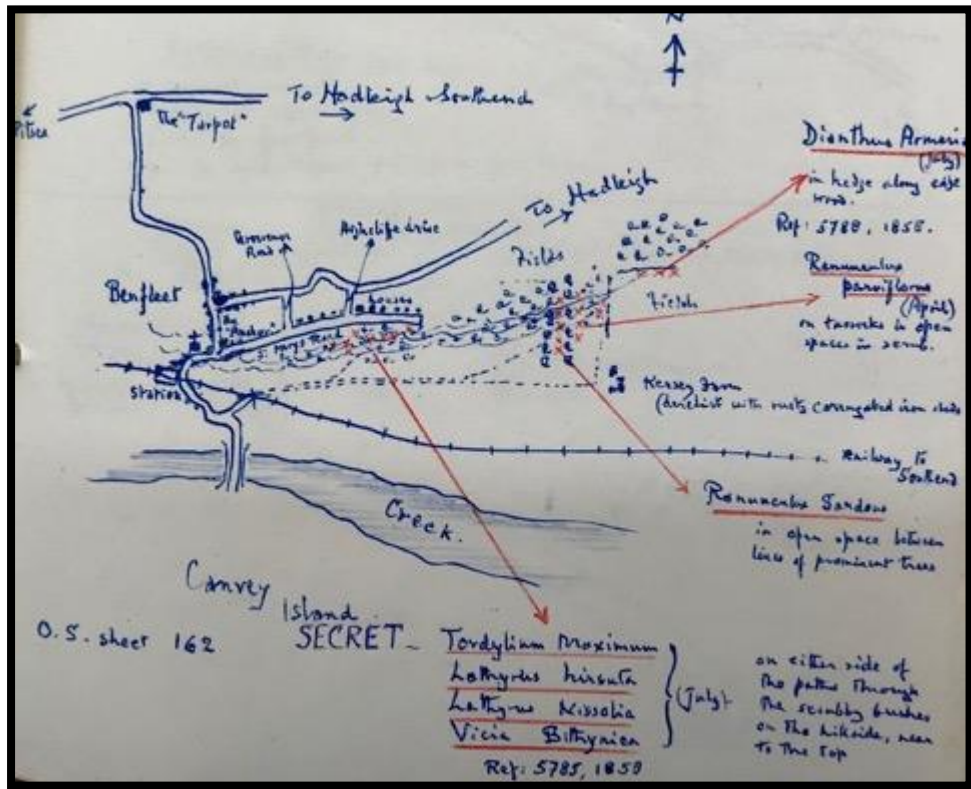


Figure 14.14: John Codrington, *Map, Wildflowers, Hadleigh, Essex* (1950s)



Figure 14.15: *Dianthus armeria* (2011)

Codrington grew native plants at Stone Cottage including the white form of *Geranium robertianum*, *Smyrniium perfoliatum* and the rare

Bupleurum falcatum, which he distributed widely.²⁷ In his words, ‘As I write in mid-July, it is a sea of red champions, white oxeye daisies and blue cranesbills. The cow parsley, one of the prettiest of wildflowers is over.’²⁸

Garden Design

Codrington started to design gardens when he was sixteen-years-old and like Alfred Parsons continued to do so as a hobby for many years. His first design, The Cross at Rockingham Castle near Market Harborough, Leicestershire was for his parents’ friends, Reverend and Mrs Watson. Part of their garden included an elaborate Victorian bedding scheme, comprising small flower beds filled with half-hardy annuals, which became difficult to maintain during the First World War (Figure 14.16). He suggested an alternative plan, comprising two double borders filled with roses and edged with lavender that intersected at a sundial.²⁹ His scheme remains one of the garden’s important features (Figure 14.17).



Figure 14.16: Rockingham Castle (1900)

²⁷ David McLintock, 'Obituary: John Codrington', *Watsonia*, 19 (1992), p. 53.

²⁸ Codrington, 'My Garden, My Wilderness', p. 509.

²⁹ Letter to the author, 14 August 2018. The original drawing has been mislaid.



Figure 14.17: The Cross Today

Codrington's army notebook, started in 1917, is interspersed with drawings and details of garden schemes amongst the military information (Figure 14.18).³⁰



Figure 14.18: John Codrington, *Trees* (1918)

³⁰ Codrington, 'Notebook', which has no page numbers.

It is unclear whether these designs were real or imaginary. Some were similar in concept to Preston Hall, but others were more innovative. A rose garden was in keeping with Edwardian ideas, 'a square of ramblers and enclosures of thirty-two beds, a sundial, stone paths to be approached by three avenues on each side'.³¹ However, Figure 14.19, another rose garden, was geometric, something frequently seen in his later commissions. The overall design, a cross with a square bed in the middle, could be approached from each section using one of three paths (Figure 14.20). The roses comprised 'Madame Caroline Testout', a pink tea rose, eight 'Frau Karl Druschki', a white hybrid perpetual, three 'General Jacqueminton', a red hybrid perpetual and six 'William Allen Richardson, a yellow noisette rose'.³²

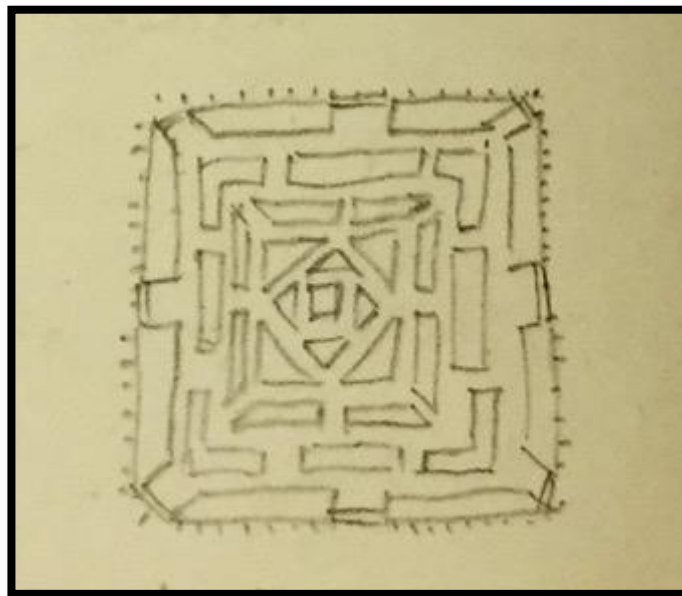


Figure 14.19: John Codrington, *Rose Garden*

³¹ Codrington, 'Notebook'.

³² Ibidem.

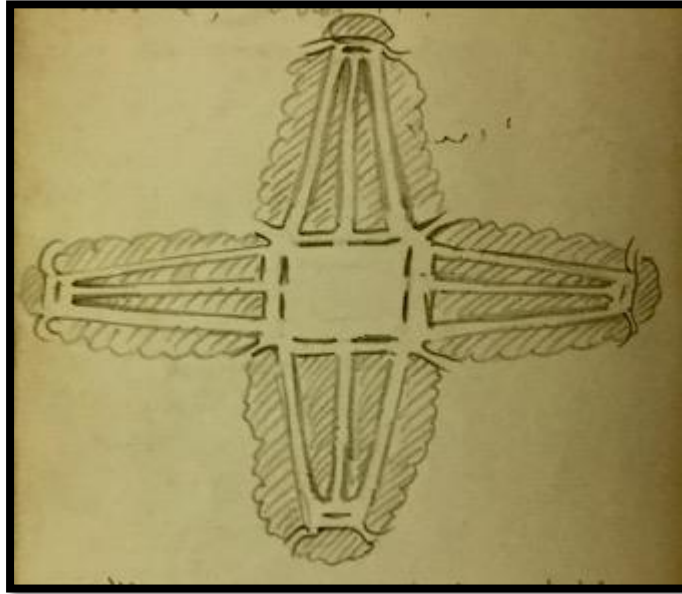


Figure 14.20: John Codrington, *Rose Garden Design*

An unusual and innovative idea was a ‘night garden’ with a pond, cypress, cedars and yew. Its planting suggests the garden was somewhere warmer than Britain with its scented white and yellow flowers, ‘Madonna and arum lilies, oenotheras, hibiscus, stocks, aloysia, wallflowers, freesias, oranges, tuberose, jasmine, roses etc, arranged for moonlit effect.’³³ Possibly a visit to his friend, Iris Origo’s (1902-1988) garden at Villa Medici in Fiesole, near Florence, where the garden ‘was drenched with the smell of gardenias, jasmine and roses’ inspired him.³⁴

Whilst he was Aide-de-Camp to Sir Thomas Bridges (1871-1939) at Smyrna, then in Greece, in 1920, he is reputed to have made a garden.³⁵ Later in 1934, when he was working for Sir Philip Chetwode, he designed parts of the garden at his official residence. Chetwode wanted a large circular pool at

³³ Codrington, ‘Notebook’. The Madonna lily is *Lilium candidum*; *Oenothera*, the evening primrose; and *Aloysia*, lemon verbena, which with hibiscus, oranges, freesias and tuberose would have been considered tender.

³⁴ Codrington, ‘Gathering Moss’, p. 217. Origo was Sybil Cutting’s daughter and part of the expatriate community in Florence that included the Berensons.

³⁵ Now Izmir in Turkey.

the end of a 500-yard avenue, which was too costly. Codrington proposed a 60-foot bed, planted with the silvery-mauve *Viola* 'Maggie Mott', to create the illusion of water.³⁶

Whilst he was in Beirut in the mid-1920s, Codrington alluded to his only garden, 'I had a small garden, which gave me infinite pleasure; it had two tangerine trees and a date palm, and I was delighted to find I could grow poinsettias and many other exotic plants'.³⁷

In 1936, after twenty years' service, Codrington resigned his commission, 'There had often been disagreements between myself and senior officers over Army matters, but on one point we were in complete agreement; it was quite obvious to me as to them that I was not the person to command a battalion.'³⁸ Soon after he married Harley and they made a garden.

Park House, Onslow Square, London

In 1937, Codrington and Harley leased Park House in Onslow Square, which Harley knew and was delighted to find for sale.³⁹ Park House, an eighteenth-century cottage, is situated at the end of Pelham Place, Pelham Crescent and Onslow Square's gardens (Figure 14.21 and Figure 14.22). They worked on the one-acre garden until their divorce in 1942. Most descriptions were written during the 1950s after Harley married Lanning Roper.⁴⁰

³⁶ Maureen Cleave, 'An Officer and a Gardener', *Daily Telegraph*, 41745 (9 September 1989), p. 58.

³⁷ Codrington, 'Gathering Moss', p. 286.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 701.

³⁹ 'Park House, Onslow Square, London', Report by Savills & Co (<http://www.rbkc.gov.uk>, September 2018) [Accessed 8 February 2019].

⁴⁰ Jane Brown, *Lanning Roper and his Gardens* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1987), p. 42. They married in 1952, but divorced in 1968.



Figure 14.21: Park House, Outlined in Red



Figure 14.22: Park House (1950s)

They painted the house pink and planted the garden with ‘vines, wisteria and jasmine against its walls [.....] and made an area to eat outside, planted with hostas, lilies, lilacs and mints, chives, thymes, tarragon and parsley crowding the pavings’ (Figure 14.23).⁴¹

⁴¹ Brown, *Lanning Roper*, p. 36.



Figure 14.23: Park House (1950s)

A shallow pool on one side, only 6-inches deep, was edged with *rheum*, ferns, iris and lilies (Figure 14.24).⁴² In Jane Brown's view, informal gardens with exuberant planting formed the essence of Codrington's style and Park Place, 'soon became a little green jungle in the heart of the city'.⁴³



Figure 14.24: Park House (1955)

⁴² Brown, *Lanning Roper*, p. 36.

⁴³ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

Harley restored the garden after the war ‘with an innovatory use of wildflowers to create the feeling of a country garden’, but Codrington’s involvement and knowledge of wildflowers was not mentioned.⁴⁴ Some planting, for example Cedric Morris’ irises would have been Harley’s choice.⁴⁵ However, a description of the approach to the house reflects his style, ‘The lane leading to Park House might well be in Somerset bounded as it is with wild roses, blackberries and Old Man’s Beard, while overhead against the Kensington sky, wave broad cartwheel flowers of giant cow parsley.’⁴⁶ The article also noted tuberose, which Codrington grew in Beirut.⁴⁷ Figure 14.25 of *Hosta sieboldiana* and ferns was a combination that Codrington, himself, proposed in article in 1962.⁴⁸



Figure 14.25: Hostas and Ferns, Park House (1960s)

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- ⁴⁴ Jane Brown, ‘Primrose Roper’ (<https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/67784>).
- ⁴⁵ ‘Benton Primrose’ was named after her.
- ⁴⁶ Jessica Young, ‘Beautiful Gardens Town & Country, Park House, London’, *Homes & Garden*, 36 (June 1955), p. 58.
- ⁴⁷ Anonymous, ‘London SW7’, *House & Garden*, 10 (London, 1954), p. 49.
- ⁴⁸ John Codrington, ‘Small-Scale Gardening in London’, *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, 57 (November 1962), p. 492.

