Fig 2 estate map of Sir Richard Newman bart 1716 (GA D1655/1)

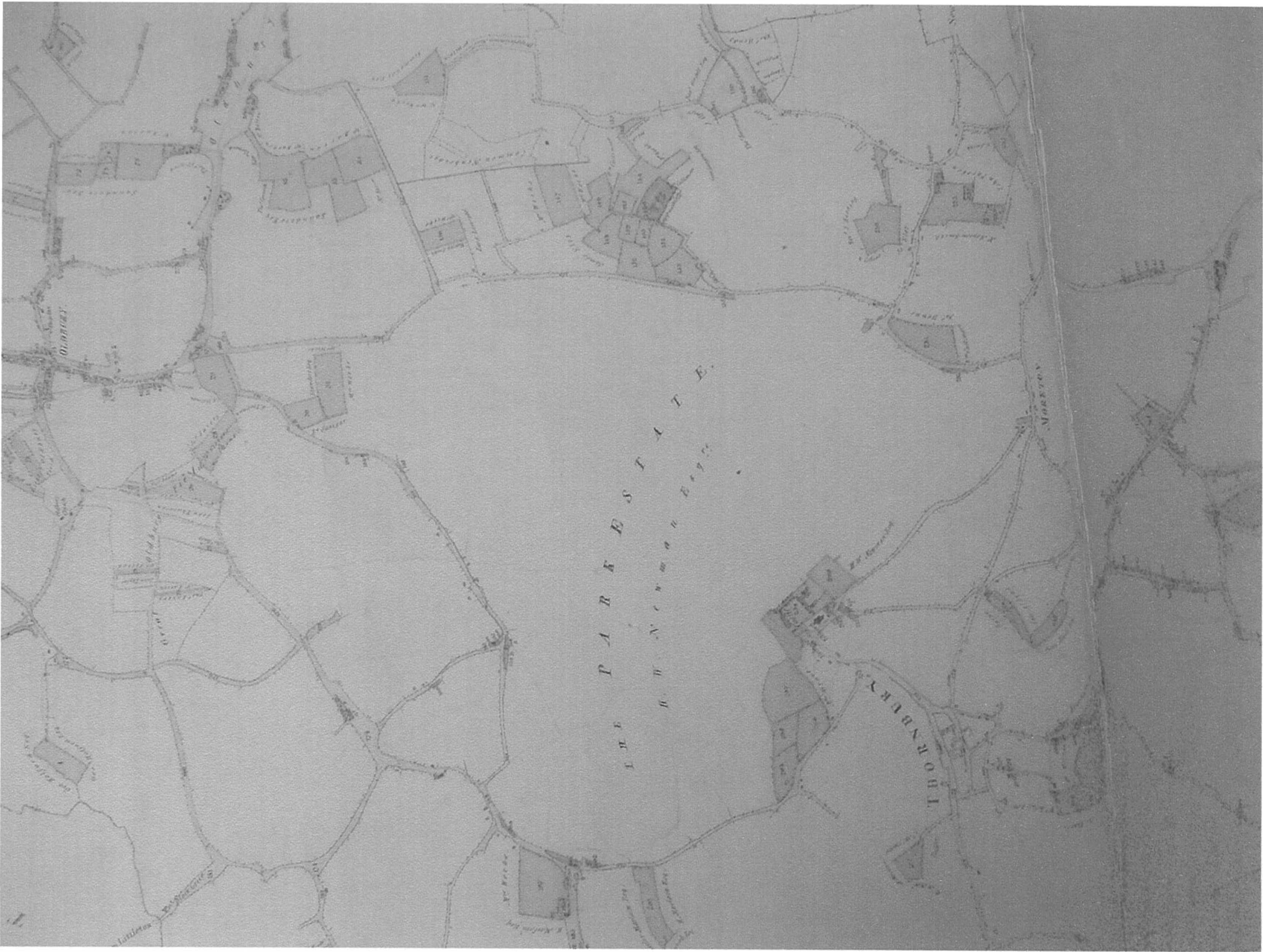

Fig 3 plan of freehold estates, wastelands and encroachments in manor of Thornbury 1822 (GA D108/P3)

