

The Landmark Trust

ROBIN HOOD'S HUT History Album



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ROBIN HOOD'S HUT – Basic Details

Built c1767 for Sir Charles Tynte
Listings Grade II*
(Halswell Park: Grade II on Register of Historic Parks & Gardens, Halswell House: I, Temple of Harmony: II*, Bath Stone Bridge: II)

Initial restoration by Somerset Building Preservation Trust

Building donated by John Tuckey in January 1995

Restoration of exterior completed Spring 1998

Architects Jonathan Saunders and Anne Evans, Caroe & Partners of Wells

Contractor Carrek & Son of Itchington, near Bristol

Major funding Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage

Conversion to a Landmark

Freehold transferred to the Landmark Trust by

Somerset BPT February 2003

Architect Peter Bird, Caroe & Partners of Wells

Contractor H & B Construction of Taunton

Opened as a Landmark July 2004

The Landmark Trust gratefully acknowledges the support of all those who donated to the appeal to give Robin Hood's Hut a new use as a Landmark.

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In separate Reader Volume:

***Arcadia Under the Plough* by Gervase Jackson-Stops, Country Life, Feb 9th 1989**

***Halswell Park, Somerset*, Country Life, November 21st 1908**

Designs for umbrellas from Batty Langley's *Gothic Architecture Improved* (1747)

From The *Follies* Journal No. 3, Winter 2003:

***A Hermit for Cadland* by Nigel Temple**

***Solitude: the Hermit Project* by Anna Douglas (account of installing a
modern day hermit)**

***Folly* by Ansuman Biswas**

***Stourhead Revisited* by Richard Higgs**



Robin Hood's Hut (built c1765) stands on an escarpment looking out over the Bristol Channel, Lundy and Steep Holm in the distance.

SUMMARY OF HISTORY & RESTORATION

Halswell is pronounced Haswell; Goathurst Go-thurst.

Robin Hood's Hut was built by Sir Charles Kemeys Tynte in the late 1760s to adorn the re-landscaping of his estate at Halswell Park, Goathurst. There had been Halswells on the estate since before 1280. John Tynte, from an ancient Somerset family, married the last Haswell, Jane Kemeys, in the mid-seventeenth century. In 1689, their son and Sir Charles's father Sir Halswell Tynte had added a fine new range in the style of Wren to the existing Tudor manor, part of which remained as the service areas. It was probably Sir Halswell who created a formal garden below Halswell House, but by the time Sir Charles inherited the estate in 1740, gardening fashions had changed. Sir Charles shared a passion for creating picturesque landscapes with two good friends, Henry Hoare II of Stourhead and Coplestone Warre Bampfylde of Hestercombe. Together they created three of the finest picturesque gardens of their day. Stourhead and Hestercombe are happily largely restored and open to the public, but Halswell Park became fragmented and degraded, especially once the estate left the family in 1948.

Sir Charles was a typical 'country gentleman' of the 18th century. He served as MP for Somerset for almost thirty years. He did all the typical works of his day, combining benevolence with self-interest: straightened local roads to facilitate the passage of his carriage and built almshouses for the poor of the parish next door to St Edward's Church in Goathurst. Sir Charles also spent long periods in London. In his absence, his estate was run by his steward, Richard Escott, whose task it was to ensure that his master's 'Scheming' on his gardens remained in line with income from the estate.

As in all great gardens, Sir Charles manipulated and highlighted the natural features of his estate to stimulate and enhance visitors' emotions. In a belt of woodland known as Mill Wood, he created a series of linked ponds, with a Bath Stone Bridge and a Druid's Temple. Nearer Halswell House were several more structures – a stepped pyramid, a small rotunda, a rockwork screen and a memorial to a favourite horse. At the foot of the hill, Sir Charles built the Temple of Harmony, based on designs in Palladio's *Quattro Libri* and holding a statue of Terpsichore, muse of dance, carved by John Walsh. Robert Adam is known to have had a hand in the interior work.

Robin Hood's Hut was built around the same time, both to be looked at and to be visited and looked out from. Its name has less to do with Robin of Locksley than the fashionable eighteenth-century allusion to ancient English liberties which Robin defended. There is a preliminary design for the building by Henry Keene in the V & A. The hut was positioned to take advantage of the stunning panorama from the ridge. Just as today, the unsuspecting visitor would approach through a belt of woodland, stumbling upon a rustic thatched cottage suggestive of hermits and witches to an eighteenth-century sensibility. Entering a dark and gloomy space, the rear doors would then be flung open by the host to reveal the glory of

the view north across to the Bristol Channel and to Wales beyond. The view was admired from an elegant Gothic umbrello or canopy, with a plaster frieze of trailing vines and a plasterwork dome moulded in imitation of swagged drapery. There is some evidence that this umbrello was added or revised later and it is reminiscent of Batty Langley's widely used patterns for Gothic architecture.

After admiring the view, visitors could then retire to the elegant 'china room' to the right of the front door. Refreshments would have been provided by servants from the little kitchen on the other side, which could then only be entered from the outside. The remains of the charcoal warming hobs are still there. The servants were not to be distracted by the view and so the north window is, and has always been, blind.

The Tyntes (later Kemeys-Tyntes) owned Halswell Park until 1948. The gardens decayed steadily through the 20th century. Parcels of land were sold, statues carted away, buildings crumbled. The umbrello at Robin Hood's Hut collapsed. Finally, in 1995 a proposal to demolish the Temple of Harmony so incensed local opinion that the Halswell Park Trust was formed to protect and reconsolidate what remained of the gardens. The Somerset Building Preservation Trust (SBPT) acquired the freehold of the Temple and repaired it. Then in 1995 Mr John Tuckey generously acquired and gave Robin Hood's Hut to the SBPT. With grants from English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, they rebuilt the umbrello, rethatched the roof, replaced windows and floors and rendered and limewashed the exterior. The interior was left bare, the shutters, other joinery and chimneypiece being based on fragments of the originals. The hut was returned to its original role as shining eyecatcher. However, it soon became clear that it would quickly deteriorate again if left mostly cold and empty on this exposed spot. In 2000, the SBPT approached the Landmark Trust for help with a new use for the building. We were delighted to do so.

Restoration of Robin Hood's Hut by Landmark

In autumn 2003, work began to fit out the interior for use as a Landmark. Electricity was introduced and a borehole sunk to provide water. One problem was how to provide a bathroom. We were keen to protect the original spaces in the buildings and therefore wanted to avoid partitioning any of the chambers. We decided to house the bathroom in a small, detached hut, fully insulated but with reference to the tradition for such rustic huts in Sir Charles's day (the Witch's Hut at Hestercombe is another such). Another decision was to form a doorway between the current kitchen and bedroom. The former servants' room had two recesses. One of these held the warming hobs and has been kept, while a new door had been inserted in the other to allow the building to be lived in satisfactorily. Sir Charles had a clear idea of the hierarchy of the three rooms, which we have tried to respect. In a letter in 1767, he wrote 'And, as for the Building on the Hill in the Park, the first room, wch I call the hermits room, must have an earthen floor, the Kitchen on the left, a brick and the little room, for china, must be boarded.'

China Room

The current joinery (shutters, sill boards, architraves and skirtings) is as done by the SBPT. The elm floorboards were also laid by the SBPT, loosely to combat serious dampness in the past. The absence of curtains is deliberate, accepting that shutters were the usual form of window dressing in such estate buildings.

The Hermit's Room or Kitchen

Architecturally, this room is essentially a lobby. It also continues to serve the purpose of antechamber to the drama of the panorama, and both these aspects have directed the arrangement of the kitchen. We also decided to replicate the earthen floor instructed by Sir Charles, using a *battuto* technique. *Battuto* means 'beaten', as brick and tile fragments are crushed and then compacted in a breathing lime concrete.

The Servants' Room or Bedroom has been kept much as it was. The tiled floor is thought to be original and has been disturbed as little as possible. The vestiges of the warming hearth remain while the recess which must have held shelving for utensils etc. has been breached to form the new door. There is a large original window in the west wall, but we have left the north window blind as originally intended by Sir Charles – his servants were to concentrate on their duties, not the view!

Meanwhile in 2003, the residue of Halswell Park with its fine mansion was in the (eventually brief) ownership of a mysterious religious cult. Since WW2, the main house had been a convalescent home for soldiers, a girls' school and divided into flats. The Grade I mansion is an important early Baroque house, described by Pevsner as 'the most important house of its date in the county'. The mansion was added in the 1680s to an existing, extensive Tudor manor complex. The whole was falling into worrying disrepair. However, In 2014 Halswell Park finally acquired the sort of private owner it desperately needed. By 2018, repairs are well underway to the main house and Tudor ranges, and to the evocative 18th-century landscape with its sprinkling of follies (of which Robin Hood's Hut is just one). The project will take years more to bring to full fruition, when Halswell Park will once again reflect the full glory of Sir Charles Kemeyes Tynte's vision for his landscape.

The house and park are occasionally open to the public while restoration works are ongoing. Visits can be booked online at www.invitationtoview.co.uk .

HALSWELL PARK & THE TYNTE FAMILY

Robin Hood's Hut stands within one of the most famous picturesque gardens of the mid-eighteenth century, Halswell¹ Park, created by Sir Charles Tynte (although the family later added 'Kemeys' to their surname, Sir Charles was rather given it as a middle name).

The Halswell family had lived on the estate at Goathurst since before 1280. The old manor house was built on the spring line, just below the 100 metre contour line and two streams shape the landscape. One rises about fifty yards east of the house and falls towards the village of Goathurst in a line of ponds. The other runs in a deeper valley known as Mill Wood to the west. A surviving receipt for 'buildying of the manor of Halswell' suggests a date of 1536 for the Tudor great hall that later became the kitchen in the old manor house. Some of the gabled range to the south of the kitchen also survives from the sixteenth century.



View from the roof of Halswell House in 2018, with the repairs to the Tudor buildings well underway. Robin Hood's Hut is behind the second large oak at the left.

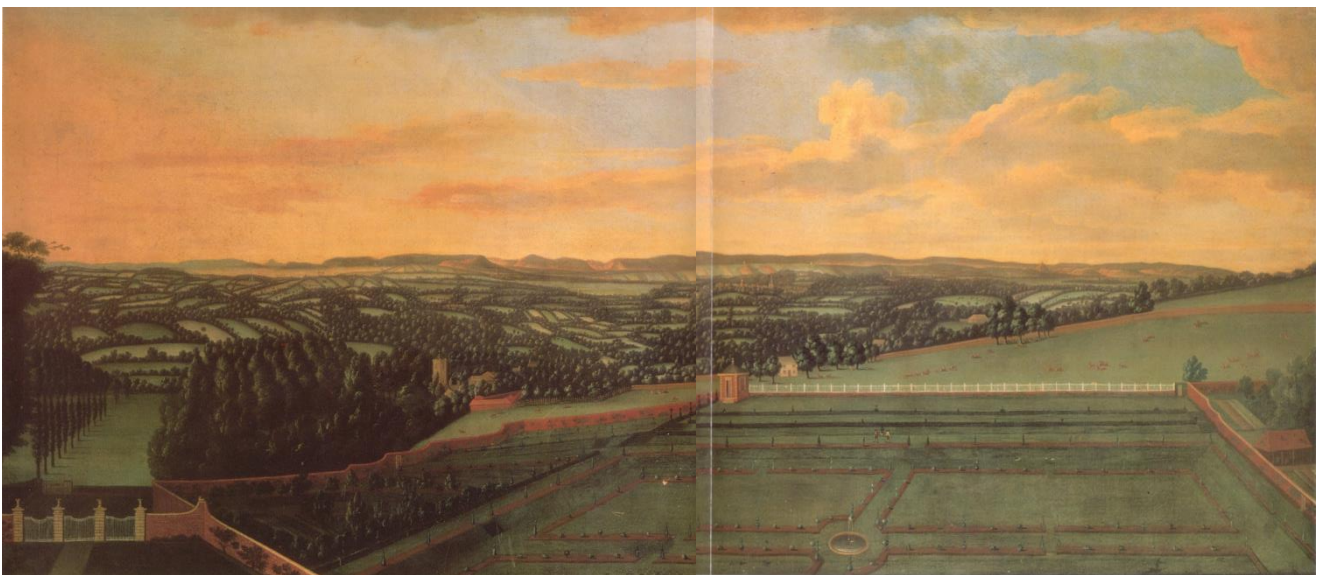
¹ Halswell is pronounced 'Has-well.'

