

Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust  
Walled Kitchen Garden Register

Name of House:	Leicester Frith Hospital Mansion. Also Glenfield Hospital Mansion House and Grounds, Earlier Names: Sherman's Lodge, Sherman's Grounds Markham's Close, Frith House ( <i>VCH</i> )			
Address:	Groby Road, Leicester LE3 9QP			
Ownership:	Private	Public: x	Institutional	Other
Grid reference:	SK 556068		Map No: Explorer 233	
Official Designations: Historic England	Designation: Leicester Frith Hospital Mansion	Reference: 1376810	Grade: II	
Date original WKG created:	Walled Kitchen Garden created c 1869-71 but see key dates below			
<p>Key dates in development:</p> <p><b>1610:</b> The land belonged to the Duchy of Lancaster prior to this date and was then leased to John Sherman. (<i>VCH</i>)</p> <p><b>1735:</b> It was referred to as a "new built messuage called Sherman's Lodge". The property was held by members of the Sherman family from the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century.</p> <p><b>1812/13:</b> The property was held by Mrs Elizabeth Sherman in 1812, but in 1812 or 1813, it was acquired by William Oldham<sup>1</sup>, the Leicester architect and builder. (<i>VCH</i>)</p> <p><b>1816:</b> It was partially rebuilt by him in 1816 and, at this point, was called Frith House.</p> <p><b>1837:</b> The owner/occupier was Lucretia Oldham, daughter of William Oldham. (<i>LRRO: QS27/2/267</i>)</p> <p><b>1861:</b> The house and estate were put up for sale but, whilst some of the land was sold (to Isaac Harrison) the house and grounds remained in the ownership of Eleanor Mackie, who had inherited the property from her brother, William Oldham.</p> <p>The sale particulars showed the kitchen garden and a pond located to the north-west of the mansion house (not in its current location) (<i>SP 1861</i>) The Gardens, Greenhouses and Hothouses were "on an extensive scale" (<i>LJ- 6 Sept 1861</i>)</p> <p><b>1864:</b> Eleanor Mackie married Thomas Swift Taylor, a cotton merchant,</p> <p><b>1869-71:</b> The house was rebuilt, with the old house still standing but a new mansion being built alongside. There is evidence of new garden outbuildings and improvements at this time with the installation of Messenger Greenhouses.</p> <p><b>1871:</b> The new building was complete and had extensive "pleasure gardens" – a</p>				

<sup>1</sup> William Oldham lived on High Street Leicester and was awarded Freedom of the City in 1763. He joined the Leicester Corporation and served the Town as Mayor in 1763. In 1774, he was commissioned by Clement Winstanley to build Braunstone Hall (now Winstanley House). He also built the House of Correction adjoining Freeschool Lane in 1803.

olly: a brick and flintstone round tower being evidence of this. (JNB)

**1891:** The Census shows evidence of a head gardener's cottage and a gardener's cottage.

**1906:** Thomas Swift Taylor had died in 1899 and Eleanor Taylor in 1906. The entire property was put on the market, including the walled kitchen garden and its structures. The gardens and pleasure grounds are described as "extremely beautiful and very extensive" and the kitchen gardens as "well-stocked in admirable cultivation" (YP-26 May 1906)

**1908:** The estate was purchased by Leicester Town Council.

**1909:** The Home of Rest, a charitable institution, was leased from the Corporation by a charity to provide nursing and care for "ladies and gentlemen of reduced circumstances"

**1911:** It was reported by the Leicester Chronicle that the garden had supplied the household with all the fruit, vegetables and eggs required.

**1917-1921:** The Disabled Warriors' Fund bought Leicester Frith House, where it was used as a home for neurasthenic cases. An annexe was built and, according to the Leicester Mail Year Book (1924) the grounds also provided a valuable asset to the work.

**1921:** It was used by the Leicester Royal Infirmary as a convalescent home.

**1923-1948:** The City Council converted the Frith into a "home for mental defectives (female). This was extended to deal with "500 defectives of both sexes"

**2<sup>nd</sup> World War:** The Hospital Block of the Frith and the newly built Hill Villa was requisitioned by the Military Authorities to accommodate wounded soldiers. It was handed back to the Mental Deficiency Committee in 1946. (JNB)

**1948** With the inception of the National Health Service, the Frith, along with three other Hospital Management Committees, came under the control of the Sheffield Regional Health Board (JNB)

**1955:** The accounts show that the market garden produced fruit and vegetables for use in the hospital.

**1960-1962:** A new greenhouse was ordered from Messengers and lean-to frames replaced.

In the 1960's the head gardener was funded to attend the Chelsea Flower Show.

**1960's-80's:** In use by the Occupational Therapy Department.

In the late 1990's, after a period of neglect in the garden, a new Multi-faith Sensory garden was created within the garden, for adults with a range of disabilities including visual and hearing loss as well as additional physical disabilities. The instigator of this project, Jenny Waite, was awarded first prize in the NHS Trust's Modernisation Award for this initiative. The garden, which included areas of textured paving, raised beds, a water feature, a central sun motif as well as scented planting, remained in use till around 2008. (See Appendix 3 for her description of the garden)

**May 2016** The Mansion house was vacated and remains empty at the time of this research. Also at this time, the walled kitchen garden became the responsibility of Glenfield Hospital and the possibility of a new project to develop the garden started to be discussed.

