CAMBRIDGESHIRE GARDENS TRUST

NEWSLETTER No. 14 MAY 2003

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

This year we have embarked upon our most ambitious events, and I call your attention to three extra events which you should include in your diary.

We are quickly selling out of tickets for our Social Evening at Kirtling Towers on Saturday, July 19th, at 6.00 pm, which is in aid of the work the Trust is carrying out at Ramsey Abbey Walled Kitchen Garden. Should you wish to bring a friend please note that you need to add a further £3 for the ticket.

Can I appeal for help when Abbots Ripton Garden is open on Sunday, 3rd August, for home-made cakes for the teas. The proceeds from the teas will also go towards the garden at Ramsey. Please can you contact Alison Gould, 01480 891043, with your offers of assistance.

On Thursday 16th October, 2003 at 2.30pm there is a visit for members to the late Sir Frederick Gibberd's garden at Marshlane, Harlow.

Our research is continuing apace, both at Bottisham and Brampton. But we need more help on our West Cambridge project. The evidence of plant orders to owners of new houses in West Cambridge has now been discovered during our Brampton research so there is much to co-ordinate. We have been given permission to print in this Newsletter just a few letters from the many Wood & Ingram ledgers, which I hope you will find of interest.

The main topic in this Newletter is Japanese gardens and their influence on gardeners in the county. The bamboo collection at the Cambridge University Botanic Garden is the earliest display of bamboo plants in a botanic garden in this country. An article about the garden of 2 Sylvester Road in Cambridge will give members a flavour of what we are trying to research in our West Cambridge project. We will soon be able to write an article about the importance of horticulture in the curriculum following our research at Bottisham Village College.

Please can you note that we have only a few (about 30) Gazetteers unsold out of the 1,000 we had printed in July 2000. Soon they will be collectors' items. Plans are afoot to consider enlarging the Gazetteer in the near future.

Please note: those members who pay by standing/banker's orders, our Treasurer has been unable to liaise with some of your banks to get the forms altered to take account of the changes to the increase in your subscription. We would be pleased if you could send the increase (£2) by cheque to cover this year's membership and then speak to your bank to formally change the appropriate document. Please check if this concerns you. Thank you.

John Drake, Chairman

GARDENING IN THE EAST

ARTIFICIAL 17th CENTURY TURKISH GARDENS

Extract from the diaries of Dr John Covel, 1670-1679, Master of Christ's College, Cambridge, published by The Hakluyt Society in 1892 in *Early voyages and travels in the Levant.*

Covel is mentioned by John Evelyn in his diary (ii, 338) as 'Covel, the great Oriental Traveller'. Covel resided six and a half years at Constantinople from 1670-77. He noticed everything and his sketches of life, costumes and manners are life-like. He was born at Horningsheath, in Suffolk, in 1638, and was educated at Bury St Edmunds and Christ's College, Cambridge. He studied medicine in early life with a view to being a physician, which accounts for his extensive knowledge of botany and drugs. When he was elected to a Fellowship at his College, he changed his studies and took Holy Orders. Dr Covel was twice Vice Chancellor of the University, and was appointed Master of Christ's College in 1688, which position he retained until his death in 1722 at the age of eighty-four.

Covel describes a procession on June 19th 1675:

"Following 30 mules handsomely trimmed and furnished, each laden with painted chests in which was gold or silver, came in two rows 112 persons on foot, in caps and well clad, bearing pieces of vests of gold, silver, satin and embroidered works. Then some Janisseries on foot; after them were led forty stately horses, their trappings designed for The Sultan to dispose of as he pleased.

"After this came three or four artificial gardens, about 3 yards square, with pretty knolls and walks, full of flowers and trees, with their fruits all of tolerable wax-works with pretty Kiosks (summer houses), in the middle, and several birds and beasts placed here and there amongst the plants and trees; two had artificial fountains in them, which were supplied with the same water by an engine of clock-work contained within them.

"All these were carried by slings in the slaves' hands, who were managed by galley-whistles; then followed, in two files on each side of the way, 120 sugar-works, born on frames by two slaves a piece, sedan wise, made from 2 feet to 5 feet high, some more or less as the fancy required. They were Ostriches, Peacocks, Swans, Pelicans, Lions, Bears, Greyhounds, Elephants and Buffaloes (it is unlawful to make the figures of men); they were done brutishly and bunglingly."

The reference to clock-work mechanism to make the artificical fountains may be due to the fact that Thomas Dallam travelled to Constantinople in 1599 to deliver an organ to Sultan Mahomed III as a present from Queen Elizabeth I. This was presumed to court the Sultan's friendship and strengthen allegiances against the Queen's Catholic enemies. The State papers record : "A great and curious present is going to the Grand Turk, which will scandalise other nations, especially the Germans."

On his return Dallam continued to build other organs and in 1605 he was engaged for 58 weeks in constructing the organ of King's College, for which he received the sum of £371.17.1d.

The Sultan's organ no longer remains. It is thought that the Turks could not understand how to maintain it and soon disposed of it.

John Drake

JAPANESE GARDENS

Chinese gardens have been an influence in Europe since the end of the 17th century, but Japanese gardens became very fashionable in the west after the Meiji restoration (1868) opened up Japan to foreign visitors. Interest in Japanese culture was somewhat superficial; it was ridiculed in Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* (1885) and with sentimentality in Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* (1904). Plants, however, were taken more seriously.

Reginald Farrer (1880-1920), the plant collector who lived in Tokyo in 1903 and described the country and its gardens in *The Gardens of Asia* (1904) thought the Japanese hated plants because they butchered them. A B Freeman-Mitford (later Baron Redesdale) of the Foreign Service regarded the Japanese garden as all 'spick and span', intensely artificial and a monument to wasted labour (*Tales of Old Japan* 1871). He developed an enthusiasm for bamboos which he cultivated at Batsford Park and described in *The Bamboo Garden* (1896). Michael Lancaster From *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* Geoffrey and Susan Jellico, Patrick Goode and Michael Lancaster, 1986

Another reference to gardens in Japan is to be found in *Samurai Williams, the adventurer who unlocked Japan* by Giles Milton, published by Hodder and Stoughton, 2002. This book is an account compiled from William Adam's diary of a sea voyage in a Dutch vessel to Japan commencing in 1586.

'Nine days after our arrival the great king of the land sent for me to come unto him'. Five galleys were despatched from Osaka, 'to bring me to the court where his highness was'. Osaka was an impressive city. It was huge - as big if not bigger than London - and was divided by a river 'as wide as the Thames'. The real draw of Osaka was its rambling elegant castle, whose scale far surpassed the Tower of London. It was one of the marvels of Japan. Once inside, visitors found themselves in an enchanted world of follies and pleasure gardens, ornamental pools and miniature waterfalls. When the Jesuit, Padre Luis Frois, had been invited here some years earlier, he had been astonished to discover that there were entire landscapes in miniature within the walls, 'wherein the four seasons of the year are reproduced with its unhewn rocks, trees, shrubs, greenery and many things'. Vast sums had been spent on creating exquisite gardens whose rambling paths and crooked trees were a world away from the formal

landscapes so beloved by the Elizabethan gentry. '(The Japanese) take much delight and pleasure in lonely and nostalgic spots', wrote the Jesuit Joao Rodrigues, '(such as) woods with shady groves, cliffs and rocky places, solitary birds ... and in every kind of solitary thing'. Osaka castle had little follies, ornamental tea pavilions and 'sumptuous and lovely *zashiki* (parlours) decorated with gold, which look down on the many green fields and pleasant rivers below'.

(The Jesuits' accounts can be read in *They came to Japan: an anthology of European reports of Japan, 1543-1640* by Michael Cooper, published by Thames and Hudson 1965.)

Compiled by John Drake

GARDENING IN THE EAST
EXTRACTS FROM MAGAZINES AND BOOKS

THE HORTICULTURE OF THE FAR EAST

That there is nothing new under the sun is an old proverb, the truth of which is denied as often as is admitted, and yet how often do we find its veracity confirmed most unexpectedly. A case of this kind has recently occurred: with us the passion for plants having variegated foliage is but the growth of the last few years, but in Japan these plants have been quite as popular for ages as they are now here. We should not forget, too, that the common kind of *Aucuba* which has been so long a favourite shrub in our gardens came originally from Japan; all the plants, propagated probably from a single stock, were males; we now have the fruiting plant, and its plain green leaves and orange berries will ensure for it as great a share of popular favour as they enjoyed by its predecessors.

