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The Aldenham House Gardens

A brief history of the School Grounds



Andrew Lawrence

942.58

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Plate 1: The 'Pulhamite' bridge over the Big Pool (Mrs Pulham, Miss Girton, Mrs Girton, Mr Beckett).

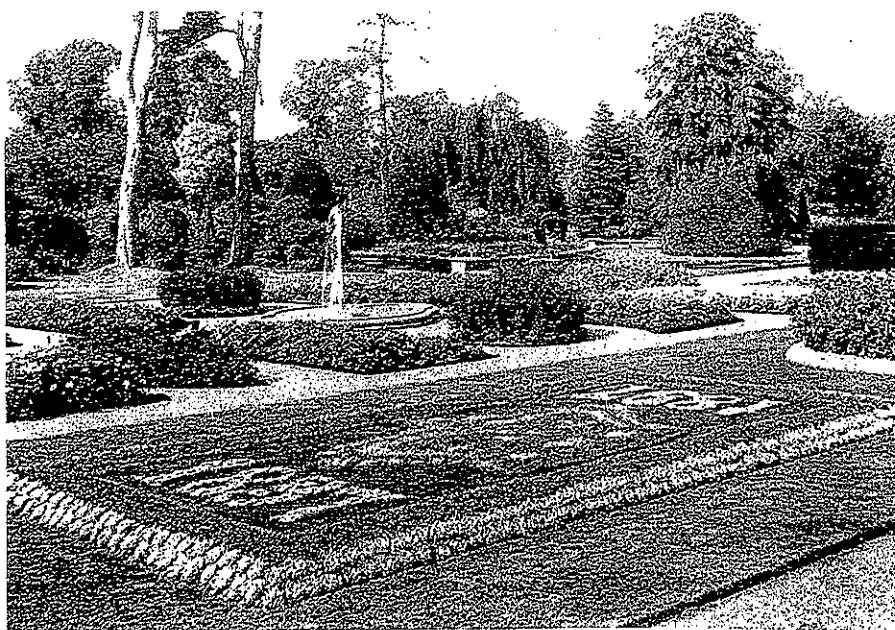


Plate 2: Carpet bedding in the Flower Garden to mark the Diamond Jubilee of H.M. Queen Victoria, 1897.

Preface

Three years ago I was shown an article published in *Country Life* in 1901. It contained photographs of a magnificent garden. The text spoke of a majestic avenue of elms, an arboretum full of rare and unique shrubs, woodland rides, orchards, and glasshouses filled with succulent fruits. As I looked more closely at the pictures, many of the scenes became vaguely familiar - the clipped yew hedge behind Aldenham House, the terracotta wall around the main cricket square and the water gardens near the music block. I decided to find out more about the history of the estate and managed to trace many other articles featuring the gardens. I soon realised that Aldenham House had once boasted one of the finest gardens in England.

In this book, I have pointed out those traces of the gardens which still remain. I have thus tried to link the present school grounds with the Aldenham House Gardens of sixty years ago. It is the story not just of a garden or a country estate, but of a whole way of life.

I am indebted to many people for their help in the research for this book. My first and most grateful thanks must go to Lord Aldenham, who has very kindly given me unlimited access to his family archives and allowed me to reproduce pictures of the gardens from his collection.

I am also grateful for the support and encouragement I have received from past and present masters and pupils of *Haberdashers'*. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the help of Bruce McGowan, Keith Dawson, Barry Goater, John Wigley, Joan Hayes, Adrian Roberts, Roy Avery, Arnold Hunt and Richard Hardy.

Alan Mitchell has kindly provided me with a list of the trees which he surveyed on the estate in 1976. Pamela Glover has generously shared the findings of her research into the history of Elstree.

Finally, I would like to thank Alfred Child, who has lived and worked on the estate all his life; Douglas Pearson, who was a Bothy-Boy in the kitchen garden in the 1920s; Ethel Booles, whose husband was foreman of the 'Alpine, Herbaceous and Rockeries' and who lived in Radlett Lodge in the early 1930s; Marjorie Ely, who worked as a telephonist for the BBC during the war; and Winn Everett, who frequently visited the estate in her capacity as the village doctor.

Elstree, September 1988

Introduction

The year is 1931 and your train is just pulling in to Boreham Wood, having covered the 13 miles from London. Outside the station a chauffeur driven car is waiting to drive you north along Allum Lane through the open fields. At the foot of the hill the car crosses over the old Roman Watling Street, passes through a wooden gate and enters a winding avenue of horse-chestnuts. Within a few minutes the gravel drive passes over an ornamental lake, a full eight acres in extent, handsomely laid out with islands, waterfalls and a boat cave. Two hundred yards further on a pair of cast-iron gates admits you into the gardens and as the path sweeps round to the right you catch a first glimpse of the 17th Century red brick mansion through the trees. To the west stretches a stately avenue of elms, some two and a half centuries old. You alight from the car and wander round the north side of the house and through a gate to find yourself in a walled kitchen garden surrounded by fruit trees, with pears and cherries hanging from the branches. A gate in the north wall leads to a rockery with a little statue of Peter Pan in the centre. To the east is a short avenue of clipped limes. Continuing south round the back of the house you encounter one of the few examples of a weeping beech. At the top of a short flight of steps you come across a pretty flower garden, laid out with carpet bedding. Turning east alongside a croquet lawn you arrive back at the front of the house.

Aldenham House looks very much as it did fifty years ago. The elms (Plate 5, p.8) which had survived two and a half centuries of cold English winters finally succumbed to disease, old age and the school's desire for a new cricket square. The kitchen garden together with the Peter-Pan Rockery (Plate 6, p.9) has made way for the school assembly hall and quadrangle, but the short avenue of clipped limes (Plate 7, p.9), now a little unkempt, still flanks the swimming pool.

Although the Boys' School moved out to Aldenham from Westbere Road, Hampstead as recently as 1961, the estate itself dates back over 700 years. In about 1250 a certain Reginald de la Penne built a moated manor house near the present North Drive. Aldenham House was not built until about the time of the Civil War, eventually passing to Henry Hucks Gibbs (later Lord Aldenham) in 1843. With the help of his younger son Vicary, and head gardener Edwin Beckett, he was to establish a collection of trees and shrubs which won the envy of Kew. On Vicary's death in 1932, the family was understandably unwilling to keep on the 100 house and garden



Plate 3: The Elstree Station Drive (now Carriage Drive), lined by double rows of horse-chestnuts.



Plate 4: Tykes Water Lake, which 'under the genial influence of the sun, resembles a shining sheet of silver.'¹

staff. Like many others of its kind, the estate fell into decline. It passed through the hands of a series of tenants and was used as a country club up until the war, when it was taken over by the BBC, for use as an overseas broadcasting station.

By the time that the Haberdashers' Company bought the school grounds in 1959, they had been neglected for more than twenty years. The garden staff who had totalled nearly sixty in the 1920s (Plate 9, p.11) had dwindled to just two during the war. What had once been one of the most magnificent gardens in the country had deteriorated almost beyond recognition.

Although some of the rare trees and shrubs remain to this day, many of the distinctive features of the once famous Aldenham House Gardens have been lost forever. Yet a closer inspection of the now overgrown rockeries to the west of the North Drive reveals paved pathways over a yard wide (Plate 23, p.28). You may be fortunate enough to stumble across a solid zinc plant label, about 14" long, engraved with the name of some lost plant. Even today there are a few people who remember the Aldenham House Gardens as they were - the great avenue of elms, probably the oldest in England, leading up to Aldenham House and the 150 yard long bed of Michaelmas Daisies (Plate 14, p.17) - a garden in which the rarest plant was a weed.



Plate 5: Aldenham House as seen from the west through the Great Elm Avenue.



Plate 6: It is difficult to reconcile this scene, of the Peter-Pan Rockery and Loggia, with the bare brick wall in the N.W. corner of the old prep school playground. On the right is part of the kitchen garden wall.

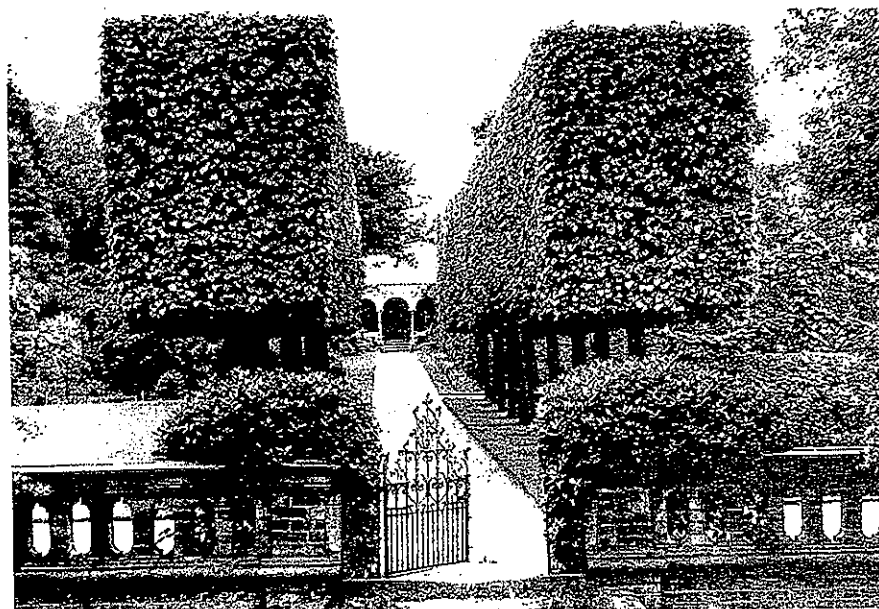


Plate 7: Looking west through the clipped lime avenue, towards the Peter-Pan Rockery and Loggia. The trees, now a little unkempt, still flank the swimming pool.

The Transformation

'It may be interesting as well as useful to ourselves and to those who come after us that there should be a record of the alterations which have been made in our time in this house and its belongings.'

Thus Henry Hucks Gibbs began the entry in his yearbook for the year 1871. Over the next 31 years he was to meticulously document the numerous alterations which he made both to the house and to the estate.

George Henry Gibbs, senior partner in the banking house of Anthony Gibbs & Sons, inherited Aldenham House from a distant cousin in 1842. Sadly, he died the following year. The house was rented out until 1868 when the opening of Elstree Station prompted his eldest son and heir, Henry Hucks, to choose it as the family home. Henry Hucks succeeded his father in the family firm and soon achieved fame in his own right. He was elected M.P. for the City of London and Chairman of the Conservative Association. In 1875 he was appointed Governor of the Bank of England and in 1896 he was rewarded with the title of Lord Aldenham. Henry Hucks Gibbs was reputed to be one of the four richest men in England and he rapidly set to work transforming the Aldenham Estate into a country residence fitting for a man of his position.



