

# Understanding Historic Parks and Gardens in Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust Research & Recording Project



## The Manor House, Bledlow

28 May 2017



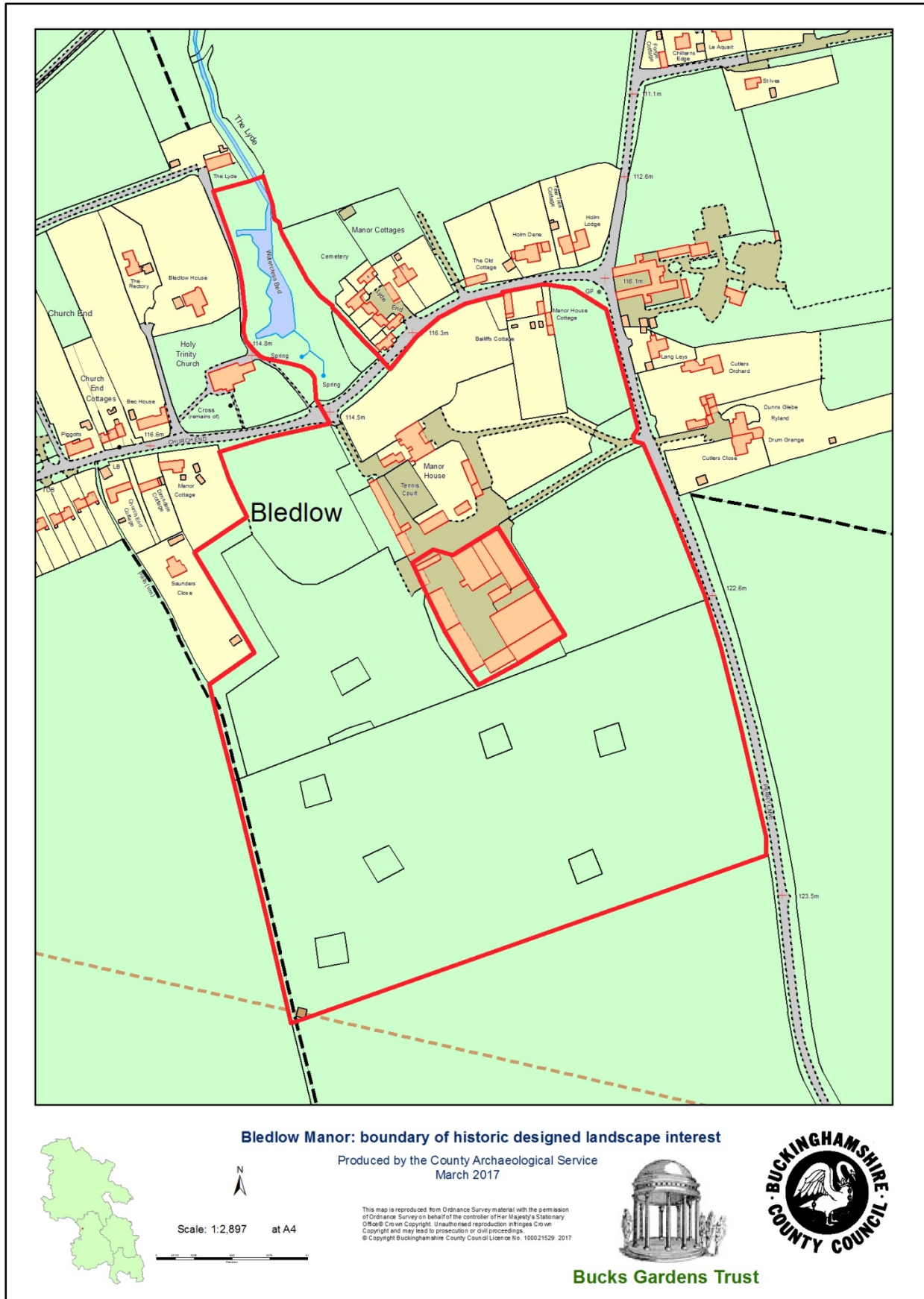
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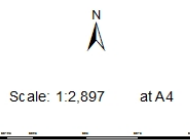
**Bucks Gardens Trust**

The Stanley Smith (UK)  
Horticultural Trust

## HISTORIC SITE BOUNDARY







**Bledlow Manor: 2008 aerial photograph**

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Produced by the County Archaeological Service  
March 2017



**Bucks Gardens Trust**



## INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Project

This site dossier has been prepared as part of The Buckinghamshire Gardens Trust (BGT) Research and Recording Project, begun in 2014. This site is one of several hundred designed landscapes county-wide identified by Bucks County Council (BCC) in 1998 (including Milton Keynes District) as potentially retaining evidence of historic interest, as part of the Historic Parks and Gardens Register Review project carried out for English Heritage (BCC Report No. 508). The list is not conclusive and further parks and gardens may be identified as research continues or further information comes to light.

