

**LEICESTERSHIRE
AND RUTLAND
GARDENS
TRUST**



**REPORT ON THE HISTORY OF
THE GARDEN AT
PAPILLON HALL**



**© Leicestershire and Rutland
Gardens Trust – 2013**

www.lrgt.org

INDEX

A History of the Garden at Papillon Hall.....	3
Introduction and Acknowledgements	3
Description of the Site	4
Key Dates.....	5
Detailed History	6
References.....	19

A History of the Garden at Papillon Hall

Introduction and Acknowledgements

The Leicestershire and Rutland Gardens Trust has known about Papillon Hall and its history for many years. More recently, we have been involved in a national project to research and record the history of the parks and gardens in our two counties, with a view to entering them on to a national database.

Given the importance of this site: a house and garden created by Edwin Lutyens, and his only significant work to be destroyed, we were anxious to research this further and visit the site, which we did in spring 2012.

Our research will shortly be entered on to the Parks and Gardens Database but is also published in this format as a report which can be downloaded from our website.

We should like to thank Stephen Hewes, the present owner of the site, for allowing us to visit and tramp round his farm. Jim and Barbara Burbidge of the Lubenham Heritage Group have been most helpful, giving us copies of Lutyens' plans and the 1948 sale catalogue, as well as spending an afternoon taking us round the site. Dr. Douglas Cawthorne of De Montfort University joined us on our visit and produced an aerial photo of the site, overlaid with Lutyens' design for the Hall in plan view. This was a very helpful aid to our site visit. Jeff Guy, who we met at the Record Office, is researching the history of Messenger greenhouses and, very kindly, supplied us with information relating to the greenhouse at Papillon. Local historians and amateur archaeologists, Alan Clarke and John Lacey, also shared information with us, for which we are grateful.

Sue Blaxland
2013



Description of the Site

The site of Papillon Hall, now a farm, is just outside the village of Lubenham, approximately three miles west of Market Harborough. It is in private ownership and not accessible to the public, although a public footpath runs alongside it.

The Hall was demolished in 1950, so there is nothing to see of this building. The site is now a field and a farmyard with fragments of the former gardens and outbuildings scattered around. These include the lily pond, a summerhouse, some walls and the remains of a greenhouse. The stables and other outbuildings remain and are now used as farm buildings.

The Hall was described in the sale catalogue as occupying “a fine position on high ground with charming views over picturesque countryside” and the site still has these qualities.

Key Dates

- C 1303** The Papillon family, which gave its name to the Hall, although French in origin, can be dated back in England to the time of William the Conqueror.
- Around 1303, Edward I recommended William Papillon to the Abbot and Convent of Leicester for a “Corrody”¹. The site on which he built the house had formerly been a lazar-house connected to the Abbey.
- 1588** Thomas Papillon (a Huguenot) sent his family to England in 1588. His son, David (1581-1659), was apprenticed to a Master Jeweller in 1597, but after his apprenticeship, in 1604, followed his real aspiration and became a Military Engineer.
- 1622-1624** David Papillon built the original Hall. It is likely that he chose this site because of its connections with the Papillon name. It was constructed in stone and, in accordance with his theories on fortifications was octagonal in shape and had only one entrance.
- 1764** The house, which had remained in the Papillon family, was sold to William Stevens of Rowell.
- 18th and 19th centuries** Papillon Hall was occupied by various owners, some of whom were graziers. It was used later as a hunting box. The most significant owner was the Earl of Hopetoun, who bought the Hall in 1866 in order to hunt with the Pytchley.
- 1901** It was bought by Mrs. Emma Bellville of Stoughton Grange for her son, Frank.
- 1903** Frank Bellville commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to rebuild the house. This he did by incorporating the old building in the centre of his design, adding an extra storey and 4 wings, which formed the shape of a butterfly.
- 1911** The house and gardens featured in Country Life magazine, with a set of photos which give a vivid impression of its appearance.
- 1937** Frank Bellville died and the house was inherited by his son, Rupert.
- 1939-45** The house was requisitioned by the Army and troops from the American 82nd Airborne Division were stationed there, prior to D Day.
- 1948** The Hall was put on the market for sale by Frank’s son, Rupert, but failed to sell.
- 1950/51** The house was demolished and the materials were sold for scrap. Some of the outhouses were converted into a farm, owned by the Hewes family. It has been in their ownership since 1950/51.