**Size and brief description:**

The size of the site is approximately 1 acre.

The shape of the garden is a trapezium: the northern boundary

	<p>wall is parallel with the back of the house, outbuildings and former stable yard.</p> <p>Both the mansion house and the garden face NNW. The side abutting the house and outbuildings is longer than the northern boundary wall, hence the non-parallel side walls, which converge.</p> <p>The site is completely flat. At present, access to the garden is through modern single-storey NHS estate offices and a new gate in the west wall. There is a modern double gate access in the northern boundary wall.</p>
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<p><b>Current Use:</b></p> <p>The garden is at present the subject of a project referred to as “The Secret Garden” which proposes to restore the former walled kitchen garden to provide a therapeutic environment for patients and staff. In the middle of the site, four themed gardens, for use by staff and patients, have been created as a result of a television programme filmed in 2018.</p> <p>The remainder of the garden is derelict.</p>	
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<p><b>Features: further information and current condition:</b></p>	
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<p>Walls, doors, gates</p>	<p>There have been considerable changes to the site throughout its history, so there are elements of speculation relating to boundaries.</p> <p>The north and east walls are 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the plan attached to the sale particulars of 1861 show boundaries to the north, east and west.</p> <p>The present west wall appears to 18<sup>th</sup> century (the bricks are hand-made and smaller). So can be assumed that this wall predated the major refurbishment by Thomas Swift Taylor in the late 1860's/early 1870's. The brick bond is English Garden Wall Bond and the brick size is 10" x 2½". However, its position is confusing: the plan with the 1861 sales particulars shows it meeting the back of the house approximately halfway along. But on the 1885 OS map, there are two walls: one at a more acute angle, leading from a large conservatory on the back of the house to the north boundary wall. There is a second wall, which runs from near the apple store to the north corner. As the new house was built next to the old house c 1870, this may account for the confusion. On the 1885 map, a triangular area is created, and this was used for cultivation as a glasshouse or cold-frame and is shown on the 1885 OS map. It may be that the second boundary (creating the triangular area) was a hedge not a wall. It was removed along with the conservatory between 1930 and 1938 (OS 1930 and 1938)</p> <p>The height of this 18<sup>th</sup> century wall varies: 2.40 metres, dropping to 2 metres in the north corner. The North wall is higher: approximately 3.20 metres.</p> <p>The north wall has been much changed with the construction of</p>
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	<p>electricity sub-stations cut into the wall. A doubled gated access point has also been cut into the wall. This wall is buttressed on the outside.</p> <p>The east wall has two intriguing narrow slit “windows” built into the brickwork. Their purpose is unknown.</p> <p>There is also access to the garden next to the Apple Store, between the store and outbuildings. Other gates are modern.</p>
Glasshouses	<p>There are two glasshouses currently on the site:</p> <p>A commercial aluminium-framed Solspan house (late 20<sup>th</sup> century). Solspan ceased trading in 2010.</p> <p>An earlier timber framed lean-to glasshouse (on a brick base) in the north-east corner and built against the north wall. Its size is 13ft x 55ft. Recollections by the daughters of former gardener, Jack Hyman, are that it contained tropical plants such as passionflower. There are no manufacturer’s name plates and it is in a derelict condition. (See Appendices 1 and 2 for recollections by Jack Hyman’s daughters. The dimensions of this house do not correspond with any of the Messenger glasshouses listed below)</p> <p>Historically, the site had extensive glasshouses:</p> <p>The sale particulars of 1861 describe “hothouses, greenhouses, vinery”.</p> <p>The following structures are listed in Thomas Messenger’s account books (<i>DG2121</i>):</p> <p>November 1868: a 60ft x 20ft heated span roof structure with iron walkway – price £259 including £44 for excavations and brickwork by a Mr Moss of Loughborough.</p> <p>1870: for Thomas Swift Taylor a number of structures including:  2 fronts 82ft x 3ft, 2 fronts 60ft x 3ft, 2 fronts 50ft x 3ft, 2 backs 50ft x 11ft. 4 roofs 60ft x 12ft 6in, 2 roofs, 50ft x 13ft, 3 partitions, 20ft x 8ft, 2 partitions 11st x 7ft, 1950 ft. Vine wire, iron walk 90ft x 2ft 9in, flat stage, 50ft x 3ft, 2 flat stages 8 x 3, stepped stage, 27ft x 4ft 6in, 4 stages for slates, 5ft x 3ft, 4 stages for slates 30ft x 3ft, stages for slates 17ft 6 in x 7ft. Heating including 2 no 11 boilers.</p> <p>The 1885 OS map shows a very large rectangular glasshouse to the north-east of the house. There is a lean-to house in approximately the same position as the existing derelict house. There is also another small glasshouse to the north of the large house.</p> <p>The 1904 OS map and later OS maps, through to 1930, shows the large glasshouse replaced with four smaller houses laid out to form a rectangle. There is also a small glasshouse on the north side of these.</p> <p>The 1906 sale details (<i>YP 20 May 1906</i>) describe:  “...three Vineries... Conservatory, stove, early and late peach houses, cucumber, melon, fig and rose houses, providing a</p>