Codrington lived in Edwardes Mews for some years, which had no garden, but this changed in 1957.⁴⁹

1 Ranelagh Cottage, Ebury Bridge Road, London

Codrington leased Ranelagh Cottage, one of three mid-nineteenth century detached cottages, which remained his London home. In his friend, Christopher Lloyd's opinion, 'Even his London home in Pimlico had an outback quality.'⁵⁰ It had a small garden in the shape of a letter 'J', measuring 42-feet by 30-feet (Figure 14.26).⁵¹



Figure 14.26: Ranelagh Cottage (1962)

Figure 14.27 shows a sketch of the garden, divided by a curved path. It was planted with banks of shrubs to 'create an illusion of mystery'.⁵²

⁴⁹ Codrington, 'Small-Scale Gardening in London', p. 491.

⁵⁰ Christopher Lloyd, 'Restless Hardy Perennial', *The Guardian* (3 May 1991), p. 39.

⁵¹ Williamson, 'In London, A Garden Designed to Look Like a Jungle', p. 15.

⁵² Codrington, 'Small-Scale Gardening in London', p. 493.

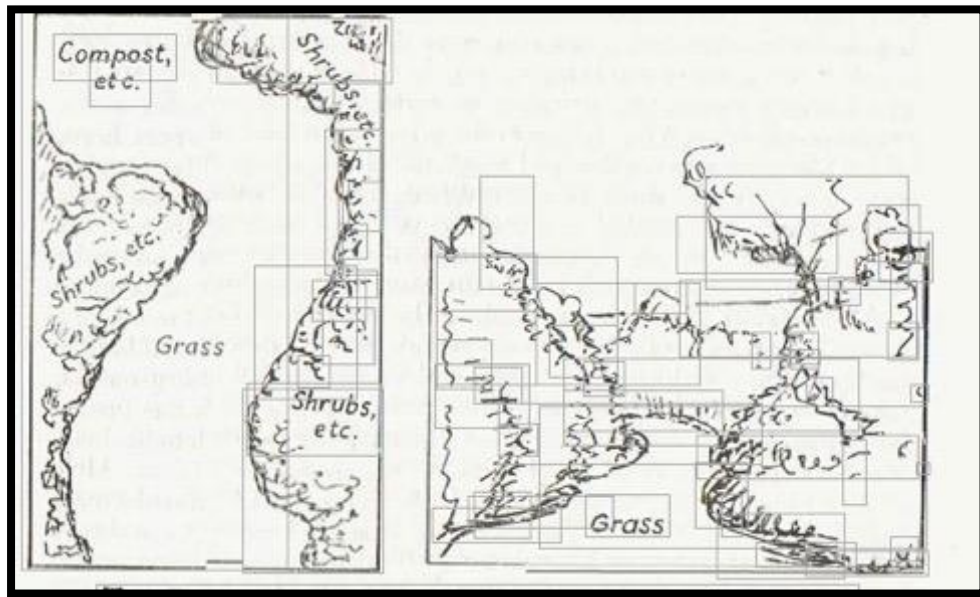


Figure 14.27: John Codrington, *Design for a Rectangular Garden* (1962)

As London gardens are often shady, Codrington planted a variety of green foliage plants, ‘We are at last beginning to realise the beauty of shapes and forms, and contrasting greens.’⁵³ One combination was a tree peony with trifoliate leaves, *Hosta sieboldiana* with large heart-shaped leaves, the sword-like leaves of irises, the fronds of *osmunda* and the palmate-leafed *rheum* and *fatsia*.⁵⁴ The most colourful plant was *Camellia japonica* ‘Apollo’, with red flowers, blotched with white.⁵⁵ He also planted grey-leafed plants, for example *Hebe pageana*, *Artemisia arborescens* and *Santolina* (Figure 14.28 and Figure 14.29).⁵⁶

⁵³ Codrington, ‘Small-Scale Gardening in London’, p. 492.

⁵⁴ Ibidem. *Osmunda* is a fern.

⁵⁵ Williamson, ‘In London, A Garden Designed to Look Like a Jungle’, p. 15.

⁵⁶ Codrington, ‘Small-Scale Gardening in London’, p. 495.



Figure 14.28: Grouping of Plants, Ranelagh Cottage (1962)



Figure 14.29: Grouping of Grey-Leaved Plants (1962)

Although Codrington did not have a garden in the early 1950s, he designed one for his widowed sister, Mary Doyne (1886-1961). When she died, she left him Stone Cottage at Oakham in Rutland where he gardened until his death.

Stone Cottage, Oakham, Rutland

Codrington developed the one-acre garden for over forty years and both he and others described it. As he wrote, 'Mine is a wild garden indeed and I like it like that' (Figure 14.30).⁵⁷ As wildflowers were allowed to self-seed, his drive became a gravel garden (Figure 14.31).⁵⁸



Figure 14.30: Pool, Stone Cottage (1977)

Many writers have emphasised the garden's inherent wildness, 'I have stressed the wildness of John Codrington's garden because naturalisation is the foundation of his philosophy.'⁵⁹ Tim Richardson concluded that:

[He] pushed the wild look to its limits in his own garden of intimate spaces at Stone Cottage, Northumberland [sic], where stone paths and

⁵⁷ Alvilde Lees-Milne & Rosemary Verey, *The Englishman's Garden* (London: Penguin Books, 1982), p. 47.

⁵⁸ Tony Venison, 'Garden of a Restless Spirit: Stone Cottage, Hambleton, Rutland', *Country Life*, 162 (22 September 1977), p. 739.

⁵⁹ Anne Scott-James, *The Cottage Garden* (London: Allen Lane, 1981), p. 130.

formal features were almost smothered with an artful jumble of plants chosen for foliage and form as much as flower.⁶⁰



Figure 14.31: Gravel Garden (1982)

When Beth Chatto visited Stone Cottage with Lloyd in June 1988, she thought it was, ‘A child’s paradise – wild overgrown and yet not entirely: his underlying design had it safe from total chaos and much of it is quite beautiful.’⁶¹ Although wildness was a predominant feature, it is significant that Chatto noted its underlying design. The only place this was obvious was the front garden, which gave the impression of ‘a sedate English country garden.’⁶² Formal beds were planted with floribunda roses and the path to the front door was edged with the silver-leafed Hidcote lavender (Figure 14.32).⁶³

⁶⁰ Tim Richardson, ‘Lost Heroes of Gardening’, *Daily Telegraph* (24 January 2011) [<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/gardening/8264835/Lost-heroes-of-gardening.html>].

⁶¹ Catherine Horwood, *Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants* (London: Pimpernel Press, 2019), p. 193.

⁶² Venison, ‘Garden of a Restless Spirit’, p. 738.

⁶³ Codrington, ‘My Garden: My Wilderness’, p. 509.



Figure 14.32: Front Garden (1977)

Tony Venison's view differed as he thought 'a series of related scenarios gives the impression of a large garden'.⁶⁴ He concluded the garden was:

A compendium of plantsmen's delights, stage-set surprises inviting exploration, blendings of colours, textures woven together, and continuous performances. It is as successfully individualistic as any modern garden can be.⁶⁵

He also wondered whether Codrington's experience of Korda's film sets had inspired him, but unlike Humphrey Waterfield, the garden was not viewed along a specified route. Its layout was 'more a sequence of excitingly planted perambulatory arcades and corridors enclosed within shrubs, hedges or deliberately wild looking thickets' (Figure 14.33).⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Venison, 'Garden of a Restless Spirit', p. 738.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, p. 739.

⁶⁶ Ibidem.



Figure 14.33: Winding Path (1977)

In Venison's opinion, the garden was mostly inward looking, which was not typical of his designs. When his sister bought the house, its windswept hilly site had to be planted with trees to create shelter.⁶⁷ In 1976, the valley below was flooded to make Rutland Water and Codrington created a view or, as he called it, '*ausblick*'.⁶⁸ Figure 14.34, a reproduction of a painting, shows cattle grazing in the fields in front of the reservoir.

⁶⁷ Venison, 'Garden of a Restless Spirit', p. 739. They were underplanted with snowdrops, bluebells and lilies.

⁶⁸ Codrington, 'My Garden, My Wilderness', p. 508.

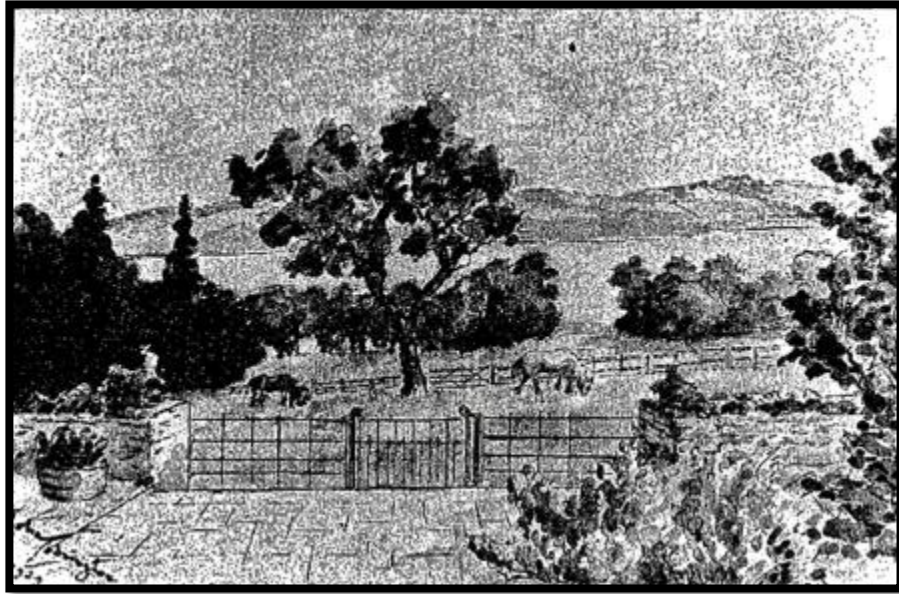


Figure 14.34: John Codrington, *Rutland Water from Stone Cottage* (1988)

Codrington also experimented with colour to create ‘a galaxy of assiduously correct colour schemes’.⁶⁹ Again he used shades of green, this time in a ‘room’, planted with green flowering plants: *Euphorbia*, *Alchemilla*, green *Zinnia*, *Nicotiana* and *Mignonette*.⁷⁰ In a white garden with a small rectangular pool and a white ironwork pagoda, grey and white plants, including *Ballota pseudodictamnus*, varieties of *Artemisia*, *Crambe cordifolia* *Hebe*, white species geraniums and the white willow herb, *Chamaenerion angustifolium* ‘Album’ were planted (Figure 14.35).

Other combinations included an area planted in yellow and pale blue and one with ‘hot’ colours, comprising orange and vermillion roses, orange lilies, Siberian wallflowers, *Alchemilla* and the single flowered, crimson floribunda rose ‘Dusky Maiden’.⁷¹ Yet if he saw a garden with too many red flowers, he always commented he would ‘have to call for the fire brigade.’⁷²

⁶⁹ Venison, ‘Garden of a Restless Spirit’, p. 739.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

⁷¹ Ibidem.

⁷¹ Tony Venison, ‘Gardening Now’, *Country Life*, 195 (5 April 2001), p. 122.

⁷² Venison, ‘Garden of a Restless Spirit’, p. 739.

When he planted 'Queen of the Night' black and white tulips in a domino pattern, it attracted considerable attention.⁷³ This combination has become popular and in 1999, Special Plants Nursery exhibited a black-and-white garden at the Chelsea Flower Show.



Figure 14.35: Grey and White Garden (1977)

However, not all his experiments were successful. Lloyd recalled that he was inspired by Byron's poem, 'The Destruction of Sennacherib', to plant a purple and yellow border, 'The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold, And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold', but it did not remain for long.⁷⁴ Codrington frequently used geometric shapes in his designs and at Stone Cottage, a chessboard square was planted with culinary and medicinal herbs.⁷⁵

⁷³ Tony Venison, 'Dominoes and Drumsticks', *Country Life*, 180 (6 November 1986, p. 1444, and Venison, 'Black and White Check', *Country Life*, 158 (30 October 1986, p. 1160. He was also going to plant this combination.

⁷⁴ Christopher Lloyd, 'Purple and Gold', *Country Life*, 194 (22 June 2000), p. 181. <http://www.poetrybyheart.org.uk> [Accessed 31 January 2020].

⁷⁵ Venison, 'Garden of a Restless Spirit', p. 739.

Stone Cottage was sold after Codrington's death. In 2017, it was advertised again and mature trees can be seen in the background. As the front garden has changed, it is doubtful his design remains (Figure 14.36).



Figure 14.36: Stone Cottage (2017)

Garden Commissions

When Codrington was asked why he decided to design gardens, he replied, 'it was simply because at the age of 59, I had no other job.'⁷⁶ In 1959, his work for the British Overseas Airways Corporation ended and with the encouragement his friend, Sylvia Crowe, he started to design gardens 'to fulfil what I thought was a need'.⁷⁷ His intention was to work around London, but soon 'spread beyond the gardens of Greater London'.⁷⁸ Only two gardens in London have been identified. One was for the artist, Eve Disher (1894-1991) at 40 South Eaton Place, where the only known detail is that he placed trellis

⁷⁶ Elizabeth Williamson, 'In London, A Garden Designed to Look Like a Jungle', *Daily Telegraph*, 37101 (3 September 1974), p. 15.

