The Landmark Trust

MONKTON OLD HALL

History Album

Written by Charlotte Haslam 1982, revised 1990 and 2015

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KEY FACTS

Built	**Probably built in 14th C as the priory guest house**
Acquired by Landmark	**1979**
Restoration by Landmark	**Completed 1982**
Architects	**L Bedall-Smith**
Contractors	**Argent's of Pembroke**

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Summary

A small Benedictine priory was founded at Pembroke in 1098, and probably established itself on the hill opposite the castle, which came to be called Monkton, a century later. The main buildings of the Priory are thought to have lain immediately next to St Nicholas' church. The Old Hall is further away, but there is a very strong tradition that it was connected with them and the likelihood is that it was built as a Guest-house.

Hospitality was one of the requirements laid down in the Benedictine Rule, and in the days before inns became common, but when a surprising number of people in fact travelled, the monasteries were almost the only place where they could be sure of a night's lodging. If a monastery was on a pilgrim route they could expect to put up a steady flow of guests.

Monkton Priory was small and not very wealthy, with only four or five monks in addition to the Prior; but it was close to a great castle, and on the pilgrim route to St David's, so a guest-house would have been very necessary. This would also explain the arrangement of the Old Hall, which is more typical of a medieval house than of a monastic building, with its great hall, and cross-wing containing separate chambers.

As a building it is very difficult to date. There are almost no dateable details - mouldings and such-like - and when there are some they have a rather faked-up air, as though they have been inserted later by someone with a romantic sense of the past. However, the plan type is a very early one. Upper halls, that is halls over a vaulted undercroft, were common in England for the two centuries after the Conquest, but were seldom seen after 1300. In Wales and Scotland they continued for longer - their defensive advantages are obvious - and fine examples were built by Bishop Gower at his palaces at St David's and Lamphey in the early 14th century. So the likelihood is that Monkton is also 14th century - but it could be up to a century later.

One of the difficulties of dating the building is that since the Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1539, Monkton has led a chequered career. It has changed hands several times; it has been in a ruinous state at least twice; and has been rescued and restored twice, once in 1879 by a scholarly medieval enthusiast called J.R. Cobb, and once in this century by Miss Muriel Thompson (later Mrs Bowen), with some help from Clough Williams-Ellis.

So the hooded "Edwardian" fireplace, now in the hall and previously (but not originally) in the south-east wing, could come from this building or from another. All dateable carpentry has disappeared long ago. Even the slender cylindrical chimney, so characteristic of Pembrokeshire and thought to be early, was added onto a stack built for a square shaft, so is secondary to the original building, at least, and may be much later.

Whatever its problems for scholars and archaeologists, Monkton Old Hall feels early, and certainly conveys to us an early pattern of life, with its uncompromising stoniness but strong sense of hospitality. It is remembered by many for Mrs Bowen's Christmas parties, and that is quite right for a building which was intended to welcome travellers.

The Landmark Trust bought Monkton Old Hall in 1979 from Mrs Campbell, who had been left the house by her godmother, Mrs Bowen. Although the house had been lived in and looked after by Mrs Bowen until her death in 1978, there were still some major repairs that she had not been able to undertake.

The chief of these was the eradication of dry rot, which had started in a wing built onto the north-west corner by J.R. Cobb, and then spread into the roof of the hall. In the end it was decided to take down the wing altogether, since the accommodation it contained would not be needed. The two doors leading to it had medieval stone surrounds, and these have been left visible. The roof was stripped, and rotten or infected timbers replaced, before the slates were relaid.

The second problem was the round chimney, which was leaning dangerously over the roof, due to subsidence in the wall beneath. The stack had to be taken right down, each stone being carefully numbered; the wall was then strengthened, and the whole chimney rebuilt, exactly the same as before, but vertical.

Thirdly, the upper face of the south-east wing, corbelled out over the curious arch, was leaning badly outwards over the road. This was mainly due to the weight of the hooded fireplace inside, which the wall beneath was too thin to support - one reason for thinking that it was not originally in that position. The fireplace was therefore removed to the hall, where it is more in character, and the wall of the wing rebuilt. At the southern end of the cross passage there was a medieval doorway, possibly put there by Cobb. It made the passage into something of a wind tunnel and since its lintel was entirely rotten - this being the weather side - it was decided to block it up, but again leaving the stone surround visible.

The only other alterations inside the Old Hall have been to provide a new kitchen, and bathrooms, together with new wiring and heating, and redecorating. The walls have been limewashed, which allows them to breathe, and helps prevent damp. The timbers in the hall have been painted with zinc chromate, usually used for painting ships, but providing exactly the right sort of "William Burges" red. Some of the furniture, such as the table in the hall and the four poster bed, belonged to Mrs Bowen and have been lent to the Trust by Mrs Campbell. Outside, a wall was built in place of the north-west wing, to shelter the courtyard. The ground level of this was raised to bring it up to the entrance door, as it appeared in an old engraving. Mrs Bowen's garden, planted on old terraces and between old walls, was an important part of Monkton's special character. It has only been possible to maintain a skeleton of this, but the view across to the Castle is as grand as ever.

Historical Monkton Old Hall

Monkton Old Hall was probably built in the 14th century. There are two main reasons (apart from a total lack of documentary evidence) why we can't be more certain of this. The building has few easily dateable details; and over the centuries it has been much altered and rebuilt. Some authorities, indeed, believe it to be 15th century, and there is circumstantial evidence to support this.

Whichever century it was built in, the Old Hall belongs to a far earlier tradition, and to a type of building that remained common in South Pembrokeshire long after it had been superseded in most other parts of Britain (Scotland apart). This was the Northern French, or Norman, semi-fortified house, built of stone, with the hall and other living accommodation on the first floor, raised over a vaulted undercroft. The defensive advantages of this arrangement explain its lasting popularity in the less peaceful parts of Britain. A Pembrokeshire refinement, which is also thought to derive from castle building, is the circular chimney, of which that at Monkton is a good, though possibly late, example.

Monkton Old Hall, in its tough and yet accommodating way, thus reflects a way of life characteristic of the century and a half following the Norman Conquest. It is one of only about half a dozen houses of this type in England and Wales. The grandest of them, from which most of the others in the area were copied, belong to the Bishop's Palaces at St. David's and Lamphey, built mainly in the early 14th century by Bishop Gower.

We can be more certain as to the builders of the Old Hall. It is generally thought, from its position next to the churchyard, that it was associated with Pembroke Priory, of which the church of St. Nicholas, Monkton, was part. Early 19th century writers assumed that it was the Prior's lodging, but since then it has

been argued that this would have been among the main group of monastic buildings, lying close to the north and north-west of the church. The most likely use for the Hall is now thought to have been as the *Hospitium* or Guest House. This would explain its domestic plan, and its situation slightly removed from the main priory buildings.

One of the duties laid down in the Rule of the Benedictine Order, to which the Priory belonged, was that of providing hospitality for travellers. If a monastery lay on a high road, or on a busy pilgrim route, there could be large numbers of these, requiring food and a bed for the night. Separate rooms, or a self-contained building, would be set aside for this purpose. Pembroke Priory, or Monkton as it came to be called, was near a great castle and on the route for St. David's Cathedral, and so could expect to be in some demand.

In the later Middle Ages, as the monasteries grew more wealthy, their hospitality both grew more lavish, and was more likely to be abused. Instead of providing mainly for the poor and needy, it was not unknown for founder's or patrons' kin to be put up for lengthy periods. Sometimes a nobleman and his following would "withdraw" to a monastery for Christmas or Easter. The *Hospitium* became more like a hostelry, with a special hosteller or guest-master to preside over it. Monkton would never have operated on this scale, because it would not have been rich enough, but in its more modest fashion it would have reflected what was happening at the greater Abbeys.

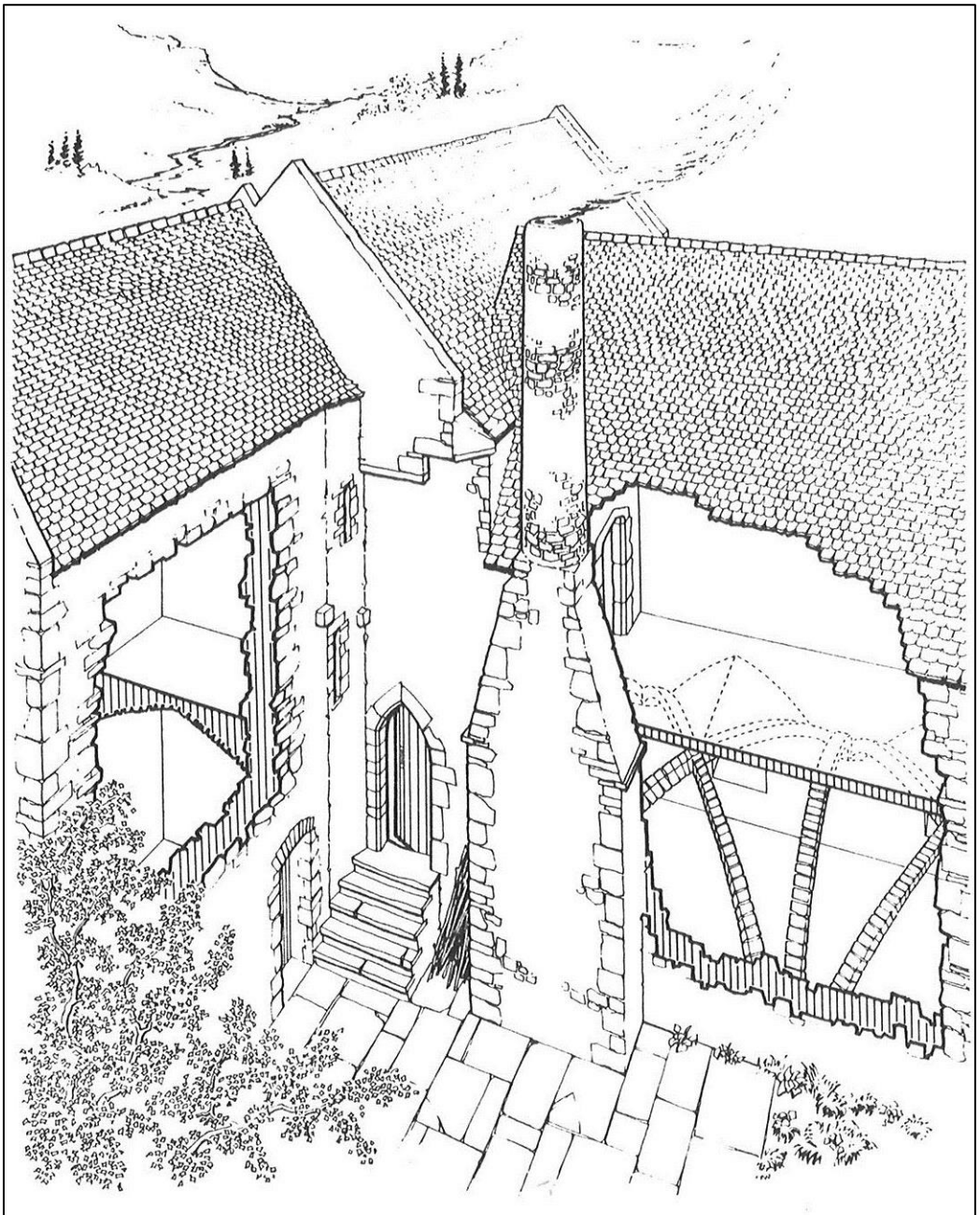


Fig. 4. Monkton Hall (Monkton, Pembs.), although on a smaller scale than the Bishop's Palace, illustrates the first-floor hall over a vaulted undercroft popular amongst the upper classes in medieval Pembrokeshire. The plan is T-shaped consisting of a hall flanked by a service and solar cross-wing at the entry end.

From *Historical Domestic Architecture in Dyfed*; an Outline by Peter Smith in Carmarthenshire Studies (1974). (The same illustration appears *in Houses of the Welsh Countryside* also by Peter Smith (1975) with the note: "A more complex plan (than St David's etc) consisting of hall and cross-wing both over a vaulted basement. The cross-wing was later extended by the addition of a vaulted kitchen).

History of the Priory of St Nicholas, Monkton

The Priory was founded in 1098 when Arnulph de Montgomery gave the church within his newly established castle at Pembroke, with 20 carucates of land, to the Benedictine Abbey of St. Martin, at Séez in Normandy. In the late 12th century its endowment was increased, and possibly its permanent site on the hill opposite the town selected, by William Marshal, the great Earl of Pembroke and builder of much of the castle.

Little else is recorded of its history. As a dependency of the Abbey at Séez, it did not have the right to appoint its own Prior. He would be sent over each time from Normandy, and most other business would also have been administered from France. In the 12th century, Giraldus Cambrensis excommunicated the Sheriff for stealing 8 yoke of the Prior's oxen; in the 13th, the visiting Archbishop of Canterbury expelled Prior Ralph and sent him back to Séez in disgrace, for "*habitual incontinency, besides other enormous and incredible offences*".

For most of the 14th century England was at war with France. As an "alien priory" (one governed from abroad) this would therefore have been a time of instability and uncertainty for Monkton. On two occasions its revenues were appropriated by the English king, each time for a number of years. It would have been in constant danger of being suppressed altogether, and having its land sold off. Almost all alien houses had to reduce their numbers at this time, because of financial difficulties. It is for this reason that the 14th century has been thought an unlikely time for the building of a large new guest-house at Monkton. Unlikely, but not impossible; and in fact the first half of the 15th century (later than which the building of a first-floor hall would be very surprising) seems to all outward appearances equally unpropitious.

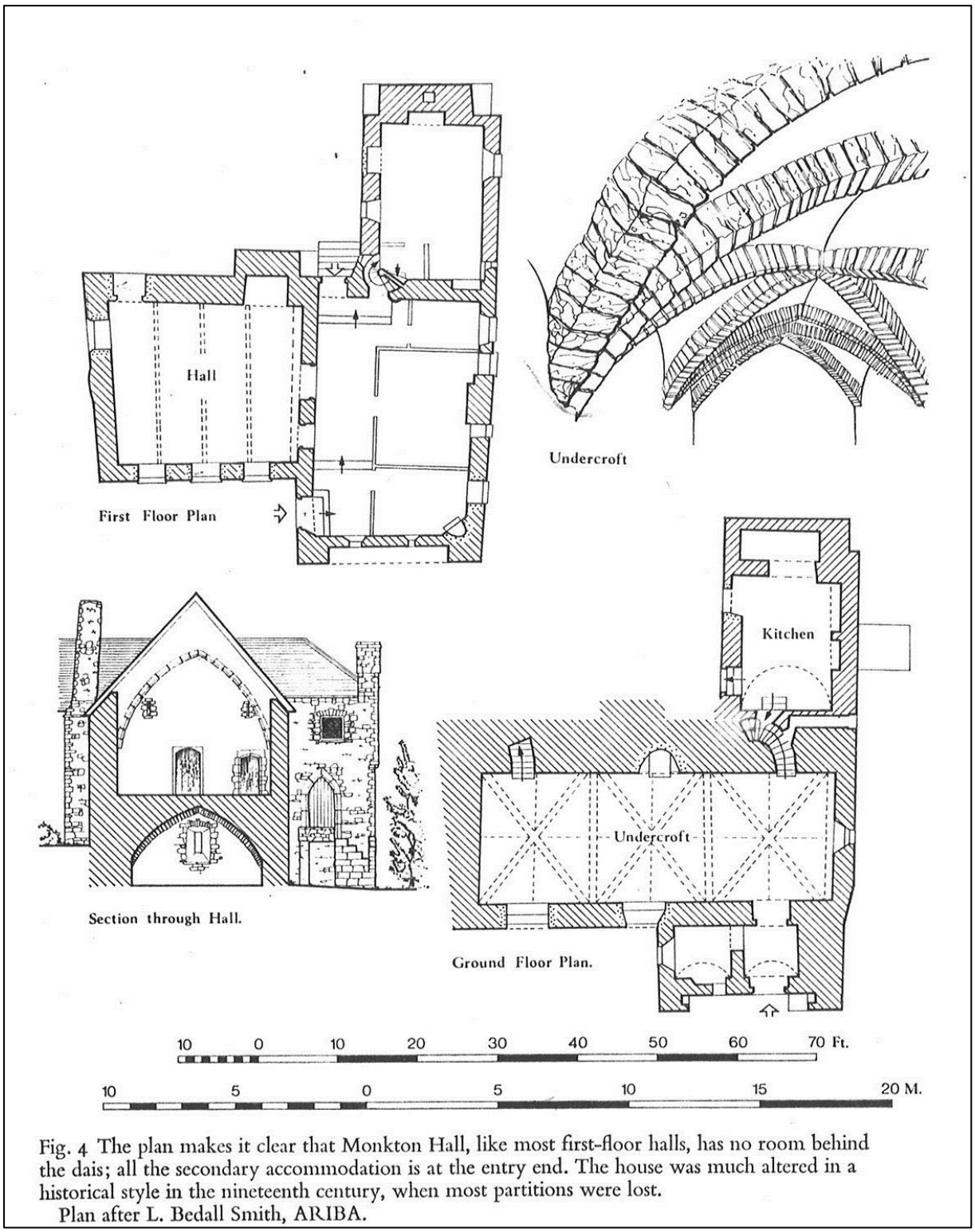


Fig. 4 The plan makes it clear that Monkton Hall, like most first-floor halls, has no room behind the dais; all the secondary accommodation is at the entry end. The house was much altered in a historical style in the nineteenth century, when most partitions were lost.
Plan after L. Bedall Smith, ARIBA.