Many of their favourites have already been imported into this country, but it is highly probable that there are yet as many more to come. Some plants, which have recently been sent to this country, enable us to form an idea of the state of horticulture better than any description would have done. We had all heard of the dwarfed trees of Japan, but few of us have ever had the chance of seeing them. It is perfectly astonishing to see the amount of industry and perseverance which the Japanese must have devoted to the production of these plants.

There are some little Fir trees, not more than a foot in height, and yet I counted upwards of 50 ties by means of which the shoots were bent backward and forward in a zig-zag way. These little Pines must have been very old, and many years must have been spent in bringing them to this state, as their growth under these favourable circumstances must have been slow in the extreme.

Artificial rock-work is very popular in Japan, and the same idea is carried out in pot-plants, for it seems to be a very fashionable mode of cultivating plants to introduce a conical piece of rough sandstone, green with mosses, and to train the plant over and around it.

The pots in which some of the Japanese plants were sent home, were almost as worthy of examination as the plants themselves. They were of very various, and, no doubt, of what is there considered very ornamental forms; but we should look on them as being both inconvenient and ugly. In some directions the Japanese seem lavish of their labour; but in others they are very economical, if not niggardly. Thus, some of the larger plants were trained so as to exhibit one side only, and the surface of the porcelain pot on that side was decorated with paintings in that peculiar style, of which the willow-pattern plate may be taken as the type. The backs of these pots are left quite plain.

The most valuable plants which have hitherto been introduced from Japan are the Conifers, of which there are many distinct kinds, some of them differing so widely from anything we already possess that they will form quite a new form in our landscapes. The nurserymen, to whose exertions we are indebted for these new hardy trees, are real benefactors to their country. C W C

From *The Gardeners' Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette* January 11th 1862.

JAPANESE GARDENING

Many and various have been the forms of gardening, carried out under the title of "Japanese", and if the usual method of gardening followed in the Eastern Island Kingdom is as varied as its representations in this country, then the charm of variety is not lacking.

The Japanese Garden at the White City, Shepherd's Bush, a few years ago, was constructed and maintained by Japanese horticultural artists, and may, therefore, be regarded as a fair general presentation of a style regular to our Allies. In various gardens throughout this country Japanese gardening has been carried out with more or less success. In general, it is a combination of rock and water gardening in a sheltered spot, and a limitation of the size of the trees and shrubs used, so as to secure a fairly wide range of subjects in a given area, and still allow each plant to show itself off to advantage.

Perhaps the most successful of the so-called Japanese gardens are those that show some adaption to our own ideas, i.e. more freedom is allowed. A very free adaption is seen in the Japanese garden at Hinchingbrook, Huntingdon, the home of the Earl of Sandwich.

A Japanese garden should consist chiefly if not entirely of Japanese plants grown in Japanese fashion, and if it does not approximate to this condition it ought to receive some other name. B K.

From *The Gardeners' Magazine* June l0th 1916

THE GARDENS OF HINCHINGBROOKE

Hinchingbrooke, the home of the Earl of Sandwich, and anciently the seat of the Cromwell family, is at Huntingdon, eight and fifty miles north of London, on the left bank of the River Ouse. Politically, Huntingdon is famous as the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell, and the Cromwell family formerly lived at Hinchingbrooke. Oliver Cromwell frequently visited Hinchingbrooke to see both his grandfather and his uncle, and the tradition says that when quite a baby he was lifted from his cradle and carried up on to the leads at Hinchingbrooke by a pet monkey. Tradition further adds that Charles I, when Duke of York, and quite a boy, stopped at Hinchingbrooke in 1604, and Oliver was sent for to play with him. The two boys quarrelled, and, in boy fashion, proceeded to settle their difference in the usual way, with the result that Charles "was sadly worsted".

Oliver's uncle supported the Royalist cause, and this he did so freely during the earlier part of the Commonwealth that he practically ruined himself, and was compelled to sell Hinchingbrooke. The purchaser of the house and estate was Sir Sidney Montagu, son of Lord Montagu, of Boughton. Sir Sidney's son, Sir Edward, was a Colonel in the Army of Parliament during the Civil War, and distinguished himself at Marston Moor, Naseby and Bristol. Sir Edward Montagu was a member of the Little Parliament of 1653, and sat as M.P. for Huntingdon in the first Protectorate Parliament. After the death of the Protector, he worked hard for the restoration of the Stuarts, and in his own ship, the 'Naseby', he brought Charles II back to England. For these eminent services the

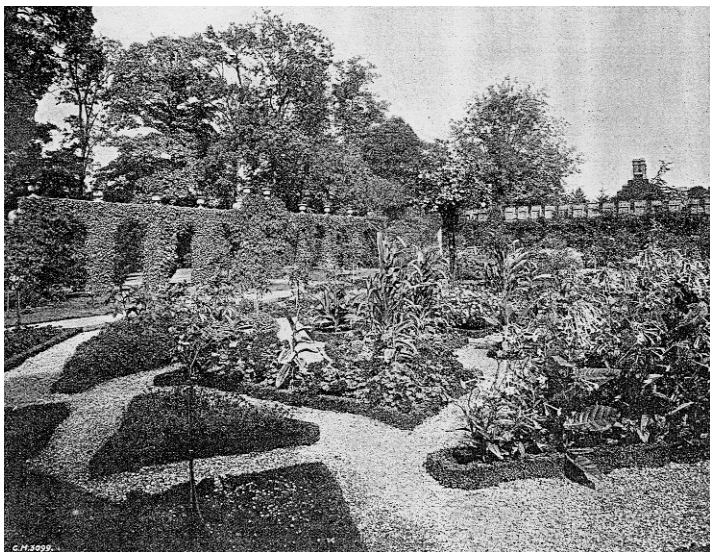
restored King eventually made him Earl of Sandwich, Viscount Hinchingbrooke, and Baron of St Neots.

The first Earl of Sandwich was a patron of Samuel Pepys, the diarist, and in the writings of the latter it will be seen that for some time both Pepys and his patron had many doubts concerning the grant of the earldom. Pepys' relatives lived at Brampton, close to Hinchingbrooke, and the death of an uncle brought Pepys from London to the funeral. The next day, July 14, 1661, he went "To Hinchingbrooke, which is now all in dirt, because of my Lord's building, which may make it very magnificent."

The Grounds:- "Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
Parks and order'd gardens great."

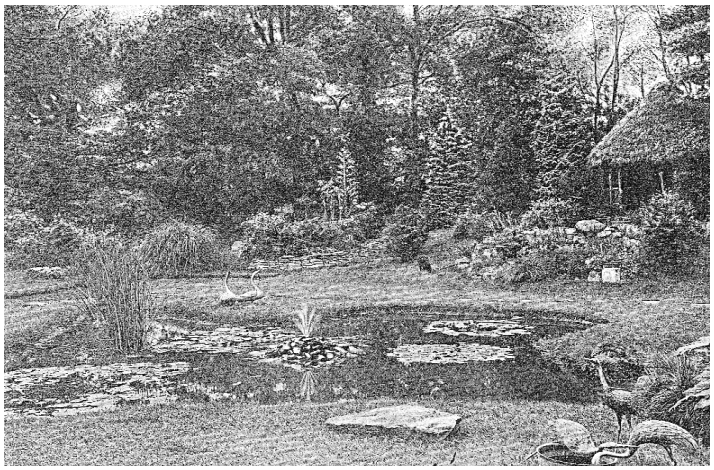
Of considerable extent are the pleasure grounds surrounding the mansion, and their arrangement is so good that the area is, apparently, doubled. On the south side of the mansion nothing attracts attention so much as the magnificent trees. These extend over the south and south-west portions, making the grounds especially fine in these directions, indeed Tennyson's lines aptly describe them: "The Garden stretches southwards. In the midst a Cedar spread his dark green layers of shade" only that here are many cedars, grand old specimens of Lebanon's ancient species, spreading their limbs unhampered, on every side, and towering upward majestically.

