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The Gardens and Landscape of Rothamsted Manor - an Historical Report - Volume 2 - Appendices and Figures

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APPENDIX B

Transcripts from Documentary Sources

This appendix is a collection of documentary evidence from primary sources used in the preparation of this report. It includes transcripts of material concerning the gardens and designed landscape from the Wittewronge papers consisting principally of memoranda and accounts, and also some relevant references found in published sources. Unless another source is given, sources are referenced by their number in the HALS Wittewronge archive, with preface D/Elw, ie. [F20] is from HALS ref. D/Elw F20. Entries are given in chronological order.

Memoranda, Descriptions and other references

From the Particulars of the manor and estate of Rothamsted c.1623
A prettie Courte before the house at the goeing in on the South being 30 yds square, and is paled about. Two little garden plotts lying on each side the Courte, one behind the house, on the North there is a dayrie house, a verie faire Pigeon or dovehouse, and a Well house, that goeth with a Wheele, wherein a dogg is putt, and draweth up the water. There is also a Moate that compasseth the back parte of the house, which Moate hath been verie badly used and is dryed upp and stopped in one or two places. On the North parte of the said Moate there is a prettie orchard, that is planted with young trees, and hath verie pleasant walks about the said orchard if they were well looked unto and ordered. There is a[lso] a yard on the East parte of the house whereon standeth two faire Barnes, two Stables, and a Shedd for two Horse. [E17, transcript from Boalch]

I had an Oake groweing in the Warren which I caused to bee felled when I began to repair my house at Rothamsted about Anno 1638 or 1639… [F20 – back page]

1649/50 Memorandum. There was burnt 184,000 of brick this year, 385 quarters of lime. [F23]

January 11th 1652 For my dearest Friend the Lady Katharon Wittewrong, … at Rothamsted
My dearest Love
I receaived thine by Tom, I am sorry thou art not well but doe hope it is noething but a could; I desire thou to be merry & make much of thy selfe; soe my absence will bee the less tedious; my occasioning here doe every day vary, & soe …: Humfrey [his Steward] … not to Stanton, but into Suffolk, to dispack something there, tending to our conclusion heere. My purpose was to see thee this weeke, but I have to deale with such slippery men, that if I come away I feare it may cost mee the more trouble, the next weeke. & therefore if thou canst excuse my coming downe untill then, I doe confidently believe all will bee by that time ended; Butt if thou shouldest not bee well & hast a disire to have mee come downe, send up John with the Horses for mee: I dined today at my fathers where they are all well, & remember them to thee; I had allmost forgott to thank thee for my cake it was exceeding good. & stands mee in grate stead for my breakfasts every morning, I have given Thomas Jones order to save two bundles of vine cuttings, which are layd in the earth in the orcharde, I would have them sent up by [Stepping?] on Friday next, which I desire thee to give

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order for. If I stay now till next weeke I shall need a [band] or two more & … I need not; I shall expect to hear from thee on Friday. till then I remayne.
Thy most affectionate Husband till death
John Wittewronge [Z22/7]

19 April 1652 Daughter Kathrine born
14 August 1652 Ripe Grapes & Peaches [F42]

Mem the 17th of February 1665/6 the tall Elme in the field before [below?] the house was pruned as allsoe the young [birch/beech?] that grows by the Warren pale next dredge field. And on Monday following being the 19th …[sett?]… the hithermost (now the second) firs two out of the orchard into the new warren orchard as allsoe the furthermost of that yew out of the garden & sett a pine in its place, & the 24th I sett the other 8 fir trees in the same … as allsoe then the yong nursery of [trees?] beyond the firs in the warren were pruned. [F20 – back page]

Oct 1666 The river in Rothamstead Mead which had by reason of ye Great Drought bin dry & not run at all for these 2 years last past began to run again by the abundance of raine that fell from the 12th to the 23rd of this Month & my new pond in ye Mead was brim full & also ye Pond before ye Stable. [F42]

May 28th 1666 I measured
The long walk in the garden & Orchard, betweene that and the Warren along that wall, from the field before the house beginning …[page torn] [gravell?] walks & walking to Dredge field is 486 feete …[page torn] and from that corner to the other of the orchard is 146 feete. [F20 – back page]

4.6.1667 - Settlement on the Marriage of James Wittewronge and Elizabeth Diconson
A close of pasture lying before the said Mansion House called Passage Close containing by estimation 10 acres.
A close of pasture adjoining the orchard or garden wall of the Mansion House called the New Orchard and Plantation, containing 5 acres. [Scattergood, Vol. 1, Bundle 31]

27 Jan 1671 Sett 198 large French Chessnutts in ye Border in ye further qr of ye Orchard [F42]

4 Nov 1674 made an End of setting ye Wood at ye left [side?] & further end of ye Park on ye left hand of ye long walk [F42]

The following references are taken from the transcripts of Sir John Wittewronge's 'Diary of Weather' [F19], published in 'Observations of Weather'. See Appendix B for a list of plant species and varieties mentioned in the diary.

