

THE BUCKINGHAMSHIRE GARDENS TRUST RESEARCH AND RECORDING PROJECT 2016

SARAH RUTHERFORD

INTRODUCTION

BGT's Research and Recording Project pilot phase in 2014–15 was introduced in *Records of Bucks* 56 (2016). The volunteer group has since moved into the main phase, based on the same methodology. We now have 20 volunteers working on researching and recording parks and gardens in historic Bucks that are generally not included on the Historic England (HE) *Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest* (denoting national significance). To add to the 20 sites for which summaries were presented in the previous volume we now add summaries for a further 14 sites throughout the county which are the fruits of our work in 2015–16.

The following summaries address the historic interest of these 14 designed landscapes, and are taken from the individual site dossiers. Rather than address nationally important sites which are generally quite well understood, we mainly target some of the 400 locally significant sites identified by Bucks County Council in 1996 in their County Register Review, prioritising those which are at risk of change. These sites of at least local interest are especially vulnerable to inappropriate management and developmental change due to a lack of information about their historical significance and the extent of their survival.

LANCELOT BROWN IN BUCKS

The tercentenary of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's birth in 2016 and its national recognition prompted us to choose also to address unregistered sites with which he is associated. Boasting 12 (and possibly 13) registered sites associated with Brown, Bucks has a relatively high number of his nationally important designs. Bucks also enjoys strong personal links with him, for of course he spent the formative years of his career

at Stowe (1741–51), where he also married and began family life in the Boycott Pavilion. Three of the five unregistered sites associated with Brown were covered in *Records* 56: Chenies Place, Chalfont Park and Stoke Place. A further site, Boarstall Tower, is addressed below. We submitted our dossier on Stoke Place to Historic England (HE) with a request for inclusion on the *Register*, as we believed it might be of national significance, and it was indeed added at grade II. At our request, the already Registered Wotton Underwood was elevated from grade II* to grade I in recognition of its exceptional quality, as one of Brown's early and unaltered masterpieces of artistry and water engineering.

For another Registered site (*i.e.* of recognised national significance), Ditton Park in former south Bucks, we were alerted by Crispin Powell, archivist to the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust at Boughton House, Northamptonshire, to a mistaken attribution to Brown working there in the late 1760s–70s. This arose from a rare misinterpretation by the great Brown scholar Dorothy Stroud of an entry in his account book at the RHS Lindley Library, London. That entry referred to a different Montagu family, probably for previously unrecognised work at Cowdray in West Sussex. Documents in the Boughton archive and payments in Brown's Drummonds Bank ledgers (at the Royal Bank of Scotland) confirm that Brown did indeed work at Ditton, but for the Montagus of Beaulieu and Boughton, this being from 1759, throughout the 1760s, with him paid over £300. Our volunteers prepared a detailed landscape chronology to include this historic revision, references list, and overview of historic interest which was submitted to HE to contribute to a revised Register entry. The summary of historic interest is presented below.

DESIGNED LANDSCAPES APPRAISED 2015–16

Below, the site overviews are arranged by broad site type (although not all fit neatly into categories and some overlap several) and their key historic and surviving interest is described. A pattern of historic interest and current significance is beginning to emerge. Even though it is early days to start drawing conclusions we can see patterns emerging in types of sites, such as villas, and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century country houses which were designed as a piece with Arts and Crafts-style gardens. We hope to draw more informed conclusions over the coming years as the body of information swells, and we will publish these in *Records* in due course. The full dossiers are available on the BGT web site: <http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk/research-and-recording/our-research/>

The Arts and Crafts Style

Bucks has not hitherto been noted for its Arts and Crafts gardens, although Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll, the golden pair of this genre, began their partnership in the early 1890s in Bucks at Chenies Place (Registered Grade II*). However, an interesting and well-preserved group of such gardens by various architects is becoming evident and more sites in this style will be covered as the project progresses.

