



## Walled Kitchen Garden Register

Name of House:	Nanpantan Hall – previously known as Nanpantan House ( <i>Ref OS Map 1904</i> )			
Address:	Nanpantan Road Nanpantan, LE11 3YF			
Ownership:	Private	Public	Institutional: School of Philosophy and Economic Science	Other
Grid reference: SK505168		Map No: OS Explorer 246		
Official Designations	Designation: Hall locally listed – June 2004	Reference:	Grade:	
Date original WKG created:	Between 1883 and 1901. ( <i>Ref OS maps 25" 1883 and 1901</i> ) Does not appear on 1883 map but is visible on the 1901 map, though possibly not with full range of glasshouses and sheds.			

**Other key dates in development:**

According to notes written on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1977 and attached to Wooley and Noel Inventory of furniture and contents taken in 1902 (*Ref DE 4686/29*):

“The original house on the site was a “neat cottage” “ (*The History and Antiquities of Charnwood Forest. Potter T.R.*)

1870's The present hall was constructed by Edward Warner (hosiery mill owner) (*Land Tax Records 1870's*)



1898 Purchased by William Bryerley Paget as a wedding present for his son, William Edmund Paget, but was let furnished to Thomas Everard between 1898 and 1905.

1902 An inventory of the contents of the Hall was taken. See above.

1905 William Edmund Paget moved into the house following his marriage.

The property remained in the Paget family until the death of William Edmund Paget's unmarried daughter, Joan, in 1985.

The Hall passed to a distant cousin, Joanna Herbert Stephney, who gifted it to the School of Economic Science (renamed The School of Philosophy and Economic Science in 2019) of which she was a member. This is the present owner of the Hall.

1988 Cutting from Loughborough Echo: “The former kitchen garden of Nanpantan Hall is being offered on lease by the present owners: the School of Economic Science.” (27<sup>th</sup> May 1988– *Loughborough Echo*)

The Walled Garden was leased and used as a market garden for a few years before falling into a state of neglect. In 1999 The Nanpantan Walled Garden Cooperative was set up to rescue the garden and make it of use to the local community.

In January 2004, the Nanpantan Victorian Garden Group was formed, having applied for Heritage Lottery Funding in 2000. The aims were to restore the Victorian walled garden and Messenger Greenhouses to comprise a community garden along with allotments as well as education and interpretation for organic and traditional gardening practices. Specifically, the main aim was to ensure that the people of Charnwood, Leicestershire and neighbouring counties would be able to enjoy the historic site and enviable location for years to come.

As well as practical volunteers, there was a history group, who met bi-monthly) (*Ref: LRRO - Local Studies Ephemera: 98-635-635976*)

A draft report on the condition of buildings and structures and a conservation management plan was drawn up as well as architects' drawings for the restoration and repair of glasshouses and back sheds. (*Conservation management plan and drawings prepared by Donald Insall Associates 2004*)

Unfortunately, the Group folded in August 2005. However, a small group of people continued to care for the garden.

In 2007, the Messenger glasshouses were demolished because they had become structurally unsafe and it was not economically viable to repair them.

The garden is not used by the Community or school groups. It continues to be cared for by a small group of volunteers.

Size and brief description:

The size of the garden is approximately 2 acres. It is broadly rectangular, wider rather than deep. It is sheltered by surrounding hills with an open aspect to the south.

It is situated to the south-east of the Hall. There is a single south-facing brick wall, approximately 93.8 metres long and varying in height between 2.5 and 4 metres.

Originally, there was a range of Messenger lean-to glasshouses against this wall and there are back-sheds still existing behind the wall. The land, and the wall, slope from west to east with a drop of approximately 3-4.5 metres. The south boundary is a low dry-stone wall, built in the local style. The distance between the brick wall and the stone wall is 50.4 metres. The east boundary is native hedge and the west boundary is woodland.

We would not normally include a garden with just a single brick wall but as it contains many of the other components that would be expected in a walled kitchen garden, we felt that it justified inclusion in the Register.