### Content

BGT has taken the Register Review list as a sound basis from which to select sites for appraisal as part of its Research and Recording Project for designed landscapes in the historic county of Bucks (pre-1974 boundaries). For each site a dossier is prepared by volunteers trained on behalf of BGT by experts in appraising designed landscapes who have worked extensively for English Heritage on its Register Upgrade Project.

Each dossier includes the following for the site:

- A site boundary mapped on the current Ordnance Survey to indicate the extent of the main part of the surviving designed landscape, also a current aerial photograph.
- A statement of historic significance based on the four Interests outlined in the National Policy Planning Framework and including an overview.
- A written description, derived from documentary research and a site visit, based on the format of the English Heritage *Register of Parks & Gardens of special historic interest* 2<sup>nd</sup> edn.
- A map showing principle views and features.

The area within the site boundary represents the significant coherent remains of the designed landscape. It does not necessarily include all surviving elements of the historical landscape design, which may be fragmented. It takes no account of current ownership.

NOTE: Sites are not open to the public unless advertised elsewhere.

### Supporters and Acknowledgements

The project was supported by The Gardens Trust (formerly the Association of Gardens Trusts and the Garden History Society) and funded by BGT with significant grants from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust and the Finnis Scott Foundation. BCC generously provided current and historic mapping and access to the Historic Environment Record.

The Trust would like to thank the volunteers and owners who have participated in this project and given so much time and effort to complete this challenging and rewarding task.

Further information is available from: [www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk](http://www.bucksgardenstrust.org.uk)

<b>COUNTY:</b>	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	<b>THE MANOR HOUSE, BLEDLOW</b>  BCC HER 0065102000
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	WYCOMBE	
<b>PARISH:</b>	BLEDLOW	
<b>OS REF:</b>	SP 779 021	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Overview

A complex modern country house garden where strong design in a variety of styles, character and appearance is matched by adventurous and colourful planting. It is the vision of Lord and Lady Carrington from the 1950s to the present, commissioning designer Robert Adams from the late 1960s onwards in a series of designs, to make the most of the opportunities relating to the C17-C18 Manor House and its surroundings. The 1980s Lyde is a rare detached water garden of this period in informal style, of particular interest. The whole garden, a sequence of contrasting linked compartments, survives complete and in good condition, and is still undergoing development alongside a small contemporary park.

### Archaeological interest

Archaeological potential is largely related to the farmstead and a Chiltern manor house and its setting up to the mid-C20, and features relating to the former uses of The Lyde.

### Architectural interest

The Manor House is a typical brick-built Chiltern manor house with much work of the mid-C17 and early C18, similar to others nearby such as Princes Risborough. The remaining early farmstead buildings are typical of the area, being timber framed and clad.

### Artistic interest

The complex garden is the vision of the owners, in partnership with designer Robert Adams, who together have developed it over a number of decades. The many linked compartments adopt a variety of styles with both traditional and innovative planting. It has been widely reported and represents one of the best later C20 gardens of its type, comparable with others such as Rosemary Verey's Barnsley Manor, and Highgrove, both Gloucs. The garden divides roughly into three contrasting areas: around the house in formal compartments, the less formal Sculpture Garden, and the detached Lyde water garden, a feature of high quality design and innovative planting very unusual particularly in the Chilterns. The modern sculpture collection is of considerable interest in the garden setting. The contemporary park with clumps of trees forms the wider designed setting.

### Historic interest

The site has been connected with the Carrington family for over two centuries including with the present Lord Carrington, a renowned diplomat and politician who served in the Cabinet in the 1980s including as Foreign Secretary.

## HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The village of Bledlow can be traced to the C10 with evidence of earlier occupation (Lipscombe, *VCH*). After 1086 William the Conqueror granted the manor and others to his half-brother Robert, Count of Mortain.

In the post-Conquest and medieval period Bledlow passed between various owners. With the dissolution of the monasteries (1536-1541), the Rectory Manor was granted to Thomas East and Henry Hobblethorne (Young) who surrendered their lease in 1552 and then it had various tenancies. The property was sequestered during the Civil War when it was owned by William Fitzherbert and sold to James Blancks (d.1664). In 1647 Blancks is believed to have built Bledlow Manor House to replace an earlier property. He retained possession after the Restoration (1660) when the estate was called "The manor of the Rectory of Bledlowe" (*VCH*). It passed through the female line of Blancks, Crosse, Hayton and Whitbread the brewing family. The house was extended c1702 (date on chimney) and altered in 1801 for the Carrington family. By 1770 (Jeffreys) the manor house, church and workhouse formed a group in the village.

