

# THE GROUNDS AND GARDENS OF CHURCHILL COLLEGE

Churchill College has beautiful gardens and excellent playing fields. The casual observer might be forgiven for assuming the site holds little more than a vast expanse of grass and a few mature trees, for on closer inspection it is clear that the grounds and gardens offer far more than that. There is a mini arboretum, the Møller parterre and fruit orchards in the domestic gardens along Storey's Way. There are beautiful herbaceous borders, an orchid collection, and more than seven hundred trees across the forty-two acre site, including the *Quercus robur* (oak) and *Morus nigra* (black mulberry), planted by the College's Founder, Sir Winston Churchill, on 17 October 1959.



The original landscape master plan for the College was drawn up in 1959 by the landscape architect, [Sheila Haywood](#). Her response to the College's Modernist architecture was to use planting to frame the buildings. Trees and shrubs, chosen for their form and foliage, were to create landscapes with borders that framed the vast brick facades. This was never destined to be a traditional college garden.

But how were those gardens and the vast expanse of playing fields first developed? Nearly sixty years have passed since the site was levelled, the playing fields seeded and the first trees planted. How was this achieved, and to what extent has the College been able to maintain the integrity of Sheila Haywood's original design in the face of new development on the site and the need to refresh and adapt planting styles across the decades? The College's Garden Archives hold some fascinating clues.

## A garden history



The site in 1958 (CCPH/5/4)

Churchill College occupies a forty-two acre site in an area once known as the West Fields of Cambridge. In the Middle Ages the West Fields comprised four great fields: Carme; Little; Middle; and Grithow. Churchill College sits on Grithow Field which covered the whole area between Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road. This was monastic land that was worked by peasant farmers until around 1800 when it was set aside for enclosure. The first major development in the area was the construction of the University Observatory in 1823, but otherwise the West Fields remained untouched, mainly since the dominant landowners of the West Fields were the colleges who wanted to maintain the land as an open space in which they could ride and walk.

The University of Cambridge was expanding and was looking for new sites on which to build. There was no possibility of further significant development in an already over-crowded city centre and the University turned its attention to the west of Cambridge. In 1946 the University Treasurer consulted with College Bursars on sites for possible new university buildings. St John's College held strategically placed land in the west of Cambridge. In his response to the University, the Senior Bursar, the Revd. J S Boys Smith, reported that the College had refrained from developing the land between the Observatory and Storey's Way, north of Madingley Road, regarding it as 'probably the best site for a new college if one were to be founded in the future'.<sup>1</sup>

But it was the introduction of town planning in the 1940s and the new system of central government grants to the University that were to pave the way for change. The County Council was charged with the preparation of a comprehensive development plan for the county and it enlisted the help of William Holford, an eminent architect and town planner who had been largely responsible for drafting the Town and Country Planning Act of 1947. The Holford Report (1950) concluded that 'all land between the Huntingdon and Barton Roads and west of the Backs should be treated as a reserve for future, and perhaps distant university and college needs'.<sup>2</sup> So the Trustees of Churchill College were in a unique position. A national appeal had already raised £3.5 million (the equivalent of around £75 million today) to build and endow a new college to be named after its founder, Sir

Winston Churchill. Not only had a suitable site been identified but it also seemed that City Council approval of an application to build a college was virtually guaranteed.

The University approved the foundation of Churchill College on 24 January 1959 and the purchase of the site from St John's College was completed soon after. An architectural competition was launched immediately. The author Simon Henley wrote:

*The 1959 competition that brought the College into being is considered by many to be a watershed moment in British Post War architectural history. It brought together 20 names, young and old, all practicing in Britain, all working in the Modernist and more specifically the nascent Brutalist style. It was a 'who's who' of British architecture at the time.*<sup>3</sup>

The results were announced in July 1959 with the winning design being submitted by Richard Sheppard (of Richard Sheppard, Robson and Partners - later Sheppard Robson). The garden and landscape designer, John Brookes, carried out a landscape review of the exhibition designs. He wrote:

*... the winning design submitted by Richard Sheppard, Robson and Partners, although it had tremendous lock, showed no treatment of the many internal courts. Intended planting was however mentioned in the accompanying report, and showed an appreciation of the necessity for winter interest in planting, often lacking in the existing college courts. Surrounding trees held the site well. A free shaped lake was suggested in this design, skirting the South West corner of the building, presumably to offset the formality of the layout. This was unfortunate as the shape lacked cohesion with the building and was not itself agreeable. A solution would have been to thread a free shape throughout the whole conception, which would float through the many courts.*<sup>4</sup>