*Aerial view from Buck Hill, shows location of garden in relation to the Hall.*

*Photo: Robert Stinchcombe:  
(Facebook: Nanpantan Hall and the Paget Family: Time, Place, Memory 16 May 2021)*

**Current Use:** It is currently used by visitors to the Hall and is cared for by approximately 12 people (2024).

**Features: further information and current condition:**

Walls, doors,  
gates

The main wall is 2.5 to 4 metres high and 94 metres long. It steps down with the slope of the ground. Square piers are built into the wall at irregular intervals.

It is constructed of 3" bricks laid in Sussex (Flemish) bond and is 39 courses high. There are 11 buttresses, 4 metres apart, on the south facing side and believed to have been added later, as the bricks are different. The coping on the buttresses is stone and brick (described in the conservation management plan as a "double brick special coping unit spanning the width of the wall")

The wall is bowing by the central gate.

There are three entrances into the kitchen garden: two modern farm gates at the top and the bottom and modern double wooden gates (2.3 metres wide) in the middle of the wall leading to an orchard area and the back sheds. Several fruit trees dating from the Victorian days are still in place as well as some planted in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



*Photographs (Sheila Burnage) showing various aspects of the wall:*

*Left: sloping wall with remains of cold frame.*

*Right: buttress and coping*

*March 2024*





*Photographs (Sheila Burnage):*

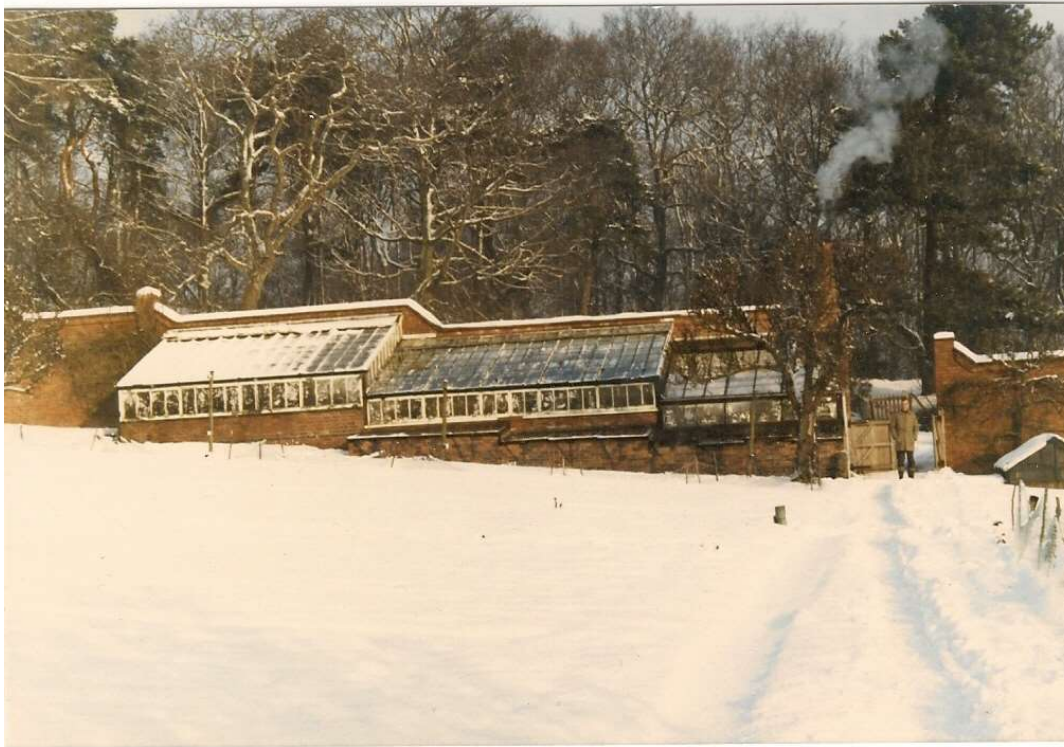
*Top: Left: wall – brick bond and coping.*