Plate 8: Aldenham House as it looked in 1786. The clock tower, porch and Great Library (old refectory) were added between 1870 and 1884. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Hertfordshire County Archives)

The earliest picture of Aldenham House was painted for Robert Hucks in 1786 (Plate 8). It depicts a young avenue of elms leading up to a rather modest Aldenham House devoid of porch, library (old refectory) or clock tower. The carriage drive runs up at right angles from Aldenham Road, passing a large reservoir on its left before sweeping round in front of the house (Map 2, p.52). Eighty-three years later, after successive tenants, Henry Hucks found the house in a 'neglected and somewhat dilapidated state' ². The original 17th Century carved oak pannelling of the entrance hall (Plate 11, p.13) had been obscured by a thick layer of white paint and the Drawing Room, now the main reception office, had actually been turned into a store room for farm produce!

Henry Hucks began the immense task of renovating the house (Plate 12, p.14). The lofty old kitchen with its large fireplace was turned into a spacious dining room, now the new chapel. This was rather more difficult than it may at first appear, for it involved the removal of a heavy wooden pillar which pierced through the ceiling, clumsily supporting the roof above. Henry Hucks will probably be best remembered for his contributions to the first edition of the Oxford English Dictionary.



Plate 9: The 58-strong team of gardeners. Many had spent their entire working lives on the estate.

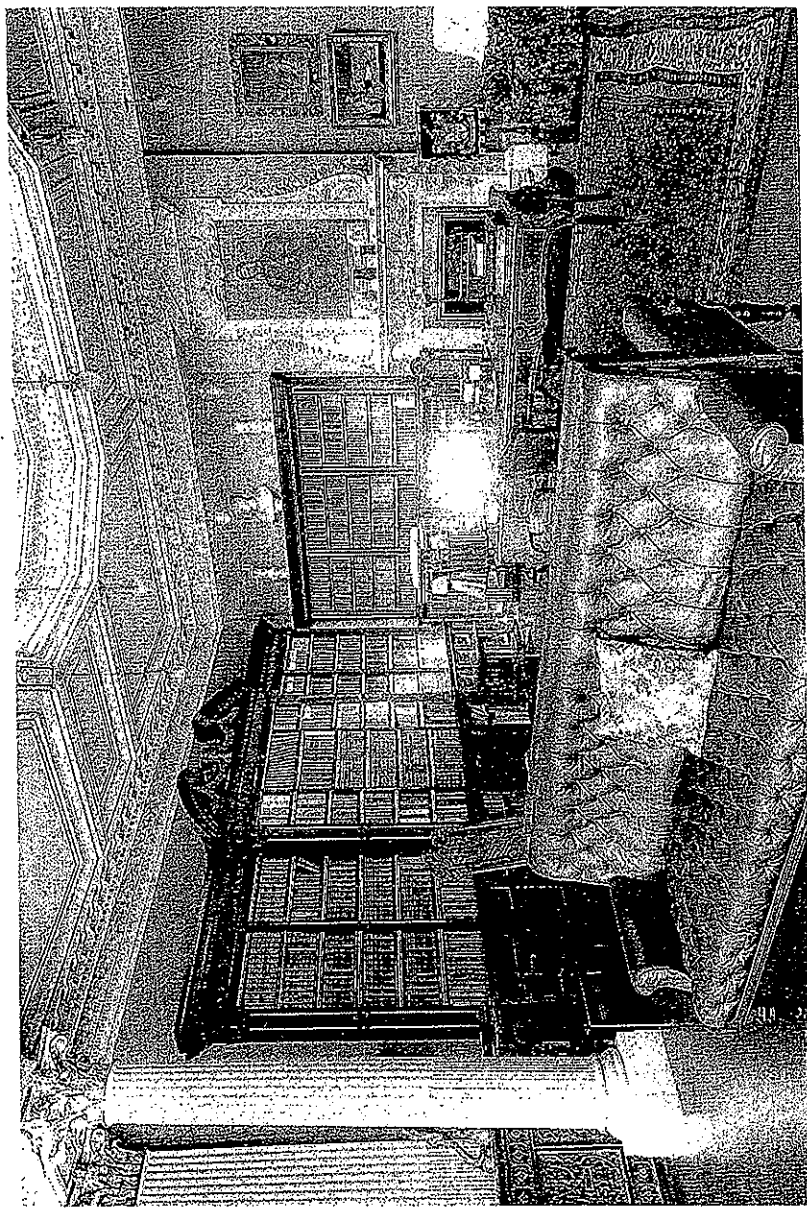


Plate 10: The Great Library (old refectory), designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield in 1884. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England)

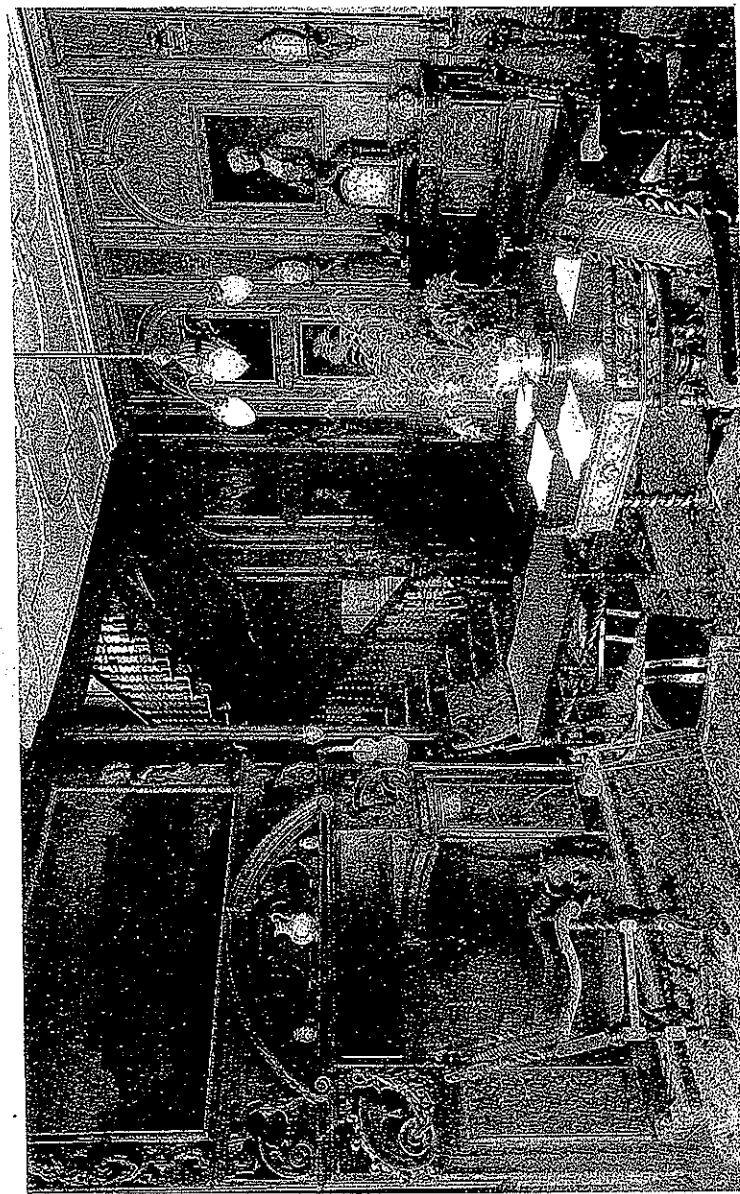


Plate 11: Apart from the 18th Century addition of the staircase, the Entrance Hall has remained unchanged for over 300 years. Note the unique china violin hanging to the right of the fireplace. (Reproduced by kind permission of the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England)

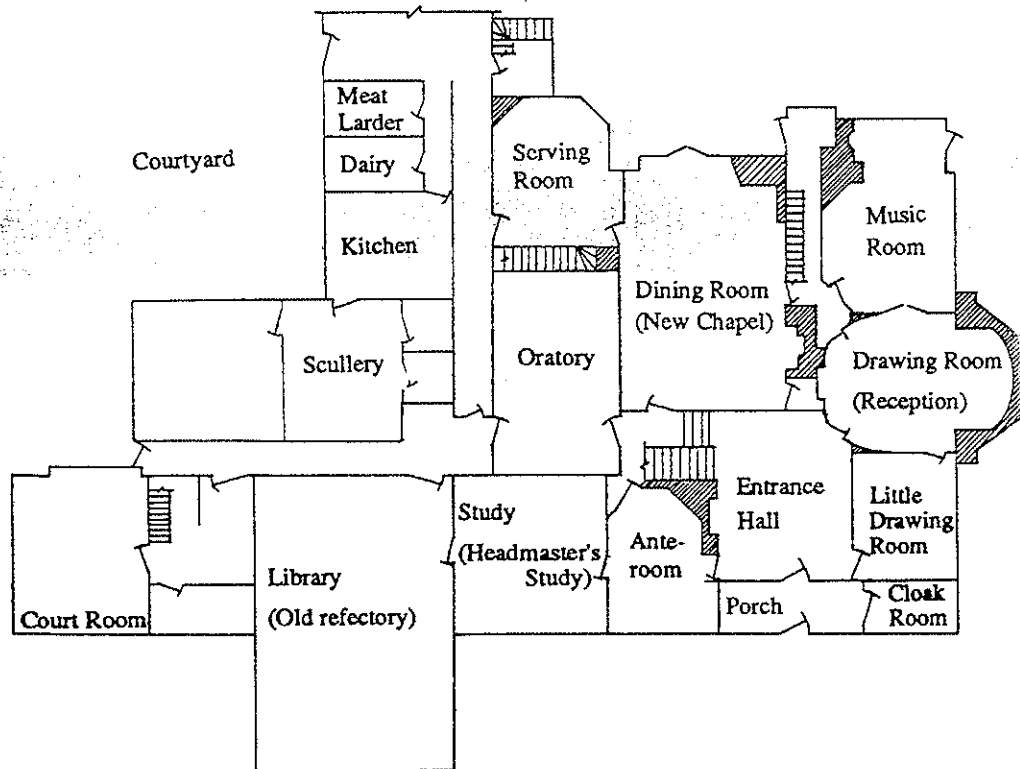
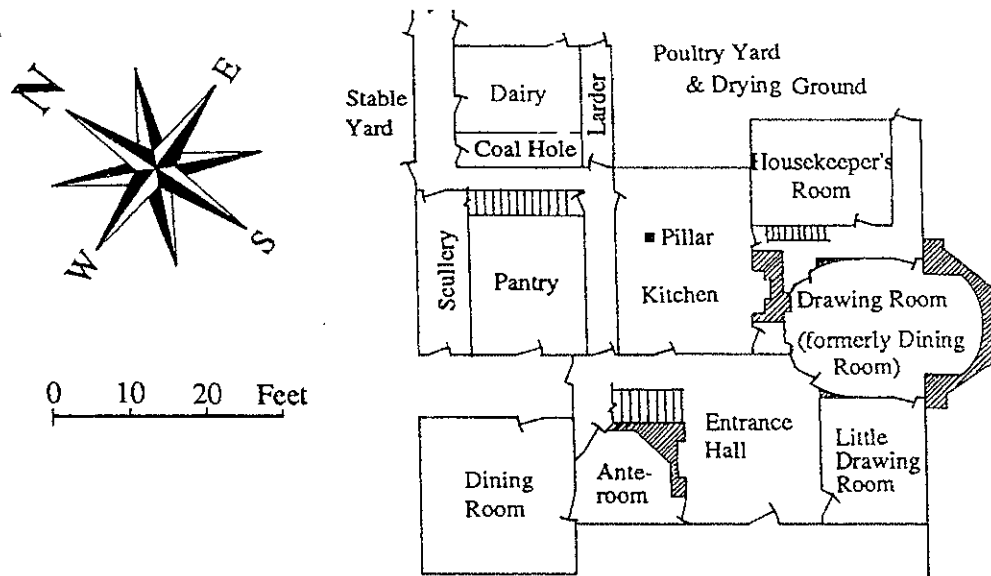


Plate 12: Ground floor plans of Aldenham House - 1842 (above) and 1900 (below).