Robert Smith, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Carrington (1752-1838) as a tory supporter and friend of William Wilberforce was rewarded, being created an Irish baron in 1796 and an English baron 1798. He purchased in 1794 Wendover Borough with two seats in Parliament and in 1799 the Wycombe Abbey estate, including the mansion house for £28,234.00 which became his main residence (CBS/D-CN/9). In 1801 Samuel Whitbread, Esq. (of Southill Park, Bedfordshire) conveyed his estate at Bledlow to the Right Hon. Robert Lord Carrington who "modernised and considerably improved" it. By 1812 (OSD) the H footprint house had extensive farm buildings to the south and south-west and a rectangular kitchen garden north east. The 1812 Inclosure Map lists 29 numbered parcels including land from Eton College, belonging to Lord Carrington (CBS/IR46). The property listed included "Mansion House Gardens and Orchard" with 3 entrances including the farm track from Perry Lane in the south-east with an avenue of trees to the farm buildings. By 1825 (Bryant) the estate house was referred to as a "Lodge". In 1826 a cottage was built by Manley Wood Esq, a barrister of law on the north boundary of The Lyde.

In 1838 the Manor passed with other estates to the Hon. Robert John Smith the 2nd Baron Carrington and Lord Lieutenant (*VCH & Gibbs*). In 1839 the family surname was changed to Carrington (NB one r for the name and two r's for the title). However, with Wycombe Abbey as the main residence the Bledlow house and lands between 1812-1943 were occupied by a school and a succession of tenant farmers (*VCH & Lipscombe*). An 1843 map and document gives details of apportionment of rent in lieu of tithes (CBS/Bledlow 47) and an 1851 map shows the woodland in the parish and ownership (CBS/Bledlow 47). The 1877 (OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition) shows the H footprint of "Bledlow House" with farm outbuildings to the south and south west similar to earlier in the century. To the east the kitchen garden was divided by a path and flanked by orchards. The Lyde had springs, a steep wooded ravine, pool and two mills on the Cuttle Brook, the North Mill and Bledlow Mill (Sheahan 1862 p105 & *VCH* Vol 2) and an entrance from Lyde Cottage. By 1900 (OS) little change had occurred. The main entrance was from Church End with a farm track, pathway from Perry Lane.

Peter Carrington, 6<sup>th</sup> Baron Carrington succeeded to the title in 1938 and married Iona Maclean in 1942. His career included military service, a Conservative politician 1946-1982 including as a Cabinet



member, and diplomat including Secretary General of NATO in the 1980s. In 1943 the Carringtons started together the renovation on the north-west and east side of the manor house and in 1946 moved in. During 1949 the tenant farmer, who had occupied the remainder of the house, died, enabling completion of the renovation of the house (*Country Life* 1987). Lord Carrington notes (Manor House Papers – undated notes) that in 1949 the kitchen garden was growing vegetables, the lawns were cut and the yew and beech hedges were planted on the north and north east boundaries as wind breaks, which later formed the gardens. From this point Lord and Lady Carrington jointly developed the gardens and later The Lyde, a sunken water garden.

In the 1950s the entrance from Perry Lane east of the Manor was enhanced with wrought iron gates, brick pillars and the drive entrance to the forecourt planted with pleached lime trees. The farm yard south-east of the house was made into an enclosed garden bounded with a C15 tithe barn on the south-west side (*Homes & Gardens* 1980). In 1955 the Manor was listed Grade II along with a barn on staddle stones and seventeen properties in the village.

In 1967 the C15 thatched tithe barn burnt down revealing the modern farm buildings. This gave the impetus to the main replanning of the garden under the enthusiastic guidance of Lord and Lady Carrington. Who hired a young garden architect Robert Adams (Landscape Institute Member) to redesign the south enclosed garden. He recommended a sunken “Pool Garden” with retaining walls and gravel paths to the house. Lord Carrington described the garden thus, “uneven slope to the C18 granary barn,.... He gave us a brick paved, sunken, pool garden..... Brick retaining wall. Behind, a grass path leads to the farm and upper story of a gazebo copied from one at Hidcote. The lower half is linked to the house by a wide gravel path and long rose border edged with catmint” (*Homes & Gardens* 1980). The tennis court was built.

In the 1970s Robert Adams created a series of yew enclosed gardens north-north-east of the house and redesigned the garden around the swimming pool to link them to the north-west parterre and gardens. The Carringtons commissioned Lyde End (1975-77), six high quality houses for the village by local architects Aldington & Craig which won a RIBA Award, forming a sensitive part of the setting for the garden around the Manor House and the later Lyde garden adjacent.

In the 1980s further developments included the creation of the Lyde as a hidden water garden for access by the village and general public including walkways, colonnade and bridges, which won the Millenium Marque Award for Environmental Excellence, and refurbishment of the walled kitchen garden into a “highly ornamental potager” (*The Field*).

Between 1987-91 Robert Adams designed an informal Sculpture Garden on 1ha. of meadow west of the Manor House. A semi-circular parterre entrance and high hedges acted as the “transition between the formal gardens and more informal sculpture park” (*Country Life* 1995) with 8 sculptures originally but this has grown to 17 in 2017.