However, the design that John Brookes reviewed in 1959 was set to change. The requirements for the playing fields had been outlined in the architects' brief:

Two cricket, two soccer, two rugger and two hockey pitches; a site for a covered swimming pool of 165 ft x 60 ft; a sports pavilion, 4 squash courts, eight grass lawn tennis courts, four hard lawn tennis courts and possibly outdoor skating.<sup>5</sup>

Grand plans indeed, but the lake was not created due to lack of funds, and neither the outdoor skating area nor the swimming pool were to see the light of day. Elsewhere in Cambridge, adjacent to Parker's Piece, a massive covered public swimming pool was in the early stages of construction, while the outdoor skating area was abandoned along with early plans for the College to be surrounded by a moat. However, the sports pavilion was built and the hockey and soccer pitches were created as directed, although the second pitch was blighted by drainage problems. The tennis courts were laid though only one rugby pitch was

created. But the cricket pitch had additional practice strips, and two croquet pitches were laid.

Work on the playing fields was carried out despite the atrocious weather conditions and heavy rainfall, making the ground almost unworkable. Even so, the sports fields immediately adjacent to the main College were terraced and sown by the contractors, Messrs Doe & Sons, in October 1960, just in time for the arrival of the first students.

## **An unfavourable site**

In Richard Sheppard's team was a young architect, William (Bill) Mullins, who was to be responsible for most of the detailed design work. He recalled the first time he visited the site in February 1959:

*I remember arriving in my Morris Mini-Minor on a cold, misty February day. The site was very wet, without features, a gently sloping cabbage field with just one Elm tree on Madingley Road which had subsequently to be taken down and a few trees on the highest part of the site adjoining the Observatory.<sup>6</sup>*

In fact, there were quite a few elms across the site, many of which were on the boundary to Madingley Road. Grounds staff recall felling these trees in the 1970s after they succumbed to Dutch elm disease. Yet two large *Ulmus x hollandica* 'Vegeta' (Huntingdon elm) trees along what was the College's service road (now Churchill Road) survived and are still standing today, more troubled by invasion from clinging ivy (until this was removed around 1998) than by the beetle that passes on Dutch elm disease.

Work on the new buildings started in 1960 with the College being built in seven phases between 1960 and 1968. The landscaping of the grounds was to be concurrent with the building work, and the College's first Bursar, Major-General Jack Hamilton, and the College Trustees, were anxious that preparatory work on the new playing fields should start as soon as possible. Time was of the essence as the College would be admitting its first students in October 1960. But this was not a very prepossessing site. The soil was heavy Gault clay, and the ground was waterlogged, rough and uneven, and required levelling. A detailed bill of quantities was drawn up in February 1960<sup>7</sup> which listed the work necessary to establish the playing field area. This included land drainage, excavation, agricultural drain pipes and storm water drains, the clearing of the site, grading and general preparation of the site for seeding. Particular attention was to be given to the cricket square and grass tennis courts where the seed mixture was to be composed of 8 parts chewing's fescue and 2 parts browntop bent for sowing at a rate of 1 oz. per 1 sq. yd. The total quantity of seed was to be divided in half with each portion being sown evenly in transverse directions by hand and then lightly raked in. This was a job that could not be rushed.

What no one could have anticipated was the impact the rush for completion of the playing fields would have on ground conditions for years to come. The autumn of 1960 was extremely wet and it was in these less than favourable conditions that the contractors carried out the terracing and sowed the grass seed, a job they completed just as the first

students arrived on site. The resultant compaction of the soil was to lead to further water-logging of the ground, while the levelling of the site left vast areas with only a thin layer of topsoil over the deep subsoil or Gault clay. This created ground conditions that were likely to have a detrimental impact on growth. Indeed, problems surfaced within months. That most important of sports facilities, the cricket square, had to be turfed in the spring of 1961 to achieve the quality of surface the game demanded.



The building site c. 1964 (CCPH/5/2) © Lafayette Photography

In 1972, struggling to deal with some four acres of the lower terrace which were becoming excessively muddy due to standing water, the College commissioned a report on the drainage of the playing fields:

*The turf was found to be in an extremely wet and muddy condition with some standing water and showing obvious signs of restricted growth of grass. The area is intended as a hockey pitch but in practice it is not possible to use it after the autumn term.*<sup>8</sup>

The report concluded that help was needed in getting water from the surface to the drains, and that immediate improvement could be provided by installing vertical slit drains measuring 1 inch and 12 inches deep, at about 4 ft intervals. These were then to be filled with sand thus providing a positive route for water from the surface to the stone above the drain.