He compiled the complete letters K and Q, as well as contributing to the letter C. His library comprised over 10,000 volumes and in 1884 Sir Arthur Blomfield was commissioned to turn the Billiard Room, with its octagonal stained glass rooflight, into a new library (Plate 10, p.12; the old boarding house refectory). The room was extended westwards and adjacent to it was built a splendid new clock tower. Only last year the library was found to be infested with dry rot, while the 29ft long central wooden beam (which marks the west wall of the old Billiard Room) was sagging nearly six inches. At great expense, the room has been completely restored. Luckily, due to the foresight of the original craftsmen, the papier mâché moulds used for casting the plasterwork were found intact, concealed behind the cornice.

In 1873, Aldenham House became one of the first country houses to be lit by electric light, albeit rather unreliable. Seventy-five glass accumulators at the Home Farm were charged up by burning anthracite and the electricity was precariously carried along overhead cables to the house. Although the Colne Valley Water Co. installed running water in 1877, the supply could barely cope with the huge demand imposed by a large household, let alone the stables and gardens. Thus, the old well in the courtyard was still a vital source of water. Unfortunately, its yield of 200 gallons an hour was hardly more than that of a modern kitchen tap and it had to be deepened. This involved firing a four foot tube of 'Tonite' and caused 'a slight explosion felt as far as Watling Street' 2,800 yards away. The well was now 495 feet deep and its yield increased fourfold. During the severe drought of 1976, the Colne Valley Water Company actually considered reopening the well, but found it too clogged with debris.

Henry Hucks was constantly searching for new ways to employ the local labour. In the course of 30 years he built over three dozen cottages, shifted 2.5 miles of public highway, planted 2 miles of avenues and laid out nearly 70 acres of woodland. As the Harrow and Wealdstone Press commented in 1893: 'How little would be heard of the shout of Socialism if only other opulent gentlemen would cling less tenaciously to their money and follow the splendid example set them by Mr. Hucks Gibbs.' Each August bank holiday, a fête was held on the lawns to the south of the house (Plate 13, p.16). The Elstree Show, as it was called, to which all the local villagers were invited, was a most elaborate affair. For many, it was their one opportunity in the year to see the gardens. There were drinks and cigarettes for the men and chocolates for the women. Each child was presented with a piece of Edinburgh Rock. Under the cover of a marquee the villagers proudly displayed their best blooms and prize vegetables, which were judged by a large team headed by Edwin Beckett. Towards evening the trees were lit up with lights and there was dancing on the lawn to the tunes of the regimental band.

The experienced gardener knows that only certain plants will thrive on a particular soil. Henry Hucks Gibbs, being intent upon establishing a collection of specimen trees and shrubs, was not prepared to allow a little damp, acidic London clay to stand in his way. Before the laying out of the arboretum, fifteen inches of humus, ashes, leaf-litter and manure were ploughed in. This measure enabled him to grow the rare and exotic plants sent back by the great Victorian explorers. In 1907, Aldenham was chosen from gardens throughout Europe to raise the seeds sent back from China by the horticulturalist, Ernest Wilson. Within a mere two years, well grown specimens of over 600 species and varieties were being sent to botanic gardens all over the world.

A number of new varieties were raised at Aldenham and frequent exchanges were made with the botanic gardens at Kew and Harvard. The 'Hon. Edith Gibbs' and 'Edwin Beckett' were two of Beckett's prize asters, but the major breakthrough was the ornamental apple 'Malus Aldenhamensis' with its small crimson apples. This can still be purchased in nurseries and has frequently been used to develop new varieties. The original tree overhangs the crossroads to the north west of Aldenham House and a second tree is to be found down the road towards Aldenham School.

The Aldenham House Gardens were reputed to contain a specimen of every tree growing in the western hemisphere. While this must have been a little of an exaggeration, it was probably close to the truth. Certainly, Aldenham boasted a fine collection of Yews as well as 50 varieties of Bamboo, 150 different Oaks and over 300 Berberis, not to mention an



Plate 13: Local villagers turned out in their Sunday best for the Elstree Show. The Show was held each August bank holiday on the site of the Girls' School.



Plate 14: Beckett has good reason to be smiling with this exceptionally fine show of Michaelmas Daisies.

unbelievable 700 varieties of Thorn. The border of Michaelmas Daisies 'some 150 yards long and in places 15 yards wide'³ comprised 300 plants of 70 varieties, many over five feet tall (Plate 14). A number of the trees at Aldenham are so rare that any attempt at identification using the standard textbooks is quite impossible. The Editor of Country Life, in January 1901, was quite overwhelmed: 'The weeping beech near the house being unexcelled in the British Isles.' The beech (Plate 39, p.48), which lay near the old prep school, has since died, as has the weeping elm which stood nearby. Hidden in the woods beyond the new prep school is the horse-chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* 'Laciniata' (Plate 38, p.48). There is only one other in England. Growing nearby is a rare white-leaved hawthorn. (See Appendix for a list of the trees surveyed by Alan Mitchell in 1976).

In the words of one of the retired gardeners, 'to enter the Aldenham House Gardens was to enter another world.' The editor of Country Life had 'never seen anything so effective in an English garden.' There was not a weed in sight and if he found one, Mr Vicary, as the gardeners called him, would jest 'You'd better put a label to that my boy.' His obituary in the Kew Bulletin commented,

'Aldenham has many rare plants but after a tour of the garden one always felt that a weed was the rarest.'

Features of the Gardens

It is almost impossible to imagine how the Aldenham House Gardens once looked. Because of this, we are particularly indebted to Edwin Beckett, who throughout his 48 years as head gardener took over 500 photographs of the gardens.

The Great Elm Avenue

Many houses had their great avenues, but only one could boast what was probably the oldest elm avenue in England (Plate 5, p.8). The trees, planted in about 1650, formed a vista from the west front of the house towards Aldenham Road. In 1880 the avenue was continued as far as Dagger Lane with a stretch of Turkey Oaks. The avenue was extended again in 1920, this time with double rows of elms, with the intention of reaching the edge of the estate at Bushey, some two miles away. Had the avenue been completed, the result would have been quite dramatic. As it was, only half a mile had been planted out when Vicary died in 1932. Many of the trees were soon to be buried under Hilfield Reservoir and the remainder were killed off in the 1970s when Dutch elm disease swept the country. The older trees were not even to survive this long for many became diseased in 1945 and the ten remaining in 1961 were felled to make way for the new cricket square. To this day, only the 200 yard stretch of Turkey Oaks between Aldenham Road and Dagger Lane remains.

The Flower Garden

The old servants' stair in Aldenham House is to be found behind the old chapel. It leads up to a spacious room on the second floor which Henry Hucks affectionately called the Oriel Room, because of the large oriel window which looks out southwards to Elstree Hill and eastwards across the Wilderness to Watling Street. It also affords an excellent view of the terrace behind Aldenham House and the yew hedge beyond (Plate 16, p.20). From this very window, Henry Hucks must have spent many a long hour surveying his creation. The area just below the window, now a rose garden, was in fact the Flower Garden. It was filled with tulips in the spring and laid out with carpet bedding during the summer (Plate 2, p.4). The figure of a weeping child which adorned the fountain in the centre has long since disappeared, as have the Fiddler and Singer which stood at the

top of the steps leading down to the Yew Hedge (Plate 15). The hedge originally enclosed a rose garden, with a sundial in the centre supported by a leaden slave. This was made from a casting of a sundial in the gardens of Clement's Inn, one of the Inn's of Chancery and the original venue of what is now the Chelsea Flower Show.

The rows of rusty iron hooks set into the bricks of Aldenham House are all that is left as a reminder of the climbers which once covered the walls. When the bay settled outwards in 1899, after three years of drought,

Henry Hucks actually took up the floor boards and had the bay underpinned from within to avoid hurting the climbers. The two terracotta medallions set into the wall above Matron's were purchased at the Great Exhibition of 1861.



In 1846, an English oak was planted on the croquet lawn to mark the birth of Henry Hucks' eldest son, Alban. By 1890 it had completely obscured the view from the bay window. Family sentiment prevented the tree being felled and it had to be dug up along with a 15 ton ball of earth! 'It took seventeen strong farm-horses to draw the tree up an inclined plane of boards over the low terra-cotta wall . . . and down to its new site in the park, about 300 yards away.'⁴

Plate 15: This Fiddler and a complementary female Singer stood at the top of the terrace steps, behind Aldenham House.

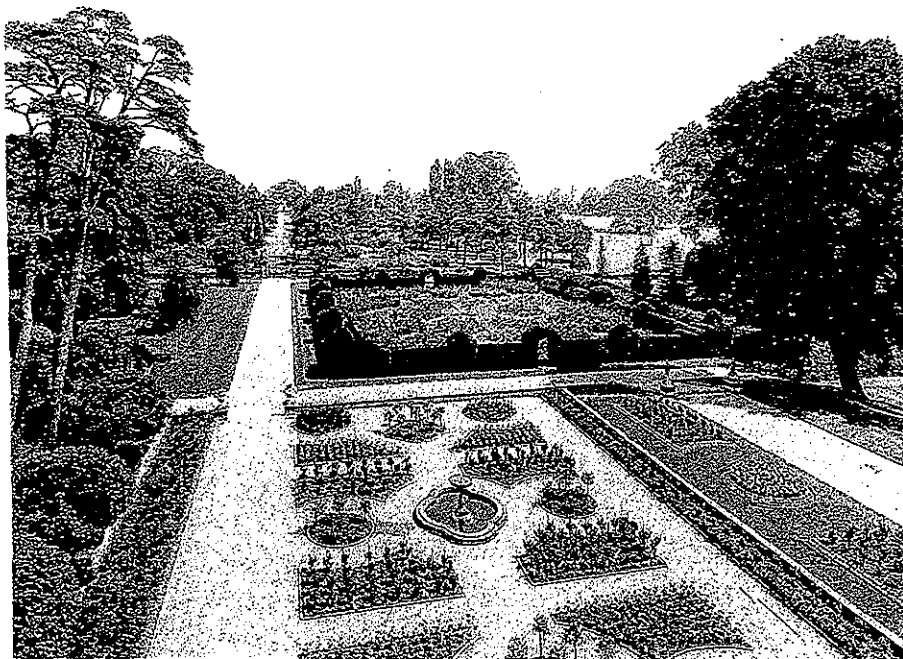


Plate 16: Looking east along Dyer's Ride from the back of Aldenham House, showing the Flower Garden (foreground), the clipped yew hedge (enclosing the rose garden) and the Wilderness beyond.

