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(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

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(incorporating the Cambs and Hunts Archaeological Society)

**Volume XCIII
for 2004**

Editor Alison Taylor

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Editorial

The first thing you will notice about these Proceedings is our leap (as a belated welcome to the 21st century) into colour, for our cover and a number of plates. This is not really an innovation: CAS had beautiful colour plates in 1883 and a few other 19th century volumes. At last this is affordable again, and the water colour drawings and photographs we wanted to show seemed to fully merit some extra expense. In future, we will look carefully at illustrations that would benefit from such reproduction and would be particularly keen to include fine examples of artefacts.

This volume contains some very substantial reports on archaeological work, for we are one of the few outlets available for full publication of excavations. It is refreshing to see that these all relate to recent work, not the backlogs that once were a feature of British archaeology. A quick look at the 'Fieldwork in Cambridgeshire 2003' section however reminds us what a small proportion of current work can be made available in this way. Of course, reports on all sites are produced and can be purchased from the relevant units or consulted in the county archaeological office. In future, these will also be added to a national data base known as OASIS, run by the Archaeology Data Service, so accessing this huge amount of data will eventually be much simpler. We aim to keep you abreast with such advances through our own website, www.camantsoc.org.

It was a great pleasure to be asked by the Cambridgeshire Local History Society to publish a short note on their superb photographic project, a worthy successor to CAS' similar project in the early part of the 20th century, now a much valued part of the Cambridgeshire Collection. This voluntary effort will likewise be used by those involved with the historic environment in years to come. The same Society asked us to include the list of recent additions to the Cambridgeshire Collection, compiled by Chris Jakes. This list used to be included in *Conduit* and has been much missed. It reminds us that our local historians are not far behind local archaeologists in their labours, a tribute to the floods of new data from an ever-active antiquarian community.

'Fieldwork', 'Reviews', 'Spring Conference report' and 'Conduit' are regular items we have managed to maintain – and which add to another substantial volume. This year, 'Conduit' was compiled at short notice by our redoubtable President, Tony Kirby, to whom we owe many thanks. In the nature of things this has to be done at the last moment, and even so many societies do not have a complete programme for the following year at the time we need it. We would therefore like to have a Supplement later in the year, as with original *Conduit*, but currently this is beyond our means. Perhaps we will have better news next year.

It remains to offer further thanks to our retiring President. Tony has taken the Society safely through two quite difficult years, and this October hands over to Nicholas James. Our Secretaries carry an even larger burden of work for the Society, of which organising nine lectures, often by speakers of national repute, is only one part. We are therefore extremely grateful to our retiring Secretary, Liz Allan, and to Janet Morris, who has now taken on the challenge. We must say a sorry farewell too to Don Fage, who has had the tough job of Registrar. It may also be noticed that we still have vacancies for Excursions Officer and for Editor of *Conduit*, so do contact us if you are interested in volunteering.

Alison Taylor
Editor

A Late Seventeenth-century Garden at Babraham, Cambridgeshire

Christopher Taylor

This paper re-examines the artificial 'canal' in Babraham Park that carries the diverted water of the River Granta past the Hall and the parish church. It concludes that it is part of an elaborate formal garden created in the late 17th century by a member of the Bennet family.

Introduction

The Linton branch of the River Cam, or Granta, takes a typical meandering course for most of its length from its source on the watershed beyond the county boundary to its junction with the main branch of the Cam at Stapleford. Except at one point. Within Babraham Park, just west of the Hall, the river flows in a ruler-straight course for a distance of 460m. The VCH (1978, 14) describes this section as an 'ornamental canal' and notes that it was already in existence in 1735 when it was recorded by the antiquary William Cole. The purpose of this paper is to attempt to better explain this 'canal' and its associated features.

Setting (Figs 1 and 2)

The River Granta flows north-west across the southern part of Babraham parish towards the south-western end of the village. It passes beneath the main street through a 19th-century brick-arched bridge. Immediately beyond the bridge the river turns north-eastwards through ninety degrees and then, after only 80m, turns through another right angle towards the north-west. It then runs in a long straight course, to form the 'canal', separating the western part of Babraham Park from the gardens around the church and the Hall. The Hall itself lies some 140m north-east of the canal and the parish church is somewhat closer, only 40m away. Beyond the gardens the river turns sharply north and returns to a more natural meandering course.