From *Houses of the Welsh Countryside* Peter Smith (1975). Although later openings are shown, the plans and section are partly a reconstruction of the original building i.e. showing a fireplace opening in the north wall of the hall, and a second door (now a hatch) in the screen. The door in the north west corner of the hall, here shown as inserted, might in fact be in situ, and possibly led to another wing on this corner.

When the alien houses were finally closed down altogether in 1414, Monkton passed into the possession of the Crown. There followed a gap of several years, during which it was probably administered by a steward, and lived in by a caretaker, who would have run the farm. Henry VI then granted it to Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester. In 1443 he in turn gave it as a cell to St. Alban's Abbey in Hertfordshire.

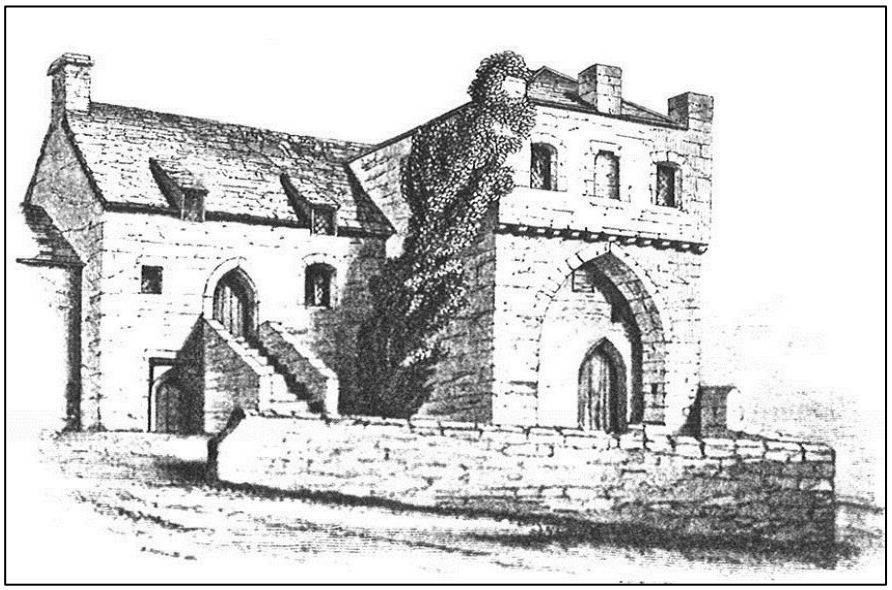
The last hundred years of the Priory's existence would have seen monks back in occupation, and its position secure; and its revenues no doubt recovered accordingly. When it was finally dissolved in 1539 its net income was œ57 per annum, which for Wales was well-to-do. The number of monks was probably slightly smaller than it originally had been, there being only four or five in addition to the Prior.

View of Monkton Old Hall and the "paddock well walled round" from across the river, showing its relationship with the other monastic buildings consisting of the church, with the Priory Farm beyond, some of which may be pre-reformation.

After the Reformation

The history of Monkton Old Hall since 1539 is not altogether happy. According to Sir William Dugdale's *Monasticum Anglicanum*, the "*manor and celle*" of Monkton was initially sold by the Crown to a lawyer, John Vaughan, and Catherine his wife. Not long afterwards, however, it passed to Walter Devereux, Viscount Hereford, and later 1st Earl of Essex. It was recorded as being in his possession in 1575, along with other Pembrokeshire manors, including Lamphey Palace.

On the Earl's death, Monkton passed to his son Robert, who was to become the unfortunate favourite of Queen Elizabeth. He passed some years of his boyhood at Lamphey, and formed a close friendship with Sir Gilly Meyrick, who lived at Fleet in the parish of Monkton. They were both executed for treason on the same day in 1601. The Earl's estates were confiscated, so Monkton found itself once again in the hands of the Crown. In 1604, however, it was restored to his son, with the rest of the Earl's property; and remained part of the Devereux estates for two centuries more.



Engraving of Monkton Old Hall from *Domestic Architecture of the Middle Ages; Fourteenth century* by JH Parker 1853.

To begin with the Old Hall filled the position of manor house to Monkton, leased to members of the minor gentry; but by the 18th century it had fallen in status, and had become a farm house. This it still was when the writer Richard Fenton went there, as described in his *Tour through Pembrokeshire* (1811):

> *The prior's mansion, now converted into a farmhouse, is of singular form, uniting the architecture of various fashions and ages. It is ascended by a flight of steps, at the foot of which on each side are remains of very curious pillars. The basement is vaulted, and the outbuildings, together with the walls that enclosed the whole, give us an idea of the prior's great state. The monastic precinct, or rather prior's liberties, occupying a very large tract, formed a paddock well walled round, commanding a fine view of the estuary, castle and town of Pembroke and must have been a sumptuous and delightful residence. A dove-house of large dimensions, an inseparable appendage to houses of the first note in this country, still exists entire just without this paddock. The priory farm rents at £400 per annum.*

At the same time, some memory of its former institutional nature kept alive a tradition that it should be used in part for charitable parish purposes, such as housing the poor. J.H. Parker in *Domestic Architecture of the Middle ages; Fourteenth Century* (1853) records its name as the Great or Charity Hall. This use of it seems to have been combined with that of farmhouse, so it seems likely that the building was divided, with one or more tenements within it.

During the long period from the mid-16th century to the mid-19th century the building inevitably underwent several structural changes. To start with, it would have been necessary to make some alterations and additions to fit it for use as a

permanent gentleman's residence. It may have been at this time (with the disappearance of the Priory kitchens) that the cross-wing was extended, with its own, vaulted, kitchen, and additional accommodation above.

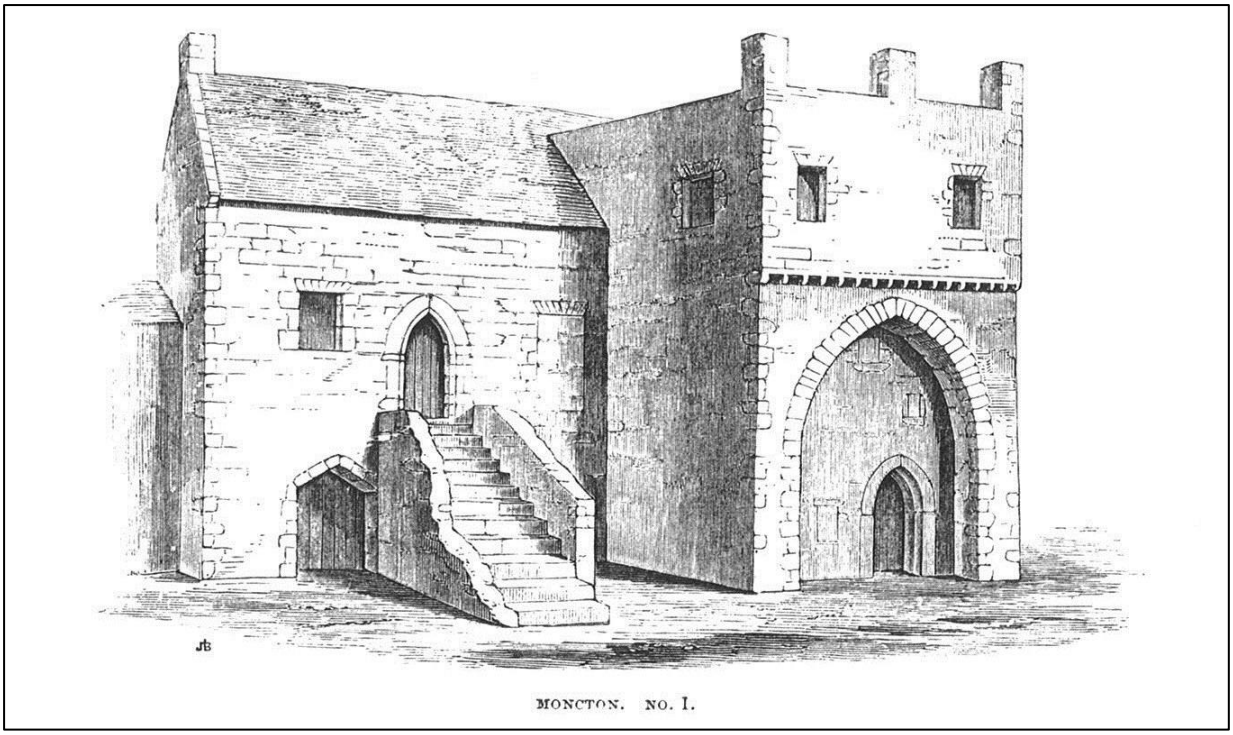
It is possible that the curious features of the south-east wing belong to a slightly later stage, in the later 16th century perhaps (a time of medieval romanticism). The arch (echoing the end wall of the hall) on its outer face, and the corbels above, have a slightly stagey quality, especially when combined with the very unlikely position within its upper room of the hooded fireplace (now in the hall), the weight of which they were presumably meant to support. A similar romanticism may have caused the building of the tall round chimney, since close examination by the Landmark Trust's architect during its repair showed it to have been added to a base on which a square chimney once sat.

At the same time, perhaps, the hall was floored in and subdivided. Other alterations probably belong to the 18th century. A new entrance was made in the south wall of the hall, by turning a medieval window into a door, reached by steps. The original entrance would have been into the cross passage at the end of the hall. The undercroft was also divided, and throughout the building, according to a 19th-century account, there were "*small fireplaces and flues put in every possible angle*".

All this adds to the impression that in the late 18th and early 19th century, at least, more than one family was living in the building. Gradually, to suit new needs and arrangements, existing windows were altered and new ones inserted, doorways and partitions were changed about. As a result, even by the mid-19th century, little trace remained of the medieval layout.

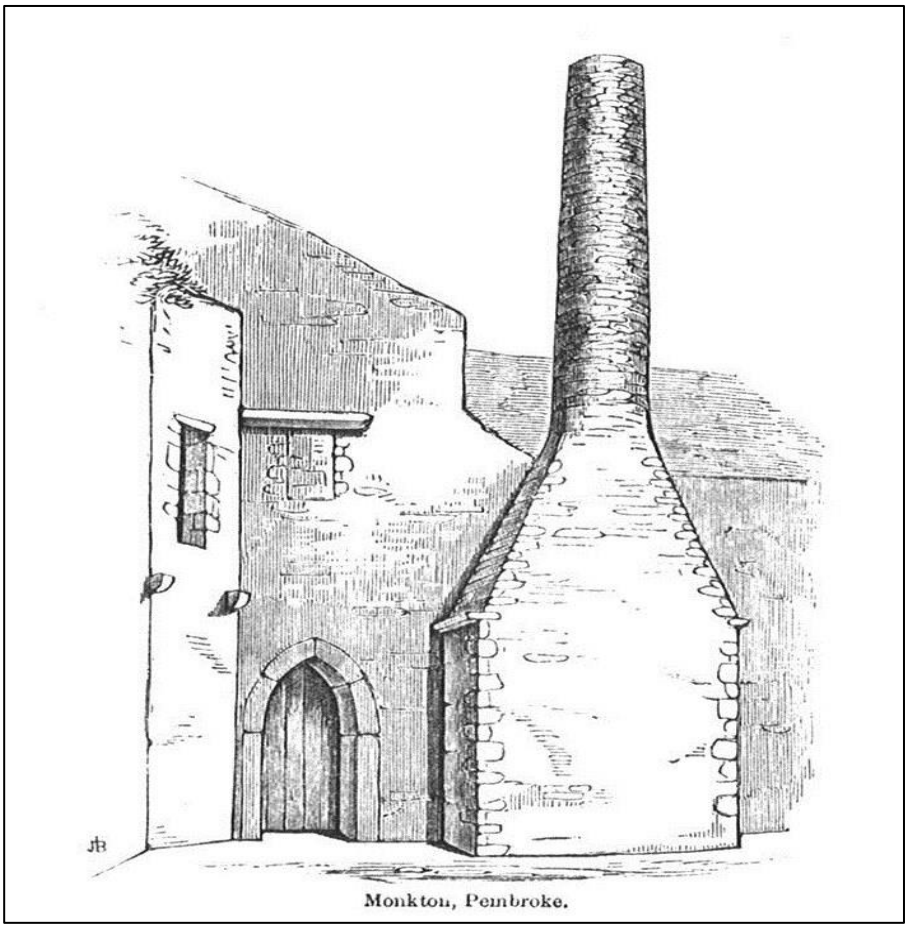
In addition to these alterations, the dates of two rounds of repair are known. One was in 1661 after a Mr Browne had moved out, taking with him a number of pipes, gates and other fixtures. Another was in 1819, shortly after the manor had been bought from the Devereux family by Sir John Owen of Orielton, the sale having taken place in 1814. On this occasion the roof, at least, was renewed, the date having been found on the timbers during a later restoration.

Either the work carried out then was of poor quality, or else no one could subsequently be found to inhabit the building and maintain it properly, because fifty years later, in 1868, the Rev. E.L.Barnwell noted "*its present neglected condition*" in an article in *Archaeologia Cambrensis*. At the time it was used mainly as a workshop. He adds that the dormer windows shown in Parker's illustration of 1853 were no longer there, and that the rear of the building was only approached through a stable, built onto the western end. By then it had also changed hands again, Sir John Owen having sold the manor in 1857 to his neighbour, Sir Thomas Meyrick of Bush.



MONCTON. NO. I.

Engravings *from Domestic Architecture of South Pembrokeshire* EL Barnwell *Archaeologia Cambresis* 3rd Series Vol XIV 1868.



Monkton, Pembroke.

The first restoration

In 1879 the fortunes of the Old Hall at last took a turn for the better, when it was leased to J.R. Cobb. Cobb was by profession a lawyer, but his interests were antiquarian. His keenest enthusiasm was for neglected medieval buildings, of which he wished to see as many as possible restored. Since he was reasonably well-off, he was able to put his ideas on the subject into effect. Pembroke, Manorbier and Caldicot Castles all belonged to him at one time, and owe much of their present appearance to his work of preservation and reconstruction. He was also closely concerned with the restoration of Brecon Cathedral. It was not surprising, therefore, that he should become interested in the Old Hall, standing gauntly on its hill opposite the castle, and clearly in need of attention.

In 1880 he wrote an account of Monkton for *Archaeologia Cambrensis.* After a structural account of the building, he goes on to outline its condition when he found it:

> "*The slated roof, the timbers of which bore the date 1819, had fallen, all the partitions above the vaulting and wooden work had disappeared, the bays of the lower hall were divided by walls, the east window had been converted into a fireplace and flue, and earth and filth had accumulated half way to the roof. The vault of the porch had given way quite recently, that of the north-east limb in more remote times, its further fall being arrested by a pillar of loose stones built underneath, about 10ft by 6ft square. An elder tree two feet in circumference grew in the slender stack, sending its roots down through the masonry to the floor of the lower hall. The (east) wall of the north-eastern limb had bulged very considerably, and*

there was imminent risk of the whole giving way; it is hoped the unsightly modern buttress will preserve it. Of course, there was no authority for this buttress, it was simple necessity".

According to the Royal Commission's *Inventory for Pembrokeshire* of 1925, Mr Cobb "appears to have been a careful and competent observer"; so much so that they quote his account of the building in full, although preferring a 15th-century date for it, and qualifying their approval with the explanation "*the ruin was so extensive that the restoration had to become equally thorough*". In Mr Cobb's own words, the building was "*restored as faithfully as circumstances would admit, though not quite to his satisfaction*".

It is not possible now to tell how much of the stonework he repaired, and how much is earlier work; but all carpentry was renewed - roof, floors, partitions, doors and window frames. The hall and undercroft were reinstated as open spaces. He turned the door in the south wall of the hall back into a window, but then reopened the door at the south end of the cross-passage, to restore the original circulation. On the north-west corner of the hall were the foundations of another wing, which he rebuilt. He presumed it to be medieval from the doors in that corner in the hall and undercroft. He thought that both this and the north-east wing had been added to an existing hall, which was itself added to the undercroft, although possibly as part of the same design.

Once Cobb had completed the restoration of the Old Hall he seems to have handed back responsibility to its owner. No doubt he intended that a tenant, or caretaker, should live in the wing. For the hall, there was to be a more public role: "*as part of the arrangement with the owner it is to be used as a Sunday school, parish library, or other parochial use in connection with the Church of England*".

What actually happened - especially after Cobb's death in 1897 - was that the Old Hall returned to its previous pattern of spasmodic use for parish purposes - even dancing classes were held in the hall at one time - interspersed with periods of neglect and use as a village dump. The undercroft began once again to fill with rubbish. For a few years in the 1920's it became the home of the Vicar, while his Vicarage was being refurbished. Then in 1931 or 1932, it was discovered by a new enthusiast, who was determined to take it on and support its cause.

Monkton in the late 1940s during the restoration by Muriel Thompson. The garden is taking form but the windows are still wooden sashes.

Muriel Thompson's first meal at Monkton in 1933.
The furniture is made from driftwood.