*Right: wall – buttress, pillar and coping.*

*Bottom: Dry stone wall which forms the south boundary of the garden*

*March 2024*

Glasshouses	<p>There were three Thomas Messenger interconnected lean-to glasshouses built against the south-facing wall. According to information supplied by the Volunteer Group, they were originally built sometime between 1884 and 1903. The overall length was 17 metres.</p> <p>The first house to be built was referred to as glasshouse 3 (the hot house) and was the lowest in the row. This is understood to have been replaced in the 1970's. It was used for melons, cucumbers, and orchids.</p> <p>Glasshouse 1, referred to as the carnation house, was at the top of the row. Miss Paget had loved carnations but turned against them and asked that they should no longer be grown. The heating pipes were cut in two.</p> <p>The middle greenhouse (glasshouse 2) was for general use.</p> <p>Substantial rebuilding and repairs were carried out during the period 1929-32: The glasshouses had timber glazing bars and frames with cast iron and steel structural brackets and braces.</p> <p>Messenger records refer to repairs:</p> <p>1926 – Lean-to Carnation house (20ft x12ft) 1929 – Lean-to Greenhouse (10ft x 6ft)</p> <p><i>(LRRO Ref: Messenger records: DF2121/194/3 and information supplied by Volunteers)</i></p> <p>In the conservation management plan (2004), they were described as “in a very poor state of repair”.</p> <p>They were demolished in 2007 but the brick wall still shows the whitewash with the “footprint” of the glasshouses and there is a commemorative slate sign on the wall recording their presence.</p> <p>In addition, there was a “cold” greenhouse on the north side of the brick wall used for propagating chrysanthemum cuttings. The brick base remains and the whitewash on the wall is visible.</p>
Frames	<p>The brick base and metal superstructure of a cold frame remain, along with a few glass panes. Historic photographs show that there was a substantial range of cold frames in front of the Messenger lean-to glasshouses. Evidence of the heating pipes can be seen.</p> <p>There was a cold frame for violets (grown by Barbara, wife of William Edmund Paget). The brick base remains in back sheds area.</p>



*View of range of Messenger greenhouses c.1982 Ernie Stinchcombe, gardener, standing in gateway having stoked the boiler for the evening. A cloud of smoke is visible from the chimney. Photograph Robert Stinchcombe.*



*Slate plaque commemorating demolished Messenger Greenhouses. Photograph Sheila Burnage 2024*





*View of glasshouses and cold frames*

*Photograph:*

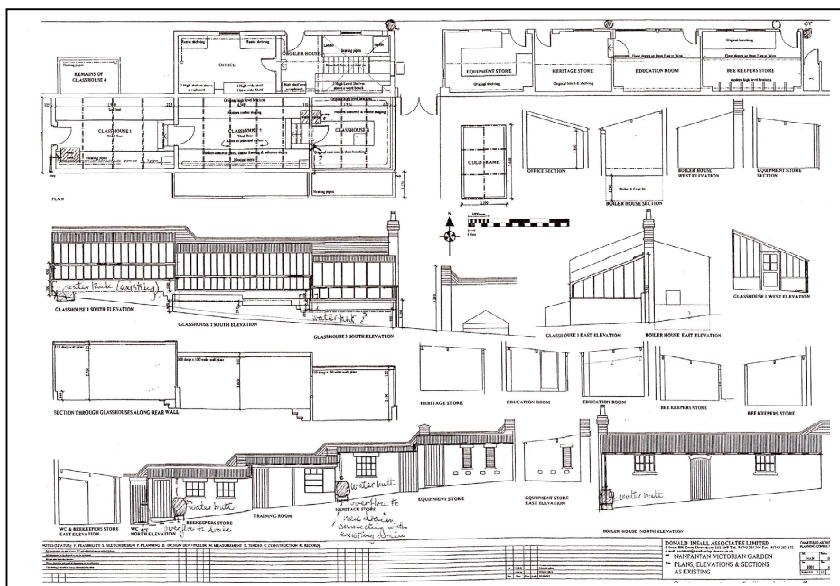
*Ernie Stinchcombe  
(Supplied by Robert  
Stinchcombe - Early  
1970's)*