That this canal is artificial is clear, not only because of its straight alignment but also because of two other pieces of evidence. The first is that the line of the earlier, and presumably original, course of the river still exists in places as a shallow ditched feature some 15m

to 20m across and less than 1m deep winding north-westwards across the park some 150m to 180m south-west of the canal. Although now much reduced by modern ploughing, this feature was still so obvious in the late 19th century that the surveyors of the first edition Ordnance Survey 1:2500 plan (OS 1886) depicted most of it as a hachured trench or ditch. It was shown in the same way on all subsequent editions of 1:2500 and 1:10560 maps and plans until recently (eg OS 1901, 1938).

This ditch begins close to the existing river on the north-western side of the bridge over the village street and then runs north-west as a sinuous depression in the centre of a narrow strip of land mapped as alluvium by the Geological Survey (1964). At its northern end this ditch turns north-eastwards to meet the southern corner of a small medieval moated site. Although the exact junction of this former course of the river and the moat has been destroyed, it is likely that the river formed the south-eastern side of the moat. The river, having filled the ditch on the other three sides of the moat, flowed out of its north-eastern corner and then northwards on or near the present course of the river. If this interpretation is correct, the canal must be later than the moat. The second piece of evidence that demonstrates the canal to be artificial is that it lies not on alluvium laid down by the present river but is cut through the adjacent terrace gravels deposited by an earlier river (Geological Survey 1964).

Description (Fig 2)

The canal, some 460m in length, is exactly straight and has a constant width of some 6m to 7m set within a cut 14m to 15m across and 1m deep. Its overall fall is little more than 1m and its channel is kept full and slow-moving by two weirs. One, some 150m from its southern end, is a modern concrete gauging station which has replaced an earlier structure. This was identical to the existing weir at the northern end of the canal which is a simple triple-stepped arrangement of 19th-century date (inf A Dockerill). Neither of these weirs were part of the original canal system.

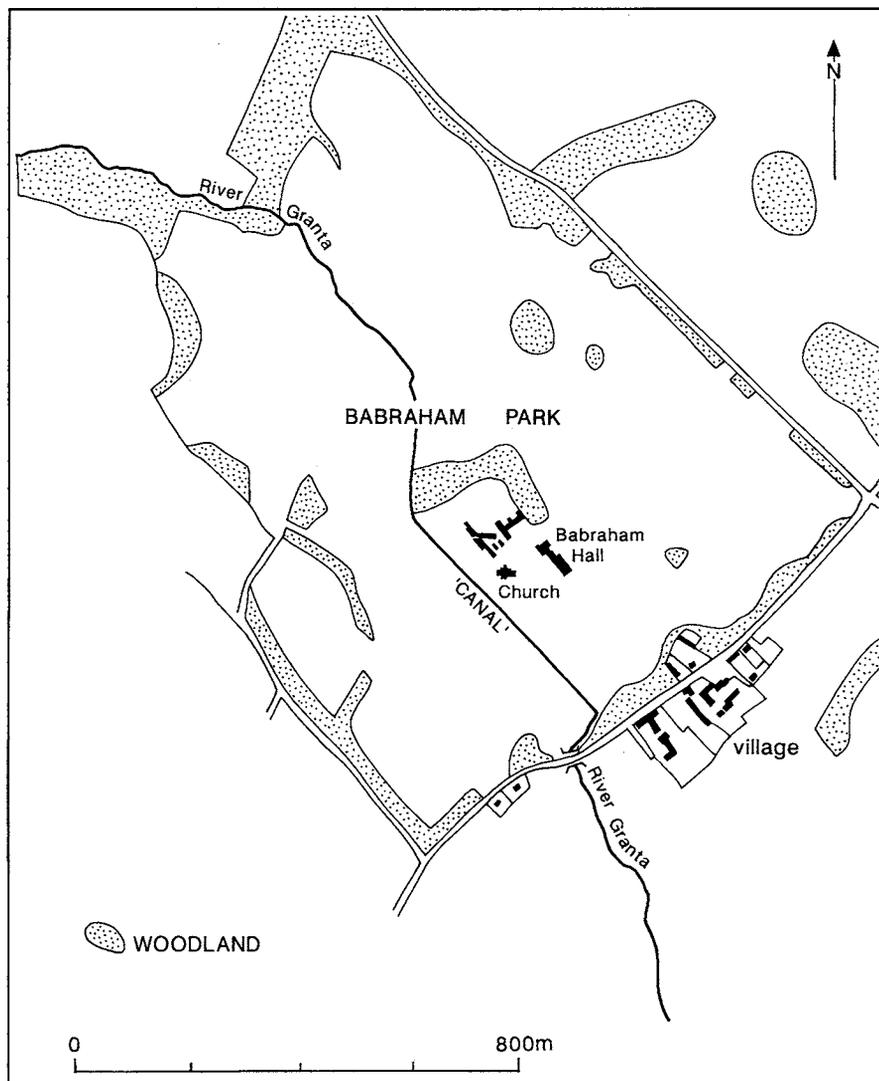


Figure 1. Babraham Park.