Demonstration of sand slitter attachment (1972). Graham Pledger (driving tractor), Brian Crow (Gardener 1971-73, standing in sand slitter). George Orr (Head Groundsman/Grounds Superintendent) can be seen to the right of the group of three at the back. © Cambridge News

But the report had also revealed the stark truth - that the natural soil materials found on the site were not favourable for sportsground use. Below the surface was 6 to 8 inches of clay topsoil and beneath this a raw subsoil of heavy clay, completely lacking in humus, very compact and practically impervious to moisture:

*... the unfavourable natural conditions have been aggravated during construction. It is noted that the drainage is worst in the upper part of the terrace where the original land levels have been cut away, and that the drainage immediately improves to the south east where the land has been filled above the original level.<sup>9</sup>*

In addition to this the Trustees had severely under-estimated the scale of the work that would be necessary to establish the new playing fields, setting aside just £5,000 in the original estimates compared to a final expenditure of around £40,000. As early as 1963 the upkeep of the grounds had been highlighted in the College accounts as being an expensive item:

*The grounds are still being established but it is hoped that the cost of maintenance will fall. There are, however, still tracks of desolate land round the College buildings to take over. The gardens of Whittinghame*

*Lodge are uneconomical. The sooner a block of flats can be constructed there, the better it will be for the College financially.*<sup>10</sup>

The Report of the Inspectors of Accounts for 1962/63 recorded that while it was not yet possible to estimate the proportions of total expenditure on establishment of grounds and on maintenance, the seven men then employed by the College were considered by the Bursar to be required for maintenance of the gardens and grounds when fully established. The Bursar had good foresight since that same number of staff has remained almost constant over the past fifty or so years.

## Landscape Master Plan



In 1959, the landscape architect, [Sheila Haywood](#), was commissioned by the architects Sheppard Robson to draw up the landscape master plan for Churchill College. At this time she was also working on the landscaping of the new Addenbrooke's Hospital site in Cambridge that was emerging on the arable fields south of Long Road, and also as Landscape Consultant for the 420-acre site of the Thorpe Marsh Power Station in Barnby Dun, South Yorkshire.

She seemed to be well suited for the role of taming this bleak, rather unfriendly, landscape.

Sheila Haywood was to produce a number of detailed landscape drawings for the College, sixteen of which are in the College's Garden Archives.

In her 'Outline Landscaping Proposals' (1959), Sheila Haywood focused on three key areas: perimeter planting; specimen trees for the grounds; and planting within the courts and around the buildings. The planting around the playing fields was intended to be park-like in character. Flowering trees and those with decorative berries were to be used close to the buildings. Lawns would be laid with the College precincts, with specimen and decorative trees. In 'Preliminary Proposals for Landscaping' (c. 1960), Haywood outlined her vision for the courtyards. She wrote:

*The grass courtyards in particular need in my view a certain amount of both lightening and modelling to give them more interest. I have made some suggestions on each one, and you will see that in general I have suggested the introduction of either paving patterns or some vertical emphasis such as statuary, clipped trees, etc.*<sup>11</sup>

It was proposed that each courtyard should be treated individually, the small courts paved with low growing shrubs such as lavender and thyme to give variety of foliage throughout the year, and the large courts grassed and taller shrubs planted. Foliage shrubs included *Choisya ternata*, *Cornus alba* and *Fatsia japonica*. Trees within the courtyards included *Magnolia kobu*, *Acer davidii* and *Rhus typhina*.