	<p>constant succession of flowers and fruits.”</p> <p>On a “Britain from Above” aerial photo, dated 1921, it is possible to see a large area of glasshouses in the position shown on the OS maps. However, it is partially obscured by trees, so the details cannot be seen.</p> <p>Also on this photo, a large lean-to glasshouse is visible at the eastern end of the north wall. This is also clearly visible on the aerial photo from the 1930-40’s. It is not possible to tell if this is the existing derelict glasshouse.</p> <p>On the 1944 and 1952 OS maps, the large area of glasshouses is shown, but not cross-hatched, though, given the positioning, it is likely that the same format remained.</p> <p>In 1959, the Leicester No 3 Hospital Management Committee purchased from Thomas Messengers a 40ft x 14ft span glasshouse in cedar, complete with staging.</p> <p>In 1960, the Leicester No 3 Hospital Management Committee purchased a 48ft x 20ft glasshouse in oiled cedar.</p>
Frames	<p>The 1885 map shows cold frames to the south of the large rectangular house and possibly also alongside the west wall.</p> <p>In 1962, the Leicester No. 3 Hospital Management Committee replaced lean-to-frames. These would have been for peach cases, or similar.</p>
Pits	None mentioned
Hotwalls/furnaces	None
Heating pipes/boilers etc.	<p>There is a brick built boiler house with chimney in the north-east corner of the garden, next to the lean-to glasshouse.</p> <p>There is a metal fuel tap on the outside of the east wall and, according to June Wallace, daughter of former gardener, Jack Hyman, there was an oil tank, to which this must have been connected.</p>
Backsheds, workrooms, stores	<p>There are workrooms at the back of the garage/stable block next to the Solspan greenhouse.</p> <p>There is a large handsome two-storey brick built Apple Store to the east of the mansion, designed to reflect the style of the mansion house. It was not possible to inspect the interior for health and safety reasons.</p> <p>There are also cart sheds to the east of the Apple Store.</p>
Gardener’s house, cottages, bothies	<p>The 1861 sale particulars show a gardener’s cottage and garden to the north east of the mansion.</p> <p>The 1891 Census lists the names of the gardeners and their families:</p> <p>Head gardener’s cottage: James Henry Wooley (head gardener), aged 33. His wife and 5 children.</p>

	<p>Gardener's cottage: Frederick Garner and his wife. Thomas Seaton, gardener and domestic servant.</p> <p>The 1906 sale particulars state that "two comfortable houses are provided for the Head and Under Gardener respectively" (<i>YP 20 May 1907</i>)</p> <p>According to June Wallace, daughter of former gardener, Jack Hyman (see oral history appendices), the head gardener, Wilf Ward, lived in a bungalow which was provided by the hospital. This was on the Groby Road.</p>
<p>Wells, ponds, tanks, towers</p>	<p>Until 2020, there was only anecdotal evidence of two wells which had been covered over (Jenny Waite who was responsible for the creation of the Sensory Garden, mentioned them.) No wells are shown on any OS maps or were visible on site.</p> <p>However, in February 2020, volunteers working in the garden unearthed a well. They were clearing an area in front of the derelict glasshouse and, beneath the stump of a self-set tree, they uncovered a substantial concrete cover, enmeshed in the tree roots. Debris falling through a small gap resulted in the sound of water splashing: it was obviously one of the wells. No further excavation was carried out and the cover was left in situ.</p> <p>There may have been a water supply in the centre of the stable yard (see OS maps)</p> <p>Alongside the north-south path, a pond has been dug but it is believed that this is a relatively modern addition.</p> <p>The circular concrete water container in the middle of the garden was purchased and installed for the 2018 television programme.</p>
<p>Planting</p>	<p>The plan attached to the 1861 sales particulars shows the kitchen garden as a triangular space located at some distance to the north-west of the house. There is a pond alongside it.</p> <p>The 1885 OS map does not show any crossing paths in the enclosed area of the walled kitchen garden, although there is a perimeter path and many trees are shown. Lines of paths are shown in detail in the formal ornamental garden to the south-east of the mansion house. It is surmised that the enclosed area might have been an orchard and that vegetables growing in the ground were cultivated elsewhere on the site, possibly the original kitchen garden.</p> <p>However, there were a number of glasshouses in the walled garden at this time.</p> <p>The 1906 sale particulars state that "the kitchen gardens are well-stocked, in admirable cultivation"</p> <p>The three appendices with oral history refer in detail to the planting in the garden in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century.</p>
<p>Other key features</p>	<p>None</p>