⁷⁷ Codrington, 'Small-Scale Gardening in London', p. 492.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*.

on one wall to create a *trompe d'oeil* effect (Figure 14.37).⁷⁹ No details are known about his scheme for Angela Caccia in Edwardes Square.⁸⁰



Figure 14.37: 40 Eaton Place London (1962)

Lady Anne Palmer (1919-2019) started to make an eight-acre garden at Rosemoor in Devon in 1959. As she knew Codrington, he gave her advice.⁸¹ The garden has sweeping lawns and curved beds and he suggested three large beds near the drive should ‘each be planted informally in a different colour, one yellow, another shades of bronze and the third largely white’.⁸² One of his earliest commissions at the end of 1960 was for Emmanuel College, Cambridge where three projects were carried out that illustrate different aspects of his style.

⁷⁹ Codrington, ‘Small-Scale Gardening in London’, p. 494. Disher was a friend of Paul Odo Cross and Angus Wilson.

⁸⁰ Caccia, ‘On Humphrey Waterfield’, p. 2.

⁸¹ When Lady Palmer remarried, she moved to New Zealand and gave Rosemoor to the Royal Horticultural Society in 1988.

⁸² Arthur Hellyer, ‘Rare Plants in a Composed Setting’, *Country Life*, 179 (10 April 1986), p. 982.

Emmanuel College, Cambridge

Emmanuel College holds the records of Codrington's projects, including correspondence and his distinctive before-and-after watercolours. In 1960, the college decided to redesign New Court, 'a small court with a lawn intersected with flagged paths'.⁸³ They decided a herb garden would be in keeping with its historic buildings and consulted Sackville-West, who recommended him.⁸⁴ His fees were five guineas for a site visit, plan and two sketches, with an additional one guinea per copy for each additional drawing.⁸⁵ He produced five schemes, loosely based on Elizabethan or Jacobean themes:

First and foremost, I understand the need is for easy access by the shortest routes between the various doors and gateways. I have therefore, in all my plans drawn paths from the three staircase doorways to the entrance on the other side of the court, rather than from the kitchen door and the tunnel themselves. This will afford quite a big paved space which can be treated in many different ways with the aid of flags, cobbles, tiles and bricks etc, which I have not indicated precisely at this stage. The paving will leave one fairly big triangle at the side of the hall, and two unequal areas on the side of the library, and the kitchen.⁸⁶

⁸³ Emmanuel College Cambridge, EM28/112a, Letter from A A Townsend, Domestic Bursar to the Director, Cambridge Botanic Garden, 29 January 1960.

⁸⁴ EM28/115A, Letter, Vita Sackville-West to the Domestic Bursar, Dr David H Woollam, 5 October 1960.

⁸⁵ EM28/115, Letter, Codrington to Woollam, 10 October 1960. Codrington would supervise the layout and planting for 5 guineas per visit. Today, £121.00.

⁸⁶ EM28/115f, Letter, Codrington to Woollam, 28 October 1960, p. 1.

Figure 14.38, Plan 'E', based on a sixteenth-century herb garden, was chosen and shows how New Court would look after the scheme was implemented, whilst Figure 14.39 shows the layout in detail. The planting comprised mainly culinary herbs, but included roses and pinks. Codrington suggested the ground could be covered with gravel or coloured stones, but this was not implemented (Figure 14.40).



Figure 14.38: John Codrington, *Plan 'E'* (1961)

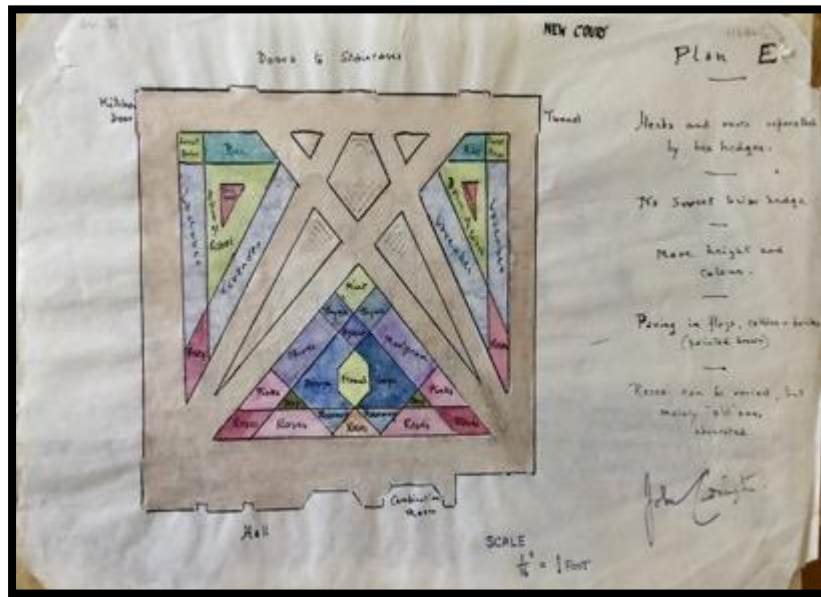


Figure 14.39: John Codrington, *Layout, Plan 'E'* (1961)



Figure 14.40: New Court Herb Garden (1986)

The triangular beds are still filled with herbs although the box-edging is higher than Codrington envisaged. Figure 14.41 show New Court today, but originally, there were no large trees. Figure 14.42 and Figure 14.43 show details of one of the beds and the paving design.



Figure 14.41: New Court (2018)



Figure 14.42: Triangular Bed, New Court (2018)



Figure 14.43: Paving Detail (2018)

When the college commissioned a report on its buildings and gardens in 2016, Richardson considered it was ‘a garden scheme redolent of Italian futurism’ and ‘an important late-Modernist garden’.⁸⁷ His opinion appears to contradict Codrington’s intention that his design was in keeping with its historic buildings, but its geometric shapes are reminiscent of Pinsent’s design for Origo, at Villa La Foce in Tuscany in the 1930s (Figure 14.44).

⁸⁷ Cambridge Architectural Research Ltd, ‘Conservation Management Statement’ (2016), p. 109.



Figure 14.44: Villa La Foce

Codrington's design for the Paddock, a large open space behind the college, was submitted in April 1963. It shows one of his key tenets that the space needed mystery and surprise, as it was approached from the courtyard through an arcade. This could be achieved by replacing a rose bed with a bank of evergreen and deciduous shrubs including *Cotoneaster lactea*, *Prunus lusitanica*, *Ilex cammelliaefolia*, *Philadelphus* and a golden yew.⁸⁸

Codrington also emphasised the importance of:

Masking the view of the lake so that it is seen bit by bit, I suggest a plantation in this area between the path, the end of the lake and the big *Ailanthus*. This could have at its centre a *Pyrus salicifolia pendula*, with three Irish yews placed roughly 24-feet from each other.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ EM28/159, Letter Codrington to Woollam, 22 April 1963.

⁸⁹ Ibidem.

He suggested the lake should be re-shaped and enlarged to include an island, planted with a *Taxodium*, to give it 'more character and incident'.⁹⁰ Figure 14.45 shows the existing paddock with an oval expanse of water. Figure 14.46 and Figure 14.47 show the proposed changes. They include a grouping of three Irish yews, a feature he often used.



Figure 14.45: John Codrington, *Existing Paddock* (1963)



Figure 14.46: John Codrington, *Proposed Scheme* (1963)

⁹⁰ EM28/159, Letter Codrington to Woollam, 22 April 1963. The island was created using material when the Master's Lodge was demolished.



Figure 14.47: John Codrington, *Proposed Scheme from the Top* (1963)

Since the scheme was implemented, some older trees have had to be replaced and additional trees and statues, given as gifts, have been added. Yet Codrington's design can be recognised, in particular the three Irish yews, seen in Figure 14.48. Figure 14.49 shows the new lake and the *Taxodium* on the island on the lake is seen in Figure 14.50.



Figure 14.48: Fastigate Yews (2018)



Figure 14.49: The Lake (2018)



Figure 14.50: *Taxodium* on the Island (2018)

Codrington designed a garden for the new Master's Lodge, but it is unclear how much of the scheme was carried out. However, a plan for an area of paving confirms his interest in geometric shapes and chequered squares (Figure 14.51).

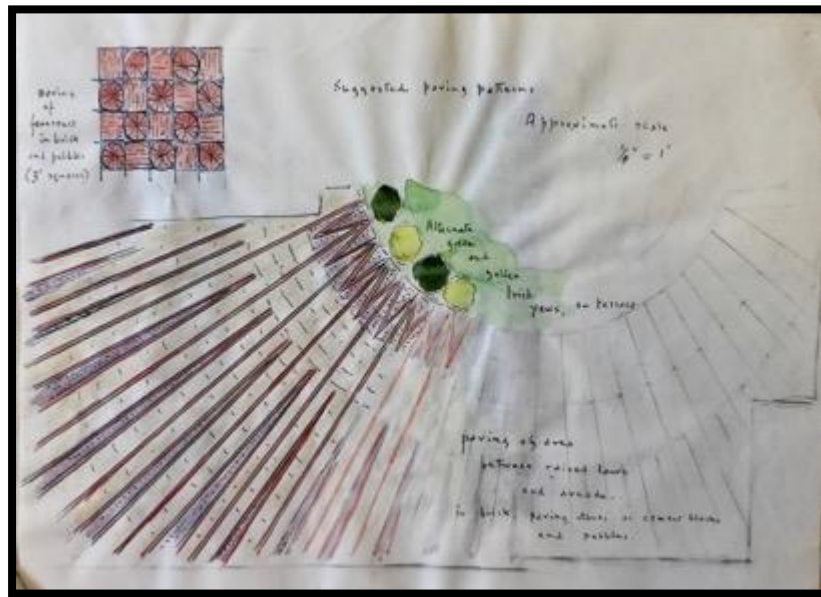


Figure 14.51: John Codrington, *Proposed Paving, Master's Lodge* (1965)

In 1962, Codrington undertook a private commission in Oxfordshire
White's Farmhouse, Letcombe Bassett, Oxfordshire

Michael and Anne Shone moved to White's Farm, a late sixteenth-century farmhouse in November 1961. Figure 14.52 shows the land when they bought it.



Figure 14.52: White's Farm (1961)

They intended to make the garden themselves, but in 1962 decided to ask Codrington for advice. As White's Farm remained in the Shones' ownership until 2019, Codrington's drawings remain, but the correspondence has not survived.⁹¹ As Michael Shone was a keen plantsman, the planting was mostly his. However, his preference for green and muted colours would have accorded with Codrington's.

Anne Shone kept an album about its development in which she recalled that Codrington was 'up at dawn charging round the field with sticks and string'.⁹² Figure 14.53 shows the existing site, whilst Figure 14.54, Codrington's overall plan demonstrates an essential aspect of his designs, the importance of both horizontal and longitudinal vistas. Figure 14.55 outlines his proposal including a group of yews.



Figure 14.53: John Codrington, *The Site* (1962)

⁹¹ Michael Shone died in 1998 and Anne Shone in January 2018. In July 2019, the house was advertised for sale for £1.2 million.

⁹² Anne Shone, 'White's Farm' (Unpublished album, Private Collection).



Figure 14.54: John Codrington, *Sketch Plan, White's Farm* (1962)

Over time, the trees and shrubs have matured and the view to the watercress beds has disappeared. However, a general impression of Codrington's vision remains. Figure 14.56 shows the view down the garden and Figure 14.57, the view to the house.



Figure 14.55: John Codrington, *Proposed Design* (1962)



Figure 14.56: View down the Garden (2018)



Figure 14.57: View to White's Farm (2018)

Figure 14.58 is Codrington's plan for the view across the garden, but Figure 14.59 shows this has also disappeared.



Figure 14.58: John Codrington, *Proposed View across the Garden* (1962)



Figure 14.59: View Across the Garden (2018)

At one side of the house, Codrington designed a secret garden, which was planted within a geometric, paved design that included water, as shown in Figure 14.60. Figure 14.61 provides details of the paving. It is unclear whether this was a herb garden. It is also not known whether gravel was used, but water can still be seen in the overgrown garden (Figure 14.62).