By the mid seventeenth century, Jane Halswell was the last representative of a family that had lived quietly in its county and played little part in its affairs. Jane married John Tynte of Chelvey, near Weston-super-Mare. The Tyntes were an ancient West Country family, who are reputed to have got their name from an 12th century ancestor, an unproven knight who fought valiantly on crusade at the battle of Ascalon. As he emerged bloodstained from battle, Richard the Lionheart exclaimed 'Tinctus cruore Saraceno!' ('coloured with Saracen blood') and thus gave the family both name and motto. Jane and John's son, understandably christened Halswell Tynte, was born in 1649. After following a typical gentry career path of the day by studying at Oxford and then a spell at the Middle Temple training in the law, Halswell inherited his paternal estates when he came of age and his mother's lands at the death of his grandfather in 1673. After acquiring his baronetcy the following year, this combined wealth enabled him to rebuild the north range of the house, which was completed by 1689.

This is the principal wing of the house we see today and was almost certainly designed by William Taylor, a surveyor from London who made alterations to Longleat in the same decade. In a letter to Lord Weymouth, for whom he was altering a church in Minsterley, Shropshire in 1683, Taylor says that he 'must be at Sir Halswell's before I come to London.' His work on the north range at Halswell was remarkably assured. Pevsner describes it as 'the most important house of its date in the county' and Gervase Jackson-Stops as 'a remarkably assured essay in the Wren style, with features derived from contemporary French pattern-books.'



Halswell House on completion. The house is much the same today, although steps, gateposts and walls have gone as has the apparent whitening of the doorcase etc. A single stone gryphon survives, now atop the Stepped Pyramid.



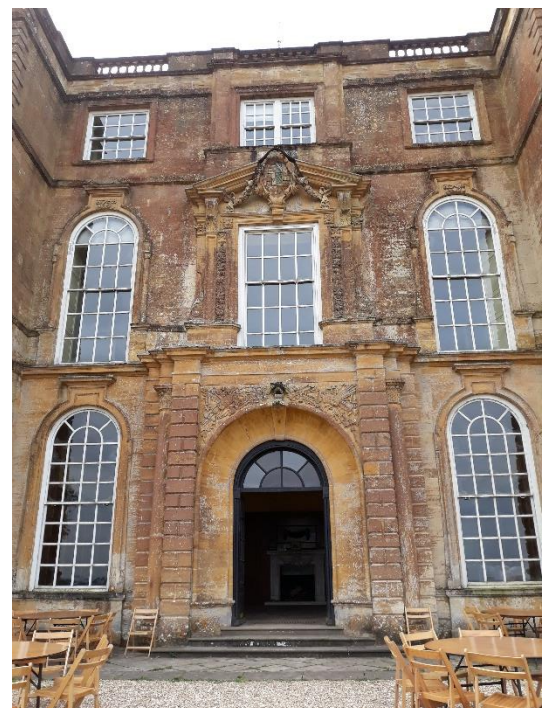
The 1689 mansion originally looked out onto formal Dutch-style gardens. (c. 1720, unknown artist). These Sir Charles Kemey's Tynte swept away in the 1760s and 70s to create the looser picturesque parkland for which Halswell Park became famous.



This portrait of Sir Charles Kemeys Tynte by Hogarth hangs today in Southside House, Wimbledon, acquired with much else from Halswell when the contents were dispersed in 1950. Sir Charles' account at Hoare's Bank records a payment of £42 to the artist in June 1753. Escott gives a date of 1755 for the building of the bridge in Mill Wood (shown in the background). (Reproduced by kind permission of the Pennington-Mellor-Munthe Trust)



Halswell House in 2018.



Sir Halswell Tynte owned the manor from (probably) 1667 until his death in 1702. He was probably also responsible for the creation of a formal water feature by diverting the stream which flowed past the east side of the house into a straight canal, with a walk alongside it leading to a pavilion. A formal parterre with terraces was formed in front of the new north range. A triple gateway led to a broad, straight avenue to the west. The fine dovecote by the house probably also dates from his day.

Sir Halswell's son John died early in 1710 and the third baronet, another Sir Halswell, also died young in 1730. His brother, the Rev. Sir John never married and when he died in 1740, their younger brother Charles became the fifth baronet. Seven years later, Sir Charles also inherited the Kemeys estate of Cefn Mably in Glamorgan from his mother. These combined resources enabled him to improve both estates.

SIR CHARLES KEMEYS TYNTE

(At this stage of the family's history, Kemeys - or sometimes Kemys - was a middle name and had not yet become hyphenated).

Sir Charles was a Member of Parliament from 1747 until he retired in 1774. He contested six elections during this time and from 1754 sat as member for Somerset. Sir Charles spent much of his time in London where he had houses at different times in Burton Street and Hill Street.

In 1754 Lord Dupplin drew up a list of the newly elected members of Parliament for Lord North, leader of the administration, according to their affiliation. MPs were classified according to their political and professional groups: whether they followed the Prince of Wales, belonged to the army or navy, were a lawyer or a placeman (in the pay of one of the political leaders) and so on. Those unclassifiable were called Tories if they opposed Lord North's government, or, if simply of an independent caste of mind, were known as country gentlemen. A

country gentleman was first and foremost a landowner who was not a member of a peer's family. Just as essentially, he sat in Parliament for his own interest. As he was obliged to neither Crown nor political patron for his seat in the House, it followed that he was independent in his political ambitions, had no close political affiliations and would approach every issue with independent judgement. About two hundred of these political dodos held the balance of power in the Commons in the mid-eighteenth century: today, they are extinct as a political phenomenon. While Sir Charles is sometimes described as a Tory (i.e. part of the opposition to the Hanoverian government), his voting behaviour characterises him more as one of these country gentlemen.

Somerset had around 8,000 voters in the mid eighteenth century with no single dominant aristocratic influence. Elections were expensive and the right to vote, far from being universal, was rather a privilege conferred by property or social position. A vote was also expected to yield adequate remuneration, rather than being viewed as a trust to be exercised. The 1768 election was hotly contested in Somerset; Sir Charles stood jointly with Richard Hippisley Coxe but they were challenged during the campaign by one John Trevelyan who had the Dissenter vote in a county where religious loyalties were fierce. A disputed election was a very expensive affair – Sir Charles spent a total of £2641 1s 7d, equivalent to a year's income from the estate, and his running mate Mr Coxe contributed a further £2608 15s 11d. Trevelyan seems to have been something of a demagogue and election songs typically criticised 'rich bullies' threatening the honest voting freeholders. In the event, Trevelyan withdrew his opposition at the very last minute – one wonders whether he was not simply being mischievous all along.

On 5th October 1767 Lord Westmorland wrote to Tynte warning him that around Yeovil, 'the old stale cry of cider and general warrants' was being raised against him - a cry which may have come from a song, 'For the Independent Freeholders of Somerset.' The West Country had led a fierce campaign against the cider tax in particular and estate records show that cider was indeed made on the Halswell

estate. Such was the seriousness of the accusation of supporting either the cider tax or general warrants that Sir Charles was moved to publish adverts in local newspapers denying that he had voted for either the cider bill or general warrants. On 4th January 1768 he declared in the *Sherburne Mercury*:

I spoke in the House of Commons against [the cider tax]. I voted against it. The only day I was absent from the House was when I was afflicted with so severe a fit of the gout, that I could not turn in my bed without assistance. I attended every meeting in the country, and in London, to concert proper measures against it, and I was carried to the House wrapped in flannels to vote for the repeal of that odious and detestable tax.²

He was quite correct: Parliamentary records show that he twice seconded motions against the Cider Act in January and February 1764 and in the same February voted with the Opposition to oppose general warrants. According to a letter written by Horace Walpole to Lord Hertford on 19th February, Sir Charles's vote was then bought for the Government with the promise of a peerage (probably fictitious). In fact, Sir Charles's voting habits remained independent.

The issue over general warrants had roused fierce debate across the country: in 1763 John Wilkes, MP for Aylesbury published issue Number 45 of his newspaper, the *North Briton*. It criticised the King, George III, directly and not only was Wilkes arrested for seditious libel but the Grenville ministry also issued a 'general warrant', permitting the arrest of any of those involved in the publication of the paper. A series of arrests followed and Wilkes was expelled from the Commons and committed to the Tower of London, all for what we today would consider the usual cut-and-thrust of political life.

The resulting storm of protest from all parts of the political spectrum took ministers by surprise. This use of general warrants was considered an unacceptable restriction on citizens' liberty and freedom of expression as British

² Sir Lewis Namier & John Brooke, *The House of Commons 1754-1790*, Vol III, 1985, p. 4. Sir Charles suffered from gout for much of his life.

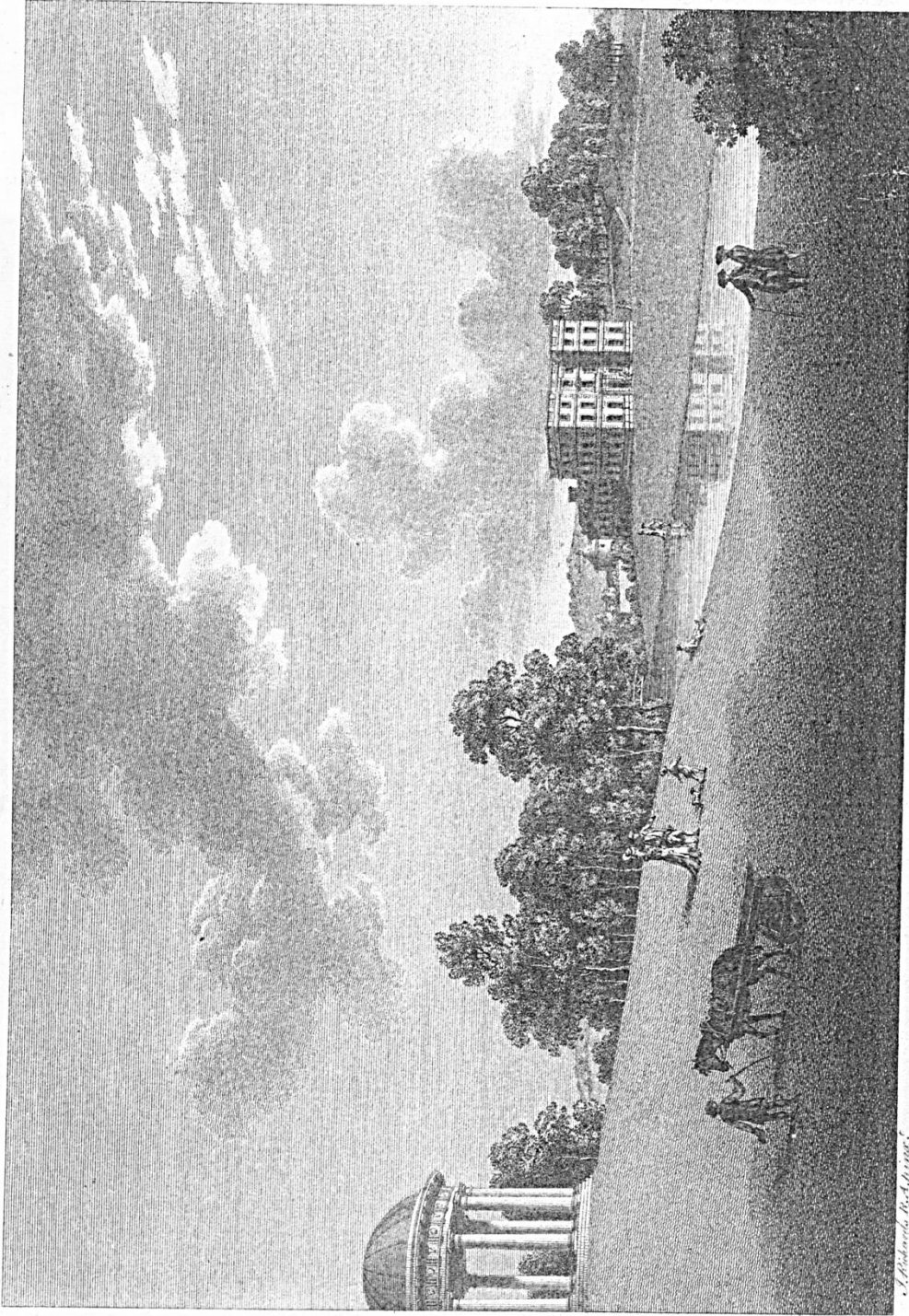
government groped its way to the modern party system in which vigorous opposition is no longer considered treason against the Crown. In due course, the courts declared such warrants illegal. The relevance for all this to Robin Hood's Hut is that, for contemporaries, both its name and Gothic style carried an appeal to the ancient liberties of the English nation, going back as far as King Alfred and traditionally defended against royal encroachment by Robin of Locksley, popularly known as Robin Hood. Lord Cobham set the first precedent twenty five years earlier with his Gothic Temple at Stowe (also a Landmark); another country gentleman, Sir John Aislabie, had his own Robin Hood's Well in his gardens at Studley Royal. Robin Hood's Hut was constructed at the height of the furore over general warrants so perhaps Sir Charles was making a wider political point by naming it as he did.