Beech trees, too, are particularly fine, and there are some good oaks. Some of the earlier owners of Hinchingbrooke did their duty well in the matter of planting, but in later times their example has not been followed. Hence there is an absence of middle-aged trees, trees that will maintain the beauty of the place when the old veterans decay. The present Earl, an excellent gardener, and also, but what does not always follow, a lover of his garden, is working out in his grounds, the park, and the estate generally, a scheme of tree planting. This work is already producing a good effect, notably to the river and the Home Farm.



In front of the drawing-room, on a side lawn, and backed by fine trees, is a very simple form of flower garden. Big iron baskets, raised four feet from the ground, alternate with the beds, and are filled during the summer with tropaeolum, drooping lobelias, ivy-leaved pelargoniums, fuchsias, etc., while the beds themselves are made gay and fragrant with heliotrope, relieved by tall araucarias and cordylines. Some of the latter are used with conspicuous success in this part of the garden, their fine heads rising 15 feet high, standing quite free of other subjects. On the lawn is also a fine bold bed of the charming Laurette Messimy rose.

Nearby, a flight of stone steps leads on to a terrace, beneath which, on the outer side runs the road to Brampton. An ornamental parapet tops the wall, and commodious old stone seats are provided at either end. On the terrace stands an old sundial, supposed to have been set by Captain Cook, the famous navigator. Descending from the far end of the terrace, the pathway leads beneath more fine trees to an ancient Yew Walk. On either side the close-cropped hedge is several feet thick, and about seven feet high, surmounted at regular intervals with rounded standard heads of yew. This walk is really the beginning of a delightful vista, and through it the view is carried on down the Walnut-tree Walk. The latter, broken slightly by an ornamental open-work gate, and bordered on either side with rhododendrons, laurels, and other evergreen shrubs, leads down through a pretty bit of woodland to the lake below. It is to these delightful vistas and views opening up here and there that the grounds owe so much of their charm.



Japanese Garden:- "In order, Eastern flowers large,
Some dropping low, their crimson bells
Half closed, and others studded wide
With disks and tiars, fed the time
With odour."

If there be one outstanding feature of this well-kept establishment it assuredly is the Japanese garden. In the south-west corner of the grounds, close to where an avenue of chestnuts passes round a large portion of the park, there was formerly - nay, but three years ago - a pond, and a muddy pond at that. Now this same site has been transformed into a delightfully pretty piece of gardening.

When travelling in Japan the Earl of Sandwich was keenly interested in the quaint gardens of our Oriental allies, and bearing in mind the chief features of those that appealed most to his taste, he determined to make a Japanese garden at home. The muddy pond was selected as the site, and here his Lordship, aided and abetted by his gardener, Mr Barson, designed a countryside in miniature. Spreading valleys, broad hill sides, mountain streams, tiny rivers, lakes and islands, rocky banks, high plateaux, and even a small volcano were all included in the design as finally executed. Flat stone paths lead from one little picture to another confined space by a

screen of evergreens, and lead on to a little thatched tea house that commands the principal view.

Planting has been carried out with great care and consideration. The temptation to fill up every inch of space with plants was, fortunately, overcome, and, as a consequence, the garden is now full of choice subjects, but without giving the impression of overcrowding. If one thing more than another can indicate the success of his Lordship's design it surely is the intention he has expressed of extending the garden beyond the bamboo bridge, where another depression, filled with old tree stumps clad in ivy, offers a splendid opportunity for further representations of Japanese, or Anglo-Japanese gardening.

Bamboos take an important part in the furnishing of this garden, and notable examples are those of B. *simonsi,* B. *mitake,* and B. *palmate*. Near the stream both the pink and white plumed Pampas grasses find a congenial home, while the lowlier growth, but more conspicuous in their season of flowers, are the Kaempfer irises, that have been freely planted in great variety. Liliums of many kinds abound, and they have taken uncommonly well to their positions; L. *speciosum,* L. *s. Melpomene,* the gorgeous L. *auratum,* L. *triginum,* L. *elegans,* L. *Henryi,* and L. *Browni* thrive amazingly. Standards of *Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora,* of the hardy hibiscuses, and of several species and varieties of cytisus provide just that touch of the unusual that makes a garden of this character so interesting and entertaining.

Flowering shrubs, notably the dwarfer forms of cherry, almond, peach and plum admirably fulfil their part in the decoration of the garden, and others, chiefly of Oriental origin, carry on the display through the summer. Climbing plants and those of rambling habit are taken full advantage of to clothe poles and light archways. Polyantha roses have been pressed into service, as also have the Japanese wineberry and the Golden Hop. The latter is very pretty, especially as the season advances, when its elegant growths have twined themselves among the connecting wires. A selection of dwarfed trees, presented by Sir Claude Macdonald, adds realism to the scene. Here is a fine old scarlet oak, over a hundred years old, with a stout and knotted trunk; yonder are azaleas growing in blocks of soft stone, with shapely miniatures of *Retinospora obtusa* hard by; these and others are not planted out - as that would soon mean goodbye to their diminutive character, but they are plunged in the soil.

No Japanese garden can afford to be without its old stone lantern, and if storks and flying fish are added so much the better. In all these things the Japanese garden at Hinchingbrooke is quite 'de rigueur'. The lantern once belonged to a Japanese temple. The storks, the geese and the flying fish are all beautiful examples of Japanese metal work, brought home by his Lordship, and they seem not at all out of place here.

The Flower Garden:-

"All among the gardens, auriculas, anemones,
Roses and lilies, and Canterbury-bells."

It is usual for the chief display of summer flowers to be arranged in full view of the mansion, but conventionalism is not rigidly followed at Hinchingbrooke. The flower garden proper is some little distance from the house, screened by substantial hedges, crowned by some wonderful umbrella standards of *Rosa* Gloire de Dijon, and cut out in an old-time geometric design. Moreover, the beds are all edged with box, so that though the position is unconventional, the design is extremely so. But the planting of the thirty-six or more beds is carried out informally. There is no attempt to pair or match the beds, and the result is probably the finer as a consequence.

Leading from this garden towards the house is an arched walk or arbour, clothed with the fragrant old red honeysuckle, with Rosa Crimson Rambler, Garland, Euphrosyne, Leuchstern, Dorothy Perkins, and other beautiful climbing and rambling roses. A fragrant bower of beauty is this in rose time, and it is a fitting preface to the flower garden proper, as approached from the house

(This account continues with descriptions of the Winter Garden and Corridors, the Kitchen Garden, the Glass Houses and the Orchard, and finally there is an appreciation of The Man in Charge – Mr J Barson.)

From *The Gardeners' Magazine* January 7th 1905

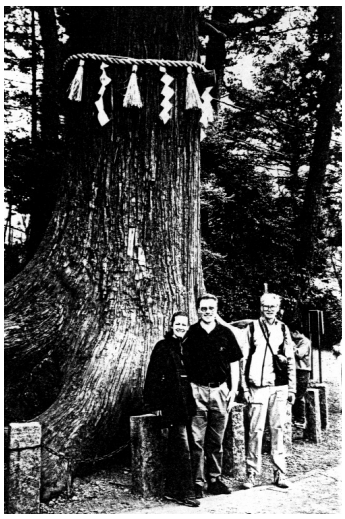
JAPANESE GARDENING
3–18 APRIL 2002

Our visit to Japan coincided with the flowering of the cherry blossom and we had an unexpected feast of the most beautiful gardens at their very best. Our visit included the parks and gardens of Tokyo, Kyoto, Takyama and Kanasawa, and some exquisite small temple gardens in the Japanese Alps. In the gardens we visited, there seemed to be a perpetual programme of maintenance, to keep their overall form in as near a perfect condition as possible. Each garden in its own way was a composition of beauty and form, traditionally designed to create spaces of balanced serenity, idealistically copying landscape features and with a reverence for ancient things.

