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The University of Bristol Historic Gardens *2nd Edition*

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University of
BRISTOL



Acknowledgements



The history of these gardens is based on both primary and secondary research and I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to the authors of those texts who made their work available to me. In addition, many members of staff and students, both past and present, have shared their memories, knowledge and enthusiasm.

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Preface



Marion's book has been commissioned by the University's Historic Buildings and Gardens Committee. The Committee aims to be proactive in identifying, overseeing and delivering conservation projects throughout the University whether it be buildings, landscapes or other assets of historical significance.

The Committee is very grateful for the donations that it receives in order to deliver these developments. For example recent funding allocations have helped us to provide:

- A database of all significant paintings held by the University
- The restoration of certain rooms within the Royal Fort, to reflect the period and historic significance
- A gazetteer of the contents of all listed buildings
- Detailed survey information concerning Goldney's Rotunda and Bastion
- Support for volunteers who are helping to re-envision the gardens at Clifton Hill House
- The restoration of a stable block in Clifton Village.

This second edition, of Marion's book, has been fully edited and proof read, and we would like to thank these copy editors for their dedication, knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject.

July 2013

Alan Stealey MSc MCIEEM

Head of External Estates

Chair of Historic Building and Gardens Committee



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Foreword



The University of Bristol is fortunate in the impressive range, not only of historic gardens, but of buildings of architectural importance, of which it is the grateful guardian. These have almost always been the result of past bequests rather than purchases, most notably by the University's great benefactors, the Wills family. Indeed the Wills dynasty of Bristol tobacco merchants is responsible for no less than five significant gifts to the University, including, of course, the £100,000 donation by Henry Overton Wills that effectively secured the University's charter in 1909.

Many of the historic gardens in the University's care are attached to halls of residence and can be enjoyed by students and staff alike. It is, however, the purpose of this book to make the wider public, particularly the citizenry of Bristol, aware what the University owns, and to enable visitors to appreciate its gardens on specially arranged open days in the summer months. The gardens range in chronology from Neolithic settlements around the Stoke Bishop site, though a Civil War fortification at the Royal Fort, to a rare merchant's eighteenth century town garden with the most exotic and best-preserved grotto in the entire country at Goldney, and a similar garden at Clifton Hill House, originally laid out with twin banqueting houses for alfresco entertainment. There are the remnants of a Humphry Repton landscape at the Fort, contrived to repair the scars of a failed building scheme, an early Victorian layout of shrubs and islands flowerbeds at Langfort, where Simon Sidney Hill raised prize cattle in his 'Bullock Palaces' and three twentieth century gardens, which climax in the Centenary Garden at the Wills Memorial Building, commissioned to celebrate the University's first 100 years.

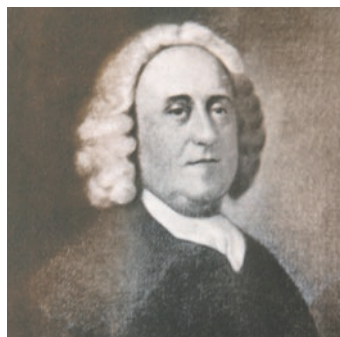
This book has been researched and written by Marion Mako, who studied for an MA in Garden history at the University, and who has recently co-authored two books – Cheshire and Somerset – in my Leverhulme – funded research project, The Historic Gardens of England. She has been enthusiastically supported by the members of the Historic Buildings and Gardens Committee, which was set up to advise on the care and maintenance of the University's historic buildings and gardens. It is the ongoing conservation and restoration of those important gardens and landscapes that the money derived from the sale of this book will support.

Professor Timothy Mowl,
June 2011



Spring blooms in the Royal Fort garden





Above: Thomas Goldney III.
(University of Bristol Library,
Special Collections)

On 24 September 1788, John Wesley visited Goldney gardens in Clifton and remarked '*Nothing can be more pleasant... But what is most remarkable is the long terrace walk, commanding a most beautiful prospect, and the Grotto, the largest and most beautiful in its kind that I ever saw*'. He finished with a lament '*And he has left it all!*' referring to the death of its creator, Thomas Goldney III (1696–1768) some twenty years earlier.

His father, Thomas Goldney II (1664–1731), a Quaker merchant grocer, had leased the prominent south-facing site of '*a tenement with orchard and garden... statues, figures and flower pots*' in 1694 from the Irish peer Lord Folliot. The statues were obviously a feature, as the tenant was required to keep them '*in as good condition as the same now are*'. With a growing family, Thomas II purchased the house in 1705 and continued his care for the gardens, with the aid of a gardener and a '*weeder woman*'.

In 1708, as his business continued to flourish, Goldney, along with a group of Bristol merchants, invested in a privateering voyage led by Captain Woodes Rogers; at the same time he began investing small sums in Abraham Darby's new iron works at Coalbrookdale. By 1713 he had realised substantial profits from the voyage. This enabled the building of a large greenhouse in 1714, perhaps to house the newly discovered tender exotics which were often brought back on the merchant ships. Although it is likely that these plants included citrus trees which gave rise to the fashionable 'Orangery' of the period, Goldney's building was called a greenhouse and sited on the western edge of the gardens at this time.

In 1723, Goldney commissioned a fellow Quaker, the architect George Tully, to substantially rebuild the house, leaving only the original east wing. He installed railings made in Darby's works on the southern boundary. This feature, rather than the planting of trees suggested a wish to open up the garden and retain the views overlooking the river Avon. Work continued in the 1720s, with the local craftsman Francis Billo employed to enhance the fountain in the garden. Records also show that a quantity of '*French grass seed*' was purchased indicating the creation of new lawns or walks.

'An early interest seems to have been the grafting of fruit trees, and in true gardening style cuttings and grafts were obtained from friends and relations, including a Nonesuch Pear from the Wallis family at Lucknam Park.'

On his father's death in 1731, Thomas Goldney III inherited the estate. Working as the company's agent, he had returned to Bristol from Coalbrookdale in 1723 and was now a merchant, continuing to expand the business. Garden visiting was becoming a popular pastime in the eighteenth century, but the first description of Goldney's garden, is by John Kelsall, a Quaker friend from Coalbrookdale on a visit to Bristol in May and June, 1735. He recorded a visit 'to Thos. Goldney's at Clifton, went through his gardens which are very fine with '*Walks, Greens [evergreens], Waterworks, Summer Houses & there were many Lemons and Orange trees with fruit on them*'. Much of this must have been the legacy from Thomas II, but his son took up the gardening mantle with gusto, if not fashionable taste.

Planted Cherry Trees against the
Terrace Wall 1755 Octob: 9th - 14th in N. E.
viz, From West End Eastward, viz,
1 White heart, 2 May Duke.
3 White heart, 4 May Duke.
5 Amber heart. 6 Black heart.
7 White heart. 8 May Duke.
9 Amber heart. 10 Black heart.
11 White heart. 12 May Duke. 2 of em.
13 White heart. 14 Carnation.

1756 Feb: 10th. Planted in Fountain Garden
a Burgundy Grape next to the Apricot
Tree, & a Muscadine next to that.

1757 March. Planted Hongsuckles against
the Wall at the South End of Grotto Arch.
viz, the London Sweet 1 on each
side the Arch, The White Crown, Scarlet,
Late flowering Crown, & Red Crown, are
next in course on y^e left side of the Slope.

Octob: 10th 1757.
Planted against the second Wall under
the Rotunda as follows. ~
A brown Bury Pear
A Turkey Apricock
Old Newington Peach
Angobart Pear.
Newington Nectarine
Le Marquis Pear.
Newington Peach.
Ditto Nectarine.

Ranging from
West to East.

Novemb: 1758 Planted against the old
Espalier Wall in Apple Paddock ~
Portugal Cherry
Hertfordshire Black Cherry Trees ranging
The Ox heart - From West to East.
Harrison's heart
A Kentish Cherry next to the old One
3 Standard Cherrys against the Terrace
Wall, viz Holm's, & Kensington's Duke,
& Churchill's heart, ranging Eastward
2 Newington Peaches, 2 do. Nectar, & 1 Noisette, against the

Above: Pages from Thomas Goldney's garden notebook recording the wide variety of fruiting trees he planted between 1738 and 1740. (University of Bristol Library, Special Collections)

One of the first things Thomas III did was to appoint a new gardener, Adam Sixsmith, who remained with him until his death. Hard work and long hours were sometimes recorded by Goldney; on one occasion 'Adam Sixsmith, my Gardener shar'd [sheared] all ye Greens [evergreens] in ye Long-Walk... in 2 days & ½, & finished ye Box Edgings in Ditto Walk in about 2 days & 1/4, but then he work'd those days till past Eight in ye Evening beginning early in ye Morn:g'. Sixsmith's values and loyalty were rewarded by the gift of £50 in his master's will. As Goldney increased the area of the gardens from the two acres he inherited to sixteen by the late 1750s, Sixsmith was assisted by Ralph Seddon and later by his own nephew, another Adam.

Despite having garden staff, Goldney took an active personal interest in the development of both the garden layout and the plants therein. From 1736 he kept a small notebook entitled 'Garden Book' and recorded plantings, sowings and general work. From November of that year he increased the 'Filbeard Grove' [Hazelnuts] as well as planting holly and lilac. An early interest seems to have been the grafting of fruit trees, and in true gardening style cuttings and grafts were obtained from friends and relations, including a Nonesuch Pear from the Wallis family at Lucknam Park. Other plantings included anemones, gooseberries, vines, aloes and white and purple broccoli. The latter were sourced from Stephen Switzer, the noted eighteenth century garden writer whose 1724 book, *Practical Fruit Gardener*, was in Goldney's library.



Opposite: Entrance to the grotto, with lion in his den. Goldney Garden

As the fashion for formal gardens was dwindling, the layout of Goldney's main garden, as depicted on the map of 1746, was rather dated. However, around 1760 these 'quarters' were removed and the design simplified to create an avenue, edged with box, leading the eye down the garden to the subterranean grotto, along the same line where the yews now stand. The survey, accompanying the 1746 plan, lists a number of garden features including *'courts, stables, gardens, orchards, paddock with three fruit clossetts'*.

In 1737, Goldney began the ambitious scheme to transform his small garden. After *'land for the Grotto garden'* was purchased, work began on the *'subterraneous passage or footway under ground of commodious dimensions (not exceeding eight foot wide and eight foot high)'*. The southerly entrance created a framed view of the landscape falling away to the port and might have been a clever recreation of the effect of a 'Claude glass' an optical instrument used by artists to compose idealised views. In this garden area Goldney planted beeches and vines along a terrace walk. Twenty years later he would plant honeysuckle against the wall at this entrance, thereby creating a fragrant passage.

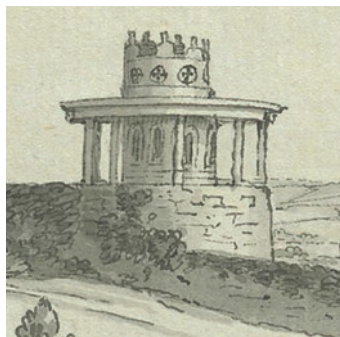
Following the completion of this access, work on the Grotto itself began immediately but it would be another twenty-seven years before the ornate cavity was completed. The date of 1739 and Thomas Goldney's initials are recorded in shells by the skylight closest to the tunnel. The chamber, measuring approximately thirty six feet long by twelve feet wide, consists of three halls divided by four columns decorated with Bristol diamonds, the colloquial name for the iron-rich quartz found commonly around Bristol and the Mendips. Much of the Grotto was formed from Brandon Hill grit, a deep red, rough sandstone quarried locally. The descending path to the north entrance, completed by 1757, leads to the Gothic doors and windows. On entering, one is faced with the lions' den. The pair, made of Bath stone, might originally have been

"A cascade falls from whence over rocks, coral, shells and is received by a bason; the walls on each hand are richly, irregularly and very boldly adorned with everything the earth and sea can produce proper for the purpose, all in their highest perfection... it is by much the finest thing of the kind I ever saw."

— Mary Delaney

painted, and were intended to evoke a feeling of mild fear amidst the beauty of the surroundings. To the left, the east chamber contains a pool filled by a cascade and commanded by a Bath stone river god holding a gushing urn. On the right, the west chamber is highly ornamented and provided with seating niches around the walls.

The whole cavern, lit by skylights, was decorated with a combination of carved Bath stone, tufa, various minerals, a few ammonites and over 200 species of shells and coral. Following her visit in 1756, Mary Delaney



Above: Detail from 18th century painting, showing Rotunda and colonade

Opposite: The Rotunda as it currently stands. Photograph taken from the Bastion

(an experienced visitor of grottos) commented: 'a cascade falls from whence over rocks, coral, shells and is received by a bason; the walls on each hand are richly, irregularly and very boldly adorned with everything the earth and sea can produce proper for the purpose, all in their highest perfection ... it is by much the finest thing of the kind I ever saw'. As Mrs. Delany admired his exotic shells, Goldney gave her a selection of corals as a memento. Some time after her visit, he also sent a large gift of materials for her friend, the Duchess of Portland, who was constructing her own grotto at Bulstrode, and he received an appreciative letter of thanks.