Both existed in 1886 (OS) but are not shown on the 1829 estate map of Babraham (CUL) which elsewhere shows water management features. These weirs were probably constructed in the mid 19th century by one of the Adeane family who owned Babraham from 1774 to 1973 (VCH 1978, 22, 26).

Apart from the moated site and the medieval parish church, every other feature in the vicinity of the canal is either contemporary with it or later. The now decayed parkland to the south-west of the river was laid out by the Adeanes between 1829 and 1886 (CUL; OS 1886). The more extensive parkland east of the river and east and north-east of the Hall is earlier and seems to have been created in about 1785, soon after the Adeanes acquired the estate (VCH 1978, 22; map of St John's College lands in Babraham 1785, CUL). The lawns and shrubberies south of the church and between the Hall and the canal are mostly 20th-century in date, but they contain in the southern corner the remains of an elaborate rockery built into a long raised terrace, close to and parallel

to the canal. During periods of drought the parchmarks of two stone-edged flower beds containing parts of elaborate scrollwork parterres are visible within the main lawn. These, as well as the terrace and rockery, all date from about 1864 when the present Hall was enlarged. Then a garden, allegedly of 16th-century form, was created here (Butcher 1954, 11-12; Cambridgeshire Gardens Trust 2000, 99). To the north-west of the Hall was a stable block and a small wooded pleasure garden, all apparently 19th-century in date and no longer in existence.

The most important features that can assist in establishing the date of the canal are, or rather were, four rectangular brick-walled compartments arranged alongside the canal, immediately north of the church (a-d on Figure 2). Now only the southernmost two of the compartments (c and d) survive in anywhere near a complete state. Only fragments of the two northernmost compartments (a and b) remain, their interiors now being largely covered by buildings of the Institute of Animal Physiology that

