

Thorpe Satchville Hall



Report on the History of the Garden

compiled by Felicity Hector and Gill Knight,
November 2012

Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust -
Research Group.

www.lrgt.org

LRGT Research Group Visit September 2011

Introduction:

Satchville Hall gardens were divided during the 1970s conversion into apartments. In September 2011 the Research Group of the Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust (LRGT) visited the two sections lying mostly to the west of the Hall. The Hall stands in an elevated position and an outstanding feature of the garden is the open view from the west of the Hall right across the garden to the open Leicestershire countryside beyond. Open fields stand to the north of the Hall, described in sales details as the 'parkland' or 'parkside'. On the northern boundary, adjoining the parkland, we found the remains of an ha-ha. Ha-has were very much a feature of 18th century landscape gardens and this was probably dug around the time the grounds were first landscaped.

The 'borrowed' landscape, ha-has and parkland, would have been in keeping with 18th century English landscapes, however we have been unable to locate any records at all about the original landscaping of the garden. In fact the first mention of the ha-ha in any records we found was in sales particulars c1960.

The ha-ha peters out to the west of the garden, although the original terracing of the lawns leading down from the ballroom terrace are still in evidence, as is a sunken garden and lily pond, which would have been added at a later stage. Along the southern boundaries of the garden is a long brick wall and a wrought iron gate and summerhouse. A statue of Mercury, photographed by T Hill in the 1960s can be spied still standing in the centre of the adjoining apartment's garden.



"Mercury" T Hill c 1960

Armed with the tracings we have made of various maps of the area held at the Records Office, another look at the garden may inform us as to whether this gate lead to the tennis courts or was part of the kitchen garden.

Following our visit, Gill Knight and Felicity Hector volunteered to pay a visit to the Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office to see what records might be found that might throw more light on the history of Thorpe Satchville Hall garden. We looked at Nicholls and Pesvner and Cantor's Historic Country Houses of Leicester but sadly no mention of Thorpe Satchville Hall. We then looked up all references to Thorpe Satchville Hall. This has revealed more about who lived at the Hall and a limited amount of information about the development of the garden. What follows is a report of our findings.

The House



Post card of West side of Hall showing Loggia- early 20th Century

Thorpe Satchville Hall is an attractive Queen Anne country house, the original part of which it is thought to have been built in the early 18th Century, although we have been unable to find any evidence to substantiate this. Two wings were added to the east and west of the House at a later stage. It is brick built with attractive rendered elevations and a graduated Cumberland slate roof. It lies on the northern outskirts of the village of Thorpe Satchville, standing back about 100 yards from the B6047 and is approached along a tree-lined drive. It stands in an elevated position overlooking the rolling Leicestershire countryside. The Hall and grounds were sub-divided into apartments in the 1970s.



Thorpe Satchville Hall today showing the main entrance and one of the two wings which were added at a later date.

The Families who lived at the Hall

From records viewed at the Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office we have been able to establish that John Paget and his descendents lived in the Hall from the early 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century. We have been unable to locate any records about who may have lived in the house prior to the Paget family. John Paget was the son of Joseph Paget of Ibstock. By the time of the 1901 Census John Paget's grandson, J Otho Paget was listed as head of house, aged 40, single and a farmer; he was the last of the Pagets to live at the Hall.

Sometime between 1901 and 1905, Mr & Mrs Hillyard are recorded as living at the Hall, although we are not certain. According to particulars for the house sale in 1912 a Mr J Crawford was a tenant. It is possible that he remained there until the Hall was sold to the Leigh family, the next residents of the Hall, who remained there until the late 1950s.

The next record we found was undated but is c1970, by which time we think the owner of the Hall was Mr C P F Marshall. The Hall possibly came on the market a second time in the 1970s by which time it was owned by Mr and Mrs P J Clarke. After this sale in 1977 the Hall was sub-divided into apartments.