There has been much speculation as to Goldney's source of inspiration for the Grotto. In 1725, his father had made a tour in the Netherlands and was particularly taken with David van Moollen's garden and grotto at Zijdebalen; he noted 'a most curious Grotto in Shell-Work, very admirable Work-manship'. Other influences probably included contemporary grottos of the 1730s, most notably Alexander Pope's grotto at Twickenham. Thomas Goldney III is known to have owned Pope's works, although with their very different backgrounds it is unlikely that they ever met. At Goodwood, Sarah, Duchess of Richmond began a formal patterned grotto in 1739. And at Stourhead, nearby, Henry Hoare created his rusticated grotto with classical overtones in 1748. But Goldney may have been the trendsetter.

The decoration of the Grotto was predominantly of natural materials except for the glazed and fired tiles laid out in a formal pattern on the floor. Sourced from works near Coalbrookdale, they were an unusual choice for a grotto, as commonly pebbles or animal bones were used. One other man made feature that has disappeared was a *trompe l'oeil* painting. In 1778, Samuel Curwen described it as a doorway and staircase leading to a garden, which would have added yet another surreal dimension to the complexity of this Grotto.

'On entering, one is faced with the lions' den. The pair, made of Bath stone, might originally have been painted, and were intended to evoke a feeling of mild fear amidst the beauty of the surroundings.'

Less information survives surrounding the construction of the Bastion and Rotunda. The Bastion is first mentioned in the *Garden Book* for September 1748 when Goldney 'set vine cuttings under the bastion in Poultry Garden'. It is possible that this structure was created from the circular features described as fruit closets on the 1746 plan. From the lower level of the Rotunda, a long grassed walk ending in an oval, extended almost to the western end of the gardens and would have afforded an excellent view of the river Avon and its shipping. It might also have offered the perfect space for bowling, although perhaps not in a Quaker family. Such a quasi-military feature was unusual in a merchant's garden and more suited to the grandeur of Castle Howard and the Duke of Marlborough's Blenheim Palace, but Goldney adopted his mock fortification for useful purposes. Below the buttressed walls, with their porthole windows made of local stone, a void provided storage space. With the addition of zinc linings to the arched roof, the same area was used in the nineteenth century to store fruits and vegetables.





Above: Undated sketch of the Octagonal Summerhouse, showing its location in the garden in relation to Clifton parish church. (Local Studies, Bristol Reference Library)

The Rotunda links the different levels at the eastern end of the Bastion. In 1753, Goldney recorded '*Began the great terras on the south side of my garden and finished it 1754*' and he may have altered the Rotunda at this time. This building probably began life as a simpler summerhouse, but the fashion for Gothic, popularised by Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill inspired many to decorate garden buildings in this way. Goldney's Gothic windows are a direct copy of plates in Batty Langley's 1741-1742 *Ancient Architecture Restored and Improved*. From the 'great terras', the Rotunda appears as a single storey building with a low wall set around it, from which to view the Bastion, but improvements included the addition of a colonnade at the western end, as well as the flight of steps leading down through the outer circular wall to the level of the Bastion walk. From here a 'pinch-bum' gate leads out to the lower slopes. Goldney noted that the Rotunda was finished with '*the colonnade round it*' in 1757, but this was dismantled in the nineteenth century. The interior was furnished with four chairs and a circular seat made of walnut. The windows to the north would originally have afforded views to Goldney's sister, Martha Champion's house.

Another summerhouse, which excited Goldney but was probably the casualty of road-widening in the nineteenth century was the Octagon or Pleasure House. It was located in the north-west corner of the gardens and one drawing exists to illustrate its prominent position in front of the since demolished St. Andrew's church. Like the Rotunda it was two storeys and would have been a sheltered place from which to view the surrounding countryside and the walk leading to a statue of Actaeon, which had been planted with hollyhocks in 1741. However, unlike the Rotunda, it was of classical design. Inside, the building was furnished with eight green Windsor chairs, a canvas 'floor cloth', a mahogany table, six 'draw up' curtains, a fire-place and many pictures of 'views' and one of the Spanish Armada.

'His flowers were obviously very precious to him, as in 1749, after a theft from the garden, he offered a reward to bring the thieves to justice who had stolen "a large collection of ranunculus, anemones, carnations and auricula".'

Other statues besides Acteon punctuated the walks and views. These include the figure of Hercules on the great terrace, and Ceres and Bacchus near the entrance courtyard and '*2 boys spouting waters*'. Some may have been survivors from Lord Folliot's time.

In 1758, he began construction of the Canal which was completed the following year. Formal in its design, it reflected the Dutch style more current at the beginning of the century, rather than the contemporary fashion for serpentine pools. It contained a basin and fountain as well as '*gold and silver fish*'. By 1762, Goldney provided a fitting home for his citrus trees, building the Orangery at the northern end of the Canal. Beyond the southern end of the Canal, on the terrace, the tower for the '*fire engine*' was constructed in 1764 to power the cascade in the Grotto and the Canal.



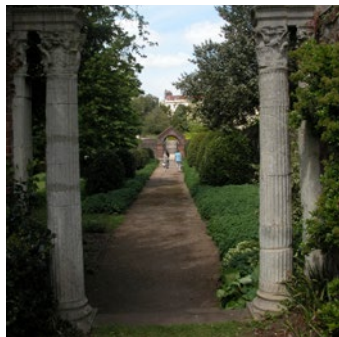
Above: Goldney pool (also known as 'Canal') with the Orangery at the far end

Housed within the tower, which is constructed of local Pennant stone, the 'fire engine' was a small size Newcomen beam engine powered by a coal-fired boiler. After two years of engineering problems, the Coalbrookdale works, where iron parts were produced, supplied an engine to work satisfactorily; it measured over nine feet in length. Adjacent to the Tower was a storage trench for the coal to fire the boiler. The water well, 36.5 metres (120 feet) deep, is still accessible, though only by the tunnel from the front of the Grotto.

The tower now stands without its chimney or beam engine, but a castellated viewing platform on the top can afford all-round views over the gardens, the river and the surrounding landscape. However, the round-arched opening at the middle stage of the tower serves as a reminder of the building's original function before electricity was introduced to power the cascade in the Grotto.

The *Garden Book* records much of Goldney's planting, in which he seems to have taken an active interest. From the beginning, much of his horticultural endeavours involved fruit trees and vines. He planted many varieties of vines, including: red and black Hamburgh, St. Peter's, Sweetwater and five varieties of Muscadine, some from Philip Miller's nursery in Chelsea. Fruit trees were also liberally planted, and the book records many varieties. In 1744, Goldney designed a fruit garden laid out in a rectangle with diagonal walks edged with fifteen different apples, eight pears, six peaches, as well as plums, nectarines, cherries and apricots.





Above: Entrance to Long walk

Opposite: View of Long walk

In the early years, other areas of the garden which were laid out for plants were named as 'Quarters' and their names probably referred to the main planting: 'Artichoak, Asparagress, Old Asparagress, Cowcumber, Myrtle', among other plantings. In the style of a potager, Goldney often planted flowers amongst the crops, although he only mentions a few vegetables, as this was considered the preserve of the gardener rather than that of a gentleman. Amongst his favourites were anemone, sunflower, larkspur, stock, sweet-william, and hollyhocks which he grew with colours ranging through the spectrum from white to purple, including a striped variety. Another floral preference was perhaps for hyacinths as in 1750 a separate note records twenty different varieties including Great Royal Rose, Belle Grideline and Conqueror, as well as notes on how best to care for them.

He sometimes collected seed to re-sow the following year, but not all sowings were a success. He recorded in April 1743 that the larkspur seed sowed in the Fountain Garden had not come up, and that '*none of the seeds of 1740 did come up*'.

His flowers were obviously very precious to him, as in 1749, after a theft from the garden, he offered a reward to bring the thieves to justice who had stolen '*a large collection of ranunculus, anemones, carnations and auriculas*'.

As well as the fruit trees, various other trees were planted at Goldney. In 1743 an '*Arbutus Tree*' was mentioned; in April 1754 he noted: '*The Plane Tree in the middle of the Rotunda Square is the Occidental. That next the Lime Tree is Spanish*'. The following year he reported: '*Planted in the Paddock below the Terrass, as follows: Male spreading Cypress, Lord Weymouth's Pine, Balm of Gilead Pine, Fox-Tail Pine, Stone Pine, Frankincense Pine, Portugal Cypress*'. Goldney only wrote the common name, of the time and, in order, these relate to: *Chamaecyparis thyoides*, *Pinus strobes*, *Pinus pinea*, and *Prunus lusitanica*.

'He sometimes collected seed to re-sow the following year, but not all sowings were a success.'

Goldney's *Garden Book* entries resumed with more fruit tree planting up until the final entry in October 1758. Guests continued to come, some later by prearranged entry, and he persevered with negotiations to purchase neighbouring parcels of land to enlarge his property until his death in December 1768. The Goldney family continued to own the property for the next hundred years until it was sold to the Right Honourable Lewis Fry (1832–1921) in 1864.

Thomas Goldney's garden evolved over thirty-five years and if there was ever a master plan it has not come to light. What he achieved was a garden, combining the formal and informal styles of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Compared to the estates of his contemporaries, such as Kings Weston, Stoke Park and Prior Park, it was diminutive, encompassing only sixteen acres in its prime. But it had a reputation as a garden of distinction.



Fry's alterations included a major remodelling of the house by Alfred Waterhouse, who added the belvedere tower to the south front overlooking the yew avenue. Fry also added state-of-the-art greenhouses, manufactured by Foster and Pearson, close to the stables in the lower southerly section of the garden. Alongside them grew strawberries and below the Rotunda an Aviary provided another diversion. The greenhouses were in productive use until the 1980s.

‘Fry’s alterations included a major remodelling of the house by Alfred Waterhouse, who added the belvedere tower to the south front overlooking the yew avenue.’

Views from the principal reception rooms of the house were enhanced by the addition of a Fountain Garden and the Mount at the southern end of the Canal was enlivened with a Rockery. An archway framed by Corinthian columns formed the focal end to a new walk on the western boundary, and decorative stone edging enhanced the beds in the Kitchen Garden – a fashionable Victorian addition.

Fry was instrumental in negotiating the University's Charter in 1909, but on his death, Goldney House was sold to the prominent Bristol industrialist George Wills. Although Wills had wished to adapt Goldney

Below: Lewis Fry and his family
fishing in the Canal in the 1890s.
(Goldney Archives)

to become a men's hall of residence, it was not until 1956 that the University took it over and immediately added the tennis court in the centre of what had been the Kitchen Garden.

In the late 1960s, additional student accommodation was built on the western side of the gardens. This was re-furbished and remodelled in 1992-4 to become an award-winning accommodation. Today the gardens are used both by students and, the area around the Orangery, as a venue for weddings and events.

Although now reduced to ten acres, the buildings and structure of Goldney's garden remain, albeit without the extended views he created. Recognition of the status of this garden is represented by the number of statutory designations awarded by English Heritage. The Grotto is listed as Grade I and the following features as Grade II*: Orangery, Tower, Canal, Rotunda, Bastion and the statue of Hercules. Overall the garden is listed as Grade II* and its significance as an eighteenth century merchant's layout is still recognised just as it was by Henry Jones in his poem of 1766 '*Clifton*':

'And each congenial guest with joy invades,
The fountains, grottos, and the clear cascades...
A minor Stowe on Clifton's crown we find,
In epic meekness, like its master's mind'.





Clifton Hill House

‘Let us remember how it is in nature:
irregularity is there the beauty;
and it must be consulted here by
intermingling trees of different
growths...what we propose now in
gardens is to collect the beauties
of nature...and create an universal
harmony among them: that everything
may be free and nothing savage.’

Opposite: A view of the garden of
around 1890, prior to the building of
the north wing. There is no staircase
set into the slope of the lawn,
access was via the perimeter paths.
(University of Bristol Library, Special
Collections)







Above: de Wilstar's 1746 survey, showing the formal layout of the gardens at Clifton Hill House. (Courtesy of Bristol Record Office, Ref. SMV/6/5/4/3)

Opposite: The 'South Summerhouse' - an original feature of the formal garden which preceded Fisher's Palladian villa.

Clifton Hill House is one of the most important surviving examples of the architect Isaac Ware's work. The large Palladian style house was commissioned in 1746 by the successful merchant and linen draper, Paul Fisher (1692-1762), as a new house away from the 'smoake and stir' of Bristol, which Alexander Pope described as '*very unpleasant, and no civilised company in it...the streets are as crowded as London*'.

At the age of sixteen, Fisher left his home in Somerton, Somerset, to begin an apprenticeship with a mercer's family, after which he set up his own linen business. In 1717 he married the independently wealthy Mary Puxton. With a growing family, Fisher expanded his business interests to include shipping, commodities and slave transport, as well as engaging himself actively in philanthropic work in the city. As an industrious and well known businessman, he was instrumental in founding the Bristol Infirmary, which opened in 1737. Paul and Mary's monogram, with the date 1747, can be seen clearly on the pediment of the west façade of Clifton Hill House, whilst on the east front, which overlooks the garden, there is a carved rebus of three fishes denoting the family name.