The restoration by Muriel Thompson (later Mrs Bowen)

Muriel Thompson wrote in her Visitors Book on 7th January, 1933, "*took possession of Monkton Old Hall at last*". She had very little money and almost no furniture, but she made up for this by having great energy and strength of character, and an uncompromising devotion to the house she had bought. She spent the next forty years, until her death in 1978, gradually furnishing it, improving it and building a garden around it.

In the first few years she divided her time between Pembrokeshire, where she had previously had a cottage at Linney, and London, where she continued her career as a journalist. As gardening correspondent for Every woman magazine, she was able to earn the money to spend on the Old Hall.

To begin with only essential work and repairs were carried out - plumbing, electricity, gutters and roof, and cleaning out the undercroft. This she always intended to bring into full use; she installed a grand piano and named it the Music Room. The man who did the work for her, John Craggs, was also a furniture dealer, and she bought one or two things from him, such as dressers and chests.

She was always on the look out for furniture massive enough to fit the house, at a price she could afford. Until then she made do with stools to sit on, or makeshift chairs and tables put together from driftwood. She collected this from the beach in a trailer which fixed onto her car, and continued to do so all her life. Later the driftwood furniture was all put together in the undercroft of the north-east wing, known as the Smoke Room.

During the War the Old Hall was occupied by soldiers. Miss Thompson and her friend Miss Hasluck moved back in 1945. Her life there seems to have entered a new stage; she continued to write and to travel (she had lived for periods in Paris and New York) but Monkton now became more permanently her home, and she began to take an interest in local affairs. As she settled in she started to plan alterations to the house. She wanted particularly to remove the sash windows fitted by Cobb, and to replace them with leaded lights. She also wanted to bring more light into the hall, and to give it a fireplace, which it appears to have been without.

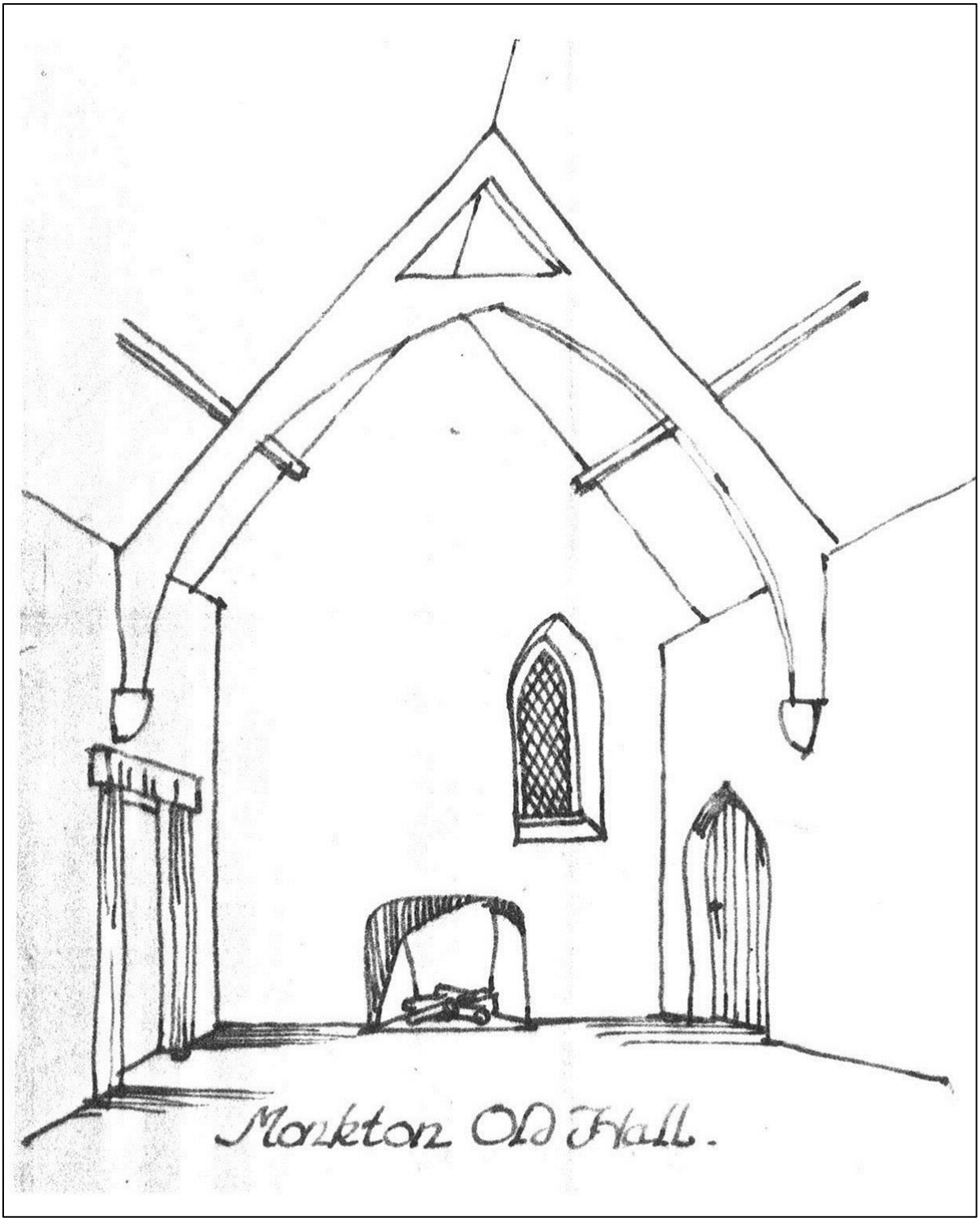
To this end, in 1950, she wrote to the architect Clough Williams-Ellis, asking him to come and look at her "queer old house" and give his advice. His suggestions to make an internal porch so that the cross-passage would be less draughty, and to make a large window at the eastern end of the Music Room to double as a door to the garden, she never carried out, but other work went on over the next three or four years. Although not wholly approving of "your leaded lights" he took great trouble to have them well made, with glass that was not too perfect, and of slightly irregular sizes.

In the hall, he suggested making a new window in the west gable, using the stones of the door surround in the south wall, which Cobb had turned back into a window but left in situ. A new window was put in its place in the centre of the south wall, matching those on either side, both of which were made slightly larger.

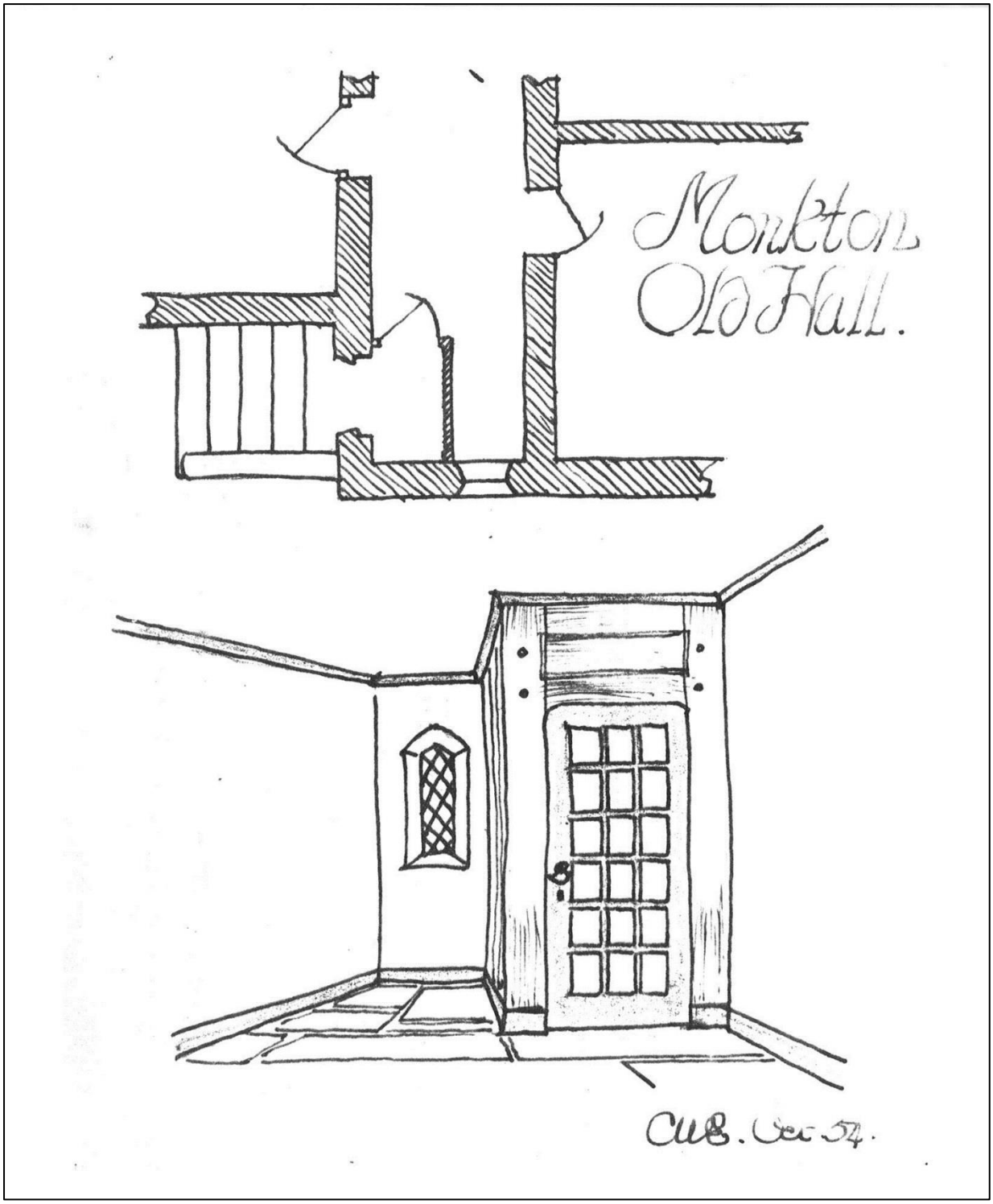
As to the fireplace he wrote:

> *"Unless you have something really one hundred percent appropriate and rather monumental the thing is to have a quite plain hole. I have even done this quite effectively in a Baroque saloon where everything else was highly architectural. It seemed to say "There was a terrific affair here once but it is gone", or alternatively "there is going to be one day when we get around to it"*.

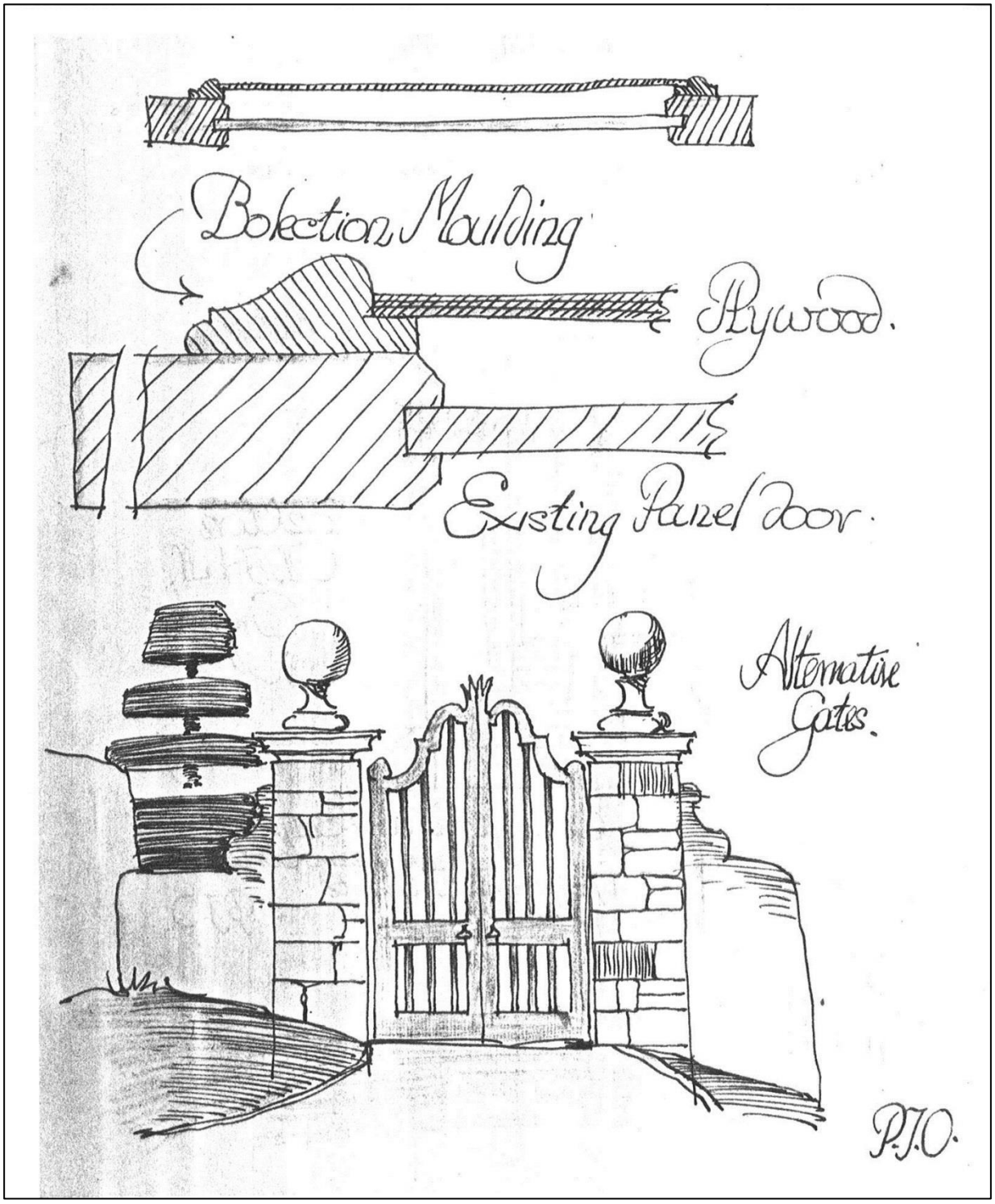
The new fireplace was to go at the west end of the hall, using a chimney added probably in the 18th century. A mason, Hubert Roblin, had been bought back from retirement by Argent's, the building firm, especially to work on the Old Hall. He made a plain mantelpiece from local limestone, and another for the fireplace in the Music Room.



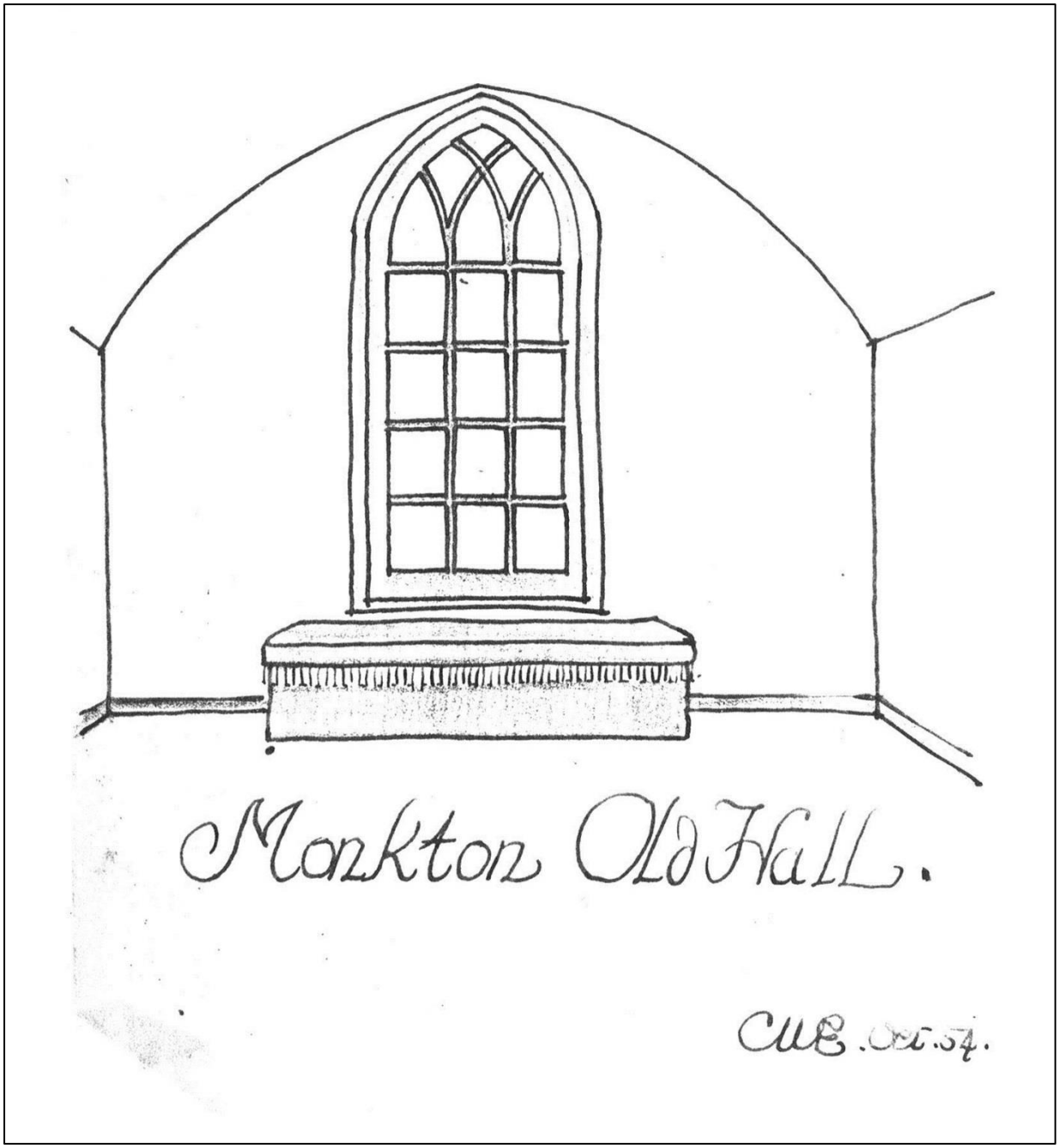
Sketch for the hall by Clough Williams-Ellis.