(Reproduced by kind permission of "Country Life")



Plate 17: Looking south along the terracotta wall from the clipped lime avenue (right) towards the gates at the west end of Dyer's Ride.

The Terracotta Wall

The pleasure gardens were enclosed on the west, south and east sides by a low terracotta wall (Plate 17), adorned with variegated ivies and urns filled with flowers. Within the wall ran a wide gravel path. Although part of the wall was demolished in about 1984 to make way for the new Sports Hall, most of it is still standing, although in need of repair. The gravel path can still be traced round the main cricket square and along the approach to the Headmaster's house. The stone 'Peacock Seat' which now lies in the old Flower Garden originally stood near the site of the school shop, at the northern end of the terracotta wall.

The Wilderness

In 1883 I planned a laying out of a very ugly part of the park opposite the dining room converting it into a 'Wilderness' with Gorse, Broom and Forest trees.'

Henry Hucks Gibbs, January 1884

The name Wilderness should perhaps not be taken too literally, for although the shrubs were arranged more naturally than in the formal gardens, the area was by no means wild. Indeed, the term 'Wilderness' is far more applicable today than it was in 1883 when Henry Hucks decided to lay out a barren field, with cypresses, birch and copper beech, interspersed with large clumps of gorse, broom and dogwood, the whole being set in long grass.

The Wilderness occupied the southern half of what are now the pheasant woods, merging into the older Aldenham Wood to the north. Together they covered 50 acres and were traversed by three miles of wide grassy walks and rides (Plate 18, p.22). Henry Hucks named five of the walks after his children:- Alban, Vicary, Kenneth, Herbert and Edith; Gerald's Walk was named after his grandson; Dyer's and Hooker's Rides were named after directors of Kew; Elwes' was named after Henry John Elwes author of 'The Trees of Great Britain and Ireland'; and Sargent's was named in honour of Professor Sargent, first curator of the Arnold Arboretum at Harvard. The winding Radlett Drive, which emerges at the corner of Butterfly Lane and Watling Street, was underlaid with gravel so that even today it never becomes muddy. The woodland walks (Plate 19)

were lined with over 100 varieties of oak, many of which Vicary had brought back from Dresden in 1902. The entire Aldenham collection of nearly 150 varieties was and quite possibly still is the most complete in the country, outside of Kew. The *Quercus Pendunculata Fastigiata* in front of the new prep school bears more resemblance to a Lombardy Poplar than an English oak. Its familiar leaves give it away.

There were two approaches to the Wilderness. A wide gravel path (Plate 16, p.20) led from the dining room (now the new chapel) through the Flower Garden, down the terrace steps and past the clipped yew hedge, finally arriving at a pair of cast-iron gates, incorporating Henry Hucks' initials (Plate 20). The gates, which now lead merely to the tennis courts, once marked the west end of Dyer's Ride, which stretched eastwards for 300 yards, flanked by the long grass of the Wilderness (Plate 18). A little gate in the terracotta wall (Plate 7, p.9) at the eastern end of the clipped lime avenue provided the second entrance to the Wilderness and the start of Hooker's Ride. Although the ride is now overgrown, during the winter it is still possible to see the light glimmering through the gap in the trees.



Plate 18: Looking west along Dyer's Ride towards Aldenham House, through the long grass of the Wilderness - a view now marred by the tennis courts.



Plate 19: A woodland view - looking north along Vicary's Walk.

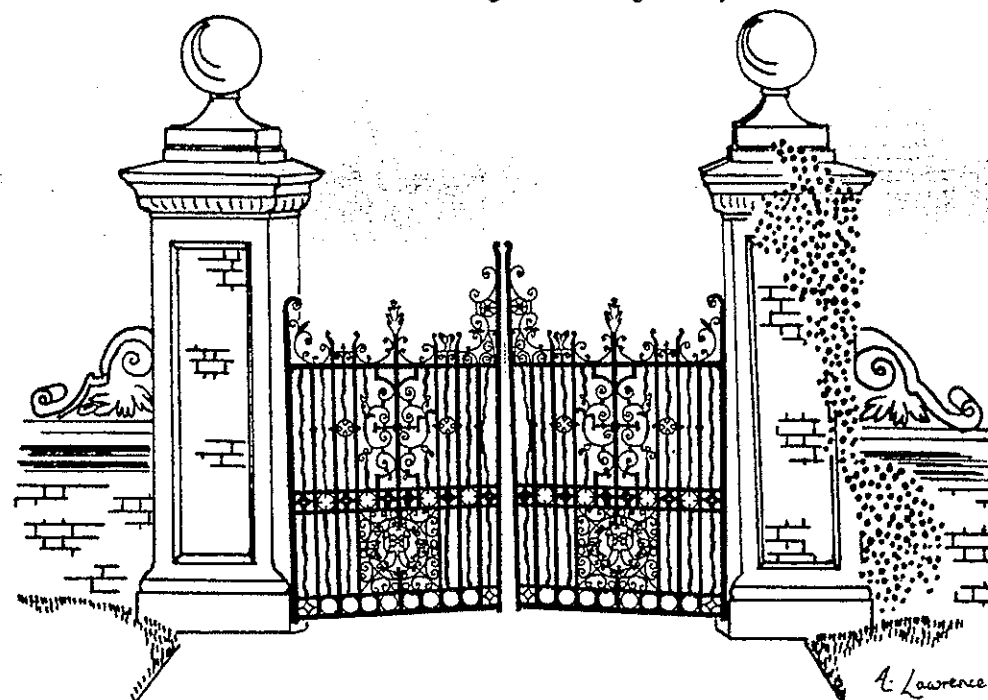


Plate 20: These gates which now lead merely to the tennis courts, once marked the west end of Dyer's Ride. The gates, which incorporate Henry Hucks' initials in the lower half, were designed by Sir Arthur Blomfield.

The woods and wilderness were a favourite hunting ground. It was actually possible to crack a whip on one side of the wood and see a rabbit scamper through the trees on the other. Fifty years on, the woods are so dense that it is quite easy to find oneself utterly lost. Cold winters have reduced many of the oaks to rotting stumps, while a number of tall cypresses have been lost in storms. A few scattered stone plinths are all that is left to show where well-heads, statues and urns once stood. Thankfully, some of the rides are still kept clear and a wander along the winding Radlett Drive makes for a pleasant afternoon's walk. To this day, the Wilderness blooms with daffodils and towards late spring the old wood is lined with a carpet of blue-bells.

The Water Gardens

Walking northwards from the elm avenue and through the Yew collection, one came as now to the water gardens. The area had originally been '*as flat as a pancake*'². Henry Hucks employed the services of 'J.Pulham & Sons, makers of artificial streams', who had already done a fine job at Sandringham and in St.James's Park. All the 'rocks' and 'stone'

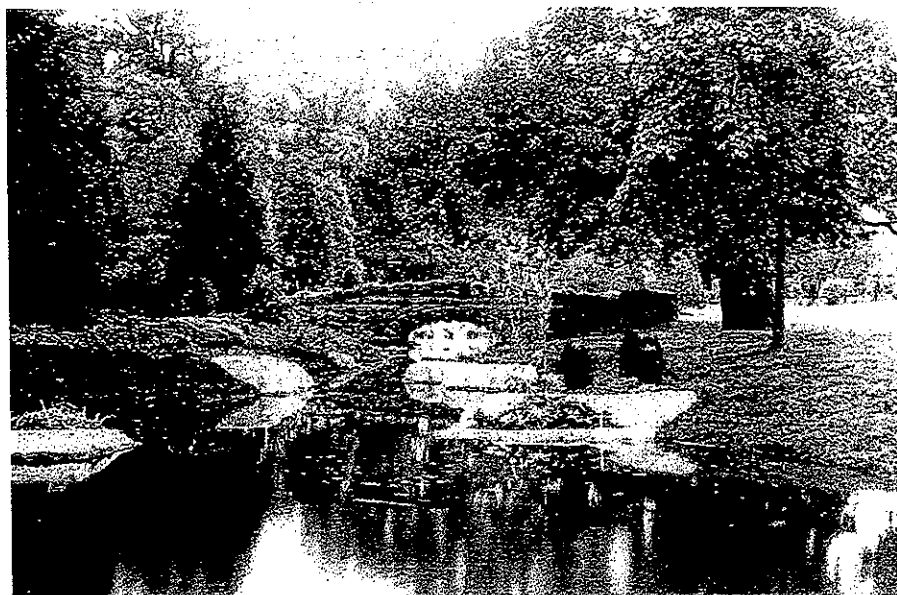
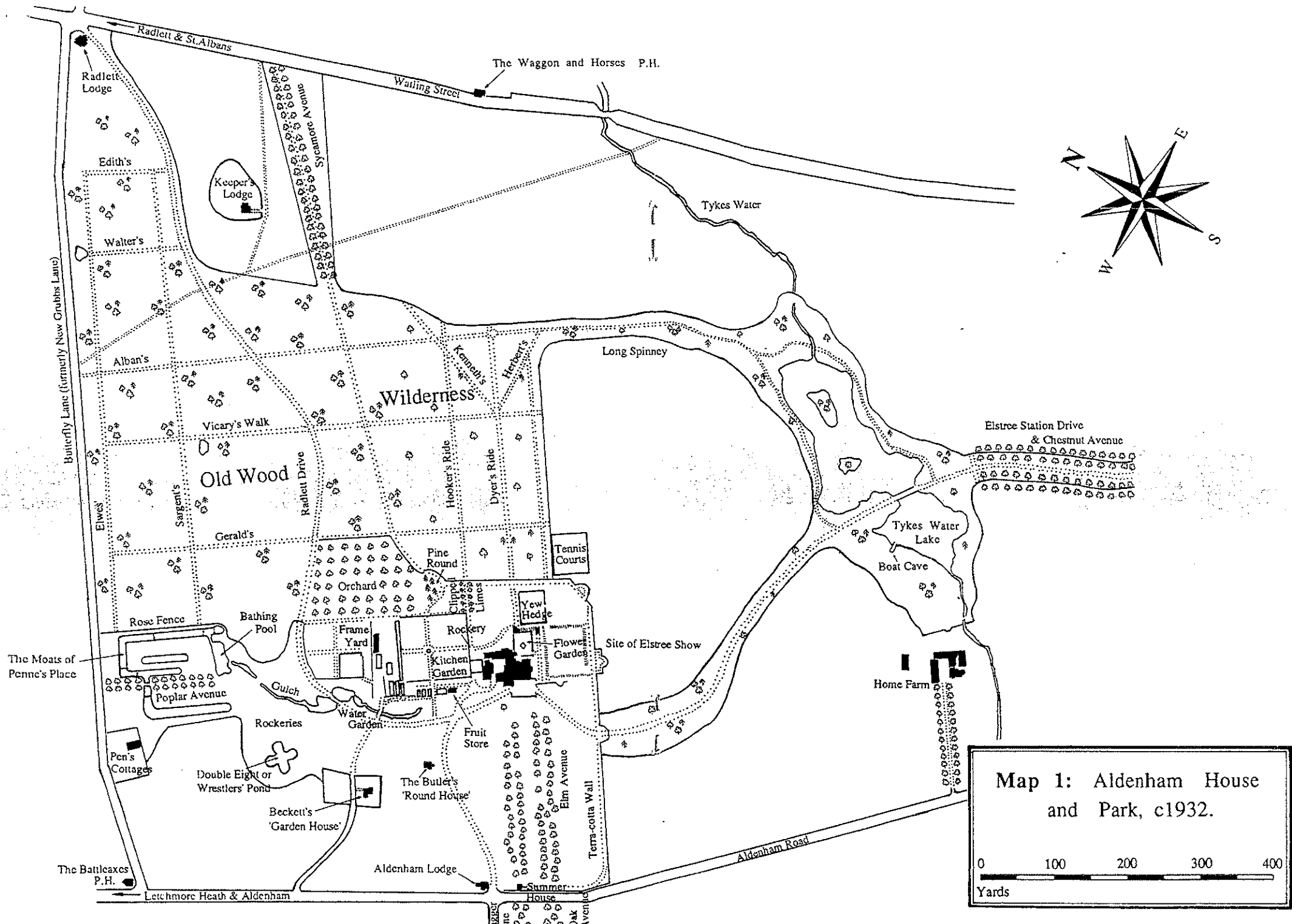