Any other information:	None	
Date site visited	Numerous visits, throughout 2018 and 2019	
References:	<p>Victoria County History for Leicestershire (<i>VCH</i>)</p> <p><b>Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office (LLRO):</b></p> <p>QS27/2/267 – Sherman’s Lodge/Leicester Frith county returns/parish revaluations.</p> <p>DG6/B/50/1 Auction Sale Particulars of Leicester Frith Estate. 27 November 1861 (<i>SP 1861</i>)</p> <p>DG2121 – Thomas Messenger Customer Records and Order Books</p> <p>Ordnance Survey Map 25 inch XXX1 1st Edition 1885 (<i>OS 1885</i>)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey Map 25 inch XXX1 1904 (<i>OS 1904</i>)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey Map 25 inch XXX1 1912 (<i>OS 1912</i>)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey Map 25 inch XXX1 1920 (<i>OS 1920</i>)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey Map 25 inch XXX1 1930 (<i>OS 1930</i>)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey Map 25 inch XXX1 1944 (<i>OS 1944</i>)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey Map 25 inch XXX1 1952 (<i>OS 1952</i>)</p> <p>(Accessed through National Library of Scotland maps online)</p> <p>Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer, 26 May 1906 – Auction Sale Particulars (<i>YP 26 May 1906</i>)</p> <p>Leicester Journal 7 September 1861 (<i>LJ 6 Sept 1861</i>)</p> <p>Broad J.N. “A Brief History of the Development of Glenfrith Hospital Leicester 1906-1982” photocopy of a document supplied by Leicester Hospitals Charity (from Glenfrith Unit Medical Library) as part of research already carried out for “The Secret Garden Project” (<i>JNB</i>)</p> <p>Aerial photo: Britain from Above: 1921</p> <p>“You Tube” video: Leicester Frith Mansion Pictorial History: A personal pictorial history by Wendy Pell. 2018</p> <p>Transcript of interviews with daughters of former gardener, Jack Hyman (Appendices 1 and 2)</p> <p>Transcript of an interview with Jenny Waite (2016), relating to the creation of the Multi-faith Sensory garden. Supplied by the hospital. (Appendix 3)</p>	
Researched by	Sarah Bailey and Sue Blaxland	
Record Compiled by:	Sue Blaxland	Date: February 2020

## APPENDIX 1

### **Notes of an interview with June Wallace, daughter of Jack Hyman, gardener at Leicester Frith. These notes were made when June visited the garden on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2019**

June and her daughter, Lyn, visited the site of the former walled kitchen garden at Leicester Frith and these notes were made as we walked round the site.

June was the elder daughter of Jack Hyman who was born in 1910 in Thrussington. He was a gardener at Leicester Frith from around 1934 till he retired in 1970. He served for three years in the Royal Leicester Regiment in the Second World War and was seriously wounded at the battle of El Alamein. He was in hospital in South Africa and was then shipped back to the UK where he was admitted to the Leicester Royal Infirmary.

Jack was one of three gardeners: Wilf Ward, who lived on a cottage on Groby Road belonging to the hospital, was head gardener; Jack Creasey was also a gardener. Subsequently he was replaced by Edgar Greenhall.

Before the War, the family lived in a rented bungalow on Groby Road but during the War, they moved away to Thurmaston to stay in their grandmother's house as the bombing was bad in Glenfield. This was because of the proximity to Braunstone Park, where troops from the US 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division were stationed. The family ultimately moved to a house in Brook Street, Thurmaston, which had been owned by June's Aunt Alice.

June remembered particular elements of the garden as we walked round:

The lean-to glasshouse which was known as a "tropical house". She remembers that a passion flower was grown there. The glasshouse still remains, in a derelict state.  
The Apple Store, where she and her sister were allowed to go to turn the apples, which were in wooden trays. She remembered how lovely they smelt.  
The peach tree which was trained on the wall just by the entrance to the glasshouse. The stump still remains.  
A brick store for coke for the boiler.  
Metal tanks located throughout the garden and used for water containers.  
A large number of vegetables were grown  
An oil tank for fuel. This was located next to the west-facing wall. There is still a tap on the outside of this wall.

June remembered that her father occasionally had male patients working with him. He was paid an extra 2 pence per hour when this happened. She also remembered, after the War, coming by bicycle with her sister at weekends to help her father with his weekend tasks. The entrance to the garden was off the Groby Road.

## APPENDIX 2

### **Recollections of the Walled Garden at Glenfrith Hospital by Jenny Nuttgens, daughter of Jack Hyman, who was one of the gardeners.**

"I have known this precious garden for as long as I can remember. I was born in 1937. My parents and older sister were living in Glenfield since it was in close proximity to Glenfrith Hospital where my father, Jack Hyman, was employed in the walled garden. He had previously worked for Admiral Lord Beatty in the gardens of Brooksby Hall where he had lived as a Bothy Boy since leaving school (and Thrussington) at the age of 14 years in 1924.

It was not until after the end of the War in 1945 that we were able to visit my father's place of work. By this time, the family was living in Thurmaston and we were old enough to make the 14 mile return journey by bicycle.

My father worked a 5½ day week (as did many people in those days) having only Saturday afternoon and Sunday off. However, every alternate week, he returned to work on Saturday late afternoon to close the greenhouse ventilation, water plants and to stoke the greenhouse boilers. Sunday would not be a day off either, as the greenhouses needed tending too, again, opening-up in the mornings and a return journey to tend them again in the evenings. These journeys were always by bicycle.

Apart from the years my father spent in the Army after the outbreak of the Second World War, and subsequently recuperating after being wounded in the battle of El Alamein, he worked at the Frith from around 1935, faithfully tending the gardens until 1970 when he retired at the age of 60.

It was always a treat for us to be invited to join him on a weekend mission to tend the hothouses – some for propagating seedlings and cuttings and being shown some of the different ways that plants can reproduce and seed be dispersed. I especially loved a succulent which produced hundreds of babies along the edge of its fleshy leaves – when ready they dropped off into the welcoming warmth of the waiting compost and began again a whole new cycle of life. Another plant (I think it was the African Violet) could grow itself from a simple slice of leaf placed edgewise into the moist compost.