Fisher's choice of a nationally renowned architect indicates not only his wealth, but also perhaps his broad taste and education. Isaac Ware (1704-1766) had studied classical architecture in Italy and mixed socially with his benefactor, Lord Burlington, and another protégé, William Kent. Ware's understanding of the classical style resulted in his 1738 publication in English of Andrea Palladio's *Quattro libri dell'architettura*, which was dedicated to Lord Burlington.

At this time the gardens at Clifton Hill House were larger than they are today, extending further east down the hill beyond Bellevue Terrace. Jacob de Wilstar's map of 1746 clearly shows the *patte d'oie* (goose-foot) layout of the gardens at what was to become Clifton Hill House, but it is unlikely that the formal gardens were retained when the villa was built between 1747 and 1750. Instead, the terraces below the house were probably planted with trees and shrubs in a more informal manner. In the Orchard, now outside the garden environs, a cold bath was sited, which made use of a spring thought to have originally been part of St. Augustine's Abbey. Cold baths became a popular and fashionable recreation for gentlemen in the eighteenth century, particularly for the treatment of skin conditions and rheumatism.

'In keeping with the prevailing fashion for natural landscaping tamed into Arcadian wildernesses, he abhorred the formal style of "clipped yews and scalloped greens, and figured borders, true lovers knots and six-inch meanders".'

Although no record of a garden design by Ware has been found, it is likely that he carried out some landscaping. This is borne out by his interest in garden styles indicated in his later publication *A Complete Body of Architecture*, published initially in weekly parts between 1756 and 1757. In it he states: '*A large house, where there is ground, was never*



Above: Two of the first students standing on the steps at Clifton Hill House c.1909. (Courtesy of Bristol Record Office, Ref. 43207/9/12/97)

Opposite: Stone steps leading to 'Italian Terrace'

designed without the thought of a garden at the same time'. In keeping with the prevailing fashion for natural landscaping tamed into Arcadian wildernesses, he abhorred the formal style of 'clipped yews and scalloped greens, and figured borders, true lovers knots and six-inch meanders'. Instead, he advised: 'let us remember how it is in nature: irregularity is there the beauty; and it must be consulted here by intermingling trees of different growths...what we propose now in gardens is to collect the beauties of nature...and create an universal harmony among them: that everything may be free and nothing savage'.

Written some ten years after his design of Clifton Hill House, it may be presumed to be a synthesis of his best ideas, and in many respects seems to portray aspects of Fisher's garden. Ware describes the best situation for a garden as being *'seated so far as to command views of distant countries...the elevation should not be too great; for it will be difficult of ascent; and the gardens are intended for walks of pleasure, not fatigue'*. On the subject of trees he advocated that *'the plantation be made of selected trees...and let them have good distance they will grow more vigorously and walks will be more wholesome...the variations of those greens...might be so managed as to form a picturesque appearance'*. With regard to flowers, he did not wish to *'deny clusters of flowers a place'*, but could not abide straight borders beside gravel paths. Instead, he suggested designing *'small places enriched with every ingredient that favours vegetation, and in these to plant the flowers of other regions'*.

Ware's 1754 designs for Admiral Byng at Wrotham Park demonstrate circular beds of herbaceous plants rising directly from the lawn. Ware described these as *'flower-pots, or large nosegays rising out of the ground in their happy form'*.

As Clerk of the Works at Windsor Castle between 1729 and 1733, this is a planting device which he may first have seen in the Temple Garden at the Hon Richard Bateman's Grove House, Old Windsor, where there were such beds as early as the 1730s. Ware later described these 'nosegays' as having a *'pleasing softness in the gradation from one to another'* incorporating colourful and scented plants and edged with a border of compact plants such as carnations, thrift or candy tuft. Fisher's shipping business meant that he would have been able to import any new and exotic plants with which to enliven his flowerbeds.

One feature, already in the gardens by 1730, was the pair of summerhouses or 'turrets', as they were usually referred to on contemporary maps. Obviously a relic from the formal garden, they were constructed as vantage points from which to survey the busy shipping in the centre and along the gorge, as well as offering places for alfresco meals and studious contemplation. Ware ridiculed such structures scoffing: *'the citizen shuts out the advantages of nature by a ten-foot wall, and is happy that he can climb to his...summerhouse to view those prospects he has at so much expense blocked out'*. But Fisher obviously decided to retain them, as they would have provided him with an excellent view of his ships. Next door to the west, Thomas Goldney's garden was further advanced, and Fisher may well have seen Goldney's 'Octagon Summerhouse' and decided to emulate his neighbour's work. Friendly rivalries between estates were common during the eighteenth century.

The final feature suggested by Ware as *'an essential article'* was water, which *'must be clean; and it should be continual; in whatsoever form it once appears'*. Evidence of a 'Bason' in the garden is recorded by a tragic



incident reported by Felix Farley on the 1 April 1758 when Benjamin, the youngest son of Fisher's friend and colleague, Christopher Willoughby, fell into the pool and drowned.

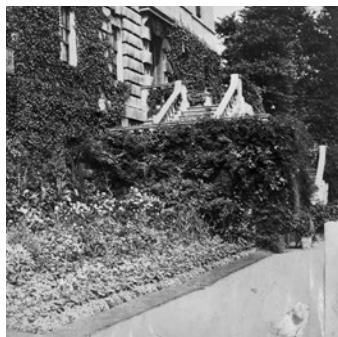
At his death on 4 December 1762, Fisher's will revealed great generosity to both his servants and the poor. He stated: *'the like Number of Servants to be employed and kept both for the Garden...and I desire that my said House shall be kept together with the Garden in neatness and Decency by them as hitherto hath been'*. The villa and gardens were to be left to his friend and nephew-in-law, Christopher Willoughby, in trust for his son, Christopher. However, no doubt due to the tragedy of 1758, the Willoughbys never took up residence and relinquished ownership in 1773.

Clifton Hill House was then owned by a succession of wealthy merchants. During this time a portion of the garden was sold for the building of the houses on Bellevue Terrace. Building began before the banking collapse of 1793 (which also had a consequence at the Royal Fort) and resulted in the development not being roofed for some years. Otherwise Clifton Hill House's gardens remained largely unaltered, and the house and demesne were listed as having the highest rateable value in 1829, greater even than Goldney. Ashmead's map of 1828 portrays a very simple layout with two circular pools set into the lawn.

In June 1851, Dr. John Addington Symonds, a notable physician, lecturer and poet, moved his family from Berkeley Square to Clifton Hill House. Although a non-conformist, he frequently entertained many notable literary, philosophical and artistic people, including the 'Swedish Nightingale', Jenny Lind. He built the southern wing of the house as a music room in 1853.

Below: The 'Italian Terrace' with rose beds backed by wisteria





Above: Planting during the Symonds' time shows the ranked borders popular in the Victorian era. (University of Bristol Library, Special Collections)

Symonds' son, also John Addington, the poet, critic and author, recorded at length his first memories of the house and gardens:

'The garden, laid out by Paul Fisher in 1747, had not been altered in any important particular, except that a large piece of it was cut away at the bottom to build a row of houses called Bellevue Terrace. Four great tulip trees, covered with golden blossoms, met our eyes at four points of vantage in the scheme. Between them, on either hand, rose two gigantic copper beeches, richly contrasted with the bright green of the tulip trees. They dated from an earlier period than the foundation of the dwelling house. The grove which clustered round the central grass plot was further diversified by ilexes [holly] and feathery acacia, with cypresses from the black boughs of which the clambering roses fell in showers. Sycamores, beeches and walnuts formed a leafy background to these choicer growths and masked the ugly frontage of Bellevue.'

Symonds' assertion that the tulip trees pre-dated Fisher's gardens is possible, as they were introduced to England around 1688. He continued: *'two ponds, quaintly enclosed with wire railings, interrupted at proper intervals the slope of soft green turf. Each had a fountain in its midst, the one shaped like a classic urn, the other a cupid seated on a dolphin and blowing a conch. When the gardener made the water rise for us from these fountains, it flashed in the sunlight, tinkled on the leaves and cups of floating lilies, disturbed the dragonflies and goldfish from their sleepy ways. Birds were singing, as they only sing in old town gardens, a chorus of blackbirds, thrushes and finches. Rooks cawed from the elms above'.*

During his unhappy schooling at Harrow, Symonds missed the gardens at Clifton Hill House and often implored his sister to *'send me some copper beech leaves'*, as a memento of happier times. His writing provides an important insight into the remains and character of Fisher's garden: *'this garden possessed a special grace and air of breeding, which lent distinction to the dignified but rather stolid house above. It was old enough to have felt "the unimaginable touch of time" and yet not old or neglected enough to have fallen into decay. Left alone, it had gained a character of wildness'.*

'It was particularly unusual for a Victorian family to destroy memorabilia, which may well have included notes and receipts for the garden.'

On that first summer's morning, the scent and colour of the gardens also made their mark on Symonds' mind. He described how *'the air hung heavy with a scent of hidden musk. The broad flowerbeds upon the terrace and along the walls were a tangle of old-fashioned herbs in bloom – mulberry-coloured scabious, love-in-idleness, love-in-a-mist, love-lies-a-bleeding, corncockles, devil-in-the-bush, hollyhocks, carnations, creeping-jenny, damask and cabbage and York-and-Lancaster roses. The mingled perfume of musk and rose pervades my memory when I think of that day'.*

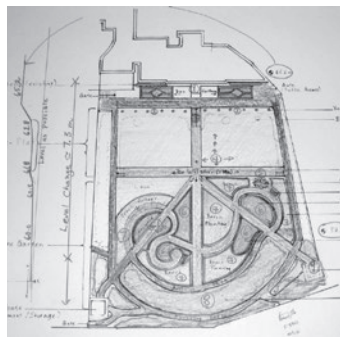
Following his inheritance, Symonds continued in the vein of his father's civic work, sitting on the Council of Clifton College and promoting higher education for women. His wife, Catherine, became good friends with their neighbour, Lewis Fry, at Goldney. But in 1877, due to recurrent

Below: Contemporary design
(by Nicola Greaves, Louise Bastow
and Kate Saville)

health problems, Symonds decided to move his family to Davos in Switzerland. The clear air and sunshine greatly benefited Symonds' lungs, which plagued him with illness all his life. After returning to England briefly in 1880 to empty the house, Symonds' daughter, Margaret, remembered how the whole family joined in '*tearing, tearing, huge piles of paper, high as an Alpine avalanche*', which was then carried 'down the garden paths to a place where the weeds were always burned on Saturday afternoon beneath a clump of elms...we joined the gardener and groom and danced round the burning heap, poking at it with long sticks'. It was particularly unusual for a Victorian family to destroy memorabilia, which may well have included notes and receipts for the garden.

The next owner was William John Rogers, a wealthy brewer who built an enormous brewery in Bristol and manufactured Rogers' Monarch Ale. Although he added the northern wing in the 1890s, there is no record of any changes to the gardens during his tenure. In the early twentieth century two anonymous women, who were strong advocates of female education, bought the house and gardens. They donated the property to the University, and in 1909 Clifton Hill House opened as the first





Above: Original design

© Douglas Gillis

women's hall of residence. Two years later, another donation provided the funds for the addition of the adjacent Callander House and Nursery Garden. Tennis courts were added in 1923, and with the advent of World War II, the air raid shelter was built beneath the top terrace. As the gardeners were conscripted, the female residents took charge of looking after the gardens. In the late twentieth century the Warden, Mrs. Annie Burnside, masterminded the restoration of the house. Her considerable efforts were awarded a first prize of the 'Restoration of a Georgian Country House' in the 2004 National Awards of the Georgian Group.

The gardens, with two of the original tulip trees, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, two copper beeches, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea', and a 1970s pond, are in need of similar restoration or replacement. In 2010, Professor Timothy Mowl, Chair of the University's Historic Buildings and Gardens Committee, commissioned the garden designer, Douglas Gillis, to prepare a scheme to re-design the gardens based on the archival material.

Gillis took his inspiration from the layout on the de Wilstar map of 1746, incorporating Arcadian style walks between the gravel paths. The meandering walks direct the eye and extend one's interest, as does the renewed planting.

The summer of 2013 saw the formation of a historic gardens volunteering group, coordinated by Louise Hopkins, under the WRAG scheme 'Women Returners To Amenity Gardening Scheme'.

Interest was significant to assist with the refurbishment of this historic garden with a number of volunteers having extensive experience of design and horticultural practices, aiding the re-visit of the garden plan. With a number of factors taken into consideration, including a maintenance regime and the existing topography of the garden, the volunteers were able to make sustainable adjustments to enhance the natural environment, keep existing features and provide a functional ambience for visitors.

'Gillis took his inspiration from the layout on the de Wilstar map of 1746, incorporating Arcadian-style walks between the gravel paths.'

Volunteers were engaged in all aspects of the refurbishment. Equipped and trained, they commenced work during the summer months. As the first pathway was staked out, a hard subterranean feature was discovered. Archaeological investigations revealed a lime mortar capped pathway thought to be the original path, as depicted by de Wilstar, and having survived for one hundred years, since the English Civil War, before being buried around the time that Clifton Hill House was built. Excitement grew as fragments of clay smoking pipes and other artefacts were retrieved from the site and could be dated to circa 1640 confirming the provenance.