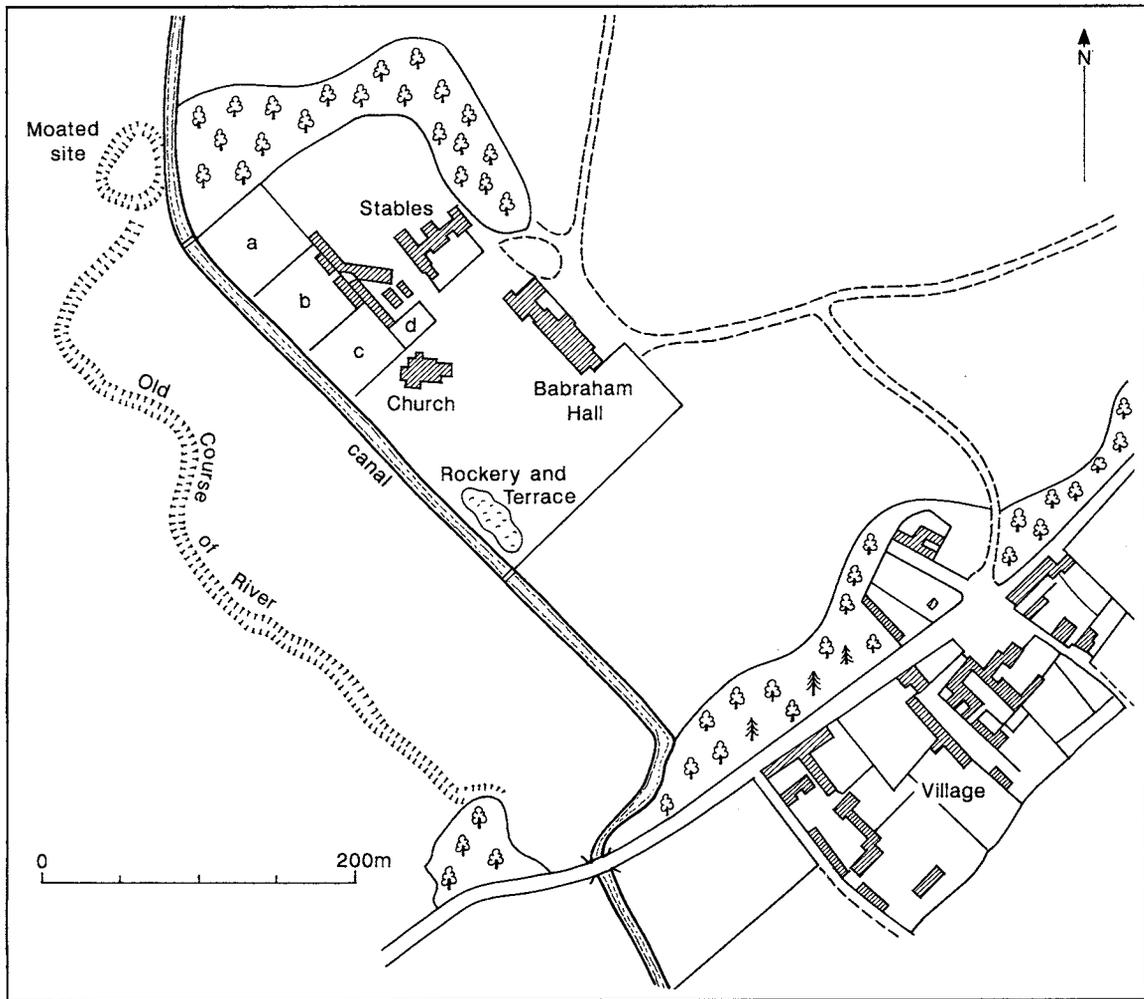


Figure 2. Babraham Hall and gardens as they were in about 1950.

now occupies Babraham Hall and park.

The three larger compartments were all rectangular, 48m to 55m across, arranged in a line parallel to the canal. They were bounded by brick walls 3.5m high except on their south-western sides which were open to the canal. The lateral walls all terminated 5m short of the edge of the canal, thus leaving space for a walkway or terrace alongside the canal, between it and the compartments. The walls, although now much repaired and rebuilt, were originally constructed of bricks that can probably be dated generally to the later 17th or early 18th century. The southernmost and the most completely surviving compartment has an entrance gap at the south end of its north-eastern side that leads into the smallest compartment (d). This gap is now flanked by elaborate stone piers, decorated with pairs of recessed panels, probably dateable to the second half of the 17th century. They have no value for dating the compartments for they are not in situ. The entrance that they flank did not exist in 1900 and Palmer records that originally they were at the main entrance to the park in Babraham village (Anon 1900, 581; Palmer 1935, caption to pl VI).

The small compartment (d on Figure 2), only 30m by 20m, is constructed of an entirely different type of brick from the other compartments, probably late 18th or early 19th-century in date. This compartment also sits awkwardly with the three larger ones. It is thus unlikely to have been part of the original arrangement that must have comprised just the three walled compartments lying alongside, set back from and opening on to a walkway edging the canal.

All four compartments existed in 1829, when they were called gardens. During the later 19th century they were much altered by the addition of various sheds, glasshouses, bothies and gazebos, most of which survived in use until the 1950s (inf A Dockerill). Some of the details are recorded on OS maps and on photographs taken in 1900 (OS 1886; Anon 1900, 581).

Function

It is clear from its shape and position that, as the VCH stated, the section of the River Granta under discussion here was indeed an ornamental canal.

Further, there can be no doubt that the three larger walled compartments are contemporary with it. Thus in its original form it would have been a long strip of slow-moving water with a walkway or terrace along its eastern side and possibly another on the west. The compartments must have been walled gardens opening on to the canal, with views across and along it. However, such a canal and compartments are unlikely to have stood alone. They must be the only surviving remnants of a more extensive garden, the date, creator and plan of which require further discussion.

Date

There is apparently no direct documentary evidence for the date of this part of this elaborate formal garden. All that is certain is that the canal and presumably the walled compartments were in existence in 1735 (VCH 1978, 19). Closer dating can be achieved by using various forms of archaeological and architectural evidence as well as by comparing it with dated gardens that are stylistically similar. Historical evidence relating to the ownership of Babraham is also useful.

The relationship of the canal to the medieval moated site at its northern end gives a crude indication that it is post-medieval in date. The original bricks of the walled compartments give a much closer date, perhaps between about 1650 and 1730. Comparing the garden with others of the same general period gives an even narrower date range. Long canals, as opposed to moats and ponds, were a feature of Western European gardens from at least the 15th century. Canals of various forms and in various relationships to their associated houses certainly existed in England by the late 16th century and even in the early 17th century were sometimes associated with walled compartments. That at Audley End, Essex, probably of 1614–18, is a good local example (Sutherill 1995, 19). However, it is not until the second half of the 17th century that formal gardens with walled or hedged compartments become common and those that are closest in style to Babraham are mainly of late 17th or early 18th-century date. They include those at Hall Barn, Buckinghamshire (1651–87), later altered, Moor Park, Surrey (1680s), Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire (1690s) and Westbury, Gloucestershire (1696–1705) (Survey of Hall Barn, NMR; Kip and Knyff 1707, pls 12, 16; Atkyns 1712, 414–15). After about 1710 canals increasingly were set within open areas of lawn, as at Eberston, Yorkshire (1718), and at Studley Royal, Yorkshire (1720) (Hussey 1967, 65–9, 132–9).