Plate 21: The newly completed Little Bridge (near the Music Block) with the Dipping Pool in the foreground.



Plate 22: The view downstream from the Little Bridge (foreground), towards the Dipping Pool.

bridges of the water gardens are actually made out of a reconstituted stone, known as 'Pulhamite'. Six million gallons of water a year, enough to fill the school pool fifty times over, were piped from Aldenham Reservoir and gushed out of a tap at the head of the water gardens. The water ran through a series of pools, along a narrow concrete channel, under the Little Bridge (Plate 21) and into the Dipping Pool (Plate 22). A waterfall led into the Big Pool from where the water passed under the Big Bridge (Plate 1, p.4) and wound along the 'Gulch' past the palm tree, bamboos and creepers, to emerge on the far side of the poplar avenue, spilling into the old swimming pool. Nowadays the pools are stagnant and the stream is dry. This, however, was a problem not unknown to Henry Hucks, for the head of the water gardens was 3 feet above the supply valve at the reservoir. Whenever water was run off to supply the fifty 56,000 gallon locks of the Grand Junction Canal, the water gardens invariably ran dry.



The Rockeries

At the south end of the North Drive (the site of the old Poplar Avenue), a little path leads west in between the bushes (Plate 23). It crosses on stepping stones over the Gulch and leads into the old rockeries which were interwoven by a series of crazy paving paths about three feet wide. This area was once laid out with rare conifers and shrubs, all meticulously labelled. Many of the smaller shrubs were sold in the sale of 1932 (see p.40) and a number of trees have since died. Inevitably, there must still be a large number of rare and possibly unique specimens waiting to be rediscovered. One has only to read the old horticultural magazines to appreciate the importance of the collection.



Plate 23: The stepping stones over the 'Gulch' leading to the rockeries.

'An arboretum containing deciduous trees and shrubs as rare as anything in the botanic garden of Kew.'

Country Life, January 12th 1901

'The most wonderful private collection of hardy trees and shrubs in the world.'

The Garden, May 10th 1924

Today, after fifty years of accumulated leaf-litter, one has to dig down a few inches to find any trace of the paths or the occasional piece of Hertfordshire Pudding Stone from the rockeries.

Tykes Water Lake

'We have dug a new pond in the brook, with an island in the middle - over which we have carried the road by two girder bridges.'

Henry Hucks Gibbs, January 1873

Aldenham House sits on London clay and it is hardly surprising that Henry Hucks found the grounds littered with numerous stagnant ponds. These were quickly filled in and a stretch of Tykes Water was instead widened into a new ornamental lake (Plate 4, p.7). It may appear surprising that the lake is only a few feet deep, but it should be remembered that it had to be dug out entirely by hand. The lake was further enlarged in 1899 and an artificial boat cave was cut into the banks. Henry Hucks even went to the expense of having the sides concreted, to prevent water rats making their home in the banks. The lake was a favourite retreat for the local village children, who secretly played there after school. They even had a punt which they sank each night to avoid detection. Later generations of children were still frequenting the lake after the war, to see the herons which had settled there.

The Carriage or 'Elstree Station Drive' was cut through in 1873 to shorten the journey from the house to the new Elstree station to 'a matter of twelve minutes'². The winding drive was lined by double rows of horse-chestnuts (Plate 3, p.7). The rustic wooden bridge which originally carried the road over the lake soon had to be replaced by the stronger brick one which is there today. Viewers of the television series 'The Avengers' may well have recognised it in the opening scenes.

The Kitchen Garden

You may have noticed the short stretch of heavily pitted red brick wall just to the south of the assembly hall. This 12ft high wall actually dates back to the mid-17th Century. Contrary to the rather fanciful belief that it was once used as a shooting range, its pitted surface may in fact be attributed to the thousands of nails once used to secure the morello

cherries which were trained against it. This was the wall of Beckett's famous kitchen garden (Plate 24), which stretched westwards to the canoe hut, eastwards to the sports corridor and northwards to the house blocks.

The kitchen garden was a kind of enlarged vegetable patch and before the days of refrigeration it was an essential part of every country estate. The high brick walls facilitated an extension of the growing season and with the help of frames and hot-houses, the expertise of the head gardener ensured a plentiful supply of fresh fruit and vegetables for the Master's table throughout the year. Even during the winter when the family retired to London, fresh estate produce had to be supplied weekly to the town residence in Regent's Park.

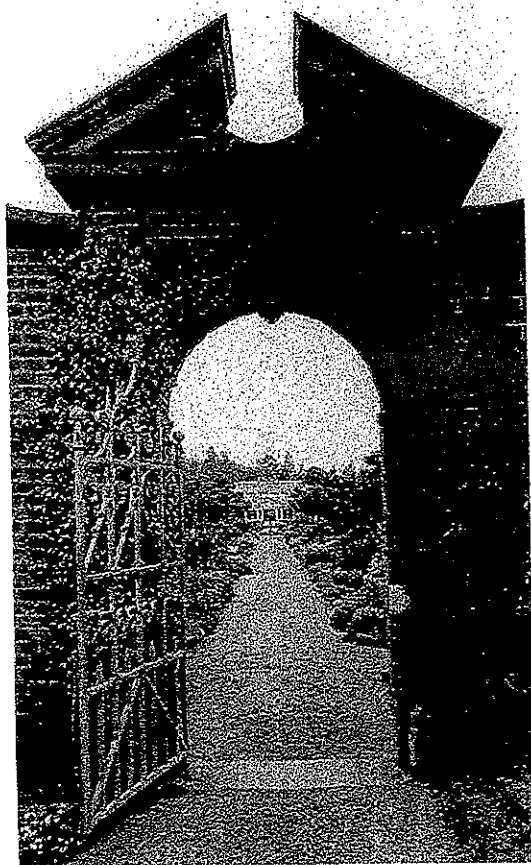


Plate 24: Who could resist to step through the Peter-Pan Gate and into the kitchen garden.



Plate 25: There was certainly no shortage of cauliflowers for the Master's table.

The kitchen garden was sited on what is now the school quadrangle. It covered about two acres and was divided into four by two paths, which crossed at a cast-iron rain gauge in the centre. The paths were lined with herbacious borders, which screened the vegetables growing behind. All parts of the garden were used to their maximum advantage. The walls, although primarily a wind-break, also served to support plums, apricots and cherries. The north end of the garden was flanked by a long vinery with a peach case at its east end, in which peaches and nectarines were grown against a wall under glass. Behind this were the heated 'Palm', 'Carnation' and 'Alpine' houses. Every head gardener sought to produce fruit and vegetables of the best quality and variety (Plate 31, p.35). The hot-houses along the western side of the kitchen garden were filled with grapes, figs, melons and bananas (Plate 25). There were also pine-apple pits. Just to the north of the canoe hut, a heavy iron manhole cover conceals a large underground reservoir, probably used to supply the glasshouses with uncontaminated rain-water.

A gate in the east wall of the kitchen garden led through into the orchard, now a mere hockey pitch. Here were four dozen apple trees, arranged on a 6 x 8 grid. It is hard to believe that the school canoe hut was once featured in 'The Gardener's Assistant' (by William Watson, curator of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew) as the 'ideal fruit room' (Plate 36, p.45). Two entire pages were devoted to its construction, including a photograph of the interior stacked to the ceiling with apples (Plate 26). The fruit had to last an entire year before the next year's crop. To this



Plate 26: Thousands of Aldenham apples stacked up in the fruit room for winter storage.

Station—ELSTREE (L.M. & S. Railway). Telegrams—"ELSTREE." Phone .. 125.	ELSTREE, HERTS.
Memo from Aldenham House Gardens.	16th May, 1927.
TO WHOM THIS MAY CONCERN:	
<p>This is to certify that Douglas Pearson has been employed in these gardens for a period of just over Two years, coming here as a boy from school. During that period he has been engaged on work in the Glass Houses, and has at all times proved himself a willing and honest lad, and shown himself to be likely to make every headway in his profession, with continued diligent and careful study. I have always found him to be courteous, painstaking, and neat and tidy in his habits and appearance. He leaves here at his own request to take another situation.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Douglas Pearson</i></p>	

Plate 27: Douglas Pearson was a Bothy-Boy at Aldenham in the 1920s. Testimonials such as his were a prized possession.

end, the fruit room was provided with a roof of Norfolk thatch, reed walls and a double door which helped insulate it against both the cold of winter and the warmth of summer. One or two of the masters can still recall stripping off the old thatch back in 1961.