The Royal Fort

The fortunes of the landscape surrounding the Royal Fort have altered dramatically over the past four centuries and little remains of the fortifications created to defend the City during the Civil War. The site has seen changes brought about by three different parties, including one of England's best-known landscape architects of the eighteenth century.

Right: Autumn in the Royal Fort garden. View looking up towards the house

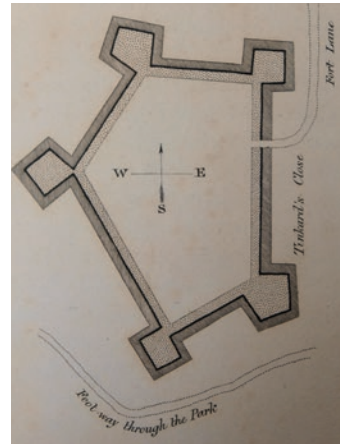


The ridge to the north of Bristol – the King's Down – was an obvious location for a defensive stronghold. Due to its topography, it was once a prominent site exposed to the elements, indicated by its original name, Windmill Hill, a name shared with other Bristol sites. However, the Civil War necessitated the need for more protective fortifications and after the rather meagre defence put up by the city's Parliamentary forces, it was taken by the Royalists on the 26 July 1643. The garrison, now renamed Windmill Hill Fort had consisted of an irregular pentagonal shape with five bastions, surrounded by low walls and ditches. It enclosed several houses and held three gun emplacements.

Led by Charles I's nephew, Prince Rupert of the Rhine, the Royalists began to strengthen the Fort and increased its standing by naming it 'The Royal Fort'. During 1644 work on the fortifications intensified under Prince Rupert's engineer Bernard de Gomme. Local labourers were conscripted in to work on additional fortifications on Brandon Hill, as well as facing the ramparts of The Royal Fort in stone and augmenting the gun power to twenty-two.

The Royalists held it until the second siege of Bristol in the late summer of 1645 when Prince Rupert surrendered to Oliver Cromwell and Lord Fairfax. It was a very gentlemanly skirmish and The Fort itself barely saw any real action. One theory as to why Rupert conceded so easily was that many of the fundamental structures had not been improved, including the water supply, which was neither fit nor abundant enough to sustain his troops.

In 1648, during the second Civil War, the Parliamentarians made further improvements until in 1655 Cromwell ordered the demolition of The Royal or Great Fort. The space around it was quickly utilised by the locals as a pleasant green space on which to build sizeable new houses with generous gardens. New residents included several retired officers of the Civil War as well as Onesiphorous Tyndall who had bought several properties in Cantock's Close in order to establish a larger parkland within the city. A sketch by James Stewart of April 1752 shows the outline of a few trees and shrubs but nothing more.



Above: A plan of the civil war fortification drawn by Samuel Seyer and published in his 1821–1823 *Memoirs historical and topographical of Bristol and its neighbourhood*. (University of Bristol Library, Special Collections)

‘One theory as to why Rupert conceded so easily was that many of the fundamental structures had not been improved, including the water supply, which was neither fit nor abundant enough to sustain his troops.’

On Onesiphorous' death in 1757, his son, Thomas Tyndall, together with his young wife, Alicia, inherited the site and instructed architects to offer designs for a new house. From the several designs by Thomas Paty, John Wallis and James Bridges, a wooden model (which can still be seen during a tour of the Royal Fort House) was made by Bridges which brought together three stylistically disparate façades. The result is a delightful three-storey villa suitable for an emerging wealthy banking

family and completed in 1762. Its position is on what was the south-western side of the Fort. The interior, designed by Thomas Paty, with plasterwork by Thomas Stocking, is one of the best surviving examples of English Rococo decoration.

A sketch plan of April 1785 indicates that a new well was dug and located close to the house, now at the corner of The Royal Fort Annexe. A second document of 1 May 1758 approves Tyndall's right to a new well by the Chamber of Bristol. The sketch also shows a summerhouse, long Terrace Walk, Kitchen Garden and Wilderness. Around the same time, the architect James Wyatt was commissioned to design a garden room and this is shown on his plan of 1785. More recent archaeological excavations carried out by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services in 2009 also located an ice house north east of the house of which only the underground cone and fragments of the surrounding wall remain.

Right: The family portrait of Colonel Thomas Tyndall and his wife Marianne Schimmelpenninck together with their children. Colonel Tyndall commissioned Humphry Repton to re-design the landscape at the Royal Fort. Painted by J. Beach in 1797. (Royal Fort Archives)





The driving force behind many of the house and garden improvements seems to have been Alicia and, following her untimely death in 1764, it appears that Thomas lost interest in the site. When, in 1792, he was offered the sizable sum of £40,000 for the site by a consortium of developers, he accepted. Fortunately for the Tyndall family, the war with France and a banking crisis led to the financial collapse of the company, allowing Tyndall's son, Colonel Thomas Tyndall, to reclaim possession in 1798.

However, by this time, the site had been drastically scarred by the initial excavations of the developers, which included a quarry on the south-western corner of the old fort. Consequently, he commissioned the landscape architect Humphry Repton (1752–1818), possibly following a recommendation by James Wyatt, to consider improving the landscape.

Above: Repton's 'before and after' views of the landscape at the Royal Fort.



Above: A watercolour of
St. John's Wort by Maria
Ely Tyndall

Repton was acquainted with the Bristol area having previously worked for several merchants in the city and at Blaise Castle. He described the *'large chasms in the ground and immense heaps of earth and broken rock which had been dug out'* on his first visit to the Fort in February 1799.

In addition, the city and its citizens were now converging on the once rural parkland. New housing in Berkeley Square and up Park Street had *'so injured the prospect from this house, that its original advantages of situation were almost destroyed'* and local residents thronged below the new house, claiming the right to walk across the landscape. All this meant that the privacy afforded by Mr. Tyndall's Park had been lost and Repton sought to correct this as he firmly believed in a gentleman's right to an uninterrupted view.

The 'Red Book' (so called because Repton's proposals were usually bound in red Moroccan leather) for The Royal Fort differs from many others in that it was produced as a record of the work completed. In this respect the tone is less sycophantic than those intended as sales pitches to potential clients. In it, Repton records how he decided to make use of the craters and spoil heaps *'to fill the holes partly up, by levelling the sides into them, and raising a bank with a wall to exclude the footpath'*. Thus he literally sculpted the land to the south to provide undulations and hillocks to *'exclude what ought to be hid, without hiding what ought to be seen'*.

'Repton also had a good grasp of how perspective might be used, and planted trees in various groups to obscure the new housing.'

Repton also had a good grasp of how perspective might be used, and planted trees in various groups to obscure the new housing. The remaining parts of The Fort's buttress walls were enveloped in earth to create gentle folds, topped with more trees, and a gravel walk was laid out along the southern slope. Around the house, smaller shrubs were placed to 'soften' the building and hide the service wing and stables to the north.

Repton provided three pairs of views with his trademark before and after watercolour sketches. The existing scene was recorded with a new flap or 'slide' which, when pulled back, revealed his proposals. The fourth view was an elaborate vision of the house enlarged, 'Gothicised' and crenellated signifying its *'original character of a castle or fortress'*. The pleasure grounds were to be encircled with a battlemented wall to keep the public out, and the ground above it, lying flush with the top of the wall, would produce the effect of a ha-ha. This wall, minus the battlements, survives along the boundary with University Walk. The only feature Repton did not incorporate at The Fort was a sheet of water, a device he commonly used to reflect and enliven the views.

The final effect was described by T.P. Malcolm in 1807:

'To commence this grand view, from the left; a mansion of the purest white, and of the Doric order, buried in dark foliage, on the summit of a beautiful slope, has the effect of a most retired country villa, although separated from the suburbs merely



Above: The agaves in flower, which are described as aloes in the 1917 sale catalogue. (University of Bristol Library, Special Collections)

by a grove of elms, judiciously disposed. The lawn, descending from the front, planted at interval, grouped with an imitation of one of the ruined towers of a castle, the grove, and the house, strongly evince the taste of Mr. Tindal the proprietor'.

After Thomas Tyndall's death in 1869, his six daughters continued to live at The Fort. One of them, Maria Ely Tyndall kept sketch books of her travels which contained many detailed watercolours of plants revealing an interest in horticulture. With no male heir to inherit, successive parcels of the land were sold off until 1916, when the house and pleasure grounds were bought by Henry Herbert Wills and donated to the University.

In the middle of August 1917 an auction of the Tyndalls' effects was held. The articles listed give a good indication of the decorative style and productive nature of the gardens at this time. Among the many items of garden and outdoor paraphernalia were seats and tables, two Ransome lawn mowers, various tubs with iron handles, a garden roller, a corn crushing machine, hens, chickens, one cockerel, garden lights, fruit netting, seakale pots and three specimens of aloes in pots, one green, two variegated. Trees which had been growing on the estate in this period, are documented by a number of lots of timber including elm, oak, poplar, sycamore and acacia.

From the greenhouse there were a quantity of carnations, eight arum lilies and various chrysanthemums. Auctioned from the Fernery were various plants as well as twenty ferns and seven orchids. Finally, the vinery yielded sundry plants, twenty four carnations, eight lots of twenty four geraniums and fifteen rhubarb pots. The family's theoretical interest in landscape and horticulture was evidenced by the sale of many books including John Evelyn's *Forest Trees*, Jane Loudon's *British Wild Flowers* and Humphry Repton's *Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, published in 1803.

'Trees which had been growing on the estate in this period, are documented by a number of lots of timber including elm, oak, poplar, sycamore and acacia.'

During the twentieth century the University built several more buildings around the pleasure grounds of The Fort, further enclosing the site and its views, although the Wills Memorial Building now forms an important eye-catcher. At the south-eastern corner of the garden are a trio of Oaks; two Fulham Oaks *Quercus x hispanica* 'Fulhamensis' and one Lucombe oak *Quercus x hispanica* 'Lucombeana' as well as a Mulberry *Morus nigra*. Opposite these the University created an enclosed garden to mark the Centenary of the University College formed in 1876. Backed by the remaining buttressed Fort walls this peaceful garden area contains a sculpture by John Huggins, titled 'Classic Flight'.

Archaeological excavations have revealed several attempts to introduce pools into the garden over the past two centuries. Although Repton usually advocated a large body of water in his schemes to enliven the

Below: Jeppe Hein Installation
entitled 'Follow me' in
Royal Fort Garden

scene, he uncharacteristically refrained from incorporating this feature, probably due to the topography. The current 'naturalised' water feature was produced by External Estates, during the winter of 2011, and replaces what was considered to be a poorly-scaled and formal 1960s pond, which was at odds with Repton's vision.

In 2009, to mark the University's centenary, a sculpture was commissioned from the Danish artist Jeppe Hein, who took his inspiration for the interactive mirrored labyrinth to create vistas and reflections from Repton's dextrous use of illusion.



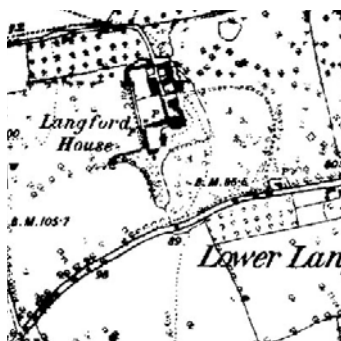


Langford House

‘Photographs from the early twentieth century show a grand formal garden befitting a gentleman of this period. Around the house, cast iron benches in the style of the famous Coalbrookdale garden furniture, are flanked by pairs of urns decorated with classical figures and filled with yuccas, fuchsias and seasonal planting.’

Opposite: The Edwardian garden staff — the head gardener, Mr G Woodman, is on the front row, second from the left. (Langford House archives)





Above: Thomas and Mary Hill's estate at Langford with the line of the ha-ha and the main drive from the Langford Road. (Courtesy of Somerset Heritage and Libraries Service, Ref. 18.1 & 11.13, and by permission of Ordnance Survey © Crown copyright, 1884)

The picturesque village of Langford is some thirteen miles south-west of Bristol and in its rural setting is the University's Veterinary School. Its location on an estate, once home to prize cattle, seems apposite and although the nineteenth century formal gardens have disappeared, the essence of a Victorian gentleman's country estate is still evident when viewed from the house.

The original house on the site was built in 1826 by John Fisher and consisted of a main building with ancillary structures, a garden and lawned areas. However, it did not have a formal entrance drive at this time. Following a series of different owners and tenants, Simon Sidney Hill purchased the house and estate in 1877.

Hill had been born in Clifton in 1829. His first business venture was in the drapery trade, but ill health forced him to leave England for warmer climates. Intending to travel to New Zealand, he arrived in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, and decided to stay, setting up a partnership with William Savage. Their commodities business traded in anything from minerals to ostrich feathers, which had become the latest fashion in ladies' headwear.