*Same view*

*Photograph:*

*Robert Stinchcombe  
Facebook: Nanpantan  
Hall and the Paget  
Family. March 2022)*



*Plan: elevations and  
cross sections of  
glasshouses and back  
sheds prepared by  
Donald Insall & Assoc.  
2004  
A1 size copy held by  
Nanpantan Volunteers*





*Glasshouses Still in situ but showing deterioration.  
Photograph: Sue Blaxland  
– Open Day September 2006)*

Pits	No evidence
Hotwalls/furnaces	None

Heating pipes/boilers etc.	<p>1930 Alterations to Messengers heating apparatus</p> <p>1949 No 46 Quorn Boiler and connecting up to the existing mains (<i>LRRO Ref: Messenger: DE2121/194/3</i>)</p> <p>1977 Ideal Standard Boiler installed.</p>
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*Left: Ideal Standard Boiler (Photograph Sue Blaxland September 2006)*

*Above: Door to Quorn No 46 Boiler, found in potting shed. Facebook: Nanpantan Hall and the Paget Family. 11 May 2021.*

Backsheds, workrooms, stores	<p>Accessed through double gates in the middle of the brick wall:</p> <p>From the top of the slope, these were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office/potting shed (Pesticides and any dangerous chemicals were kept here)</li> <li>- Boiler house (coke was burnt)</li> <li>- Double gates</li> <li>- Fruit store and pot store</li> <li>- An open store for machinery, lime and pots</li> <li>- Potato store (now used by the bee keeper)</li> <li>- WC (not plumbed)</li> </ul> <p>The cold greenhouse (see above and illustration below) was at the top of the slope, to the right of the office.</p> <p>Also in this area is an orchard growing pears and apples from original stock. In addition, there are beehives.</p>
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Looking down the slope, shows the row of back sheds.

*(Photograph: Sue Blaxland – September 2006)*



Left: site of cold greenhouse.

Above: Interior of office/potting shed  
*(Photographs: Sheila Burnage 2024)*

Gardener's house, cottages, bothies	No gardeners lived on site: the head gardener lived near the Priory Pub at the Nanpantan crossroads.
Wells, ponds, tanks, towers	<p>There is a waterwheel elsewhere on the Estate used to pump clear water to all parts of the estate, including the kitchen garden (and the house). If there is insufficient water, the supply reverts to mains water. <i>(Ref: Facebook – Nanpantan Hall and the Paget Family. 14 January 2024)</i></p> <p>There are two taps, one on the corner of the greenhouse footings (still in use) and the other on the opposite side of the central path.</p> <p>There was a well in the glasshouses but it is unclear whether it was natural. There are various natural springs around the garden.</p>
Planting	<p>The west (top) of the garden is cultivated by the volunteers as allotments. There is a mown area adjacent to the wall and fruit trees planted to the south. Behind the wall lies the orchard with a mix of old and newer fruit trees, the latter being old Leicestershire varieties.</p> <p>It is planted with apple, plum, cherry and damson trees. Leicestershire heritage apple varieties: Annie Elisabeth and Dunmellow Seedling were planted by the Victorian Garden Group, along with two medlars 'Nottingham'</p> <p>Photographs from the 1960's and 1970's show fine double herbaceous borders (presumably flowers for cutting for the house) as well as extensive vegetable planting.</p>



*Photographs: Robert Stinchcombe – Probably taken by his father Ernie Stinchcombe – 1960's*