In 2009 Lady Carrington died and a memorial garden, the “Snail Garden”, was created in the north-east area with a paved area, sculptures and seating. The swimming pool was filled in. The site remains in private ownership.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

### **LOCATION, AREA, LANDFORM SETTING**

Bledlow Manor is in the small village of Bledlow, 2 miles south-west of Princes Risborough and 1 mile north-east of Chinnor, on the boundary of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. The B4009 (Lower Icknield Way) Princes Risborough to Chinnor Road passes 600m to the north. It is situated at c120m AOD on the spring line on the northern edge of the Chiltern Hills with the vale of the River Thames away to the west. The position on the edge of the Chilterns means that the soil is loam over thick chalk, giving a high lime content closely influencing the planting.

The 12ha. site is bounded to the east by Perry Lane and enclosed along this boundary by metal park railings backed by wire mesh fencing. To the north it is enclosed by Church End Lane with metal railings for c30m from Perry Lane then eastwards the area to the north of the kitchen garden by the Bailiff's Cottage (30m). Continuing west along Church End, the next c.50m has a 4m high yew hedge, then a 3m high red brick wall (C18) for 100m running in front of the Manor House and overlooking The Lyde, although this is largely screened by woody ornamental planting. A post and rail fence runs for 75m along the boundary with Manor Cottage. The west and south boundaries are of 3 barred wooden fencing bordered by shrubbery/mixed hedges and trees at intervals with farm and pasture land beyond.

The 0.7ha. Lyde garden extends north of Church End in a narrow corrie ravine, formerly a watercress bed. The central stream is fed by 14 chalk springs from the south and west slopes of the ravine which flows out to the north. It is bounded by Holy Trinity Church, Churchyard and the vicarage to the west, Lyde Cottage to the north, and the parish cemetery and award winning 1978 houses to the east and is fenced by post and rail. A dwarf brick wall fronts Church End Lane.

The medieval Holy Trinity Church (listed Grade I) dating from the C12 and C13 lies to the north-west of the Manor and west of the Lyde garden. East of the Lyde is Lyde End, six villagers' houses around a courtyard commissioned by Lord Carrington from Aldington and Craig (1975-77, listed Grade II). Other cottages along Church End Lane date from the C16, C17, C18, with the listed Old Wycombe Union School on Perry Lane terminating the east end of Church End.

The manor and village are set amongst farmland below an undulating Chiltern ridge c. 120m AOD, dropping to the north to the Lower Icknield Way at 98m. With little outward prospect in any direction, limited views from the gardens overlook the Church to the north-west, and from the north end of the Lyde over farmland to the north-east.

### **ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES**

Bledlow Manor is entered from Perry Lane 140m south-east of the house. The imposing gateway is set back off the road by a tarmac drive, the northern arm of which leads to a pair of 3m-high wrought iron gates, above which are intertwined letter Cs in an iron overthrow. The gates are flanked by brick piers on top of which are acorn finials. Flanking brick walls, 2.5m tall, complete the entrance. The driveway runs north-west for c110m, partly lined to the north by the brick wall of the kitchen garden, to a rectangular forecourt below the east front of the house set in informal lawns. The drive is flanked by pleached limes with great boxes of clipped branches supported on stilt-like



trunks, forming a tunnel more than an avenue. This drive was created by the Carringtons in the 1950s on a new site, with the gateway and lime avenue.

The farm drive from the entrance off Perry Lane leads west to a wooden five-barred gate and then to the farm which stands adjacent to the west of the Manor.

The north side of the Manor garden is bounded by Church End. A white wooden five-barred gated entrance, 3m wide gives access to the Manor from Church End on the northern side of the garden. The gateway, 50m north-west of the house, is opposite the boundary of the Lyde Garden and the Church. A footpath crosses the driveway that separates the north gardens of the Manor House from the Sculpture Garden to the west. This drive provides direct vehicular and pedestrian access to Church End, as well as offering a service vehicle entrance to the house if required.

A path from the north-west corner of the Manor forecourt leads directly to a 2m high wooden gate and stone steps set in the northern boundary wall, c160m from the junction of Church End Lane and Perry Lane, opposite the entrance to the Lyde garden. This allows private access for the family to the road, Church and gardens opposite.

The Bailiff's Cottage on the northern boundary adjacent to the orchard, 100m north east of the House has two small wicket gates set in yew hedging which give access to Church End. The cottage is surrounded by hedges screening it from the main gardens.

## **PRINCIPAL BUILDING**

Bledlow Manor (listed Grade II) stands on the south west side of the village in the middle of the site. James Blanck acquired the "manor of the Rectory of Bledlowe" from William Fitzherbert c.1648 and is believed to have built the core of the present house at about the same time replacing an earlier one. The manor house was enlarged and remodelled between 1670 and the 1720 to its present H-plan footprint with two storeys, cellars and attics. The brick, which was once colour washed, has a moulded and gauged brick band course at first floor level. The roof is of old tiles, hipped and with brick chimneys with finely moulded cornices and neckings. When the Carringtons purchased the house in 1801 it was further altered when it was "modernised and considerably improved" (Lipscombe). It was generally occupied by tenant farmers.