¹ A corrody was an allowance of food, clothing, money or land, awarded to servants of the Crown.

Detailed History

The Papillon family, which gave its name to the Hall, although French in origin, can be dated back in England to the time of William the Conqueror.

Around 1303, Edward I recommended William Papillon to the Abbot and Convent of Leicester for a “Corrody”. The site on which he built the house had formerly been a lazaret connected to the Abbey. There was a chalybeate spring in the grounds, known as St. Mary’s Well.

In 1588, Thomas Papillon (a Huguenot) was Captain of the Guard and Gentleman of the Bedchamber to Henri IV of France. Because of the persecution of the Huguenots, he sent his family to England. His wife, Jeanne, and the younger children, David, Esther and Anne set sail to Hythe, Kent. Sadly, they were shipwrecked and the mother drowned. The three children were taken in by Huguenot friends.

David Papillon (1581-1659), was apprenticed to a Master Jeweller in 1597, but after his apprenticeship, in 1604, followed his real aspiration and became a military engineer. He became an expert on the construction of fortifications and wrote a Treatise on this in 1646.

He left the army in 1609, investing in the business of trading in precious stones. In 1629, he was appointed by King Charles I to superintend the redemption and sale of Crown Jewels in the Netherlands. The transaction was to satisfy a debt that the King had incurred to support his sister, the Queen of Bohemia.

At this stage, he was looking for a suitable site to establish a residence and land for his family for future generations. It is likely that he chose the site of Papillon because of its connections with the Papillon name.

Papillon Hall was built between 1622 and 1624. It was constructed in stone and in accordance with his theories on fortifications. It was octagonal in shape, having only



Papillon Hall: plate from John Nichols 'The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester' - 1798

one entrance and very strong stonework surrounding the windows. It was positioned on high ground with the land sloping away on all sides and, according to Nichols, writing in 1798, had been surrounded with a moat, but no trace remained at the time of his writing. It faced south, with strong massive windows. The roof was in the shape of a cross, formed by the gables. The flat surfaces on either side of the gables were paved with lead, to create platforms where cannon could be mounted. These commanded a view over two sides of the surrounding countryside. All the rooms on the first floor communicated with each other and the top floor consisted of four attics with sloping sides within the gabled roof.

In 1645, during the Civil War, he published “A practical abstract on the arts of fortification and assailing, containing four different methods of fortification with approved rules...”

In 1649, David was well settled at Papillon Hall, having married, as his second wife, Anne Marie Calandrini, whose family had fled Italy as Protestants. In a letter, dated 18 December, held among the Papillon family papers at the Northamptonshire Record Office, he wrote to his son, Thomas, in London, asking him to find a buyer or tenant for his London house because things in London “be so deare”. He described the cheaper life in Lubenham and agricultural improvements that he was carrying out. He wrote: “I and my man live for eight shillings a week”.

In 1756, Thomas Papillon (1631-1702), their first son, purchased Acrise Park in Kent. He was a prominent merchant and campaigner for civil and religious freedoms, becoming an MP for Dover and then for the City of London

In 1670, George Papillon (d. 1684) was still living at Papillon, though the family had moved to Kent.

The second David Papillon (1691-1762) was great grandson of the builder of the Hall. He lived at the Hall and was known as Pamp. It is he to whom the folklore and stories relating to his psychic powers, his Spanish mistress and her slippers, said to have been cursed, are linked. As they bear no connection to the history of the garden and are well-reported on the Internet, they will not be repeated in this report.

Following his marriage to Mary Keyser in 1717, he moved away from the Hall to Acrise Park in Kent.

The house remained in the family until sold to William Stevens of Rowell by another, David Papillon (Pamp’s son) in 1764.

Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, Papillon Hall had various owners and tenants, being occupied by graziers and used later as a hunting box. Owners included John Jordan (a grazier, perhaps one of the Jordans of Gumley).

In 1780, the Hall passed to Charles² Bosworth, through marriage. It was used as a ‘nursing home’ for inoculation against small-pox.³

² According to ‘The History of the Mysterious Papillon Hall – by Colonel Pen Lloyd, his name was George. However, Nichols, writing in 1798, says that it is the property of Charles Bosworth.

³ Advertisement in the Leicester Journal 1789: “At Papillon Hall (an elegant and copious House situated within 3 miles of Market Harborough) patients are taken for the purpose of having the small-pox, supplied with the best accommodation on most reasonable terms and with the liberty of choosing the attendance of any medical gentleman they think proper.”