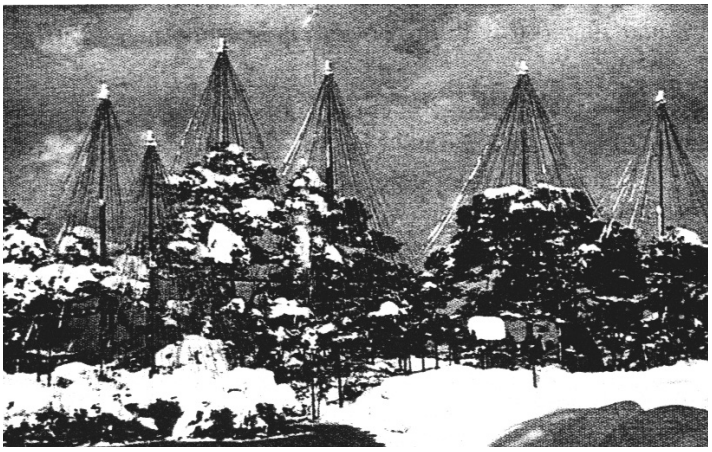
I was particularly interested in the gardening and the gardeners that we saw. How did they achieve this amazing degree of control for perfection that almost seemed to outwit

nature? The form of the gardens, apart from their seasonal changes of blossom time and leaf-fall, seemed to be frozen in time. We noted that the ancient trees of the temple and palace gardens had been painstakingly propped and supported by fans and screens of bamboo carefully tied together with knotted twine. In the Alps particularly, many trees were protected from the snow by bamboo canopies reaching up to great heights; these canopies were removed and stored in the spring. We saw bamboo being prepared on several occasions for screens and fences, one in a temple garden, and another, a low fence being constructed to protect a tree at a view-point beside the road. The gardens were constantly being tended; gravel was raked in meaningful patterns in the dry gardens of the temples with bamboo rakes, and fallen leaves everywhere were carefully swept and removed from all surfaces. In the palace gardens in Tokyo we saw three teams of workers, dressed in team uniforms, removing leaves from a rose garden and shrubbery; they worked in unison and had a gang leader who led the group off the site when they had finished with their cart full of leaves. Marching together, they made a great deal of noise and were obviously having fun. I thought they may have been prisoners on a special working party, but no, they were retired members of perhaps the 'friends of palace gardens'. Later they were boarding buses, three buses, each with about 40 people; the gardens were large and their team work must have been invaluable. We saw streams with gravel beds and water irises being raked for fallen leaves and debris by gardeners standing in the water.

Unexpected were the moss gardens in damp places and beside streams, all immaculately cared for under the shade of ancient trees, and in the wild we also saw the most iridescent mosses growing on every surface possible with orchids and amazing fans of lichens. We were constantly amazed at the tortuous way trees and shrubs were pruned, some trees about 40 feet high losing all their branches except for a seemingly distorted twig poking from a swathe of bandages. How could these trees survive, and how long would the gardeners have to wait to see the results of their artistry? The very beautiful forms of some of the acers, simulating great age by their contorted shapes over the pools and streams, must have been the result of many years of pruning and staking. They were quite remarkable. The plant reflections in the water were lovely, especially where they complemented small temples, pavilions or shrines, with lanterns and bridges that carried the eye from one pool of interest to another and that lead you into another composition of captured beauty.



The cherry blossom in the temple garden in Kyoto was breath-taking. We found ourselves in a small courtyard of weeping cherries with the sun shining through the blossom, and where the falling pink petals had carpeted the ground. The cherry blossom on the lower slopes of the mountains, mingled with flowering japonicas and azalias, while beneath the trees were irises, lilies and bamboos in variety - a plantsman's delight.



As modern-day pilgrims, we climbed the hills to the sacred shrines outside Tokyo, and at the same time heard the song of the bush warbler, which sounded rather like the nightingale. The slopes were crowded with Japanese families and their friends walking the well-trodden paths marked out by ancient, giant pine trees. These had survived the urgent felling for timber after the second world war only because they were sacred, and today they are venerated by rope garlands. We also found small private gardens in the crowded streets of Tokyo and Kanasawa each with a carefully trained acer or magnolia in flower, and often there were small rock gardens with bonsai trees no larger than a tea tray beside a window or doorway. It was inspirational!

In the small courtyard of our apartment we watched a bamboo grow one foot a day; we counted the days, and when it had reached over 15 feet it was time to return home.

Beth Davis

2 SYLVESTER ROAD, CAMBRIDGE

In Gabriele Ullstein's 1953 article 'A professor's home in Cambridge' in *Homes and Gardens* she includes a photograph of the property looking across the lawn to the orchard. She comments that 'It stands in a street of medium-sized houses in medium-sized gardens, all facing west towards the road, but whereas the garage wing is in alignment with the rest, the main block is angled on a south-west-north-east axis; this gives the building an air of individuality, and seems to "lengthen" the sweep of lawn and orchard in front of it.'

This house was designed for Professor Sir Michael Moissey Postan (1899-1981) and his wife, Professor Eileen Power, after their marriage in 1938 by the architect Mr Hughes of Hughes and Bicknell, a local Cambridge practice. Professor Postan was born at Tighina in Bessarabia and educated in Odessa. He later studied economics at the universities of St Petersburg, Odessa and Kiev. Eileen Power was a medieval historian, and Professor at the London School of Economics. Professor Postan continued his studies at the L.S.E. and moved to Cambridge in 1935. When only 39 years old he was elected to the Chair of Economic History, an appointment which confirmed the medieval bias of his interests. He was a Fellow of Peterhouse from 1935-1965 and was knighted in 1980.

Immediately after the completion of their new home Eileen took a great interest in the garden and a letter survives from Charles Morley, Nurseryman and Florist at Station Nurseries, Fordham, offering her standard plums 3/- each, apples 3/- each, standard almonds 4/- each, bush apples 18/- a dozen and standard double white cherries 4/6d. (The order also included a *Hamamelis mollis* 4/-, a weeping flowering cherry 4/6d, a *Spiraea* 'Arguta' 2/3d and a *Forsythia viridissima* 1/3d. These four plants were actually planted and survived.)

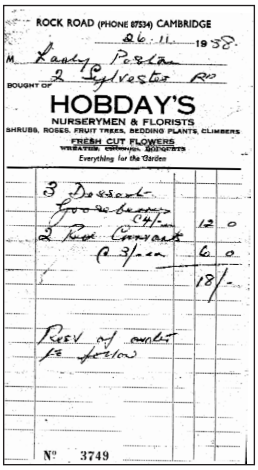
Her garden notes mention a Mr Cramp – horticultural advisor – and it is possible that he was involved with the final choice of fruit trees for the garden as follows '1 std Victoria Plum, 1 Early Transparent Gage, 1 standard Ellisons Orange, 2 standard Laxton Superb, 4 bush Cox's Orange on type 2 (2 years), 1 bush Worcester Pearmain, 1 Ribston Pippin, (1 Conference on quince, 1 Superb on quince, although these never survived) 3 standard Almonds and 3 standard Double White Cherries.'

Eileen Power Postan produced a diagrammatic layout for the garden which indicates the orchard screening the house from the road; other areas of planting are indicated in 'blocks', ie aubretia and pinks, wallflowers and tulips, sweet peas, mixed bulbs and 'blocks' of roses. With this overall layout established, three detailed planting plans remain; all refer to the 'blocks' of roses.

There was a triangular bed for red and pink roses arranged in a strong geometical design which required the following: *R* 'Madame Abel Chantenay'*, *R* 'Madame Edouard Herriot'*, *R* 'Mrs A R Barraclough', *R* 'Southport', *R* 'Christopher Stone'*, *R* 'McGredy's Scarlet', *R* 'Fred Walker', *R* 'George Dickson'*, *R* 'Daily Mail'* (same as *R* 'Edouard Herriot'), *R* 'W E Chaplin', *R* 'Etoile de Hollande'*, *R* 'Picture'*, *R* 'Caroline Testout'*, *R* 'Dame Edith Helen'*, *R* 'Mrs Henry Mase', *R* 'La France'*, *R* 'Shot Silk'*, *R* 'Mrs Henry Bowmes', *R* 'Betty Uprichard'*, *R* 'Signora', *R* 'President Herbert Hoover'*, *R* 'Hugh Dickson'* and *R* 'Crimson Glory'*.