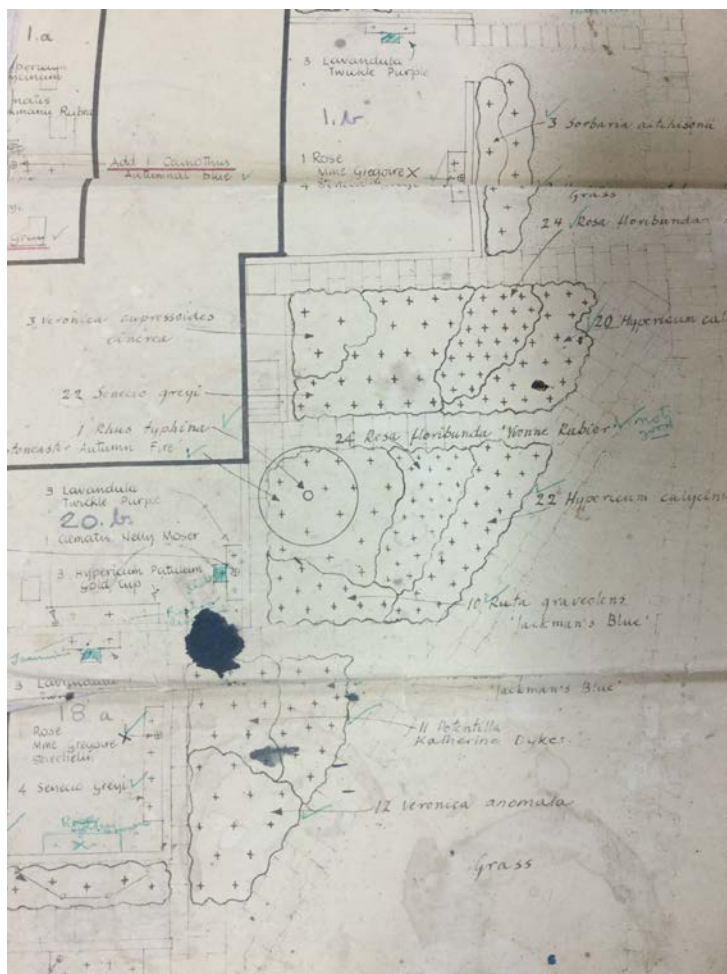
The large mound on the south-eastern boundary with Madingley Road and Storey's Way was to be planted with trees and shrubs, several of a kind together so that they would form

striking groups. Elsewhere, she proposed that the surface be carpeted 'upon a wide scale' with ground cover plants such as *Hypericum calycinum* and *Cotoneaster horizontalis*.

Sheila Haywood's proposals for planting the border to the right of the service road (now Churchill Road), included shrubs such as *Cotoneaster franchettii*, *Philadelphus 'Belle Étoile'*, *Pyracantha rogersiana*, *Sorbaria arborea* and *Virburnum tinus*. The shrubs were planted in great swathes along the side of the road in blocks of thirty *Viburnum*, twenty *Cotoneaster* and sixty-five *Pyracantha*. Large, rampant shrubs, they would have provided coordinated areas of interest across the seasons.

## Planting

One of the first jobs on site was the planting of trees to create a tree screen along the boundary with Madingley Road. Bad weather in the autumn of 1959 delayed the first tranche of planting but a break in the weather in February 1960 permitted the planting of the perimeter trees by Hillier & Sons with the assistance of two student gardeners from the University Botanic Gardens.



The next areas to be planted were the borders around the Sheppard Flats.<sup>12</sup> One section of the plan shows a *Rhus typhina* underplanted with *Cotoneaster 'Autumn Fire'*, with a band of creamy white *Rosa floribunda 'Yvonne Rabier'* planted in front for summer interest. *Hypericum calycinum* with its yellow flowers, and the blue foliage of the *Ruta graveolens 'Jackmans Blue'* can be seen at the front of the border. Across the path, the planting of *Ruta graveolens 'Jackmans Blue'* is mirrored and the shrubby cinquefoil, *Potentilla fruticosa 'Katherine Dykes'*, with its tiny yellow rose-like flowers and the small-leaved *Veronica anomala* with its purple tips, is planted alongside. The plan provides for a subtle mix of texture and colour.

Drg. 123/5 Extract from Sheila Haywood's planting plan for the flats (1960) CCAR/406/8



Planting on the site commenced in February 1961, followed by the border along the service road (now Churchill Road). Staff from Notcutts of Woodbridge, Suffolk, were brought in to help. But the months of January and February 1963 brought prolonged sub-zero temperatures, and the bitterly cold winter damaged a large number of newly-planted trees and shrubs. The Bursar, Major-General Jack Hamilton, realised that it was time to get an experienced horticulturalist on board.

## Early staff members

The College's first Head Groundsman was Ernest Watson. He was 29 years old and experienced in the use of horse drawn mowers and rollers as well as the latest type of tractor-drawn machinery. He joined the College in October 1960 but only stayed for a year. George Orr, who was to remain in post until his retirement in 1978, succeeded him as Head Groundsman. Another member of this first team was Doug Ashman who was appointed Groundsman in March 1961. He in turn was promoted to Head Groundsman on George Orr's retirement in 1978, and remained in post until his own retirement in 1999.