In 1798, Mary, widow of Charles Bosworth, remarried John Breedon and let the house to a relative, a Mr. Thomas Marriott, whose son was living there in 1847. However, she was living there herself in 1863.

In 1866, it was bought by John Hope, 7th Earl of Hopetoun so that he could hunt with the Pytchley. In the 1871 census, he is shown as living there with his wife, 4 children, their governess, 18 indoor servants, 6 stablemen, a covert lad, a coachman and a postilion. The number of stable staff listed would indicate that it was being used as a hunting box.

In 1872, it was sold to Thomas Halford of Bitteswell near Lutterworth and later to Charles William Walker of Burwash, Sussex. There is some uncertainty about the date of this sale – either 1884 or 1892⁴. He was definitely living there at the time of the 1891 census, along with his wife, 3 children, 4 servants and a gardener, Harry Goode, who lived at The Lodge. Harry was still working there as a gardener in 1901.

In 1895, A.C. Isham leased it for hunting.



Papillon Hall c. 1900 before Lutyens alterations. The figure in the foreground is Mr. Charles Walker.

In 1901, the Hall was bought by Mrs. Emma Bellville of Stoughton Grange to give to her son, Frank.⁵

⁴ Pen-Lloyd says 1884 but Victoria County History, quoting Wrights Directory for Leicester, says 1892.

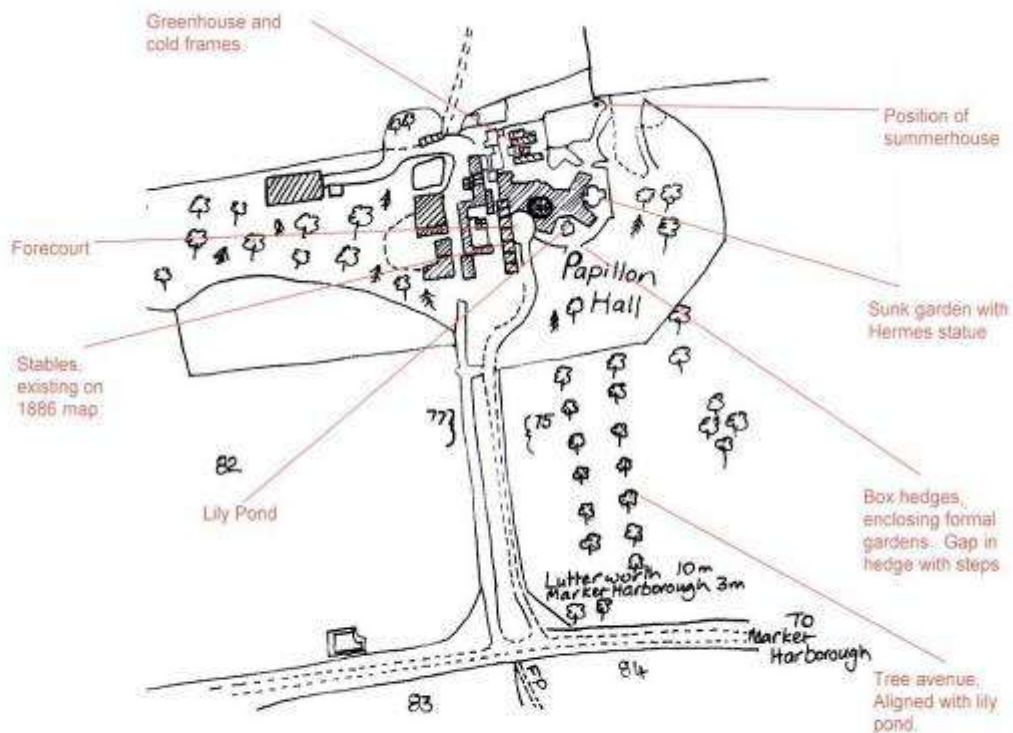
⁵ According to the Victoria County History, this information was obtained from Frank Bellville's son, Rupert.

Frank Ashton Bellville, born 1871 in London, was the third son of William and Emma Bellville (nee Magor). In 1823, Robinson and Bellville were manufacturing patent barley and groats - for infants. They amalgamated with Keens Mustard in 1862 and were taken over by Colmans Mustard in 1903. So the family income came from Robinsons Barley Water and Keens Mustard.