Despite living in London much of the time, Sir Charles also took an interest in his Somerset locale. In 1780, he gave the poor house and garden which still stand next to the churchyard in Goathurst for use as a school for poor children. He also took an interest in roads and widened the road between Goathurst and Taunton to ease the passage of his carriage. The narrow lane that leads beyond St Edward's Church in Goathurst is thus not as winding as it once was.



Sir Charles Kemeys Tynte on his memorial in St Edward's Church and the family coat of arms. By Sir Charles's time, the motto has become 'Plaisir en faits d'armes' ('pleasure in martial deeds) perhaps recalling his ancestor's feats on the field at Ascalon, but somewhat incongruous for a peaceable eighteenth-century gentleman. The church also has a very fine monument to Sir Halswell Tynte.





Halfwell, in Somersetshire, the Seat of Sir Charles Kemewyn Zytte, Bart!

Published as the first division, from the views by W. H. W. Kemewyn, Esq. of the above.

Engraving by J. Richards, c. 1790.

SIR CHARLES TYNTE & THE CREATION OF HALSWELL PARK

Sir Charles was great friends with Henry Hoare of Stourhead and painter and landscape designer Coplestone Warre Bampfylde of Hestercombe. In its day, Halswell Park would have been on a par with these two great gardens, today both happily restored and open to the public. Henry Hoare II developed Stourhead over a period of forty years from 1744. He designed the main circuit around the lake to symbolise the epic journey of Aeneas as told by Virgil, structuring it around a series of ornamental buildings in different styles, Classical, Gothic and rustic. Halswell Park was not so single-themed, but this was the mentality of garden design that Sir Charles would have shared, although unfortunately hardly any records remain to record the creation process. The triangular friendship between Sir Charles, Warre Bampfylde and Henry Hoare II of Stourhead was an enduring one, which Bampfylde commemorated at Hestercombe with a Friendship Urn, whose inscription includes a quote from Horace which translates as *Earth has not produced two such shining spirits as these, nor any with which I have closer bonds*. Sir Charles made his own gesture to friendship in the Temple of Harmony (see below).

Specific sources of inspiration for Sir Charles's landscape remain largely elusive. The estate papers include a series of inventories for Halswell House (SRO DD\S\WH\267 - given an overall date of 1780) including an undated list of the books in the library. It is wide ranging and extensive, typical of a country gentleman and encompassing husbandry, Parliamentary affairs, jurisprudence, travel and history. There is nothing, however, on architecture or landscape.

Sir Charles inherited the Halswell estate in 1740. It was only 30 acres at that time, but by buying adjoining land, Sir Charles doubled its size during the 1750s. By the end of the century, it had grown to 132 acres. Under Sir Charles's direction, it became one of the most celebrated 'natural' landscapes of its day, an exemplar of mid-Georgian landscape design. It reflected the typical mid-eighteenth century preoccupation with the relationship between Art and Nature

and the manipulation of buildings within the landscape to make sentimental or mythological allusion. The landscape was famed even while still in creation and visited by a stream of interested visitors. This landscaped park was surrounded by a home park of a further 1500 acres and supported by the satellite farms in Somerset and South Wales which amounted to a further 2000 acres.

Progress of the work on the gardens can be followed in a long memorandum written by the steward of Halswell, Richard Escott, when he retired in 1781 and appended to this volume (the document is in private ownership). This gives a year by year account of work on the estate from his appointment in 1753, although work on naturalising the formal garden had clearly begun before this. Escott's dates are not always accurate – he was writing many years later. The tempo of Sir Charles's 'Scheming' as he called it seems to have been dictated partly by estate finances (though perhaps not as controlled by this as much as his steward Richard Escott sometimes wished) and partly by political events which sometimes kept him in London. Escott is Sir Charles' eyes and ears, reporting on a stream of local affairs when his master is in London, from voteholders and the condition of potential land purchases to family affairs or an order of eight dozen glasses or reports on one Alford's acquittal of sheepstealing.³ It is also clear that Mr Escott had quite a hand in creating the park.

For example, in a letter written on 2nd May 1753 Escott reports 'The young ladies were inoculated yesterday.' He writes of pheasants, voters, coppices, felling timber, estates for sale and then goes on:

'From the plan of Halswell, Mr Escott has drawn out such Sketches of the Garden and Orchards, which may be connected to a Garden, as he hopes Sir Charles will be able to understand and reconcile with the plan, on a larger scale [missing], which he lately sent Sir Charles.'

He also describes the creation of a walled garden, of about 2 acres. Clay has been thrown in the Cooper's Garden enough for 250,000 bricks for the walls.

³ Escott's papers are in the Somerset Record Office in Taunton, in the Wharton collection under DD/S/WH/269.

Stones for foundations are being raised by Old Farmer Lovodor; Escott regrets that there are none nearer so that carriage is expensive.

'The sum of 4-2-6 for Wheeling away Earth is for taking away the Surface of the Garden, where the clay is dug, and it must be brought back again, when the Bricks are carried away to renew the Garden.'

Mr Escott also attempts to apply financial prudence in his master's schemes. On 3rd April 1758, he warns Sir Charles that 'as the prospect now appears, in all probability, you will be able to spend this year in Somerset no more than £2204.' A certain sense of anxiety is apparent in his commentary on the Estate Accounts for that year, in which payments amounted to £2582 19 6d but receipts only £2514. Mr Escott writes firmly:

'I have pointed out to Sir Charles the particular outgoings that will certainly every year exhaust this Income; that Sir Charles might from thence convalt[??] his schemes accordingly and be sensible, what Burthen his Estate will bear; and what money he can from the Welsh Estate appropriate to his own private use, which must also pay the House rent and Expenses in London.'

Escott then annotates individual items:

'To the Gardener £300 'might certainly be lessen'd.' <
Making roads £21 'for a time only' <
Carriage hire £12 'ditto'. <
The Carpenter £110, <
Joiner £48, Mason £70, Lime £36, Tiler and plaisterer £18,
Stone cutter £8 10' <

Those marked thus < on this side will be considerable [sic] less when we have put an end to Scheming.'

Sir Charles proceeded to establish a series of plantations, including chestnuts and firs. By 1756, a survey shows an avenue of trees stretching north towards Goathurst had been planted to complement Sir Halswell's western avenue, although his parterre near the house was to be reduced in size in 1769. The western avenue also shows in the OS map of 1809 although has now been lost. Sir Charles then proceeded to highlight and emphasise the natural features of his

landscape with a series of carefully planned features and buildings. Only the fine dovecote in the grounds of Halswell House predates his activity, being built in the late 17th century. It was re-roofed by American soldiers billeted in the house during the Second World War and its cob walls repaired more recently.



The Dovecote during recent repairs

A brief description follows of each of the structures erected in the park by Sir Charles, in roughly chronological order. Their locations may be found on the map overleaf. Landmarkers tempted to seek out their remains today will find the usual Footpath Map on the Landmark bookshelves and reminded that they should keep to the rights of way.

THE ROCKWORK SCREENS



The surviving rockwork screen in 2018.

Escott records a rockwork screen as being built in 1754 'at the Head of the Canal on the Lawn' below the house. This arched, rusticated screen was adorned with female herms, named after the busts of Hermes which were set up by the Greeks as boundary markers and also used by Romans as garden ornaments. The water cascaded beneath from three large apsidal niches into a circular pool which is clearly visible in 18th century engravings of the house.



13—Pre-war Ordnance Survey map. (1) Halswell House; (2) Grotto; (3) Mrs Busby's Temple; (4) Robin Hood's Hut; (5) Site of Druid's Temple; (6) Bridge in Mill Wood; (7) Temple of Harmony; (8) Site of Horse Monument; (9) Site of statue of Pan; (10) Patcombe Farm; (11) Riding school; (12) Stables

THE ROTUNDA



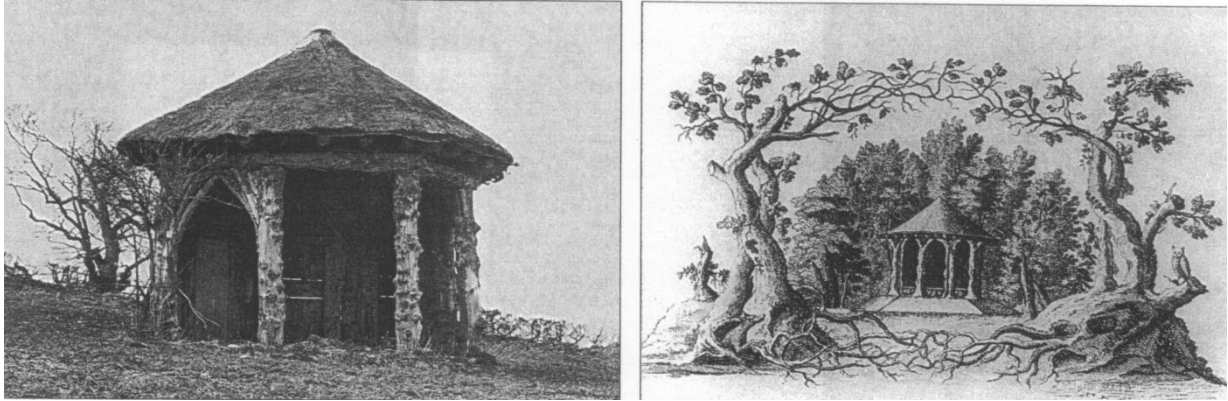
The Rotunda (also known as Mrs Busby's Temple after Sir Charles's sister-in-law) was built on the lawn above the house in 1755. It is very similar to rotundas built by Thomas Wright at Stoke Gifford in Gloucestershire and Culford in Suffolk. Set on a grassy rise on the further side of the lake (now hidden by trees) this Doric rotunda unusually has an icehouse beneath it.

THE STEPPED PYRAMID



In 1744 Sir Charles built a stepped pyramid in Ham stone surmounted by a gryphon bearing a shield behind Halswell House, as a cover for its main well. This mixture of architectural metaphors predates by several decades the fashion for all things Egyptian set by Napoleon's campaign in Egypt in 1798. The structure had an open tank with water gushing into it on one side and an inscription on another, now too decayed to read but thought to have been a dedication to 'a pure nymph', perhaps a niece of Sir Charles's who died prematurely in 1744.

THE DRUID'S TEMPLE



The Druid's Temple, demolished in the 1950s. Design by Thomas Wright, published in 1755.

The Druid's Temple is thought to have been built around 1756 by John de Wilstar. Wilstar was the surveyor responsible for drawing up an estate map in 1756 and is recorded as an architect and builder working in Bristol in the 1740s. He may indeed have been the designer of several of the estate buildings. However, Gervaise Jackson-Stops has pointed out the similarity between Sir Charles's temple and the frontispiece to Thomas Wright's *Book of Arbours*, published in 1755 and to which Sir Charles is known to have subscribed. The bridge and rockwork screen in Mill Wood also resemble drawings by Wright. 'A Druid's Temple in a just style of Bark etc., the view quite gloomy and confined, nearby is a gushing fall which hurts not the moods so raised by so sequestered a scene,' wrote an early visitor. It predated the Witch House at Hestercombe, which was also originally an octagonal and rustic hut.

MILL WOOD, THE BATH STONE BRIDGE AND THE ROCKWORK SCREEN

There had been a mill on the Halswell estate since at least 1314 and one was last recorded in 1597. It may well have stood on the stream that descends through the wooded valley to the west of Halswell House, known as Mill Wood. Sir Charles constructed a Bath Stone Bridge as a dam to form a series of linked ponds from the stream, with a cascade between.



The cascade

The bridge is also thought to have been designed by Thomas Wright. Its rusticated alcove contained a statue of Neptune flanked by two therms, mythical female figures. In the portrait of Sir Charles by Hogarth (see above), the bridge is seen under construction in the background, surrounded by workmen and scaffolding. The stream flowed on through five linked ponds, well-stocked with carp and tench for the household.



Aerial photograph of the linked ponds which ran through Mill Wood. The encroachment of modern farmland on the previously picturesque woodland is clear, especially when compared with the early OS map on page 23 above.



The linked ponds in Mill Wood retain their picturesque qualities and will regain them still further as tree planting and restoration proceed further (2018).



The Bath Stone Bridge in 2018, restoration almost complete. Most of the screen has been skilfully re-carved, matching and interpreting the original fabric.



The screen on the Bath Stone Bridge in 2003, before restoration. The alcove once held a statue of Neptune. The flanking statue may be a 19th-century addition.



The Bath Stone Bridge, painted in 1986 by John Piper (as *The Grotto*).