Fig 4 tithe map of Thornbury parish 1839 (GA P330 SD2/1)

Fig 5 Thornbury Park (from Kingsley 2001)

Appendix AC 6
Extract from Mowl, T (2002) *Historic Gardens of Gloucestershire* (Tempus)

A last word on access. Most of the important gardens of the county are regularly open to the public, or occasionally open either by written appointment or as part of the National Gardens Scheme. I have found very few owners who will not respond generously to enthusiasm and a courteous letter. With one exception, which will be apparent from the text, these Gloucestershire gardens and their happy owners have left me optimistic about human nature.

1 An uncertain spring in the gardens of south Gloucestershire

In a mildly pastoral way the countryside between the Cotswolds and Severn to the north of Bristol is pleasant enough, though unlikely to be voted anyone's favourite English or even Gloucestershire landscape. The commuter suburbs are edging up this way and the villages of a small worked-out coalfield beyond them have, with their abandoned collieries, brickworks and overgrown tramways, little rustic charm. Unexpectedly it is in these dim fields and traffic-ridden lanes that one of the most interesting sequences of gardens in England, spanning the cusp from medieval to Renaissance design, has managed, more by neglect than anything else, to cling on in fascinating ruin.

Creations around the cusp of any important stylistic movement tend to a lively character because, on the one side, conservative patrons are trying angrily to reassert past form, in this case the enclosed walled gardens of feudalism, while on the other the mould-breakers, the aesthetic revolutionaries, are making appealingly uncertain gestures towards a new ideal, in this case the garden forms and furnishings of Italy. It is this tension over their stylistic identity and direction that makes the gardens at Thornbury Castle, Acton Court and Horton Court so interesting and nationally important. Even one Henrician garden is a rarity, so three close together in this nondescript corner of the county present an opportunity for study and questions that garden enthusiasts will not want to miss.

The decision of Edward Stafford, third Duke of Buckingham, Lord High Constable and the richest peer in England, to begin building, around 1511, a castle-palace on an unstrategic, indefensible site in this backwater, could charitably be explained by the unhandy shapelessness of the Stafford estates. Despite his Home Counties title, the Duke was the last of the semi-independent Welsh Marcher lords. He was actually born in Brecon and drew much of his huge annual income from legal taxes in Welsh law courts. One of his many castles, Newport, had a water-gate and stood not far down across the Severn from Thornbury, so he was only a short boat trip away from his Welsh power base.

He has left a beautiful and evocative wreck of a very ambitious house and garden, but it is impossible to find one contemporary with a good word to say for the third Duke. Historically speaking he was a dinosaur who thought that the recent peaceful reign of Henry VII had been just an interval in the Wars of the Roses, and that the Crown was still a prize to be played for in a selfish game by great nobles like himself. He had, however, no gift for inspiring loyalty in either his servants or his relations by marriage, being given to 'fumes and displeasure' and prone to 'rail and misuse himself

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in words'.[1] He was not even good at tennis; he lost £64 in bets when playing with King Henry VIII, and he once told Cardinal Wolsey, who would have immediately reported it back to the King, that 'he would rather go to Rome than joust Henry', who loved jousting.[2] Even his enthusiasm for parks and gardens contributed to his ultimate execution in 1521 as he had thrown his peasantry off good farm land around Thornbury to create deer parks: Estewood, seven miles round, Marlewood, three miles round and New Park, also three miles round, 'not without', Leland recorded, 'many Curses of the poor Tenaunts'.[3]