The group below contains three gardens designed by a variety of architects who sought the advice of Gertrude Jekyll on planting schemes as a key element of their houses and gardens (UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Archives, copies at Historic England Archive, Jekyll Microfilm). Miss Jekyll, one of the most prolific and influential early 20th-century garden designers worked with many other architects but, unlike the spark of personal creativity she enjoyed with Lutyens, she worked with others on only a politely professional basis. She did not apparently visit the sites in Bucks as they were beyond a comfortable journey for her from Surrey. Instead each architect provided her with relevant information about the site and ground plans of the new layout and she returned hand-drawn planting plans. Sometimes they covered the whole garden (e.g. Rignalls¹) where a house was newly built or remodelled, or else they could be for specific areas in an existing garden (e.g. Pednor and Lillingstone House). This

was typical of her working methods.² However, it is often unclear how successful her designs were, and to what extent they were followed. It is possible that some were either sidelined by the gardener laying out the garden or only partially executed, as she was not personally supervising on site.

Thomas Mawson was a highly regarded Lake District landscape designer and town planner who eventually had offices in Lancaster and London. Not as well-known now as Miss Jekyll, he was involved in gardens in south Buckinghamshire around the time he advised at Poundon (c.1909) although the architect of this house is unknown.³

Barton Hartshorn Manor House

(HER 0491402000)

A complex Arts and Crafts garden for a smaller country house built in the Vale of Aylesbury to designs by the renowned Scots architect Robert Lorimer when he extended the 17th-century manor house in two phases in the 1900s. Planting advice by Gertrude Jekyll is recorded, but it is unclear to what extent this was executed. The layout includes formal terraces, lawns and garden compartments and a summerhouse, surrounded by a small park. Lorimer's layout and garden structures largely survive, but it is unclear to what extent the Jekyll planting survives. A group of glasshouses supplied by the well-known firm of Messenger and Co. in the 1900s has gone. Barton Hartshorn is an unusual isolated English commission for Lorimer, for a smaller country house together with the garden layout in Arts and Crafts style. He married c.1902 Violet Wyld of Tile House, Denham (qv) who was a distant relative. It seems that he did not work in England again until he returned to Barton Hartshorn in 1908 for the second phase of the house, when the garden was apparently laid out. Elsewhere in Bucks he worked at Eton College in 1917, and at Stowe School in 1926–27, including designing the school chapel after winning a competition.

Key feature: Arts and Crafts-style garden layout and materials by a renowned Scottish architect, the planting associated with iconic garden designer Gertrude Jekyll.

Little Halings, Denham

(HER 0653900000)

A compact Arts and Crafts garden of the late 1920s for a smaller country house built to designs



FIGURE 1 Barton Hartshorn, Buckingham, 1901–02 & 1908–09, architect Robert Lorimer, with original planting scheme by Gertrude Jekyll (Charles Boot/ Christopher Dingwall)



FIGURE 2 Barton Hartshorn, the summerhouse, c.1908, architect Robert Lorimer (Charles Boot/Christopher Dingwall)

by Walter Sarel incorporating an earlier, modest farm house and kitchen garden. The layout includes a sequence of formal garden compartments surrounding the kitchen garden, within a wider informal landscape of Chiltern woodland and paddocks, itself within a wider rural setting. Planting advice was provided by Gertrude Jekyll and a planting plan survives. Much of the layout survives, but the planting has been considerably simplified and it is unclear whether any of the Jekyll planting survives. Of Sarel's 81 commissions (new houses, alterations and additions) seven had some involvement with Miss Jekyll in their garden layouts or planting schemes. She had probably known Sarel as a family friend since he was a child in Kent.

Key feature: Arts and Crafts-style garden layout and materials as a set piece with the house, the planting associated with iconic garden designer Gertrude Jekyll.

Poundon

(HER 1118703000)

An Arts and Crafts-style garden designed by the renowned garden designer Thomas Mawson c.1909 for a smaller country house, built by an unknown architect 1907–09. Mawson's layout includes formal terraces, lawns and garden compartments and a kitchen garden with ornamental features, set in agricultural land with long views over the Vale of Aylesbury towards Waddesdon. The layout and garden structures largely survive but Mawson's planting schemes, both proposed and executed, are unclear. While a considerable amount of structural planting survives in the form of hedges and trees, the more ephemeral planting has altered and the kitchen garden is no longer productive.