According to a letter from Warre Bampfylde apparently written in the early 1780s when both were trustees in a scheme to build a new hospital in Bristol, Sir Charles attempted a further sequence of ponds below the house. Warre Bampfylde did not approve:

'I was at Halswell on Monday & view'd your alteration below the House, part of which I much approve of. The lower piece of Water is well conducted, and has a very good effect but the upper pond in its present situation does not correspond with the other but in one point of view, which is near the Gate that goes from your home plot into the Meadow below the House, and to speak freely upon the Matter I think it a point of great difficulty to bring it into any form that will make it appear to unite with what is below it, the difference between the two will ever be an impediment to the natural appearance of that scene, and I have upon maturely considering it determined in my own mind, that if the upper water was totally removed, the appearance of the lower Water would have a better Effect from every point of view, as it would have the look of the beginning of a River, which loses itself very cleverly amongst the trees below ye little bridge now thrown across ye head. When I came from ye Village towards ye House the Head of ye old pond obstructs ye Eye, and I am doubtful if ye Stream will at any time answer the End proposed of making a good Cascade. For this reason I cannot help thinking ye upper pond is in every respect an Eyesore for it must always appear to be a forced piece of ground whether seen from above or below. I can only say that [if] it was my own, I wd entirely remove it. If you differ in opinion, I shall with pleasure make any design for decorating the Head that my poor fancy can furnish. At present it so much resembles the others in your wood, that I cd wish to alter it as much as possible, by dividing the water by rock work in some parts, and letting it unite again in others: but whether the stream will answer this end is rather dubious..... I have told you what I think about the matter, and leave it to your own judgement to resolve.'



John Piper sketching the Bath Stone bridge in 1986. Piper also painted the Rockwork Screen.

Today, only one stately and half blasted chestnut remains of Mill Wood, in which these structures stood. The rest of the timber was felled after the war. In 2018, the wood has been re-acquired by Halswell's new owner and the belt of woodland has been re-planted. The water plain geometry survives and is being re-dredged and gradually excavated with ongoing archaeology. The Grade II* bridge is also nearing full restoration. A local resident remembers seeing its statue of Neptune dragged by chains behind a tractor over the hill to Bridgewater, never to be seen again and presumed melted down. Meanwhile, a pump, maintained by the same local firm that made it so long ago, still pumps water from the Mill Wood ponds above the Temple of Harmony up to the ponds near Halswell House.



The old pump and the last 18th-century sweet chestnut tree to remain of Mill Wood. The area in front of it has once again been planted with trees.



The Temple of Harmony before restoration by the Halswell Park Trust in the late 1990s.

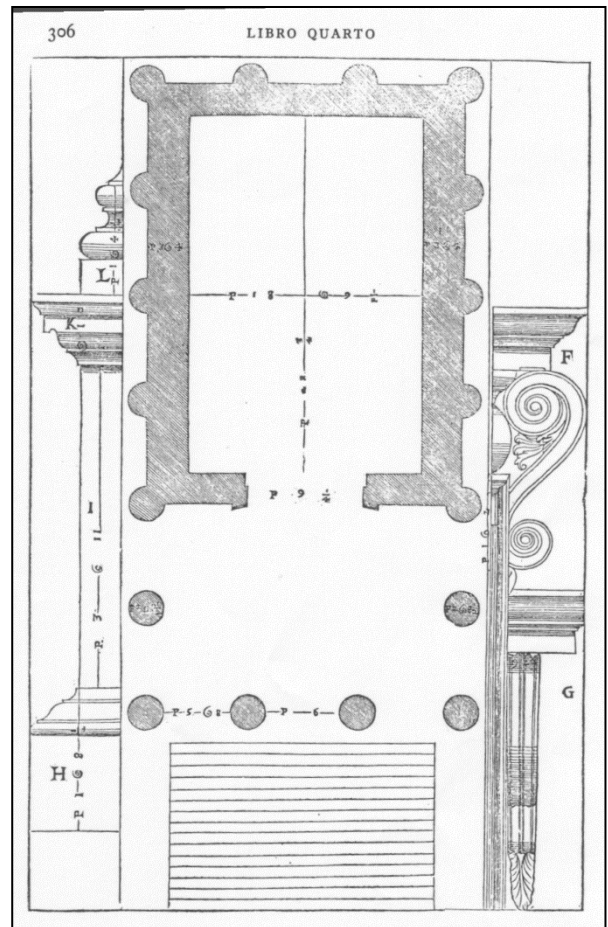
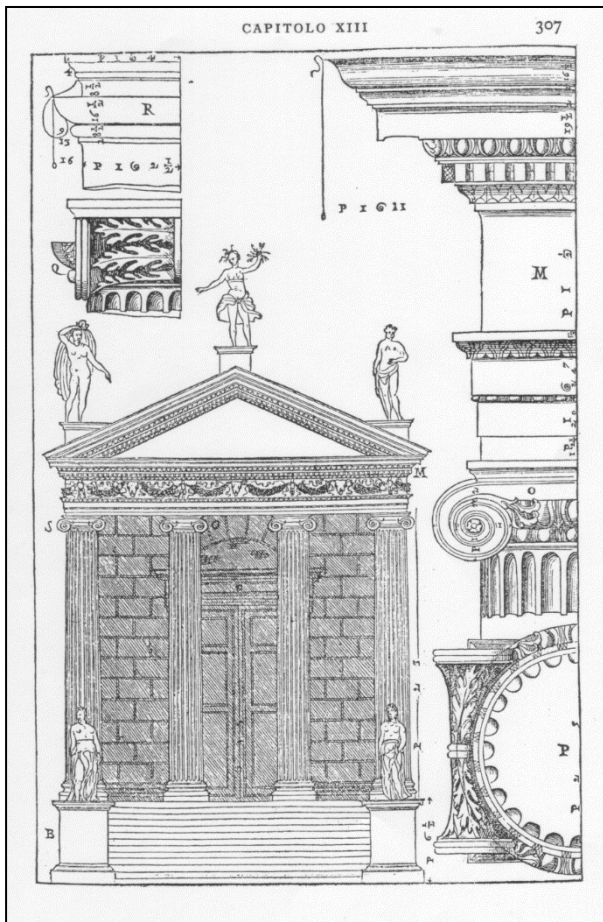
THE TEMPLE OF HARMONY



The Temple of Harmony today, after restoration by the Halswell Park Trust.

Sir Charles seemed to have paused in his endeavours after 1756 but began again with renewed vigour in 1761 when the park was greatly expanded to the east. In 1764-5 he began building again, with his most assured essay, the Temple of Harmony, at the bottom of Mill Wood. According to Escott, it was built for £400. The temple was designed by Thomas Prowse of Axbridge in memory of Sir Charles's and his mutual friend, Peregrine Palmer of nearby Fairfield. Palmer had been MP for Oxford and had died in November 1762. The Temple's design is based on the Temple of Fortuna Virilis in Rome (dating from the 1st century BC) as depicted in Palladio's *Quattro Libri*, the authoritative texts for the English Palladian movement.

The designs for the Temple Fortuna Virilis on which the Temple of Harmony was based, from Palladio's *Quattro Libri*.



Robert Adam is now known to have had a hand in the design of the interiors and his neo-Classical aedicule still remains, supported by Palyrma columns. A statue of Terpsichore stands in the central niche, carved by John Walsh of London and signed and dated 1771, although an R. Barford wrote to Sir Charles on 12th Sept. 'in my way thro' London I called on your Statuary Mr Walsh, who has finished the model of Harmony & I think it is a very fine figure.'

As muse of song and dance, she holds a zither and a pair of compasses. The current statue in the Temple is a modern Coade-stone replica, the broken fingers of the original now restored (the original is in Taunton Museum). The plasterwork in the Temple is thought to be by Bristol plasterer Thomas Stocking, to whom the architect Prowse sent a drawing in August 1766 with instructions to attend Sir Charles at Halswell.



Terpsichore from the Temple of Harmony, now in Taunton Museum. A modern Coade stone copy now stands in the Temple.

A letter survives from Sir Charles to his steward Mr Escott, dated 'Monday ye 27 1767' which illuminates his plans for both the Temple of Harmony and Robin Hood's Hut and is reproduced opposite. A transcription may help those daunted by Sir Charles's execrable handwriting:

'I think I perceive a Storm a Brewing against the next Election, which will erase all new Schemes from my thoughts till that time is over. However our present Schemes I wd have finished out of Hand and I am now fix'd in my Plan for the Temple in the Wood, in the place of the Window, there will be a Nick [=niche] wch will spread 7 foot in the hight 13 & half. I shall send som thing from London. And, as for the Building on the Hill in the Park, the first room, wch I call the hermits room, must have an earthen floor, the Kitchen on the left, a brick and the little room, for china, must be boarded. I shld be glad to hear how shed[?] the Brick for about town everything is destroy'd by the last frost totally, even the Gooseberries. I have not express'd myself so fully as I wish concerning the Temple in the Wood. Every thing concerning the Nick, I shall send down from London but the floor wch I have the opinion of Every one (I think have real good taste) tells me must be of the same stone that the Portico is floor'd with – this floor I am certain Westcott can make as compleat as anyone if he has the Stone that will agree in colour. And I wd have this floor finish'd before I come into t he Country. All the parts of the Nick I shall send from hence, finish'd to put up immediately. I will give you as well as I can an Idea of what I shall send down somewhat later[?] executed I hope after this Sketch.'⁴

Sadly, the temple Prowse designed as a memorial to friendship between others became his own memorial too as he died during the project. The temple had to have an inscription and in this Sir Charles again had the benefit of advice from a well-meaning friend, who wrote an undated letter and signed himself simply 'L':

'I can assure my Dear Friend that the enclosed inscription was the inscription of and the Production of Nowell & therefore I may venture to say I think it the Best. But even this seems to me to have one Objection, which is increased by the Alteration now made!
I assume your Intention was to do equal Honor to your Two Friends; & I cannot think Mr Prowse is on a Par with Palmer as it first stood; but as it is now changed, he appears only in the light of an architect and might most naturally stand in a Parenthesis; by which Situation He hath small share in the Compliment. Viz
"To The Memory &c
This Temple of Harmony
(Designed by Tho. Prowse Esq.)
Was erected &c'

⁴ SRO DD/S/WH/269 Escott's papers.

If it is deemed necessary to signify that the edifice was designed by Prowse, why should it not simply be mentioned on some proper Place on the Outside ; leaving the Internal Inscription plainly "To the Memory of Palmer Esq

&

Tho. Prowse Esq

This Temple &c &c.

Their Respective Trusts, one as Representative of the University & the other as Representative of the county of Somerset may, or may not be added to their names as shall be most agreeable.'⁵

As Arthur Young's account makes clear (see p.45), the walk down through Mill Wood was intended to stimulate a full range of emotions, from the silent waters and 'gloomy and confined views' beneath the Druid's Temple to the more cheerful passage onto the more open landscape around the Temple of Harmony, where 'every part is riant, and bears the stamp of pleasure.'

ROBIN HOOD'S HUT

Robin Hood's Hut was built in 1767, partaking of the fashion for hermitages and rustic estate buildings (a documentary reference also suggests flooring work in 1771). The idea of thatched estate buildings is often traced back to Abbe Laugier's *Essai sur l'Architecture*, published in Paris in 1753 and in England in 1755. Laugier argued that the 'rustic cabin of primitive man' was the 'model on which all the magnificences in architecture have been imagined.' Laugier had an important influence on the neo-classical movement and especially on architects who designed *cottages ornés*.