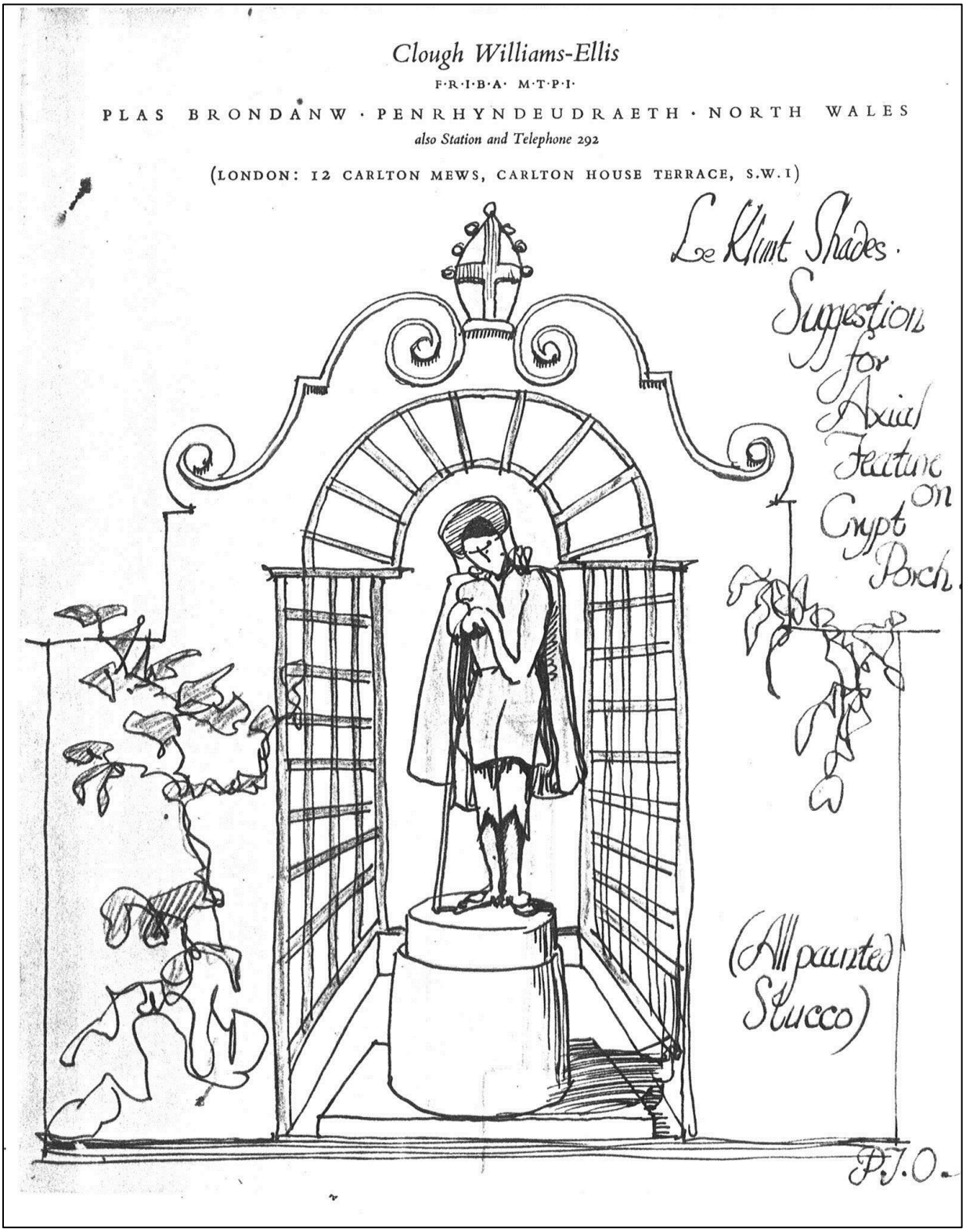
Plan for an internal porch.



Suggested gates for the garden.



An idea for the east end of the music room

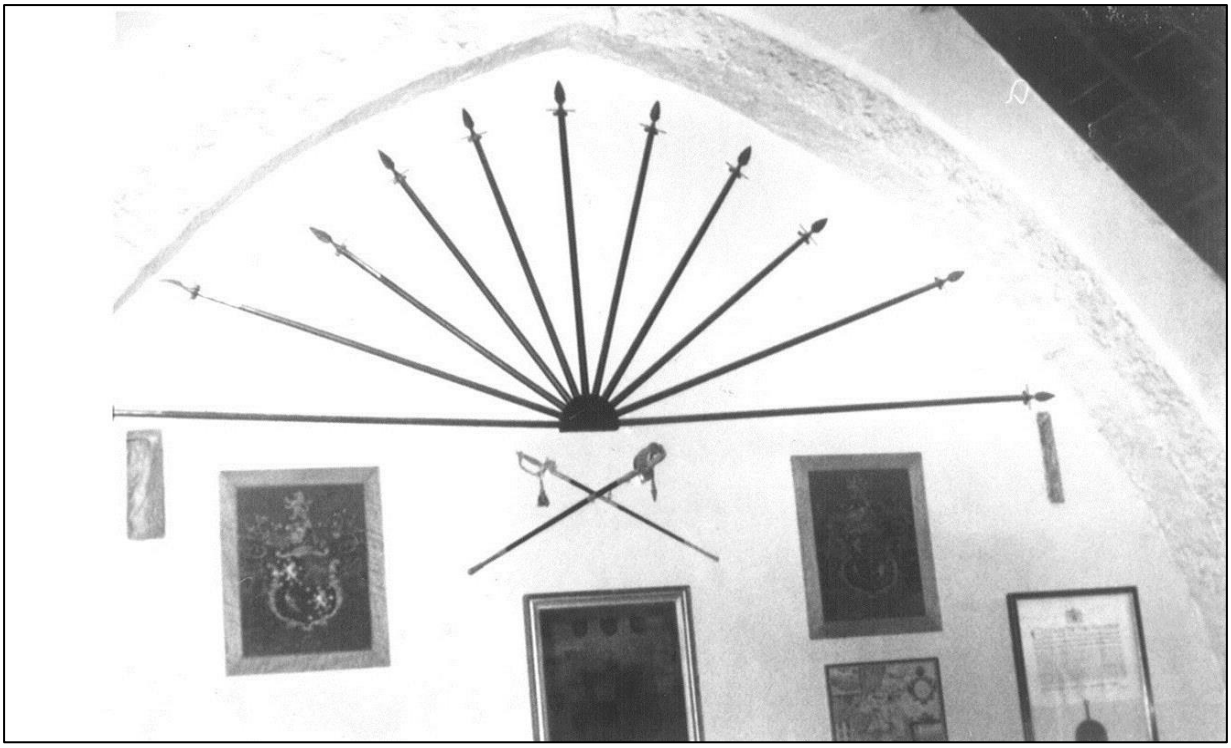


Plans to brighten up the music room.

In all the work she did, Miss Thompson had an inventive and able right-hand man in Mr James, who came to work for her as gardener and odd job man in 1945. His wife also helped in the house and did the cooking. He cleared away six sycamores from around the west end of the house, and laid down the tarmac drive, with the raised border by it. For the path leading to what was then the front door (in the south-east wing), he used paving stones which he had found being thrown away by Council workmen in Pembroke.

When Miss Thompson decided to take up the floor boards in the hall, in order to lay tiles instead, he used the wood to make cupboards around the house. One of these was in Miss Thompson's bedroom, built all along one wall, and entered from either end so that her large four poster bed could stand against its front (this was designed for her by Clough Williams-Ellis). Also in her bedroom, which was on the first floor of the south-east wing, was at that time the large hooded fireplace, known as "Edwardian", from its similarity to those built in Edward I's castles.

In order to stop this fireplace from smoking, Mr James built up the hearth with stones collected from the beach. It then refused to draw. They tried every known method of making it do so, without success; finally one of the builders suggested hanging a chain down the chimney. They did so, and it worked. Miss Thompson opened a bottle of champagne to celebrate, and they all sat down on the end of her bed to drink it.



Staffs of office of Lords Lieutenant of Pembrokeshire belonging to Commodore Bowen's family. Bringing Old Monkton Hall back to life.

In the early 1960s Miss Thompson married Air Commodore Bowen, who was at that time Lord Lieutenant of Pembrokeshire. Several of his ancestors had been Lord Lieutenant before him, and the family had kept their staffs of office. These, and other insignia, were arranged on the end wall of the hall.

Her husband's office gave Mrs Bowen an excuse for even more frequent entertaining. From the beginning it had been her intention, in taking on the Old Hall, to revive its spirit of hospitality; to make it a centre where people could gather and talk and enjoy themselves. The Visitors Books show the house as constantly full, with large families of cousins as well as friends. They all had to write or draw something in the book before they left.

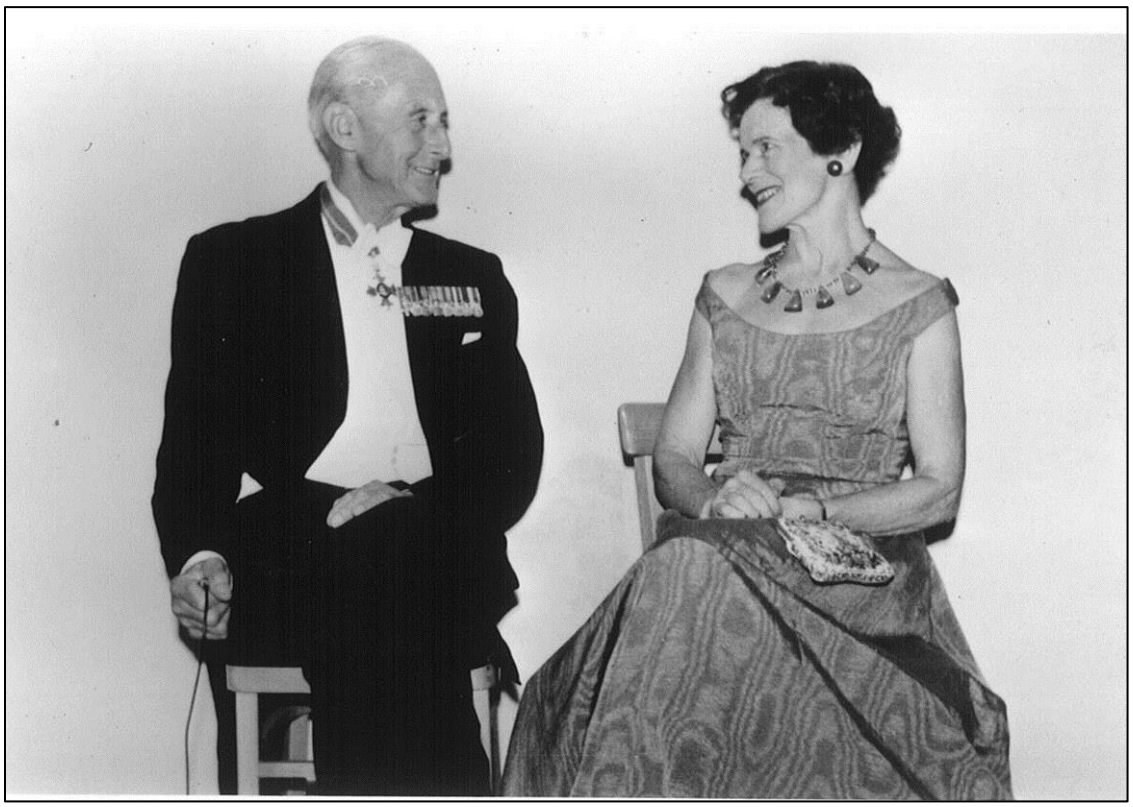
As well as house parties there were lunch and dinner parties, children's parties for her god-daughter, and most lavish of all the annual Christmas parties. A large tree would be put up in the hall, and covered with decorations. These, like her Christmas cards, she often made herself; there were twelve new things every year, so that by the end of her life they could hardly all be fitted on. The whole house would be garlanded with greenery, in addition to her usual flower arrangements. When the candles on the tree had been lit, everyone would go down to the Music Room, where local children would ring hand bells, and the church choir would sing.

The long, terraced garden is very much part of Monkton's special character. Creepers and climbing roses softened the walls of the house; herbaceous borders flourished in the shelter of the walled garden, providing an interlude before the dramatic views of the castle, for which a small formal garden provides the foreground. The garden was continually growing and developing, with new varieties of plants and new combinations of colour. Mrs Bowen had planned to

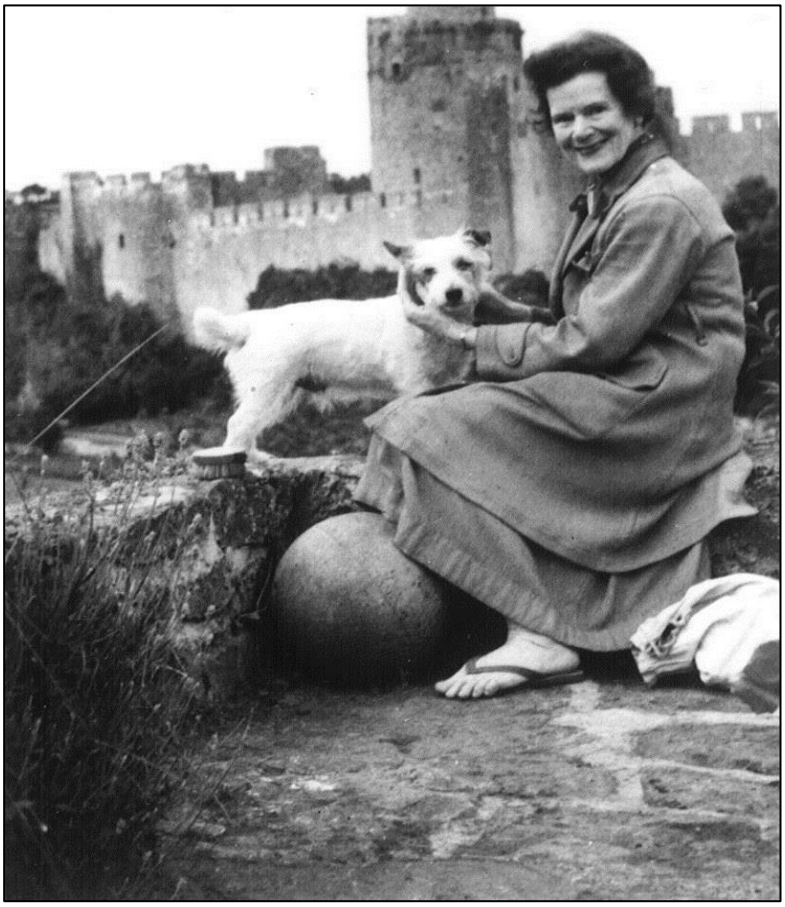
put a glass door, with heavy glazing bars, at the north end of the passage, so that when she was too old to go out in winter (in the summer the door was usually open anyway), she could still see it all. In fact she remained so active, and agile, until the end of her life that it never had to be done.

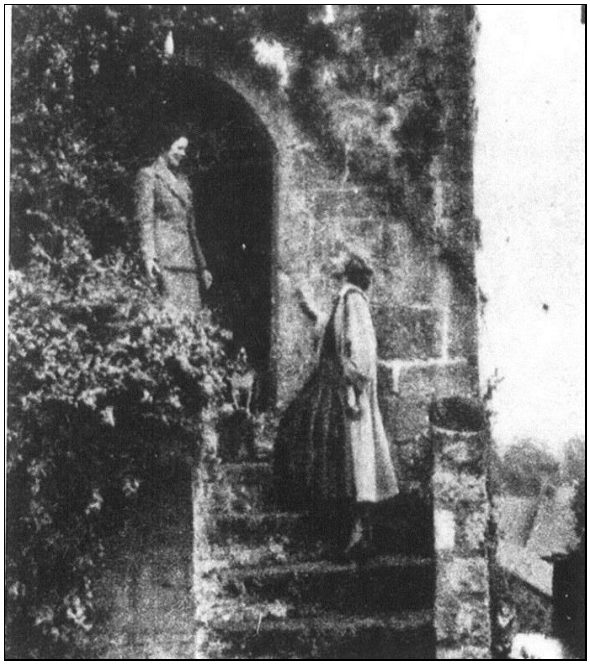
Mrs Bowen's ambition was to bring Monkton Old Hall back to life, and to see it restored to a prominent place in the social framework of the county. To have done this so well, entirely through her own efforts and with no money behind her, was a remarkable achievement. It was also perhaps one which could only have succeeded so fully in the years before and just after the War.