On one occasion when the Duke saw Wolsey washing his hands in the same water that the King had just used he picked up the basin and threw it at the Cardinal. Then, when Wolsey angrily threatened to 'sit upon his skirts', Buckingham came to Court the next day defiantly wearing a very short coat.[4] In keeping, however, with his conservative cast of mind, he was notably pious, contributing lavish alms to the shrine of the Holy Blood at Hailes Abbey in the north of the county, and keeping his own private hermit, John Glade, at Thornbury. To keep a hermit and to play a bad game of tennis indicates the cultural balancing act that a great lord of his times might try to perform and that Buckingham notably bungled. It does also explain the symbolic character of his 'Privie' and 'Goodly' gardens at Thornbury. They were exclusively private yet at the same time they were contained within architectural structures that linked his superb domestic apartments with a neighbouring church that was open freely to public devotions.

Buckingham might have survived his tactless project of building a more splendid home than the King's favourite palace at Greenwich if he could have kept a guard on his tongue; but at various times he was heard to declare that 'he was a noble man and wolde be a ryall ruler', and 'If ought but good comes to the King the duke of Buckingham should be the next in blood to succeed to the crown'.[5] Henry lured him to London and put him on trial for treason. The Duke's chancellor, chaplain and ex-surveyor all scrambled to testify against him and in May 1521 off went his head.

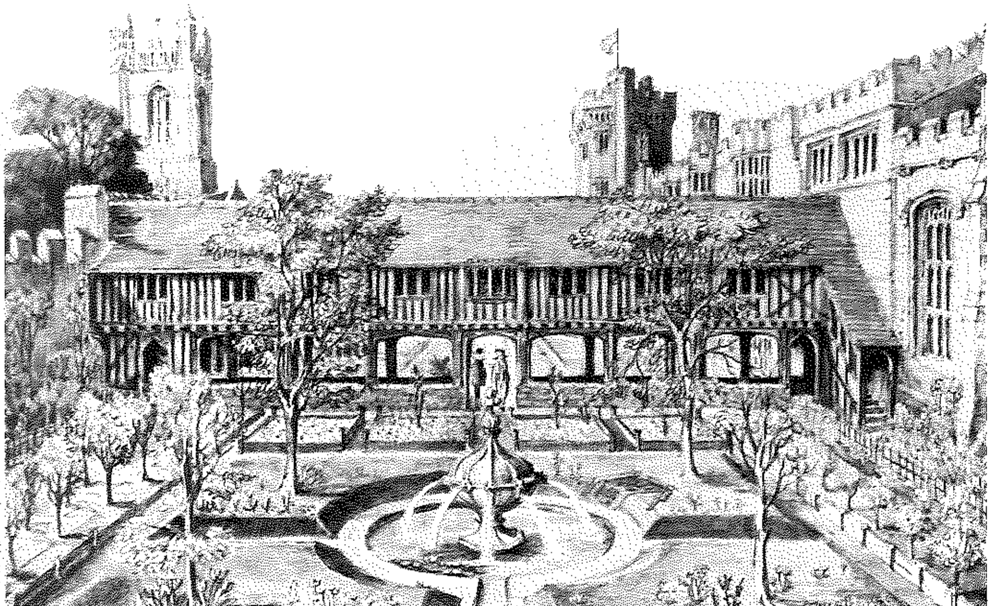
What makes Thornbury such a rewarding and rare experience today is that it is still possible, for the price of a good lunch, to enjoy at least a third part of Buckingham's gardens in all their atmospheric decay.[6] The castle was neglected after the forfeiture of the Duke's possessions. Henry and Anne Boleyn stayed briefly in its unfinished rooms in 1535, but then the castle languished roofless until a cadet branch of the Howard family in the nineteenth century saw Thornbury's romantic potential and employed Anthony Salvin to effect a tactful restoration. It is now the kind of hotel, elite, well manicured, filled with heraldry and old portraits, that the Duke would, in a later age, have patronised. The drive sweeps in past the coronetted battlements of St Mary's church, which just before his downfall the Duke was beginning to convert into a collegiate foundation to rival St George's Chapel at Windsor.[7] Next comes an enormous base court of roofless ranges, generously fenestrated on their elevations to the court but convincingly military on their outside walls, with gun ports and arrow slits.[8] The hotel has sensitively allowed these to mature into a wild ruined garden of ferns, ivy, broken Gothic tracery and whole suites of hollow rooms. On the right is the one massive donjon tower built before the axe fell on Tower Hill. There were to have been three