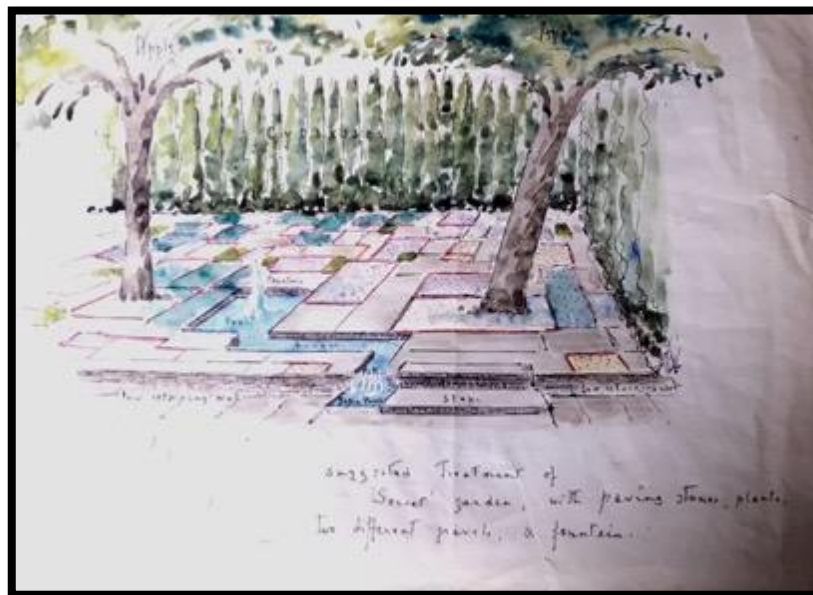


Figure 14.60: John Codrington, *Secret Garden* (1962)

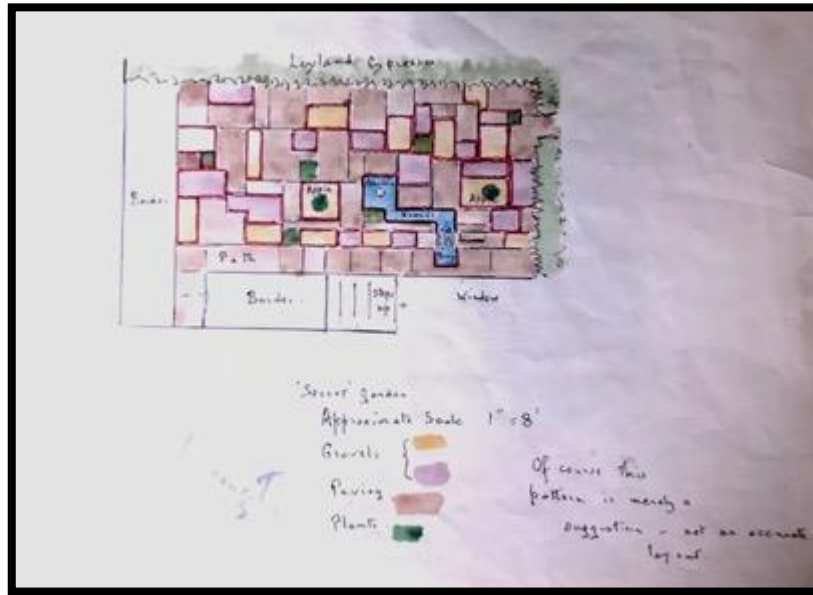


Figure 14.61: John Codrington, *Proposed Paving, Secret Garden* (1962)



Figure 14.62: Secret Garden (2018)

After the Shones bought land in the front of the house in the 1970s, they consulted Codrington again, but his ideas were not implemented.⁹³

⁹³ No drawings for this scheme remain. In January 2017, Anne Shone said he had proposed an elaborate greenhouse, which was inappropriate.

Penshurst Place, Kent

From 1972 to 1978 Codrington undertook three projects at Penshurst Place for his friend, William Sidney, 1st Viscount De L'Isle (1909-1991), which again demonstrated his knowledge and versatility. He visited Penshurst in July 1972 and in December, a five-year plan was agreed to implement them.⁹⁴

Between 1973 and 1974, three new areas of the garden were created: one featuring nut trees, one magnolias and a grey and white garden. Penshurst Place retain the original records, but copies are lodged with Kent County Archive.⁹⁵

Codrington's design for the grey and white garden was geometric, with its centre formed by terracotta bricks from demolished glasshouses (Figure 14.63).



Figure 14.63: Paving Detail (2019)

⁹⁴ Codrington, Letter to De L'Isle, 30 July 1972, and Letter, De L'Isle to Codrington, 2 October saying he is delighted with his sketches.

⁹⁵ Copies were sent to Kent Archive Centre for the author, but permission to photograph his watercolour drawings and letters was refused.

The planting comprised grey, white, cream and silver plants, including Codrington's favourites, *Hebe pageana*, *Stachys* 'Silver Carpet', *Artemisia splendens* and *Achillea argentea*. Two views of the garden's layout are shown in Figure 14.64 and Figure 14.65.



Figure 14.64: Grey and White Garden (2019)



Figure 14.65: Grey and White Garden (2019)

The Nut Garden was an original, but complex quadrilateral design, comprising *Corylus avelana aurea* and *Corylus maximus purpurea*, which

were planted to give a tunnel effect on the outside with a wooden pergola inside (Figure 14.66)⁹⁶. In the centre, a square wooden frame is covered with vines, honeysuckle and roses (Figure 14.67). On the top, the Helm represents a fallen tent from the battle of the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520 (Figure 14.68).



Figure 14.66: The Nuttery (2019)



Figure 14.67: Looking Toward the Helm (2019)

⁹⁶ Today, the nut trees are all green-leaved.



Figure 14.68: The Helm (2019)

The Magnolia Garden is a sunken garden surrounded by fifteen Irish yews (Figure 14.69). The magnolias include *Magnolia soulangeana rubra* and *Magnolia liliflora nigra* with *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Exmouth' at each corner (Figure 14.70).



Figure 14.69: Irish Yews, Magnolia Garden (2019)



Figure 14.70: Magnolia Garden (2019)

Little Bentley Hall, Colchester

A commission that encapsulates Codrington's approach to garden design was Little Bentley Hall in Essex for Christopher and Virginia Palmer-Tomkinson.⁹⁷ They bought the eighteenth-century house, once part of Little Bentley Farm estate in 1974. Although it had ancient woodland and stew ponds, there was virtually no garden (Figure 14.71).⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Tilly Ware, 'Flowing with Brilliant Ideas: Little Bentley Hall', *Country Life*, 213 (24 April 2019), pp. 91-95.

⁹⁸ Advertisement, Humbert, Flint, Rawlence & Squarey, *Country Life*, 155 (4 April 1974), p. 17. Michael Hanson, 'The Estate Market: Clutching at Straws in the Wind', *Country Life*, 155 (27 June 1974), p. 1726. It was sold for £71,000, today £768,532.

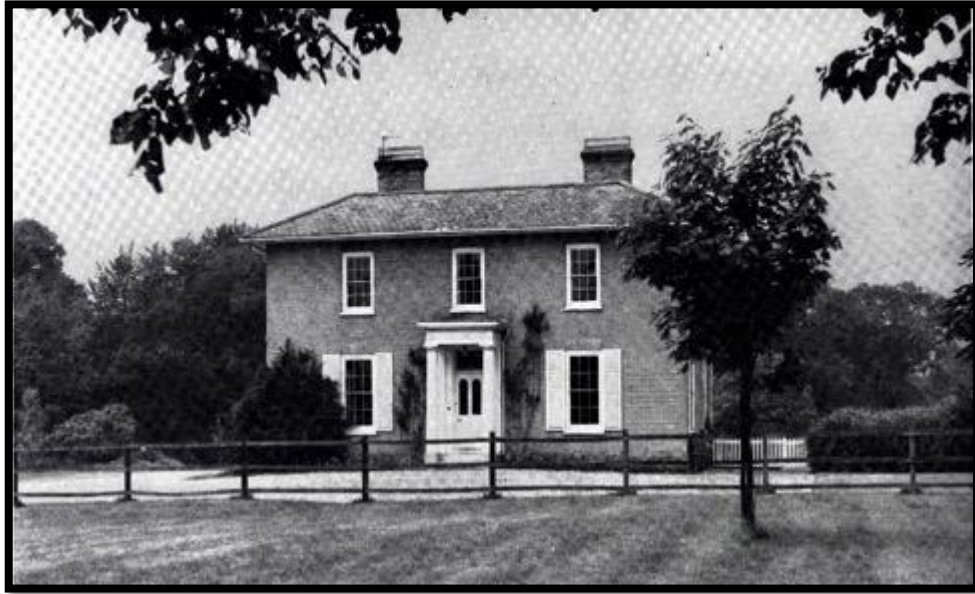


Figure 14.71: Little Bentley Hall (1974)

Codrington visited once in December 1976 and then left them to interpret his wide-ranging ideas.⁹⁹ Palmer-Tomkinson thought Codrington had a wonderful eye for design and inspired their enthusiasm to develop the garden.¹⁰⁰ He made two suggestions to improve the views from the house, although he acknowledged these would be costly to implement. The first was to alter the drive to remove any sight of gravel or cars from the house. Secondly, the vista from the house and terrace, which was ‘important and lovely’, would be improved if the fence was removed and a ha-ha and pond created.¹⁰¹ Figure 14.72 shows the existing view and Figure 14.73 shows the Repton-like flap that was brought across to give the proposed view.

⁹⁹ Letter, Codrington, 6 December 1976 (Private collection). A conversation with Palmer-Tomkinson on 15 July 2019 ascertained that Codrington’s niece, Tessa Codrington (1944-2017), a friend of his wife, recommended him.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem.



Figure 14.72: John Codrington, *Existing View* (1976)



Figure 14.73: John Codrington, *Proposed View* (1976)

Codrington also proposed a brick area near the back door should be made into a herb garden using his favourite chequerboard design (Figure 14.74).

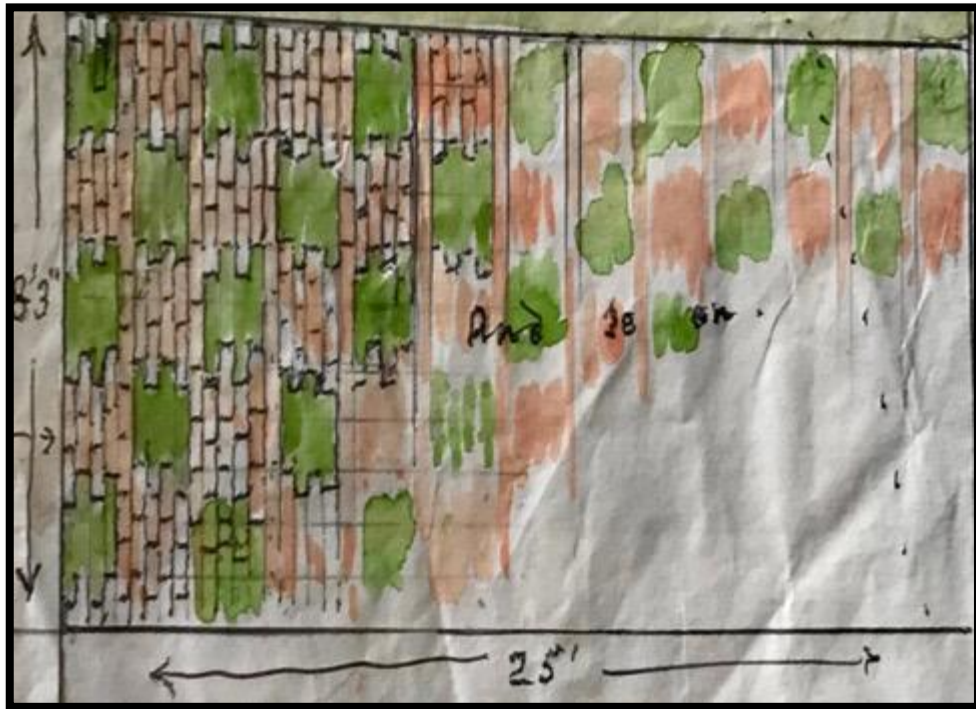


Figure 14.74: John Codrington: *Proposed Herb Garden* (1976)

Codrington gave them advice on the garden's planting, including using pink flowers in a proposed herbaceous border:

The different shades are very difficult to harmonise, and the pink of cistus does not happily go with the coral of certain roses or the scarlet of the new potentilla, Nerines, too, though lovely are of a colour that only goes well with greys, blues, whites and deep purple, and hardly with other shades of red or pink.¹⁰²

Mary Cloister Garden, Lincoln Cathedral

In the 1970s, Codrington designed an unusual garden at Lincoln Cathedral using plants associated with the Virgin Mary. His idea was to '[preserve] from oblivion some of the ancient legends about plants associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary', which like *Alchemilla vulgaris*, now known as Lady's Mantle,

¹⁰² Letter, Codrington, 6 December 1976.

were renamed after the Reformation to remove any connection with her.¹⁰³ The garden demonstrated his knowledge of Marian plants, some, like the slipper orchid, *Cypripedium calceolus*, were wildflowers.¹⁰⁴ The border had thirty-six different plants with the Madonna lily, *Lilium candidum* and Our Lady's Tears, lily of the valley, chosen for scent (Figure 14.75).¹⁰⁵ The garden disappeared in the late 1980s when it was considered too costly to maintain.



Figure 14.75: Mary Cloister, Lincoln Cathedral

Arthingworth Manor at Market Harborough, Northamptonshire

During the 1970s, Codrington advised Mr & Mrs William Guinness at Arthingworth Manor. In Mrs Guinness' opinion, 'wherever you see good planting or clever design, it is the work of John Codrington.'¹⁰⁶ His design showed how the long curving lawn, often mown in two lengths, drew the eye

¹⁰³ Lincoln Cathedral, RP 0581, John Codrington, 'The Plants of the Cloister Garden, Lincoln Cathedral' (Undated).

¹⁰⁴ BRN 92908, Codrington, 'Botanical Maps of British Wild Flora', recorded where this rare orchid grew.

¹⁰⁵ RP 0581, 'The Plants of the Cloister Garden, Lincoln Cathedral'.

¹⁰⁶ George Plumptre, 'Well-Ordered Treasure', *Country Life*, 182 (29 August 1988), p. 177.

towards the surrounding countryside (Figure 14.76). Beds of shrubs and specimen trees flanked the lawns (Figure 14.77). At Arthingworth, too, Codrington designed a herb garden, planted with culinary herbs in a geometric pattern of brick squares.¹⁰⁷



Figure 14.76: Arthingworth Manor (1988)



Figure 14.77: Arthingworth Manor (1988)

¹⁰⁷- Plumptre, 'Well-Ordered Treasure', p. 178.