The College's first Head Gardener was Tom Hitchens, who came to the College in May 1963. He was short in stature with grey hair and addressed everyone as 'boy'. He used to wear a gardener's apron that tied around the waist with a big pocket in the front. He had a Scottish terrier dog that he used to bring in to work with him every day in his small grey van. Born in the UK, he had spent some years working in Canada as a tree planter.



Tom Hitchens working in the Fellows' Garden (June 1964) CCRF/120/4/10

Another member of the first 'Grounds and Gardens' team was Graham Pledger. He was interviewed for the post by the Bursar, Major-General Hamilton, and was offered the job of Trainee Groundsman on a wage of £5 per week, starting on 30 March 1964. Over the years,

he was to be promoted to the position of Deputy Head of Grounds and Gardens. He is still in post, and is the College's longest-serving member of staff.

## Implementation

It is certainly the case that the College endeavoured to implement Sheila Haywood's landscape master plan. However, Sheila Haywood frequently faced opposition from the College to her proposals. The Master, Sir John Cockcroft, had very firm ideas about both the size of the Master's Lodge garden and the planting scheme, and on occasion he made his own planting decisions without recourse to Sheila Haywood or reference to her plans. In time, this was to cause her some professional embarrassment. In July 1964, an article appeared in the *Observer Weekend Review*. The architect Michael Manser wrote:

*What spoils the architectural unity of Churchill is its furnishings and landscaping ... the planting is too prissy. Grand-hotel flower-plantings are all wrong for this kind of building, which screams for chunks of evergreen or colour in mass banks – not flowers plopped out in rows like soldiers.*<sup>13</sup>

Sheila Haywood was horrified, but her response was measured:

*I think he has perhaps forgotten that all planting contains a time-scale. If he had looked into the matter a little more closely, he would have found that the main College buildings are designed to be held in a framework of evergreen oaks, Mahonia aquifolium and clipped box. The first two were planted a year ago, the third is due this autumn. No doubt, however, at this stage the flowers in the Master's and Fellows' garden (which form no part of the permanent design and which had been planted without reference to me) more readily catch the eye.*<sup>14</sup>

The Bursar, Major-General Jack Hamilton, was a keen amateur gardener. He was immensely interested in the College grounds and was knowledgeable about plants, and especially trees. Always direct in his approach, he did not hesitate to make his opinions known to Sheila Haywood. Ever mindful of the finances, he was equally concerned about the aesthetics and did not shy away from challenging her proposals when he saw fit.

In November 1964, the Buildings Committee reviewed the overall progress on the landscaping of the site. A paper submitted by Sheila Haywood and Richard Sheppard listed the landscape items outstanding and made suggestions as to how these might be completed. While the Minutes record that their suggestions were 'generally accepted', in reality this was not the case. Of the fifteen items listed, just two were approved, three were 'in contention', five were 'not agreed', two were 'not considered', and three items were marked 'no decision'.<sup>15</sup>

Notwithstanding the inevitable discussions, approvals, amendments and rejections that clearly took place, a review of Sheila Haywood's landscape drawings and original plant lists indicates that her plans were broadly implemented. Original trees can still be identified, and, although the borders around the Sheppard Flats have undergone refurbishment in

recent years, many of the original shrubby plants are still in place. Within the courtyards, some of the original trees can still be identified and that same theme of foliage and winter interest has been maintained. There is even some topiary in one of the courtyards, although this is not from the original planting. Of course, nearly sixty years have now passed since these first trees and shrubs were planted on the site and inevitably some have become overgrown and have had to be removed. Others did not do well in the heavy clay soil, harsh winters or periods of drought, and were replaced. But the original concept is still evident.