Following several years of successful trade, Hill returned to England in 1864 and married Mary Ann Bobbett. They shared a staunch belief in the work of the Wesleyan church, and this would influence much of their life, particularly at Langford. Hill's business took him back to South Africa, and eventually Mary went with him, engaging in many charitable works, including teaching in the Sunday school. Unfortunately, after just ten years in South Africa, Mary was diagnosed with consumption and the Hills returned to England, settling in Bournemouth for the air. However, only five weeks later, on 7 December 1874, Mary died and was buried at Arnos Vale Cemetery in Bristol.

Sidney (as Simon is more frequently referred to, even though it was not his Christian name) Hill was devastated and, although he returned to Port Elizabeth for his work, he eventually came back to England for good in 1877, and settled in Langford, close to Churchill, where he had first met Mary. He then directed his energy into becoming a gentleman farmer. Work included re-modelling the house, adding the belvedere tower in Italianate style, which he ornamented with a clock that chimed *'All things bright and beautiful'*. He also added stables, a dairy and the extravagant 'Bullock Palaces' for his prized Red Scotch Shorthorn Cattle. The Stock Lane entrance, marked by a Moorish octagonal summerhouse which no longer exists, became the secondary drive, as a new main driveway was created from the Langford Road. This impressive entrance swept up to the west front of the house through newly-planted trees.

'Another of his passions was photography, and it is because of this that we have the most complete record of the gardens at Langford, including cine film from the 1920s-40s, which illustrates many of the fêtes held in the grounds.'



Above: The Victorian 'gardenesque' style of formal island beds and rose arches. (From the collection of Simon Sidney Hill. Reproduced with the permission of the descendants of the Hill Family)

There is no detailed evidence to document work in the gardens, but maps record the drives, extensive greenhouses and layout. The age of many of the trees, particularly the evergreens which were collectable specimens in the Victorian period, suggest that they were planted by Hill. Early photographs show young plants enclosed in fencing to protect them from the sheep which enlivened the grounds beyond the ha-ha. One of the tree specimens was a Brewer's weeping spruce, *Picea breweriana*, planted on the south-eastern corner of the house, and introduced to Kew in 1897. Unfortunately, this tree no longer exists. In keeping with the fashions, it is likely that it was Hill who laid out the grounds around the house in the Gardenesque style of island and basket beds. Photographs from the 1930s show these formal beds, laid out in symmetrical patterns and filled with annual flowers to form the colourful carpet bedding reminiscent of the Victorian era.

To provide all the bedding and house plants for the estate, Hill commissioned a range of glasshouses from the suppliers Foster and Pearson of Beeston in Nottinghamshire. Established in 1841, they were one of the most prominent glasshouse manufacturers of the day, supplying Queen Victoria among others. The panels for the greenhouses were made in their factory before being transported by rail to the client, after which the garden staff would assemble the building in-situ. At Langford they lined the east and west sides of the courtyard garden. Only one glasshouse remains, having been restored in the 1990s, but the interior still features the original ironwork. The pear arch would have





Above: A gravestone recording the lives of several of Simon Hill's favourite animals, including 'Crummy', his first cow.

Opposite: The interior of the Orchid House with ranked planting to display the blooms. (From the collection of Simon Sidney Hill. Reproduced with the permission of the descendants of the Hill Family)

been planted to replace one of these glasshouses when it came to the end of its life. It includes over twelve varieties including: *Pyrus communis* 'Duchesse d'Angouleme', *P.* 'Louise Bonne of Jersey', *P.* 'Doyenne du Comice', *P.* 'Clapp's Favourite' and *P.* 'Pitmaston Duchesse'.

Following the introduction of new plant specimens during the nineteenth century, gentlemen gardeners enjoyed displaying their collections of exotic, rare and floriferous plants. At Langford, one of the glasshouses was given over to orchids and another to ferns. Fern collecting was particularly popular among philanthropic Victorian industrialists who often enlarged their glasshouses to encompass a vast range of newly introduced plants.

Simon Sidney Hill is remembered in the village as a generous benefactor to the poor and was nicknamed 'Mr. Greatheart' but, in the Victorian tradition of philanthropy, attendance at the Wesleyan Methodist chapel in Churchill, which he had built in 1880 in memory of Mary, was no doubt expected in return. He funded several buildings in Langford and Churchill including the Victoria Jubilee Homes and a drinking fountain dedicated '*for man and beast*'.

His love of animals is revealed on the estate by the siting of a memorial stone at the southern end of the lawn. It commemorates his first cow, named Crummy, '*a docile creature and good milker*', who died aged eleven in 1888. The stone also records several much-loved dogs, namely Lion, Leo, Glen and Captain.

On the 3 March 1908, following a fall, Simon Sidney Hill died of influenza and pneumonia. Such were the number of mourners at his funeral that the service had to be held outside the Methodist chapel. The outdoor staff of the Langford House estate, which included the nine gardeners, headed the funeral's foot procession. Langford House was left to Hill's nephew Thomas James Hill, but he only lived in it for four years before his death in 1912. Following him, James A Hill, another nephew, failed to take up residence, so the occupancy was taken up by a great-nephew, Thomas Sidney Hill.

Thomas Hill was a technological trail-blazer. Born in South Africa in 1874 and brought up in Bristol, he had studied engineering, recognising that the motorcar would be revolutionary. He was interested in everything new and was the first in Langford to own a car, tractor and telephone. Following his marriage to Edith Emily Albury, the couple moved to Langford House in 1913; their arrival is marked by a date-stone on the house. A daughter, Daphne, was born at the house, joining their two sons, Thurle and Ronald.

'Thomas Hill began to remodel the house, adding a billiard room and nursery. As the billiard room overlooked the east court, it is likely that this area was remodelled to create an enhanced vista.'



Above: The interior of the octagonal summerhouse with its floral stained glass

Opposite: Cattle at Langford

Thomas Hill began to remodel the house, adding a billiard room and nursery. As the billiard room overlooked the east court, it is likely that this area was remodelled to create an enhanced vista. Around the circular pool with its fountain were positioned six urns filled with spiky-leaved phormiums. The surrounding lawn was edged with flowerbeds, conifers, a birdbath and a sundial. At the northerly end of this garden he added the hexagonal summerhouse, shaded by trees. It now languishes on the southern lawn, beyond the ha-ha, awaiting restoration.

Thomas Hill also continued in his great uncle's tradition as a gentleman farmer. However, instead of prize cattle, his interest was in pedigree Berkshire pigs, which he housed in the 'Bullock Palaces'. Thomas was also a keen sportsman and his particular interest was cricket. Part of his early landscaping at Langford involved creating a fine, even pitch which was the envy of other clubs. Another of his passions was photography,

'On the lawns leading to the ha-ha, island beds of varying shapes and sizes were filled with shrubs and herbaceous plants; some of the beds had a vertical accent in the form of a conifer, or were interspersed with standard roses.'





Above: Langford House 1920 with carriage drive and formal herbaceous borders (from the collection of Simon Sidney Hill. Reproduced with the permission of the descendants of the Hill family)

and it is because of this that we have the most complete record of the gardens at Langford, including cine film from the 1920s–1940s, which illustrates many of the fêtes held in the grounds.

Photographs from the early twentieth century show a grand formal garden befitting a gentleman of this period. Around the house, cast iron benches in the style of the famous Coalbrookdale garden furniture, are flanked by pairs of urns decorated with classical figures and filled with yuccas, fuchsias and seasonal planting. Only one pair of urns survives now. On the lawns leading to the ha-ha, island beds of varying shapes and sizes were filled with shrubs and herbaceous plants; some of the beds had a vertical accent in the form of a conifer, or were interspersed with standard roses.

‘The intention was to create an informal green glade with silver birch trees, wild flowers and a seat for quiet contemplation. A wooden pergola, wreathed in roses and hop-vines, leads into the enclosed space; wildlife is encouraged into the garden with bird feeders, wood piles and plants which sustain insect life.’

Below: Present day Langford House

On the west lawn, an arrangement of rose gardens encircled the formal beds. Climbing roses were trained over six arches, whilst the under-planting remained formal. New varieties of roses such as the hybrid tea, a cross between the hybrid perpetual and the tea rose, were particularly popular in this period, providing scent and repeat flowering. The entrance to the remaining glasshouse was guarded by the statues of two children, standing on decorative pedestals. Opposite, there was an octagonal sundial with barley-sugar columns; this still survives, but the flagpole has since been lost.

Thomas Hill died in 1944 after a long illness and the house was subsequently let, as the tenure of the Hill family had come to an end. Two years later, the Commissioners of Crown Land bought Langford House, and in 1948 the University of Bristol founded the School of Veterinary Science with students welcomed the following year. The University has continued to expand this resource, which is now a centre of excellence, and the estate covers 220 acres.

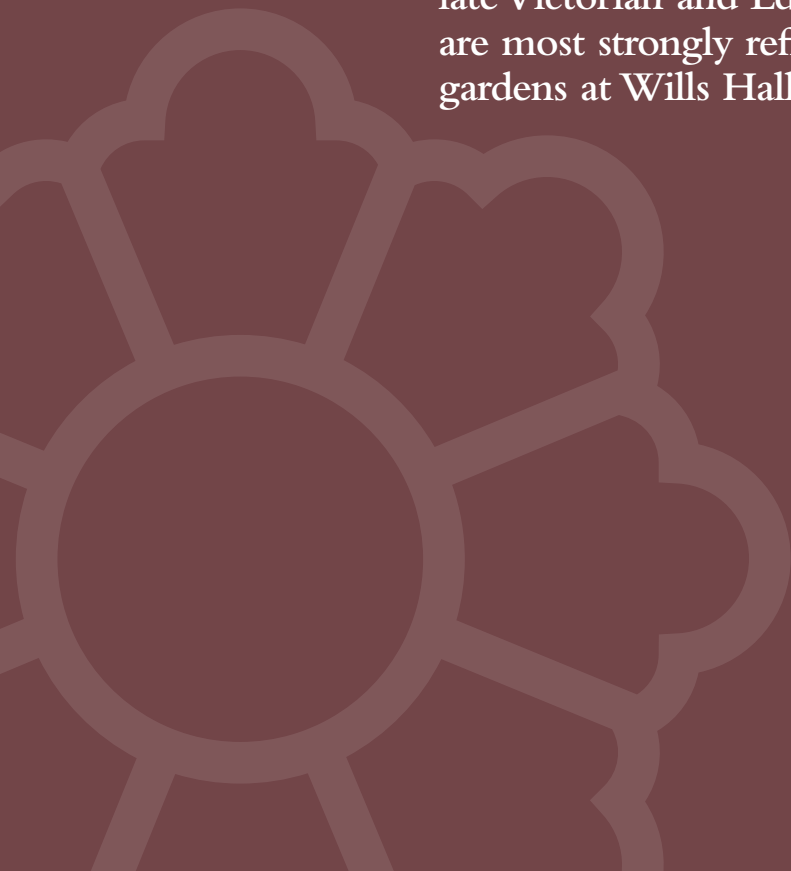
In keeping with the tradition of animal monuments begun by Simon Sidney Hill, the gardeners, Debbie Hutchins and Neil Oxford, designed a Memorial Garden in 2007. They were responding to the need by pet owners for a tranquil space on which to reflect about sad or difficult moments. The intention was to create an informal green glade with silver birch trees, wild flowers and a seat for quiet contemplation. A wooden pergola, wreathed in roses and hop-vines, leads into the enclosed space; wildlife is encouraged into the garden with bird feeders, wood piles and plants which sustain insect life.





Wills Hall

Once part of the Stoke House estate and formerly Downside House, the land on which Wills Hall stands has a long and complex history. However, it is the late Victorian and Edwardian eras which are most strongly reflected in the gardens at Wills Hall.

A large, stylized white floral graphic with multiple layers of petals, positioned in the bottom left corner of the page.