Closer parallels for Babraham, although on a much larger and more lavish scale, include the gardens at Longleat, Wiltshire, of the 1680s. There a long canal, set parallel to the house, was bounded on both sides for some three quarters of its length by large open rectangular parterres and lawns. But at the eastern end the canal passed between walled parterres that opened on to it (Kip and Knyff 1707, pl 40). Another

example was at Dawley, Middlesex, of 1695–1700. Although there was no canal, an elongated walled compartment, laid out with parterres, and overlooked by an orangery, opened out at one end on to a terraced walk with views across adjacent fields (Kip and Knyff 1707, pl 48).

However, there is a closer parallel for Babraham at Ickworth in Suffolk. On the south-western side of Ickworth Park are the remains of a formal canal, shorter and wider than the Babraham one, but with three walled garden compartments on its northern side. These compartments are set back some 5m from the canal edge on to which they open, thus providing a terrace walk. The compartments are almost identical to those at Babraham except that the side walls terminate in brick piers surmounted by balls and that in the back wall of the central compartment is a single-storey brick summerhouse or orangery of late 17th or early 18th-century date. This building and thus the compartments and the canal traditionally are said to have been built by John Hervey when he became Baron Hervey in 1703. The evidence on which this rests is a letter written by Vanbrugh to the Duke of Newcastle in 1703, reporting that Hervey had consulted William Talman about rebuilding the manor house at Ickworth (Jackson-Stops 1984, 40–42). This lay just north-east of the canal and its compartments in a position similar to the house at Babraham.

However, the date of the Ickworth compartments is less straightforward than this. The bricks of the summerhouse and of the piers are quite different from those of the walls of the compartments (Tipping 1925, figs 11 and 12). This might mean that the compartments are earlier than the summerhouse and piers and that although the latter may well be of about 1703, the walls are possibly of 1694 when John Hervey succeeded his father, Sir Thomas Hervey, at Ickworth. Further uncertainty is caused by a 1717 reference to the 'new canall at Spring Garden in ye Parke' (Tipping 1925, 674). This is perhaps referring to further modifications made here in about 1710 when Hervey finally demolished the old manor house in preparation for a new one on the same site, a scheme later abandoned. Thus, although the three compartments at Ickworth are very similar in form, size and perhaps date to those at Babraham, the canal is not necessarily of the same period. There is also a connection, albeit remote, between the Bennet family, who owned Babraham from 1631 to 1767, and the Herveys of Ickworth. The families were related through the female line to Sir Humphrey May (1573–1630) and certainly the Bennets and Mays remained close until at least the late 1650s (Taylor 2002, 104–5). It is perhaps unlikely that this relationship played a part in creating two similar gardens. The influence of contemporary fashion is more likely.

The status of the Bennet family

One other aspect of the site at Babraham that requires discussion, particularly in relation to its possible date,

is the changing status of the Bennet family. Increases in the wealth and changes in the status of the owners of houses and estates are often followed by major alterations to those houses and estates. It is thus well worth looking at the rise and fall of the Bennets to see if there were any periods when the creation of a new garden and canal might have taken place.

Thomas Bennet, who with his brother Richard purchased Babraham in 1631, was the first of his family to move into the landed gentry. His father and grandfather were London merchants, his great-grandfather a Berkshire farmer (Taylor 2002, 104–5). Thomas Bennet took over the house at Babraham that had been built in the 1580s by Robert Taylor and embellished between 1592 and 1600 by his successor Sir Horatio Palavicino (VCH 1978, 21–2). However, although he improved his estate in the 1650s, there is no evidence that Thomas Bennet altered the house even after he was created a baronet in 1660. Nor apparently did his son Sir Levinus Bennet who succeeded in 1667, despite being MP for Cambridgeshire from 1679 until his death in 1693 (VCH 1978, 21). Sir Levinus was succeeded by his son Richard, whose heir on his death in 1701 was a young daughter, Judith. When she died while still a minor in 1713, Babraham passed to the five daughters of Sir Levinus.