## The passage of time



Albert Richmond succeeded Tom Hitchens as Head Gardener. He had previously worked in the gardens of a stately home and was a real gardener of the old school. He recalled that when he arrived at Churchill College in 1969 there were very few borders: it was basically just grass and granite chips. He said that he tried to add colour and imagination to the gardens and in 1984 he wrote:

*I was told that on no account was the College to ever look like a municipal park. The Grounds Supt always insisted that the College gardens were designed and developed to the architect's plans, and with a few exceptions this is what has been achieved.*<sup>16</sup>

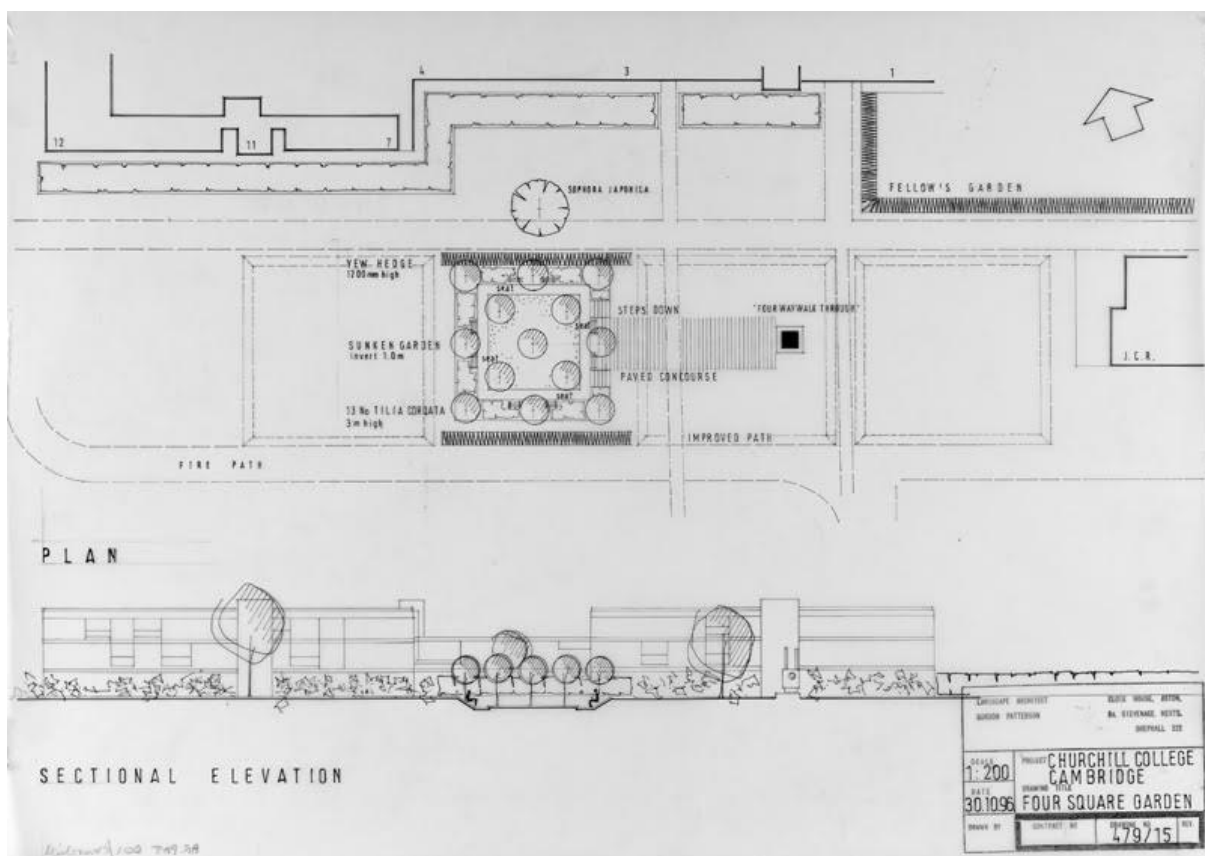
Respect for the original design was to be commended but by the beginning of the 1990s the borders were starting to look tired and overgrown and many shrubs were coming to the end of their lives. The College decided to seek professional advice and in 1992 Gordon Patterson, an Associate of the Institute of Landscape Architects, was appointed the College's Consultant Landscape Architect. He was noted particularly for his work on Stevenage New Town from 1950-61, and the Stevenage Town Gardens, and was also Landscape Consultant for the Forestry Commission for England, Scotland and Wales. But he had another very special credential that linked him to Churchill College: he knew Sheila Haywood. With Sylvia Crowe and Susan Jellicoe, the four had travelled to India in 1970, the outcome of the trip being a beautifully illustrated book entitled *'The Gardens of Mughul India'*, published in 1972. Thus, he knew her professionally and understood her vision for the landscaping of the College.