To the north of the kitchen garden, enclosed by a hedge, lay a large frame yard (Plate 28). Every autumn, ten labourers spent an entire month raking up the leaves from the woodland floor and heaping them up to six feet high in the frame yard. After the leaves had compacted down, frames were placed on top and planted out with early cabbages, brussels sprouts and cauliflowers. As the leaves decomposed they provided a warm bed for the seedlings throughout the winter. During the 1st World War, the job of raking up the leaves was given to the 70 German prisoners working on the estate.

Six days a week at the hour of 6.30 a.m. (an hour later during the winter) the rings of the garden bell called the men to work. The labourers' hut or 'Bothy', which stood on the site of the school dining hall, was home for the nine 'Bothy-boys', young apprentices who had come straight from school (Plate 27). In the absence of pesticides, it was their job to wash down the floors and worktops of the glasshouses. One boy had to clean out the hundreds of flowerpots, in an attempt to reduce the spread of disease. Carelessness could result in the loss of an entire crop and the

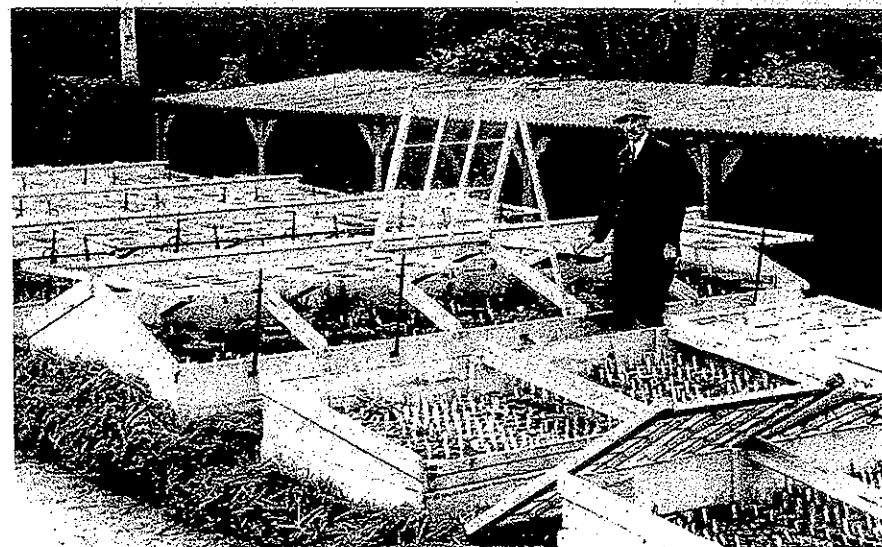


Plate 28: Young alpiners growing in frames in the frame yard.



Plate 29: Aldenham vegetables on display in the R.H.S. Hall.

consequent wrath of the head gardener. As the young boys became more experienced they were elevated to the ranks of journeymen and improvers and entrusted with the more specialised tasks of pruning, sowing and pollinating. They worked under the direction of a foreman, distinguished by a bowler hat, who reported directly to the head gardener. In the Victorian garden every man aspired to the position of head gardener. There cannot have been many positions more sought after than that of head gardener at Aldenham. Henry Hucks must have been particularly proud that Charles Penny, one of Beckett's predecessors, left Aldenham in 1873 to join none other than H.R.H. the Prince of Wales at Sandringham.

It should never be forgotten that the kitchen garden was Mr Beckett's domain. The best produce was destined not for the kitchen, but for display at the horticultural shows. Each year at Chelsea, Edwin Beckett put on a lavish display of vegetables (Plate 29) - huge mountains of cauliflowers and giant runner beans tied up to resemble a bunch of bananas. In his day he was an authority on vegetable growing (Plate 30), about which he had written several books. By 1910, he had won 18 gold medals for vegetables.

The BBC television series 'The Victorian Kitchen Garden' gives a good indication of the hours of hard work that went into the upkeep of a kitchen garden. The garden at Chilton House, Berkshire featured in the series, was actually run by Beckett's brother and there were doubtless many similarities between the two gardens. It is sad to think that all that remains of the once famous kitchen garden at Aldenham is the apple store, a short stretch of wall and nearby a solitary pear tree, one of the few fruit trees left on the entire estate.



Plate 30: Messrs Algrove, Bates, Beckett and Crump judging apples at the Daily Mail Fruit Show.



Plate 31: A proud Beckett surveys his crop of onions.

Diverting the High-Road

This year and last we have been engaged on a very great job no less than diverting the High Road.'

Henry Hucks Gibbs, January 1891

There are three things which have always been particularly puzzling. To begin with there is the location of the Round House. It was obviously built as an entrance lodge and yet it lies 150 yards within the estate boundary. Secondly there is the name 'New Grubbs Lane', now better known as Butterfly Lane, which begs the question as to what happened to the old one. Finally there is the problem posed by the pair of cottages, a little way down the road towards Elstree, which actually back onto Aldenham Road!

Indeed, until just one hundred years ago, Aldenham Road cut straight across the main cricket square and past the Round House, meeting Grubbs Lane where the old cricket pavilion stands today (see Map 2, p.52). This meant that the road ran quite close to the house. Inquisitive travellers had a habit of peering into the estate as they rode by. Henry Hucks gained permission to move the road further west, hiding it in a cutting behind a ha-ha (a sunken boundary wall running along the side of a ditch or cutting). In total the road was diverted for one and three quarter miles, employing 150 labourers. Grubbs Lane was also moved further north thus bringing Penne's Place within the boundary of the gardens. The Wrestlers Public House (Plate 33), famed for its boxing matches, which had formerly stood at the corner of Aldenham Road and Grubbs Lane had to be pulled down. It was relocated at the new junction of the roads and renamed 'The Battleaxes' after the Aldenham Coat of Arms.

There is little to remind one of the Wrestlers today. The Walnut tree planted on the site by Henry Hucks in 1891 may still be seen, and the 'Double Eight' pond was created out of the old Wrestlers' horse pond. Now that the fountain has been turned off, the pond is dry for most of the year. A couple of years ago, while digging about in the mud, I came across a green 'Codd Bottle' complete with a rubber washer and glass bottle stopper, bearing the words 'Mineral Water Company, Watford'. Was this perhaps a relic from the Wrestlers?

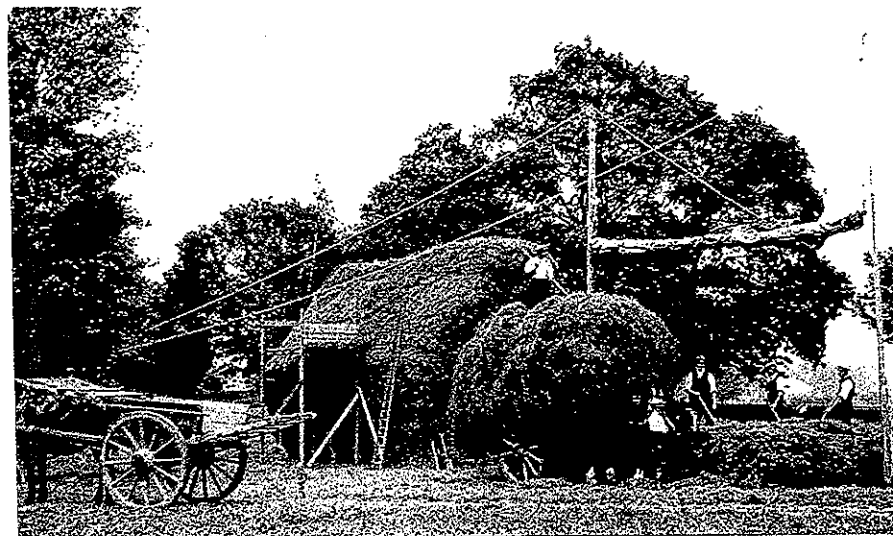


Plate 32: The hay harvest, 1920. Scenes such as this have now vanished from the English countryside.

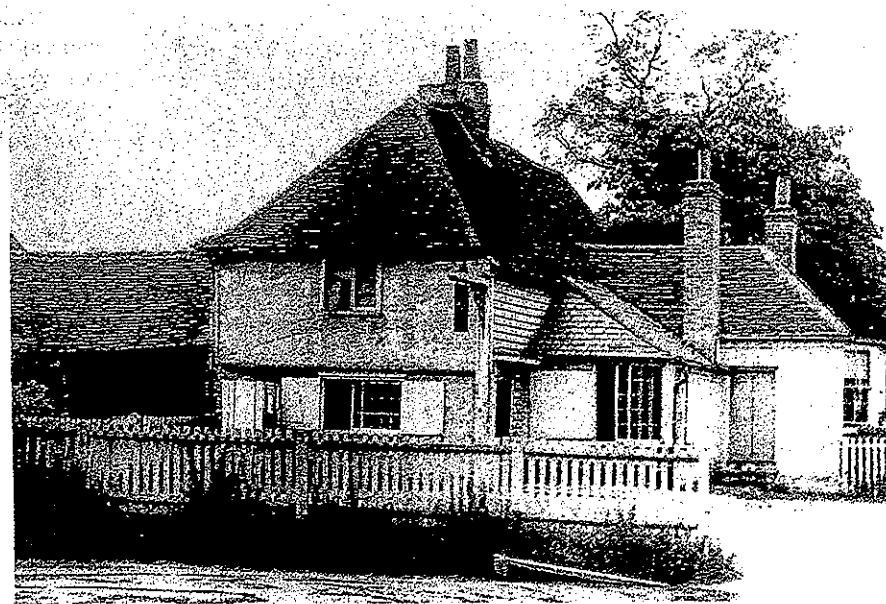


Plate 33: The Wrestlers public house stood at the old junction of Aldenham Road and Grubbs Lane. It was demolished when the roads were moved in 1890 and replaced by the Battleaxes.

Penne's Place

Elstree and its environs has been a favourable site for settlement ever since the construction of Watling Street, the great Roman road from Canterbury to Chester. The village lies 11 miles from Marble Arch and 8 from St. Albans, while the nearest Roman settlement, Sylloniaca, lay just one mile to the south on Brockley Hill. Roman pottery has been found both at Aldenham School and near the Home Farm, although none specifically within the Haberdashers' school grounds. The population of the area increased in the mid-13th Century with the establishment of three local manor houses:- Little Organ Hall on Theobald Street, Kendal Hall on Watling Street and Penne's (or Pen's) Place on Grubbs Lane. The latter, a moated manor house, was built by a certain Reginald de la Penne. Although the house has not existed for over 300 years, the moats still remain in the shape of the rather stagnant ponds to the east of the North Drive, now incorporated into the C.C.F. assault course. The portion of the moats to the west of the North Drive was filled in about twenty years ago. To the south, where the house bordered on the old Grubbs Lane, it was probably protected by a wall.