more in a tremendous display of largely spurious fortifications. A gatehouse leads in to an inner court with a kitchen court behind it to the left and lastly, through a towering range of ducal apartments, comes the 'Privie' garden itself.

This is an enclosure to savour (**colour plate 1**). The high stone walls around it with their bay windows and battlements are the authentic outer boundaries of the medieval garden. It was a two-storey cloister, the upper galleries of which led out by two doors, still visible in the walls of the ducal apartments, to a lost gallery bridge across the churchyard and into a ducal pew in the north aisle.[9] Freakish good fortune has not only preserved the handsome bones of this 'Privie' garden and its 'Goodly' extension to the north (**3**), but also the careful description of it in all its brief prime, made by the surveyors Thomas Magnus and William Walweyn whom Henry sent, as soon as Buckingham was dead, so that he could gloat over his acquisition.

Without their description it would not be easy to understand the complex features surrounding this 'Privie' garden at first-floor level. They recorded that:

> On the South Side of the said ynner warde is a proper gardeyn, and about the same a goodly galery conveying above and beneth from the principall loggings booth to the chapel [at the far end of the range] and p'ishe churche, the utter part of the said gallery being of stoon imbattled, [which survives] and the ynner part of tymbre covered wt slate.[10]



3 *A reconstruction of the 'Goodly' Garden at Thornbury Castle in its 1520s prime from H. Avray Tipping's 1925* English Gardens. *The 'Privie' Garden lay beyond the cloister range connecting the ducal apartments with the church and its ducal pew*

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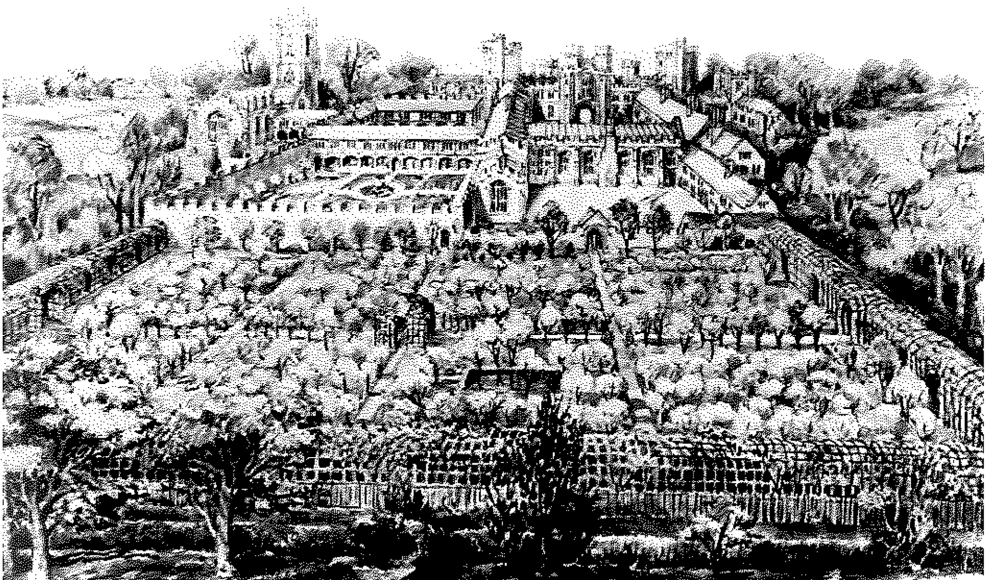
What have been lost are the inner walls of the double-decker cloister, of timber and plaster covered by Devon slates, heraldically patterned like those the King would lay over the walls of his Nonsuch Palace in 1541-5. From the windows of the presence and dining chambers with their astonishing tracery, concave above, convex below, 'perhaps the most perfect in existence' as an awed David Verey described them, the Duke would have looked across at the church tower and down into the garth.[11] In 1520 he had paid 3s 4d to 'John Wynde, gardener, for diligence in making knotts', most likely Stafford knots, his heraldic device, of lavender and rosemary.[12] If their interstices were filled with herbs like savory, oregano, sage and elecampane, the scent on sunny days in that enclosed, almost windless, space would have been overwhelming, combining piety and perfume as Buckingham walked to his devotions. Or would he have preferred the colour of stocks, periwinkles, sweet rocket, iris, cowslip and daffodil, with tall foxgloves and hollyhocks at the corners? Whichever he chose he enjoyed them for only one spring and summer.