Now approaching 90 years of age, he was asked recently what were his impressions of the landscape on seeing the College for the first time in 1992.<sup>17</sup> He said that he appreciated the use of space and trees in Sheila Haywood's design, but expressed disappointment at the poor growth of the trees on the site which he put down to the heavy clay soil. Interestingly, when Sheila Haywood and Richard Sheppard visited the College in August 1984 they had been pleased at how well the trees had developed. So, this is perhaps where the difficulties encountered with the levelling and preparation of the playing fields back in that wet autumn of 1960 really started to become apparent.

But looking forward, in his Audit of the Existing Landscape (1996)<sup>18</sup> Gordon Patterson sought to address a reconstruction of Sheila Haywood's early vision and to give further

insight into what the next thirty years could be expected to hold for the appearance and use of the grounds. He proposed the formation of a boundary walk, the thinning and refurbishment of the Madingley Road tree belt, and an enhancement to the central vista that would echo the avenue of limes in front of the Møller Centre (the large building erected on the site in 1991-92 and designed by the Danish architect, Henning Larsen). He also proposed that trees should be planted in the main car park in accordance with Sheila Haywood's original plan; a raised lawn created along the Storey's Way frontage; that there should be additional tree screening behind the Wolfson Flats and houses along Storey's Way; and that there should be another re-working of the Master's and Fellows' Garden.

During his six years at the College Gordon Patterson drew up a number of plans for the landscaping of the site including a proposal for a 'Møller Theatre' (1994) in an area outside the Møller Centre. The plan used stepped terraces and hornbeam hedging to create a space for open area theatrical events. He also drew up a plan for a 'Four Square Garden' (1996) adjacent to the College's iconic *Four-Square (Walk Through)* statue by Barbara Hepworth that dominates the central vista towards the top of the grounds. But neither design was taken up by the College; the College was probably neither ready for, nor receptive to, such radical yet creative, ideas. But many of his plans were implemented by the College and his work on the thinning and refurbishment of the tree belt along Madingley Road, and the creation of a boundary walk, are testament to his wider vision and expertise.



Gordon Patterson's sketch for proposed Four Square Garden (1996)  
 © Landscape Institute/Museum of English Rural Life

In 1996, the College marked the retirement of Albert Richmond who had been Head Gardener for twenty-seven years. He had a passion for chrysanthemums which, by all accounts, were grown to exhibition standard, and were used by Doreen Pryor who did the flower arranging in College. Albert Richmond's yearly calendar, drawn up shortly before his retirement, showed that in addition to the chrysanthemums, the greenhouse was used, for example, for starting dahlias into growth, for sowing sweet peas for cut flowers, growing annuals for summer bedding, growing tomatoes, and sowing biennials for autumn bedding. He would draw up designs for summer bedding schemes in borders and in containers and would later plant the containers with chrysanthemums for autumn colour. At Christmas, he would supply and set up the Christmas trees in College and in the Master's Lodge, and he would also supply Christmas greenery. Staff were sometimes the recipients of surplus tomatoes or cut flowers, and if they were really lucky, branches of the mistletoe that still grows so well in the grounds.

## A new era

Albert Richmond's successor as Head Gardener was a young man of just twenty-four years of age - John Moore. John trained at the Harlow Carr Botanical Gardens in Harrogate, spending some time at the Cambridge University Botanic Garden before taking up appointment as Craft Gardener in the Herbaceous Department of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Michael Allen was Bursar at the time. He recalled:

*I think it was very interesting when we appointed someone to succeed him [Albert Richmond] because clearly, we needed to review how the gardens were going to develop ... quite a lot of things in the garden needed attention, and they needed attention in a way that wasn't going to cost us an enormous amount of money in long-term maintenance but which would fit within the theme of Churchill's grounds and gardens.<sup>19</sup>*

Of his first impressions of Churchill College, John Moore recalled:

*I wasn't expecting a building of the style that we have here, as obviously everyone thinks of Cambridge colleges as a lot older, and I knew it was the 1960s at the time. But I still wasn't quite expecting the sort of Brutalism that we have here. So, it was a bit of a shock ... but it is a building that grows on you over time and something that you really grow to appreciate and like.<sup>20</sup>*

John quickly realised that he would be the youngest head of department and that he would be managing staff who were closer to his parents' age:

*I remember my first day and Albert Richmond, the old Head Gardener, had left me a letter in the greenhouse welcoming me, which was really nice - a typical Albert touch - saying he hoped I'd enjoy myself and how he'd enjoyed his time here and wishing me well in the future. It was a nice thing to turn up to.<sup>21</sup>*