We were unable to find out who purchased the Hall in 1977, nor any details of the conversion. No doubt a survey of Melton Borough Council minutes might reveal more and a further study of the records at the Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office might reveal more about the succession of the people who have resided at the Hall.

The Garden

Records we found relating to the garden:

- Amongst the Paget papers held at the Records office we found an interesting survey of the estate dated 1836.
- We next found a description of the garden in sale particulars dated 1912.
- We also found a description of the garden within sales particulars c.1970 and again in 1977.
- Finally, we studied relevant ordnance survey maps to see what clues this might give us about how the garden has developed.

Estate survey 1831

Amongst a box of very old Paget family papers we delved through at the Records Office, we found a valuation of the estate at Thorpe Satchville dated 26 December 1831. It was accompanied by a letter from Thomas Breedon of Saddington, dated January 1832, explaining that this was a copy of his father's evaluation of Mr Paget's estate. The valuation list included the following: a mansion, greenhouse, coach-house, nag and stable building and courtyard, an orchard, pleasure ground and gardens (but sadly no descriptions of any features), cottage garden and croft, plantations, a shrubbery,

farmyard buildings, Home Close and several other closes, a pond, fields, hollows and spinneys extending right across the estate.

We are attaching a tracing of a sketch of part of the estate dated 1826. The wings have not yet been added to the Hall.

A tennis court at Thorpe Satchville Hall

We know that Mr and Mrs Hillyard were renting a cottage on the estate in 1912, as this is mentioned in the sales particulars and, according to records we found, it is likely that they were the next residents or even the owners of the Hall. Mrs Hillyard was a keen tennis player and was a six-times Wimbledon champion. In 1909 a local firm built a hard lawn tennis court for the Hillyards using a revolutionary product of crushed brick - the first of its kind. The court proved very successful and resulted in the establishment of En-Tout-Cas Co. Ltd. in 1912, which went on to build hard tennis courts at Chatsworth as well as specialist race tracks for the 1948 and 1956 Olympics games.



The En-Tout-Cas tennis court made for the Hillyards. Mr Hillyard seated far left and Mrs Hillyard playing tennis far right.

In 1909, when the tennis court was re-surfaced for the Hillyards, according to records Mr Crawford was the tenant. Perhaps he sub-let the Hall to the Hillyards or maybe they owned the Hall and he was there tenant. Whatever, there is no doubt that they were heavily involved with life in Thorpe Satchville and the Hall and in particular the tennis court. Interestingly they were also linked with The Elms, a hunting lodge in the village, lying just south of the Hall - a record is held at the Museum of Rural Studies about a Messenger greenhouse which had been commissioned by Mr Hillyard for The Elms.

Sale of the House in 1912

It's not clear from Osborn and Mercer, Auctioneers, who owned the Hall at the time of this sale since it was sold by direction of a mortgage. However it would seem from these particulars that the residence and Park had been let to Mr J S Crawford probably since 1905. The sales particulars indicate that during the last eight years the tenant had "expended very large sums of money on permanent improvements to the property". These included considerable additions to the house and stables, the introduction of modern conveniences, such as electric light, radiator heating.

He had completely transformed the gardens and grounds which were described as now being so delightful a feature of the property. He had erected ranges of glass-houses and, in fact, had spared no expense in carrying out all possible improvements.

The auctioneer's details for Lot 1 of the sale included a brief description of the house and grounds at that time. The house was described as having ten bedrooms, plus dressing rooms, and six servants' bedrooms. It was described as being a

“handsome residence substantially built of brick, with rough-cast exterior and slated roof with overhanging eaves, is an example of the perfection which can be obtained by a lavish expenditure in the adoption of modern ideas conducting to comfort and convenience. The house is well arranged internally. The rooms being well proportioned, sunny and cheerful.”