I remember the humid heat in the glasshouses where the tomatoes and cucumbers grew – almost too sweltering to breathe in there – and the rich mouth-watering scent of the ripe tomatoes smelling just as tomatoes should – but seldom do these days.

One glasshouse was full of exotic plants, the most impressive of which was the Passion Flower (*Passiflora caerulea*) and of being shown how each part of the flower represented the Passion of Christ – the three crosses, the Hill of Calvary, the nails and the spots of blood.

In addition to the rows of beans, onions, leeks, cabbages and many other vegetables, there were also heavily scented herbs: mint, sage, fennel, thyme, lavender and lemon balm.

A peach tree grew against a south-facing wall and there were other fruit trees – pears and apples especially. Once we were allowed to climb the ladder to look at the harvested apples being stored there (*this refers to the Apple Store*)

Most of all, I loved the potting shed and, in the winter, the warmth from the coke-fuelled stove. There was evidence of the lunch break, when the gardening team of Wilf Ward (*Head Gardener*), Jack Creasey and my father, Jack Hyman, could spend some time chatting and relaxing, drinking tea from the random, tannin-stained mugs that mingled with the clay pots and raffia strands on the potting shed bench.

In addition to the regular team of three gardeners, some of the patients also helped in the garden.

Occasionally, the gardens were called upon to supply floral decorations for various events, including the Granby Halls, and for the Mansion House (*the Victorian building which formed part of the hospital*). The Abbey Park Flower Show was another occasion when they would be called upon to display their produce.

My sister, June, remembers chickens in the gardens too, but when it was decided to relocate these, one of them escaped capture. When it did reappear, it was too late to join the others and spent the rest of its life living with my family and being known as Dulcie.

Sadly my last memories of seeing the Glenfrith garden were not such happy ones. In 1995, my mother was taken ill. We took my father to visit her in the new hospital at Glenfrith. Whilst Jack sat with her, we took a drive around the back of the walled garden. Through the peepholes in the wall, we were dismayed to see that the area had become a builder's yard. There were tears in my father's eyes hearing this news.

My mother died in January 1996 and Jack in 1997 after over 60 years of happily married life.

It is such good news to hear that, like the Phoenix, the garden has once again sprung to life and has become the happy place that it used to be. Jack would be so thrilled."

*There is more information about Jack online in the [Thurmaston Military Indexes website](#).*

31<sup>st</sup> August 2019

## APPENDIX 3

### **Transcript of Interview with Jenny Waite, describing the creation of the Sensory Garden. This interview took place in Summer 2016**

“It was in 1987 that I transferred from working at Gorse Hill as a Housekeeper to work at Leicester Frith Hospital, Glenfield to support mental health patients who, in some cases, had never left their residential institutions, and people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities. It was because of this move I had the opportunity to develop and manage an indoor sensory environment and it was because of this move that I first encountered the garden – a Victorian walled garden attached to a Mansion House.

At the time the Mansion House was a place where people with learning disabilities received support and further education opportunities in a caring environment. The sad part about that was that the garden could only be accessed by 15% of those who would have really benefitted from what it offered, or in reality, could potentially offer....

I couldn't imagine how the garden once looked – not like it did in 1987 - a blank stretch of grass punctuated by one of few features – the old apple trees (which had stood for years and years and, if they could speak, could tell us a thing or two)! The garden had little to offer but such a great potential to give in 1987.

And so, with the support of like-minded people I did something to change that and unlock the potential (I had a very supportive Line Manager).

The two things I wanted, 1) that it was to be designed to be accessible for all, a garden of inclusion, and 2) for the design to retain the history of the garden as it once was (the apple trees and the double row of tall conifers).

Walking down the pathway we created an entrance to the garden. An acorn symbol represented the entrance to the garden and meant that almost everyone could independently recognise the way in. A wind chime gave an auditory reference for people with a visual disability. It was surrounded by blackberry bushes and strawberry bushes and these bushes gave the garden its border.

The row of tall conifers gave us a natural sensory tunnel and a way to be amongst people but without having the threat of being amongst people. It also lent itself to seclusion for those who needed to be alone or to think. It gave shade in the summer. Looking down the garden, on the right hand side, (next to the rows of tall conifers) we created a sensory garden with lattice fencing with benches either side where people could sit and exchange conversation with the 'safety' of being behind a fence. We grew ivy on the fencing to give the sense of nature. Flowers were planted thoughtfully – some with smells like Lily of the Valley - and others planted because of no smell.

We created small raised beds so that people could experience working in a garden (no plants with thorns) and a water feature under a pergola - offering shade on a sunny day and the sound of running water – so good – therapeutically speaking.

Along the other side of the row of conifers we created an area to grow things – to provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce and eat their own produce. A working greenhouse stood here so that people could see things grow from seed and nurture them as they grew – to be able to care for something else, for something else to depend on them (rather than perhaps the other way round).

Beyond the sensory garden there was a herb patch and sitting on the herb patch was a seat (a lay down seat) donated in memory of a patient so that other patients could

lie safely and smell the different smells of the herbs and touch the different textures and shapes of the leaves. It invited people to linger a while.

