

Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust
Walled Kitchen Garden Register

Name of House:	Hallaton Hall (Aka Torch House)			
Address:	Hallaton Hall North End Hallaton Leicestershire			
Ownership:	Private *	Public	Institutional	Other
Grid reference: SP7904396638	Map No: 233 OS Explorer			
Official Designations	Designation: Heritage England List	Reference: 1360800	Grade: II	
Date original WKG created:	1844 Earliest evidence of kitchen garden. (P.Ac.) First evidence of glasshouses is vinery, 1848 (GG).			
<p>Other key dates in development (largely sourced from HE., Lee, J.M., McKinley, R A 1964; additional sources cited after text):</p> <p>c.16C original house</p> <p>From 1713 – mid 19th century the home of the Bewicke family.</p> <p>Early 18th century core of the house built.</p> <p>Late 18th century alterations included a wing added to each end of the Hall, additionally a new entrance portico, new garden frontage, and extra stabling.</p> <p>1848 Calverley Bewicke leased the Hall to Lady Hinrich. She moved to the Manor House c.1860.</p> <p>1860 - 1870 the Hall had several tenants. (LC1860, NM 1870)</p> <p>1897 sold to Leicester banker, Samuel Nevins Bankart, along with the local water supply network of tanks and machinery that took water from Hallaton Brook and springs.</p> <p>1897-1903 major additions and alterations to the house and gardens and installation of central heating into Hall, including new schoolroom, service quarters and conservatory. (GG.)</p> <p>c.1910 acquisition of thin strip of land opposite the Hall on North End, and construction of a water tower.</p> <p>1910 Bankart sold Hallaton Hall to his brother-in-law, Herbert Fletcher.</p> <p>1913 The Lloyd George ‘Domesday’ Survey revealed electricity generated by a 16HP Hornsby oil engine with dynamo and 55 storage batteries that lit the whole house, stables, outbuildings and three cottages on North End.</p>				

In 1958 it was occupied by nuns of the order of Our Lady of Good Counsel as a training school for novices.

By 1987 the Hall had become a Home for the Blind (O/S Map)

<p>Size and brief description:</p>	<p>The kitchen garden is unusual because it is spread over 2 sites and there is only one wall. We have included it because, in every other respect it has all the other elements of a WKG.</p> <p>Most of the glasshouses and outhouses were sited close to Hallaton Hall and bordered the pleasure garden which to the West had a shelter belt of Lime, Chestnut and Elm trees; it was open to the south. Several lean-to glasshouses backed onto the garden's long, Eastern boundary wall on Medbourne Road. A later sales catalogue described this area containing glass houses as 'The Rosary Garden' partially flanked by a dwarf stone wall and approached by stone steps. (JS 1938)</p> <p>On the other side of Medbourne Road there was a fenced, five-sided Kitchen Garden of about $\frac{3}{4}$ acre very well stocked with apple, plum and pear trees. It was described as a small vegetable garden with lean-to glasshouse with furnace. (Wood,1921; WSW.)</p>
------------------------------------	--

Current Use: The 1987 O/S map shows the Hall had become a Home for the Blind (Torch House) with 3 new buildings within the former hall garden accessed from a new short road called Torch Close. This runs from a new entry from Medbourne Road opposite the Hall courtyard. Latterly, further new housing has been built against the Northern part of the wall along Medbourne Road.

On the opposite side of the road, the same source shows a house called Hycroft constructed within the enlarged boundary of the original KG.

Features: further information and current condition:

<p>Walls, doors, gates</p>	<p>The wall of the original pleasure garden and KG alongside Medbourne Road shows signs of being partially rebuilt and repaired at different times – by 1905/6 it had been straightened. (GG; shown on later 1860 O/S Map).</p> <p>The earliest brickwork, is of English Garden Wall bond, pre-1850s hand-made and clamp fired. The original coping has been replaced by flat concrete slabs towards the North. The Southern part of the wall has blue brick saddleback coping.</p> <p>Although O/S maps show footpaths around the hall gardens there is no clear evidence of original entries, doors or gates.</p>
<p>Glasshouses</p>	<p>1848 'Hall offered for sale including a vinery'. (LJ.1848. GG.).</p>