Three further herb gardens have been identified. Codrington designed a herb garden at Stockeld Park using various geometric shapes in the 1960s. Within a 30-foot square, four circular beds 10-feet in diameter were made, each with a *Cupressus fastigata* ‘Juniper’ planted at the centre to give vertical focus.¹⁰⁸ Four smaller circular beds were made in the centre.¹⁰⁹ The beds’ shape was formed by concrete, with the largest areas between the beds resembling cartwheels. Herbs, planted in gravel, were chosen for different leaf textures and included silver plants (Figure 14.78).¹¹⁰



Figure 14.78: Herb Garden, Stockeld Park (1986)

At Packwood House in Warwickshire, Codrington’s design was an interlocking chessboard, whereas at Stoke Park Pavilions near Towcester in Northamptonshire, a flagged herb garden was designed for his friend and

¹⁰⁸ Guy Cooper & Gordon Taylor, *English Herb Gardens* (London: Weidenfield & Nicolson, 1986), p. 55.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁰ People/Lifestyle, ‘Stockeld Park, North Yorkshire’, *House & Garden*, 63 (January 2008), p. 60. The garden was restored in 2007.

executor, Robin Duff Chancellor (1921-2010).¹¹¹ A description noted that an old orchard, walled on three sides had ‘a formal herb garden in the form of interlocking chessboards with alternate squares occupied with alternate different herbs’ (Figure 14.79).¹¹²



Figure 14.79: Stoke Park Pavilions (1979)

Codrington designed gardens not only in Britain, but worldwide although few details of these survive.¹¹³ In 1964, when James Fairfax (1933-2017) bought Retford House at Bowrai, New South Wales, the grounds and arboretum were overgrown. His mother, Elizabeth Fairfax (1907-1995), met Codrington, who was travelling to advise the Botanical Gardens in Perth in 1967.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Elizabeth Drury & Harriet Bridgeman, *Guide to the Gardens of Britain and Europe* (London: Granada, 1979), p. 44.

¹¹² Ibidem, p. 79. The garden is being replanted, but the original drawings have been lost.¹¹²

¹¹³ Appendix 4 gives a list of Codrington’s known commissions.

¹¹⁴ Gretchen Poiner & Sybil M Jack (Edited), *Gardens of History and Imagination: Growing New South Wales* (Sydney, Australia: Sydney University Press, 2016), p. 208.

After Retford House was bequeathed to the National Trust of Australia, it was described as being ‘very much an English country garden, with many features, including the picturesque fountain path, framed by hedges that mimic giant smooth pebbles’.¹¹⁵ Again, it shows Codrington’s love of paving and grey-leaved plants (Figure 14.80 and Figure 14.81).



Figure 14.80: Fountain Garden, Retford Park, Bowrai (2016)

Codrington was still designing gardens in 1987 and when he was almost ninety, he designed the front garden at Fairbank Cottage at Kirkby Lonsdale in Lancashire for Dr Rodney Gallacher.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Elizabeth Sebag-Montefiore, ‘From an Emu Run to a Pet Cemetery: Fairfax Family \$20 Million Estate Opens its Gates’, *The Guardian* (2 November 2016) [<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/nov/02/from-an-emu-run-to-a-pet-cemetery-fairfax-family-20m-estate-opens-its-gates>].

¹¹⁶ Stephen Lacey, ‘Whose Idea Was it Anyway?’, *Daily Telegraph*, 42371 (14 September 1991), p. xviii.

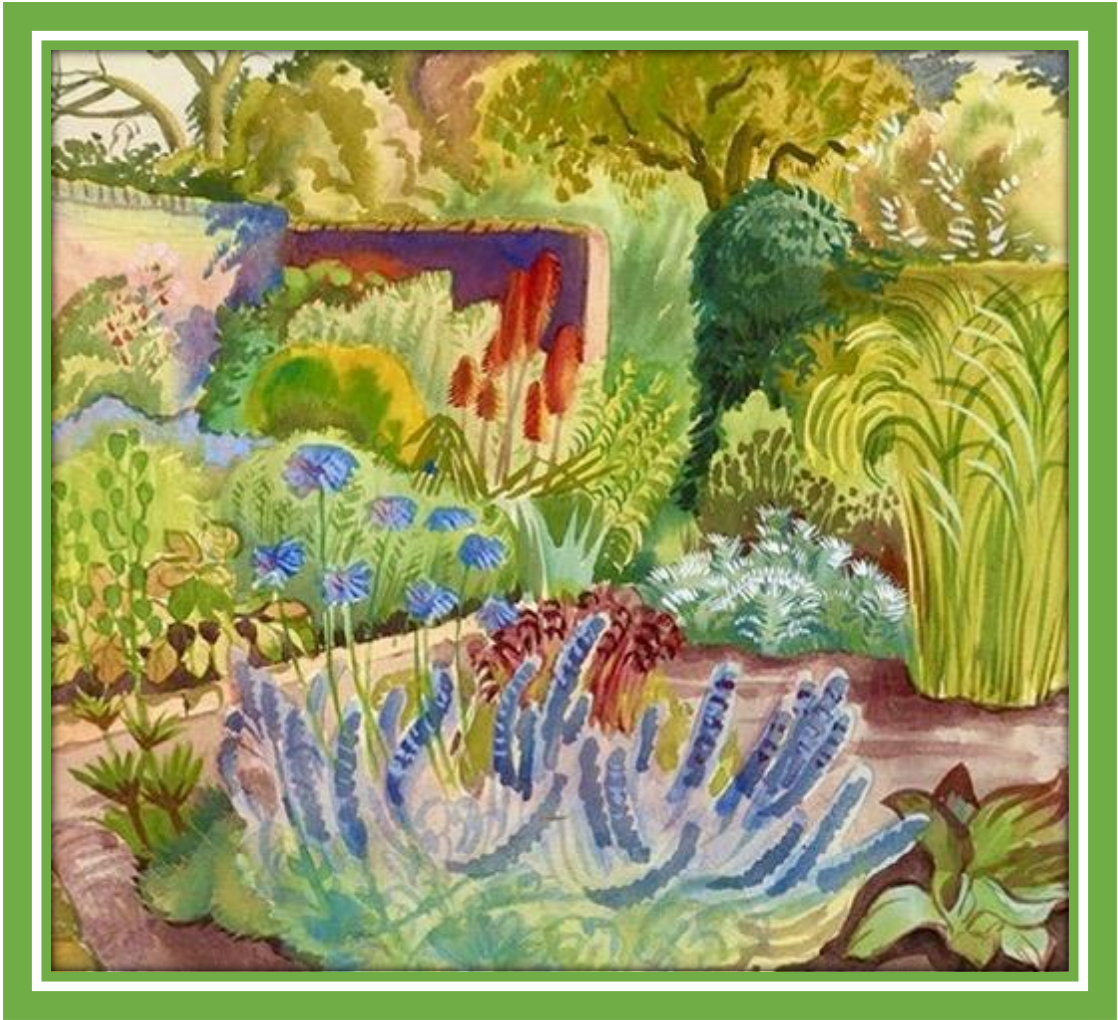


Figure 14.81: Fountain Garden from the House (2016)

Appendix 4 provides details of forty-seven gardens that have been identified, but undoubtedly these represent only a small proportion of his portfolio. However, they show his preference for certain schemes: grey and silver gardens and other carefully chosen colour combinations, geometric shaped herb gardens and long sweeping lawns to emphasise a view. They also show his wide knowledge of plants, although it appears he did not recommend the wildflowers he grew in his garden. It was there that his imaginative style was indulged and although fashionable today, was then considered unusual. As a visitor to his garden remarked, ‘I don’t think much of this garden, it’s all weeds, look at all this cow parsley’.¹¹⁷ Today, he would not need to rush to put a label reading, *Anthriscus sylvestris* on the largest clump.

¹¹⁷ Codrington, ‘My Garden, My Wilderness’, p. 509.

Conclusion



Kathleen Hale (1898-2000), *The Garden at Benton End* (1950s)

‘To create gardens is a marvellous art – possibly one of the oldest manifestations of art.’

Roberto Burle Marx³¹⁷

When twentieth-century garden design is discussed, three designers are usually noted as being inspirational: Gertrude Jekyll, Lawrence Johnston and Vita Sackville-West, who unlike them was not an artist-gardener. Thus, at the outset, if two artist-gardeners were so influential during this period, consideration must be given to whether the appreciable number of other artist-gardeners should be acknowledged as a discrete group and recognised as making a significant contribution to the history of gardens.

Whilst individual artist-gardeners’ contribution to garden design between 1890 and 1980 has been recognised, this study has shown that some who were acknowledged in their lifetime faded from view. One reason for this is that artist-gardeners often designed gardens for their own enjoyment and those who worked for clients – Jekyll, Alfred Parsons, Humphrey Waterfield and John Codrington – began their careers in middle age. For Parsons and Waterfield painting remained a primary concern and, as Parsons wrote to Robert Fuller at Great Chalfield Manor, ‘I can’t get away myself till my pictures are finished, but perhaps [Walter] Partridge will run down.’³¹⁸

As has been presented here, garden paintings are often the only record of a garden’s existence, and when gardens remain in private ownership considerable ingenuity has to be deployed to locate their records. However, this has uncovered new information, notably about Parsons’ life and the

³¹⁷ Roberto Burle Marx, ‘Foreward’, Sima Eliovson, *The Gardens of Roberto Burle Marx* (New York: Harry N Abrams, 1991).

³¹⁸ Swindon & Wiltshire History Centre, 3581 bx 17215. Letter Parsons to Fuller, 20 January 1909.

identification of a previously unknown garden of his at Abbots Ripton Hall. It has also been possible to enrich what is known about Waterfield's paintings and designs.³¹⁹ For the first time, sufficient information has been found to assess John Codrington's important contribution to garden design.

Yet it appears that many artist-gardeners had little interest in posterity, especially for their own gardens. Whilst Johnston left Hidcote to the National Trust, Jekyll left Munstead Wood to her nephew, who sold it, as did Parsons' nephew at Luggershill. E A Bowles' garden at Myddelton House is now managed by the Lea Valley Regional Park and some of Reginald Farrer's garden remains. There are plans to re-create Cedric Morris' garden at Benton End, but Codrington's gardens have not survived. Although the future of Waterfield's garden in Menton is secure, Hill Pasture was sold, and while elements of his design remain, his planting has virtually disappeared.

With regards to their designed gardens, it is unclear how artist-gardeners viewed them. Jekyll's detailed planting schemes survive, enabling many gardens with which she was involved to be restored, but most of Parsons' records have not and few of his designed gardens survive. Waterfield's records were destroyed and, although Codrington assisted in the management of the project at Emmanuel College, his usual practice was to visit a garden, produce a plan and let his clients interpret it as they wished.

Some artist-gardeners wrote about their gardens and most of these descriptions are still available in print or on internet sites. This includes writings by Jekyll, Bowles and Farrer's books about rock gardens. Parsons

³¹⁹ Jean Cornell, 'A Dual Life: An Assessment of the Gardens of Humphrey Waterfield, 1908-71' (Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Buckingham, 2015).

only wrote about his visit to Japan, whilst Ella du Cane's books are limited to overseas travel. Johnston wrote one article about plant hunting in Kenya, whilst Waterfield and Codrington wrote one each about Hill Pasture and Stone Cottage respectively. Aubrey Waterfield's wife and daughter described the garden at Aulla, whilst Morris regarded his paintings as his record.

The relationship between gardens and landscapes was explored to see how this evolved as styles in painting changed. Whilst the garden-artists' primary focus was gardens, Parsons was a landscape artist, whose pastoral scenes encapsulated William Robinson's view that gardens should be natural and blend seamlessly into the adjoining countryside. Jekyll, too, painted landscapes as a young woman, and at Munstead Wood her garden had an expanse of azaleas and rhododendrons before it merged into the Surrey woodlands.

After the First World War, although the Post-Impressionists Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell depicted landscape reduced to its essentials, their paintings were distinct from the garden at the Charleston Farmhouse, which their canvases reveal billowed with brightly coloured flowers. Paul Nash's stark landscapes sometimes recorded a garden devoid of flowers, but as this study has discovered, although he was thought to have no interest in gardens, when living at Iden he bought plants from the specialist Six Hills nursery. His brother John Nash's depictions of his gardens at Meadle and Bottengoms showed they bordered on open countryside, as did those of John Aldridge and Edward Bawden, both of whom are noted for their paintings of the Essex landscape. Whereas after 1945, artists like Ivon Hitchens' landscapes were more abstract, Morris's portrayal of The Pound and Benton End's gardens depicted them as part of the wider landscape. Waterfield's paintings and

garden designs always included the countryside, whilst at White's Farm and Little Bentley Hall, Codrington incorporated the sites' vistas into his design.

A significant theme considered here was to assess whether artist-gardeners' approach to design differed from those of other contemporary practitioners. Before 1914, Jekyll and Johnston, albeit in different ways, set a standard to assess how artist-gardeners' style evolved. Jekyll showed that formal gardens with extensive hard landscaping could be enhanced by imaginative planting, selected for its form and colour. Yet most artist-gardeners' designs restricted formality to areas near the house. Parsons created discrete areas using yew or box hedging, an idea adapted by Johnston as 'garden rooms', which became a key design feature in subsequent gardens.