On the way to the bottom of the garden there was a sun created in the ground with the rays of the sun created with fences with safe pathways to the centre (to the sun) and each section of the sun's rays representing a faith – carrying out the ethos of a garden of inclusion. There is still an Acer tree overhanging the Buddhist segment although the different segments are, in 2017, no longer easily distinguishable – as is a lot of the garden of 1987 in 2017.

At the bottom of the garden was an orangery – a very old orangery which must have been there for some years (I am sure the history will tell). We used the orangery to grow tomatoes! The orangery is still there but in a very dilapidated state.

Down the middle of the garden we built raised beds, again designed for inclusion. Somewhere underneath the now sad looking beds is a Victorian brick well – I'm not sure where it is but I know it's there somewhere.

On the left hand side of the garden, as you look down the garden, was a growing area bordered by fruit trees, apples and pears, (people were encouraged to take a few and leave a few) with bushes and roses and clematis.

Along the right hand wall it was left as a grassed area with a path lined with roses - and somewhere there we buried a time capsule. I think that was in 1990. At the back we had small sheds for storing the garden equipment. Also along the wall we trained old pear trees and apple trees.

By the side gate we planted lavender as a focal point and we planted roses so that the smell of the lavender and roses met anyone who entered the garden that way (and lavender planted near roses keeps aphids down)!

At the end of the garden is another old, old apple tree – it too could tell a tale or two..... and so.....

The garden gave people the opportunity to experience the outdoors, to experience new things e.g. music to the sound of water, develop new skills and, as was the vision, it created a garden of inclusion.

We also achieved our aim of being sympathetic to the history of the garden e.g. the old apple tree created a lovely boundary for the sensory garden and the orangery came back to life.

This is all now being lost. We have the opportunity to prevent this. We also have the opportunity of capturing the history of the garden from Victorian times.

It would be amazing for some of the history and the more recent history to be captured for future generations and for the community in which we live – and beyond.”

#### APPENDIX 4

#### **Brian Ward - My Story and Recollections - and the Garden's Connection to Health Care (as told: April 2024)**

*“If you can see Old John, Bradgate Park it's a good day, if not it's raining”.*

This is something Brian remembers vividly from his childhood living in Rose Cottage, Leicester Frith when Leicester Frith was green fields and open spaces as far as the eye could see. There was a poultry farm and only two lots of semi-detached houses stood on the land. One semi-detached, now gone, was occupied by Bob Bushell the carpenter and the Ward family and one, which remains to this day, which was occupied by Mr & Mrs Jack Salisbury (Mrs Salisbury managed the

laundry) and the Head Male Nurse Mr Cleaver.

I grew up with the freedom to run and play in 300 acres of green open spaces and woodland. I remember building platforms in the trees to make dens. I remember fishing in the ponds, helping with the harvest and sitting on the farm tractor or the tractor's trailer driven by either the tractor or horses.

My name is Brian Ward and I am the son of Wilfred the Head Gardener at the garden at Glenfield Hospital from just before the beginning of World War II until the early 1960's. During this time the National Health Service ('NHS') was founded (1948) and the small local hospital, as it was then, became part of Sheffield Group no.3 and part of a much bigger NHS organisation.

\*I was born in Rose Cottage, which stood on the perimeter of the Victorian walled garden, in 1932, moving with my family from the cottage in 1939, when the cottage was demolished, to a hospital cottage on the Groby Road. I lived there until getting married (I met my wife Gillian at a dance. Gillian worked for the NHS and was based in the Mansion House) and moving to Henley on Thames in 1956 and then back to the Leicestershire area in 1959.

\*I even remember that I was delivered by a Dr Williams (I must have been told this by my parents)!

My father was a good father, organised, a disciplinarian but very family orientated. His sister had polio as a child and used a spinal frame to walk. Having a close family and within the wall of the garden his sister was able to gain her independence. It's good to know that people's physical wellbeing is also still a part of this lovely garden.

Prior to being Head Gardener, my father worked in the shoe industry and then as deputy Head Gardener to Mr Calton on the garden. Also, on the garden at the time, where two assistant gardeners, one was Jack Creasey and one was Jack Hyman. Both were called up to fight in the war but both, thankfully, returned after the war to take up their posts on the garden again (Jack Creasey was in the anti-aircraft defence and returned unscathed and Jack Hyman was injured and invalided out). After the war the team were joined by Cyril Harris, a grave digger at Gilroes cemetery, prior to joining the team.

Just a little note to add here – as well as being Head Gardener my father was also a respected member of the Vaughan Horticultural Society.

During this time the Mansion House was the 'home' of patients with mental health illnesses. The Head Matron, Matron Baldwin, (who wore a brown uniform and was known as the brown bomber) and Sister Fairweather had their offices in the Mansion House and Grace Johnson, Matron's maid, a high grade patient, lived in one of the flats. There was a female dining room and a male dining room and the rooms upstairs were bedrooms for the female staff.