Until 1701 Babraham Hall was occupied by the Bennets. After 1701 the situation is not clear. The one unmarried daughter of Sir Levinus who died in 1724 may have lived there. But it was apparently unoccupied in the late 1720s when the young William Cole (1714–82) and his sister, who were themselves living in an old farmhouse adjoining the Hall, kept pets in the empty courtyard there (Palmer 1935, 1). It presumably remained empty until soon after 1735 when Bennet Alexander (d 1745), the son of another of Sir Levinus's daughters, moved to Babraham. He was succeeded by his son Richard Alexander Bennet, but by then the great days of the Bennets were over. Richard Bennet was forced to sell the estate to his brothers-in-law in 1765. It was finally purchased in 1767 by Robert Jones, a director of the East India Company, who built a new house there and bequeathed it to his grandson Robert Jones Adeane in 1774.

This history of the Bennets at Babraham may be of some value in helping to date the canal and the garden compartments. Given the minority of Richard Bennet's daughter, the division of the estate between the five co-heirs and the evidence of the hall being empty in the 1720s, it is very unlikely that the gardens were laid out after 1700. The three most likely times when changes in status of members of the family might have produced new gardens at Babraham are 1660, when Thomas Bennet was made a baronet, 1667 when Sir Levinus Bennet succeeded, and soon after 1693 when Sir Richard Bennet inherited. The bricks of the compartments and the stylistic parallels suggest that the whole site dates from the second half of the 17th century and nearer to 1700 rather than to 1650. This being so, it seems likely that the gardens were the work of either Sir Levinus Bennet at some time after 1667 or of Sir Richard after 1693.

However, there is one other piece of evidence that should be considered. As already noted, the Bennets were related to the May family, the best known member of which was the architect Hugh May (1622–86). May seems to have been particularly close to the Bennets, to the extent of helping Thomas Bennet with the construction of his water meadows in 1654 (Taylor 2002, 108). But, as well as being a distinguished architect, May was interested in garden design. He expressed strong views as to what gardens should look like to Samuel Pepys in 1666. He was involved, to a greater or lesser degree, in the laying out of the gardens and parks at at least two of the great houses he designed, Cornbury in Oxfordshire in 1663–4, and Cassiobury Park in Hertfordshire in 1674–80, and possibly at a third, Holme Lacy in Herefordshire in 1673. From 1670 one of his posts was inspector of French and English gardeners at Whitehall, St James's Palace, Greenwich and Hampton Court, although it is not known what this actually entailed (Thacker 1994, 145–7; Colvin 1995, 646–8). If May was indeed involved even marginally with the Babraham gardens, then a date of 1667 or soon after is most likely.



'The Terrace, Babraham Hall' in 1903, from the *Cambridgeshire Explorer* CD-ROM.

Garden layout (Fig 3)

So far this paper has been concerned with the date and function of the canal and associated walled compartments. The conclusion is that they are part of a late 17th-century garden. But can one go further than this? Is it possible to see how the existing remains might have fitted into the once larger garden that must have existed at Babraham Hall? Here the evidence is less firm and speculation more necessary. But the writer believes that such speculation is valid for, even if wrong, it will only be proved to be so by further research. And only in this way will the history of Babraham be advanced.

The first piece of evidence that can be used to reconstruct the wider possible garden setting is the relationship of the compartments to the canal. The canal is just over 460m long, the total length of the three compartments is nearly 155m. This means that the compartments occupy almost exactly one third of the length of the canal, which might suggest that the original garden to the north-east of the canal was