Although Aubrey Waterfield's garden at Aulla reflected Jekyll's ideas, at I Tatti he planted an area of spring bulbs in grass. Bowles made his alpine meadow, innovative at the time, after the First World War. However, Bawden and Charles Mahoney's gardens were more representative of small gardens where people not only gardened, but also enjoyed themselves. These were the forerunners of today's outdoor living. At Hill Pasture Waterfield re-interpreted a traditional romantic garden, but Morris and Codrington pushed the boundaries forward, as the balance between design and informality was more tenuous. Their view that gardens were essentially places in which to grow plants was typical of many artist-gardeners, whose maxim was 'right plant, right place'. For most, this interest in plants started in childhood, often with native wildflowers, which were later collected in other parts of the world. Although Bowles set his plants in an alpine meadow, Codrington allowed wildflowers to seed in his garden.

This in-depth knowledge of plants, combined with an acute awareness of colour, enabled Jekyll and her successors not only to design gardens, but to experiment with different planting schemes in restricted colours. Bowles experimented with variegated, gold, silver and red-leaved plants and those with unusual forms, whilst Johnston planted borders at Hidcote comprising mainly red flowers. Codrington was even more resourceful. A design featuring black and white tulips appealed to others, although his idea to combine purple and gold was unsuccessful. Waterfield viewed white in the countryside's hedgerows as its predominant colour in a sequence starting with blackthorn through to May blossom and elderflowers and, as a consequence, only planted white or very pale pink flowering plants on his garden's boundary. Yet Jekyll and Morris went further and bred plants. Jekyll wanted plants in the exact shades needed for schemes like her primrose garden, whilst Morris' experiments resulted in flowers in hitherto unknown shades, as in his *Papaver rhoeas* strain. Although he bred the first pink bearded iris, every part of the iris had to meet his exacting standards.

Although it could be argued that artist-gardeners' emphasis on plants was to the detriment of design, it does not signify that it was overlooked as the twentieth century progressed. Paul Nash's depiction of trees, which he imparted to his students, showed that their leaves could enhance a strong framework. John Nash's garden was planted around his ponds. Whilst Codrington referred to his garden as a 'jungle' or 'wilderness', Beth Chatto noted its strong underlying design.³²⁰ She also commented that Morris did

³²⁰ Quoted in Catherine Horwood, *Beth Chatto: A Life with Plants* (London: Pimpernel Press, 2019), p. 193.

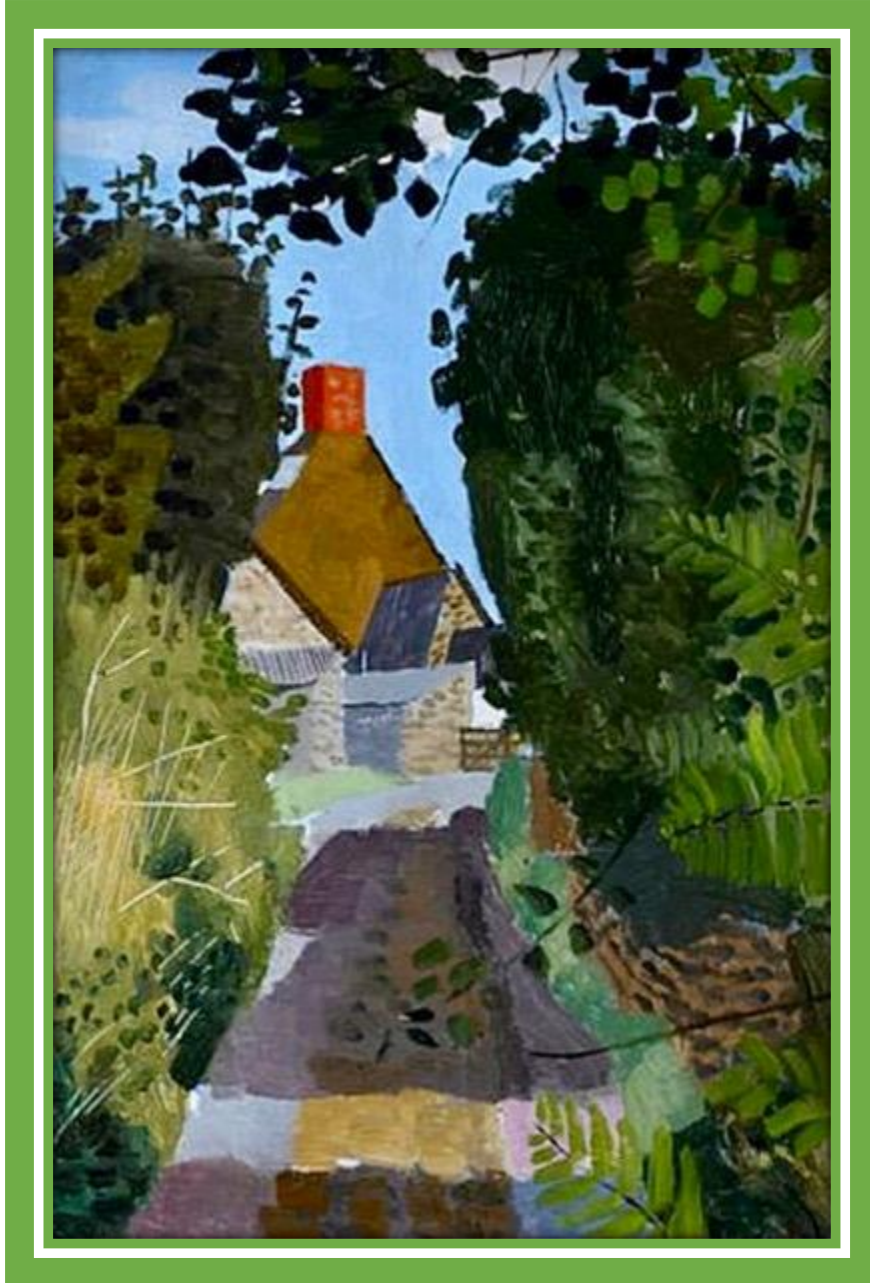
not discuss design with her, yet his plants were displayed in beds within a walled garden.³²¹

As this study has shown, artist-gardeners not only depicted how gardens evolved over time, from the large romantic gardens of the Edwardian era to small gardens where people relaxed, they were resourceful and adapted their designs and planting to respond to changing circumstances. Their schemes, once considered highly innovative, are now an accepted part of garden design. Thus, the way to ensure that artist-gardeners are given their due as an integral part of garden history, and which has been presented in this study, is to view them as a loosely-defined group, ‘the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.’³²² They were a group that made a significant contribution to the design of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century gardens.

³²¹ Beth Chatto, ‘A Painter’s Palette’ in Erica Hunningher (Edited), *Gardens of Inspiration* (London: BBC Books, 2001), p. 64.

³²² Aristotle, *Metaphysica, Book 8, 1045a* (350 BCE), W D Ross (Translated) (<http://www.classics.mit.edu>) [Accessed 21 March 2019].

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Appendices



Appendix 1

Artists-Gardeners

Edith Helena Adie (1864-1947)

Garden artist.

John Aldridge (1905-83)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Place House, Great Bardfield, Essex. Friend of Edward Bawden, John Nash and Cedric Morris.

Helen Allingham (1848-1926)

Artist noted for her depiction of cottages and gardens.

William Shute Barrington, 10th Viscount Barrington (1873-1960)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Nether Lypiatt Manor, Gloucestershire. Friend of Lawrence Johnston.

Edward Bawden (1903-1989)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Brick House, Great Bardfield, Essex. Friend of John Aldridge, Charles Mahoney, John Nash and Eric Ravilious.

Vanessa Bell (1879-1961)

Artist-gardener who lived with Duncan Grant at Charleston Farmhouse in Sussex.

Edward Augustus Bowles (1865-1954)

Botanical artist and gardener, who lived at Myddelton House, Enfield.

Eleanor Vere Boyle (1825-1916)

Artist, writer and gardener, who lived at Huntercombe Manor, Buckinghamshire.

Lieutenant-Colonel John Codrington (1898-1991)

Soldier and artist-gardener, who had gardens in London and Stone Cottage, Oakham in Rutland.

Ella Du Cane (1874-1943)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Beacons, near Braxted in Essex.

Phyllis Dodd (1899-1995)

Artist, who specialised in portraits and was married to the artist and friend of Edward Bawden, Percy Bliss (1900-1984).

George Samuel Elgood (1851-1943)

Artist-gardener, who had gardens at Markfield in Leicestershire and Knockholt in Kent.

Evelyn Dunbar (1906-1960)

Artist-gardener. Friend and lover of Charles Mahoney.

Reginald Farrer (1880-1920)

Artist-gardener, writer and plant collector, who lived at Clapham in Yorkshire and friend of E A Bowles.

Roger Fry (1866-1934)

Artist-gardener, art historian and critic. Friend of Vanessa Bell, who made a garden, Durbins in Guildford, Surrey.

Frank Galsworthy (1863-1959)

Artist and botanical artist, who gardened at Green Lane Farm, Chertsey in Surrey. Friend of E A Bowles.

Duncan Grant (1885-1978)

Artist-gardener, who lived with Vanessa Bell at Charleston Farmhouse in Sussex.

Tirzah Garwood (1908-1951)

Artist, who was married to Eric Ravilious. For a time, they shared Brick House with Edward Bawden.

Derek Jarman (1942-1994)

Film Director and artist-gardener, who made a garden at Prospect Cottage, Dungeness in Kent.

Arthur Lett-Haines (1894-1978)

Artist and lifelong partner of Cedric Morris.

Kathleen Hale (1898-2000)

Artist and writer, who was a close friend of Lett Haines and Cedric Morris.

Patrick Heron (1920-1999)

Abstract artist and gardener who lived at Eagles Nest in Devon.

Ivon Hichens (1893-1979)

Artist who painted but did not tend his garden in Sussex

Walter Hoyle (1922-2000)

Artist, who lived for a time at Great Bardfield.

Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932)

Artist-gardener and craftswoman, who lived at Munstead Wood, Godalming, Surrey.

Major Lawrence Waterbury Johnson (1871-1958)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Hidcote Manor in Gloucestershire and Serre de la Madone in Menton.

Cyril [Charles] Mahoney (1903-1968)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Oak Cottage, Wrotham, Kent. Friend and lover of Evelyn Dunbar. Friend of, Edward Bawden, John Nash and Geoffrey Rhoades.

Sir Cedric Lockwood Morris (1889-1962)

Artist-gardener and plantsman who lived at The Place, Higham and Benton End at Hadleigh in Suffolk.

John Northcote Nash (1893-1977)

Artist-gardener and brother of Paul Nash, who lived at Bottengoms, Wormingfold in Essex. Friend of Cedric Morris.

Paul Nash (1889-1946):

Artist-gardener and brother of John Nash

William Andrews Nesfield (1703-1881):

Artist and landscape gardener.

Marianne North (1830-1890)

Botanical artist and gardener.

Russell Page (1906-1985):

Garden designer and artist.

Alfred William Parsons (1847-1920)

Landscape painter, illustrator and garden designer who lived in Kensington and Luggershill, Broadway.

Beatrice Emma Parsons (1870-1955)

Garden artist, who lived in Hertfordshire. No relation to Alfred Parsons.

Eric Ravilious (1903-1942)

Artist and Tirzah Garwood's husband. Friend of Edward Bawden.

Humphry Repton (1752-1818)

Artist and landscape garden designer.

Geoffrey Rhoades (1898-1980)

Artist and friend of Charles Mahoney.

Ernest Arthur Rowe (1863-1922)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Ravello, Rusthall in Kent.

Kenneth Rowntree (1915-1997)

Artist, who lived for a time at Great Bardfield. Friend of Humphrey Waterfield.

Francis Inigo Thomas (1865-1950)

Artist, architect and garden designer.

Joan Warburton (1920-1996)

Artist and friend of Cedric Morris and Lett Haines.

Aubrey William Waterfield (1874-1944)

Artist-gardener who lived at Aulla in Italy and in Kent. Brother of Margaret Waterfield.

Derick Humphrey Waterfield (1908-1971)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Hill Pasture, Broxton in Essex and Clos du Peyronnet in France. Second cousin of Aubrey and Margaret Waterfield.

Margaret Helen Waterfield (1863-1953)

Artist-gardener, who lived at Lympne Kent. Sister of Aubrey Waterfield.