A rectangular area was set aside for polyantha roses of mixed colours: *R* 'Superba', *R* 'Maud E Gladstone', *R* 'Ideal', *R* 'Alice Amos', *R* 'Yvonne Rabier'*, *R* 'Leonie Lamasch'*, *R* 'Rodhatte', *R* 'Ellen Poulsen'*, *R* 'Karen Poulson', *R* 'D T Poulsen', *R* 'Little Dorrit'*, *R* 'Cameo'*, *R* 'Diana', *R* 'Jessie', *R* 'Coral Cluster'*, *R* 'Gloria Mundi'*, *R* 'Poulsen', *R* 'Fortshutt', *R* 'Salmon Spray', *R* 'Frau Astrid Spath'*, and *R* 'Resplendence'.

Then a long bed of yellow, copper and white roses was established which required the following:- *R* 'Edith Holly Perkins', *R* 'McGredy's Yellow'*, *R* 'Golden Dawn'*, *R* 'Mabel Morse', *R* 'Phyllis Gold', *R* 'Christine', *R* 'Duchess of Atholl', *R* 'Katherine Pechtold', *R* 'Irish Elegance'*, *R* 'Emma Wright'*, *R* 'McGredy's Wonder', *R* 'Margaret A Baxter', *R* 'Lady Forteviot'*, *R* 'Comtesse Vandal'*, *R* 'Sir Henry Segrave', *R* 'Dickson's Perfection'*, *R* 'Mrs Sam McGredy'*, *R* 'Barbara Richards', *R* 'Mme J Perraud', *R* 'Swansdown', *R* 'McGredy's Ivory' and *R* 'Frau Karl Druschki'*. Although these were the roses required it is likely that not all were planted. (Those roses marked * are still available today.)


ROCK ROAD (PHONE 87534) CAMBRIDGE

26.11. 1938.

M Lady Postan

2 Sylvester Rd

BOUGHT OF

HOBDAY'S

NURSERYMEN & FLORISTS

SHRUBS, ROSES, FRUIT TREES, BEDDING PLANTS, CLIMBERS

FRESH CUT FLOWERS

Everything for the Garden

3 Dessert Gooseberry @4/- ea	12	0
2 Red Currant @ 3/- ea	6	0
	18/-	

No 3749

Eileen took her gardening very seriously even though she had had no previous experience. But she knew exactly what she wanted – a rather conventional garden with a lot of familiar flowers based perhaps on what she had observed at Girton College.

During the spring of 1940 Mallows, her gardener, was given a list of seasonal jobs to carry out:

1) Move prunus behind roses to place marked by sticks near weeping cherry & substitute Japanese flowering prunus (*Prunus sekiyama* now renamed *Prunus* 'Kanzan').
2) Plant *Prunus persica magnifica* on other side of path in position marked with stick.
3) Plant crab apple (*Malus*) behind roses between 2 Cox trees as marked by stick.
4) Plant 4 climbing roses in positions marked by stakes outside sitting room door at back of house, alternating red and pink.
5) Plant William Allen Richardson by gate as near gatepost as possible if can be done train on existing hedge tree.
6) Plant two *Rosa moyesii** bushes where marked by sticks behind Cox's Orange Pippin behind long rose bed & *Rosa hugonis** nearer fence on same side in position marked by stick.

From her house at 20 Mecklenburgh Square, London, WC1, Eileen prepared lists of annuals to be obtained for sowing and planting by Mallows. His notes record orders to Barr for 4 oz of mixed flower seeds for naturalisation 2/-, to Dobbies for a collection of 12 Invincible sweet peas for 5/-, and a lengthy order to Unwins, Histon, Cambs for tall mixed calliopsis 2d, cornflower double blue 3d, clarkias double mixed 3d. eschscholzia 'Monarch Art Shades' 6d. felicia 6d, *Geum* 'Mrs Bradshaw' 3d. godetia tall mixed 3d, and larkspur 'Giant Imperial' 3d.

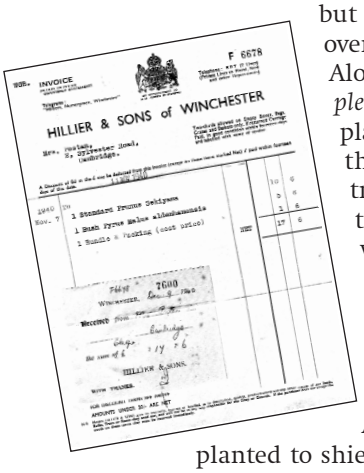
The borders were filled with her favourite nasturtiums, nicotianas, nigellas, linums, nemesias, poppies, primroses, salpiglossis, stocks, sweet williams and violas. Unfortunately Lady Cynthia Postan has no record of how the above annuals were used between 1940 and 1945, but amongst Eileen's garden lists are directions for border planting with delphiniums 2ft apart; phlox, clarkia, penstemons and lupins 15 ins apart in the middle of the border and in sheltered places bulbs of ixias and *Hyacinthus candicans*.

Finally her choice of available shrubs should also be recorded: *Acuba japonica, Cornus alba* 'Westonbirt', *Cotoneaster rotundifolia, Weigelia middendorffiana, Spiraea japonica* 'Bumalda', *Escallonia* 'C F Ball', *Ribes sanguineum, Senecio greyii* and *Viburnum carlesii*. Only the vibernum was there in 1945.

In 1940 Eileen died and illustrated is probably her last order to Hilliers for a pear and flowering cherry. The house was then rented by Professor Sir Raymond and Lady Firth, and Mallows, the gardener, remained. coming regularly every Monday. Later he went to work full time at the American War Cemetery at Madingley.

In 1944 Professor Postan married Lady Cynthia Keppel (2nd daughter of the 9th Earl of Albemarle) and the garden entered a new phase. The size of the plot was one acre and two perches - obtained on a long lease from St John's College for £35 per annum. There was the deep ditch to the south, Bin Brook, which formed part of the drainage system for the west Cambridge fields. Water would often fill the ditch if it was blocked lower down, and in the 1946/47 winter the Postans' chickens were all swept away. The soil was very heavy clay (the main reason for leaving the garden and house at the end), but was enjoyed by the snowdrops and wild violets.

The Postans kept the original fence along the garden's road frontage and between the road and the house the orchard was planted. The apples - Cox's Orange Pippin, Sturmer Pippin, Worcester Pearmain and King of the Pippins flourished well, but the plums suffered, leaf curl took over and they were later removed. Along the drive *Prunus avium 'flore pleno'* and three almonds were planted, the latter removed because they grew too large, and one cherry tree was moved to the south side of the ditch. Two ornamental maples were planted by the Bin Brook facing the road (since removed by the Needham Institute). By the front door the Postans planted a Prunus ëAmanogawa' and by their garage a *Prunus* 'Kanzan'. A row of lombardy poplars were planted to shield the property from the flats in Thorney Creek House, next door (see C.G.T. Gazetteer 5.10).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INVOICE

HILLIER & SONS of WINCHESTER

The herbaceous border was established by Eileen, and after the war the path to the front of this border was paved, and a small brick retaining wall and coping stone were built to stop the soil from falling across the path. A colour scheme was adhered to which used plants with blue, yellow or white flowers - white phlox, *Paeony* 'Solange', yellow *Helianthemum* 'Wisley Primrose', delphiniums, anchusas, *Linum narbonense, Aster x frikartii, Aster amellus* 'King George', *Aster pappei* now called *Felicia amoena.* Behind were shrubs of hibiscus, syringa, *Vibernum carlesii, Spiraea* 'arguta' and *Ceanothus* 'Gloire de Versailles'.

Professor Postan did not like plants covering the new house as he considered that it would blur the architectural elevations which had been prepared by Mr Hughes, his architect. But fuchsias in the window box, and one *Rosa* 'Etoile de Hollande' were planted at the corner of the house.