Key feature: Arts and Crafts-style garden layout and materials by the renowned landscape designer Thomas Mawson as a set piece with the house.

Rignalls, Great Missenden

(HER 1256801000)

A complex Arts and Crafts garden for a smaller country house built to designs of 1909–10 by architects Adams and Holden. Planting advice by Gertrude Jekyll is recorded in an extensive series of plans for the gardens and woodland. The layout includes formal terraced lawns and

garden compartments, designed to accommodate the steep Chiltern slope, with a complex flight of stone steps and landings, and a brick and timber pergola leading to a summer house. The architects had previously worked with Gertrude Jekyll on The King's Sanatorium, a private TB hospital in Midhurst, Sussex, opened in 1906 by King Edward VII. The structure of the May 1909 plan appears to survive largely intact but it is unclear whether any of the Jekyll planting survives.

Key feature: Arts and Crafts-style garden layout and materials as a set piece with the house, the planting associated with iconic garden designer Gertrude Jekyll.

Villas

The term villa is a broad one, covering houses of varying scale. In this context it is taken to mean a country house and ornamental grounds built without a wider country estate to support it. A number were built in the folds of the Chiltern Hills, taking advantage of dramatic views and sheltered positions.

Chesham Bois House

(HER 0420601001)

The early 19th-century garden for a small Chiltern villa including the remains of formal gardens and a park for a later 17th-century house for Charles Cheyne on a site occupied since the 13th century, which has been further laid out with gardens since the 1960s. The site of 17th-century parterres and the bowling green remains, but the extensive rides and allees which formerly offered views over the Chess Valley to Latimer House and vistas through the woods have gone. The wider former park and woodland setting has become fragmented between 20th-century development.

Key feature: The relict features of a formerly complex formal garden for a 17th-century mansion incorporated in the framework of an early 19th-century villa garden.

Denham Grove (formerly Durdent Court and Tile House)

(HER 0654000000)

The outer grounds of a lost country house, developed from 1800, and later in the 19th century as a villa by the Drummond family. Little of the



FIGURE 3 Rignalls, Great Missenden, 1909–10, architects Adams and Holden with original planting scheme by Gertrude Jekyll (© Mandy Moore)