March 1683 … the extream hard winter killed all my hartychoakes …[and]… fig trees, some vines, rosemary, Philleraea & cipress trees as also all the carps in my pond before the stable.

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... the backward spring...[affected]...Apricotts, peaches, nectrines, payres or plumbs ... nor any leaves on the roses or gossberryes.

23rd April - first smal dish of Sparragoes wee had this yeare, but afterwards had plenty every day

15th August – cut & eat a very large mellon weing 4 pound, and it was as good as it was great.

This summer in generall from the beginning of May: till the latter end of August, was the hottest and dryest that I ever remember; or (I thinck) any man els, being more like Spain for hot dry settled weather than England; wee had 203 ripe bunches of grapes before Bartholemewtide but the peaches and Roman Nectrines ripened later then usually; not till the middle of this month and some not till the beginning of December, and the late peaches, as the blouddy peach, French peach & Portugall & Man peach not till the middle of that month and after, seven not till Michaelmas.

3rd October – 14 pigeons out of the new dove house

3rd March 1684/5 : Made the hot bed for mellons
6 of March Sowed the seeds
11 Prickt them out
26 Transplanted them into ranges

The 17th [Oct. 1685] made a vessell of 12 qts of the Clarrett and frontiniack grapes, to which I putt (when it was up) 2 pounds of fine shugar.

11th,12th,13th & 15th February 1685/6 – sett the box that grew in the Knott, in the borders in the garden next the gravel walks

5th May 1686 – But it was the unkindest year for all mannor of fruit that I ever knew; almost all apple & peare tree leaves were eaten up of catterpillars, as also the fruit or els blasted. They eat also other leaves & almost all the rose budds.

The 28th [Sept.1686] pickt all the grapes off the Vine by the Arches, whereof made about 3 gallons of wine.

November 1686 – The french marigolds, & Affricanes lasted in flower from the latter end of July till the beginning of November; & there were some Pincks in flower the last of November; and 2 or 3 gilly flowers.

5th February 1686/7 – planted 7 Ewe Trees in the garden one whereof is sett in the place where the stone boy stood.

Spring 1688 – No pear blossoms out, but on the wal trees.

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These transcripts are taken from the small notebook [F42] used by Jacob Wittewronge II during his period at Rothamsted (1720-28). This book was also used by Sir John Wittewronge from 1650, and John Bennet (17622-1783).

27/12/1721 Mem. I planted 40 Elms fronting from the House to the Lane that leads from Hatching Green to Redbourn December 27th 1721

Nov 14th 1722 I planted the cross walks in the Orchard with young Apple trees for hedges most of them nonparels. I likewise planted at the same time the South West Wall next the Warren or Ffurr Grove wth Peaches, Apricots, Figgs, Pears, 2 plumbs, 2 Gold Pippins, & 2 Quinces. there is ag.t that wall 42 trees.

July 23th 1723 I this day gathered a nectarine full ripe & found two ripe peaches fallen off one of my trees w.ch peaches never used to ripen till towds the end of August. Note this is the most plentyfull year of Wall fruit viz. Peaches, Nectarines, & Apricocks, that ever I remember, & they ripen a fortnight or 3 weeks before the usual time, it having been a very drye Summer.

My Son Thomas was born 26th of Septem.r & was Baptized 16th of Oct. 1723. he was born on a Thursday.

Mem Anno 1725.I this Summer graveled the CrossWalks in the Orchard wth a foundation of Chalk … a Coat of Gravel from Harden [Harpenden] Comon wth a covering of fine red Gravel from Barnet Heath. I also this Summer painted the Hall, Drawing Room, best Stairs, common staircase with all the Gates in the Court and Gardens.

Mem. This Summer Anno 1725 has been the wettest that any man can remember. My Wife was forced to feed her Bees in June or they would have been starved, the weather being so wett every day that they could not get out to gather any honey …