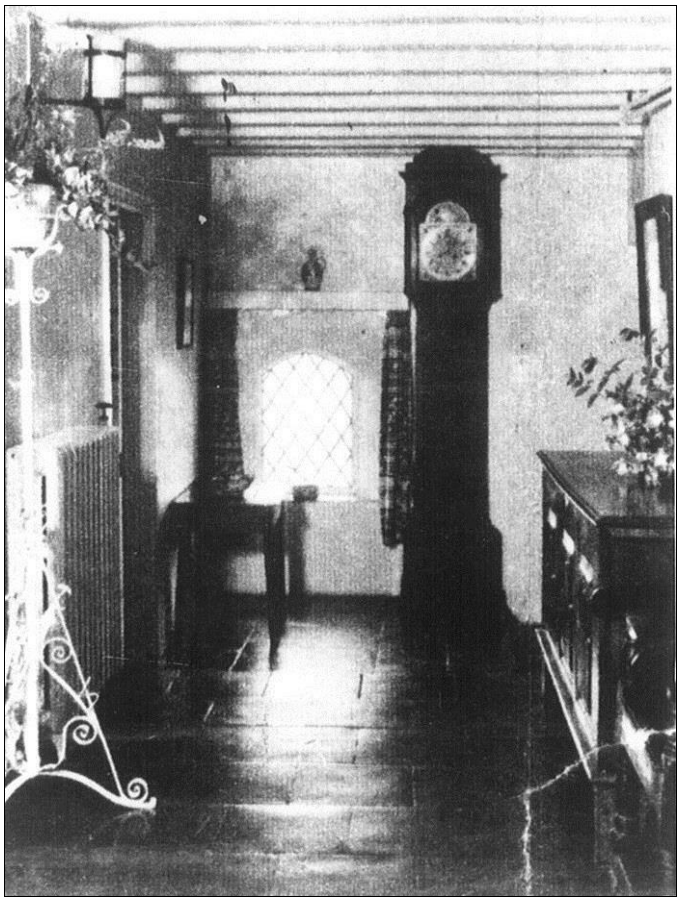
Such an ambitious undertaking always requires a very individual, and seldom repeatable, vision and dedication to carry it through; today in addition to this, building and most other costs being so much higher than they were fifty years ago, it also demands the ability, and opportunity, to earn a substantial living in a remote place. (This perhaps is becoming more possible again, with the advent of high- technology communications). Sadly, therefore, it is rare for such places to continue for a second generation. However, by leaving the Old Hall to her god-daughter Cheryl Campbell, who comes from an old Pembrokeshire family, and is married to an architect with a wide knowledge and experience of historic buildings, Mrs Bowen ensured that a great deal of thought and care would be given to securing its future.



Air Commodore and Mrs Bowen (he is taking the picture).



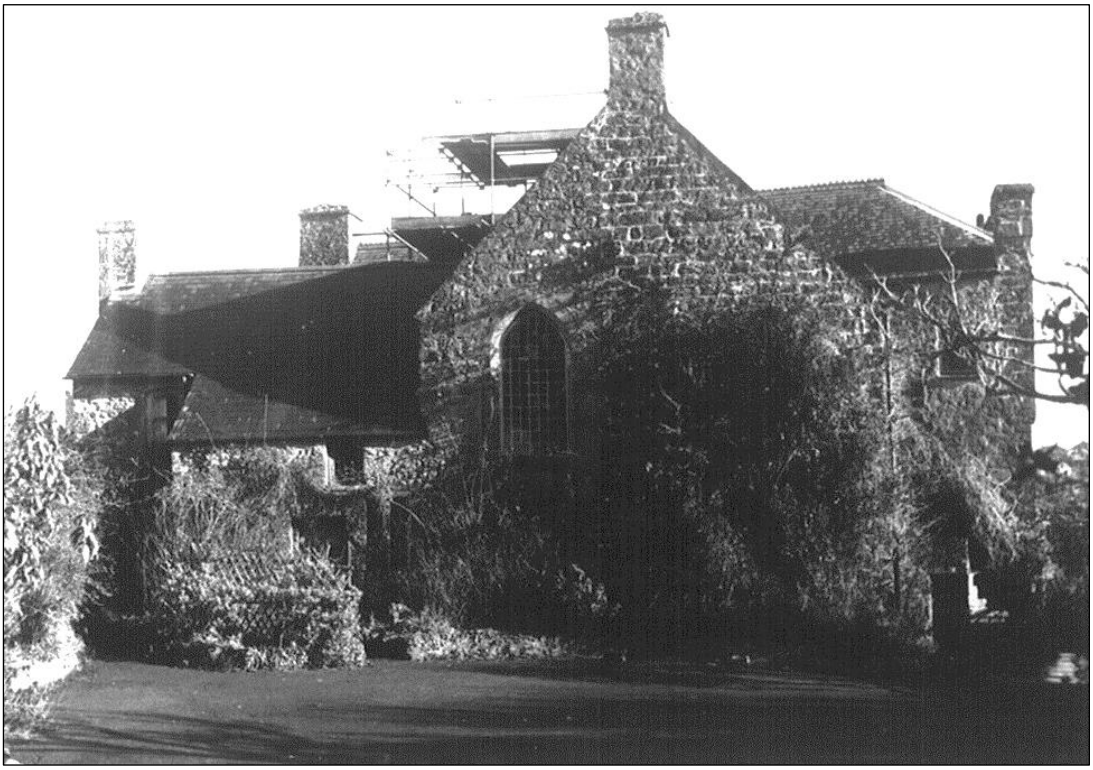




Photographs from an article about Mrs Bowen's house in Everywoman magazine that appeared in the 1950s.

Mrs Bowen's bedroom [above] and the music room [below].

Demolished north west wing form the courtyard.



View from the west, with the demolished wing on the left and the former entrance into the SE wing on the right.

Work carried out by the Landmark Trust

The solution arrived at by Mrs Campbell was to sell Monkton Old Hall in 1979 to the Landmark Trust. The house would in this way continue to be enjoyed by a constant flow of different people, and would at the same time be earning an income to pay for its maintenance. Before anyone could stay there, however, it was necessary for Landmark to make some alterations, to adapt the house for its new use; and to carry out repairs that Mrs Bowen had not been able to do. To supervise this work, the architect Lionel Beddall-Smith was appointed; and Argent's, the firm that worked at Monkton in the 1950's, was employed to carry it out.

The most urgent job was the eradication of dry rot. This had started in, and spread throughout, Cobb's north-west wing, and was beginning to spread further into the north wall of the hall, and the roof timbers. Since the cost of reinstating the wing would have been enormous, and the accommodation that it contained was not in fact needed, the decision was made to demolish it altogether. The two doors connecting it with the main building were blocked up, but the medieval dressings were left exposed on the inside. To keep the feeling of a sheltered and enclosed courtyard on this side of the house, a new wall was built out from the corner of the hall in its place.

The roof was stripped of its slates, some of which were broken; any timbers that were decayed or affected by dry rot were replaced, and the slates refixed, their numbers being made up from the roof of the demolished wing.

For some years there had been concern about the round chimney, which was now leaning inwards over the roof, as well as to the side, which it had probably

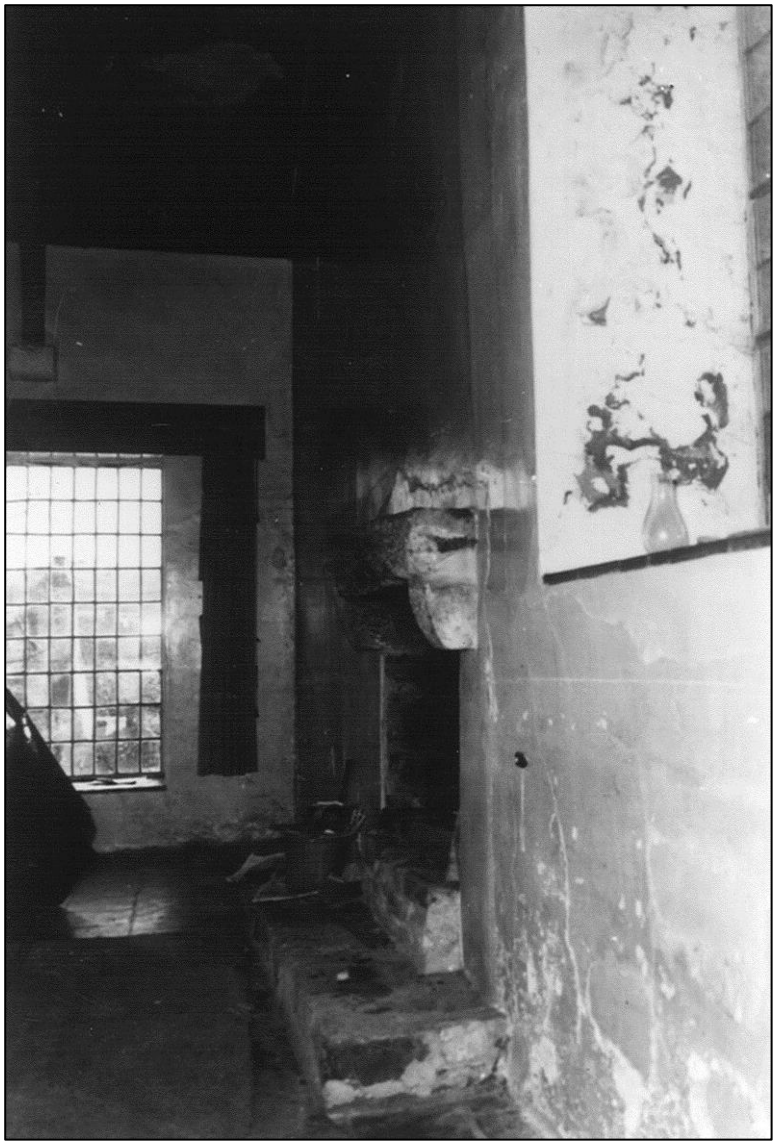
always done. This was because the wall beneath had at some time been rebuilt with inferior masonry and was not strong enough to support the weight. It was possible that it would lean no further, but it was more likely that the point of collapse would be reached before long. The chimney was taken down, a concrete spreader inserted in the wall below to distribute the weight more evenly, and the whole faithfully and carefully rebuilt.

Small repairs were carried out to the other chimneys, and some areas of wall repointed and repaired, using local stone. Repairs to the south-east wing were more extensive. The upper half of its south elevation (overhanging the road) was leaning outwards, because of the weight of the big fireplace within it, which the wall was too thin to bear. The wall was taken down to the level of the corbels, the stones all being numbered so that they could be rebuilt in exactly the same order, but this time to the vertical. Three small chimneys on the parapet were not reconstructed, since they made the roofline fussy and were, in any case, later additions which were no longer of any use. To prevent the problem recurring, the great fireplace had been removed, for re-use elsewhere in the house.

Damp had been getting through this wall as well, and on the main floor had rotted the internal lintel of Cobb's entrance door at the south-west corner of the cross-passage. Partly because the main entrance was to be transferred to the north side, and partly to prevent drafts and the rain from getting in, this door was blocked, and the steps leading up to it removed. The medieval stones have been left visible. Then, in order to make the south wall completely damp-proof, an inner skin was built, with a cavity between it and the outer wall.

The same was done at the west end of the hall, not only to keep out damp, but also to make the wall thick enough to take the great fireplace, which was to be

inserted there. If this fireplace came from the hall in the first place (it might have come from another building entirely), it would have been on the north wall. However, the flues there had been altered to serve the fireplace in the undercroft, so it seemed to make better sense to use the opening made by Mrs Bowen in the west wall.



The west end of the hall, with the fireplace inserted by Mrs Bowen.

The former front door in the south east wing. You can see damp penetrating the walls causing damage to the plaster

Apart from moving the fireplace, and fitting a kitchen into Mrs Bowen's small dining room, little was done to the interior apart from general refurbishment and redecoration. The heating system and the wiring were renewed, and where necessary the walls were replastered, before limewashing. The paint on the woodwork is one normally used for the hulls of ships; it is a zinc chromate, and just the right shade of "William Burges" red. The outer doors, and that opening into the hall, were renewed, all in plain oak. Iron door furniture came from redundant Victorian churches at Warren and Castlebythe.

Mrs Bowen's bedroom with the "Edwardian" fireplace which was then moved to the hall.

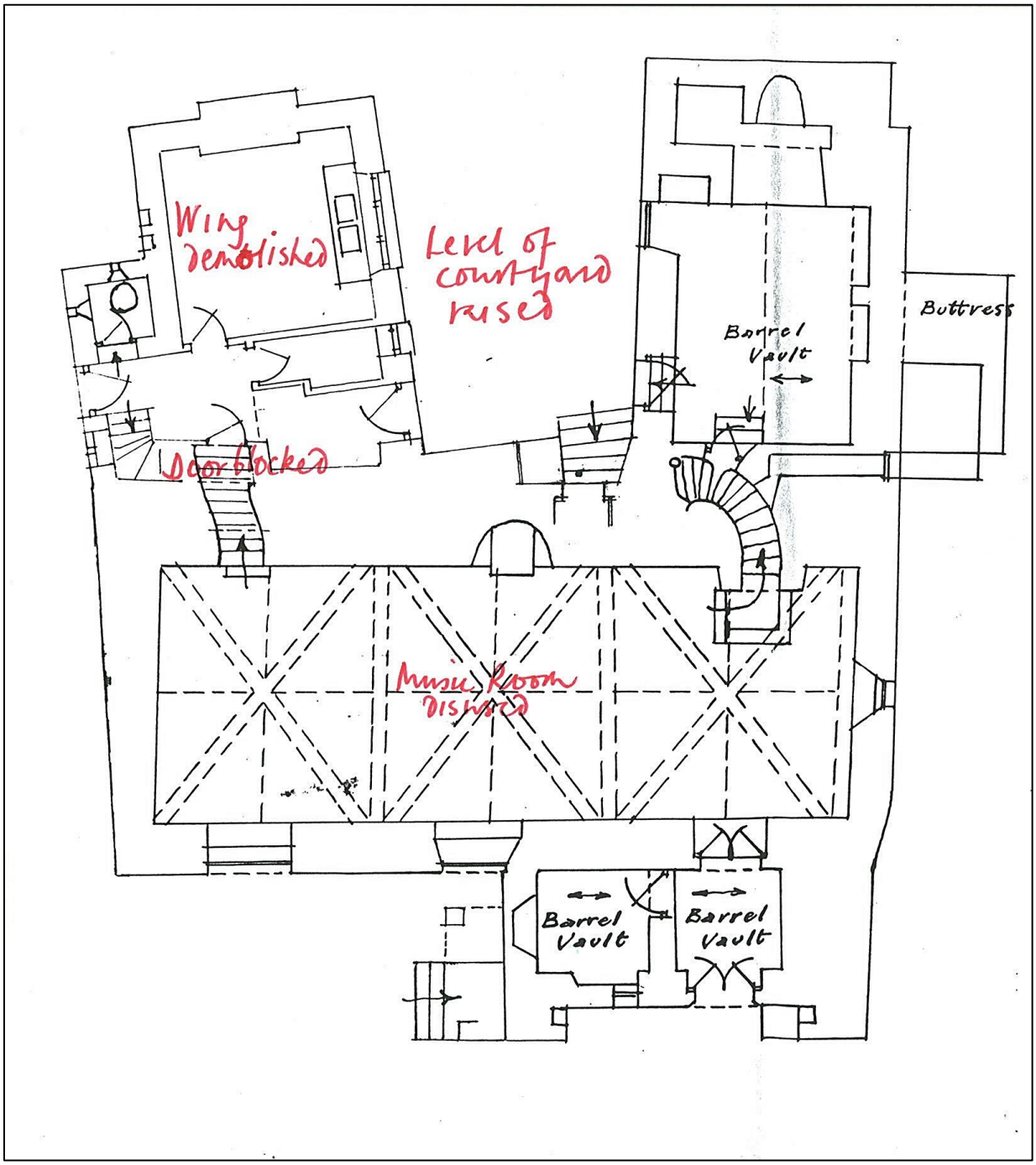
Some of the furniture in the house belonged to Mrs Bowen, and has been lent to the Landmark by Mrs Campbell: the table in the hall; the iron standard lamps (made by a local blacksmith); and the four-poster bed. This had to be enlarged to fit a modern-sized mattress, but its former canopy, painted with the sun and moons, hangs in the hall. The small stone owl was carved by Mrs Bowen's nephew, the sculptor Alan Best.

Outside, on the north side, the courtyard was enlarged by the removal of some 19th-century potting sheds. The level has been raised by about two feet, to bring it nearer to the main floor of the house. The paving stones are blue pennant, from the Blue Anchor Quarry at Penclawdd near Swansea. The external steps are mostly Carmarthen "black" limestone, recovered from Stackpole, a demolished Victorian house.

Demolished potting sheds.