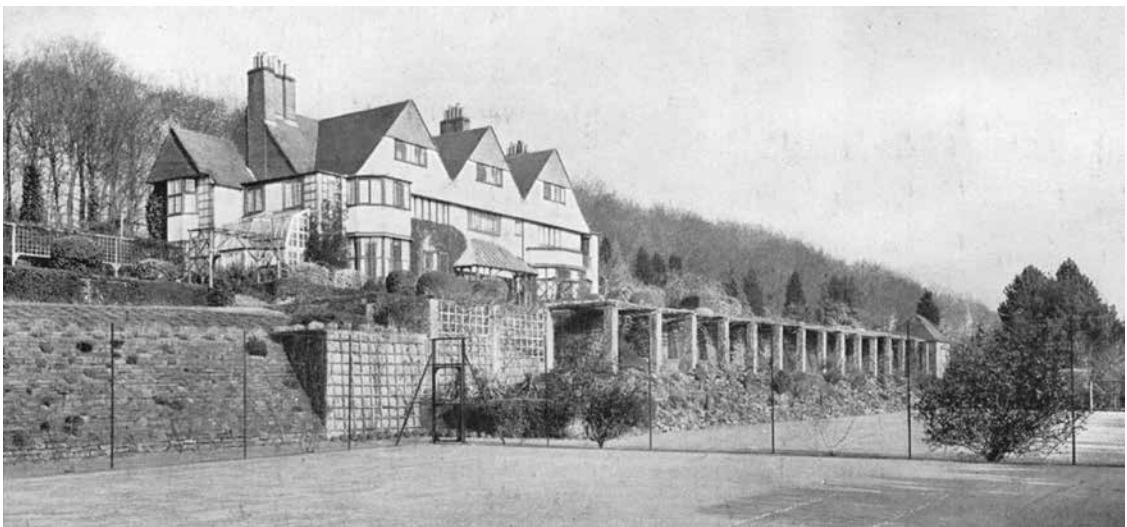


FIGURE 4 Rignalls, 1909–10, the south front, pergola and tennis court, 1936 sale catalogue (Julian Hunt)

core of the designed landscape associated with the immediate environs of the former house survives intact (it was replaced by a large hotel/conference centre) but elements of the wider landscape, particularly the former parkland, survive.

Key feature: the surviving parkland and views over the Misbourne valley.

Heatherden Hall, Iver (Pinewood Studios)
(HER 0638101000)

The complex formal and informal gardens for a mid-late 19th-century villa which was substantially enlarged in the early 20th century when the gardens were re-designed with the addition of a lake, fountain and grotto by the notable landscape firm James Pulham & Sons. The house and gardens were retained as the core of the renowned Pinewood Film Studios, which opened in 1936 as a country club and for film locations. In partnership with J. Arthur Rank and others, Charles Boot created Pinewood Studios on the estate north of the house (the name referencing Hollywood, California, and also the surrounding pine woods). The garden

retains much of the historic character and detailed layout established by the 1930s including hedges, sculpture, mature ornamental trees and other planting and is a fine example of Pulham work. It has featured in many films including the Carry On, James Bond and Harry Potter series.

Key feature: The Pulham water features and rockwork, within the essential and complex wider villa garden framework.

Woodlands Park, Great Missenden
(HER 1254301000)

An early to mid-19th century Chiltern villa, park and garden sited to make the most of elevated views over characteristic rolling landscape in a deep valley in the Chilterns. Woodlands is one of several such houses in a similar elevated site on the valley side along the former turnpike road from Aylesbury to London including Woodrow High House. Notable surviving features include a terrace, kitchen garden, pleasure ground to the north and park, incorporating the ancient linear archaeological feature known as Grims Ditch as



FIGURE 5 Heatherden Hall, c.late 1930s when Pinewood Studios were thriving and expanding, but often used the garden as the setting for films (C Boot)



FIGURE 6 Pulhamite rockwork around the lake at Heatherden Hall (Ros Hampton)

a feature. Some mature trees date from the late C19 including a large cedar in the wilderness and a mixed area of perimeter planting on the approach from the main road in the valley. Notable specimens include a line of Scots pine, oak, beech and horse chestnut. The layout survives largely intact, together with long views across the Misbourne valley.

Key feature: The northern pleasure ground featuring Grims Ditch, together with 'extensive views across the Misbourne valley.

Richings, Iver
(HER 0024104000)

The extensive Thames Valley park and pleasure ground for a nabob's villa of the 1790s, further developed in the mid-19th century. It incorporates

remnant features from Lord Bathurst's renowned and influential early-mid-C18 *ferme ornée*, the most notable feature being the extensive canal. The site and previous house (dem. 1780s) had strong connections with the 17th-century royal court, and early-mid-18th century literati including Alexander Pope who wrote part of his famous translation of the *Iliad* here c.1717, and associations with the garden designer Stephen Switzer, whose contribution is unclear. The layout, at its most fully developed by the 1920s, survives partly intact, although having lost the 1790s villa (the second in the park), four lodges, the detail of the gardens and pleasure ground, and been overlaid by a golf course and divided at the south end by the M4 motorway. However, much of the woody planting survives as the framework, together with lengthy drives, the C18 canal, the stable courtyard,



FIGURE 7 Woodlands Park, Great Missenden. This is a Chiltern villa with a pleasure ground that includes part of Grim's Ditch (Mary Buckle)

an elegant stone bridge (1790s-early 19th century) reminiscent of that nearby at Stoke Park, and the relict villa terrace (mid-19th century).