The garden itself was run like a private gated garden on an Estate. The single gate was not where the gate is today (this gate was known as the back gate). The entrance to the garden was near to where the new outdoor kitchen now stands, in the opposite corner. If you look at the wall you can see where this entrance has since been bricked up. I remember the potting shed and the tool shed. I remember the two boilers (that heated the greenhouses) underneath the potting shed left running in the winter evenings and that my father used to have to go and shake the ashes and top up with coke to keep them ticking over. Sometimes my father would send me to the boiler house in the evening. I was only 13 or 14 years old and I would have to walk down the steps under the potting shed and along a dark tunnel, which only had a small light at the end. It used to scare me going down that tunnel -

and I remember cycling quickly back home afterwards.

I remember the two big greenhouses where flowers and tomatoes used to grow. I remember Matron Baldwin coming to the garden to chat to Pop, the name she gave to my father, and picking the baby tomatoes. Beyond the greenhouses was a patch where trenches were dug and where sweet peas, runner beans, celery and lettuce, amongst other things, were grown. The vegetable garden, which from the air looked like an aerodrome – not good in the war as this made it a potential target, also grew leeks, onions, carrots and herbs.

In the peach house, which currently is in need of restoration, peaches were grown inside and along the back wall were the grape vines. Along the front border of the peach house were metal bars and wire where gooseberries used to grow. It was a practical way of keeping people to the path as well as being great for a gooseberry pie! Along a north wall within the garden was a morello cherry tree which covered the wall in a fan shape (and who doesn't love a morello cherry), and around the walls of the garden were fruit trees, including a big brown turkey fig tree. At the back of the garden there was a border where manure from the farm was piled up for winter digging.

On the farm they grew large quantities of potatoes. As well as being used by the kitchen for meals the farm ran a scheme for staff. Any member of staff could join. All those who joined were given a designated row of potatoes and were able to go and dig up potatoes for their dinner, from their designated row. I suppose this could be considered one of the staff benefits.

Within the walls there also stood a big apple tree, an "Annie Elizabeth" cooking apple, which always produced an abundance of apples. I remember standing underneath this tree as my father picked the apples and threw them down to me to catch. I remember a time when I lost concentration and one hit me in the face! In addition to the Annie Elizabeth several apple trees grew on the garden and there was also an orchard in the surrounding grounds

The two storey brick building which was then, and is now, referred to as the Apple Store had a wooden staircase on the outside into the top floor, the doorway is now bricked up but you can still see the shape of the doorway on the outside. This was used as an apple store where, as well as apples, onions were stored. Underneath was the egg store.

All the food on the garden was grown to feed the patients and staff and, as you can imagine, everyone was very well fed.

I remember the poultry farm (where the car park now stands) and I remember that at home we also had our own chickens. The eggs they produced needed to be preserved and to do this they used to be kept in a gelatine compound. One of the worst jobs for me was when my mother or father would ask me to go and get eggs for breakfast. I had to put my hand into the gelatine and, as you can imagine, this wasn't a pleasant thing to do at all! I remember how it felt this day.

One of my memories of the war, with a connection to the secret garden, is recalled here. My father used to get up very early in the morning go to the garden and then come back for breakfast. One morning as we sat eating our breakfast there was an almighty bang. My father left his breakfast and, thinking it was a boiler that had exploded, rushed back to the garden. It wasn't a boiler exploding it was anti-aircraft fire and a shell had been fired and had exploded just outside the farm's milking shed. Fortunately, the farmer didn't lose any of his cows.....or his staff!

One of my other residing memories of this time is that a group of high grade mental health patients used to come into the garden to help the gardening team. It was considered good for their wellbeing but also they gained work experiences in the

hope that this could lead to employment in the longer term. I remember one of the patients, he was a chap called Billy Dallinson, a real character. He was a small man who used to regularly walk down to the bottom of the drive and catch a Hylton & Dawson bus to the local pub for a pint, or two, catch the last bus home and then walk back up the drive again. It's a memory that once again shows that the care and support for the mental health of people has been a part of the garden for a very long time.

I also recall two patients, George and Florence, who fell in love and married. Even romance can blossom on the secret garden.

I also remember the Mansion House and surrounding land was a very social place to be. The Deputy Male Nurse, George Taylor, managed and conducted the male voice choir. My father had a lovely tenor voice and was a member of the choir and occasionally, when the ladies joined the choir, he was known to perform duets. There was a mouth organ and harmonica group too. The Drama Society was run by Matron Baldwin and the society put on one or two shows a year (the carpenters building the staging). There were whist drives in the lounge and monthly dances (both groups joined together for refreshments at half time), concerts and outings and an annual sports day (I recall Florrie won everything)! I captained the Cricket Club for patients and Paddy Clarke, ex Leicester City Player, organised events and competitions. My wife was captain of the lady's hockey team.