The land to the south of the old Grubbs Lane was held by a John Wykebourne (reeve of the abbot of Westminster) in 1355 and in 1614 the house and estate of Wigbournes was inherited by Faith Sutton, the wife of Henry Coghill, a London merchant. According to Sir Henry Chauncy (1700, 'The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire'), Penne's Place was '*a small Manor situated upon the common where Henry Coghill, Esq. built a fair house of brick*'. This probably refers to Wigbournes, now Aldenham House, rather than the original Penne's Place. However, the old timbers which Henry Hucks had to replace in that portion of Aldenham House over the old and new chapels, suggested that this part, together with the large fireplace now in the new chapel, possibly dated back to Elizabethan times. It was not until 1734 that Sarah Hucks gave Wigbournes the rather more stately title 'Aldenham House', regardless of the fact that the village of Aldenham lies (as it presumably did then) some two miles to the north-east. Penne's Place apparently survived as the local manor house until about 1540, after which it was reduced to a farmhouse and all traces of the house had disappeared by the time that Henry Coghill bought '*the site*'⁵ in 1640. In 1959 the Coghill Coat of Arms, supported by a pair of dolphins, still adorned the pediment of Aldenham House. Sadly, the Arms have now vanished.

By the 1840s the moats of Penne's Place were clogged with leaves and although the house no longer existed, it was still possible to trace out the foundations in dry weather. Grubbs Lane was moved in 1890, bringing Penne's Place within the grounds of Aldenham House. The moats were cleaned out and the old stew or fish pond to the south was lined with concrete and made into a bathing pool, complete with a dressing room, built into the banks. An avenue of Lombardy Poplars was planted between the moats leading up to New Grubbs Lane, within which was planted the avenue of hawthorns which still line the North Drive. The avenues of Yew and Birch to the west of the drive were planted in 1897, to mark Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. In contrast to today's dense undergrowth, the moats were surrounded by undulating lawns and the iron fence, bordering on the woodland, was covered in roses which were used to decorate the house.

Unfortunately, the tall Poplar Avenue caused an obstruction to planes landing at Elstree Aerodrome and during the 1940s and 50s the tops of the trees were regularly lopped. The trees were left untreated and by the time that the school took over they had suffered so badly that they had to be felled.

Between 1962 and 1964, Professor H.H. Swinnerton (the father-in-law of Dr. T.W. Taylor, a past headmaster) conducted excavations on the site of Penne's Place. Under the sixth form car park he found some of the flint foundations of the manor house. Fragments of pottery were found in the old well, dating mainly from the 17th Century, including part of a Pipkin, once used to store grain, and the Belarmine Jug, now in the headmaster's study. Various bricks and tiles were also discovered dating from an earlier period. The marks left by the wooden moulds were clearly visible.

The Greatest Garden Sale in the World

'The collection at Aldenham House comprises some 10,000 species, varieties and forms, among which are many unique examples, and is the largest privately owned collection in the world.'

D.B.Crane in a letter to Country Life
February 13th, 1932

Vicary Gibbs died in 1932 leaving behind a unique collection of trees and shrubs which compared favourably with the older collection at Kew. His family, who had been known to make such comments as *'Vicary's silly bushes'* ⁴ during his lifetime, did not share his enthusiasm for gardening and were less than delighted to take on the huge financial responsibility involved in the upkeep of the estate. His eldest brother, Alban, was firmly rooted on his estate at Clifton Hampden, near Oxford, and could hardly be expected to move back to Aldenham at the age of 86.

For some years the gardens had been thrown open to the public on the Saturdays of July, August and September. It was suggested that they should now be acquired for the benefit of the nation. Yet, within a mere 6 months, it was decided to sell off and disperse the entire collection (Plate 34). Eminent horticulturalists travelled from throughout Europe to attend what has been termed 'The greatest garden sale in the world'. It comprised some 2000 lots, many consisting of entire borders of plants, and lasted a full seven days. By the end only the more established trees which were too large to move remained. It must have been a sad time for Edwin Beckett who retired to a small house in Radlett.

Aldenham House remained empty until 1934 when it was rented to a Brigadier Watkins who turned it into a country club and 'Residential Health Resort' (Plate 35), catering for the wealthy actors and directors who were working at the nearby Elstree Film Studios. The 'Aldenham House Club', as it was called, offered 'good facilities for air and sun bathing' ⁶. In view of the English climate it is hardly surprising that within two years the club had made a loss. Nevertheless, the gardens were kept in good order and a 52 acre nine-hole golf course was laid out on the site of the Girls' School.

Aldenham House Gardens,
ELSTREE, HERTS.
Two miles from Elstree Station, L.M.S. Bus from Edgware passes the Entrance.

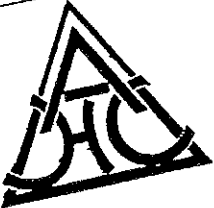
SALE OF
The Honourable Vicary Gibbs' Collection of
HARDY TREES & SHRUBS
Including many fine and rare specimens, also
SEEDLING PHLOX, ASTERS AND DELPHINIUMS
MANY NOT YET IN COMMERCE, TOGETHER WITH THE
ROCK SHRUBS AND OTHER ITEMS.

STRESSERS.
PROTHEROE & MORRIS
IN CONJUNCTION WITH MESSRS.
HUMBERT & FLINT

Have been instructed to Sell the above by Auction, at The Gardens,
ON MONDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 1932
AND FOLLOWING DAYS, at 12 o'clock each day.

May be viewed. Catalogues can be obtained of Mr. E. BECKETT, The Gardens, and of the Joint Auctioneers,
Messrs. HUMBERT & FLINT, Watford, and 6 Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.2.
Messrs. PROTHEROE & MORRIS, 67 and 68 Cheapside, E.C.2.
Telegrams: Prothoroe, Crnt. London. Telephone: City 3636 (2 lines).
W. & W. Ltd., Romford.

Plate 34: The catalogue of the Sale, 1932.


Aldenham House
&
RESIDENTIAL HEALTH RESORT
&
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: ALDENHAM HOUSE, ELSTREE.

TELEPHONE NUMBER: ELSTREE 1633

Plate 35: The brochure of the Aldenham House Club, c1934.

Radio Aldenham

Few people are aware that Aldenham House served as the wartime headquarters of the BBC Latin American and Near East Service. Even at the time the Corporation's presence was kept very much of a secret.

The BBC played an essential wartime role, both in keeping up the morale at home and promoting Allied propaganda overseas. The bombing of the BBC studios at Bush House or Portland Place would have been a national disaster. In September 1941, the BBC's Director General decided to establish new studios outside the capital, to which the service could be transferred in the eventuality of bomb damage. Aldenham House, only ten minutes drive from the end of the Northern Line, provided a suitable location. Although the laws of requisition had not yet been passed, the house had recently been vacated by the Ever Ready Corporation, who had been using it for the past year.

Aldenham House was rapidly equipped with the latest recording equipment. The present reception office was established as the main control room, while the school secretary's office and the old chapel were amongst the four rooms sound-proofed for use as studios. A canteen was set up in what is now the accounts' office on the first floor. Radio masts were erected behind the house.

At about the same time, the overseas service, fuelled by the Allied propaganda broadcasts, was undergoing a period of rapid expansion. The BBC foresaw the opportunity to turn Aldenham House into a post-war centre for the overseas service. They began drawing up plans for the development of the estate. There would be 8 new studio blocks and accommodation for some 5000 people. As the war progressed, this plan proved rather too costly and an interim scheme was adopted in the shape of 'The Art, Craft and Design Centre' and the 'C.C.F. block'.

At 0430 B.S.T. on Saturday 27th December, 1941, 'Radio Newsreel' was broadcast from Aldenham. With the completion of the new buildings, 'Empire News' bulletins followed. Every night, Aldenham House became a hive of activity as Egyptian, Arab and Spanish broadcasters, sometimes the ambassadors themselves, were driven up from the embassies. The National Anthem, played at the start of each broadcast, provided the sole means of identification. Marjorie Ely, who was working as a telephonist in Aldenham House, will never forget the awful night when the record of the Anthem

went missing and a frantic search ensued. Fortunately for Britain, a recording was eventually located. A 24 hour car relay service was established with Bush House and an hourly shuttle ran to and from Edgware Station.

The stringent wartime economy prevented the upkeep of large country gardens. The BBC could only afford two gardeners, who maintained the kitchen garden. The grassy woodland rides and the arboretum were sadly left to run wild and trespassers stole many of the shrubs and ornaments.

By the end of the war, four years of neglect had left the gardens unrecognisable and the Aldenham House Club brought an action against the BBC for gross negligence.

'The most important area for the purposes of the claim was . . . an artificial stream (The Water Gardens). The area had beautiful lawns and beds of the rarest shrubs of all kinds. It was, perhaps, the most beautiful collection of shrubs in the country. It was in respect of that area that complete devastation had taken place. The lawns were covered with weeds and nettles and the beds had completely disappeared.'

Estates Gazette August 7th, 1948

It was eventually agreed that the BBC should pay the Aldenham House Club £11,110 in damages, although it would in practice be impossible to fully restore the gardens. During the case it transpired that the estimated cost for clearing the gardens did not include the removal of the dead material. The gardeners argued that while it was usual to remove the garden rubbish this did not normally amount to 600 lorry loads!

Having literally spent a few million pounds equipping the studios, the BBC was keen to keep them up after the war and in May 1951 it was finally able to purchase the house together with sixty acres of the park. However, plans soon changed when Caversham Park, Reading was chosen as the new headquarters of the Overseas Service. The expensive recording equipment was removed, the radio masts taken down and the house boarded up. In 1956 BBC television showed interest in the estate but nothing ever came of it. In 1959 it was eventually agreed to sell the house to the Haberdashers' Company.

Conclusion - *Haberdashers'* takes over



Aldenham House was purchased from the BBC in 1959 together with the grounds, now much overgrown. Margaret Taylor (the wife of a late headmaster) has vivid memories of rummaging through the undergrowth to discover long-forgotten stone paths and cast-iron gates. The BBC had left its mark in the form of the two war grade buildings (The Art, Craft and Design Centre, and the C.C.F. Block), in which the studios were still labelled. Dotted around outside were a number of the concrete plinths on which the radio masts had once stood. The glasshouses were beyond repair and had to be demolished together with the old kitchen garden wall, the rubble being used as foundation for the new school buildings. The orchard and the woods to its north were cleared to make way for playing fields and the all-weather pitch. The cottage-style Garden House (Plate 37) which lay to the north-west of the new prep school and where Beckett had spent his years as head gardener, was in a dangerous condition and had to be demolished by the C.C.F.

In an attempt to retain the essential layout of the grounds, the new school buildings were arranged around the site of the old kitchen garden. The school was officially opened by the Lord Mayor of London on 11th October, 1961. After 27 years, Haberdashers' is now firmly established in Elstree. The school's expansion has inevitably been at the cost of the old estate. Each year more trees succumb to old age and strong winds. The old fruit room (Plate 36) is stacked not with apples but canoes. Nevertheless, the work of Henry Hucks and Vicary Gibbs lives on in the beautiful autumn colours of the woodland, the graceful, if a little overgrown, water gardens and the many fine trees and shrubs which still adorn the school grounds. At the present moment, Aldenham House is undergoing a complete programme of restoration, which should preserve it for another 300 years.