Frank had been a Lieutenant in the 65th Leicestershire Imperial Yeomanry and had fought in the Boer War. However, he subsequently became involved in the family business, describing himself as a “Director of Companies” in the 1911 Census. He was married twice: first to Gladys Hermione Chester-Master by whom he had two sons, Rupert and Anthony. His second marriage was to Joan Isobel Bowes Lyon (1st cousin to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother) and there were three daughters from this marriage.

According to Gavin Stamp in his book “Edwin Lutyens Country Houses”, Frank Bellville did little else but hunt. It was Mrs. Bellville, who met Lutyens at a party at the Deanery Garden and asked him to enlarge Papillon Hall.

This he did by incorporating the old building in the centre of his design, adding an extra storey and 4 wings, which formed the shape of a butterfly. The wings contained the dining room, a drawing room, a billiard room and the kitchen and servants’ hall. The original octagon, at the centre of the house, contained the entrance hall and a sitting room. A flagged courtyard, forming the entrance to the house, covered a huge water cistern and a spring. The house was approached from the Market Harborough to Lutterworth road by a long drive, opening into an oval-shaped forecourt. The stables lay to the west of this, the Hall to the east and a service wing to the north.



SKETCH PLAN, WITH ANNOTATIONS,
BASED ON 1929 OS MAP

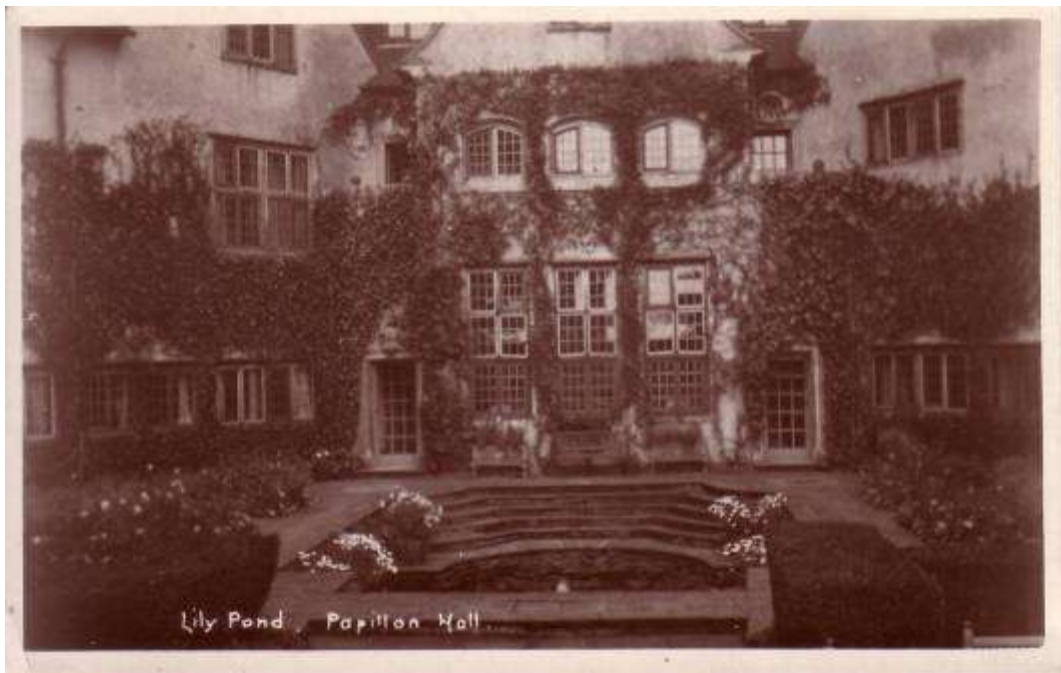


Remains of entrance forecourt walls, looking south

Lutyens designed the structure of formal gardens running round the house on the south, east and north sides. A very attractive feature of a butterfly plan house are the partly enclosed garden spaces which are formed by the wings. There were formal terraces to the south and east and these were enclosed by box and yew hedges, with breaks in the hedges and steps leading to the parkland and paddocks beyond.

The south garden was filled with paving and a formal lily pond, which still remains today, albeit in a decrepit state:





Postcard of Lily Pond – early 20th Century

There were steps at either end, leading down to water level, and York stone walls at the sides, with rock plants in the crevices. There was a dolphin fountain with water gushing from its mouth. The surrounding beds were filled with roses and seasonal bedding plants.