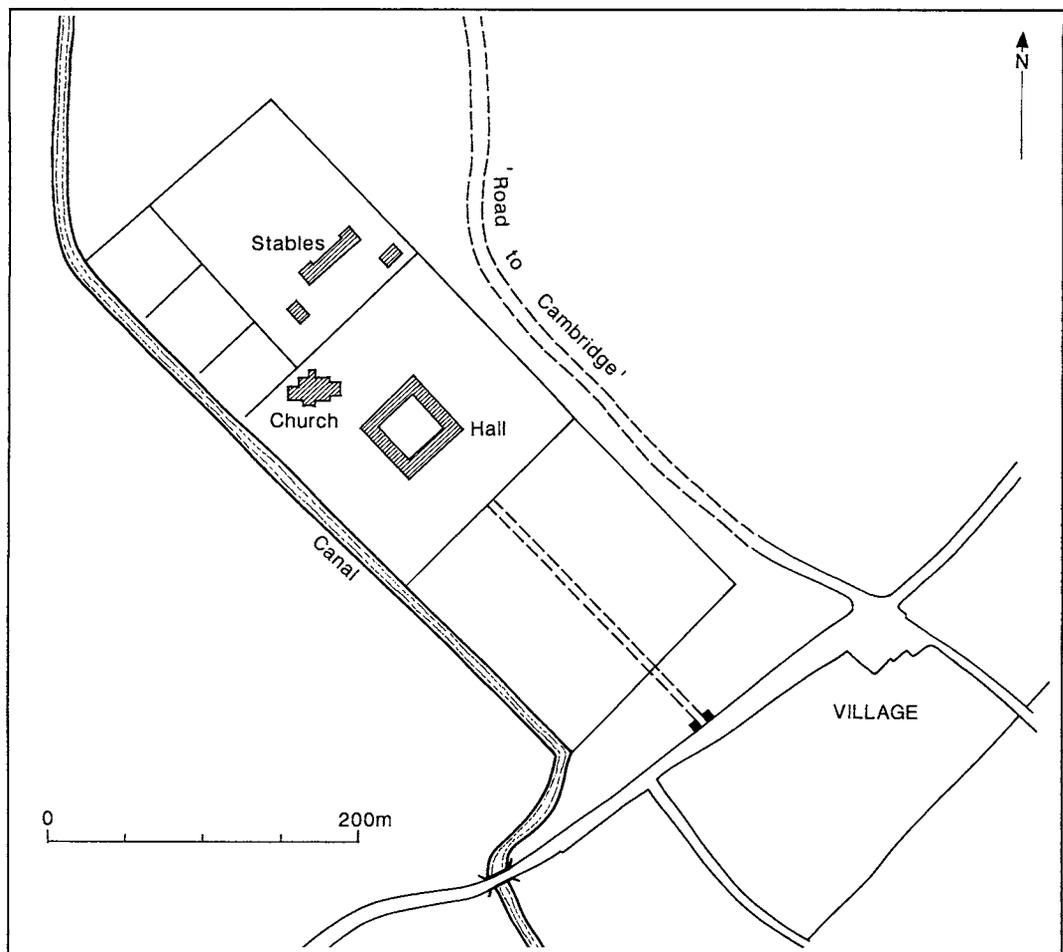


Figure 3. Reconstruction of the late 17th-century garden at Babraham.

once made up of three equal parts. One, including the compartments, in the north-west, a central one containing the Hall and church and a third to the south-east laid out to further gardens.

Such a mathematical division of gardens with their houses in the centre was a not uncommon arrangement in the late 17th century. These included simple tripartite layouts as is being suggested at Babraham, and more complex quadripartite or quinquepartite layouts. Thus the gardens at Ragley, Warwickshire, of the 1670s (Kip and Knyff 1707, pl 71) had five divisions, the house being positioned in the central one. Longleat, Wiltshire, of the 1680s (Kip and Knyff 1707, pl 40) had four parts with the house occupying one third of each of the central pair. Wimpole, Cambridgeshire (Kip and Knyff 1707, pl 32) had three parts, the house standing in the central one, while Dyrham Park, Gloucestershire, of the 1690s (Atkyns 1712, 414–15) had six divisions south of the house, the latter lying across the central two and the medieval church standing in an adjacent section. Similar examples are recorded from all over Western Europe (Jaques and van de Horst 1988; Adams 1979).

The hypothesis that two other sections existed at Babraham in addition to that containing the walled

compartments cannot be proved. But curiously, the south-eastern side of the Victorian garden south-east of the Hall and church is parallel to and 155m south-east of the south-eastern side of the walled compartments. Further, it extends just over 150m north-eastwards. At first sight this would suggest that there was indeed another area that contained the church and Hall exactly the same length as the one to the north-west. Such a division actually produces a possible third one to the south-east again, just over 150m long, terminating at the beginning of the canal. The south-eastern side of this section would have lain along the sinuous edge of the plantation that now forms the boundary of the later park here. However, as a result of modern development, no physical remains can be traced. The resulting narrow strip of land between the suggested south-eastern side of the garden and the village street beyond might have been occupied by houses and gardens removed by the later landscaping in the 18th century.