All the roses grew well, but after 25 years they started to decline. The planting was enriched by a golden catalpa, many lilacs, yellow *Paeonia ludlowii* and *Rosa moyesii* along the path to the road. The stump of the remaining plum tree was used as a support for the climbing rose 'Magenta'. On the drive the climbing rose 'The Garland' was planted against a large flowering cherry tree. By the 1950s the Postans were traversing the country with a different range of plants for their garden at Ffestiniog in North Wales, and frequently called in at James Smith's Nursery, Matlock, Derbyshire, on their journeys. They had a passion for tree paeonies and their plants from Tapling's Nursery in Essex of *Paeonia mlokosewitschii* flourished and still give much pleasure in Lady Cynthia's garden in Barton Road. Missing roses were replaced and Hillier's invoice of February 8th 1955 shows the cost of roses was still only 4/- each. Some fruit trees survived and in 1958 Lady Cynthia was ordering soft fruit from Hobday's, Nurserymen & Florists, Rock Road, Cambridge.

There was a narrow raised paved path along the main elevation, below which was a wide bed planted in the early 1950s with ericas of various colours which were compatible with an alkaline soil. These had to be clipped every year - a great chore but quite essential. They were all winter flowering.

The property was sold in 1984, and the garden was changed to suit the requirements of the Needham Research Institute which now occupies the site (see C.G T. Gazetteer 5.18).

I have included many plant names from her garden plans and records in order that readers may appreciate the range of plants available during World War 2. These also indicate the gardening fashion of the period, i.e. Hybrid Tea roses of bright colours which flower later in the season. The soft colours of 'old fashioned' roses were not the 'in thing' in west Cambridge gardens. But planting schemes with roses of certain colours are surely a revelation for Cambridge gardeners, as the White Garden at Sissinghurst was not contemplated until 1949.

I am greatly indebted to Lady Cynthia Postan who has helped with this article, not only for making available her garden records and invoices from nurseries which supplied many of the plants, but also for her patience when answering so many of my questions.

John Drake

EILEEN POWER 1889–1940

Eileen was born in the Cheshire village of Dunham Massey, the daughter of a Manchester stockbroker. She was brought up by her maternal grandfather and spinster aunts in Oxford and entered Girton College, Cambridge to read history in 1907. After graduation she taught history as a Fellow of that College for eight years.

In 1921 she moved to a lectureship at the London School of Economics under Sir William Beveridge. At LSE, where she gained a chair in 1931, she worked closely with R H Tawney to make economic and social history a prominent part of the historical disciplines. The case was argued from the lecture platform, on the radio and in the press. Charismatic, possessing a fine literary style and a keen interest in anthropology, she was perhaps the best known mediaeval historian of the inter-war years. During these two decades she developed close friendships with the economists, Hugh Dalton and Hugh Gaitskell, and a very close working partnership with one of her early students, Michael Moissey Postan (c1899–1980). Eileen fostered his career, securing appointments for him at LSE and University College London. Finally she kept her name from being put forward as Professor of Economic History at Cambridge on the retirement of Sir John Clapham, leaving the way open to the appointment of 'Munia' Postan as professor and Fellow of Peterhouse. In 1937 Eileen and 'Munia' married and theirs was one of the great historical associations.

An active participant in the campaign for women's suffrage, women's history as an academic subject taught at universities was her creation but it only re-emerged in the 1970s, some two decades after her death. She was the first woman to be appointed to the Kahn Travelling Fellowship, 1920-21, one of the first women to be appointed to an economic history professorship and was the first woman to be invited to deliver the Ford lectures at Oxford.

Her travels had taken her to India, Malaysia, China, Japan and North America, and she had studied in France. For her, economic history was an analytical study but integrated into social sciences and responding to theoretical questions. It was shaped within a broad and politically relevant mould. She wrote "The ears of the historian are full of echoes, but since his own existence is the thing most real to him, some sound more clearly than others, because his ear is attuned to the ring of a clarion or the toll of a passing bell".

Her links with Cambridge were never lost. She retained close social links with the town and a close friendship with Sir John Clapham, Professor of Economic History and his family, often staying at his house in Storey's End. After her marriage in 1937 and 'Munia' Postan's professorship they moved to the new modernist house at 2 Sylvester Road, Cambridge, a house which they had built for their new life together.

With the outbreak of war in 1939, LSE was evacuated to Cambridge, but 'Munia' Postan was moved to London as Head of the Eastern European section of the Ministry of Economic Warfare. Sylvester Road became a gathering place for Eileen's students and for economic historians. Her London dinner parties and dances gave way to Sunday afternoon 'at homes'.

The summer of 1940 involved much travelling back and forth to London. Among other duties Eileen was editing the Economic History Review, assisted by Elizabeth Crittall, a young member of her seminar. For relaxation she took pleasure in working in her garden at Sylvester Road, often with Elizabeth, who remembers that Eileen experienced a sharp pain in her back while gardening. It stopped the gardening but not another trip to London. While shopping in Bourne and Hollingsworth's Eileen had a heart attack and collapsed. She died in an ambulance on the way to Middlesex Hospital, aged 51 years.

After her death G M Trevelyan dedicated his very successful *English Social History* to her memory. She was there among the great and good, but was still representative of the younger historians and a standard bearer of new directions in economic and social history, which she had helped to create. She would not have approved of Trevelyan's narrowly English approach and her own was rooted in archives and primary sources rather than an imaginative approach. An accolade when awarded an honorary degree at the University of Manchester stated 'she combined the graces of a butterfly with the sober industry of the bee'. It is perhaps possible to wonder whether her gardening was fostered by her travels and experiences in the Orient.

C H Malyon

A NEW GARDEN AT ELTON

In 1993 we decided to move to the Peterborough area from Gerrards Cross in Bucks, where we had spent ten years renovating a ¾ acre woodland garden. Our main requirement was a large garden; the house size was not a key factor. After two years of searching and much heated discussion we were able to agree on a property on the edge of Elton village in Huntingdonshire (Cambs.). The site itself was approximately two acres, with a modern architect-designed house, and a garden which was almost featureless apart from a swimming pool. We had viewed many properties with beautiful gardens, but the accommodation was invariably unacceptable. The Elton house, however, needed no immediate attention and the garden was a 'blank canvas'. So in December 1995 we moved to make the Elton property our new home.

We cannot say that the garden was planned from the beginning, since it was proposed to start the development from the house, and the whole scheme would gradually evolve outwards. Referring to Fig 1 it can be seen that the original garden had a good-sized lawn near the house, and an even larger paddock with medieval ridge and furrow beyond a conifer hedge. The whole garden was a rather uninteresting long rectangle, but had the advantage that the complete garden could be viewed from the upper storeys of the house. It was from the house attics that we did the landscape planning, and issued instructions on the alignment of the various garden features.

The first stage was to erect a geometrically scalloped trellis, with associated flowerbeds, and climbing roses on the two lawn sides of the swimming pool. A balustrade was erected around the existing patio, with three access points, and two new sets of steps. A rectangular bed with crossing paths was dug adjacent to the pool, which had the same overall dimensions as the pool, and balanced the design at this end of the garden. This was one of the earliest beds, and was used to accommodate some of the plants brought from the previous house. Fig 2 shows the effective screening of the swimming pool, the rectangular bed, and the elevated garden viewing points provided by the attic windows. A small octagonal greenhouse, with surrounding flowerbeds, was the next project to be completed at the upper left-hand corner of the lawn by the conifer hedge.

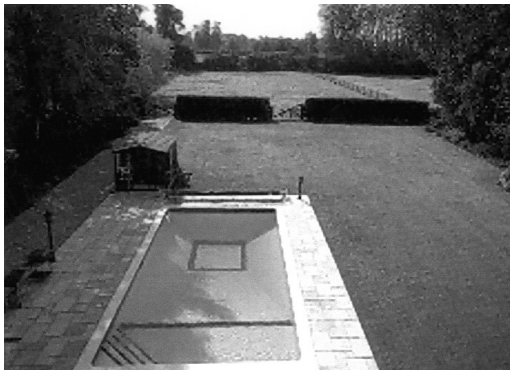
At this point it was necessary to decide how to open up the paddock so that it became part of the garden as a whole. This was achieved by removing the central gate and a good section of the conifer hedge. Once the length of the two main sections of the hedge was established, it was possible to determine

what to do with the right-hand section of the lawn in front of the conifer hedge. With the aid of string and tent pegs, plus many loud instructions from the attic windows, a large circular section of lawn was arranged inside a square of flowerbeds. This design was completed with a central gravel garden incorporating a sundial, and an arched opening to the paddock rose garden.