	<p>1860 Hall listed as ‘To Let’ with gardens and hot houses, well stocked with the choicest shrubs and fruit trees.’ (LC,1860. GG.)</p> <p>1870 Hall offered to let including the pleasure grounds, hot houses, kitchen and flower gardens. (NM 1870. GG.)</p> <p>1892 New 42ft 3ins long partitioned lean-to glasshouse. (GG)</p> <p>1893 New 45ft 6ins x 13ft 9 ins partitioned lean-to greenhouse (stove and plant house) in place of existing greenhouse. (GG)</p> <p>1897 New Conservatory (GG). Bankart spent much money on the garden installing new greenhouses, an orangery and a chrysanthemum house, overseen by head gardener, Evan Huggard. (Lee, J.M., McKinley, R. A.1964)</p> <p>1903 a peach wall/cover 145ft 8 ins x 12ft wide and 12 ft high ordered, although unclear if actually built. (GG)</p> <p>1905/6 New c.129ft long, $\frac{3}{4}$ span partitioned range consisting of several vineries & peach houses, with gabled central entrance. Prior to construction the Medbourne Road wall, against which it leant, was straightened. Peach trellis and vine wires, wood walkways, staging, slates, and heating also installed. Alterations and heating to an existing Carnation House, and iron grates to an existing house. (GG. See also 1960 O/S map)</p> <p>1921 Description of ‘excellent ranges of glass in good order’. These comprise span-roof house in 3 divisions with a total run of 50 ft, plant house, 3 span-roof houses of 25 ft. run each for peaches and 2 other span roofed houses of about 30 ft. run each for plants and tomatoes; lean-to conservatory and 2 hothouses and 2 lean-to vineries. Most being situated against the wall to the Hall pleasure garden. (Wood 1921)</p> <p>Across the Medbourne Road there was a small lean-to glasshouse with furnace. (Wood 1921)</p> <p>1938 Reference to ‘a wide range of glasshouses’. (JS1938)</p>
Frames	<p>In 1893 the installation of a new cucumber frame. (GG)</p> <p>1905/6 53ft 7ins. X 5ft 8½ lean-to frames in front of part of range.</p>
Pits	<p>A manure pit is mentioned in an undated catalogue. (WSW undated)</p>
Hot walls/furnaces	<p>1860/1870 hothouses listed as part of the estate (GG)</p> <p>1921 a furnace house with two boilers provided the range of glass houses with heating via hot water coils. And there was a separate furnace for the lean-to glass house in the fenced kitchen garden to East of Medbourne Road. (Wood 1921)</p>

<p>Heating pipes/boilers etc.</p>	<p>1892 heating was installed in the new lean-to glass house costing £47 15s; and heating was installed to an existing plant house. (GG)</p> <p>1893 the partitioned lean-to glasshouse described as ‘plant and stove’. (GG)</p> <p>1897 Bankart installed boilers to heat his new greenhouses, an orangery and a chrysanthemum house. (Lee, J.M., McKinley, R A 1964)</p> <p>1921 see above.</p>
<p>Back-sheds, workrooms, stores</p>	<p>1921 sales catalogue mentions a fruit room fitted with large shelving compartments; mowing machine shed, range of timber and iron open potting shed and enclosed potting shed with the gardener’s office. There was an open timber and iron coal store, with another furnace and mushroom house. (Wood 1921; WSW undated)</p>
<p>Gardener’s house, cottages, bothies</p>	<p>1911 The head gardener was William Sayers. He lived in one of the houses in North End opposite the Hall (probably a tied cottage). He was also the key person in the construction of the glasshouses and other building projects, such as installing boilers. Correspondence from the companies involved was sent to him. (Lee, J.M., McKinley, R. A.1964)</p> <p>1921 record of a gardener’s bothy and gardener’s office on the main hall site. There were 3 WCs for men adjacent to fenced KG. All the gardens and grounds could be maintained by three or four men. (Wood 1921).</p>
<p>Wells, ponds, tanks, towers</p>	<p>1897 Bankart acquired land on the other side of North End where he built a water tower. (Lee, J.M., McKinley, R A 1964).</p> <p>A hydrant with sufficient length of piping to reach the ‘whole of the buildings.’ (WSW undated).</p> <p>The water supply to the house and gardens in 1938 is described as being from a Spring in Sandy Brook field, pumped by a 5 hp. Blackstone Engine and over the road a secondary Water Wheel to a Water Tower in a field with a 7,000 gallon tank. (JS1938)</p>
<p>Planting</p>	<p>Across the Medbourne Road the small fenced 3/4/ acre vegetable garden was described as very well stocked with apple, plum and pear trees. (Wood 1921). See various glasshouses for plants within.</p> <p>Surviving accounts from 1844 (P.Acc.1844) provide contemporary evidence of fruit and vegetables produced in the kitchen garden and glasshouses. Vegetables include cauliflowers, cabbage, beans, potatoes, peas, turnips, carrots,</p>