Aldenham House has had many influential connections - the governor of the Bank of England, the BBC and now Haberdashers' Aske's. It is for the School to ensure that Aldenham lives up to its name and heritage.



Plate 36: Aldenham's model fruit room, complete with its roof of Norfolk thatch. It survives to this day as the school canoe hut.



Plate 37: Beckett's 'Garden House' stood N.W. of the new prep school.

Appendix - Trees surveyed by Alan Mitchell in 1976.

Trees in the Aldenham Woods	Height/ft	Girth
Acer macrophyllum	56	3' 11"
Acer pseudoplatanus 'Variegatum'	82	7' 1"
Aesculus x hybrida	82	2' 8"
Betula Lenta	42	3' 1" @ 4ft
Betula platyphylla	56	3' 3"
Carya cordiformis	56	3' 8" broken
Carya laciniosa	46	1' 5"
Cedrela (Toona) sinensis	60	5' 2"
Crataegus mollis	46	4' 2"
"	50	2' 4"
Crataegus monogyna 'Variegata'	13	3' 2"
Fagus sylvatica 'Asplenifolia'	52	6' 6"
Fraxinus latifolia	70	5' 5"
"	72	4' 4"
Fraxinus ornus	66	7' 7"
Juglans mandschurica	52	4' 6"
Juglans nigra	70	6' 2"
Kalopanax pictus	56	4' 1"
Mespilus germanica	13	3' 1"
Phellodendron amurense v lavellei	43	3' 9"
Pinus cembra	56	4' 6"
Populus nigra 'Italica'	80	7' 3"
Populus 'Serotina' (in field)	105	11' 8"
Pyrus pashia	70	3' 3"
"	56	4' 5"
Quercus castaneifolia	87	6' 1" Rideside
"	72	5' 8"
Quercus coccinea	60	6' 6"
Quercus frainetto	70	6' 1"
Quercus macranthera	72	5' 2"
Quercus macrocarpa (?)	56	3' 5"
Quercus phellos	58	3' 5"
Quercus pyrenaica	56	4' 0"
Quercus shumardii	56	3' 8"
Salix matsudana 'Tortuosa'	52	5' 7"
Sophora japonica	46	3' 8"
Sorbus latifolia	54	5' 3"
Tilia platyphyllos	65	6' 7"

Trees in the School Grounds	Height/ft	Girth
Acer campestre	50	5' 3" (40', 1931)
Acer henryi	26	2' 3"
Aesculus chinensis	36	2' 5"
Aesculus hippocastanum 'Laciniata'	36	2' 7"
Ailanthus altissima	62	6' 5"
"	50	5' 9"
Alnus glutinosa 'Laciniata'	56	6' 11"
Amelanchier x lamarckii	38	3' 7"
Arbutus menziesii	42	4' 2"
Betula maximowiczii	42	3' 5"
Betula medwediewii	39	3' 5"
Betula pendula 'Youngii'	23	3' 3"
Calocedrus decurrens	60	5' 9"
Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata'	50	4' 8" @ 3ft
Carya ovalis (?)	50	3' 11"
Catalpa speciosa	42	3' 3"
Chamaecyparis nootkatensis	56	4' 0"
Cornus controversa	36	3' 4" @ 3ft
Crataegus monogyna 'Variegata'	13	3' 2"
x Cupressocyparis leylandii	70	5' 11"
Dipteronia sinensis	26	1' 1" +11in
Fagus sylvatica 'Cristata'	60	3' 0"
Fagus sylvatica 'Dawyc'	72	4' 8"
Fagus sylvatica 'Rotundifolia'	50	3' 10"
Fraxinus excelsior 'Jaspidea'	52	5' 1"
Fraxinus latifolia 'Variegata'	48	3' 10"
Ginkgo biloba	48	4' 1"
Gleditsia triacanthos 'Inermis'	66	5' 11"
Juniperus chinensis 'Aurea'	36	3' 0" (20', 1931)
Malus x 'Aldenhamensis'	33	3' 7"
Malus x baccata v mandschurica	50	7' 1"
Mespilus germanica	13	2' 9"
Morus alba 'Pendula'	10	2' 5"
Nothofagus obliqua	10	4' 11" thin
Ostrya carpinifolia	46	4' 4"
Parrotia persica	46	4' 0" bole 3ft
Phellodendron lavellei	52	3' 6"
Pinus contorta v contorta	42	2' 11"
Pinus nigra v maritima	90	9' 1"
Pinus nigra v nigra	80	9' 5"
Pseudocarya sinensis	20	3' 8"
Pterocarya fraxinifolia v dumosa	23	2' 8" leaning

	Height/ft	Girth
Quercus robur 'Fastigiata'	54	3' 11"
Sophora japonica	60	6' 3"
Sophora japonica 'Variegata'	40	5' 4"
Sorbus aria	42	6' 4" @ 3ft
Sorbus aucuparia 'Laciniata'	52	4' 2"
Sorbus domestica	52	6' 6"
Tilia 'Petiolaris'	94	10' 3"

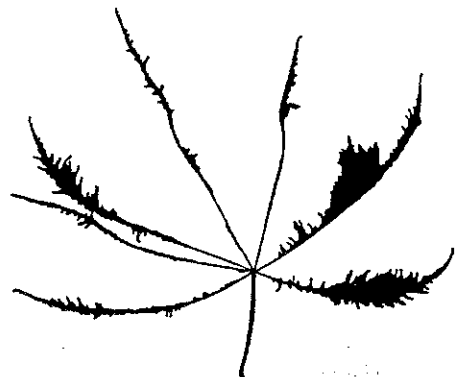


Plate 38: Aesculus
Hippocastanum 'Laciniata' - a
rare variety of the common
horse-chestnut. The tree, which
still lies in the woods beyond
the new prep school, is one of
only two in England.

Notes

- 1: *The Harrow and Wealdstone Press* (13th February, 1903)
- 2: Gibbs, Henry Hucks *Aldenham House Yearbook* (1871-1902)
- 3: *The Gardeners' Chronicle* (1st January, 1910)
- 4: Gibbs, Vicary *Oaks at Aldenham* (R.H.S., 1920)
- 5: Page, W. *The Victoria History of the County of Hertfordshire, Vol 2* (1908)
- 6: Brochure of the Aldenham House Club (c1934)



Plate 39: This weeping beech (right) and weeping elm (left) stood east of
the old prep school.

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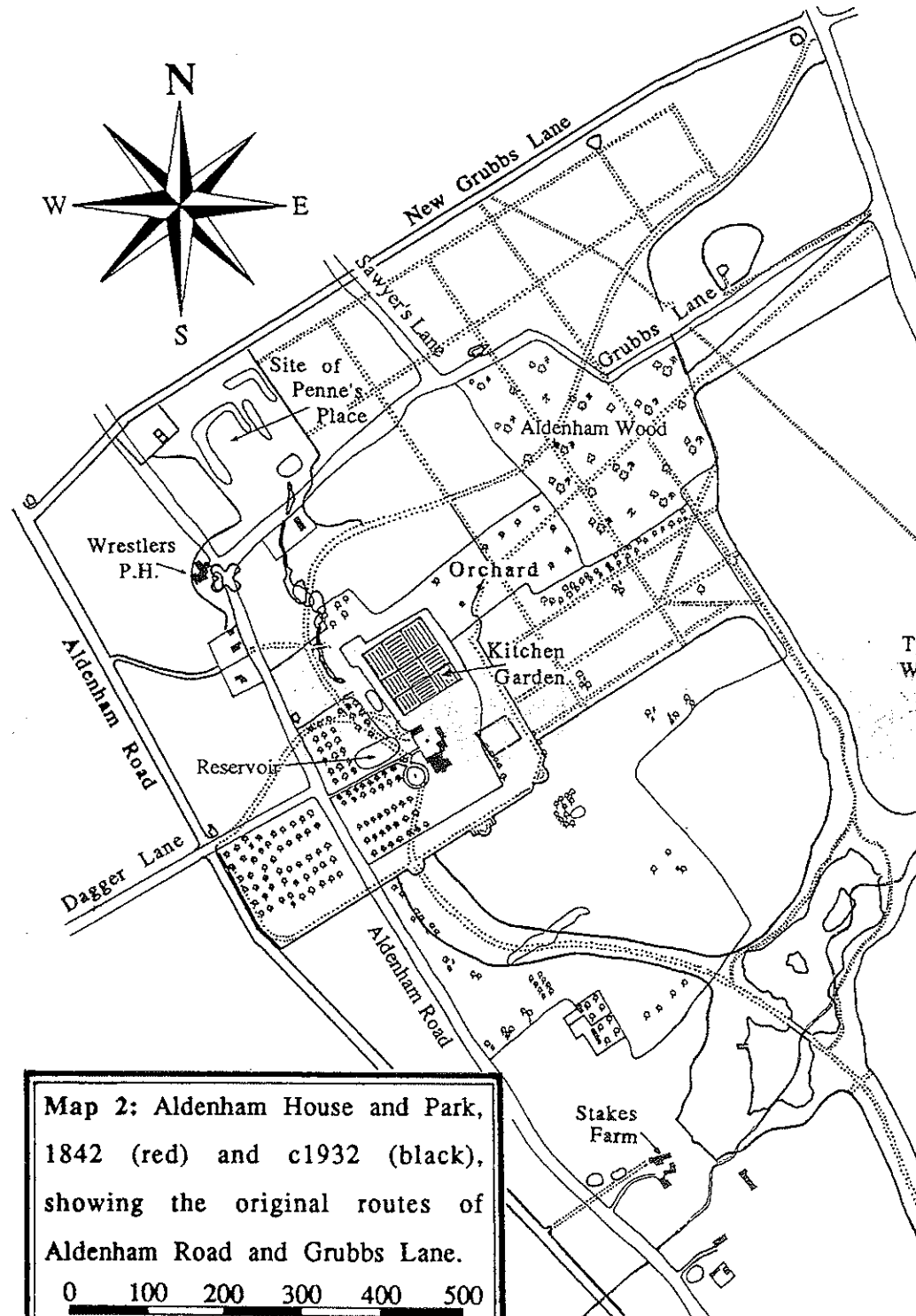
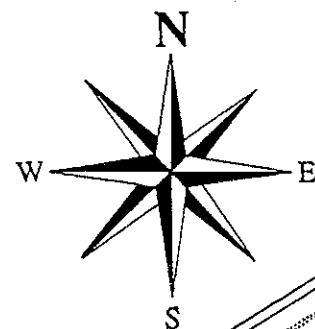
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Map 2: Aldenham House and Park, 1842 (red) and c1932 (black), showing the original routes of Aldenham Road and Grubbs Lane.

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