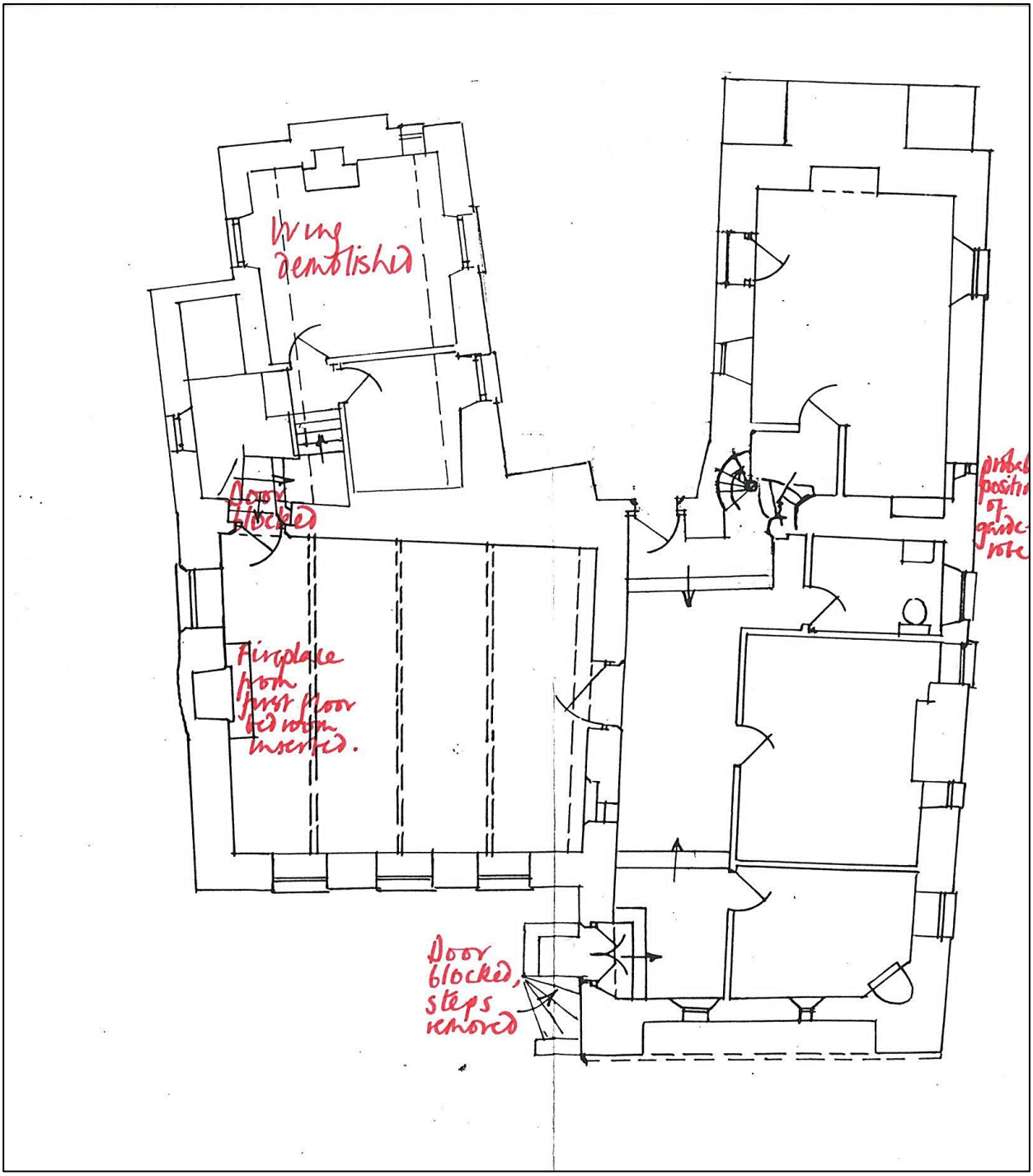
No attempt was made to fully restore Mrs Bowen's garden, for without her skill and dedication this would be impossible, but thanks to the hard work of Mr James, its shape has been retained, particularly in the viewing place at the end.

An Open Day for local people was held at the Old Hall on St David's Day, 1989. It was notable how many of those who came had vivid memories of the parties held in the house, remembering especially the Christmas tree, the carols, and the hand-bells, which some of them had rung. It is a house which has a strong appeal for children, which is just as it should be, because its character is in some way fundamental. Those who care for the Old Hall can look forward to its future with reasonable confidence, seeing it securely established within the tradition of hospitality for which it was built.

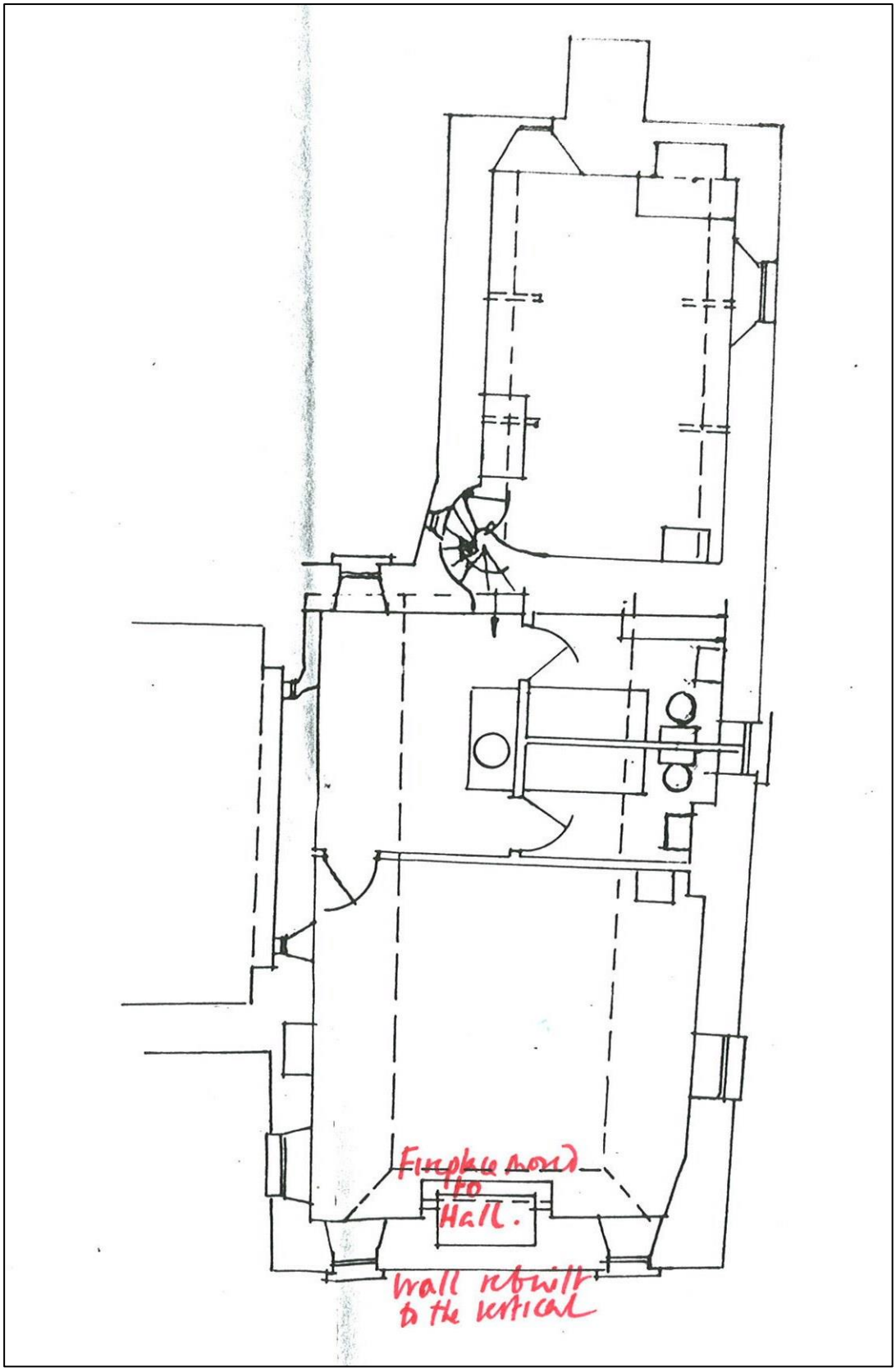


Lower Floor

Monkton Old Hall in 1979 before work was carried out by Landmark.



Ground Floor



First floor

Annexes

Extracts from *Everywoman* magazine, articles by Miss Thompson

A brief history of the ancient priory church of St Nicholas & St John, Monkton

Register of Parks and Gardens in Wales for Monkton Old Hall and Vicarage

Gardener's Log

JULY

IF July finds your mixed borders suffering from between seasons dullness, make a note *now* how this can be avoided next year—either by skilful use of annuals, or by adding a few July and August flowering plants to bridge the gap between spring flowers and dahlias.

FIRST WEEK: Make a further sowing of carrots this week. Choose the quick growing short horn varieties, which will have time to grow to a useful size before they are checked by cold weather.

Colewort is a hardy type of cabbage—a very useful stopgap when other cabbages are scarce. A sowing now should provide you with green vegetable from October to Christmas, and if you sow Hardy Green Colewort next month, that should help to give you vegetables during the later weeks of winter. Sow thinly in one inch drills and prick out as you have space available after the seedlings have made their third leaf.

Increase double arabis by cuttings—this pretty plant cannot be grown from seed, but cuttings strike readily if put in moist sandy soil at this time of year and kept shaded.

Strawberries can be layered now. Choose a parent plant that has fruited well. Don't allow more than four runners to a plant. A bit of turf turned grass side down makes an excellent rooting place for a runner.

SECOND WEEK: Spinach beet or perpetual spinach is a vegetable you should sow now. Sow the seed straightaway in its permanent bed instead of in a seed bed. If you are planning to have more than one row, keep them 18 ins. apart. The plants should eventually stand not less than 6 ins. from each other. Sown now, this vegetable should provide you with leaves to pick during a long period of the winter.

Don't forget to sow another pinch of lettuce seed. This should be done every second week. And remember that cos lettuce does better than cabbace lettuce on heavy soils.

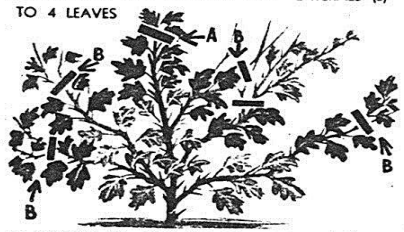
Don't sow any more radishes now until the hottest weeks of summer are over.

When summer pruning, remember that your main object is to urge your fruit trees and bushes to grow the way you wish, and to produce an abundance of fruit, rather than leafy growth, in the places you choose. That is why laterals are nipped back to encourage fruit spurs to be formed near to the strong main branches instead of at the ends of weak twigs.

All spent roses should be removed, and the branches that have flowered should be cut back to suitable outward-pointing buds. If you remember to prune every time you cut your roses you will be rewarded by much better crops of flowers later.

SPECIAL JOB — **SUMMER PRUNING**

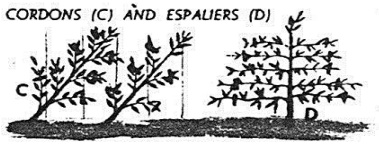
GOOSEBERRIES: 1 SHORTEN LEADERS (A) TO 6 LEAVES OF NEW GROWTH AND LATERALS (B) TO 4 LEAVES



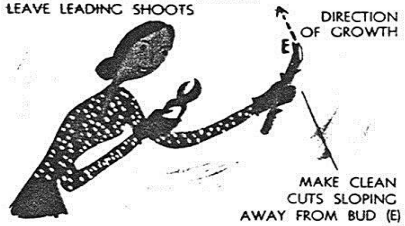
2 REMOVE ALL GROWTHS ROUND ROOTS ★

RED AND WHITE CURRANTS, BUSH AND PYRAMID APPLES AND PEARS: SHORTEN LEADING SHOOTS TO 6 LEAVES, LATERALS TO 4 LEAVES

CORDONS (C) AND ESPALIERS (D)



SHORTEN LATERALS TO 4 LEAVES
LEAVE LEADING SHOOTS



THIRD WEEK: If you have semi-trailing flowers in your borders, such as petunias, verbenas or phlox drumondii, don't leave them to be tossed about by the wind, but peg them carefully down so that the flowers will cover the largest area and show to the best advantage. Pegging down can be just as effective as propping up!

Look out for mildew on grape vines in greenhouses. Dust flowers of sulphur over infected leaves at first sign of trouble.

Mulch the roots of loganberries and raspberries. Keep loganberry growths tied back to prevent wind damage.

Leek seedlings should now be transplanted to their permanent bed. A good plan is to make furrows for them 4 ins. deep and at least 15 ins. apart. Bore a hole for each seedling in these furrows. Keep the holes 9 ins. apart, and make them deep enough for a seedling to be dropped in up to its first pair of leaves. Pour water into each hole to settle the soil round the leek. The tips of the leaves should be trimmed off before the seedlings are planted.

It's important to use *both* hands when picking peas and beans—the haulms are often ruined by careless picking.

Young turnips can be helped enormously by regular watering every evening. This checks pests that attack seed leaves in dry weather.

FOURTH WEEK: Some very useful kitchen vegetables can be grown in a kitchen window box. Stick to herbs and saladings as the best use of such a space. I suggest parsley, chives, lettuce, sorrel, thyme for a start, with a little mint in the solitary confinement of a flower pot to keep it from trespassing! Mustard and cress do quite well in the shade. Remember to sow cress two or three days earlier than mustard if you wish to cut them at the same time.

Dwarf French beans can be sown outside now for a late summer crop.

Keep the hoe busy—both to remove weeds and to loosen the surface soil.

Give a light mulch—lawn mowings will do—to shallow-rooted plants such as herbaceous phloxes. Roses root near the surface, too, so a mulch will help to keep the roots moist.

Try some cuttings of fuchsias and hydrangeas this week. Use flowerless shoots, remove the lower leaves, and plant them firmly in sandy compost—either in separate pots or round the edge of a large pot.

As you finish picking from black currant bushes, remove any old wood that will not be wanted for next year's crop. Fruit will be borne next year on this season's new whips as well as on what sound old wood is left.

MURIEL THOMSON, F.R.H.S.

part-time gardening

IF Christmas week gives your household a little free time and they feel like exercise, there is plenty to be had in the garden. Unaccustomed backs will find even half an hour's continuous digging quite hard work. And you should certainly use any surplus labour you may have available for rolling the lawn. This is the best time of year for this work—unless the ground is hard from frost. Have it rolled as often as you can, both lengthwise and across. The roller should be moved very slowly. It cannot do its job properly if it is raced over the surface.

A less active job, but an important one, is hunting down hibernating snails and destroying them. Whole colonies can often be found behind clumps of creepers or wall plants, or in the crevices of stone walls. If you dislike treading on them, drop them into a jar of salty water.

Pruning. Now your gooseberry bushes should have their winter pruning. Keep the centres of the bushes free. Remove very old and deformed branches. Cut back laterals to an inch from their base and the leading shoots to eight inches. Young bushes require very little pruning.

If you have an asparagus bed, cut away all the tops of the plants now, and manure the soil.

There are even seeds that can be sown now. Broad beans can be sown in the open, but choose a strip in a sunny border if you want early results. And don't attempt to sow seed when the ground is waterlogged or frozen hard. Choose a fine dry day when the soil is workable. The beans should be three inches deep and six inches apart.

Cold frame. If you have a cold frame you will find it well worth while to sow a pinch of lettuce seed. With a little care you can get a crop several weeks earlier by sowing now than by sowing next month. And if you have any seedlings in a greenhouse or in frames, give them plenty of ventilation during mild spells, but see that they have adequate protection from cold. Frames and windows should be closed early during these short days before dusk has fallen.

Consult your Gardening Expert about YOUR garden. Write to her c/o WOMAN, 6, Catherine Street, W.C.2, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope for her reply

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Gardener's Log

MARCH

HOWEVER lion-like the advent of March, every gardener knows that winter is now definitely behind and spring is only round the next corner—so seeds will be sprinkled in happy frenzy in seed boxes and borders.

FIRST WEEK: Be sure the soil for seeds is properly prepared and the site carefully chosen. Work the soil in seed boxes with your fingers so as to break up every lump—just as carefully as if it were flour for pastry or cake. A little sand mixed with surface soil is always a help. Moisten soil well *before* sowing, and then keep shaded until growth has begun.

Heavy watering washes seeds into huddled clumps and seriously injures little seedlings. When possible dip seed boxes and pots into water for an instant so that moisture can seep up without disturbing the baby plants. A very fine spray should be used for top watering.

Sow zinnias and dahlias without delay in slight warmth. Zinnias are only annuals, and their lovely flowers fall to the first frost, so an early start is essential if you are to enjoy them for a matter of weeks. Dahlias are herbaceous perennials, so this year's plants should, with reasonable care, continue to flower for many years—but you won't get flowers *this* year unless you sow early.

SECOND WEEK: Most vegetable seeds can be sown outdoors now, but do sow thinly. It is a terrible waste of seed, of time and of plant life to let seedlings begin in a huddle.

Sow peas and beans singly—three inches apart for peas and six for beans—arranging rows if possible to run north and south. Pests can be deterred from feasting on this good food if the peas and beans are first dipped in paraffin and then rolled in red lead.

Sow parsley—not too far from the kitchen door! And sow a pinch of lettuce seed.