Appendix 2

Properties Associated with Alfred Parsons and Captain Walter Partridge

Eighty gardens can be attributed to Alfred Parsons comprising:

Commissions	Number
Alfred Parsons	17
Partridge & Parsons	64
Total	81

Gardens Designed by Alfred Parsons

Projects	Number
Own gardens	2
Advice	3
Visit only	2
Schemes	10
Total	17

Alfred Parsons: Own Gardens

No	Property	Date
1	54 Bedford Gardens Kensington London	1879 -1914
2	Luggershill Broadway Worcestershire	circa 1903-1920

Alfred Parsons: Garden Projects

Parsons' Friends: Possible Advice

	Property	Client	Date	Source
1	Gravetye Manor Hoathly West Sussex	Mr William Robinson Paintings, Porch, Moat Cottage and possible garden advice	1888	Historic England AL0356/038/01
2	Morgans Hall Fairford Cirencester Gloucestershire	Mr & Mrs Edwin Abbey Visited, possible advice	1893	E V Lucas <i>Edward Austin Abbey</i>
3	Nymans Handscross East Sussex	Mr Ludvig Messel Book illustration, paintings and possible garden advice	1910-1915	Ludvig Messel <i>A Garden Flora: Trees and Flowers in the Gardens at Nymans 1890-1915</i>

Site Visit

	Property	Client	Date	Source
1	Antibes France	Unknown Mentioned once	1899	Tudway Letters
2	Stackallan Meath Ireland	William Russell-Hamilton 8 th Viscount Boyne Probable visit	1904	Tudway Letters

Garden Schemes

	Property	Client	Date	Source
1	Bishopswood House Ross-on-Wye Herefordshire	Colonel Harry McCalmont Garden scheme	1894-1899	Tudway Letters

	Property	Client	Date	Source
2	Clouds House East Knoyle Wiltshire	Hon Percy & Mrs Madeline Wyndham Partial scheme	1884	<i>Country Life</i> (19 November 1904)
3	Court Farm Broadway Worcestershire	Mrs Mary Anderson De Navarro Garden scheme	1895- 1920	Mary Anderson <i>A Few More Reminiscences</i>
4	Florham New Jersey USA	Mr & Mrs Hamilton McKown Twombly Italian Garden	1903 - 1908	Tudway Letters
5	Lamb House West Street Rye East Sussex	Mr Henry James Garden scheme	1897	H Montgomery Hyde <i>The Story of Lamb House, Rye</i>
6	Roseneath Helensburgh Argyllshire	Princess Louise Duchess of Argyll Garden scheme	1899- 1908	Tudway Letters
7	Russell House Broadway Worcestershire	Mr Francis Davis Millet Garden scheme	1890- 1899	Tudway Letters
8	Sunningdale Park Ascot Berkshire	Major William Joicey Garden scheme	1897 →	Tudway Letters
9	Tower Cottage Winchelsea East Sussex	Mr & Mrs Joseph Comyns Carr Small garden	Before 1892	Alice Comyns Carr <i>Reminiscences</i>
10	Provost's Lodge Worcester College Oxford	Dr Henry Daniels Rose Garden	1903	Francis Lys <i>Worcester College, 1882- 1943:</i>

Partridge & Parsons: Garden Commissions

Commissions	Number
Consultation only	16
Site visit	15
Some work carried out	10
Complete garden schemes	23
Total	64

Consultation only

	Property	Client	Date	Source
1	Ballimore House Otterferry Argyll	Major John MacRae-Gilstrap Enquiry only. Site visit considered too expensive	1901	Tudway Letters
2	Bedgebury Park Goudhurst Kent	Mr Philip Hope-Beresford Potential garden, but house sold	July 1899	Tudway Letters
3	Easton Lodge Great Dunmow Essex	Frances Evelyn 'Daisy' Greville Countess of Warwick Asked Parsons to visit, but may not have as Peto was working there	1903	Tudway Letters
4	Farmleigh Castle Knoll Dublin Ireland	Edward Cecil Guinness 1 st Earl Iveagh Agent's letter asking them to visit	1905	Tudway Letters
5	Hatherop Castle Cirencester Gloucestershire	Sir Thomas Bazley Possible visit	1901	Tudway Letters
6	Tregothnan Trenorchion Cornwall	Evelyn Boscawen 7 th Viscount Falmouth Consulted, but may not have visited	1901	Tudway Letters

	Property	Client	Date	Source
7	The Islet Maidenhead Court Maidenhead Berkshire	Mr Edward Wagg Possible visit	1901	Tudway Letters
8	Unknown Gloucestershire	Unknown Went to see about a garden job	1900	Tudway Letters
9	Unknown (?? Warplestone) Guildford Surrey	Unknown Mention of Parsons visiting	1899	Tudway Letters
10	Unknown Suffolk	Mr Clark Enquiry, but Partridge thought their terms would be too expensive	1906	Tudway Letters
11	Unknown Yorkshire	Lady Londesborough Partridge said he would put her off	1901- 1902	
12	Unknown Isle of Wight	Unknown Partridge going to see about a possible garden	1900	Tudway Letters
13	Unknown London	Unknown Possibility of a big job	1900	Tudway Letters
14	White Lodge Windsor	? Royal Family ? No further details	1901	Tudway Letters
15	Woodstock West Sussex	Sir Charles Day Rose	1904- 1905	Tudway Letters

Site Visit

	Property	Client	Date	Source
1	Aske Hall Richmond North Yorkshire	Lawrence Dundas Lord Zetland Consultation and probable visit, but decided to implement scheme themselves	1901- 1902	Tudway Letters

	Property	Client	Date	Source
2	Bolton Castle Wensleydale Yorkshire	William Orde-Powlett Lord Bolton Partridge visited	1905	Tudway Letters
3	Hardwick House Whitchurch-on-Thames Oxfordshire	Sir Charles Day Rose Visit and garden design, but probably not carried out	1901	Tudway Letters
4	Hollington House Woolton Hill Newbury Berkshire	Mr William Peter Taylor Site visit. Garden scheme considered too expensive as wanted a scheme his gardener could implement	1902	Tudway Letters
5	Munden Watford Hertfordshires	Mrs Ellen Holland-Hibbert, Viscountess Knutsford Site visit and suggestions	1901	Tudway Letters
6	Sharcombe Dinder Wells Somerset	Sir John F Hall Mentioned several times Scheme proposed, but unsure if it was carried out	1899- 1904	Tudway Letters
7	Spreacombe Manor Braunton Devon	Major & Mrs George Montague Style Several visits, but scheme probably not implemented	1903- 1905	Tudway Letters
8	The Coombe Wells Somerset	Mr Charles Clement Tudway Visit and probable garden advice	1902	Tudway Letters
9	Unknown	Mrs Manning Visit	1899	Tudway Letters
10	Unknown Gloucestershire	Unknown Went to see about a garden job	1900	Tudway Letters
11	Unknown Sheffield	Unknown Going to see a 'new job'	1901	Tudway Letters
12	Unknown Twyford Bewkshire	Unknown Meeting Parsons to look at a little gardening job	1904	Tudway Letters

	Property	Client	Date	Source
13	Warwick Castle Warwick	Frances Evelyns 'Daisy' Greville, Countess of Warwick Lady Warwick sent for Parsons	1900	Tudway Letters
14	Worth Hall West Sussex	Sir Thomas Raikes Thompson Visit. Thompson died in 1904	1903	Tudway Letter

Some Work Carried Out

No	Property	Client	Date	Source
1	Abbots Ripton Hall Rutland Huntingdon	Mr & Mrs Howard Gilliatt Double herbaceous borders	1899- 1900	Tudway Letters
2	Bawdsey Manor Felixtowe Suffolk	Sir William Cuthbert Quilter Probable scheme for a sunken garden	1903- 1908	Historic England
3	Brynbella Tremirchion Flintshire	Mrs Edith Mainwaring Parsons visited to advise, gave planting advice and minor work carried out	1899	Tudway Letters
4	Bryngarw House Bridgend Glamorganshire	Captain Onslow Powell Traherne Correspondence re water garden and levels in 1905 Traherne wanted the work done gradually starting with the valley	1904- 1905 1910 - 1918	Tudway Letters
5	Ditchley Park Chipping Norton Oxfordshire	Mr Harold Dillon Minor work carried out	1899	Tudway Letters
6	Hardres Court Upper Hardres Kent	Mr George Marshall Laying out garden mentioned	1901	Tudway Letters
7	Kidmore End Near Reading Berkshire	Mr Ronald Keith Mackenzie Rose garden	1903	Tudway Letters

No	Property	Client	Date	Source
8	Unknown	Mr Meysey-Thompson Delighted with the design and how well the plans have worked out	1902	Tudway Letters
9	Unknown	Mr Musgrove Rose garden	1904	Tudway Letters
10	Walmsgate Hall Louth Lincolnshire	Mrs Frances Dallas- Yorke Visited and probable garden scheme	1899	Tudway Letters

Garden Schemes

No	Property	Client	Dates	Source
1	Battledene Wash Common Berkshire	Captain Walter Partridge	1899- 1915	Tudway Letters
2	Brockhampton Park Andoversford Hampshire	Colonel Fairfax Rhodes	1900- 1902	Tudway Letters
3	Callis Court Broadstairs Kent	Mr Harry Hananel Marks	1902 - 1905	Tudway Letters
4	Down Hall Hatfield Broad Oak Essex	Major & Mrs Horace Calverley Scheme not completed due to lack of funding	1902 – 1903	Tudway Letters
5	East Burnham Lodge Slough Buckinghamshire	Mrs Maria Harvey Scheme may not have been completed	1901 – 1905	Tudway Letters
6	Fullerton Manor Andover Hampshire	Mr William Cory & Miss Alice Cory Scheme may not have been completed	1904– 1906	Tudway Letters

No	Property	Client	Dates	Source
7	Great Chalfield Manor Bradford-on-Avon Wiltshire	Major Robert Fuller	1907 - 1912	Swindon & Wiltshire Archive Centre 3581 bx 17215
8	Harleyford Manor Marlow Buckinghamshire	Sir William Clayton	1899	Tudway Letters
9	Hartpury House, Hartpury Gloucestershire	Mr & Mrs William Gordon- Canning	1900 - 1902	Tudway Letters
10	Kidbrooke Park Forest Row East Grinstead East Sussex	Mrs Marion Gerard Leigh	1902 - 1904	Tudway Letters
11	Lyndon Road Manton Rutland	Major William Harford	1900	Tudway Letters 1901 Census
12	Milton Lodge Wells Somerset	Mr Charles Tudway	1909 - 1913	Tudway Estate Miscella neous Papers
13	Petty France Manor Badminton Gloucestershire	Major William A Harford	1901 - 1903	Tudway Letters
14	Preshaw House Exton Winchester Hampshire	Major Reginald Harry Cholmondeley	1904- 1905	Tudway Letters
15	Preston Hall Oakham Rutland	General Sir Alfred & Mrs Codrington	1900- 1902	Tudway Letters
16	Shiplake Court Henley- on-Thames Oxfordshire	Mr Robert H C Harrison	1899- 1905	Tudway Letters
17	The Firs Newbury Berkshire	Mr Arthur Charles Wombwell	1902- 1905	Tudway Letters

No	Property	Client	Dates	Source
18	Trysull Manor Trysull Staffordshire	Mr Benjamin Howard Mander	1901- 1902	Tudway Letters
19	Warnham Court Horsham West Sussex	Mr Charles James Lucas	1904- 1906	Tudway Letters
20	Welbeck Abbey Worksop Nottinghamshire	William Cavendish-Bentick 6 th Duke of Portland Three schemes implemented	1899- 1905	Tudway Letters
21	Wightwick Manor Wolverhampton	Mr Theodore Samuel Mander	1899- 1900	Tudway Letters
22	Wiseton Hall Bawtry Nottinghamshire	General Sir Joseph Frederick Laycock	1899- 1902	Tudway Letters
23	Woodcock Lodge Little Berkhamsted Hertfordshire	Lady Anne Agnew of Lochnaw Scheme not completed	1902- 1904	Tudway Letters

Sources of Wealth

Information was collected from:

Probate Records: <http://www.ancestry.co.uk>

W D Rubenstein, 'British Millionaires, 1809-1949', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 47 (1974), pp. 202-223.

F M L Thompson, *Gentrification and the Enterprise Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

The 'Partners'

	Status	Died	Probate £	Today £
Parsons, Alfred	Grandfather: Maltster Father: General Practitioner	1920	18,400	903,418
Partridge, Walter St Ives Croker	Grandfather: Ironmaster, 1 Father: Navy and Wine merchant	1924	7,505	43,755
Tudway, Charles Clement	Landowner Sugar plantation in Antigua	1927	66,293	3,851,198

Only Parsons was not included in Edward Walford's, *Count Families of the United Kingdom* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1904 Edition)

Clients

Client	Status	Died	Probate £	Today £
Agnew, Lady Gertrude	Landed estate	1922	Sealed	Unknown
Boscawen, Evelyn Edward 7 th Viscount Falmouth	Landed estate/Army	1918	327,033	18,733,050
Calverley, Major Horace	Landowner	1929	58,648	3,753,301
Cholmondeley, Major Reginald Harry*	Army	1941	2,383	120,186
Clayton, Sir William	Landowner	1914	143,000	16,624,480
Codrington, General Sir Alfred	Army	1945	80,780	3,512,696
Cory, Mr William & Cory, Miss Alice	Coal (W) (A)	1933 1963	215,396 179,373	15,531,688 3,784,417
Dallas-Yorke, Mrs Frances	Landowner	1924	32,730	2,360,081
Daniels, Dr Henry*	Academic			Unknown
De Navarro, Mrs Mary Anderson	American actress	1940	15,970	901,231
Dillon, Viscount Harold Arthur*	Land/Army	1932	226,872	15,955,264
Dundas, Lawrence, Lord Zetland	Landed estate	1928	454,142	28,746,666
Fuller, Major Robert	Rubber/ land/army	1955	114,807	3,034,794
Gerard-Leigh, Mrs Marion (Halsey)	Own means	1927	21,493	1,373,046
Gilliatt, Howard	G K Gilliatt & Sons	1906	272,018	33,323,422
Gordon-Canning, Mr William	Land and army	1929	5,152	329,757
Greville, Frances Evelyn, 'Daisy', Countess of Warwick	Landed estate	1938	37,100	2,515,954s
Guinness, Edward Cecil, 1 st Earl Iveagh	Landed estate	1927	11,100,000	702,568,333
Hall, Sir John Frederick	Landowner	1905	58,232	7,133,855
Harford, Major William	Landowners	1924	33,968	2,080,631
Harrison, Mr Robert Hichens Camden	Stockbroker	1924	89,080	5,456,389
Harvey, Mrs Catherine Maria	Widow/Inherited	1929	42,960	2,749,681
Holland-Hibbert, Mrs Ellen Viscountess Knutsford	Landed estate	1935	190,351	13,646,593
Hope-Beresford, Mr Phillip	Landed estate	1916	6,494	569,124
James, Mr Henry	American writer	1916	8,961	785,328
Joicey, Major William James	Landowner/Coal	1912	713,293	82,084,334
Laycock, General Sir Joseph Frederick	Landowner/ Army	1952	506,679	14,688,505
Louise, Duchess of Argyll	Landed estate	1939		Unknown
Lucas, Mr Charles James	Landowner	1928	62,522	3,957,295
MacRae-Gilstrap, Major John	Landowner/ Army	1937	Sealed	Unknown
Mainwaring, Mrs Edith	Own means	1920	46,778	2,106,489
Mander, Benjamin Howard	Varnish manufacturer	1912	155,373	17,880,450
Mander, Samuel Theodore	Varnish manufacturer	1900	178,548	22,110,841