Next to the 'Privie' garden and still within the high walled enclosure was, the surveyors reported, a 'goodly gardeyn to walke ynne cloosed wt high walles imbattled. The conveyance thither is by the galery, above and beneth, and by other privie waies'.[13] So these high stone walls enclosed two gardens, the 'Privie' in its two storey cloister for all-weather exercise, and the 'Goodly', almost certainly separated from it by a painted palisade, for fair weather walking. Here the Howards in the nineteenth century speculated imaginatively. All the thick battlements of topiary work enclosing little secret arbours are theirs, though the sixteenth-century planting would, without the yews, have been lighter in profile, more floral and more scented. In 1907 there was still the Howards' prodigious 20-foot tower of clipped yew guarding the door, now blocked, through the north wall. This door led, in the Duke's day, into 'a large and goodly orcharde' (**4**) which was

> full of young grafftes, well laden with frute, many rooses, and other pleasures; and in the same orcharde ar many goodly alies to walke ynne openly; and round aboute the same orcharde is covered on a good height [a raised bank], other goodly alies wt roosting [resting] places coverde thoroughly wit white thorne and hasill.[14]

Outside this again was a wooden paling and 'wt oute that ditches and quick set heggs'; always there was this emphasis on enclosure within enclosure.[15] Whitethorn was preferred for quick-set hedges because it grew fastest (five to seven years), it was easily trimmed, of a delicate colour and put out its leaves earliest in spring. Crab-apple stock was usually planted in it at 20-foot intervals and roses twined over it. So the covered walk around this third garden was not a gloomy affair of dark yew, but raised up on a bank and alive in spring with the blossom of the whitethorn trained over it; in autumn it would become a coppice of sloes and hazelnuts. The 'roosting places' would have been raised turf banks for seats with views out into the surrounding countryside: privacy cleverly united with vantage points.



4 *The 'Goodly' Orchard and the inner fortified gardens from the north-east at Thornbury in Mr Kitchin's reconstruction. Whitethorn and hazels, not yews, shaded the covered alleyways*

That was not all. As long ago as 1305 Piero de'Crescenzi of Bologna, writing in his *Ruralium Commodorum Liber*, following and often quoting word for word from Albertus Magnus's *De vegetabilibus et plantis* (*c.*1260), identified three garden types. First was the small 'herber', less than an acre in extent, for flowers and herbs; then there was the orchard, anything up to four times larger and laid out in regular walks to provide shade, privacy and ripe fruit; thirdly, but only for the castles of kings and great noblemen, there was a park for animals.[16] Buckingham had three deer parks in the surrounding country and the King's surveyors noted that at Thornbury he had, adjoining his 'herber' and his 'orchard', Crescenzi's third garden type:

> From out of the said orcharde ar divers posterons in sundry places, at pleasur to goe and entre into a goodly parke newly made, called the New Parke, having in the same no great plenty of wood, but many heggsrowes of thorne and great Elmes. The same Parke conteynneth nigh upon iii miles about, and in the same be viiic [700] der [deer] or more . . . Nigh to the said Newe Parke there is another parke called Marlwood, noething being between them but the bredth of an high waie.[17]

This suggests that in his garden thinking Buckingham was more thirteenth- than sixteenth-century.