Key feature: The relict features of a formerly complex early 18th-century *ferme ornée*, particularly the extensive canal, incorporated in the framework of the late 18th-century villa pleasure grounds and park together with mid-19th and early 20th-century developments.

Manor Houses and Similar Rural Gardens

Boarstall Tower

(HER 0031702002)

The remains of the gardens of a former medieval house in the Vale of Aylesbury which was in the 17th century remodelled to include a formal garden, incorporating both a substantial defensive tower and a moat. These grounds include the likely site of gardens associated with the medieval house. The property declined following the demolition of the house in 1777, until 1925 when garden features were created within the moated area focussed on

the tower, as it then became the principal residence. Lancelot 'Capability' Brown charged a small sum (15 guineas) for two visits between 1769 and 1777, but no obvious changes were made.

Key feature: The moat and gardens within it, including the site of the lost house, dominated by the tower.

Chetwode Manor

(HER 0415702000)

The 20th-century garden of a 16th-century and later manor house and associated buildings, standing in an elevated position, facing south over a 20th century formal parterre and gardens, with impressive views over the Vale of Aylesbury. The garden contains the remains of a mid-20th century garden for Mrs Ruby Fleischmann, former Chairman of the National Gardens Scheme, when it was renowned for the rose collection and its arrangement. The late 19th/early 20th-century framework apparently survives largely intact, including clipped hedges and mature trees, but the planting has altered since the 1960s when

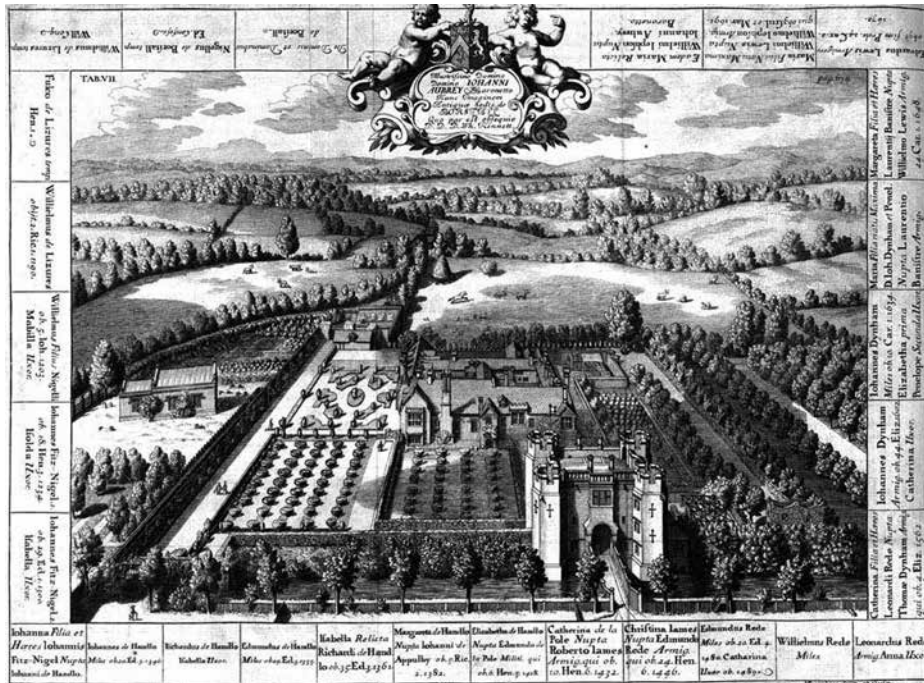


FIGURE 8 Boarstall before the house was demolished, Burgher’s engraving, 1695. The framework of the garden survives, within and beyond the moat

Mrs Fleischmann left. The renowned horticulturist Graham Stuart Thomas contributed to later schemes. The north lodge which marked the entrance to the long 19th-century drive and avenue has gone, although its site remains open.

Key feature: The remains of the late 19th/early 20th-century framework, also associated planting to the 1960s.