There was stabling for seventeen horses (with bedrooms above), a large coach house, a stud groom's cottage and a motor garage (with inspection pit!). The estate at that time extended to 230 acres. The Hall was described as standing on a gravel sub-soil, occupying a magnificent situation at an altitude of nearly 500 feet above sea level and was approached by a carriage drive with a lodge at the entrance. A loggia with brick floor and broad flight of steps lead down to the lawns and gardens which contained:

- wide-spreading lawns shaded by forest and ornamental trees,
- studded with geometrical flower beds and skirted by herbaceous borders well-grown hedges.
- tennis court and lawns
- flower and fruit gardens
- shady walks
- highly cultivated and well stocked kitchen garden and capital orchard
- abutting on to the pleasure grounds and in full view of the mansion, but screened from the road by a fine belt of trees in the heavily timbered park.

We are attaching a tracing of the plan of Lot 1 which shows the kitchen garden, capital orchard and greenhouses.

It is interesting that the sunken garden and lily pond aren't mentioned in this list of garden features, nor are shown on the map. It is built in the "Arts and Crafts" style of the early 20th, but it would therefore appear that it was built after the First World War, possibly in the 1920s and 1930s rather than before the War.

Polo Days

Sometime during the mid 1900s, Lt-Col Cecil Gerard Leigh became the owner of the Hall. He was a local magistrate and was Leicestershire's high sheriff in 1948, when his address was given as Thorpe Satchville Hall. The family were still living there when his daughter married Baron Jeffreys in 1956. His son William Gerard Leigh was heavily into polo and recalled being put onto a wooden horse (presumably at TS Hall) and having balls lobbed at him from an early age. It is thought that a polo field was created on the estate, although we have been unable to find any records to verify this. We have no idea when Lt Col Leigh and his family sold the Hall.

1970s

The next records we found were undated sale particulars for the Hall, farm and estate with photos and plans by direction of a C P F Marshall. The sales particulars were thought to have been drawn up around 1970 (since 1970 cropping plans are referred to) even though a much earlier map, dated 1959, accompanied the details. The agents for the sale were H Morris and Alfred Savill, Curtis and Henson. Solicitors were Rotheras of Nottingham. The sales particulars mention that the village cricket club should be able to continue to enjoy the use of the cricket pitch in front of the park and that the Quorn Hunt had a deed of grant to traverse the lands on the western side of the railway line.

Our tracing of the 1972 Ordnance Survey Map shows the extent of the estate at this time, marking a garden pond, spinneys, vegetable garden and a farmery. The garden (c1970) is described as having:

- A large expanse of lawn down to the Ha-ha at Parkside (this is the first mention of the ha-ha);
- these lawns are adorned with variety of deciduous and ornamental trees;
- to west of House there is a western slope incorporating terraced lawns;
- a stone-paved summer house (the first mention of this feature);
- picturesque rose garden and sunken lily pond (this is the first mention of this feature);
- beyond this is the fruit and vegetable garden;
- a brick and slate roofed Gardener's Bothy of two rooms with sink;
- a potting shed;
- stoke hole with Robin Hood boiler for heating the comprehensive range of greenhouses.

We think the house came on the market again in 1977 - this time by direction of a Mr and Mrs P J Clarke. It was put up for auction in April 1977 by Solicitors Bernard Wright and Cursham of Nottingham. By now the estate was 47 acres. The Hall contained two self-contained flats, a grooms cottage, the Lodge at the drive entrance and two stable blocks - and a right of way over the back drive leading to the Old School House.

The particulars (c1974) describe how the vendor had comprehensively renovated the house and installed new central heating and rewiring. Planning permission had been granted to change the use of the Hall from domestic to a private residential home for elderly.

The garden was described as being:

- terraced with lawns
- having stone-paved summer house,
- a rose garden and sunken lily pond
- and had been planned for easy maintenance
- has a large expanse of lawn running to a Ha-ha at the park side and containing a wide variety of ornamental and other trees and shrubs.

We understand that the Hall was then sub-divided into four separate apartments.