If only all three had been restored by the Howards we would have a uniquely complete, three-part garden sequence, authenticated by contemporary witnesses who had probably eaten its fruit, heard its birdsong and tramped its walks. It was the garden of a traditionally minded Catholic nobleman, part devout in direction, part secular, sounding with church bells as well as with singing birds. It worked intricately on two levels with the rooms of the castle, and was grey with stone, green with 'herbery', but with nothing of that darkness of yews that we have come to associate with later Tudor 'Italian' gardens.

Over the course of the next two centuries enclosed gardens and wider, but still enclosed, deer parks would gradually come together, finally to fuse around 1730-40 to form that uniquely English achievement, the Arcadian Garden. Here, in 1521, the two are already adjoining and interconnected. The Duke's over-ambitious deer parks survive now only in name; but before moving three miles to the south-east, to Acton Court, the next garden chronologically in the Henrician sequence, it would be worth the four mile detour due north (past Newpark Farm) to the living, miraculously surviving, deer park of Berkeley Castle.

Whitcliff Park is a perfect time capsule, a boat-shaped enclosure of walls enclosing a little hill. It lies a mile from Berkeley Castle and was created in 1329 by the third Lord Berkeley, the murderer of King Edward II, two years after that event. At no point do its walls touch any public road, but six barns or houses are built against it, a sign of how commercially important it must have been locally. At its centre is a lodge tower, occupied by the deerherd and his family who lived in rooms under a banquet room, and a flat roof terrace for viewing any sport (**colour plate 2**). The present tower is of early nineteenth century date, but it is the successor to that first 1329 lodge and a later, 1613, Berkeley dower house.[18]

Red deer and fallow deer were kept in separate parks for both meat and the pleasure of the hunt. They could be chased on horseback and pulled down by deer hounds or marshalled to run past a stand where ladies and older gentry could try their luck with bow and arrow. First, however, their dung, or 'fewmets', had to be inspected to judge whether the stags were big enough to be worth shooting. On the several occasions when Queen Elizabeth tried her luck with bow and arrow the steaming fewmets were presented to her experienced eye in a silver dish.[19] An alternative park pleasure was simply to watch the deer moving and being fed. In 1694 Celia Fiennes wrote that Lord Tracy at Toddington in the north of the county had 'a very good parke, which stands so high that by the Lodge I rode up the banke I could see all the parke about and the deer feeding and running'.[20] So deer parks functioned somewhere between modern zoos and shooting galleries in a fairground.

There is a public footpath across this faintly sinister little park at Whitcliff and the walk is well worthwhile. But it is hard to repress the suspicion that those two dates, the murder in 1327 and the building of the lodge tower in 1329, were connected. Was the coveted licence to empark granted by 'the she-wolf of France', Queen Isabella, as a reward and as hush money after the convenient termination of her husband's existence?

5 *The grounds of Acton Court, Iron Acton from the air. Between the round horse pond (top right), and the Court (centre), are the square banks of the farmyard with the dovecote casting a dark shadow. To the bottom left woodland screens the larger fishpond*

Acton Court at Iron Acton could also be described as sinister, but for its looks, not its history (**5**). The Court is a real House of Usher with an enormous lowering presence, a gaunt hulk of red ironstone, recently on the edge of ruin yet preserving on its first floor the three bare rooms – guard, presence and privy chambers – of the east wing that was rushed up by Sir Nicholas Poyntz in nine months for the reception of King Henry and Queen Anne on their royal progress during the summer of 1535.