The north-east is the entrance front, with garden fronts to the north-west and south-east and a service wing to south-west. The north-east entrance overlooking the courtyard has flanking projections with traces of blocked openings and a tiled roof with hips. The canopy and ground floor colonnade has a central door flanked by 2 sash windows with traces of the original 5-bay facade with red brick window dressings and the original buff or stone coloured wash.

The north-west front overlooking the mature yew, fish ponds and lawn was also remodelled in the early C19 with 5 bays of sash windows and central glazed doorway. The wooden modillion eaves cornice, probably dates from the 1720s (English Heritage 1995). The south-east front overlooking the sunken water garden has 5 bays with large sashes. The south-west service front and yard is dated 1702 with 2 projections, the right partly rebuilt. Single-storey brick outhouses and storage project from the kitchen area. The garden makes the most of the house's qualities, particularly the south-east and north-west facades.

## GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS

The compartmented gardens lie below the north-east, north-west, and south-east sides of the Manor house. They are largely the result of a series of phases commissioned by Lord and Lady Carrington between 1949 and 2012, with those from 1967 all designed by landscape garden designer Robert Adams. The gardens around the house form a sequence of connecting small rooms, linked by arches in the tall yew or beech hedges. High hedges and walls protect the gardens from the prevailing wind. The Lyde is an informal valley water garden to the north detached by Church End (the village street).

The front door of the Manor House in the north-east front opens to a tarmac forecourt, and beyond this a lawn with mature cedar and beech trees leads north-east to the entrance of the walled kitchen garden. East of the kitchen garden against Perry Lane, bounded by the drive to the south, is an area of orchard, first shown in 1877 (OS).

West of the kitchen garden an archway leads north from the lawn through the beech hedge to the Croquet Lawn part of the former orchard. Gravelled paths lead through the shrubbery to the lawn, with an herbaceous border to the east adjacent to the kitchen garden wall. A tall yew hedge on the north-east boundary has a small gated archway providing a private entrance to the Bailiff's Cottage. The boundary to Church End is formed by a tall yew hedge, with a large mature sycamore.

A wooden fretwork screen (2012) separates the croquet lawn on the west side from the former swimming Pool Garden. The pool was installed in 1969 and illustrated in 1987 (*Country Life*). In 2012 the pool was filled in and replaced by a brick and paved terrace (Robert Adams). This is overlooked from the north by the former pool house which is clad in cedar. The west side of this garden has a circular design of brick paths, with another wooden fretwork screen in front of the high yew hedge. Brick pathways lead south through small shrubs, roses and herbaceous beds to the Snail Garden.

The Snail Garden (Robert Adams, 2010) is being developed (2016) as a Memorial Garden to Lady Carrington (d. 2009). She was particularly fond of roses, some of which are trained along rope swags surrounding a lawn with many aromatic shrubs. The garden contains a large stone snail sculpture.

Two brick pathways lead through the tall beech and yew hedging south-west into the Coracle Garden. A large raised metal "bowl-shaped" fountain, designed by William Pye (*Country Life* 2013) is the main feature amongst small shrubs (Hebes, mahonia, philadelphus, rosemary, potentilla, sage and lavender) with a grey, blue and yellow theme. In the south-west corner is a brick-edged sunken bed of iris.

A gravel path leads through the yew hedge to the link path from the forecourt north-west to the private wooden gateway to Church End. To the south-east, the path leads to a wrought iron gate set within brick gate piers with pineapple finials leading to the forecourt. From this path a further 'small formal room' (1970) opens to the north-west with box and yew topiary centred on an astrolabe on a stone plinth. Brick paths then lead north-west into St Peter's Garden (1970). In the south-west corner is a statue of St Peter, rescued from the south-east tower of the Houses of Parliament when they were renovated in 1970. From this statue, 'a herb garden shaped like the quadrant of a circle. Small parterre beds edged with low box hedges fan out from the statue of St Peter which is set in the

angle between two straight sides' (*Sunday Times*, 1989), filled with santolina and copper-coloured heuchera. From the north-west corner the brick bath continues west into the memorial garden.

Steps lead west down from the gravel pathway onto a large lawn below the north front of the manor. Two terraces with long brick paths between formal beds with shallow steps lead down from the manor to the lawn containing a 400-year-old yew tree to the north and with a line of four rectangular fishponds along the western side. The fishponds are bordered by raised brick beds formerly full of herbaceous plants, but now (2016) 'a simpler scheme of Portuguese laurels, Japanese quinces on the walls and herbaceous planting including lavenders, heucheras and nepetas.' (*Sunday Times*, 2013), and a high brick wall. A wrought iron gateway with brick piers topped with a ball leads west from the fishponds across the vehicular service road from Church End to the Sculpture Garden.