Time Line

409-1076	Earthworks and archaeology finds indicate that there have been settlements in Thorpe Satchville since Roman times (MLE5926 and MLE 5946).
1400s	Church built late 15th century. Grade II listed MLE 11683.
1732	United in Twyford - described as a Chapelry.
1796	Parish inclosed.
1808	First son, John Paget, born at the Hall. First mention of family living here.
1810	Second son, Edmund Arthur Paget, born at the Hall.
1831	Survey of estate carried out by John Paget (senior).
1838	John Paget (father) dies.
1851	Edmund A Paget listed in census as Head of household, occupying 240 acres and employing eight labourers and three boys. John Paget, his brother, and his Hungarian wife are listed as visitors.
1860	Edmund's son, John Otho (known as Otho) born.
1866	The parish of Thorpe Satchville created, having previously been a chapelry of Twyford.
1871	Edmund (now aged 61) still listed at head of household. He's a magistrate, landowner and farmer of 240 acres and has 8 men, two women and two boys working for him. His wife, Martha, and children Claude, Otho, Albert, Geraldine and Oliver are all living at home under private tuition.
1879	The railway from Bottesford to Market Harborough arrives, cutting right through the estate. Nearest station John O'Gaunt was regularly used by household and visitors and the local hunting fraternity.
1881	Edmund Paget, now aged 71, still listed as head of the family. Still a magistrate and a farmer, now of 180 acres.
1892	John Paget (son) dies in Gyeres Hungary.
1898	Edmund Paget dies aged 88 in Melton Mowbray.
1901	Census lists Otho as head of family at the Hall

1905	George & Blanche Hillyard recorded as living at the Hall.
1904	J S Crawford (probably a member of the Crawfords Biscuits family) for £397 per annum (for 21 years with an option of extending this for a further 7 years to 1932).
1912	Sales particulars for Hall and estate include a description of the garden, which includes mention of the erection of greenhouses. Mr Crawford holds lease on property.
1936	Thorpe Satchville merged with Twyford.
1948	John Cecil Gerard Leigh listed as High Sheriff of Leicestershire living at the Hall although we do not know when he first moved to the Hall.
1956	Still living at Hall when his daughter was married.
1959	An OS Map shows the extent of the estate at that time, marking garden pond, spinneys,
c1970	Undated sales particulars for the Hall, naming a C P F Marshall as the vendor, contain description of grounds.
1977	Sales particulars contain a description of the grounds, by now 46.76 acres (by order of a Mrs and Mrs Clarke). Hall sub-divided into apartments.



A little more about some of the people who lived at the Hall:



John Paget (son) (1808–1892).

In his obituary John Paget is described as an agriculturist and writer on Hungary. He was John Paget's son by his wife, Anna Hunt, and was born at the Hall in 1808. He studied at an Unitarian college in York and at Edinburgh University and graduated in medicine although he never practised. He went on to study of medicine in Paris and Italy, obtaining first prizes in medical science, including one for an outstanding essay on the diseases of the skin. He travelled extensively and in Italy met the Baroness Polyxena Wesselényi (d. 1878), a widow, whom he married in 1837. After travelling in Hungary he

devoted himself to the development of his wife's estates and gained a high reputation as a scientific agriculturist and a beneficent landlord, introducing an improved breed of cattle, and paying special

attention to viniculture. He was an ardent member of the unitarian church of Transylvania and somewhat a social reformer. He took part in the 1848-49 Hungarian revolution. He wrote books about his experiences including *The diary of John Paget 1849* (now lodged in an Hungarian museum). He had two children: an elder son who died in childhood and a younger son, Oliver (1841-1863) who served under Garibaldi in Sicily.

J Otho Paget (grandson) (1860-1934)



Otho Paget

Otho Paget was the second son of Edmund Athur Paget and Martha Patty Maudeline Manners. Edmund was the second son of John Paget senior and lived and farmed at Thorpe Satchville Hall. Otho would have lived at the Hall as a child and young man and was listed as head of house in the 1901 Census.