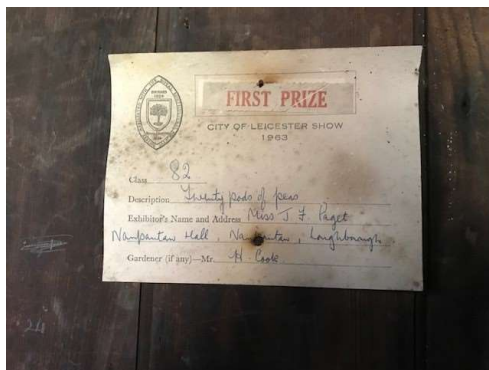
Other key features	None	
Any other information:	None	
Date site visited	Site visited on various occasions between 2017 and 2024. Main site survey carried out on 6 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	
References:	<p><u>OS Maps: 25" – National Library of Scotland:</u>  <a href="https://maps.nls.uk">https://maps.nls.uk</a>  Leicestershire xvii.15 1<sup>st</sup> Edition: Surveyed 1883 pub 1884  Leicestershire xvii.15 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: revised 1901 pub 1903  Leicestershire xvii.15 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition revised 1919 pub 1921</p> <p><u>Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office (LLRO):</u>  DE4686/29 Inventory of the furniture and contents of Nanpantan Hall: 1902. At front, notes on the Hall and occupiers by J.R. Woolley 1977.  DE2121/194/3 Messenger records  Local studies ephemera: 98-635-635976:  Details and map of the Nanpantan Victorian Garden – event flyers and poster for the garden. 2000-2004</p> <p><u>Donald Insall Associates:</u> Copies of Plans, Extracts from Report on condition of buildings and structures, Conservation Management Plan 2004. Provided by Sue Saunders, (Nanpantan volunteer)</p> <p>Copies of quotations, invoices and correspondence between Messengers and Messrs Woolley and Noel (land agents for Paget family) provided by Sue Saunders</p> <p>Background history and general information supplied by Sue Saunders (2017)</p> <p><u>Facebook: Nanpantan Hall and the Paget Family: Time, Place, Memory</u></p> <p>General discussion on and off site with Sue and Dave Saunders</p>	
Researched by:	Sue Blaxland, Sheila Burnage, Fliss Hector, Judith Hibbert	
Record Compiled by:	Sue Blaxland	Date: April 2024



*Back sheds*



*Shelves inside the potting shed*



*First prize certificate for twenty pods of peas awarded to Miss J. Paget at the City of Leicester Show*



*Cloche in Potting shed*

## **Appendix: Transcript and Notes of Interviews with Ernie Stinchcombe, former gardener and his son, Rob. 2004 and 2014**

Meeting with Ernie Stinchcombe, ex-gardener at Nanpantan Hall, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2004

**Dates and names:** Ernie worked as a gardener (his title eventually was Foreman Gardener) at the Hall from 1932 to 1984 (52 years). One of his first jobs was washing the pots, which he did in the bad weather, using the water from the boiler: he hated it. At the start there were about 5-6 other men working there; the head gardener was Mr Selaway who had started in the 1920's and lived at the lodge at Buck Hill, then there was a 'temporary chap', then Mr. Cook, who took over in the late 50's, early 60's (whose names are on the certificates for the Leicester show). Ernie says that the gardeners and grooms who had been there longer than him used to talk about the 20's as being the 'good old days', with the hunting parties especially. Some of the other names he remembers are Mr Oswin, Mr Vaughan (the groom), Chris Newton, George Crooks and Arthur Small. The gardeners worked over the whole estate, not just the kitchen garden. It seems there was just himself and the Head Gardener for quite a few years. Ernie retired a year after the School of Economic Science acquired the Hall. They kept him on to keep the garden tidy.

A plan of the garden shows what was growing where, with very little change the whole time Ernie was there. Herbaceous border: heleniums, carnations and pinks, phlox and fruit trees put in by the school. The vegetables were grown in rotation in the beds (we do not have a copy of this plan).

In terms of features and facilities: in addition to the tap on the corner of the greenhouse, there was one other water point, where there is still a tap (not working) at the end of the second path (which is why the sweet peas were grown there). The paths and layout of the garden were as they are now. The brick base in the orchard was the base for some frames that used to be there, where violets were grown: Miss Paget's favourite. It sounds as though the frames must have still been there when Ernie left. The paths were of loose stone chippings or quarry waste, with upturned stone edging; some of this can still be seen in the middle path.

There were no ornamental features such as arches, pergolas etc. It was just a working garden.