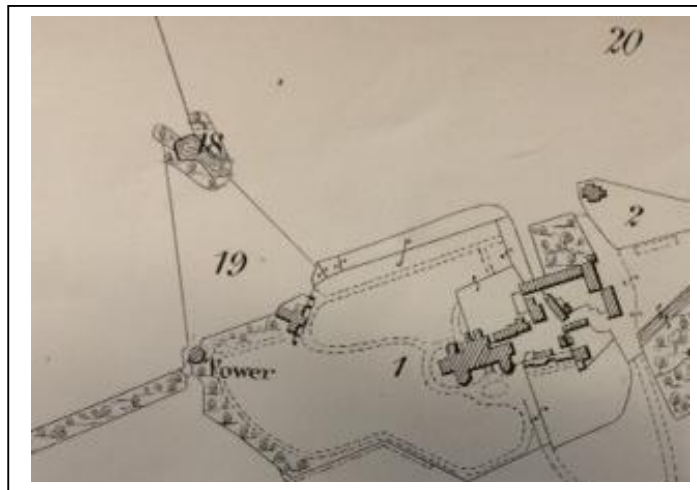
Molly Malone (possibly not her name but I remember her being called Molly Malone) came over from Ireland after the war and worked in the kitchen becoming Head Cook after Miss Gibson retired. Molly used to oversee the catering for the social evenings. I remember the amazing chocolate eclairs she used to bake. There was a big sports element and connection to sport as well as a real social feel during the time my father was Head Gardener on the garden.

The photographs of this time really bring to life the memories of the garden I have shared.

Brian, now 91 years young, learned about horticulture from his father and gained a basic training in, and a love of gardening and growing food. Although, after his national service, his career led him in a different direction, the love for gardening and growing food remains with Brian to this day.

***"I have really enjoyed sharing a few of my memories of my time on the garden and it's so good to know that the secret garden today is once again inviting people back to enjoy and spend time in this wonderful place. It's also good to hear that some social and therapeutic sessions have been held on the garden and that activities on the garden is something that will only grow in the future".***

**Brian Ward**



Site plan from 1861 Sale Particulars. The area marked 19 is the Kitchen Garden. The area marked 2 is the head gardener's cottage and garden. The area behind the house shows the line of the 18<sup>th</sup> century wall, butting up to the earlier house.



1885 Ordnance Survey map. The cross-hatched areas in blue show the glasshouses and conservatory.



1921 Aerial View (Britain from Above). The walled kitchen garden can be seen at the back of the house, towards the right hand side. It is believed that the figures in the foreground are neurasthenic soldiers from the First World War, being treated for “shell shock” as they all appear to be wearing the same dark uniform.



Aerial View 1930s-40s. Image supplied by Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust, Learning Disability Library, cropped from a larger photograph of the entire site. The walled kitchen garden is visible to the back and right of the house.

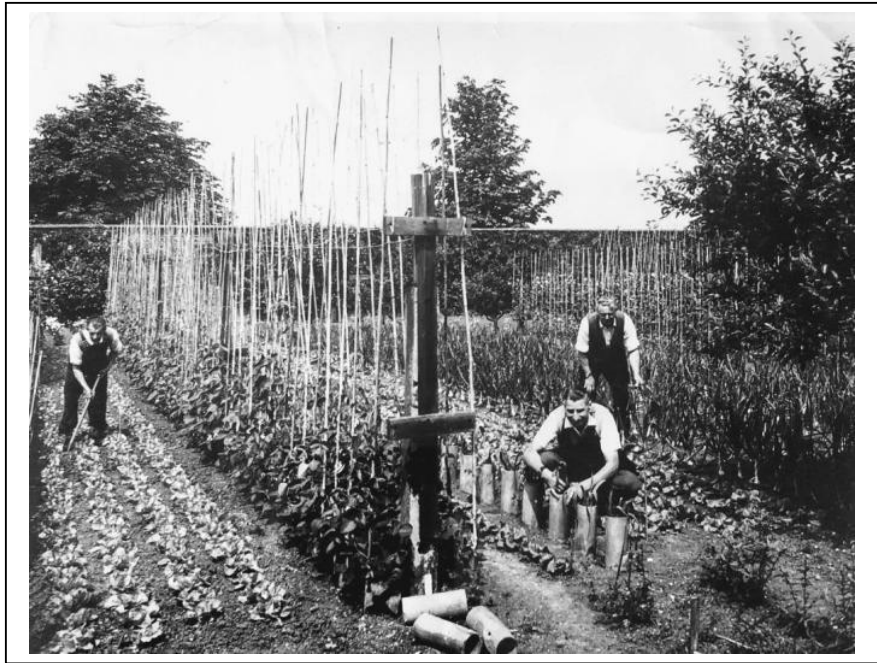


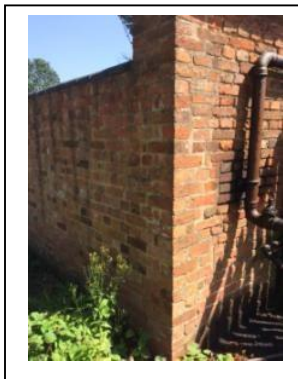
Image supplied by the daughters of Jack Hyman – gardener at Leicester Frith from 1934-1970. He is on the left, hoeing lettuces, Jack Creasey is putting pipes over the leeks to blanch them and Wilf Ward, head gardener, is standing behind him.



Boiler chimney (left) and slit window in east wall (right)



Above: Aerial view, undated (possibly 1970-80's)  
 Prior to installation of Solspan glasshouse but showing the lean-to house  
 in the north-east corner, a span house and three small modern  
 glasshouses. (Image supplied by the Hospital)  
 Below: Left: Apple Store, Right: Concrete slab and tree stump over well



Far Left: Outside west  
 corner of garden,  
 showing 18<sup>th</sup> century and  
 19<sup>th</sup> century bricks.  
 Left: Outside north wall,  
 showing buttresses.