Client	Status	Died	Probate £	Today £
Marks, Mr Harry Hananel	Newspaper owner MP	1917	30,933	2,162,084
Marshall Mr George	Merchant/ Shipowner	1914		Unknown
McCalmont, Colonel Harry Leslie Blundell	Inherited landed estates	1902	2,000,000	247,673,913
Millet, Mr Francis Davis	US artist living on own means	1912	4,474	514,872
Mostyn-Llewellyn, Mr Thomas	Stockbroker	1927	13	823
Musgrove, Mr George	Unknown			Unknown
Orde-Powlett, William Thomas Lord, Bolton	Landed estate	1922	673,212	33,542,233
Quilter, Sir William Cuthbert	Inherited	1911	1,179,000	139,564,250
Rhodes, Colonel Fairfax	Army	1929	465,688	29,806,648
Rose, Sir Charles Day	Business/MP	1913	355,419	41,319,272
Russell-Hamilton, William 8 th Viscount Boyne	Landed estate	1907	668,762	31,055,377
Traherne, Captain Onslow Powell	Land/Coal mining	1950	4,588	158,377
Twombly, Mr Hamilton McKown	US millionaire, wife, Florence Vanderbilt	1910		Unknown
Wagg, Mr Edward	Stockbroker	1933	781,540	56,854,970
Wombwell, Mr Arthur Charles	Land/Army	1921	77,619	3,828,196
Wyndham, Hon Percy	Landed estate	1914	179,003	20,810,012

Appendix 3

Iris Bed, Hill Pasture

Colour	Abbreviation
Bicolour	BC
Blue	B
Blue-violet	BV
Lavender	L
Lilac	LL
Pink	PK
Purple	P
Unknown	U
Violet	V

Varieties Planted

Variety	No	BC	P	V	L	LL	BV	B	PK
Aline	1				X				
Astarte	1								
Blue Ensign	2						X		
Blue Sapphire	2							X	
Brimpton	1							X	
Conquistador						X			
Corrida	5						X		
Helen McGregor	1							X	
Hermia	3			X					
Jane Phillips	1							X	
Joanna	1			X					
Lord of June	1			X					
Louis Bel	3	X-							
Maisie Lowe	1			X					
Marjorie	3		X						
Millie Grove	3		X						
Mount Royal	5	X							
Mrs Adelita Robinson	3		X						
Pink Satin	1			x					
Pink Seedling'	1								X
Praetor	3		X						
Seminole	3								
Serena	3		X						
Sir Michael	2			X					
Susan Bliss	3			X		X			
Sweet Lavender	5				X				
Sylvia Murphy	1						X		
Woodley	1							X	

Irises' Planting

Top left	Top right
Across top	Across top
'Sylvia Murray' 'Helen McGregor',	Iris 'Jane Phillips'
Outer row	Outer row
Pink seedling 'Mrs Robinson' x 2' 'Blue Ensign' 'Praetor' x 2	'Hermia' x 2
Second row	Second row
'Millie Grove' 'Mrs Robinson' 'Sir Michael' x 2 'Praetor' 'Maisie Lowe' 'Sapphire Blue'	'Marjorie' 'Hermia'
	Third row
	Marjorie' x 2
Inner row	Inner row
Mount Royal	Mount Royal'
Bottom left	Bottom right
Outer row	Outer row
'Sapphire' x 2 'Louis Bel' x 2	'Sweet Lavender' x 3 'Susan Bliss' 'Blue Ensign'
Second row	Second row
'Millie Grove' 'Conquistador' 'Millie Grove' 'Corrida' 'Louis Bel' 'Sweet Lavender'	'Sweet Lavender' 'Serena' 'Susan Bliss' 'Seminole'
Third row	Third row
'Conquistador' x 2 'Corrida' 'Lord of June' 'Astarte' 'Brimpton'	'Serena' x 2 'Susan Bliss' 'Seminole'
	Fourth row
	'Pink Satin' 'Seminole'
Inner row	Inner row
Conquistador' x 2 'Woodley' 'Joanna'	'Maisie Lowe' 'Aline' 'Mount Royal' x 2

Appendix 4

Gardens Designed by Lieutenant-Colonel John Codrington

To date, 47 gardens designed by John Codrington have been identified, but the number he designed in the UK is considerably larger.

Although 12 gardens have been identified overseas, there are no details about seven of them.

Gardens Designed	Number
Own gardens	4
UK gardens	29
Outside UK	14
Total	47

UK Gardens

	Date	Garden	Scheme	Source
1.	1920s	Unknown Beirut Lebanon	Small garden designed and planted	John Codrington 'Gathering Moss'
2.	1936 -1942	Park House Onslow Square London	Garden designed and planted	<i>Country Life Homes & Gardens</i>
3.	1958 -1991	1 Ranelagh Cottages Ebury Bridge Road London	Garden designed and planted	<i>The Garden</i>
4.	1951 -1991	Stone Cottage Hambleton Rutland	Garden designed for his sister. When she died she left him the house.	<i>The Garden</i>

UK Gardens

	Date	Garden	Scheme	Source
1.	1914 circa	Rev & Mrs Wentworth Watson Rockingham Castle Cottingham Northamptonshire	'The Cross' two double borders intersecting at a sundial	Ray Desmond <i>British Gardens</i>

	Date	Garden	Scheme	Source
2.	1920s	Barracks Aldershot Hampshire	Shrubbery	Tony Venison 'Garden of a Restless Spirit <i>Country Life</i> 24 September 1977
3.	1951- 1980	Mrs Mary Saunders Orchard Cottage Gretton Gloucestershire	Advice on enlarging pond to make it look more natural and selecting plants	Lees-Milne & Verey, <i>An Englishwoman's Garden</i>
4.	1959 circa	Lady Anne Palmer Rosemoor Torrington Devon	Advice on garden/Design of borders	<i>Country Life</i> 16 April 1986
5.	1960	Miss Eve Disher Ground Floor 40 South Eaton Place London	Courtyard Garden	<i>Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society</i> November 1962
6.	1960- 1965	Emmanuel College Cambridge	New Court The Paddock Master's House	Emmanuel College records
7.	1960s	Dr & Mrs Owen- Taylor Le Clos du Chenin St Peters Jersey Channel Islands	Garden Scheme	International Dendrology Society Yearbook 1969-1970
8.	1960s	Mr & Mrs C Smith-Rylands Sherbourne Park Warwick Warwickshire	Advice and arboretum	<i>Country Life</i> 1 December 1988
9.	1960s	Mr Robin Chancellor Stoke Park Pavilions Towcester Northamptonshire	Herb Garden	<i>Guide to the Gardens of Britain & Europe</i>

	Date	Garden	Scheme	Source
10.	1960s	Mrs Mary Dent-Brocklehurst Sudeley Castle Winchcombe Gloucestershire	Unknown Only mentioned involvement	<i>Country Life</i> 17 May 2001
11.	1960s	Rev Henry Thorold Marston Hall Grantham Lincolnshire	Advice on planting borders	John Anthony <i>The Gardens of Britain: East Midlands</i>
12.	1960s	Unknown Stockeld Park Wetherby North Yorkshire	Herb Garden	House & Garden June 2008
13.	1962 circa	Count de Salis Yarlington House Wincanton Somerset	Plans, but not implemented	Somerset Gardens Trust Newsletter Summer 2014
14.	1962	Mr & Mrs M Shone White's Farm Wantage Oxfordshire	Garden scheme	Family records
15.	1963 circa	Mr & Mrs D Caccia Edwardes Square London	Garden scheme	Angela Caccia
16.	1965 circa	Brigadier & Mrs N Breitmeyer Bartlow Park Bartlow Cambridgeshire	Garden scheme	Parks & Gardens UK ID 5602
17.	1966	Colonel H Clive Dorothy Clive Garden Willoughbridge Market Drayton Staffordshire	Advice Borders near the entrance	Parks & Gardens UK ID 1111

	Date	Garden	Scheme	Source
18.	1970 circa	Mr & Mrs W Guinness Arthingworth Market Harborough Northamptonshi re	Garden scheme and herb garden	<i>Country Life</i> 29 August 1988
19.	1970s	Lady Conant Periwinkle Cottage Lyndon Rutland	Garden scheme	National Garden Scheme 2004
20.	1970s	Lincoln Cathedral Mary Cloister Garden Lincoln	Border comprising plants associated with the Virgin Mary	Lincoln Cathedral Leaflet
21.	1970s	Mr & Mrs C Voullaire Worthy Manor Minehead Somerset	Advice not implemented as thought too radical	<i>Country Life</i> 7 April 1988
22.	1970s	Mr J Hambro Waverton House Moreton-in-the- Marsh Gloucestershire	Avenue of willow leafed pears down to a statue	<i>Daily Telegraph</i> 5 May 1991
23.	1972- 1978	Viscount De L'Isle Penshurst Place Penshurst Kent	Various schemes: Grey and silver garden, Nuttery, Magnolia Garden	Penshurst Place archive
24.	1973	Mr & Mrs R Brackenbury Holmpierrepoint Hall Nottingham	Advice on east garden not implemented	www.holmepie rreponthall.co m>uploads
25.	1976	Mr & Mrs Palmer- Tomkinson Little Bentley Hall Near Colchester Essex	Garden scheme	Private records

	Date	Garden	Scheme	Source
26.	1978 circa	Mrs A Holland- Hibbert Manor House Farm Beckley Oxfordshire	Garden advice	<i>Hortus</i> Winter 1995
27.	1979	Mr & Mrs Oakley The Cottage Rectory Lane Medbourne Market Harborough Leicestershire	Garden scheme	http://www.medbourne.org.uk/parishcouncil/NP-Documents/Appendix11-LocalHeritageAssetList.pdf
28.	1987	Dr Rodney Gallacher Fairbank Cottage Kirkby Lonsdale Lancashire	Plans for front and rear garden	<i>Daily Telegraph</i> 14 September 1991
29.	1980s	Mr & Mrs T Haet The Old Hall Market Overton Rutland	Advice	National Garden Scheme 2006

Outside UK

	Date	Garden	Scheme	Source
1.	1920 circa	Smyrna Turkey	Residency Garden	
2.	1920s	Army Barracks Kasr el Nil Cairo Egypt	Garden in barracks	Venison 'Garden of a Restless Spirit'
3.	1934	Field-Marshal Philip Chetwode Flagstaff House New Delhi India	Large circle of blue violas planted to resemble a lake	'An Officer and a Gardener' <i>Daily Telegraph</i> 9 September 1989

	Date	Garden	Scheme	Source
4.	1969	James Fairfax Retford Park Bowrai New South Wales Australia	Fountain Garden/Other parts of the garden	https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/nov/02/from-an-emu-run-to-a-pet-cemetery-fairfax-familys-20m-estate-opens-its-gates
5.	1967	Perth Botanic Garden	Plans	Gretchen Poiner & Sybil Jack & (Edited) <i>Gardens of History and Imagination: Growing New South Wales</i>
6.	1960s	McKenzie & McGrath families Bundanon Homestead Illaroo New South Wales Australia	Cottage garden around kitchen courtyard	http://www.bundanon.com.au
7.	1960s	Head of Tourist Agency Tourist Bureau Timbuktu Mali	Plan for a courtyard garden	<i>The Garden</i> 1969
8.	Not known	Unknown Ethiopia	Unknown	Ray Desmond <i>British Gardens.</i>
9.	Not known	Unknown France	Unknown	Parks & Gardens UK
10.	Not known	Unknown Madagascar	Unknown	Desmond <i>British Gardens</i>
11.	Not known	Unknown Malta	Unknown	Desmond <i>British Gardens.</i>
12.	Not known	Botanic Garden Port Moresby Papua New Guinea	Plans prepared	Desmond <i>British Gardens.</i>
13.	Not known	Unknown South Africa	Unknown	Desmond <i>British Gardens.</i>
14.	Not known	Unknown Spice Merchant's House Ghana	Unknown	<i>The Garden</i> 1987