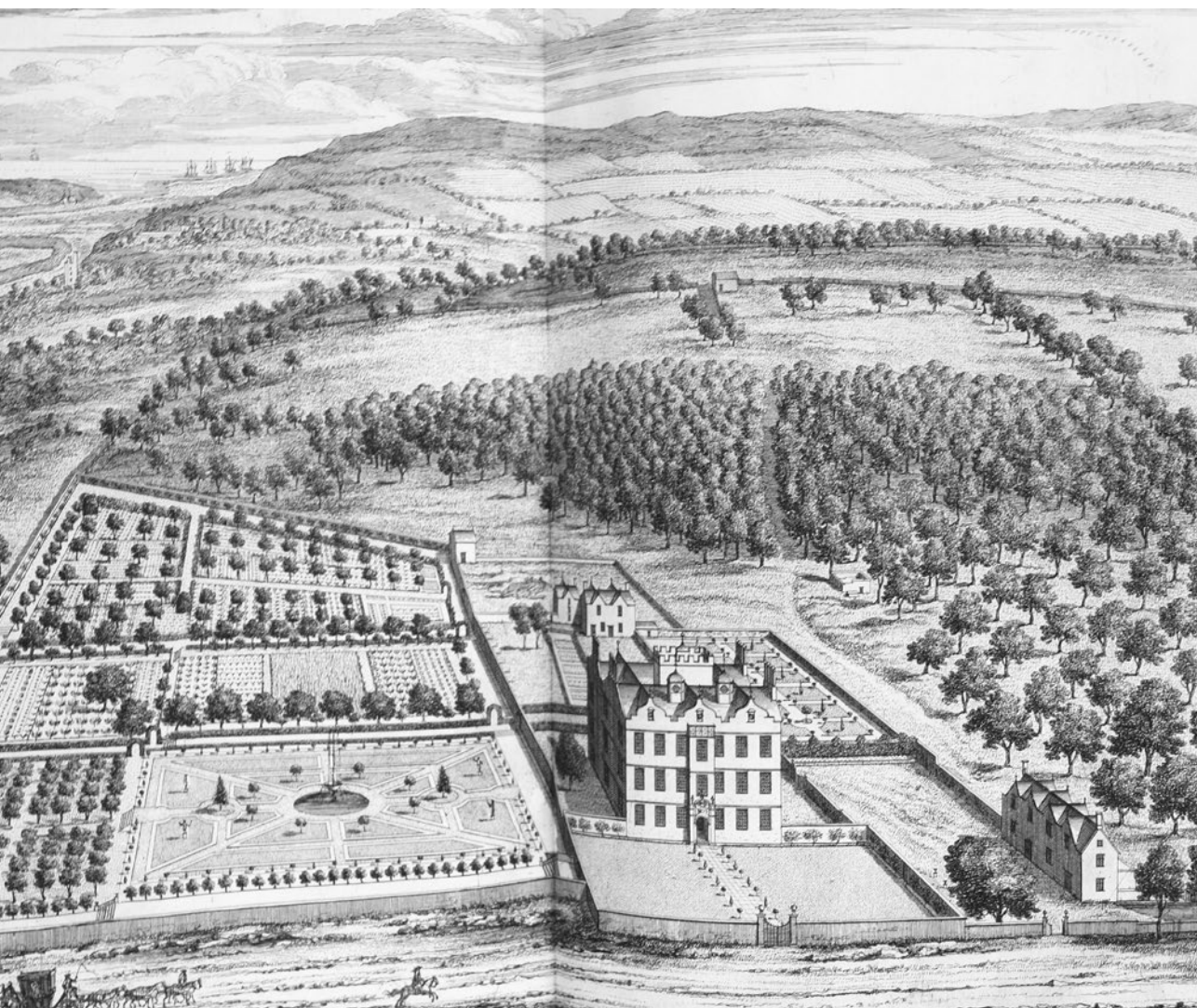
Opposite: The Flower Garden
at Downside House (Wills Hall)
by CE Hearn, August 1891
(private collection)

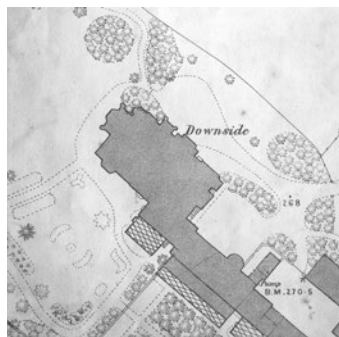


Below: Kip and Knyff's plan of Stoke Park, from Robert Atkyns' 1712 Gloucestershire. Downside House was built on part of the estate to the north-east of this view. (University of Bristol Library, Special Collections)

Early settlements on the local landscape date from 2880–2460 BC. Archaeological excavations have revealed evidence of a Neolithic burial chamber and remains of Bronze Age pottery. In the Roman occupation the road, named 'Via Julia', ran across what is now Durdham Down, connecting Bath to Sea Mills, and in the medieval period Hollybush Lane may have been an important pack-horse route for transport between Bristol and the river Severn.

There was a manor house and park at Stoke during the Elizabethan era, but it was not until 1669 that Sir Robert Cann built Stoke House as his country residence. On Sir Robert's death in 1685, the house passed to his son, Thomas, who was probably responsible for laying out the formal gardens. The evidence for this is illustrated in a drawing by the Dutch artists, Johannes Kip (c.1653–c.1721) and Leendert Knyff (1650–1720), more commonly known as Leonard Knyff. The pair illustrated country estates from a birds-eye perspective with Kip engraving Knyff's illustrations. The estate contained a farm and a large wooded area, probably used for deer hunting, as well as enclosed gardens laid out in the formal style of George London and Henry Wise, which were typical of the late seventeenth century.





Above: The late-Victorian layout of Downside's gardens included several glasshouses, as well as the Gardenesque island beds, which are shaped as scrolls, trefoils and stars.

In 1773, the Stoke House estate passed by marriage to the Lippincott family who held it until sections were sold off in 1829. Alfred George (1792–1878) probably bought a parcel of land at this time, through wealth acquired by his second marriage to Eliza Oldham Edwards, the daughter of a banking family. The Georges may already have been living in the area, at Durdham Lodge, but Downside House is not listed until the 1841 Tithe Map.

By this time Alfred, a senior partner in the family brewery in Bristol, Georges and Co, was recorded as owning four plots of land bordering Parry's Lane consisting of 'Ferry Leaze', 'Hilly Field', 'near to Stoke Abbey Farm' and the fourth on the site of Downside, described as a 'House, Offices and Gardens'. The main entrance drive to Downside from Parry's Lane passed a lodge and then meandered through deciduous and evergreen trees up to the north-east front of the house. The house was built in the Gothic style, made popular in the eighteenth century by Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill, and was similar in style to Thomas Goldney's Rotunda. In 1869, Alfred consolidated the Downside estate with the addition of Stoke Abbey Farm to the north and Down House to the south, thereby creating a second drive from Hollybush Lane. This was a more formal entrance, lined with deciduous trees. After Alfred's death in 1878, his son, William Edwards George (1842–1921) became director of the family brewery, and continued the landscaping of Downside on which he and his father had embarked.

‘The proximity of the glasshouse to the head gardener’s cottage also meant that he could oversee his owner’s prized collection personally, so that it did not suffer the same fate as that of Thomas Goldney, whose floral collections were stolen in 1749.’

The development of the gardens is illustrated by the Ordnance Survey, beginning with the first edition of 1880–81. The agricultural landscape has been transformed into a nineteenth century country estate with the requisite features of this era. The map illustrates both the serpentine and formal entrance drives, guarded by lodges. Behind the Parry's Lane lodge is a small square pool, and a number of footpaths thread through the tree belt to the east of the drive. Meandering paths continue from the south-west of Downside House through groups of trees to the western corner where another larger pool is shown. This irregular piece of water is divided into three and may have been a fishpond, providing food. The paths continue around the western boundaries, as well as across the lawn, where island beds were laid out. Backing on to the southern area of the house, where the servants' wing was located, were a number of glasshouses overlooking a rectangular, quartered garden. This was the 'Kitchen Garden' with paths lined with fruit trees. One glasshouse stands at the end of the formal drive; this would probably have been more decorative, housing the exotic specimen plants favoured by the Victorians, in the same way Simon Hill displayed his collection at Langford. The proximity of the glasshouse to the head gardener's cottage also meant that he could oversee his owner's prized collection personally,



Above: JP Munro & Son's plan of Downside (c.1922), showing the formal gardens introduced to the north-east of the house, and the Italianate fountain to the south. (University of Bristol Library, Special Collections)

so that it did not suffer the same fate as that of Thomas Goldney, whose floral collections were stolen in 1749. Another glasshouse was located on the south-western corner of the house near the billiard room and would have contained only decorative plants.

By the second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1901-2, the formal gardens and lawned areas on the north-west of the house had increased and included a tennis court and partially walled area. The most significant change was the removal of the kitchen garden from its earlier position adjacent to the house. As wealth and formal gardens expanded, the requirement was for a kitchen garden out of sight of the house and its guests. Its new position was further west and bordered by a wall to the north, thereby creating a south-facing range for the new 'orchard houses', which would have grown delicate fruits such as apricots, peaches and nectarines. An Italianate fountain was the central focus in this garden, while over the wall in the area backing on to Down House, an irregular pool was set amongst the mixed tree planting.

To the north-east of Downside, the sinuous paths were replaced with two rectangular enclosures, landscaped to create two sunken gardens at different levels, joined by steps. The first encloses a perimeter path, and the second, with a cruciform path, leads to a gate decorated with William George's initials. After William's first wife, Charlotte, died in 1889, he remarried. His second wife, Thomasina Prittie, was likely, therefore, to have been the influence and guiding hand in the creation of these two formal, enclosed gardens and, not surprisingly, the planting reflects the Arts and Crafts style popular at this time. These gardens were enclosed by walls topped with a pierced diamond and circle patterned balustrade. Both are now designated for the warden's private use.

“A Residential college for men, our chief objects being to help solve the problem of hostels in place of lodgings, and to foster the growth of a spirit of corporate life amongst undergraduates’.”

The sunken gardens are recorded in a series of photographs and show that the upper garden was edged with rose bushes. A stone sundial, decorated with acanthus leaves, survives in the gardens; it was positioned in the centre of the lawn; and the corners were planted with conical yews. The lower garden was laid out with generous herbaceous borders filled with plants such as lilies, foxgloves, delphiniums and carnations.

Beyond this, a new square summerhouse built of Ham Hill ashlar with a tiled roof was added. Opening on to the Cedar Lawn, it offers views to the north and south.

The Edwardian era saw further alterations to the gardens, including more enclosed garden areas and a formal grid layout imposed on the kitchen garden. This had '*vineries, an orchid house and conservatories*'. A plan drawn up just prior to William's death shows the extent of the alterations made to the landscape surrounding Downside.

Below: Thomasina Prittie pictured in the flower garden, which she may have been instrumental in creating. (Private collection)

Following the death of William George in March 1921, and following the failure to establish a men's hall of residence in the newly-acquired Goldney House, the estate was bought by Henry Herbert Wills who gave it to the University in 1922. After his death his brother George Wills purchased the building and oversaw the arrangements, continuing their joint aim of *'erecting on the property at Downside ... a residential college for men, our chief objects being to help solve the problem of hostels in place of lodgings, and to foster the growth of a spirit of corporate life amongst undergraduates'*. For this project George Wills commissioned George Oatley, the architect who was already known to the University for his plans for the Wills Memorial Building, begun in 1912 but not completed until 1925.

The design of a quad was based on those seen at Oxford. The new building was attached to the servants' wing of Downside and built over an area of the formal garden to the south. The original design included a pool in the centre, but this was removed as it was considered likely to encourage student dunkings. The hall was opened by Sir Winston Churchill, Chancellor of the University, on 14 December 1929.

In the following years, parts of the garden were let or sold, beginning with the kitchen garden. One hundred and twenty feet of this garden was let to the owner of The Holmes, Mr. H M Baker, who requested that an *'un-climbable and opaque fence'* be erected across the Italianate fountain. In addition, he asked for the removal of this feature, saying it would *'make a very nice gift to a public park'*. It was dismantled in 1926 but its whereabouts are unknown.





Above: The wall in the 'Quiet Garden,' on which the glasshouses were attached, was originally painted with whitewash, some of which survives.

A field, known as the Hockey Field, had been used as a spoil tip during the hall's construction, but in the 1930s it was levelled and replanted as an orchard. However, this planting proved to be unsuccessful as the fruit trees failed to thrive, perhaps due to the now buried contaminated material. George Oatley was called upon again to design the chapel, which was paid for by Henry Wills' wife Monica, and built between 1928 and 1930.

During the Second World War, land was used to keep pigs, chickens and sheep, as well as 'digging for victory' to supplement rations. Further expansion of the Wills Hall complex in 1961 and 1989 now overlays this area. On the south side, plots have been sold off around Down House, but significant parts of the garden, including the Croquet Lawn located at the south-western end of the Quiet Garden, remain. The Croquet Lawn is edged with lavender, and opposite its entrance, stands a superb specimen of a Golden Rain tree *Koelreuteria paniculata*.

There is still evidence of the 'orchard houses' along the north-western boundary of the Quiet Garden. Remains of the whitewash paint, which was used to reflect natural light in glasshouses, can be seen on the red brick walls, along with the only surviving gardener's shed. The garden is laid to lawn with island beds of shrub planting, interspersed with spring bulbs. Some notable trees in this garden include a *Magnolia stellata*, *Morus alba* and *Eucalyptus* spp.

Below: A photograph of about 1900 of the cedar and monkey puzzle trees on the west lawn; there are typical island beds planted with standard roses in the foreground. (Private collection)

Today, many of the Victorian trees lining the Parry's Lane drive still survive including golden Irish yew, *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata aureomarginata'; Wellingtonia, *Sequoiadendron giganteum*; California redwood, *Sequoia sempervirens*, and other conifers popular during the nineteenth century. A statuesque cedar of Lebanon, *Cedrus libani*, which was a prominent feature on the lawn west of the house, survived until 1984, when it had to be felled. Photographs taken in 1901 show it to be fully mature, indicating that it must have been planted by the mid-eighteenth century; a neighbouring Monkey puzzle, *Araucaria araucana*, has also gone. On the same lawn a venerable oak tree, surviving from the seventeenth century, now has a girth of over four metres. Other ancient oaks grow throughout the grounds of the Stoke Bishop halls, stalwarts reflecting the now fragmented Stoke House estate.