	French beans, celery and greens. Fruit includes gooseberries, apples, pears, cherries, raspberries, currants, apricots, plums, walnuts, peaches and nectarines.
Other key features	An elaborate 'Winter Garden' with glazed front, gabled roof, and gabled central entrance with double glazed doors to the right of the garden front of the house was set between the central block of the house and a music room. (HE 2022). Probably the Conservatory as described in other documents.
Any other information:	It was suggested that the whole garden and grounds could be maintained by 3-4 men. (Wood 1921). Poole's accounts record weekly payments to himself, 2 other individuals, and a husband and wife. Other outgoings include the hire of a man to mend fences for 3 days, and another to mow the lawn. NB. Poole's wages were considerably more than the other gardeners, possibly because he was the head gardener, Other income included regular payments of rent from properties owned by the estate. (P.Acc.1844). For extant gardeners references see additional notes below.
Dates site visited	23/10/2019; 17/07/2024
References:	<p>Guy, Geoff, <u>Research Notes on Messenger Greenhouses between 1848-1905/6</u>, 2019. (GG)</p> <p>Historic England, <u>Listed Building Description Hallaton Hall</u>, 24th June 2002. Accessed from HE website 23/10/2019. (HE 2002)</p> <p>Jackson Stops and Staff, <u>Sale Catalogue</u>, 25th July 1938. (JS1938)</p> <p><u>The Leicester Chronicle or Commercial and Agricultural Advertiser</u>, 22nd December, 1860. (LC 1860)</p> <p>Lee, J.M., McKinley, R. A., 'Hallaton', in <u>A History of the County of Leicestershire: Volume 5, Gartree Hundred</u>, London, 1964, sections on Hallaton, pp. 992, 1001, 1002. Off-print accessed at Market Harborough Museum and Reference Library. Online version: https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/leics/vol5: accessed 30th July 2024. (Lee, J.M., McKinley, R. A.1964)</p> <p><u>The Leicester Journal</u>, 13th August, 1848. (LJ 1848)</p> <p><u>The Northampton Mercury</u>, 29th October 1870. (NM 1870)</p> <p>Ordnance Survey, <u>25 inch Map: XXXIX 15</u>, 1886, 1906, 1951 (O/S date)</p> <p>Poole, <u>Handwritten Accounts</u>, 1844, includes payments to staff and prices for vegetables, 8th July to 30th September, 1844, by Poole, possibly the Head Gardener, Hallaton Hall. Photocopied</p>

	Document No. 9D53/76 from Leics. Records Office. (P.AcCs.1844). Warner, Sheppard & Wade, <u>Sale Catalogue</u> , undated. (WSW) Wood Jon D. & Co., <u>Sale Catalogue</u> , 1921 (Wood 1921)	
Extra Notes on Sources:	With are particularly grateful to: Geoff Guy for detailed information from his research into Messenger glasshouses. The Leicestershire & Record Office. (LRO) Market Harborough Museum and Reference Library. (MHM&RL)	
Record Compiled by:	Elizabeth Bacon, Gill Knight, Rowan Roenisch	Date: October 2024

Additional information:

Two transcripts of reference letters sent by employers on behalf of Percy Plowright to prospective employers (Lee, J.M., McKinley, R. A.1964):

1. From: William Sayers, Head Gardener, Hallaton Hall, 1908

*The Gardens,
Hallaton Hall Nr. Uppingham, March 16th 1908.*

Mr F. Knights

Dear Sir,

I am in receipt of your letter of today. The... is Percy Plowright who I can with confidence recommend to you. He has been used to all sorts of work inside and out, also assisted the journeymen every other Sunday with duty:

We have a lot of glass here & he has had every chance of a good insite(sic) of the general work. I have always found him honest sober and obliging and well conducted hard working lad. He belongs to a highly respectable family here in Hallaton and I am sure if you engage him he will do everything in his power to give you satisfaction:

I am Dear Sir

Yours faithfully,

W Sayers

From F.C. Hawke:

2.

15/5/1915

Memo from F.C. Hawke

Dealer in Ford Cars,

Hallaton Market Harborough

Percy Plowright has had considerable experience with me on various kinds of car during the last two years. I found him a careful & efficient driver & hard-working &

painstaking in repairs. He is a good all-round man. He left me on getting married, for private service as a chauffeur. He gave me great satisfaction whilst working for me & I should have no hesitation in re-engaging him.

F.C. Hawke