He was Seaman and Master of Hounds of the Thorpe Satchville Beagles and hunting correspondent for *The Field* under the pseudonym "Q" appointed in 1886.

His obituary reads "Captain John Otho Paget, M.C., Master of the Thorpe Satchville Beagles, died at his home at Burrough, Melton Mowbray, on Sunday, at the age of 73. Captain Paget founded the Beagles in the 1890-91 season and, excepting the War years, hunted them regularly until he fell a victim to pleurisy at Christmas:

His death recalls the steeplechase which was held at midnight in March, 1890, at Melton Mowbray. All the riders taking part wore white nightshirts instead of riding kit; and the race was over a three-mile course which was illuminated by oil lamps. Captain Paget finished second to Major A. E. Burnaby of Baggrave Hall, Leicestershire."

He was educated at University College School and on the training ship Conway, and spent two years in the merchant service. In his early days he sailed in a "windjammer." In the War he served in the 11th (Southdown) Battalion of The Royal Sussex Regiment, was mentioned in dispatches and awarded the military cross."

He edited "Beckford's Thoughts on Hunting," the Haddon Hall Library edition of *Hunting*; and was the author of "Memories of the Shires," 1920; "Beagles and Beagling"; and "The Art of Beagling," 1932.

In 1918 he married Gertrude, widow of Captain C. Williams, and had one daughter, Anne Paget, born in 1920 (who worked at Bletchley Park apparently). She and his grandson, Sir William Otho Jaffray, recently gave an illustrated talk on his *Memories of the Shires* and Leicestershire hunting history to the Belvoir Hunt.

Blanche Hillyard (1863-1946)



Blanche Hillyard

Blanche Hillyard was a keen all-round sportsperson, excelling particularly at tennis. She always played in soft white gloves, believing them to improve the grip. Here's an extract from the Leicestershire Lawn Tennis Club website which describes tennis days at Thorpe Satchville Hall: "One golden period was around the start of the 1900s when the Leicester Tournament became known as 'Little Wimbledon'. Blanche Hillyard, a six times Wimbledon champion, had recently moved into nearby Thorpe Satchville Hall with her fellow tennis enthusiast husband, George. On a regular basis the Hillyard house guests would turn out for the Leicester tournament, including Wimbledon champions like the Doherty and Renshaws brothers, Mrs Lambert Chambers, May Sutton, Arthur Gore, Norman Brookes and Anthony Wilding. A

pamphlet published by the then committee in April 1905 states 'An Open Tournament will be held in June in which Mr and Mrs Hillyard and their friends (including Mr H L Doherty, Dr Eaves and others) have promised to play'. In the context of today, and given the quality of their friends, this is a little like Andy Murray promising to turn up for a local tournament with Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal , Maria Sharapova and the Williams sisters in tow.

Her husband, Commander George Whiteside Hillyard (1864-1943) served with Prince Albert and Prince George. He helped to create the All England Tennis Club.

Mr and Mrs Hillyard had two children, Jack and Marjorie. She did not give up competitive tennis with motherhood.

Lt-Col John Cecil Gerard Leigh (1889-1963)

He moved to the Hall sometime during the mid 1900s and lived there until c.1959. He is listed on the County Council's website as high sheriff of Leicestershire in 1948. He was a magistrate in 1937. He married Helen Goudy His daughter married a Baron Jeffreys in 1956 and the family was still living at Thorpe Satchville Hall at that time.

The Leighs were originally from Lipton, in Lancashire, and an ancestor, John Shaw Leigh, bought Luton Hoo, in Bedfordshire, the house built by Robert Adam for the 3rd Earl of Bute; in 1903, after the death of G's grandfather, it was sold to Julius Wernher and it was later the home of Sir Harold and Lady Zia Wernher, who also owned Thorpe Lubbenham Hall..