Chetwode Priory
(HER 0057703000)

The gardens and small late-20th century park for a mid-19th century country house on the site of a previous house in the Vale of Aylesbury. Most of the present layout was developed during the mid-19th century from 1833, incorporating some earlier features. The garden has a rare detached pleasure ground. This is focussed on two existing moats re-used as ornamental features, linked by the remains of a network of walks, including a raised nut walk, and containing a rare ornamental iron bridge dated 1859 from a local foundry (Castle Foundry, Buckingham).

The layout survives largely intact as it had developed in phases by the 1920s, including an early 20th-century phase, with late 20th/early 21st-century additions by the present owner featuring work by architect Peter Foster. The main loss is the layout of the kitchen garden and a section of it to the east.

Key feature: The detached mid-C19 pleasure ground, its water features, structures and planting.

Ditton Park
(Berkshire HER 00004)

The extensive grade II-registered garden, pleasure grounds and park for a moated country house in the Thames Valley, developed in phases from the medieval period to the early 19th century, with advice in the 1760s from Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown. The layout and planting survive largely intact as completed by the 1830s, based on elements of successive formal and informal 17th and 18th-century phases within an earlier framework. Whilst rebuilding the house in the 17th century, Elizabeth Winward created formal gardens, ponds,

an orchard, and enlarged the park. In the early-mid-18th century John, 2nd Duke of Montagu, developed this layout in the pleasure ground and park, which was naturalised to some degree by Lancelot Brown in the 1760s (paid some £300) as part of Edward, Baron (later Earl) Montagu's works of the later 18th century. Little change occurred after the 1830s, but a remote section of the west park has been lost to office development since World War II.

Key features: The large moated garden with associated water features, the simplified remains of the extensive wilderness, and the parkland of medieval origins, developed formally and informally in the 17th, 18th and early 19th century, with associations with Lancelot Brown.

Wendover Manor (Wendover House)
(HER 0152804000)

The remains of a typical garden, pleasure ground and small park for a Chiltern manor house rebuilt in the 1870s to a design by George Devey with associated gardens. The key surviving ornamental period is the late 19th century, including mature trees, a walled kitchen garden and modest parkland. Some features such as the 18th-century walled kitchen garden and stable block may have been incorporated from the former vicarage that stood adjacent until demolished in the mid-19th century. The ensemble survives partly intact, although with the loss of some features particularly the garden features around the house since the site became a school in the mid-20th century.

Key feature: The walled garden in its pleasure ground and park setting.

NOTES

1. Miss Jekyll commented that 'the difference between working with Ned [Lutyens] and Lorimer was as between quicksilver and suet.' Quoted in J. Brown, *Gardens of a Golden Afternoon* (1982), 153.
2. Miss Jekyll provided designs for a number of sites in the county including Woodside Place, Chenies (her first commission with Lutyens, 1893); Tilecotes, Gazeley and Seymour Court, Marlow (1895); Barton Hartshorn Manor House (architect R Lorimer, 1900s); Cheswick, Hedgerley (1902); Pollard's Park, Chalfont St Giles (1906); Rignalls, Great Missenden (architects Adams and Holden, 1909); Lillingstone House (1910); Chalfont Park (Lutyens, 1912, qv); Fulmer Court and Orchards, Great Missenden (1913); Bramleys, Great Missenden (architect E Willmott, 1913); Pednor House, Chesham (architects Forbes & Tate, 1919); Little Halings, Denham (1927, architect W Sarel); Ponds, Seer Green (1928). Others are likely to be identified.
3. Mawson also advised on gardens in Bucks at Newlands Park; Chalfont St Giles (1903); Uplands, Stoke Poges (1906); St Bernards, Gerrards Cross (1909). After World War I he/his firm advised on a major (largely unexecuted) housing development in Ashridge Park in 1925, 1929 and 1932, and on the Vale Park in Aylesbury in 1931 (Ledger Book 1901-36, Cumbria Record Office WDB 86/12).