The building's situation and design were carefully contrived to provide the maximum drama. Just as today, a drive through dark woodland brought the visitor to the rustic rear elevation, bark-clad and at the time no doubt instantly redolent of the hermit's dwellings then in vogue. Just as at another Landmark,

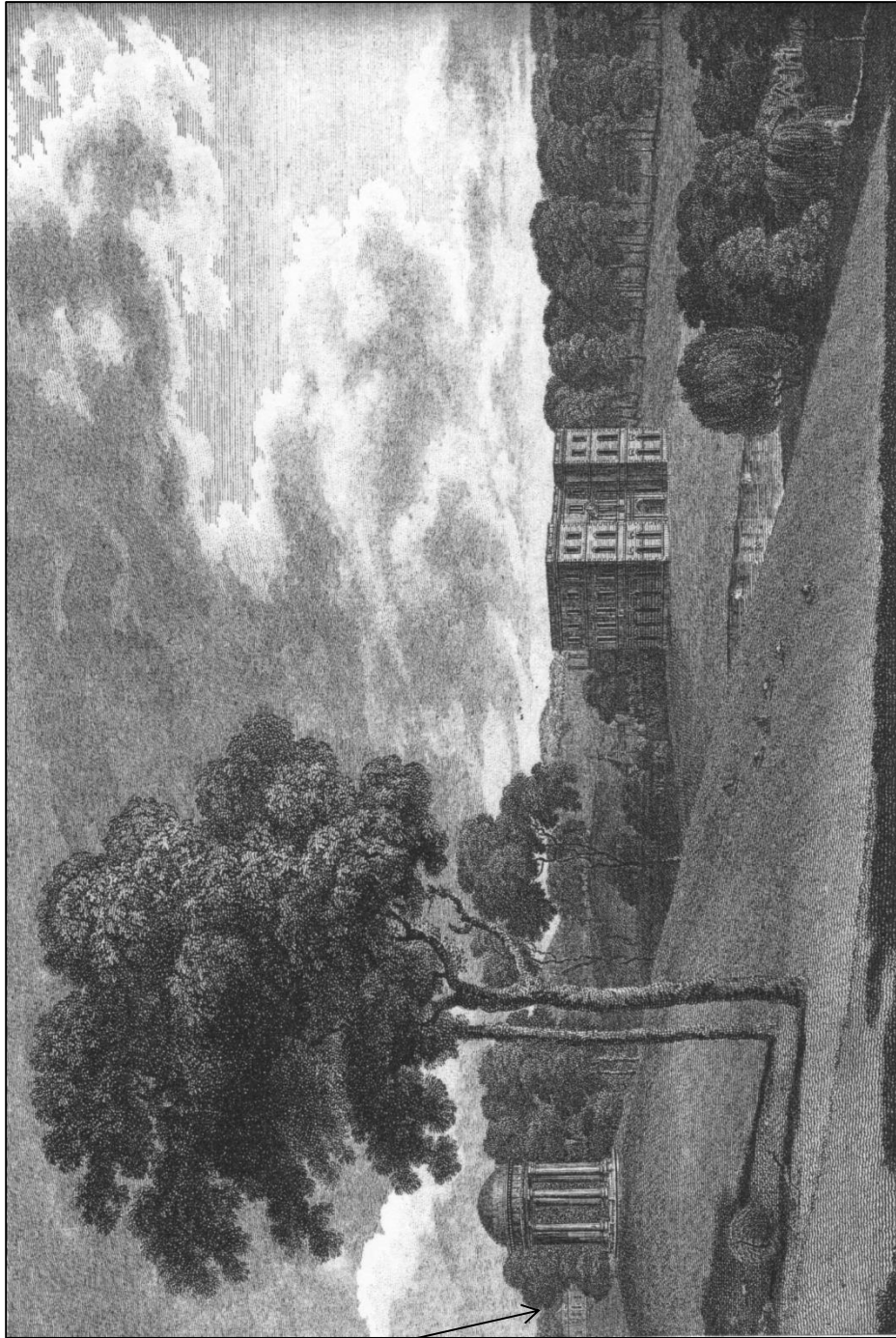
⁵ SRO DD\S\WH\322

The Ruin at Hackfall, one enters into a dark and gloomy space with no hint of what lies beyond. At Robin Hood's Hut, the panorama looks out over the Bristol Channel to the islands of Steepholm and Flatholm and on to Wales. The sense of space and light when the doors were flung open to reveal the view must have been as breathtaking then as now and Landmark's treatment of the interior seeks to retain something of this contrast.

The rustic rear elevation had bark appliquéd to the eaves and the door, which was also originally framed by two massive hollow tree trunks. The quoins were rusticated by pressing pebbles into the mortar. The SBPT replicated both these quoins and the bark clad door in their restoration.

The view is framed by a canted veranda or umbrello of ogee arches on clustered columns, flanked by gothick windows. Building analysis carried out on behalf of the SBPT suggested that it may originally have been intended as a full octagonal room: straight joints to the existing masonry suggested an octagonal structure with openings on more than three sides. A series of relieving arches suggesting openings or niches in each wall were later modified to form the circular internal wall, in a slightly uneasy transition from the octagonal. The flues from the side room run up at angles to meet in a single chimney above the doorway rather than each rising vertically as might be expected and this could be seen as a remnant of the earlier design. Under this hypothesis, the building would have achieved its current profile in a second phase of work, perhaps in the early nineteenth century, by which time the influence of the Brighton Pavilion might explain the flavour of the Raj in the ogee arcade above columns which are pure Batty Langley Gothic in style.

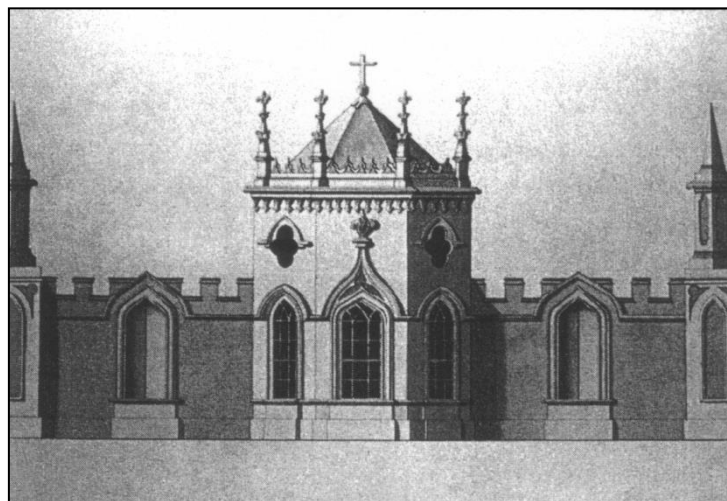
A small length of the neo-classical frieze of twisted vines remained in situ and the plasterwork on the ceiling of the dome worked to appear as drapery and swagged at each spandrel was worked out from fragments of plaster found on the ground



Engraving of Halswell House by Thomas Bonner from John Collinson's History of Antiquities for the County of Somerset (1791), showing Robin Hood's Hut at the far left. It is partly the appearance of the hut as shown in the detail that has prompted speculation that the umbrella was added in the early 19th century – although allowing for the notoriously uneven memories of the engravers, this seems a fair representation.

before restoration. Research showed that the plasterwork in the Temple of Harmony was done by Thomas Stocking (who also worked at Amo Castle) and the style of the fragments found at Robin Hood's Hut make Stocking a likely candidate to have worked there too, as well as on the family pew in St Edward's Church since all date from the mid to late 1760s. It seems likely that the umbrella ceiling would have been altered when the open arches were inserted. The plaster fragments which remained suggested that this ceiling was quite crude in form: though its surface undulates in plan, the laths did not.

The design for the hut clearly drew on the patterns for such pavilions drawn by Batty Langley in his *Gothic Architecture Improved* (1747). It is also sometimes attributed to Thomas Wright. However, there is a plan and elevation of "a Gothick Pavilion at Halswell House" by Henry Keene (1726-76) Surveyor of the Fabric at Westminster Abbey, in the V & A Drawings Collection. While it is not an exact replica of the building we see today (showing an octagonal room and porch with flanking walls, Keene is now considered its most likely designer. Keene may also have designed the family pew in Goathurst church, a mixture of Gothick and pseudo-Jacobean work (St Edward's in Goathurst is well worth a visit for the splendid Tynte family memorials).

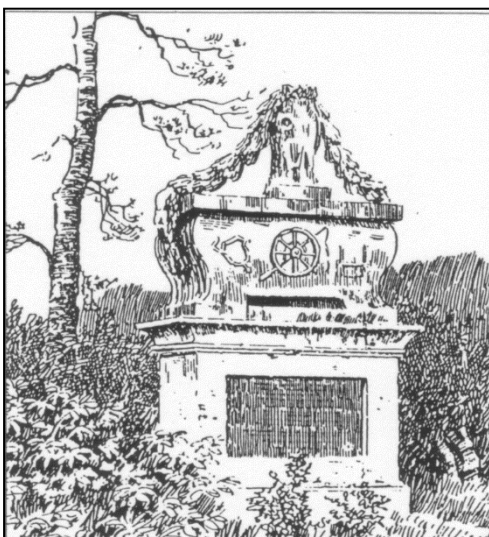


Henry Keene's design for Sir Charles Tynte (V&A).

According to Sir Charles's steward Escott, 'Robin Hood's House' was built in 1765 at a cost of £300, but it seems it was still being worked on in 1767 when Sir Charles specified a clear hierarchy through the three rooms in the letter cited above : 'as for the Building on the Hill in the Park, the first room, which I call the hermit's room, must have an earthen floor, the kitchen on the left, a brick, and the little room for China, must be board'd.' This hierarchy is also reflected in the blanking out of the window in the left hand room – the servants were not to be distracted from their tasks by the magnificence of the vista outside or to spy on Sir Charles and his guests.

The name Robin Hood's Hut may also have been a quip on one of Sir Charles's factotums, Mr Sherwood, who lived in a house on the eastern edge of the estate, known as Sherwood. However, Robin Hood was something of an iconic figure to eighteenth century Whigs as a defender of natural English liberties against royal encroachments. Gothic architecture, as the "Old English style" was employed to communicate a similar subtext, as for example at another Landmark pavilion, the Gothic Temple at Stowe, where Lord Cobham set an even earlier example in 1741.

MONUMENT TO A FAVOURITE HORSE



Sir Charles erected a monument to the memory of a favourite horse in 1765, halfway down the avenue that led from the house to Mill Wood. The stallion apparently died after winning a wager for its owner. The monument survived until relatively recently, when it was knocked over by a tractor. Local anecdote has it that the farmer then removed the statue to adorn his garden and had its inscription set into the floor of the changing room for his swimming pool. Such are the unregulated dispersals that occur.

TEMPLE OF PAN, PATCOMBE

In 1771, Sir Charles built a brick house for his bailiff, with a pedimented front facing into the hillside and a convex Doric portico on the other side enclosing an oval loggia whose plan repeats that at Robin Hood's Hut. Originally, a life-size bronze statue of Pan guarded the approach to the house, some 50 yards from it. The Temple was probably designed by architect John Johnson (1732-1814) who exhibited depictions of a Temple of Pan in the gardens at Halswell at the Society of Artists in 1778. The Temple has now been fully restored as private residential accommodation.



The Temple of Pan before restoration as a private house.

GATE LODGE

The gate lodge was built c. 1825 to replace an earlier one. The cottage *orné* style it presents enjoyed a brief vogue in the early nineteenth century, after the inspiration of Nash and Repton's Blaise Castle Hamlet near Bristol, now in the ownership of the National Trust.



The gate lodge to Halswell House, with St Edward's Church beyond.

KITCHEN GARDENS

Records of Halswell under the occupancy of Sir Charles's widow from 1785-98 show the successful cultivation of oranges, lemons, citrons, coffee trees, pepper trees and prickly figs (presumably against flue heated walls and greenhouses, much as at Dunmore, home to Landmark's own exotic fruit, The Pineapple). There was also a hotbed for melons as well as a nursery garden and hothouses, renowned for their variety of exotic fruit. Each year in the late 1780s, Lady Tynte left with the gardener twists of paper containing melon seeds from the Duke of Manchester.

ARTHUR YOUNG'S DESCRIPTION OF HALSWELL (reproduced in

J. Collinson's *History of the Antiquities of Somerset* Vol, 1771, pp. 81-83)

'But what chiefly attracts the notice and attention of strangers are the decorated grounds. The riding which leads to the principal points of view crosses the park by the house, commanding a fine view of the rich vale of Bridgwater. It then runs by the side of a woody precipice, and up through some new plantations, from a dark part of which you enter through a door into a temple dedicated to Robin Hood; upon which a most noble prospect breaks at once upon the beholder, which acts not a little by the surprize of the entrance. The ground shelves from it in front and to the right gradually; but to the left in bolder slopes; where the dips are beautifully grouped with wood and the hills above them rise in waving inclosures.

'About the house the groves thicken; and a vast vale of rich inclosures, spotted in a beautiful manner with white objects, stretches beyond it to a distance of twelve miles. Then you command the channel, which is here nine miles over, the Steep Holm rising in the midst of it very boldly, and beyond these the mountains of Wales rise one behind another.

'From hence the riding leads up into the hills, commanding all the way a most extensive prospect: after which it turns down through a plantation to a single oak, with a few pales about it, and a bench. Here the grounds sinking from the eye form a most sweet landscape. The lawns undulate in the finest manner, and the groves of oak seem to drop into the hollows. The clumps and trees have an uncommon elegance, and unite the foreground of the scene with Robin Hood's temple, which is here seen to great advantage. Beyond the whole you have the distant extensive prospect.

'From hence the riding leads down the hill to a wood of noble oaks, which shade a spot beautifully wild and sequestered, where a limpid spring rises at the foot of a rock overhung in a fine bold manner by wood growing from its clefts. The water winds away through the grove in a proper manner. Here is a tablet with these lines:

When Israel's wand'ring sons the desert trod,
The melting rock obey'd the prophet's rod;
Forth gushed the stream; the tribes their thirst allay'd;
Forgetful of their GOD, they rose and play'd.
Ye happy swains, for whom these waters flow,

Oh! may your hearts with grateful ardours glow!
Lo! here a fountain streams at HIS command,
Not o'er barren, but a fruitful land;
Where nature's choicest gifts the vallies fill,
And smiling plenty gladdens every hill.