'There is still evidence of the 'orchard houses' along the north-western boundary of the Quiet Garden. Remains of the whitewash paint, which was used to reflect natural light in glasshouses, can be seen on the red brick walls, along with the only surviving gardener's shed.'





Hampton House

“A visitor to the garden is surprised by the great change brought about, giving the impression that a good fairy had paid a visit and transformed the ugly into the beautiful.”

Opposite: A view of the new gardens looking back to Hampton House.
(Courtesy of Bristol Record Office, Ref.36754/x/4)





Above: Walter Melville Wills
Below: Louisa Gertrude Wills.
(Courtesy of Bristol Record Office, Ref. 381/Ph/D/10 and Ref. 381/Ph/D/ reproduced by kind permission of Imperial Tobacco Limited, England)

The garden associated with Cotham House has been radically altered by the development of Hampton House. The 'new' gardens epitomise the formal Edwardian garden style and are due to one member of the Wills family, Walter Melville Wills (1861–1941). However, the style and beauty of the layout is overshadowed by a double family tragedy, which led to its creation.

Melville Wills was one of seven sons of Henry Overton Wills III, founder of the University of Bristol. He was educated at Clifton College and Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he read Natural Science, although he went on to become a chartered accountant. In 1887 he returned to Bristol and joined the family firm of H O Wills & Company. Not only responsible for the business accounts, Melville restructured many of the company's systems and became head of sales. In the year of his return to his native city he married a family friend, Louisa Gertrude Wilson (b.1862), and she bore him four sons.

'However, in common with many families, the First World War also brought tragedy when the Wills' second son, Bruce, was killed in action in France on 15 February 1915. He was twenty four and had married Daisy only eight months earlier.'

Melville and Louisa (who is frequently referred to by her middle name Gertrude) moved from Clifton and built a large Arts and Crafts house – Bracken Hill – on the edge of Leigh Woods. It was completed in 1895 and the gardens extended to two and a half acres. Two years later, Melville purchased an identical sized plot and amalgamated it into the gardens. As his stature and wealth grew, so did the Bracken Hill estate. In 1907 this resulted in their purchase of another plot on the opposite side of North Road where he added a cottage ornée, originally called The Bungalow, as an estate office. For the treatment of the pleasure gardens around it he commissioned Pulham & Sons, who created a series of pools, rocky outcrops, arches and a grotto joined by artificial waterfalls and streams.

The family firm of Pulham & Son was founded in 1834 when James Pulham set up his own business using a product he had been developing and patented as 'Pulham's Portland cement'. His skill lay in an ability to fashion this man made material into naturalistic-looking stone features, which could be used in buildings and in gardens. An article in The Builder of 1845 described it in detail:

'The natural colour is Portland stone and therefore requires no artificial colouring. It has stood the test of 24 years and remains perfect. It has even deceived the trade, the imitation is so complete. It is excellent for both exterior and interior purposes of stucco and mouldings and for fountains, vases and even floors etc.'

After his death in 1838, his son James improved upon his father's ideas and created boulders of artificial stone by moulding the cement mixture over a core of building rubble and clinker. As a result, the firm achieved the first artificial rock garden at Hoddesdon Hall in Hertfordshire, close to where the business was established.



Above: View of Hampton House and Garden as it stands presently. The large windows, balconies, terraces and gardens were provided to 'aid the recovery of tuberculosis patients'

Pulham's venture into artificial rockworks could not have been better timed. With the Victorian fashion for collecting exotic plants, particularly ferns and alpinists, garden owners were eager to incorporate a suitable rocky outcrop to show off their collections. By the 1870s, as business prospered, Pulham & Son branched out to offer whole landscaping schemes, and in 1877 James Pulham published a pattern book entitled: *Picturesque Ferneries, and Rock Garden Scenery*. What made a 'Pulhamite' garden so sought after was its ability to appear completely natural. This was achieved by four distinct factors: the preparation of different coloured and textured artificial mixtures; good design proportions; the provision of spaces between the rocks to allow plants to establish; and finally, the inclusion of local rocks where available. Melville Wills was so impressed with Pulham's work that Bracken Hill's gardens contained three Pulhamite structures, including one inside the Fernery.

In 1912, at the age of fifty one, Wills retired to enjoy a peripatetic life spent on his vast estate at Killilan in Scotland, skiing in Switzerland, at home in Bracken Hill House and staying with friends in the south of France. During this period he was treated for unspecified ailments by the eminent homeopathic doctor, Christopher Osmond Bodman (c.1863-1940). The treatment was evidently successful, and this was to have a profound effect on him. In 1916 Melville Wills was appointed President of the committee of the Homeopathic Hospital, which at that time was located in Brunswick Square. However, in common with many families, the First World War also brought tragedy when the Wills' second son, Bruce, was killed in action in France on 15 February 1915.



Above: Hospital staff inspecting the sundial on the terrace of the main garden

He was twenty four and had married Daisy only eight months earlier. As a corporal in the Royal Engineers, Bruce was recommended posthumously for a Victoria Cross.

The tragedy, coupled with Melville's belief in homeopathic principles, prompted him to provide a new homeopathic hospital for the city of Bristol. The need for a facility of this type had been discussed in a 1900 report when the Bristol Homeopathic Hospital and dispensary claimed that *'medical staff of the present hospitals refuse to allow physicians practising homeopathy to hold any office in these institutions, although it has been demonstrated again and again that many cases, which have been given up as hopeless under allopathic treatment, have been cured under homeopathic treatment, and far less expense'*.

'Melville described its situation as "light and airy", and the hospital design incorporated wards with their "own separate sun balcony for open-air treatment".'

In 1917, Melville bought Cotham House at the top of St. Michael's Hill, and commissioned the architectural firm of Oatley & Lawrence, already employed by the Wills family on a range of projects, to design the new hospital building.

In 1900, Cotham House gardens looked similar in layout to those at Manor House (see Manor Hall), with a circuit walk around a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees, along with several glasshouses. Melville described its situation as *'light and airy'*, and the hospital design incorporated wards with their *'own separate sun balcony for open air treatment'*. The location of the site at the top of a hill and the open air treatments were considered to aid the recovery of tuberculosis patients.

HRH The Prince of Wales was invited to lay the foundation stone of the 'New Memorial Hospital' during an invitation only tea ceremony on 10 June 1921. A time capsule to commemorate this event was placed beneath the stone. It contained various local papers of the previous day, copper coins, a report on the hospital and a copy of the ceremony's programme. It is interesting to note from the invitations that Mrs. Melville Wills was listed as President at this time, perhaps indicating her belief in the alternative medical practice. Fundraising continued over the next four years with the appeal to benefactors that *'He giveth twice who giveth quickly'*!

In 1924, minutes of the Hospital Building Committee noted that *'the entrance gates, cleaning of the site and formation of terraces'* were still awaiting completion. Whether the design of the gardens was to be undertaken by Oatley & Lawrence is not known, but in early 1925 Melville commissioned Pulham & Son to work with the architects. Pulham would, no doubt, have been grateful for the work, as the business had severely declined following the war. In February, another record noted that *'Messrs Pulham's scheme for the layout of the garden has not yet come to hand, but a preliminary suggestion by Mr. Rickett of that firm has reached us this*

Below: A nurse wheels a patient on to the balcony for 'open air' therapy. (Courtesy of Bristol Record Office, Ref.36754/X/4)

morning from Mr. Melville Wills, together with a letter upon that subject, in which Mr. Wills states that he is most anxious that the garden should be extremely attractive and does not object to spending a considerable amount of money'.

A week later, another tragic event befell the Wills family, when an avalanche killed their youngest son, Edgar, during a skiing holiday in Murren. A memorial plaque positioned on a wall in the garden commemorates his life. It ends with the touching epitaph: '*He was passionately fond of flowers*'; thus, the gardens, like the hospital, would become a memorial to their sons. The grass is now allowed to grow longer and incorporates wild flowers such as clover, buttercups, speedwell, spurge and forget-me-not augmenting Edgar's memorial.

Pulham's designs, perhaps encouraged by Melville, are similar to the gardens that were laid out at the garden at Bracken Hill. Terraces, walks and stone walls created enclosed garden areas fashionable in the early twentieth century, and the central Italianate pool, surrounded by a rose garden, was an exact replica of the one at Bracken Hill. Planting cascaded over the stonework, softening the effect. To enhance outdoor treatment, four open air shelters were placed on the terrace to the west of the building. In 1929, a new children's ward was opened, and the shelters were 'reconstructed' and placed on revolving bases so that they could '*be turned to take advantage of all the sunshine that our climate allows and to escape the cold winds*'. They were re-named as 'chalets' and were in great demand, often booked for weeks in advance. Revolving summerhouses had been used in gardens as far back as the eighteenth century when the landscape





Above: Image of Bracken Hill garden. The gardens and pool at Hampton House imitate those at Wills' own garden at Bracken Hill on the other side of the Clifton Suspension Bridge. (Courtesy of Bristol Record Office, Ref.36754/x/4)

designer Stephen Switzer (1682-1745) described *'a Windsor seat, which is contriv'd to turn round any way, either for the advantage or prospect, or to avoid the inconveniencies of wind, the sun etc'*.

The circular rails on which the chalets turned can still be seen on the edge of the car park at Hampton House.

In 1926, Melville Wills extended the scheme in the western corner and asked Pulham to include another of his rockeries, spilling down the bank to where a Tennis Court was introduced, though this was intended for the staff rather than for the patients. The hospital report of that year described the rock gardens as *'one of the most attractive spots in the district and a great boon to the patients and staff'*.

Even the Committee's reservations that the garden would be costly to maintain were countered by the family who promised to maintain it 'in perpetuity'. Melville and Louisa's passion for the hospital and gardens was a direct response to their wishes to honour two lost sons as well as their belief in the benefits of homeopathic treatments. In all, £12,000 was spent on the creation of the gardens at Hampton House.

The opening ceremony was performed by HRH Princess Helena Victoria on 26 May 1925 and the hospital report of the same year described how: *'A visitor to the garden is surprised by the great change brought about, giving the impression that a good fairy had paid a visit and transformed the ugly into the beautiful'*.

Below: The pool in the Rose Garden at Hampton House

In 1930, Melville Wills endowed the University with the Melville Wills Chair of Botany.

The pool, although now dry, is fringed by two flowering cherry trees and bordered by the rose beds which provide great colour and scent throughout the summer. Many of the roses have been re-planted with newer varieties to enhance the flowering period. They include pale pink colours in Rosa ‘Great Expectations’, R. ‘The Fairy’ and R. glauca, the dusky yellow R. ‘Chinatown’, scarlet in R. ‘The Times’, as well as several named after counties: Wiltshire, Hertfordshire, Worcestershire and Kent.

Hampton House continued to take inpatients until 1986. Then, in the early 1990s, the University bought the site, and for a short period of time the building was altered to create residences for students; whilst the National Health Service continued to see outpatients in annexe buildings.

‘The hospital report of that year described the rock gardens as “one of the most attractive spots in the district and a great boon to the patients and staff”.’



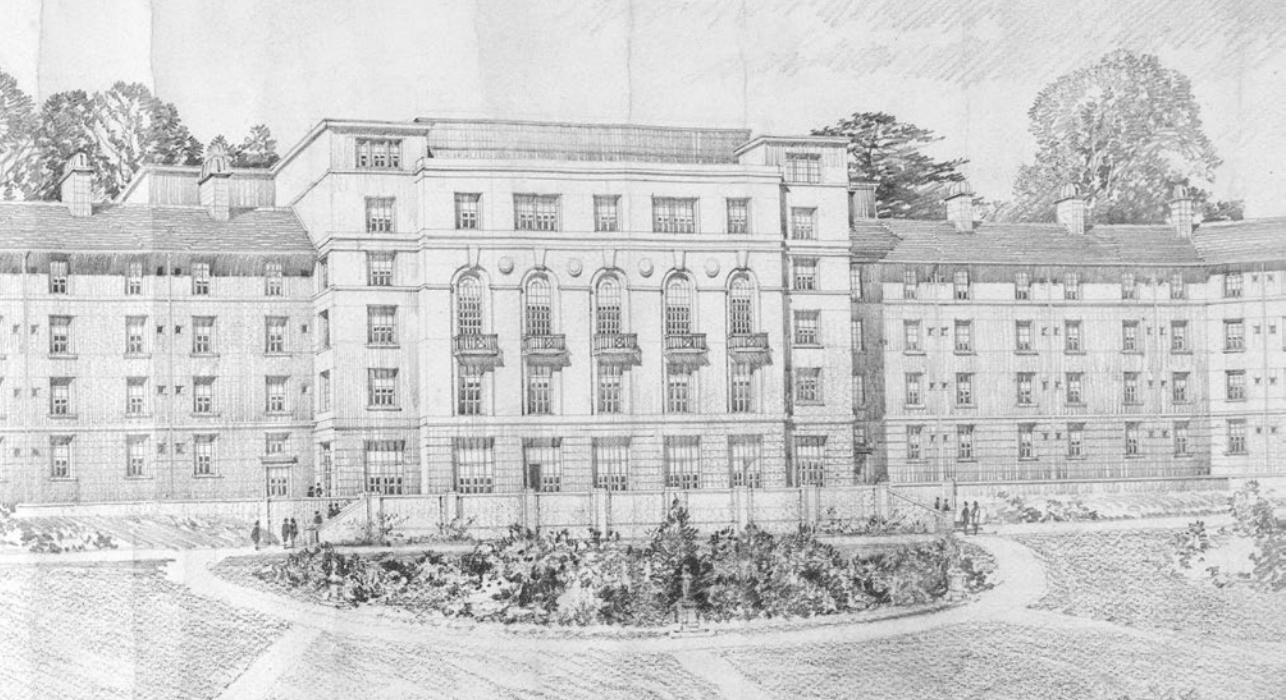


Manor Hall

‘At the western point of Manor Hall’s site stands Richmond House, built between 1701 and 1703, and situated on the footprint of the original manor house of Clifton, which was burnt down in 1643 by Prince Rupert during the siege of Bristol.’