The 1 ha. Sculpture Garden, entered through a high yew hedge (1990s, Robert Adams), was formerly a cow paddock. Brick footpaths radiate from the entrance through a semi-circular parterre of clipped yew hedging with a central sculpture designed by Marzia Colonna. Beyond is an undulating area with lawns planted with mixed trees and shrubs rising to the west. The sculptures are placed individually in order that each one is viewed singly in its own discreet space, as Lord Carrington said "the one thing you mustn't do when siting sculpture in a garden is allow two pieces to be seen at once, because then it looks as if you're trying to sell them. And he recalls the moment when the late John Robinson's sculpture 'Immortality' was delivered. The artist sent Lord Carrington a typed note, intending to say "I do hope you like 'Immortality'. However, he typed 'I do hope you like Immorality'" (*Country Life* 2013).

Initially students from the Royal College of Art were commissioned to design sculptures specifically for the garden, firstly Alistair Lambert and Paul Vanstone who was awarded the Henry Moore Award in 1991 & 1992. Later sculptures include Michael Cooper (1994), Patrick Barker and Peter Randall-Page with exhibits in the Tate Gallery, British Museum and worldwide. There are now (2017) 13 sculptures in the garden.

To the north and west is a shelter belt of mixed trees planted for the protection of the garden, through which filtered views of the parish church can be seen to the north. A small gateway in the east perimeter border leads from the Sculpture Garden out of the south end across the service road, past the tennis court to the rear of the Manor house. An entrance through the high wall leads into the Sunken Garden on the south side of the house.

The Sunken Garden adjacent to the south side of the house was the first garden to be developed, in 1946 on the site of the farmyard. After the fire in 1967, which destroyed the C15 barn, Robert Adams designed the sunken garden to disguise the flatness of the site. It is divided into two halves by a central brick and gravel pathway which leads to the sunken pool. Two rows of the highly scented clipped standard *Viburnum carlesii* trees flank the pathway. On the west side is a shrub border with a high wall, and gateway to the tennis court. A gravel path leads south to a two-storey gazebo inspired by visits to Hidcote. The central path leads to the sunken lily pond bordered by brick paving. Brick walls surround the pond, surmounted on the west by a high beech hedge. Steps lead up from the south of the pool to the C18 granary (dated TC 1725) on staddle stones and the gazebo. Steps to the east of the pool lead up the embankment where there is a double row of 8 pleached lime trees. A paved path leads from the north corner of the lime trees up to the Urn Garden, the

east side bordered by the rear of the garages and the west by a yew hedge with steps down into the formal lawn of the sunken garden. This garden is stone-paved with shrubs and an urn on a plinth in the centre. A low stone colonnaded balustrade separates this garden from the south side of the main forecourt and so we have finished our garden tour.

## **PARK**

The late C20 park is divided into three by hedging and regularly spaced trees to the south west, south and south east of the site and wraps, as a shelter belt round the modern farm buildings (outside the historic boundary) and manor house. It was formerly part of the three field enclosure system as the South Field (1812-13 Field System Map – A. Young) running south east along Perry Lane, south by the Upper Icknield Way and south west along West Lane with mixed hedge and regularly spaced trees. This area, formerly farmland, is now used for grazing, hay and parking when the gardens are open with five barred farm gates providing access. In the south-west and south are six platoons of native trees now interspaced with single and groups of trees. The south-east area which borders the farm drive has single evenly-spaced trees.

## **KITCHEN GARDEN**

The 0.2ha. red-brick walled C18 kitchen garden (c30m x 65m), first shown on in 1812 (OSD), lies 70m north-east of the main entrance to the Manor House. The garden was redesigned by Robert Adams in 1988 as a “highly ornamental potager where herbaceous flowering plants will compete for attention with fruit trees either trained as mop-heads to line cross alleys, or espaliered on wires to form hedges. Other features will include hornbeam and lavender hedges, roses grown on pillars, a central pavilion, and fine urns giving focal points to long vistas.” (*Sunday Times Magazine*, June 1989).

The main entrance to the garden is through wrought iron double gates set in the 1.8m high west wall with brick piers capped with stone pineapples (1988). On the south wall at the junction with the west wall a wooden gate leads to the drive and on the northern end of the west wall is evidence of a bricked-up entrance. The walls vary in height from c1.8m on the south end of the west wall, 2.8m on the south, east, north, and rising from the main gate on the west to c3m adjacent to the north wall. Most of the walls are topped with coping stones, though the north-west corner is brick topped. A *tromp l’oeil* of Vertumnus (the Roman God of vegetation) designed by Owen Turville in the style of Arcimboldo is placed centrally on the south wall.

York stone paved paths, shown in this pattern by 1878 (OS) encircle the garden and bisect it in cruciform pattern, with a wrought iron gazebo (1988) at the central intersection. Four brick-based greenhouses and a potting shed line the north wall. In 1946 when the Carrington family moved in “the garden was waist high with every known weed” (Lady Carrington, *Homes & Gardens*, July 1980); it is now a very productive fruit and vegetable garden, with espalier fruit trees on the east wall.