'Turning the corner you catch a bridge, under a thick shade, and then come to the Druid's temple, built in a just stile, of bark, & c. the view quite gloomy and confined: the water winds silently along, except a little gushing fall which hurts not the emotions raised by so sequestered a scene.

'Following the path towards the bridge, you catch just before you come at it, a little landscape through the trees, of distant water, finely united with wood. From the bridge the river appears to great advantage; nobly embanked on one side with tall spreading trees, and on the other with green slopes in which single ones are scattered.

'From these retired and gloomy spots you leave the dark groves, and open in to a more cheerful ground: the river is bounded only on one side by thick wood, and on the other by waving lawns open to the fields, and scattered thinly with trees. From a bench on the banks you view a slight fall of water well shaded.

'As we advance the character of the ground again changes most happily; the woods open on both sides the water; the waving lawns are of the most lively verdure. Trees thinly scattered – brighter streams – touches of distant prospect and elegant buildings – all unite to raise the most cheerful ideas, which we were prepared for, by gradually leaving the gloom of the more sequestered woods.

'A break through the trees to the right lets in a view of the Rotunda. Passing to the Ionic portico, which is excellently placed, the scenery in view is truly enchanting: the lawn is gently waved, and spotted with trees and shrubs in the happiest taste. The water seems to wind naturally through a falling vale; and a swelling hill, crowned by the rotunda, forms a complete picture. The whole scene is really elegant; every part is *riant*, and bears the stamp of pleasure.

‘As you cross the bridge, you look to the right on a very beautiful cascade, which makes five or six slight falls over a moss and ivy bank, under a dark shade of wood. The slopes, wood and water unite to render the scene striking.

‘Turning down by the water the lawn continues very beautiful, and you gain a fine view of the Ionic portico on a rising slope, which here appears to great advantage; but the middle cascade, which you here command, should be totally hid; it is an inferior repetition of the principal one.

‘Rising the hill by the side of the water, you have from a bench under a spreading wood, an agreeable view of a bridge; and a little further another commands the same object, and has also a very pleasing opening through the trees to the portico. The view left up to the river is a confirmation of Shenstone's observation.

‘The riding which follows on the bank of the river under the gloomy shade of numerous venerable trees, is a fit residence for contemplation to dwell in. The openings across the water on the opposite lawn are just sufficient to heighten by contrast. The awful shade, the solemn stillness of the scene, broken by nothing but the fall of distant waters, have altogether a great effect and impress upon the mind a melancholy scarcely effaced by the cheerful view of a rich vale, with the water winding through it, which is seen on crossing the park to the house. This seat has received rich gifts from nature, and very pleasing ones from art. The riding is of large extent, and commands a great variety of distant prospect and rich landscapes. The home scenes are elegant, and set off by the shade of such a noble wood, that every impression they make is rendered forcible. The buildings are light and pleasing in style.’

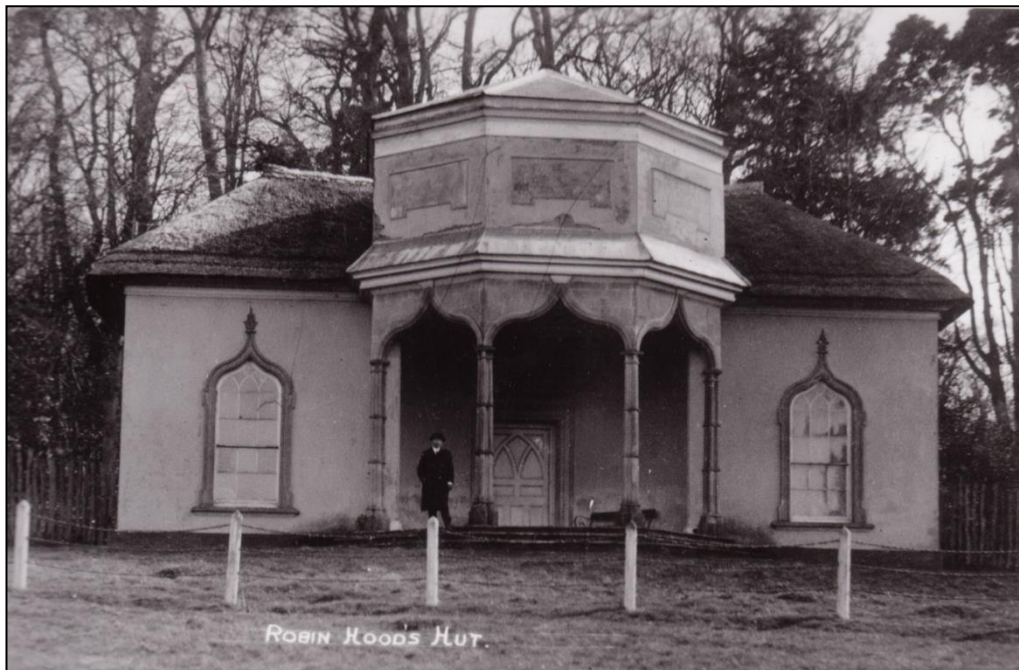


When Sir Charles Tynte died in 1778, the estate passed through his wife Ann (after whose sister Mrs Busby's Temple was named) to his nephew, Charles Kemeys Kemeys-Tynte. This charming family group shows his wife and five children, presumably painted in the 1810s.

LATER HISTORY OF THE GARDENS

Through the nineteenth century, the revival in mediaeval romanticism brought with it a renewed fashion for deer parks. Halswell Park was no exception: by 1892 it held some 450 head of fallow deer, the largest herd in the country. By 1911, when the park had been enlarged to 220 acres, it also held red deer. Plantations of larch, Japanese larch and Douglas fir were added between 1906 and 1910.

During these years too the Tynte family fought to reclaim the Wharton barony, lost in 1678. By the time Charles Theodore Halswell Kemeys-Tynte finally succeeded in 1916 after 196 years, it had become the longest case in chancery history.



Robin Hood's Hut in the early twentieth century (*NMR*)

The estate remained in the hands of the Kemeys-Tyntes family until it was sold in 1950, a somewhat unfortunate result of the estate being vested with Hoare's Bank. The contents of Halswell House passed to the Munthe family and many are

displayed today in Southside House in Wimbledon, a fine Restoration period house full of treasures. Ownership of Halswell house and estate then became fragmented. The coach house and stables became freehold residences and the house, which had been damaged by fire in the 1920s, narrowly avoided demolition by being converted into flats. The 'lawn' to the east of the house became a wilderness, covering up the Rotunda and grotto. The estate was sold off in parcels of land to various local farmers. In Mill Wood, ancient oaks and chestnuts were felled, leaving the temples exposed and at the mercy of vandals – the Druid's Temple had already been lost in the 1950s. The statue of Pan disappeared to Castle Hill, near South Molton in Devon and the horse monument was similarly removed by the farmer.



The 17th-century mansion was gutted by fire in the 1920s. Much of today's interior belongs to the restoration that followed, probably account for the foreclosure by Hoare's in 1950.

In the late 1980s, the then owners of Halswell House went bankrupt and the house was repossessed. The Temple of Harmony was in such a ruinous state that the owner was threatened with a Repairs Notice. In 1993 there was an offer to move the Temple and re-erect it elsewhere (this was not the first such offer – in 1958 Pevsner had authoritatively reported that 'the Temple is to be re-erected in Portmeirion, Mr Williams-Ellis's estate in Wales').

This proved the nadir of the fortunes of the park. Local outcry led to a refusal of listed building consent to move the Temple of Harmony and it was at this point that the Somerset Buildings Preservation Trust (SBPT) became involved. The decision by the SBPT to restore the Temple of Harmony was a seminal event that brought the past grandeur and present plight of Halswell Park to the attention of the general public. It sparked the restoration of the Rotunda, the Dovecote and Patcombe Farm and led to the formation of the Halswell Park Trust dedicated to the long term ideal of reuniting and restoring the Halswell Park landscape.

The SBPT acquired the Temple in October 1994 and Robin Hood's Hut in January 1995. Both were derelict, cattle sheltering in the roofless Temple and trees growing through both. The umbrella had entirely collapsed

ROBIN HOOD'S HUT BEFORE RESTORATION BY THE SOMERSET BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST.

Photos: SBPT



North elevation, with details of collapsed umbrella.



South elevation before restoration, all render lost. The scraps of wood bottom right are the remnants of the giant trunks that once framed the door on this elevation.



A charitable trust, the Halswell Park Trust, was set up to mastermind the park's restoration. A repairs notice was served, with the result that the SBPT took the Temple on and undertook its repair. The Temple opened to the public in May 1996 and continues to be opened periodically.

Robin Hood's Hut, in an even more ruinous state, was then acquired by John Bolley Tuckey who generously gave it to the SBPT. With the help of grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and English Heritage, work began on site in June 1997 and was completed in 1998. At first it was opened occasionally to the public like the Temple of Harmony, but given the building's exposed setting, it soon became clear that more regular use would be required in the long term and the SBPT approached Landmark. Knowing the exemplary standards set in its repair, Landmark was keen to help with the building's long term future and a long lease was agreed with the SBPT. Access proved less easy to resolve and required lengthy negotiations, finally resolved late in 2002.



During repair by the SBPT.



Rebuilding the roof above the umbrella.



Left: Scratch coat of render and lead flashing. Right: The fragment of plaster work on which the frieze restoration was based.

RESTORATION OF ROBIN HOOD'S HUT

Phase 1: Somerset Buildings Preservation Trust

The plight of this pretty little pavilion before the involvement of the Somerset Buildings Preservation Trust is clear from Headley & Meulenkamp's rather dismissive description of it after their visit in the late 1980s. 'Robin Hood's Temple, a wonderful name for a disappointing building, is slowly collapsing at the top of the hill above the house. What remains is a plain, oblong building with a ridiculous, 1930s, Bletchley-style central chimneypot and two ogival windows flanking a ruined circular or semicircular prospect room.' Photos from the National Monuments Record also make clear its derelict state.

The building had been "excavated" in 1989 and much salvaged stone, plaster and timber stored in Halswell House. Those fragments provided essential information for the restoration, as did the surviving structure. Work involved the complete overhaul of the building including reconstruction of the umbrella, new roof structure and thatch (in new combed wheat reed), masonry repairs, new plasterwork and floor and some landscaping. Significant aspects of the work required some interpretation, most notably the interior plasterwork to the umbrella although fortunately some fragments of the grape and vine leaf frieze had survived. The new chimney piece in the china room was based on fragments of the original.

The restoration, completed in 1998, was a success but before long it became clear that only occasional access meant that the unheated building began to deteriorate through inadequate ventilation and maintenance. It needed to be used and with this in mind, the SBPT approached Landmark in 2000. Access with neighbouring landowners took lengthy negotiations to resolve but in 2003 the Trust gave the building to Landmark.



Robin Hood's Hut in 1998 after restoration by the Somerset Building Preservation Trust.

Phase 2 – Conversion to a Landmark

As the building had already been restored with generous grant aid from English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund, we were not able to go back for more and were therefore dependent on our own fundraising efforts. We were helped by a particularly generous private donation and this enabled work to begin in the autumn of 2003.

The SBPT had restored the hut as a garden building, without modern services which therefore had to be brought to the building, primarily beneath the floors to avoid disturbing the new plasterwork more than absolutely necessary. Another conundrum was where, in these three tiny rooms, to put a bathroom. After much thought, we decided to house it in a hut of our own, with more than a nod to the fashion in Sir Charles' own day for such rustic structures. A third major decision was to form a doorway between the current kitchen and bedroom. Originally the bedroom was the servants' kitchen entered only from outside, observing a strict division between polite and service areas. However, the servants' room had two symmetrical recesses (one matching that in the china room). One of these contained a cooking hearth and has been kept; the other, probably for shelving originally, we felt it acceptable to breach to allow the building to be lived in satisfactorily and providing an internal symmetry with the door to the China Room.

Exterior

Given the recency of the SBPT restoration, very little repair was needed externally. The new thatch, of combed wheat straw, remained in reasonable condition but Landmark renewed the ridge, including the horns at the end of each ridge which are a traditional feature in this part of Somerset. The external walls of the cottage elevation were given three new coats of yellow ochre limewash, while the umbrella received a rather thicker lime sheltercoat, tinted to recreate a bathstone colour. The umbrella floor was raked out and re-pointed.