Colonel William Gerard Leigh (1915-2008)



Gerard Leigh [left] at Guards Polo Club, of which he was chairman, with the polo manager Major-General Claude Pert (Daily

Extracts from the Daily Telegraph obituary: "Colonel William Gerard Leigh (known at G), served in the Life Guards throughout the Second World War and beyond and was a popular and respected figure in the polo world. He was the eldest child of Lt-Col John Gerard Leigh, of Thorpe Satchville Hall, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, and his American wife, Helen, the daughter of William Judd Goudy, of Chicago.

Gerard Leigh was introduced to polo in boyhood, when he sat astride a wooden horse

as balls were pitched towards him by the 10-goal All-England player Lord Wodehouse (later the 3rd Earl of Kimberley), whose family lived nearby. Gerard Leigh later recalled: "Lord Wodehouse much enjoyed the occasion when I smacked a ball through his parents' dining-room window."

He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, where he read History and was Master of the Draghounds and a member of the university's polo team. In 1937 he joined the Life Guards. During the winter he kept a private hunter, along with two Life Guards chargers at home, and hunted with the Quorn, Cottesmore and Belvoir, earning a reputation as "a bold man to hounds". Much of his summer was devoted to polo, his squadron leader being Major (later Colonel) Andrew Ferguson, who was a painstaking instructor. extract from The Daily Telegraph Obituaries, 1st October 2008.

References

Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office
Sales particulars 1912, c1960 and 1977
Paget Papers, 1831 (Box III 59)

Victoria County History: A History of the County of Leicestershire: Volume 5: Gartree Hundred (1964), pp. 61-68.; J.M. Lee, R.A. McKinley 1963

A Vision of Britain Through Time 1870-72, John Marius Wilson's Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales

Heritage Gateway - Leicestershire and Rutland HER,

British History on line: A Topographical Dictionary of England 1848. Editor Samuel Lewis

Leicester Mercury, Obituary of Captain Otho PAGET (1860-), 3.10.58

The Daily Telegraph Obituaries, Col William G Leigh, 1st October 2008

Gordon, Alexander, Dictionary of National Biography 1885-1900

Leicestershire County Council website

The Diary of John Paget, 1849, Henry Miller Madden, The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 19, No. 53/54, The Slavonic Year-Book (1939 - 1940), pp. 237-264 Published by: Modern Humanities Research Association

Gardine William, Music and friends: or, Pleasant recollections of a dilettante, Volume 1, Google Books

Ancestry.com

Anatpro on-line records

National Archives on-line catalogue

Map Tracings

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1826 | Sketch of Thorpe Satchville Estate, Leicestershire and Rutland
Records Office, 39'30/17 |
| 1844 | Plan of Township of Thorpe Satchville, Leicestershire and
Rutland Records Office DE3/46 Ma/326/2 |
| 1912 | Plan of Lot 1 of Thorpe Satchville Estate for auction
Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office, DE4674/2198 |
| 1972 | Ordnance Survey Map SK7211-7311, Leicestershire and Rutland
Records Office |

Photographs:

"Mercury" from an album of photographs by T Hill c 1960, Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office Ref No: DE3736

Postcard showing west side of Hall - early 20th Century, Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office, Ref No: DE3736

Photos of exterior of house, the drawing room and bedroom from Sales Catalogue c1960, Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office, Ref No: DE4674/2198

Photograph of tennis court from the archives of En Tout Cas, Leicestershire and Rutland Records Office

Photos:

Current photos of the garden and house and some older images of the house, showing some comparisons



"Borrowed" landscape - view from the house to the west overlooking the Leicestershire countryside



Terracing



The Ha-Ha



Mature Trees



Parkside



The sunken garden and lily pond



Garden wall and gate - is this the entrance to the old tennis courts??



Summerhouse



Court yard on south of the house looking out towards open countryside.



West of house with sun loggia and without



Today

... and in 1962