Hardy annual flowers such as marigolds, candytuft, poppies and clarkia can be sown thinly where they are to grow. Mark all such sowings carefully to avoid confusion later. Sow petunias and antirrhinums in seed boxes.

Cut back winter flowering shrubs such as jasmine, hammamelis mollis, lonicera fragrantissima, pernettyas and climbing roses. Shorten back all young fruit trees which were planted last autumn.

THIRD WEEK: Chrysanthemum cuttings can still be taken. Watch established cuttings carefully and move them progressively into larger pots as their roots demand it. A cool frame is the best place for them at this time of year.

Short cuttings can now be taken of delphiniums and herbaceous lupins. This is a good way to increase stocks of favourites—but it must be done before the stems become hollow.

Plant out seedlings of Brussels sprouts, spring cabbages and cauliflowers as soon as they are big enough to handle.

Autumn-sown onions should be ready to plant out in rich, well-worked soil. To flatten the surface soil of an onion bed fasten flat pieces of wood on to the soles of shoes and tread systematically.

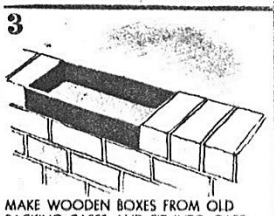
Spray gooseberry bushes now to ward off attacks of mildew and scale.

SPECIAL JOB — **TRIMMING WALL-TOPS**

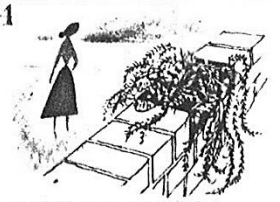
FLOWERS GROWING NATURALLY ON WALLS

1 ARE ATTRACTIVE BUT VERY DESTRUCTIVE TO MASONRY

2 REMOVE LOOSE COPING STONES AND WATERPROOF SURFACE WITH CEMENT



3 MAKE WOODEN BOXES FROM OLD PACKING CASES AND FIT INTO GAPS, CREOSOTE WOOD SURFACES



1 USE BOXES FOR SUITABLE PLANTS WHICH CAN NOW GROW HARMLESSLY

Use one part lime-sulphur to twelve parts water. Peaches and nectarines with a tendency to leaf-curl need spraying with a copper sulphate mixture—Bordeaux or Burgundy mixture can be bought for this purpose.

FOURTH WEEK: Lady Day was set aside by gardeners of a generation ago for pruning bush roses. It still seems a good date to choose, but opinions differ widely today as to how severely roses should be pruned. It is a safe rule to cut out all dead wood and the blackened tips of shoots. Always cut to a bud pointing in the direction in which you wish a shoot to grow. Weak growth should be removed to encourage strong new shoots, but vigorous bushes don't need much pruning.

Get ahead with potato planting. The best tubers have dark green sprouts about an inch long. Rub off all but two sprouts for best results in quality *and* quantity. Beds of first early potatoes should be kept well hoed. Be ready with protective litter to spread over them if there is a frost warning. Replant the mint bed, putting rooted shoots six inches apart.

MURIEL THOMSON, F.R.H.S.

Mother's Nursery Food

IT'S EVERY BIT as important to be a good manager in the garden as it is to manage housekeeping. Even a small strip can be made really productive if it is treated methodically and a wise proportion given to each crop.

I am assuming that your garden is twenty feet long by fifteen feet wide, and that you are a busy woman without much time for fancy gardening. I think you would be wise to concentrate on green vegetables and not bother about potatoes or other roots. Your small garden won't be big enough for a year's supply of everything, so it's much better to buy root vegetables, which don't spoil with keeping, from the greengrocer, and gather your green vegetables fresh from your own garden as you want them. You could grow half a dozen different green vegetables in your little garden, and also have space for successional crops of saladings and for a root of chives.

One of the most serious problems of wartime gardening is getting proper food or fertilizers for the soil. You can help to solve this by making your own. This can be done in two ways—your compost heap, which should have a permanent corner to itself, and your occasional bonfire.

All dead leaves and soft vegetable refuse should be piled on your compost heap. This rubbish will rot down till it is almost as good as farmyard manure for your garden. And you will be wise to sprinkle your heap from time to time with one of the chemical products on the market which hasten this rotting process.

On your bonfire you should burn any roots, twigs, or more solid and woody rubbish that would take a long while to decompose. The ash from the bonfire is rich in potash—which is a most necessary food for your garden, but one you cannot easily buy in wartime. So scatter the ash where you want it as soon as the fire has burned out. Weather very quickly carries the valuable salts down into the soil, so make your bonfire on garden soil, not on a corner of your path—and remember that there is very little goodness left in ash which has lain about for days.

Supplies of chemicals for fertilizers are so uncertain this year that I daren't advise them by name, but suggest that you buy proprietary brands—there are still several good ones on the market.

If you look at the two garden plans, you will see that a strip has been cut off one end to allow space for a permanent compost heap, a seed bed and a few herbs. Having done this, you should decide what crops you mean to raise and divide the rest of your garden between them. During the summer months you must devote a good deal of space to half-grown seedlings which will later provide your winter harvest. Here are some hints for the crops on the plans.

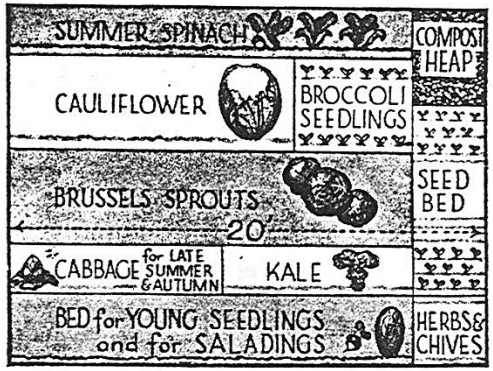
Summer Spinach should be sown right away, and it is best sown in its permanent bed. Draw drills 1 in. deep and sow the seeds very thinly. When the seedlings are 2 in. high you can start thinning, and your thinnings will make delicious soup. Continue taking out alternate plants every few days until the plants stand a foot apart. You should be able to begin gathering leaves in June.

Winter Spinach should be sown from August onwards. The treatment is the same as for summer spinach. All spinach needs rich, well-manured ground and plenty of water in dry weather.

Cauliflower and Broccoli are so similar that I will deal with them together. The crops resemble each other very much, but cauliflowers are more delicate in flavour and in constitution than broccoli, and are better for summer use—while the hardy broccoli comes into its own during the winter months. Both like good soil, and the seed should be started in your seed bed. Sow cauliflower seed now, but you need not sow broccoli until the middle of next month. Make drills ¾ in. deep and 6 in. apart. When the seedlings are big enough to handle, prick them out 6 in. apart and transfer them to their permanent quarters as the land becomes available. They should stand 2 ft. apart to complete their growth. When you are transplanting the broccoli

Garden

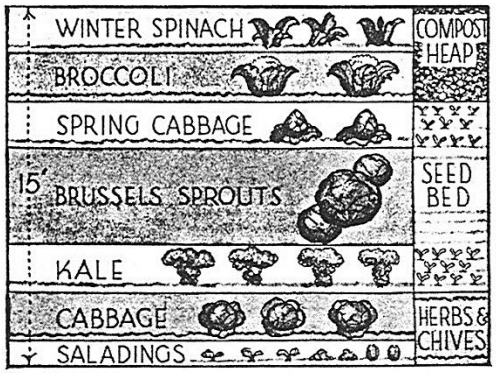
Here is a simple cropping plan to make a small vegetable garden yield valuable greens for the table all the year round, without using up very much of your time



Summer Garden Plan

Every good garden has its seed bed and compost heap for use all the year round. Crops should succeed each other so that the ground is kept busy all the time

Here is your garden in the second half of the year when winter spinach has taken the place of summer spinach and the later vegetables have been planted out



Winter Garden Plan

THE ANCIENT PRIORY CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS & ST JOHN, MONKTON.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The ridge of land on which the town of Pembroke now stands had, both north and south of it, a tidal inlet extending a mile-and-a-half eastward of the present castle ruins. The western end of this peninsular was strengthened by defence works, which comprised three dirches and vallums accross it from shore to shore. Across the southern tidal inlet on the land now occupied by part of Monkton, was a still larger earthwork. Inside this Monkton earthwork, a church and some monastic buildings were established in the early centuries of the Christian era. Just how long these buildings had existed before the arrival of the Normans it is impossible to say, but about A.D. 1090 Arnulph Montgomery came and occupied this Monkton earthwork. The Welsh are said to have attacked it in A.D. 1092 and again in 1094, but without any success, so the earthwork must have been a very strong defence. In A.D. 1098 Arnulph Montgomery was so well established in the district, that he made a gift of the Church of St Nicholas, 'within his castle' to the Abbey of Seez in Normandy. The north side of the nave of the present church, supported outside by buttresses, is still the original wall of the nave of the ancient church of St Nicholas. The last Prior was William Waren, who ruled in 1534.

In 1436 Henry VII was born in Pembroke Castle, and as a boy was sent to the Priory to be brought up and educated by the Benedictine monks. He remained here until his teens. When Cromwell besieged Pembroke Castle in 1648, he placed a battery of cannon at Monkton, some say in the paddock alongside the present Vicarage. The then Curate-in-charge refused to leave his home and preferred the dangers and the noise! He was invited by Cromwell after the siege to preach to the officers of his army.

Since the dissolution of the monasteries, the state of the Priory Church gradually deteriorated until there remained only the long narrow nave, which was the old place of worship for the parishioners. The Choir and Sanctuary became a roofless ruin. The large west window was lost, and the beautiful geometric windows on the South side were blocked up (two still remain blocked). The arch where the lecturn and pulpit now stand was bricked up, and the rich canopied tomb of Purbeck marble (early 16th century) was placed against the wall. This tomb is now in the North wall of the Sanctuary. It was in this condition, and worse, that the Reverend David Bowen found his Parish Church when he came to be Vicar of Monkton in 1877. He gave his life to the work of restoration, and was Vicar of this parish until 1926 - for nearly fifty years. A tablet erected to his memory on the North Wall of the Chancel has these latin words on it: 'Si quaeris Monumentum Circumspice' - that is, 'If you are looking for his memorial, look around you.'

THE CHURCH TODAY

In restoration, the floor level of the porch was lowered a couple of feet, and in doing this, the large stone slab, which probably for centuries had done duty as a door step, on being turned over, proved to be the effigy of someone, no doubt a former Prior. This newly-discovered effigy is now to be seen in a recess in the South wall of the Chancel, whilst in the North wall recess in the Sanctuary another effigy is to be seen, being either that of a Crusader or of a patron of the Church. This effigy was also found in the floor of the Porch. Over the present Porch there used to be a room called a 'Parvisse', and was opened at the restoration. The steps which led to this room can still be seen to the West of the Main Door, running inside the wall. When this 'Parvisse' was opened at the restoration, the skeleton of a monk was found in such a position that it was commonly thought that a monk had, for some reason or other, been locked in alive. A very fine Norman arch covers the doorway to the Church, and this too was only discovered at the restoration.

The Nave is narrow and long and has a vaulted plaster roof, which, because of its height and length, is probably a unique example of this craft in this country. The North side is double-walled and is supported outside by three huge buttresses. This side is the oldest part of the church - being part of the ancient church built there in the very earliest centuries A.D.

When the floor of the Nave was levelled, hundreds of human bones were found, mingled in a most extraordinary fashion: skulls, legs, ribs, and other portions of human remains, lying side by side, or crossing each other without any order of arrangement of any kind. These were reverently collected and re-interred in a large grave 12 feet auare and 7½ deep under the shadow of the North wall of the Churchyard.

The small recess in the wall near the Porch door was probably for a vessel containing Holy Water.

The vaults of the Meyricks of Bush, the Owens of Orielton, and the Corston family, are still legible. The figures of Meyricke's seven sons and a daughter are to be seen kneeling in perpetual prayer for their father's soul around his vault.

In 1887 the wall dividing the Nave from the Choir was removed, and in its place the present Chancel arcg was built with its cluster of columns, surmounted by the heads of St Nicholas and a monk. The arch is 45 feet high, and almost as wide (24 feet) as the full width of the Nave.

The Chancel and Sanctuary, formerly the Benedictine Choir, are of an unusually large scale - 69 feet high. The great East window was erected to commemorate the visit, in 1902, of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. It was dedicated in 1904 by the then Bishop of St Davids. The canopies over the Choir Stalls were designed by Mr G.E.Halliday of Llandaff, andwere carved by Mr Edwin Thomas of St Davids.

On the North side of the Chancel there is a glass case which contains a chained Book of Common Prayer which is very rare. It was recovered in 1904, and at Evensong on Whitsunday of that year it was replaced in the Chancel. It is of unusual interest in that it is the Prayer Book (1604) which was suppressed by Cromwell when he introduced the 'Directory' into the Church of England. In the glass case are also displayed a Monk's beer-jug and a Holy Water stoup.

To the North of the Chancel is a doorway which leads to a large Chapel which in all probability was the Prior's private chapel. This, too, was in ruins, and has been restored.

The Vestry and Organ Chamber were at one time 'barrel' shaped passages to the monks' domestic buildings, and there are still signs of an upper floor which was the Infirmary. One can still see a large opening in the upper wall, which comes through the North wall into the Chancel, through which the sick monks couls see the High Altar and the Elevation of the Host at Mass.

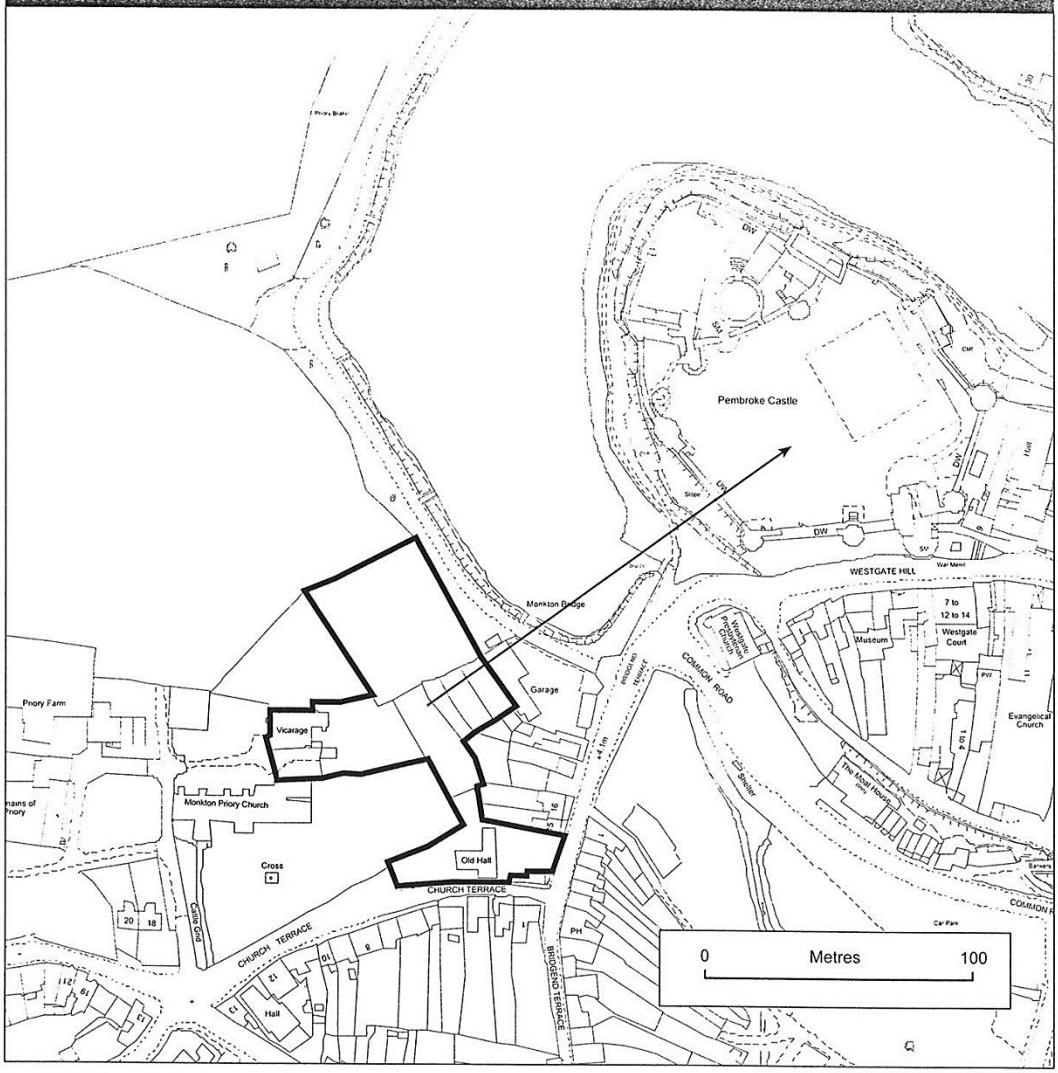
THE FURURE

It is amazing to think that, despite all the work done on this Church over the centuries, and especially that dome by Canon Bowen in the 1890's, the work of restoration and preservation is still going on. Our Priory Church has had a great and historic past, and it is now our duty to ensure that, equally, it will have a great future.