## **OTHER LAND: THE LYDE**

The 0.7ha. Lyde water garden is situated 70m north-west of the Manor House on the north side of Church End. It is 160m long and varies in width from 24m to 55m. It was created in a dramatic ravine as a hidden water garden in 1988 out of abandoned watercress beds, for the enjoyment of the local



population. The springs and pool of the Lyde fed into the Cuttle Brook running the paper mills to the north, North Mill and Bledlow Mill (Sheahan & VCH), with the watercress beds fed by springs on the western side, which kept the area waterlogged for most of the year. It had become virtually inaccessible due to fallen trees and undergrowth. Sheahan noted that, "The curious and romantic dell of the Lyde is very irregular, very precipitous in parts, and somewhat gloomy in aspect. The declivity is covered in trees, some of considerable size, chiefly with witch elm, under whose drooping branches, arise from a rock of chalk many springs of pure water. These springs appearing to undermine the cliff seem to have given rise to the following proverbial lines:

'They who live and do abide,

Shall see Bledlow Church fall into the Lyde.'

The chancel of the Church is but 27 feet from the edge of the glen." 14 springs from below the churchyard feed into the valley.

In 1986 the Carringtons began clearing the area to let in the light, (*Sunday Times* 1989), and plans for the development and planting of the garden were drawn up by Robert Adams in 1987 (documents are held by the owner). "A pool was created at the head of the corrie, by directing into it all the water from surrounding springs. A channel was dug to carry water from below the pool towards the mouth of the corrie, the level being maintained by a pair of weirs.... The springs along the side of the corrie were also channelled into the stream. In steeper parts, where the water has tended to cause landslips, the soil has been held in place by palisades of stakes and by a surface cladding of plastic netting, through which moisture-loving plants like willows have been planted.... Robert Adams also designed an ingenious pathway...over the marshier areas on duck-boarding and raised decking." (ibid) A network of stepped, gravel footpaths and bridges along the steep-sided valley takes visitors along the sides of the corrie and down to the waterside. The stream flows north to join the river Thame. Many bog plants surround the central water course and pond to the north that it feeds.

The Lyde was awarded the 'Millennium Award for environmental excellence' – the marque of the new century and is now open all year for the enjoyment of all. In 1979 the Carringtons set up a Charitable Trust, 'The Lyde Water Garden' and conveyed the garden to the village for its use. (Carrington Estate Archives)

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## MAPS

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1812-13 Bledlow Inclosure map & award, – 2 plans (CBS IR/46)  
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1825 Bryant, Map of Buckinghamshire  
OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1868 published 1877  
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OS 6" to 1 mile: 2<sup>nd</sup> edition published 1900  
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OS 1:10,000 National Grid revised edition published 1981

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Aerial views 1930, 1947, 1985, 1988, 2003, 2008 (HER)

## ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

### Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

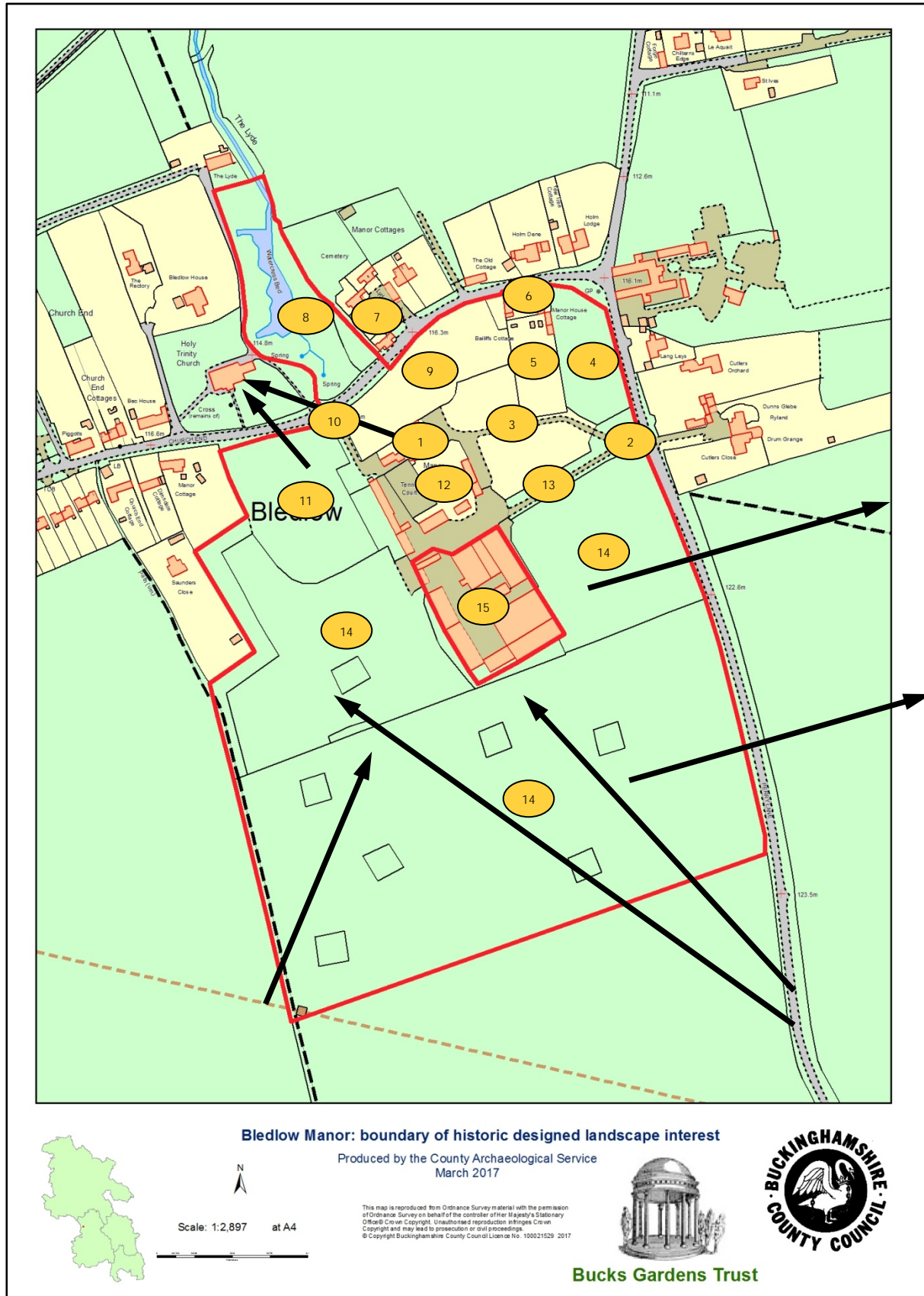
The Carrington Collection (ref D-CN): Information from summary of family & estate papers relating to the Carrington family, Barons Carrington from C18 to C21.