Gertrude Jekyll commented on it in “Gardens for Small Country Houses”, describing it as “the delightful pool at Papillon Hall, where the contrast between the curves of the descending steps and the lines of the margin of the pool is altogether successful”.

A flag stone path led round to the east garden which had, as its central feature, a statue of Mercury standing on a stone sphere. This was described in the 1948 sale catalogue as the “Sunk Garden”, and was enclosed with yew hedges.

To the north-east and north of the house, the garden was enclosed by a high brick wall, a section of which remains today. A broad flag stone path, cut through the lawn and led away from the house to a summerhouse. This still exists and, along with the wall and a single remaining gate pier, is EH Grade II listed.⁶

The summerhouse, which was circular, was constructed with four ashlar piers supporting a plain tile roof. Beyond the two front piers, are single piers linked to the summerhouse with wooden cross beams. These were originally surmounted with ball finials.

⁶ List Entry Number 1252088

The gate pier, is of ashlar, intersected every two courses with narrow bands of red



tiles. It has a moulded top. Originally, both gate piers were surmounted with lead statues. Gertrude Jekyll described them thus in “Gardens for Small Country Houses”:

“A very attractive pair is the leaden Youth and Maiden dressed in eighteenth century costume that nod and beckon to each other from neighbouring gate-piers at Papillon Hall. They are only about four feet high and of a type suitable for comparatively small, though not for very small gardens. They will be recognised as little cousins to the well-known Watteau-like Shepherd and Shepherdess who simper at each other in the solemn atmosphere of the South Kensington Museum.”





View showing the summerhouse and the gate piers. The path leads to the home paddocks. This image is taken from the 1948 sale catalogue.

To the north-west of the Hall, and adjoining the kitchen wing, was the Dial Garden: a simple design with a flagged path, cutting through lawn, and a central sundial. It was illustrated in A.S.G. Butler's "The Architecture of Edwin Lutyens"⁷

Beyond this, and on a south-facing slope, lay the kitchen garden. It was described in the sale catalogue as having "sufficient but not too much glass". It included a greenhouse, built, between 1925-30 by Thos. Messenger of Loughborough⁸.



⁷ Copies of these illustrations are in the Papillon reference file at Market Harborough Museum

⁸ LRRO Reference No. DE2121-52 Messengers Plans and Contract book 11 – 1925-1930

It was 18ft x 17ft 6in. with iron staging, wood lath blinds and a section for an existing Beeston Boiler Company Robin Hood Boiler. The brickwork was by Knight Bros., of Husbands Bosworth. Given its construction date and the fact that there was an existing boiler, the Messenger greenhouse must have replaced an earlier structure.

Its skeletal remains are now hidden in the undergrowth.



*Left: Iron staging in greenhouse.
Above: Garden store. The gardener at the time was Mr. G. Thurston.*

There were also cold frames, which are still visible on the 1960's OS map.

To the west of the Hall and driveway forecourt, lay the stables, coach house, harness room and stores. These are Victorian and pre-date the Lutyens alterations to the Hall. From plans, there appear to have been 9 stalls. This area still exists and forms part of the farmyard.



Around the site, it is possible to uncover vestigial remains of the detailing of Lutyens hard landscaping. Here, members of the Research Group discover a circle of tiles, laid on edge, which formed a centre feature in the driveway forecourt.



The gate lodge lies on the main road and pre-dates the Lutyens alterations. From the style, it would appear to be c. 1870-1880's. It is rendered and painted white and there are ornate bargeboards attached to the roof gables. It has a tall chimney. It was described in the sale catalogue as "an attractive lodge with six rooms".

The planting of the formal gardens at Papillon Hall poses the interesting question as to whether Gertrude Jekyll had any involvement in their design. She clearly knew about the property from the fact that she referred to it in “Gardens for Small Country Houses”.

Pevsner states that the garden was planted by Jekyll in 1903 and this information is repeated in the English Heritage Listings. However, there are no records of any plans in the Jekyll archives. So it is really only from photographs that any assessment can be made. The photos taken for *Country Life* in 1911 show roses and seasonal bedding as well as climbing roses and the large-leaved vine, *Vitis coignetiae*. There are images in Butler’s book, showing the planting at an early stage, possibly in its second season. It is difficult from these to draw any conclusion, though there is the impression that the planting design lacks the sophisticated plant associations that might be expected with a Jekyll scheme. It is possible that an assumption was made that the planting was by Jekyll, because of her association with Lutyens.