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No one should come to Iron Acton expecting a beautiful garden, but one as characterful and interesting as its parent house and also highly controversial, a place for garden antiquaries to come and test their analysis of its bacon-striped and battlemented enclosures against the conclusions of the experts, who were digging here extensively and inconclusively during the 1980s.[21] Acton Court is the detective mystery among Gloucestershire gardens and should be enjoyed as such.

The Court broods in the centre of a long rectangle of land running north-south, bounded on the north and east by a road, on the west by the original boundary line of a long, wet ditch and a very old hedge. On the south it is defended by a fish pond which has deteriorated into a marshy coppice but retains its Tudor dam and traces of an island that could once have been a garden feature, a miniature gloriette. The present entrance court is short and runs from the central door of the east range to the road on the east side. It has a handsome gateway with a five-centred arch and oak leaves carved in the spandrels, but the excavators found traces of buildings along the road wall of this court and proposed that it was originally the service court of the main house. But would Sir Nicholas have allowed the windows of his new royal east wing to overlook a base service court; and is not this the obvious place for a state entrance from the road to the royal apartments? At some stage the red walls of this east court were given a broad, bacon stripe band of decorative white plaster. The plaster has worn away, but left a defining stripe of pale lichen.

Acton Court's most notable garden feature is undoubtedly its south court. Twice the size of the east court it is surrounded by battlemented walls and was linked by a bridge across a deep moat to the lost south ranges of the house. It has yet to be excavated and on the strength of one mature pear tree is usually described as the orchard. A main entrance could once have stood here, but there is no trace of a gatehouse. In the south-west corner is a viewing bastion which would have given prospects over the big fishpond (**6**). Nearer the house is what looks like a gunport, with a narrow window slit commanding the moat. These two disparate features do not add up. Possibly there was once a second twin bastion on the south-east corner to overlook three further fishponds across the road and a walled deer park. The tower lodge of this park still stands among the delightful early nineteenth-century Gothick buildings of Acton Lodge farm. If such a south-east bastion ever existed a range of eighteenth-century barns has replaced it, so the function of this important area remains unresolved. Was the wide, battlemented court like the 'goodly orcharde' at Thornbury, a garden for ladies of the house to walk in and enjoy the views?

Then there are the areas north and west of the house. During the excavations the north field yielded up a confused map of banks and trenches which baffled the research team. Their report concluded: 'They are most likely to be connected with an elaborate garden and park'.[22] But is it likely? A house as large as Acton Court would have had an extensive farmyard and stables. These were usually sited on the opposite side of a manor house to its main entrance and contained a dovecote, not as an ornamental feature, but as a resource for providing pigeon pies. There is the ugly ruin of a dovecote in the centre of this northern area and, if some of these linear features are ignored, a large square section of banks can be isolated which

6 The Bastion Walk at Acton Court, viewed from the fishpond wood. The height of the wall demonstrates Sir Nicholas Poyntz's indifference to defence

may have bounded the farmyard. A pond further north of this square was the farm's horse or duck pond,[23] and another linear feature that leads out to the road in a north-westerly direction could have been the farmyard's exit point, avoiding the formal gardens.

That leaves the western sector. Here the archaeologists suggest there was a canal; but going where, from what and to what purpose? No less than eight dumps of later material have made it difficult to come to any more precise conclusions. What added frustration to the work was the discovery in 1985, among foundations, of the battered wreck of the earliest sundial yet found in any English garden, carrying the date 1520 and the initials, NK, of Nicholas Kratzer, Court Horologist to Henry VIII.[24] Sir Nicholas Poyntz appears to have leap-frogged his father Sir Anthony and succeeded his grandfather, Sir Robert Poyntz, on his death in 1520. All these garden works could then be Sir Robert's and contemporary with the Duke's at Thornbury. Alternatively Sir Nicholas, an assiduous and well-rewarded courtier, could, in a flush of enthusiasm, have begun all the surviving garden works and commissioned Kratzer to make a sundial in imitation of his royal master.