The next stage was to develop the paddock area so that it became part of the garden as a whole. One of the main priorities was to preserve as much of the medieval ridge and furrow as possible, as it was the only historic feature in the garden. Fig 3 gives an overall picture of the developments that have taken place in front of the conifer hedge and in the paddock beyond. The left-hand side of the paddock was often water-logged, and with wide furrows it was an ideal area to create a wildlife pond and a bog garden, whereas the right-hand side was a higher ridge area which would be suitable for a small arboretum. To take account of these conditions a willow hedge was planted on the left, and a rose hedge on the right boundary line. Other features that have been sympathetically included are a rose bed, white garden, vegetable plot and cottage garden. These were established in the four corners of the paddock where the ridge and furrow was less evident.

Following this came the creation of the significant focal point centrally at the end of the paddock, which would appear to bring this area into the main garden and help to mask the long rectangular shape of the site. This was achieved by constructing a large wooden ësummer house' using two conventional building conservatories, purchased in kit form, to make one self-contained enclosed unit. The 'summer house' was painted white to make it more visible, and connected to the original garden area by a long grass walk edged with flowerbeds. The long walk was flattened slightly, to overcome the wavy edges to the flowerbeds, caused by the undulations associated with the medieval ploughing. The 'summer house' has had the desired perspective effect and is now used to grow grapes, figs and peaches.

To the left of the long walk the wildlife pond was constructed in the form of an upper and lower pond,



incorporating a bog garden at the lowest point. There is a rustic bridge across the narrow section joining the two ponds, and the larger lower pond had two pebble beaches. The pond areas have now matured, and in addition to the wealth of plants they are now the adopted home to mallard ducks, moorhens, newts, frogs, toads and sticklebacks.

The higher ground on the right of the long walk had had the medieval ridge and furrow left untouched, and is planted with a variety of interesting trees in a series of elongated diamond beds which enable the undulating grass surface to be cut more easily.

While the groundwork was proceeding the flowerbeds were filled with plants from a wide variety of sources. Needless to say, winter flooding, summer drought, moles, and particularly rabbits have taken their toll, but it does provide an excuse for buying something new and different. Several of the flowerbeds have grown in size to accommodate that extra plant, and the white garden is now blue and white - something to do with the bees! There is now a dahlia bed, and an acid bed made with offcuts from the pond liner, since there is a limestone layer beneath the topsoil. We only have annuals in pots, as there is never room anywhere else, the exception being the usual wealth of self-seeded opium-type poppies and wild flowers.

We now find that there is a lot of routine work during the year, weeding, pruning and grass cutting, but the pleasure we get makes it all worthwhile.

Verna and Bill Emmerson

VISIT TO BRAMPTON
'THE HORTICULTURAL CENTRE OF THE COUNTY'

On the most beautiful Saturday morning in March many members gathered in Brampton at 44 Huntingdon Road. The land around this site consists of extensive grass meadows, and that morning the grass was wet with the morning dew. Adding to the pastoral scene were sheep grazing under the shadows of ancient boundary trees. Such an evocative scene is seldom seen today with the fields surrounding country villages now given over to housing and other needs. A tiny sign on the gatepost informs the enquiring visitor that this house has historical connections with Samuel Pepys. Indeed it was here in the garden that Pepys'wife buried their fortune in the dark and came with her husband to retrieve it some months later.

I have driven past this house many times but had never made the effort to arrange to look inside. Mrs Curtis, who had recently been suffering from back problems, showed us around the interior of the house. She mentioned that not long ago the fields, which almost surround this property, were due to have a garage and large housing estate built on them. Luckily the Pepys Preservation Trust quickly moved into action and bought the fields, thereby saving them for posterity. Members were also informed that the original barn to the house was sold to the adjoining owner and is no longer within the garden.

The main reason for visiting Brampton was to trace what still remained of the nursery of Wood & Ingram, which was established in Huntingdon in 1740, moved to Brampton to the south of the village, and occupied many acres of land along the Thrapston Road for growing extensive numbers of roses.

Following our visit to Pepys' House we proceeded over the A14 roundabout towards land to the west of Huntingdon Racecourse to see the original buildings erected by the firm in 1909. In these single storey-brick buildings they packed and sent out thousands of roses all over the world. The rose fields have been partly obliterated by the raised section of the A14 dual-carriageway and the brick buildings are today almost hidden within new agricultural stores which surround them. We had warned members that they were to expect something different from the peace and quiet of 44 Huntingdon Road. Here we were greeted with many old agricultural tools and machines displayed on every available piece of ground and in the buildings which were similarly filled to capacity.

Mr Grenville Sewell, the owner, was to be found in a large building filled with tractors, putting the final touches to his repainting of a Ransome two-furrow plough. Mr Sewell showed us the stables adjacent to this building. Several stables were needed to house horses that ploughed the rose fields, and other buildings were needed for animals for the production of manure for the grafted roses. The stables were no longer strewn with straw, but with diesel oil and spare parts for his machines. It is possible that the corner building with its wide brick arch may once have been a forge. Finally we were permitted to see the contents of the concrete building which was once the A14 surveyors' office. This was filled with more caterpillar tractors and, I am told, one of the only three remaining tractors which was used on the Western Front in World War I. In the distance we noted the tall trees (remnants from Wood & Ingram's nursery) at the edge of the rose fields which now form a boundary from the Racecourse.

Margaret Helme had kindly invited members to have lunch in her house at Waterloo Farm, so once again the cavalcade of cars processed around the Racecourse to higher ground where her farm stands. Members were treated to the most delicious food and nearly everyone was able to sit around the same table. Margaret had been greatly helped by Wyn Goulthorpe, and the potatoes had been grown by Grenville who also came to lunch. We could have stayed longer listening to Margaret's problems concerning access to her property, and we never did find out what was discovered behind the bureau in the living room.

After lunch we returned to Brampton to visit River Lane Nurseries which stand on part of what was once the site of Wood & Ingram's nursery. Today this smaller nursery is owned by Mr Bruss who permitted members to look into his potting shed which is shown on the first edition O S Map of 1880. This long narrow timber building has changed little since it was built and retains some original features - the fireplace inside and the timber opening flaps immediately under the roof. Some early brick glasshouses remain, without the glazing, and one can easily spot the mature trees dotted around the buildings which indicate that the site has been used as a nursery for several years. To the left of the entrance as you leave is a *Euonymus fortunei* 'Coloratus' of some size. 50 cuttings are taken each year and luckily this plant is still in cultivation.

We finally visited the garden around the house where the nursery manager once lived. This is immediately to the south of what is now Frost's Garden Centre. Mr Bickerdike, the present owner, spoke about the design of the garden and the amount of work he had to do to cut the perimeter yews back to a manageable size. He also gave an account of what happened to Wood & Ingram's nursery when it was sold in 1950, how the site had changed hands several times and the successful alterations he had made to this property when extending it. Several members enjoyed the late afternoon warmth in his garden and so an unusual day concluded. Members will now know something about the extensive research which our members are undertaking and I am sure that many will be interested in reading about the history of the firm when our research is published. Our grateful thanks to Audrey Osborne who planned the day, and to all those who allowed access to their gardens, farm, and nursery. Finally, a further thank you to Margaret Helme whose lunch idea was appreciated by everyone.

John Drake

WOOD & INGRAM
NURSERYMEN OF HUNTINGDON AND BRAMPTON

Members of the research team are busy writing up the history of this nursery which traded continuously from 1741 to 1950. It grew from small beginnings to become a firm of world-wide repute.