Interior

China Room

This nomenclature of this is of course Sir Charles' own and the recess beside the fireplace probably once held a china cupboard. We have inherited the current joinery regimen (shutters, sill boards, architraves and skirtings) from the SBPT. The elm floorboards were also laid by the SBPT, loosely to combat serious dampness in the past. These we took up carefully in order to fit insulation between the joists, route electric cables and install electric underfloor heating. An underfloor vent was also introduced to help the chimney draw. The absence of curtains is deliberate, accepting that shutters were the usual form of window dressing in such estate buildings.

The Hermit's Room or Kitchen

Architecturally, this room is essentially a lobby, with four doors opening into it. It also continues to serve the purpose of antechamber to the drama of the panorama, and both these aspects have directed the arrangement of the kitchen. By placing the appliances alongside the entrance door we have tried to preserve something of the intended atmosphere as the building is entered.

Sir Charles Tynte had very clear ideas about the hierarchy of materials in his little pavilion, as seen in his instruction that 'the first room, which I call the hermit's room, must have an earthen floor, the kitchen on the left, a brick, and the little room for China, must be board'd.' The original kitchen or servants' room (now the bedroom) appears still to have its original brick pammets and something similar was initially contemplated for today's kitchen. However, Sir Charles instruction was so explicit and the hierarchy such a striking aspect to the building that we decided that the earthen floor should be replicated. As bare earth might be considered a little unfriendly today, we decided to use a *battuto* technique of which we have experience from Villa Saraceno, Landmark's Palladian villa in Italy. *Coccio pesto* means literally 'ground brick,' as brick fragments are crushed and then compacted in a breathing lime concrete. Our contractors looked on with a certain bemusement as we experimented with various mixes of local sands and

sub soil, hydraulic lime and the brick and tile pieces, inventively crushed by the contractor with the bucket of a JCB! The final recipe was carefully mixed by hand and compacted over the new breathing subfloor to sandwich the underfloor heating elements. Once the lime component had 'gone off' or set, the surface was hand-sanded to bring out the tile aggregate and present a harder wearing surface. The surface will be oiled annually, just as at Villa Saraceno.

The walls are limewashed in the same ochre as the external walls, further reflecting the ambiguity of this space.

The Servants' Room (today's bedroom)

This room has been kept much as it was. The terracotta floor, as mentioned above, is thought to be original and has been disturbed as little as possible. The vestiges of the cooking hearth remain while the recess which must have held shelving for utensils etc. has been breached to form the new door, the inner face of the door lining being designed to reflect this former use. There was never a window in this room to make the most of the view (the servants were not there to enjoy themselves) and we therefore felt it would be an unwarranted intrusion into the external appearance to introduce one.

The Bathroom Hut

This new build has been carefully oriented to allow the view through the window to be enjoyed from the bath. The oak shingled roof and elm clad walls conceal a modern structure with underfloor heating and is insulated to the highest standards. Similarly, provision of both water (from a borehole) and electricity incorporate very 21st-century technology and solutions. As the hut mellows, it will blend into the woodland behind it, allowing Landmarkers the chance to play reclusive hermit themselves while enjoying a long hot soak.

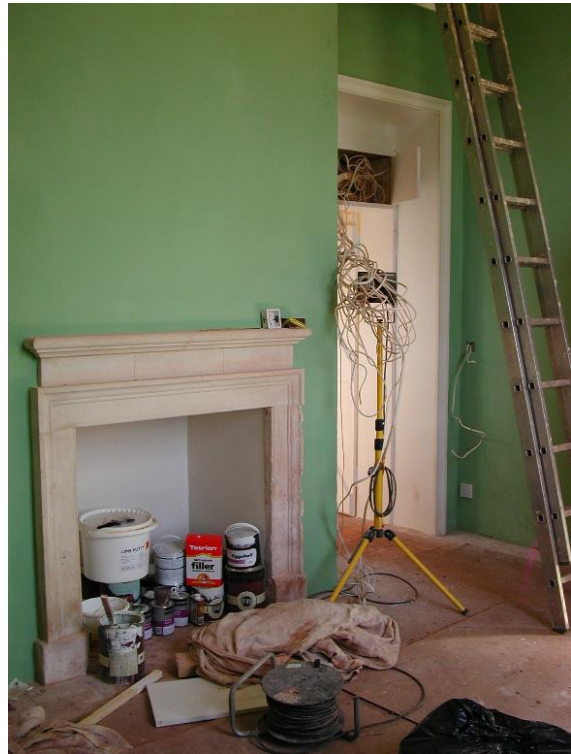


Positioning the ash trunks (from the woodland behind) which support the bathroom eaves. They stand on stone bases to prevent rot.





Finishing off the new door to the bedroom



The tangle of cables that have to be concealed to provide modern services, here above the new door.



Inspecting the flashing above the umbrello.



Re-finishing the umbrello.



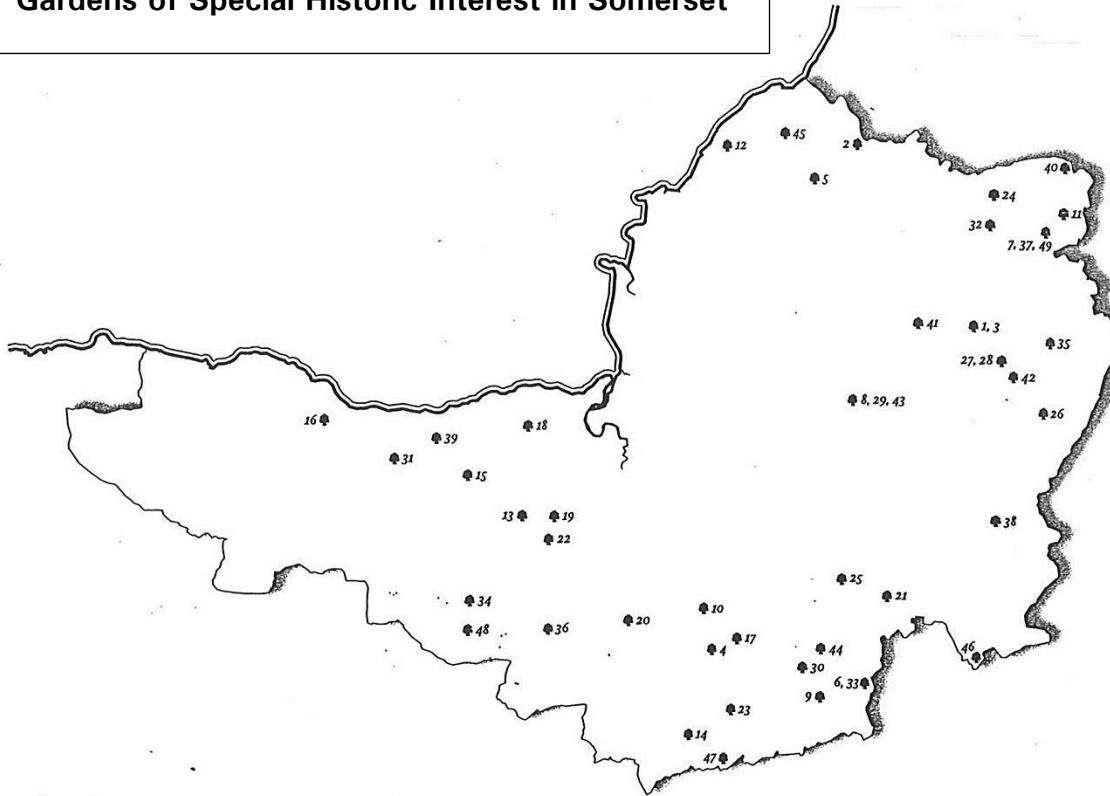
Labour intensive: sanding the *coccio pesto* floor (above) and bedding pebbles outside.





The team from H & B Construction enjoying the view over lunch.

Gardens of Special Historic Interest in Somerset



1. **AMMERDOWN HOUSE, Kilmersdon, Grade II*.**
Italianate formal garden layout, 1901-3 by Sir Edwin Lutyens; park of late 18th Century to early 19th Century by Thomas Jolliffe.
2. **ASHTON COURT, Long Ashton, Grade II*.**
Landscape park circa 1801 after design by Humphry Repton; formal gardens of late 19th Century.
3. **BABINGTON HOUSE, Kilmersdon, Grade II.**
Gardens and park mid 18th Century onwards.
4. **BARRINGTON COURT, Barrington, Grade II*.**
Mainly formal garden enclosures and layout, 1920-25, partly to designs by Gertrude Jekyll. Restored late 1970s-80s. National Trust.
5. **BARROW COURT, Barrow Gurney, Grade II.**
Remains of 18th Century park and enclosed formal garden layout designed by Inigo Thomas in 1890.
6. **BARWICK PARK, Barwick, Grade II*.**
Landscape park, with follies, probably late 18th Century.
7. **BECKFORD'S RIDE, Bath, Grade II.**
Irregular but continuous areas of garden and woodland, developed in 1822-44 by William Beckford.
8. **BISHOP'S PALACE, Wells, Grade II.**
Walled and moated precincts of bishop's palace, medieval, but landscaped 1824-45. Remains of deer park.
9. **Brympton d'Evercy, Brympton, Grade II*.**
Early formal gardens and pleasure grounds, late 17th Century, altered and added to circa 1723, 1860 and 1910.
10. **BURTON PYNSENT, Curry Rivel, Grade II.**
Landscape pleasure grounds and park, mainly circa 1765 by Capability Brown with William Pitt.
11. **CLAVERTON MANOR, Claverton, Grade II.**
Remains of terraced gardens of circa 1580, gardens and pleasure grounds of early 19th Century with American garden layout of 1960s. Park-like landscape, 18th Century to early 19th Century.
12. **CLEVEDON COURT, Clevedon, Grade II*.**
Terraced gardens of circa 1700 extended circa 1775 with planting of 18th Century to 1840. National Trust.
13. **COTHELSTONE MANOR, Cothelstone, Grade II.**
Formal drive, forecourt and remains of formal gardens.
14. **CRICKET HOUSE, Cricket St Thomas, Grade II*.**
Terraced gardens, late 17th Century to early 18th Century. Pleasure grounds and park, late 18th Century to early 19th Century. Now forms part of wildlife park.
15. **CROWCOMBE COURT, Crowcombe, Grade II.**
Walled gardens and landscape park, circa 1723 onwards.