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Plans and drawings by Robert Adams *The Lyde Garden Bledlow November 1987*  
Proposal for Millennium Marque award for the Lyde Garden October 1996

GM, RH, JT Edited SR 28 May 2017

## KEY HISTORIC VIEWS & FEATURES





### Key to numbered features

1. Manor House (C17-C18) & forecourt	2. Main entrance and gateway (1950s)
3. Main drive to Manor House (1950s)	4. Orchard
5. Kitchen garden (C18 walls, planting 1988)	6. Bailiff's House
7. Lyde End (villagers' houses, 1975-77)	8. The Lyde water garden (mid-1980s)
9. Gardens around the Manor House (1970s-80s)	10. Entrance to service drive off Church End
11. Sculpture Garden (1987-91)	12. Sunken garden (1967-69) and granary (1725)
13. Farm drive	14. Park (1980s)
15. Farm	

## CURRENT IMAGES



Main gateway off Perry Lane and drive.



Forecourt (left); north-east front (right).





South Garden: (Sunken Garden (centre); south front of manor (right).



South Garden: sunken garden, gazebo & barn (left); kitchen garden entrance (right).



Snail Garden (left); Astrolabe Garden (centre); fish ponds (right).



South Garden left; fish ponds (centre); view from fish ponds to Sculpture Garden (right).



Sculpture Garden entrance (left); view to parish church (right).





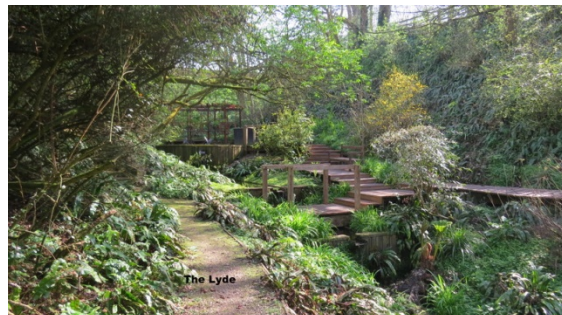
Sculpture Garden



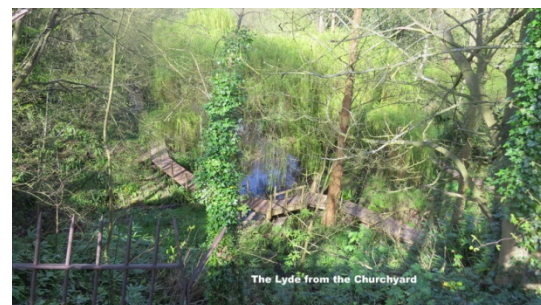
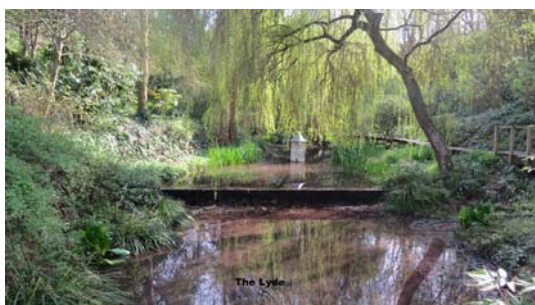
Park views, south of garden



The Lyde



The Lyde



The Lyde