The greenhouses were built at different times, the first being glasshouse 3 (Ernie calls this the hot house), which was then replaced sometime in the 70's, and the youngest being glasshouse 1, which Ernie refers to as the carnation house. Miss Paget loved carnations but apparently, she suddenly turned against them and asked for them to be stopped growing and Ernie said she had the pipes cut in two. Looking at the photos I brought, he doesn't remember the wooden staging being on the wall in the last two greenhouses, so I think they must have been put in later, perhaps by the people who had a small nursery there. The other glasshouses were used for general use, and the bottom glasshouse (the hot house) was for melons and cucumbers. The north facing greenhouse was used for propagating and general use, although he especially mentions chrysanthemum cutting and other ornamentals. The cold frames outside the greenhouses were for general purpose, but you could turn the pipes on or off, so they weren't always on. The north facing greenhouse came down while Ernie was working there, because it was in a bad state.



Confusion about the boiler: Ernie can't remember the boiler being replaced, and he says it is a Messenger boiler (incorrect: the Ideal Standard boiler was installed in 1977)

Ernie says that the carnation house (glasshouse 1) was the most efficient and was the 'mainstay'.

The buildings were as follows: from the bottom of the hill upwards: a WC (not plumbed, just a basic hole) "to be used only in emergency", the potato store, an open store for machinery, lime and pots etc, fruit store and pot store, fruit room, the boiler room (they used coke) then an 'office' where all the pesticides and dangerous chemicals were kept in locked cupboards, also the books and Ernie calls it a potting shed at one point.

Methods: any chemicals, tools that are different from today? Ernie mentioned a water tank on wheels, and identified a paraffin blowtorch that was in a photo I showed to him. I mentioned we had found some rhubarb forcers and he told us that the wheelbarrows were much heavier then, which was very tiring working on such a hilly site.

He talks about espaliered fruit trees against the wall, using cloth thread and the wall nails that are still there.

What was grown:

The varieties that Ernie mentioned are marked on the plan (Not seen); however, he also remembered some of the apple varieties in the orchard: James Grieve, Ribston Pippin, Worcester Pearmain (he thinks this was the first tree on the right as you come through the gates, but he says it may have come down), Allenton Pippin and Bramley Seedling. We have sent some of the apples away to Wisley to be identified.

In the hot house (glasshouse 3) used to grow melons and cucumbers, orchids. Violets were grown in the cold frames in the orchard because Miss Paget loved violets.

The younger trees that were put in by the School would be about 20 years old; Ernie can't remember the varieties, although he did put them in and was asking how they were doing.

There were four trees in each of the four corners of the garden. Mostly Williams pears.

Access to the garden:

The main access to the house used by the gardeners was through the orchard gate and up the hill through the woods. Ernie says this was very hard work, especially with heavy pots of chrysanthemums. He and the other gardeners used to come to work through the meadow and the wood, just like we do. The steps up to the house were very rarely used, I assume they were for visitors and the family. He says they had to keep them clean and in good order.

The farm had very little to do with the garden, except for supplying the manure.

Ernie said the Pagets were a good family to work for, "I could always get on with them". Miss Joan Paget came down quite a lot to pick flowers for the house. He worked 47 hours a week, usually from 7-7.30 a.m. and every other weekend

(Saturday afternoon and Sunday for watering and setting the fire for the boiler). He got paid three shillings for that shift. Pay improved after the War when the unions had more influence and they came under the Agricultural Act. He said there was a rumour that the "old man" (William Paget) had won the Hall from a gambling session! He doesn't know much about what they did or how they earned their money, he seemed to think they were "just gentry": inherited wealth. He mentioned they owned land at Southfields Park in Loughborough, and Sutton Bonington (where one Paget had something to do with the railways), where they are buried. Ernie remembers when gas used to be piped up the Hall from the side of Nanpantan Road (retorts?) from before his time. Peter Paget, Joan's brother died in the second world war.

Mr Warner was the original owner, there is a squirrel symbol built on the outside of the Hall, which was the original symbol of the Warner hosiery factory, I think in Loughborough.