John has been in post for over twenty years now and has overall responsibility for grounds and gardens, managing a team of ten which includes part-time staff and a trainee. He has also been responsible for almost all the planting on site since 1996, and estimates that since his arrival over 95% of the College's borders have been replanted. With the loyal support of his team of grounds and gardens staff he has moved steadily across the site refurbishing and redesigning where necessary. His projects include the creation of the large herbaceous border and winter borders adjacent to North Court, and a Sir Winston Churchill plant border containing the plants named after the College's founder, which he hopes will one day be designated a National Plant Collection through the conservation charity, Plant Heritage. Other projects have included the designs for planting around the Møller Centre from the parterre to the pleached tree avenue and all the borders around the building, car park and Study Centre as well as the creation of a mini arboretum in the area previously known as the copse. He has also designed new gardens for the College's houses on 36, 36a and 64 Storey's Way and is working on the design for the new Xiaotian Fu garden in 70 and 72 Storey's Way. Rejuvenation and renewal is a constant theme.

Reflecting on John's appointment recently, Michael Allen said:

*I think we were very lucky to find a candidate who took on the affection for the garden and the love of the place, and gradually, and very sensitively, worked on the sort of principles that Gordon Patterson had laid out, and where it was necessary to modify them ... he did that too. So, John Moore has really taken on the garden and developed it in a way which is quite different from any of his predecessors in grounds or gardens.<sup>22</sup>*

After his retirement, and before his death in 2009, Albert Richmond visited the College regularly. He used to talk to John about the 'old days'. John said that he was always very supportive of the changes he had made.

In a BBC Radio Cambridgeshire documentary in 2008, John said:

*It was a very fashionable time in the sixties to plant mainly things like Viburnums, Skimmias and Acubas which were just large dark evergreen plants and it was a recurring theme that was just repeated over and over again, on the site. When we are planting around the College we try to keep more to the original theme so there are less flowers around the area, whereas when we come up to the top end of the site where we had the latest postgraduate houses built, we changed the planting scheme slightly so that we have more flowers and more colour, although we do want to have a continuity going through the whole site.<sup>23</sup>*

Sheila Haywood wrote in 1974:

*There are strong arguments from a landscape point of view in favour of thinking on a time-scale of fifty to sixty years ahead, and sometimes even more.*<sup>24</sup>

As the College approaches its sixtieth anniversary it seems appropriate to reflect on that landscape master plan. When she was overseeing the planting of the first trees on site in 1960, standing there in that wide-open space, buffeted by the wind and rain, did Sheila Haywood envisage the beautiful, well-kept landscape and long vistas that exist today? Like Gordon Patterson after her, would she have been disappointed at the growth of the trees, and what would she have thought of the new landscaping on site to meet the College's expanding educational and residential needs? Of course, that is something we shall never know. It is the case that the grounds and gardens have not remained in stasis and have continued to evolve but here and there are areas where the original planting and design remains intact: the framework of evergreen oaks; the park-like character of the planting around the playing fields; and the lawns with specimen trees. Granite chippings still line all the pathways in the courtyards, a *Gleditsia triacanthus* stands in East Court, and outside the SCR there is a magnificent *Magnolia grandiflora*.

So, the College continues to move forward. In the main courtyard, a *Morus alba* 'Pendula' (white mulberry) is growing steadily in the shade of the main College buildings. Planted in 2009 by Sir Winston Churchill's daughter to commemorate fifty years since the first two trees were planted, this small tree is thriving. But most important of all, the *Morus nigra* (black mulberry) and the *Quercus robur* (oak), planted by Sir Winston Churchill on 17 October 1959, are both now magnificent specimens.

The spirit of Sheila Haywood's early vision remains intact.

**Paula Laycock**

**John Moore**

**December 2016**

*This article is taken from a book currently being written by Paula Laycock and John Moore which covers in greater detail the development of the grounds and gardens of Churchill College. The book includes chapters on the development of The Churchill Rose and the rediscovery of Rosa 'Sir Winston Churchill' and the College's efforts to bring it back to the UK; the creation of the Sir Winston Churchill border; the full story behind the planting of Sir Winston's mulberry and oak trees; as well as recent projects made possible through the generosity of Alumni. These include the new Orchid House, the mini arboretum, and the Xiaotian Fu Garden.*

*Acknowledgements*

Churchill Archives Centre

Landscape Institute Archives/Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading

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