CADW

MONKTON OLD HALL AND VICARAGE, PEMBROKE ICOMOS UK

PEMBROKESHIRE



Garden
Essential Setting
Significant View

Register Number Former Register Number	PGW (Dy) 40 (PEM)
O.S. Sheet Number	SM 9801
Community	PEMBROKE

SUMMARY

Ref number	*PGW (Dy) 40 (PEM)*
OS Map	*158*
Grid ref	*SM 981 014*
Former county	*Dyfed*
Local authority	*Pembrokeshire*
Community Council	*Pembroke*
Designations	*Listed buildings: Monkton Old Hall (grade I); Priory Church of St Nicholas (grade I); south-west and south-east churchyard walls to Priory Church of St Nicholas (grade II); south retaining and garden wall to Monkton Old Hall (grade II).*
	Conservation Area: Pembroke.
Site evaluation	*Grade II**
Primary reasons for grading	*The survival of a compartmented and terraced garden in an exceptionally fine position overlooking Pembroke Castle. The garden is associated with the medieval priory and parts probably date to this period, making them a very rare example of a walled medieval garden. The terraces probably date to the mid-nineteenth century.*
Type of site	*Walled and compartmented garden, with a series of terraces.*
Main phases of construction	*Fourteenth century; mid-nineteenth century; 1933–78.*

Site description

Monkton Old Hall is a substantial medieval house situated on the eastern edge of the village of Monkton, just west of Pembroke. The house is built on a rock outcrop, with steep drops below it to the south and east. On the east side the ground drops down to a sea inlet, Monkton Pill, beyond which is Pembroke Castle. The house is three-storey and T-shaped, with the leg of the T projecting westwards. It is built of stone, with pitched slate roofs. In the basement is a large, vaulted undercroft. Above, a large, two-storey hall occupies the west wing. The entrance is in the middle of the north side and has a circular Flemish chimney immediately to its south.

Monkton Old Hall is thought to date from the fourteenth century and is built in the style of a north French semi-fortified house. It is thought to have originated as the guest house, or *hospitium* of the adjacent priory of St Nicholas. The priory was Benedictine, founded in 1098, when Arnulph de Montgomery gave a church and land to the abbey of Seez, in Normandy. The abbey was closed down in 1414 and became a possession of the Crown. In 1443 it was given to St Alban's Abbey, Hertfordshire, and remained their cell until it was dissolved in 1539. It was then sold to a local lawyer, John Vaughan, from whom it passed to Walter Devereux, Viscount Hereford (later first earl of Essex). It remained in the Devereux family for over two centuries, during which time it was leased out to minor gentry families. By the eighteenth century it had degenerated into a farmhouse.

The earliest description of Monkton Old Hall is by Fenton, in his *Tour* of 1811, when the house was a farmhouse, which he assumed was originally the prior's lodging: 'the outbuildings, together with the walls that enclosed the whole, give us an idea of the prior's great state. The monastic precinct, or rather the prior's liberties, occupying a very large tract, formed a paddock well walled round, commanding a fine view of the estuary, castle and town of Pembroke and must have been a sumptuous and delightful residence. A dove-house of large dimensions ... still exists entire just without this paddock'. The outbuildings and dovecot, to the west of the church, are now in a ruinous state.

From the nineteenth century onwards the property has undergone three cycles of decay and renewal. In 1814 Sir John Owen of Orielton bought the property and he or his son sold it in 1857 to Sir Thomas Meyrick of Bush. There is evidence that the house was reroofed in 1819 but later it appears to have been in a poor state: in 1868 the Revd E. L. Barnwell noted 'its present neglected condition'. In 1879 a wealthy romantic, J. R. Cobb, who restored several medieval castles in south Wales, took a lease of the property and began a programme of careful restoration. The roof had fallen in; original partitions had been removed, and others added; and walls were in poor condition. Cobb restored the building 'as faithfully as circumstances would admit, though not quite to his satisfaction'. After his death in 1897 the house was used by the village for various purposes and was left to deteriorate again.

The next saviour was Miss Muriel Thompson, gardening correspondent of *Everywoman* magazine and also a romantic. She bought Monkton Old Hall in 1933 but did not make it her permanent home until after the Second World War. Although impecunious she carried out restoration work, asking Clough Williams-Ellis for advice in 1950. In the early 1960s she married Air Commodore Bowen. On her death in 1978 the property was left to Mrs Oran Campbell, who passed it to the Landmark Trust. The Trust has carried out a major programme of restoration on the house, including the demolition of a small Victorian wing on the north-west side of the house.

The gardens associated with Monkton Old Hall and the vicarage of the church of St Nicholas lie to the north of the Hall and east of the vicarage. To their west is the walled churchyard. The ground is level in the upper compartments, on the west side of the gardens, and then slopes steeply to the east down to the shore of Monkton Pill. Although the gardens belonging to Monkton Old Hall and the vicarage are now separate, with no intercommunication, they were originally both part of the monastic precinct and are therefore treated as a single entity here.

The entrance to the grounds of Monkton Old Hall is to the west of the house, off Church Terrace, which runs along the south side of the property. Square stone piers, with pyramidal tops, and slightly lower rubble stone walls flank the wooden entrance gates. Inside is a small tarmac forecourt bounded on the north and south by shrub borders. In the north border is a myrtle grown from a sprig in the Queen Mother's wedding bouquet, given to Miss Thompson. The forecourt is bounded on the east side by a low stone wall. Two stone steps lead down to a small lawn and a gravel path runs eastward to a flight of four stone steps up to a flagstone court on the north side of the house. The court is bounded on the west by stone walls with tapered tops.

A substantial rubble stone revetment wall, with a low parapet, bounds the south side of the property and between it and the house is a narrow lawn, reached from the west by a flight of steps. At the east end of the lawn is a further flight of three steps and then a very steep and narrow flight down to a doorway, with a pointed arch, on to the lane. East of the house, two steps lead up to a small grass terrace. Below, to the east, the ground slopes gently down to a revetment wall without a parapet, below

which are derelict ground and small stone outbuildings. On the north side of the terrace is a wall about 1.6m high. Originally there was a narrow flight of steps along its south side leading down to a doorway, now blocked, on Bridgend Terrace, below the garden. A flight of steps leads up to the paved court north of the house.

The main garden area lies north of the house. In front of the paved court is a small walled compartment. Its walls, and all those in the rest of the gardens, are of mortared rubble stone. The compartment consists of a lawn with a central flagstone path leading to a doorway, with pointed arch, in the north wall, which is about 3.3m high. On the east side the compartment is bounded by a wall about 1.3m high on the edge of the steep drop on this side. The west wall, which is the churchyard boundary wall, is about 3.2m–3.5m high. In the north-west corner is a small, single-storey stone building with a pent roof, now used as a garden shed. The doorway in the north wall leads to the main terrace.

The main terrace is a rectangular walled compartment, its long axis running north–south and its east and west walls being continuations of those of the compartment to the south and of similar build and height. The north wall is about 3.5m high. The terrace is supported on the east side by a revetment wall about 5m high. The terrace consists of a lawn, bounded on the west by a shrub border and on the east by an old flower and shrub bed which is in the process of being removed. At the north end is a circular flower bed, now planted with herbs, bounded by a random flagstone path. A flagstone path crosses the middle of the bed and four flagstone paths radiate out from the circular path. That to the east leads to a wooden gate to a flight of steps to a series of terraces below. From the platform just outside the gate there is a very fine view of Pembroke Castle and town.

A series of three terraces lie directly below the main terrace, enclosed in a walled compartment, the north and south walls of which are continuations of those of the terrace above. The south wall is about 1.2m high. A long flight of 22 uneven and well-worn stone steps, with a low parapet, leads down the upper terrace revetment wall to the top of the central east–west axial path down the terraces. Two more steps, on this axis, lead down to the first terrace. This is about 4.5m wide, with no parapet on its lower side. The terrace has been cleared of vegetation, except for a few ornamental trees, the principal ones being a magnolia at the north end and a variety of cherries. There are also some large buddleia bushes. Underneath the steps is a storage space. A flight of fourteen steps leads down to the second terrace.

The upper part of this terrace is sloping, the lower part level. A stone-edged path runs along the foot of the revetment wall, which is about 1.2m high. The path continues along the north side, with a stone-edged border next to the wall. Lilac and viburnum bushes grow on the lower side. The perimeter path is visible as a slightly sunken linear feature along the south and east sides of the terrace. Both halves of the terrace, on either side of the central path, have the same layout. Flanking the central path are two large, decaying cherry trees. The sloping part of the terrace is ridged up and down the slope, suggesting former vegetable production or an asparagus bed. In the lower part of the terrace a flight of sixteen steps, leading to the third and lowest terrace, begins.

The lowest level slopes down towards the east and was probably an orchard, at least within the last century, as a number of old fruit trees remain in it. It is backed by the revetment wall of the terrace above, which is about 2.1m high. A perimeter path, just visible, runs around the edge of the terrace. A large bush of *Lonicera nitida* grows against the south wall. There is no wall on the east side and a modern garage is built against the revetment wall. On the north side there is a small, narrow doorway leading out of the garden at the east end of the wall.

The garden and paddock of the present vicarage are an integral part of the original gardens of the priory and Monkton Old Hall. They lie to the north and west of the main terrace. At present there is no interconnection between the gardens of the vicarage and Monkton Old Hall but a blocked doorway in the wall between them attests to their former integration.

The vicarage garden is a four-sided walled compartment on level ground to the east of the vicarage and west of the main terrace of Monkton Old Hall. The north wall is about 2.2m high, with a short return next to the house. At the east end is a doorway through to the paddock, south of which is a short extension to the north wall of the hall's main terrace. The east wall is about 2.3m high and the south wall is similar, with a cross wall extending a short distance half way along. To its west is a blocked doorway which would have led through to the churchyard. The garden is laid out mainly to lawn.

The walled compartment to the north of the main terrace, now used as a paddock, was once part of the gardens. It is a rectangular area, larger than the terraced garden of Monkton Old Hall to the south, but with similar topography. At the top, on the west side, is a wide level terrace backed on the west side by a wall about 1.5m high, rising to 3.5m in the north-west corner. At the south end of the wall there are two doors. The northern one leads out into the field north of the vicarage garden. The southern one, which has a horizontal, modern lintel, leads into the garden. On the east side the terrace is bounded by a stony grass scarp about 1m high. The north wall of the compartment is about 3m high, with an uneven top. The south wall (north wall of the terraced compartment to the south) is 2.5m–3m high, rising to about 3.5m at its west end. Towards its upper end is a blocked doorway which would have led through to the Monkton Old Hall garden. Below the top terrace the ground slopes quite steeply and a number of ancient fruit trees grow on the slope. On the central, east–west axis is an overgrown and decayed path, about 2m wide, punctuated by four flights of steps. The upper steps have concrete treads on brick risers and are flanked by square piers and low stone walls. The lower steps have stone treads and sunk below the slope.

At the foot of the slope is a level terrace about 4m wide, backed on the west by a drystone retaining wall about 1.2m high, rising to about 1.8m high at the south end. Towards the north end of the terrace is a small, square sunk feature, which might have been a pool or well. The east wall of the compartment is about 3.5m high and has door in it with a pointed arch.

Next to the south wall, about halfway down the slope and built into it, is a small ruined stone building. Its west wall is about 2.3m high and more or less complete; the north and east walls stand up to about 1.5m and the south wall is mostly gone. There is no roof. In the middle of the back (west) wall is a small, slate-lined niche.

The gardens of Monkton Old Hall and the vicarage together have their origins in the medieval period. At this time they lay within the precinct of St Nicholas's Priory and Monkton Old Hall is thought to have been the guest house. The inset map of Pembroke in John Speed's map of Pembrokeshire, dated 1610,

shows the buildings and precinct wall of Monkton Priory. The precinct appears to include land to the north of the gardens, towards the estuary, and an area west of the church. No garden is shown within the precinct, although gardens and orchards are shown within the walled town. However, the scale of the map probably precluded any depiction of garden enclosures within the precinct. Fenton's description of 1811 is the earliest that mentions the walled precinct, which he noted as 'a paddock well walled round, commanding a fine view of the estuary, castle and town of Pembroke'. The dovecot lay just outside, to the north. The precinct was clearly more extensive than the walled garden enclosures but included them and it can be assumed that the vicarage garden walls, the walled former orchard and at least the upper terrace of Monkton Old Hall date to the medieval period. The original internal layout of the enclosures is not known but is likely to have been simple. The small building in the former orchard may date to the medieval period but its function is not known.

The dating of the lower terraces of Monkton Old Hall is problematic. In terms of construction their walling is no different to that of the other compartments and terraces, and the steps of worn stone have an ancient appearance. However, the odd brick built into the walling of the lower terraces suggests that they are not medieval, nor probably even Tudor or seventeenth-century. Stylistically it is unusual to encounter terracing and steps of this kind in a medieval garden. They would be more in keeping with a Tudor or seventeenth-century garden, but during this period, as will be seen, the property was let and is unlikely to have been embellished.

In the three hundred or so years between the dissolution of the priory in 1539 and the second half of the nineteenth century it is probable that little development took place in the walled enclosures. The priory estate passed through several hands and for much of this time was owned by the Devereux family and leased out. In the first half of the nineteenth century it belonged to Sir John Owen of Orielton, who sold in 1857 to Sir Thomas Meyrick of Bush. None of these owners, all absentees, would have had an interest in developing the gardens. An oil painting of Pembroke Castle by Augustus W. Callcott (1779–1844) provides probable confirmation that the lower terraces were not in existence in the early nineteenth century. The painting is a view from the north and clearly shows the church and Monkton Old Hall. A wall is shown on the top of the slope north of the Hall; below it appears to be a steep, scrubby slope. An estate map of 1848 shows the upper terrace of Monkton Old Hall (subdivided as now) and the orchard enclosure (with the building shown), both coloured pink, and the enclosure that later became the vicarage garden coloured green (as is the field to its north). The area of the lower terraces of Monkton Old Hall, together with the area to its south-east is a separate but single, uncoloured, enclosure, implying that it was not in the estate's ownership. A slightly later estate map, of 1859, shows the same layout, with the area of the lower terraces being labelled as the property of Thomas Hurlow, Esq. and Mrs Llewhellin. This suggests that it was probably divided into two, the division not being shown as the area fell outside the estate's ownership and was therefore of no interest. The area of the lower terraces would therefore appear not to have been part of the Monkton Priory estate in the mid-nineteenth century. Its layout can only be surmised, but the Callcott painting shows a row of small, undistinguished houses on the Monkton Pill, at the foot of the slope, and these are unlikely to have had sophisticated, terraced gardens attached to them.

However, if it is the case that the terraces were not in existence in 1859, then they were made between 1859 and the date of survey of the First Edition 25in Ordnance Survey map published in 1885. No survey date is given but it was probably surveyed in 1864, as was the neighbouring sheet. This map shows the garden layout more or less as it is now. The gardens are still united: there is a path from the churchyard to the Old Hall garden, passing through a doorway near the south end of the east wall of the churchyard. The map clearly shows the lower terraces in their present form. There are two buildings at their foot, since gone. The upper terrace and first of the lower ones have perimeter paths around them. The two below have both perimeter and central paths. Interestingly, no steps are shown down to the second terrace, but the tree symbols may obscure them. The map shows trees planted on the terraces and trees lining the paths, which suggests that they were well established at the time. It would appear, therefore, that if the map was surveyed in about 1864 the garden on the lower terraces was made before J. R. Cobb obtained the lease of the property in 1879, during the ownership of Sir Thomas Meyrick of Bush. The period can be narrowed even further, to between 1859, when the lower terraces area was in separate ownership, and about 1864. In his article of 1880 in *Archaeologia Cambrensis* about his work at Monkton, Cobb makes no mention of the garden, perhaps suggesting that he did not have a hand in it.

After about 1864 other changes took place on the upper terrace and in the old orchard. At some stage the doorway into the churchyard and that from the upper terrace to the old orchard were blocked, making the garden of Monkton Old Hall separate from that of the vicarage. This is likely to have taken place soon after the vicarage was built in the late nineteenth century. At the same time the doorway through from the vicarage garden to the old orchard enclosure was probably made. It may also have been at this time that the orchard enclosure was developed more as a garden, with the upper terrace, central path and steps and lower terrace. The Second Edition 25in Ordnance Survey map of 1908 shows this layout, with the slope planted as an orchard. However, again caution is needed as there is a possibility that the terracing is more ancient and only the steps date to the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. The gothic arched doorway in the east wall, with its brick head, is likely to be of this latter date. A similar doorway in the wall dividing the upper terrace of Monkton Old Hall is probably contemporary.

The phase of ownership of Monkton Old Hall by Miss Muriel Thompson, from 1933 to 1978, saw little if any structural changes made to the garden but a great deal of planting. Miss Thompson was gardening correspondent for *Everywoman* magazine and a knowledgeable planter. Some of the mature trees on the terraces and mature shrubs throughout the garden probably date to this era.

Since 1978, when Monkton Old Hall was given to the Landmark Trust, there have been a few changes in the immediate vicinity of the house. The courtyard on its north side was made by raising the level about 1.3m and paving the area with blue Pennant flagstones. Steps around the house were built from Carmarthen 'black' limestone slabs recovered from the demolished Stackpole Court.

Sources

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Oil painting of Pembroke Castle, Augustus W. Callcott (1779–1844): private collection.
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