We are appealing to any member of the Trust who might have memories of the firm, who might have catalogues, receipts, photographs, memorabilia, etc., which would help us with this project, or who might know of any descendants of the Wood, Ingram or Perkins families still living in the Huntingdon area whom we could contact.

We have met some former employees of the firm who have given us valuable information, but any additional help would be much appreciated. If you can help, please telephone 01223 292246.

John Drake

EXTRACTS FROM WOOD & INGRAM'S LETTERS LEDGER JULY 1920–SEPT 1920

The following three letters taken from Letters Ledger July 1920 to September 1920 give a good insight into not only horticultural matters, but also into social and political conditions at the time:

14th August 1920 Ref: 255

Mr F Mitchell
The Reservoir, KNIPTON,
Grantham.

Dear Mr Mitchell

Many thanks for your kind enquiry of the 13th, as you are probably aware, Larch Fir is extremely scarce this season, but I can offer you 40,000 1½ft/2ft, Native Larch, twice transplanted, really good stuff, at 105/- per 1,000, carriage paid to Marston Siding.

I have about 5,000 Japanese, same size which I can offer you at 105/- per 1,000.

I can also offer you two year Scotch Fir very good at 75/- per l,000 and Spruce fir same age about 6 to 13" at the same price.

If any of the above are of service to you, I shall be glad if you will kindly let me know as quickly as possible, as I can only offer it strictly subject to remaining unsold.

The fact is, they are so scarce and there is such a keen demand, that one hardly knows how to deal with the enquiries. However, I am giving you the first chance of the Larch, and will hold it a few days pending your reply.

I ought to have had a big lot now this size, but 9/10ths. of the crop was a failure, not only with us, but with other Nurserymen.

Yes, it has been a very trying hay season. It seems extraordinary to think there is so much with you uncut. We got ours cut and carted it two months ago, in very good weather, and I can assure you we have felt very glad a good many times that it was up.

With our united kind regards, trusting Mrs Mitchell, yourself and family are well.

I am,

Yours very truly,

H Perkins

20th August 1920 Ref: 324/325

Mr F Mitchell
The Reservoir, KNIPTON,
Grantham.

Dear Mr Mitchell

Very many thanks for your kind letter of the 19th, which I was very glad to receive. I was much interested to read your opinion therein expressed.

I am always very glad to get the opinion of anyone like yourself who is practical on the subject about which we are writing.

As regards the investment money, not only now, but in the future, of course I am speaking for any of those who have any money to invest, it is a very difficult matter to say what will prove to be a good investment.

If I had the land to plant and contemplated doing it within the next few years, I should feel very much inclined to get on with it if I could get the plants. I do not think the labour, and wiring and fencing are likely to come down, and if one looks solely to the reduction in the cost of trees, I cannot see how a first class article is likely to fall in price; and presuming there is a reduction say for arguments sake it comes to as much as a Pound or 25/- a thousand in 2 or 3 years time, it is not much per acre when one reckons it out, and then there are to my mind two other important factors, whilst we are waiting for this reduction in the price of plants, the ground we are contemplating planting will probably produce nothing in many instances and become foul, which, in the long run, I am sure is a false economy. The loss of plants in many cases will be infinitely greater than ever the saving will be by waiting.

The other factor I look at is this, supposing in years to come this country was by any chance at War again, so that our

timber supplies were in danger, where are we going to for the timber which proved of such use for pit props, sleepers and in endless other ways during the war.

Of course, we all hope that such a thing will never arise, but if someone had not planted in the past, the loss to the Nation would have been far greater than it has been, and even on this score alone I think the policy of recommending people to wait a few years before planting is wrong.

I am telling you frankly what I think, not looking at it from the point of view of the forest trees I have to sell. I have not a great lot except it may be a fair quantity of Scotch Fir to offer this season, but such as I have I am anxious to give the first refusal to old clients like your father and yourself.

Of course, the contention of some people is, that if the country is likely to require timber in the future, let the Government provide it, or that it should be provided out of Government money.

After all, I think we should realise that there is no such thing as Government money, and at the present moment I think it is a difficult matter for the Government to find the money for what they already have in hand, and it strikes me that if we wait for them to make a good job of all our plantations in the country, we shall wait a long time.

If I may say so, I think the points mentioned in this letter are those to which those responsible for the planting of estates should have their attention drawn.

Again thanking you for your kind letter,

I am,

Yours very truly,

15th September 1920 Ref: 469

Dear Mr Michell

In further reply to your kind letter of 24th August, one can well understand Owners selling outlying portions of their estates, and I quite think that force of circumstances made many of them look at the matter from a different aspect to what they have hitherto done, but of course, as you know, there are a great many things done on Estates and in connection with the house and establishments which are kept up in connection therewith, which the owners do not do solely from the point of view as to whether it is a good investment or otherwise.

After all there is the other side of the picture, and quite apart from the monetary return it must be born in mind on a health and pleasure point of view the return on a good deal of the outlay is sufficient in itself, and a many might very well make very much worse investments today than planting trees.

As a matter of fact in the investment world, far more money has been lost during the last 12 months than will ever be lost out of planting in this country. Unfortunately for us all in this country, we are taxed far too heavily whilst we are alive, and then the death duties which follow, as you say, play great havoc with Estates.

I shall be only too pleased to see you at any time, for I always think that an exchange of views does good.

After all what is spent on the average estate nowadays on planting is quite a small item compared with what is spent in other directions, and I still maintain even at the present cost, a man might do very far worse than to plant trees.

As regards the Stilton which you are good enough to offer us, what we really want is one which will be right for Christmas, if you will be good enough to send one which will answer that purpose, and as to the time of sending it, we must leave this with you, as I expect much depends upon the condition of the cheese.

With our united kind regards,

I am yours very truly,

(Readers may be interested to know that in 1919 Wood & Ingram sold over 113,000 Larch trees.)

The following letter is an example of many which reply to customers with a polite turn of phrase. We wonder if such expressions are related to Huntingdon and are still in use today.

16th August 1920

Dear Mr Modral,

I have been wondering if one day next week would be convenient for me to send the car over for Mrs. Modral, yourself, and I believe Mrs. Perkins said Mrs. Modral's sister would join you.

We have been trying to fix this up for some time past, but the weather seems to have a fit of the miserables. As it is better now, we hope you will be able to fix *(sic)* it in, if not next week, sometime in the near future.

With kind regards,

I am.

Yours very truly,

Mr. W.C. Modral
The Gardens, Old Warden Park,
BIGGLESWADE.

Jill Cremer

Please note in your diary that the following events have been arranged for your interest:

1. **Sunday, August 3rd 2003** The extensive ornamental gardens of **Abbots Ripton Hall** are opening from 2.00 - 5.30 pm for the National Gardens Scheme. Lady De Ramsey has generously agreed that 25% of the entrance money raised will go to the Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust. Teas are available and again the monies raised will be used to help the restoration of the Walled Kitchen Garden at Ramsey Abbey. We need as many home-made cakes as possible so that we can raise money from the teas. Please can you contact Alison Gould (01480 891043) with as many offers for help as possible. Admission £3.00

2. **Thursday, 16th October 2003 2.30 pm Visit to the Gibberd Garden, Marsh Lane, Harlow.** This well established garden commenced in the1950s by Sir Frederick Gibberd (who was the master planner of Harlow New Town and Architect of Liverpool Catholic Cathedral) has recently been given support by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and is currently undergoing an imaginative and extensive restoration programme. The garden is recognised as an important contribution to 20th century garden design. £4.00 for members. Tea is available at the garden.

3. **Saturday, 22nd November 2003 2.30 pm Annual General Meeting** at the Village Hall, Buckden. Followed by a talk by **Jane Brown** relating to her recent research for the guide books for the gardens at **Buckingham Palace** and **Kelmarsh Hall.**

For those members who have booked to go to Kelmarsh Hall on Thursday, 11th September, please contact Daphne Pearce by phone, 01767 650527, if they are interested in having a light lunch at the Hall before our tour.

Please address applications for tickets to Mrs Daphne Pearce c/o 13 Ramper Road, Swavesey, Cambridge CB4 5RU until further notice.

Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust
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