"It brings back memories. I had some good times and some bad times...."

Gill Wilde, 21st September 2004

(interview taped on Dictaphone)



## Meeting with Rob Stinchcombe, 21<sup>st</sup> September 2014

Rob is the son of Ernie Stinchcombe who was a gardener at Nanpantan Hall for 50 years. Rob frequently accompanied his father in the garden and has many memories of the garden, the Hall, and its grounds.

- Water came into the garden from the farm. The water wheel pumped spring and stream water into the garden. If the water level was too low, mains water was used. The stop cock is in the field to the side of the garden just beyond the blocked five-barred gate.
- Coke was brought in through this gate for the boiler which heated the greenhouse.
- The garden used to go further up the hill, as far as the steps down from the Hall and beyond the brick wall. Rob thought that the bracken was one reason for reducing the size of the garden.
- Asparagus and raspberries were grown where the vegetable garden now is. There were lots of greenfinches and hawfinches that fed on the asparagus ferns. Rob's Dad used to shoot the hawfinches as they did so much damage.
- The lower part of the garden was used for growing fruit such as currants: red, white, and black.
- Peas, (a very tall variety) were grown just uphill from the top greenhouse.
- Greenhouses – pipes were cut off to the lower house (?) because of the cost of heating.
- North house was heated.
- Gardeners used to help on the farm as well.
- There were plans to build a second reservoir which would have flooded the farm and the garden. A new site for the garden was found up the hill to the west of the house. The plans were abandoned when test bores found the ground to be too porous.
- Farm: Joe Harvey till 1971/2 and then David Griffiths.
- Miss Paget made a fuss of Rob because he was so small.
- She called Ernest "Ernie" not Stinchcombe (as would have been normal) as she had known him since he was a lad.
- Gamekeeper Harry Crooks once shot a buzzard. He showed Miss Paget who looked it up in her bird books. When she realised what it was, she told him off and told him never to shoot another one.
- They used to shoot grey squirrels but not the red. One day Ernie saw a grey squirrel going up a tree. He borrowed the chauffeur's gun to shoot it but, when he did so, he found that it was a red one.
- Lots of woodpeckers.
- Horse radish was grown where we now have the "dump". Ernie was nearly shot there while flushing out a rabbit.
- There was a rabbit-proof fence around the garden.
- Boiler: had to get dampers just right or it would roar away.
- Ernie used to bake potatoes on top of the boiler.
- Used to be rows of certificates on the wall in the boiler room.
- Weather records were kept inside the cupboard on the back of the door.
- Ernie used to decorate the church as well as the Hall.
- Swallows used to fly through holes in the wall into the potting shed and nest there.



- Spotted flycatchers used to nest against the wall in the orchard where the cherry trees grew. When these were netted, the birds couldn't access their eggs. If they couldn't make an access hole for the fly catcher, Rob would sometimes take the eggs and put them in a swallow's nest. The swallows then reared the flycatchers.

### Orchard

- There were frames either side of the path.
- Loam was stacked by the woods: Rob used to cut this from the fields with his Dad.
- Rubbish was tipped on the hill in the woods.
- Compost heaps were also there.
- In the War, Ernie was in the Home Guard – he wasn't called up. He once shot a hole in a piece of guttering with a .45.
- They had a rotavator which Ernie found it hard to dig with – it was kept in the open store.
- There were peach and cherry trees on the north side of the wall in the orchard.
- Used to cut the grass in the orchard with an Allen scythe which was hard to use – it would frequently run away with them.
- The top shed after the gate to the garden was the fruit store.
- There were drains running under the path.

### Garden

- Californian poppies grown just inside gate from orchard.
- Apricot tree there.
- Herbaceous border was double-sided – rhubarb grown towards the bottom.
- Rob couldn't remember a gate into the field at the bottom of the garden, but he did remember a big hawthorn tree.
- When Ernie needed to tend the boiler at the weekend, he would drive up the farm drive, across the field and access the orchard through the gate at the bottom.