Opposite: Manor Hall
rear facade and garden





Above: Oatley's design for the gardens accompanied his plans for Manor Hall, but were not executed. (University of Bristol Library, Special Collections)

The site of Manor Hall encompasses several other buildings, the largest three being Richmond House, Manor House and Sinclair House, with the main gardens lying to the south-east and north-west. Outside the University boundary but adjacent to the gardens on the steep eastern slope lies the 'Strangers' burial ground. It earned this sobriquet from the visitors who came to take the medicinal waters at the Hotwells in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and who died whilst resident in Bristol.

At the western point of Manor Hall's site stands Richmond House, built between 1701 and 1703, and situated on the footprint of the original manor house of Clifton, which was burnt down in 1643 by Prince Rupert during the siege of Bristol. By the mid-nineteenth century, Clifton's expansion and development meant that the space between Richmond and Manor House was filled with new, smaller dwellings. It was not until the late nineteenth century that a garden specifically associated with Richmond House was depicted on the Ordnance Survey. The map shows a greenhouse and a serpentine walk lined with trees.

Manor House lies to the west of Manor Hall on a steep slope re-planted in the 1980s with a variety of productive trees chosen for their relevance to an eighteenth century garden. These include quince, mulberry, fig, walnut, sweet chestnut and pear. Beneath them in springtime, the grassy incline is covered with primroses and daffodils.

The present Manor House was built in the early eighteenth century and is illustrated on Jacob de Wilstar's map of 1746. Unlike Goldney or Clifton Hill House, Manor's garden is not laid out in the formal fashion but simply with an avenue of trees leading south. The demesne belonging to 'Mr. Freman' included: '*offices, garden court, orchard, coach house and stables*'. By 1828, Ashmead's map shows no indication of any garden layout except an enclosed area, now known as York Place Gardens. By 1874, this rectangular area had a variety of trees growing around its boundary. However, the 1880 Ordnance Survey map depicts the Manor



Above: Hiatt Cowles Baker.
(University of Bristol Library,
Special Collections)

House garden enlarged, including a sunken tennis court to the south, where Manor Hall is now located. In the western corner of the garden a small glasshouse was erected and below it in the westerly third of the garden, a circuit walk, planted with trees, enclosed part of the grounds.

This garden was designed by Dr. William Budd (1811–1880), who lived at Manor House between 1865 and 1874. A noted physician and epidemiologist, he is mainly recognised for his work on the prevention of typhoid, with which the city had become plagued as its trade increased. A keen gardener who waged his own personal war against the dandelions, Budd's time at Manor House came towards the end of his life when he was able to spend more time in the gardens. The terrace of Manor House lies over a tunnel, originally linking the gardens and the kitchens so that the gardeners could bring produce to the kitchens without being seen. Beside it grows a plane tree (possibly *Platanus x acerifolia* 'Augustine Henry'), the oldest tree in the grounds. The terrace is now planted with a mixture of herbs and scented climbing roses intertwining around the railings. Plaques on Manor House mark Budd's occupancy, as well as two other notable residents, Professor John Beddoe (1826–1911) and the Reverend John Stirling (1806–1844).

In 1919, Sir George Alfred Wills donated Manor House to the University, but it was not until the death of his brother, Henry Herbert Wills, in 1922, that a legacy solely assigned for buildings made possible the construction of a new hall of residence for female students.

Following his successes at the Wills Memorial Building and Wills Hall, Sir George Oatley's architectural practice was again called upon to design a building to fit into a small field below the Manor House gardens, which had been used as allotments during the war. Built between 1927–1932, Oatley's plan for a building that enveloped the gardens on the north side with east and west projecting wings was considered one of his finest achievements for the University. The entrance piers, topped with lights, are characteristic of the prevailing Art Deco style.

York Place Gardens, originally the demesne of Manor House and more recently the communal garden for the residents of York Place and Meridian Place, were treated by Oatley to a simple, formal design. The lawns were shaped, echoing those in the Edwin Lutyens–Gertrude Jekyll Arts and Crafts garden at Hestercombe, near Taunton, and around the edge were walks and an herbaceous border along the north boundary. Although Oatley & Lawrence included a design for the gardens to the south of the Hall, it remained unfinished until 1934, when Dr. Hiatt Cowles Baker (1864–1934), took over.

Educated at Rugby and Oxford, Hiatt Baker was a talented sportsman and played rugby for England in 1887. His interest in outdoor pursuits continued, as he became an accomplished mountain climber, scaling many new slopes in the Alps and the Balkans. It was during these trips that his interest in horticulture, and particularly alpine plants, was ignited; it is for plant hunting that he is chiefly remembered.

Born in the Stoke Bishop area, Baker's family lived at The Holmes (the gardens of which form the University's Botanic Garden) for eight years, and he may have laid out the rockery and some of the ponds there. Throughout his life he worked for the family drapery business, rising



Above: During its time as a school, boys played on the terrace of Manor House. (Reproduced by kind permission of Dr. M J Crossley-Evans)

The arrangement of paths around the southern boundary reflected eighteenth century serpentine walks. However, Hiatt Baker introduced an element of modernity by designing two orthogonal paths, which divide the garden into three areas. At the end of these avenues he planted two tulip trees, *Liriodendron tulipifera*, possibly in response to those in the neighbouring garden of Clifton Hill House. The 1930s planting is not recorded, but due to Hiatt Baker's extensive horticultural knowledge, it would, undoubtedly, have included many interesting species. Today, a mixture of shrubs and herbaceous planting fills the borders below the terrace. These include mahonia, forsythia, hydrangea, weigelia, potentilla, myrtle, euphorbia, sedum, iris and the Japanese rose, *Rosa rugosa*, with its scented flowers followed by large hips.

A few of the original cherry trees survive along with a pear tree. This specimen is a replacement for an original which was collected and propagated by Hiatt Baker from one of his plant-hunting expeditions. There are also many twentieth century arboreal additions such as *Magnolia stellata* and silver birch, *Betula pendula*. Like the grass banks along the drive, the ground is carpeted in spring with snowdrops, followed by crocus and daffodils, making it predominantly a spring garden.

Beyond the southern boundary the ground falls away sharply, indicating the remains of a medieval manor, but the towers of Brandon Hill and the Wills Memorial Building rise up to create focal points along the horizon. The peaceful nature of this garden, within the city, has prompted several alumni to donate funds in memory of fellow students and staff. As a result, many of the benches have plaques commemorating their work, and several of the trees have been planted to honour their memory.

‘Hiatt Baker’s design for the gardens at Manor Hall was his last gift to the University. His daughter Mrs. Hewer has recalled that he always intended the layout to be simple, but completely symmetrical.’

Many of Manor Hall's wardens have taken an active interest in the gardens, particularly Dr. Marjorie Tait (1906–1972), who used a small greenhouse to grow tomatoes. In memory of Miss Gladys Morgan (1894–1957) students provided the planting in the borders on either side of the terrace. The current warden, Dr. Martin Crossley-Evans, also takes great pride in the gardens and has planted many of the shrubs and trees in memory of family and students. He is one of the trustees of the Joy and Gwynn Kennedy Memorial Trust, which was set up by Gwynn in memory of his late wife, a Manor Hall student. Income from the Trust is designated solely for the care of the gardens and new planting, such as the clematis bowers around the benches.

The most important memorial is positioned on the lawn. The stone birdbath celebrates Hiatt Baker's design of the gardens at Manor Hall. The original planting of rock roses, *Cistus*, surrounding the bath serves as an appropriate reminder to the visitor of his great love of Alpine plants.



Centenary Garden

This bare patch of grass dwarfed by the Wills Memorial's gothic ranges would be transformed into a more intimate and usable space, responding to the scale of the adjacent tower.

Opposite: Yulan magnolia tree in the centre of the garden is backed by a commemorative stone carved by Sarah Stewart-Smith





Above: Kate Wallis' impression of mature garden © Kate Wallis

To celebrate 100 years of the University of Bristol in 2009, the Centenary Project Board charged Professor Timothy Mowl with masterminding the creation of a new garden. As a result, the former Bristol postgraduate and garden designer, Anne de Verteuil, was approached to design a commemorative garden in the green space enclosed on three sides by the Wills Memorial Building. This iconic building, set at the top of Park Street, was commissioned in 1912, by his sons George A Wills and Henry H Wills, as a memorial to Henry Overton Wills III, who had been instrumental in founding the University of Bristol and was its first Chancellor. The brothers chose the Bristol architect George Herbert Oatley to design a building on the site of the Blind Asylum. Conceived in the Gothic style and constructed of Bath and Clipsham stone, it was officially opened in 1925, the building's completion having been delayed by the First World War.

The bare patch of grass dwarfed by Oatley's Gothic ranges was occasionally used by students in fine weather, but did not provide any screening from the traffic on Queens Road and Park Street, nor any seating. Its main function was to provide space for marquees in which graduands would be fitted into their academic gowns in preparation for February and July Degree Congregations.

‘Local legend suggests that it grew from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea when he plunged it into the ground at Glastonbury.’



Above: Wills memorial tower illuminated at night

Below: Sir Roy Strong opening the gardens on 8 May 2009. (University Archives)

Anne de Verteuil remarked: 'It felt like a bare stage and the buildings created strong diagonal shadows across the space'. Her aim was to create a more intimate and usable space, whilst responding to the scale of the adjacent tower, so that the garden did not compete with it. Strong lines within the design serve both to break up the garden into smaller areas and also to echo the axis of the buildings. The choice of materials was also carefully considered for their function and local provenance. Planting reflects local historical associations and was chosen with the assistance of Nicholas Wray, Curator of the University's Botanic Garden.

The green oak benches, designed to respond to the mass of the Wills Building were made by the Radstock wood carver, Martin Nichols, a member of the Somerset Guild of Craftsmen. The commemorative stone of Cornish slate utilises the sun motif present in the bronze roundels on the H H Wills Physics Building in the Royal Fort garden. It was carved by Sarah Stewart-Smith of Artcarvers in Redruth.

The bold but simple planting was designed to create a contemporary style, whilst allowing uninterrupted views of the building. The solidity of the building and the oak benches is echoed in the cubes of native English yew, *Taxus baccata*. These will be closely clipped, as a reference to the Edwardian fashion for topiary hedging. Contrasting with the evergreen yew, two cubes of deciduous hawthorn or may, *Crataegus monogyna*, provide seasonal interest, with white spring flowers followed by red berries known as 'haws'. Closest to the road, a cube of the Glastonbury thorn, *Crataegus monogyna* 'Biflora', offers winter and spring flowers in





mild seasons and its inclusion here reflects Thomas Goldney's choice of it in his own garden. Local legend suggests that it grew from the staff of Joseph of Arimathea when he plunged it into the ground at Glastonbury.

In the centre of the garden, a Yulan magnolia or lily tree, *Magnolia denudata*, symbolises Bristol's trading links with China, from where it was imported in 1789. In early spring the pure white, cup-shaped flowers provide fragrance in the city air.

Screening is provided along the roadside by the line of six sweet gum trees, *Liquidambar styraciflua* 'Worplesdon' which, when mature, will reach 15 metres and produce a much-needed vertical accent. The deep green, lobed leaves of the trees offer seasonal interest with autumnal colours of orange and yellow; they may even bear fruit in years to come.



The purpose of the Centenary Garden, brought into reality by External Estates, managed by Alan Stealey, was to provide a new civic space for both members of the University and the citizens of Bristol to enjoy. Anne de Verteuil's scheme has combined the principles of the Arts and Crafts movement, coupled with historic planting references and modern design motifs, creating a tranquil space at the top of traffic-bound Park Street. This twenty first century addition to the University's historic gardens brings its horticultural heritage right up to date, its success measured by the number of people who use it, not just in the summer but all year round.



‘The purpose of the Centenary Garden, brought into reality by External Estates, managed by Alan Stealey, was to provide a new civic space for both members of the University and the citizens of Bristol to enjoy.’

Above: Landscaping in progress to create the new Centenary Garden

Opposite: Seats made of green oak, designed by Martin Nichols, are screened from the road by six *Liquidambar styraciflua*



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