16. **DUNSTER CASTLE**, Dunster, Grade I.
Gardens and woodland on castle hill. Early and late 18th Century, mid 19th Century, on medieval site. National Trust.
17. **EAST LAMBROOK MANOR**, Kingsbury Episcopi, Grade I.
Plantsman's garden created by Margery Fish from 1937.
18. **FAIRFIELD**, Stogursey, Grade II.
Enclosed gardens and park.
19. **HALSWELL PARK**, Goathurst, Grade II.
Landscape pleasure grounds and park mainly mid to late 18th Century by Sir Charles Kemys Tynte.
20. **HATCH COURT**, Hatch Beauchamp, Grade II.
Gardens, landscaped pleasure grounds and deer park, mid 18th Century.
21. **HAZELGROVE HOUSE**, Queen Camel, Grade II.
18th Century landscape park with formal garden in front of house.
22. **HESTERCOMBE**, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Grade I.
Formal layout 1904-10 by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll, restored 1973-8; remains of parkland; landscaped combe of circa 1750-90 by Coplestone Warre Bampfylde.
23. **HINTON HOUSE**, Hinton St George, Grade II.
Gardens and pleasure grounds, landscape park, late 17th Century and mid 18th Century onwards.
24. **KELSTON PARK**, Kelston, Grade II.
Landscape park 1767-68 by Capability Brown. Terraced garden.
25. **LYTES CARY**, Charlton Mackrell, Grade II.
Garden enclosures, in Elizabethan manner created in 1907-20 by Sir Walter Jenner, restored 1960s in the Jekyll tradition. National Trust.
26. **MARSTON HOUSE**, Trudoxhill, Grade II.
Remains of pleasure grounds and landscape park, 1724-45 by Stephen Switzer, 1819-22 by Sir Jeffry Wyatville, and late 19th Century.
27. **MELLS MANOR HOUSE**, Mells, Grade I.
Gardens circa 1520 and circa 1900 with advice from Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll.
28. **MELLS PARK**, Mells, Grade II.
Gardens by Sir Edwin Lutyens of circa 1924, altered; landscape park, late 18th Century.
29. **MILTON LODGE and THE COMBE**, Wells, Grade II.
Early 20th Century terraced gardens and parkland; detached early 19th Century walled pleasure ground.
30. **MONTACUTE HOUSE**, Montacute, Grade I.
Formal garden enclosures and remains of parkland. Late 16th Century through to mid 19th Century. National Trust.
31. **NETTLECOMBE COURT**, Nettlecombe, Grade II.
Pleasure grounds and landscape park, mid to late 18th Century.
32. **NEWTON PARK**, Newton St Loe, Grade II.
Landscape pleasure grounds and park, circa 1760 by Capability Brown, 1796-97 by Humphry Repton.
33. **NEWTON SURMAVILLE**, Barwick, Grade II.
Gardens and pleasure grounds, mid 18th Century, later 19th Century.
34. **NYNEHEAD COURT**, Nynehead, Grade II*.
Ornamental 19th Century parterre with extensive 18th Century landscape park.
35. **ORCHARDLEIGH**, Lullington, Grade II*.
Formal gardens and pleasure grounds, mainly 19th Century, 1856 by Mr Page; landscaped deer park, medieval onwards.
36. **POUNDISFORD PARK**, Pitminster, Grade II.
Enclosed garden, 17th Century; deer park, medieval onwards.
37. **PRIOR PARK**, Bath, Grade I.
Landscape pleasure grounds and park, 1734 onwards by Ralph Allen with advice from Alexander Pope, 1762-65 by Capability Brown. National Trust.
38. **REDLYNCH PARK**, Bruton, Grade II.
Gardens circa 1901 by Sir Edwin Lutyens, pleasure grounds, park from 17th Century.
39. **ST AUDRIES**, West Quantoxhead, Grade II.
Gardens and pleasure grounds, mid 19th Century on earlier site; landscaped deer park, mid to late 18th Century.
40. **ST CATHERINE'S COURT**, St Catherine, Grade II*.
Terraced gardens, late medieval, early 17th Century, with 19th Century planting.
41. **STON EASTON PARK**, Ston Easton, Grade II.
Landscape pleasure grounds, remains of park, circa 1793 by Humphry Repton; gardens circa 1814 by Lady Hippisley.
42. **THE CHANTRY**, Whatley, Grade II*.
Remains of landscape with lakes and grottoes, circa 1825.
43. **THE DEANERY**, Wells, Grade II.
Gardens enclosed by medieval and later walling, the garden of Dean William Turner, 16th Century.
44. **TINTINHULL HOUSE**, Tintinhull, Grade II.
Formal garden layout circa 1904 by Dr J.S.M. Price, 1933 onwards by Phyllis Reiss. National Trust.
45. **TYNTESFIELD**, Wraxall, Grade II*.
Formal terraced gardens, pleasure grounds, in landscape park. Kitchen gardens, late 19th Century, garden buildings and ornaments 1885 by Sir Walter Cave.
46. **VEN HOUSE**, Milborne Port, Grade II.
Early formal garden layout; late 17th Century to early 18th Century; landscaped pleasure grounds, late 18th Century to early 19th Century, a modification of early formal layout; remains of formal park layout; kitchen gardens.
47. **WAYFORD MANOR**, Wayford, Grade II.
Terraced gardens, in formal woodland garden, 1900-19 by Harold Peto and Humphrey Baker; partly on site of Elizabethan garden.
48. **WELLINGTON PARK**, Wellington, Grade II.
Edwardian public gardens laid out by F.W. Meyer, landscape gardener.
49. **WIDCOMBE MANOR**, Widcombe, Grade II.
Garden terrace and landscape, 18th Century, extensively developed in 1930s.

Robin Hood's Hut – Bibliography

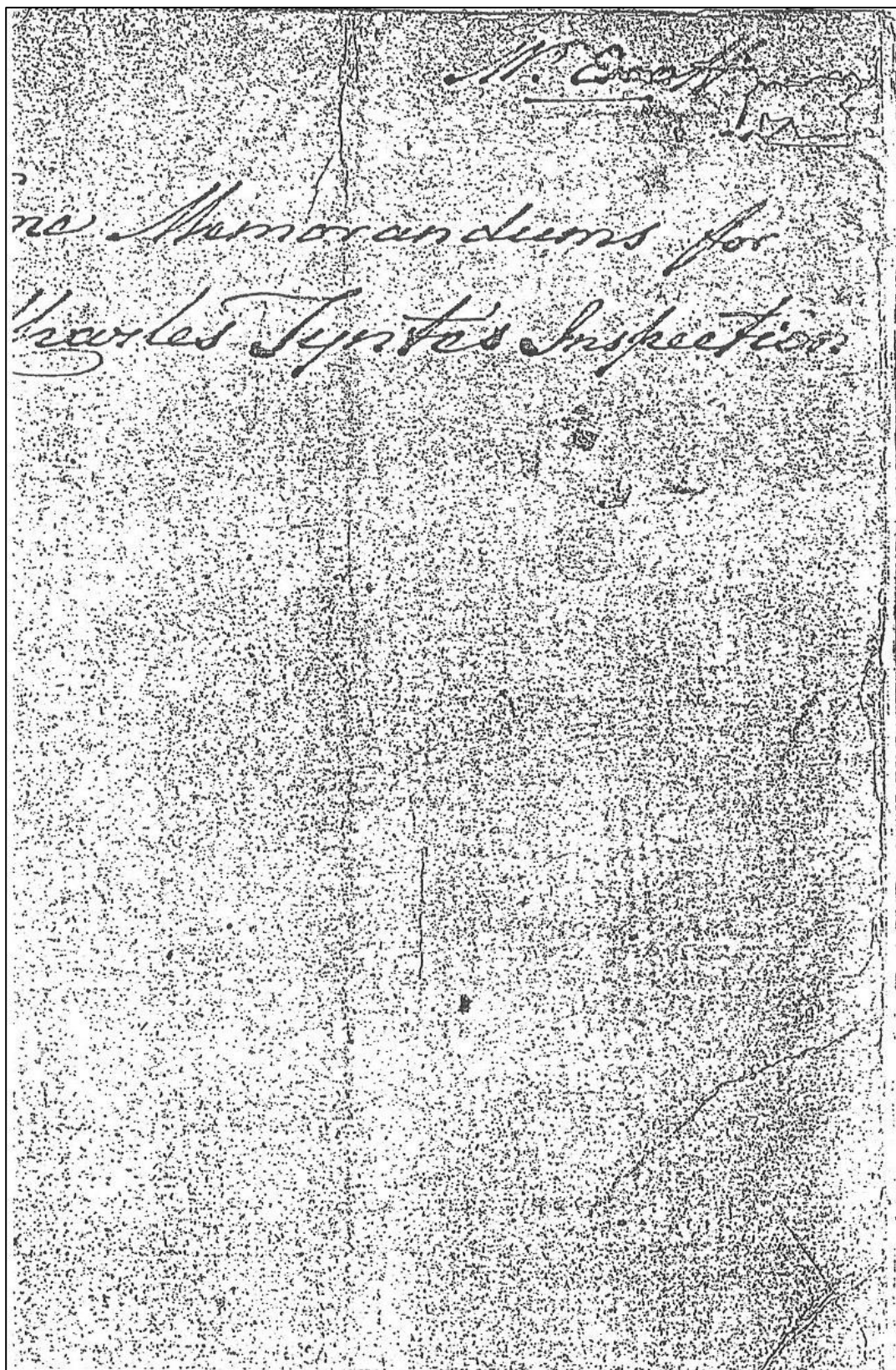
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Memorandums for Charles Tynte's Inspection

<u>Purchases made by Sir Charles</u>		x a
50. 8. Sept ^r	of Sir Halswell Tynte purchase of Bragg Esq ^r the quarter part of the Manor of Gouthurst.	£1585. 15 ^s 776
53. 1 May	of Sir Charles purchase of John Buncombe Esq ^r a moiety of same.	£4200.
	the other quarter part belongs to the Joane family.	776
55. 6. February	Exchanges with the parsonage.	
63. 30. Sept ^r	of Richard Seach a bott. Orchard and Garden by the road side at the head of Chartry Wood	£42. 777
63. 30. Novem ^r	of William White the bott. and Garden by the road side under the park	£14. 15 ^s .
65. 10. October	Made some very conditious Exchanges with Henry William portman Esq ^r	778
66. 10. October	of Bennett Coombe Esq ^r the Manor and Farm of Sluntwile, by Sale of Week Manor and Farm to Richard Croft Esq ^r	£5250.
68. 26. May	of Robert England the House Garden and Orchard adjoining pages on the West.	£180.
76. 28. March	of Lovodar and Warren. Aiddles farm. lying on the West of Putcombe Wood and Lands.	£1237.
76. 15. Aug ^t	of William Burgo a bott. and Garden on the East side of the road leading to Stream in Broomfield.	£30. 10 ^s

to the Improvement of his Estate

1770. th 7. November — Of John Bacon the reversion in fee of three Cottages on the Westside of Andersfield Green, after the expiration of the Lease granted on them by Lord Egmont. £10. 10^s —
1775. th 8. March — Of Charity, page the House and Garden that William Coak lived in. £. 37. —
1779. th 29. Sept^r — Of John Slade Esq. the Manor and Farm of Boomer — Goodings Farm adjoining — and the Soil and Royalty of King's Cliff and Cott. — by Sale of his Lands in Waxall and Mispemoad in Nailsey to William Turner Esq. £11000 —
1780. th 1. May — Of James Pine the Smiths house and Garden in Gonthurst Village. £63. —
- Of John Lee a Cott. and Garden, lying on the Westside of the road leading to Stream in Broomfielde —
- At 7. The Additional buildings to Huntshils — Hurts — Westbower and Waterman's Farms — and the Building of Ingram's Farm house at Stream stood Sir Charles in upwards of — £1000 —

1753.

February 2^{de}

Richard Escott appointed Steward by Sir Charles Kemys Tynke Bart^r after Mr. Edmund Scane

The Drawing room at Halswell and the Chamber over it fitted up this year.

1754.

The Rock Work at the head of the Canal on the Lawn made.

The East and West Fronts of Halswell house made by Mr. Cartwright of Blanford.

The Thicket at the head of the park, on the East of the Robin hood, as far as pawlets Downs planted.

1755.

Lands given in Exchange to the parsonage (viz.) the Warrens and the Tenement at Andersfield for the parsonage Lands lying on the Hill. — greatly to the Advantage of the parsonage.

1755.

The Bathstone Bridge in the Wood
built.

M^{rs} Busby's Temple on the Lawn
built.

1756.

The Druid's Temple in the Wood built
by De Wilster.

1757.

5/60.

5/61.

The Park extended this year to Slintstilo-
Bottom. —

5/62.

The lower corner in mill wood, on the East
planted —

5/63.

The Hall flood'd at Halswell. S

The Road from Durligh to Goathurst made
by Sir Charles at the Expence of about £300.

NB. the old road was on the South side of
Shanky Wood.

NB. In the making of this road from Goathurst to
Durligh, the Road from Goathurst towards Jaunton,
as far as Mr. Bampfyld's Wain.

The Road towards Enmoors. — and the Road
towards Northpetherton, as far as Boomer. —
Cost Sir Charles full £700 —

(5764.)

The Temple of Harmony in the Wood built to the
Memory of Mr. Palmer and Mr. Prouse. £400.

The Thicket at the head of the park, on the
East side planted. —

The parsonage, mead and Lands about
it laid open and sunk fences made.

(5765.)

The Robin hood house built. . . . £. 300.

The Great Sewer made to receive all the
Drains and Necessaries of the House
to prevent them passing into the Park,
— It is so large, a man may walk thro
it, and goe in a straight Direction thro
Lady Synter's Garden under the Lawn,
— it begins at the Slaughter house. —
There are places made, at equal distances
from each other, for a person to go down,
if necessary, to clean it out. —

5774.	At the general Election in this year, Sir Charles resigned, on account of his age. He was solicited by the County to stand ^{for} again, — having represented it in <u>Parl.</u>
5775.	
5776.	The opposition to the Indulgence of Sedgemoor in parliament successful, thro' Sir Charles's Interest
5777.	
5778.	The plantation at the entrance to Waterman's Farm made.
	The plantations round Great Thorns, on Huntville farm made.
	The Stall house at Rook's Castle built.

(5779)	The poor house built and given by the Charities to the use of the poor forever.
(5780)	
(5781)	The Canal made under the fletcher well & ponds.
	The meadows on Boomer farm under enclosed and drained.
	and Orchard planted.
	and Chestnuts planted in the Woods.

1758.

This year Lord Egmont claimed, that the Water arising in Shaddock's moore should unite with the Mill stream, below proctor's mill, and not run on to Lovedar's house and farm. — Sir Charles insisted it should, and repaired the old Head Wars to keep it in its ancient course, whereupon Lord Egmont gave up his pretensions. —

Lord Egmont also planted an Elm on Andrew field Green, claiming it his Waste. — Sir Charles cut it down, — inclosed part of the Waste on the West side, — and also on the East side into Abel Waterman's Orchard there, — and Lovedar, Sir Charles's Tenant, also, by his Order, carried away the Soil on the East side of the Green to manure Sir Charles's lands and also cut down a pollard Oak growing thereon, — and Lord Egmont did not bring any Suit, or make any further Claim. —

The Green belongs to Sir Charles's manor of Lovedar, as do the old Court rolls. —

1759.