However, although the boundary of the Victorian garden was mapped in 1886 (OS), it is not shown on the 1829 Estate Map. Instead a pecked line is depicted which, while starting at exactly the same place on the canal side as the Victorian garden boundary

and following the same line for the first 40m, then curves northwards towards the Hall. It is not clear what this pecked line is meant to be. Elsewhere on the 1829 map, which is in effect a private Enclosure Map, pecked lines indicate intended field boundaries, not all of which were actually laid out. Here the line may be showing a projected garden boundary which was never constructed. Nevertheless there is no evidence that the Victorian boundary is any older than the 19th century except for the remarkable fact that it too forms the edge of an area almost 155m long. If this is more than a coincidence and the Victorian boundary is following an earlier one, then it is possible that the late 17th-century garden could indeed have been arranged in the form of a line of three large square areas, each around 150m long with the canal bounding their south-western sides. The northern one would have had the walled compartments in its south-western half. The central section would have held the church and Hall, as well as further parterres, while the southern section may also have contained lawns or parterres.

The principal argument against this neat reconstruction is the present position of the Hall. Its location in the northern corner of the presumed central section would be quite wrong for a house and associated garden of the late 17th century. It has always been assumed that the late 16th-century Hall occupied by the Bennets throughout most of the 17th century and demolished in 1766–7, and its replacement the “neat small seat” erected by Robert Jones in 1770, were on the same site. It was assumed too that the present house, built by Henry John Adeane in 1833–7 and enlarged in 1864, was also on this same site. That the 1833 house was erected in the same place as the 1770 house is clear from the 1829 map. But was the

earlier 16th-century house also in the same place? No uncontroversial proof exists, only one piece of rather unsatisfactory evidence to suggest that it was not.

This is William Cole’s description of the house, written in 1768 shortly after it was pulled down. Cole knew it well having lived next to it as a child and he had remained a friend of the Bennets until the family left. His account of the house shows it to have been a typical late 16th-century building set around a courtyard. Erected in about 1580, the main range contained a hall with a parlour beyond and with a long gallery above. The latter extended the entire length of the range and had bow windows at either end. The main elevation which apparently faced north-east and overlooked the then road to Cambridge also had “bow” windows, one over a central porticoed doorway, one seemingly lighting the hall and one the parlour (Palmer 1935, 83). All this suggests that the 1580s house at Babraham could have had two alternative arrangements. Either the principal range containing the hall and parlour faced directly north-east with the courtyard behind, or it formed the rear range with the courtyard in front of it. The latter is the most likely although the former is possible.

The crucial piece of information from Cole’s account is that he states that the parlour was nearer to the church than it was to the hall. If the house stood on the site of the present one and with the same orientation, this statement is nonsense. For no matter which of the two alternative plans outlined above existed, the parlour could not be described as being nearer to the church than was the hall. Both would have faced north-east while the church would have been, as it is now, at least 70m to 80m away out of sight to the west and to the rear.

However, if the 1770s house was not built on the



Babraham Hall, 1997 (Alison Taylor).

site of the earlier one but in a new position perhaps 50m to 60m to the north-east, Cole's statement becomes clear. Whichever range of the house the hall and parlour were in, if the former lay at the north end of the hall it would be nearer the church, as Cole said it was. More significantly for this paper, the position of the late 16th-century house would have been in almost the exact centre of the middle one of the postulated three major sections of the late 17th-century garden, that is to say arranged in precisely the same way as most contemporary houses and gardens.

If this interpretation is correct then the late 17th-century gardens at Babraham can be seen to have been in an entirely contemporary style with a canal, walled compartments and probably open parterres, lawns and orchards, bounded by hedges or fences but so arranged as to ensure that the existing house stood in its exact centre. Such an arrangement might also have meant that the stables, outbuildings and possibly the old farmhouse where William Cole lived were behind the walled compartments, where the later stables and estate buildings were situated.

One last piece of evidence to complete this speculative reconstruction is the original position of the gate piers, now reset in the eastern corner of the southernmost walled compartment (c). If Palmer (1935, pl VI) was correct, it is possible to identify the exact position on the ground today. This would place the 17th-century entrance to the Hall on the north-western side of the village street almost opposite the north-western corner of Home Farm. If a line from this point is projected north-westwards across the park, parallel to the canal, it meets the Victorian garden boundary exactly halfway along its length and somewhere close to the assumed centre of the south-eastern side of the 16th-century house. If this projected line was actually an approach drive, passing between scrollwork parterres, the Babraham gardens would have been even closer to some of its contemporaries (eg Strong 2000, pl 199).

Conclusion

Not for the first time the writer has descended into the wider realms of speculation. But at least some of his more extreme suggestions are capable of being proved or refuted. The lawns between the present Hall and the canal still remain open. Thus the assumed site of the 16th-century house is still available for excavation, if and when it becomes possible or necessary. Whether or not correct in every detail, this paper has, hopefully, further advanced the knowledge of the history of gardens in Cambridgeshire.

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