Another key element of the planting design were the two tree avenues which extended to the south and south-east of the Hall. A few of these trees remain today.



View from the South Terrace, looking south through the tree avenue towards the Welland valley. Photo from 1948 sale catalogue

An additional remainder of earlier planting is a mulberry tree which would have been in the garden behind the Hall. This may have even pre-dated the Lutyens alterations.

High quality photos of the Hall and the gardens appeared in *Country Life* magazine in late summer 2011. They can be viewed on-line at www.countrylifeimages.co.uk

In 1937, Captain Bellville died at the home of his younger son, Anthony, on the Isle of Wight. His elder son, Rupert inherited Papillon Hall.

Rupert, an old Etonian, fought as a volunteer in General Franco's air force in the Spanish Civil War. It is said that he was so passionate about the Nationalist cause that he painted the gateposts of Papillon in the Nationalist colours! Incidentally, he is also reputed to have been the first Englishman to have practised as a bull-fighter.

However, during the Second World War, he became a test pilot and Papillon Hall was requisitioned by the Army. The 319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion (82nd Airborne Division) were stationed there prior to D Day with troops billeted in the stables, 6 to a stall.

After the War, Rupert, who had married an American, was living in London and attempted to sell the Hall in 1948. However, he failed to find a buyer.

In 1950, a Mrs. Barbara Papillon, a descendant of the original family, visited and wrote "the house was in a parlous condition, weeds growing up to the lower windows, and doors open and swinging on broken hinges."



In 1950, the house was demolished and the materials were sold for scrap. Some of the outhouses were converted into a farm, owned by the Hewes family. It has been in their ownership since this time.

Lutyens' daughter, Ursula, Lady Ridley, visited Papillon Hall just before it was demolished and wrote to her mother:



“I feel rather relieved that it is going....His very worst Kingston By Pass manner in roughcast which is always ugly and a lot of half timber bogosity”.

But she rescued a fragment of the Hall and installed in the garden at her home, Blagdon Hall.

Various windows and other fragments of the Hall are said to be in local villages.

Since this time, Papillon Hall has been a focus of interest for historians, locally and nationally. Various archaeological digs have been undertaken and a geophysical survey carried out. This proved inconclusive due to disturbance caused during the demolition and its subsequent use as a farm.

The site continues to fascinate, probably because of the ghost stories which surround it. However, it seems equally fascinating that a house and garden like this could vanish, leaving only tantalising traces behind to give a clue of its former beauty.

References

Pen Lloyd, Colonel, "*The History of the Mysterious Papillon Hall*" pub David Dover – Reprint Books

Pevsner, Nicholas, "*The Buildings of England – Leicestershire and Rutland*", pub. Penguin Books Ltd. ISBN 0 14 071018 3

Nichols, J. "*The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*". Vol II

Stamp, Gavin, "*Edwin Lutyens Country Houses*", pub. Aurum Press 2001. ISBN 978 1 84513 765 6

Weaver, Lawrence, "*Houses of Gardens by E.L. Lutyens*". pub. 1913

Bradley-Hole, Kathryn, "*Lost Gardens of England from the Archives of Country Life*" Pub Aurum Press 2008. ISBN 1 85410 991 X

Jekyll, G. "*Gardens for Small Country Houses*"

Mastoris, Steph. "*Around Market Harborough in old Photographs*". Pub. 1989, Alan Sutton Publishing. ISBN 0-86299-527 2

Leicestershire and Rutland Record Office

Ordnance Survey 25 inch series: 1902 and 1929.

Market Harborough Museum

Plates and text from: Butler, A.S.G. "*The Architecture of Edwin Lutyens*"
Newspaper cutting from "Illustrated Leicester Chronicle – 11 Sept 1948

Lubenham Heritage Group

Copy of 1948 sale catalogue
Copies of original Lutyens plans for the Hall and Garden (no source given)

On-line Resources

Victoria County History entry for Lubenham:
<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=22061>

English Heritage Listing information for summer house, wall and gate pier.
http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=1252088&resourceID=5

Lubenham Heritage Group:
<http://www.leicestershirevillages.com/lubenham/oldpampanndtheslippersofpapillonh1.html>