If all this debate over unresolved and insoluble problems sounds tedious it should not put garden enthusiasts off a visit to Iron Acton. Its future custodian may well decide upon ambitious new planting and various visitor attractions but now, in its forlorn emptiness of rooms and courts, the place has a rare authenticity of textures and an intense feeling of a lost era when some building gestures might be richly

rewarded and others might end with the sweep of an axe. Newark Park, which concludes this chapter, will reveal how Sir Nicholas Poyntz's gardening paid off.

Acton Court is a problematic and interesting garden, an archaeologist's delight, but no one would seriously claim that it set out to charm. Horton Court, on the other hand, house, church and garden, lies like the ideal and improbable creation of a female novelist in its Cotswold combe. For this little crook of hillside to contain not only a Romanesque hall house, 850 years old, but also the earliest approach to a Renaissance garden loggia in Britain seems too much architectural good fortune to be true, lightning striking twice in one very small village. Horton's garden can be seen too as a sad and significant place historically, for its loggia proves how quickly Italian design and Renaissance aesthetics could have come to our offshore island if Henry VIII had not broken with the Roman Catholic church and isolated England culturally from the purer classical forms of southern Europe.

The genius who created this small garden was Henry's trouble-shooting ambassador extraordinary, the Italophile priest, William Knight. London born, Knight went through the Establishment's educational mill of Winchester and New College, Oxford, but then soared much higher, studying Law at Ferrara and spending years in Italy, some of them in Rome where he made influential contacts. King Henry appreciated his rare qualities, sent him on embassies to Spain and Switzerland and rewarded him accordingly with numerous Church appointments, sinecures for the most part, but one of them, the prebend of Horton, must have particularly appealed to Knight. That in itself is remarkable. At a time when the average garden fancier indulged in herberies, painted palings and woven tunnels of whitethorn, William Knight appears to have had a sensitive appreciation for the actual lie of land in what we today consider an idyllic valley. Was he an Arcadian gardener long before his time? If not why should a man familiar with Rome, Paris, London, Florence and Bologna choose as his favourite retreat this miniature landscape under the Cotswold edge?

More to the point is what Knight did to improve the landscape. His Ambulatory is a six-arched loggia set at right-angles to the garden front of the house (**colour plate 3**). It commands a connoisseur's view across and down the combe over what were, in his day, three fishponds. Immediately below the Ambulatory a steep terrace has been scooped out, a six foot drop, creating a level area, the present lawn, as a setting for the arches. It is just large enough for a limited, prebendal game of bowls. Around the corner to the right, beside a small orchard, are two more terraces with the inevitable twentieth-century features of a swimming pool and a rose garden. What are missing are the enclosing stone or brick walls which, in an Elizabethan layout, would have cut each one of these pleasant little valley spaces off from one another. As for the loggia itself, if a cusp is 'a tooth-like meeting point of two branches of a curve', then these arches, which Knight, who would have been familiar with the Spedali degli Innocenti in Florence, persuaded Gloucestershire masons to create for him, are exactly that cusp point where ogival English and segmental Italian arches meet. Their columns are slender, almost fluted, their capitals are minimal and the points of their arches are as blunt as the masons could make them without abandoning their native Gothic. The whole building breathes a frustrated awareness of

7 *Hannibal, the 'good' pagan, stylized with the confidence of a Pisanello medal, on the wall of the Horton Court Ambulatory*

Italian models, of elegant sun-soaked loggias and sleepy afternoons in the Florentine sun. It is purely ornamental, nostalgic and symmetrical, yet raised up here to face east in a damp, green Gloucestershire valley.

Gardens of this age usually raise problems, and the Ambulatory's problems are the four Cotswold stone medallions, mortared into its back wall in symbolic order. The two central figures in a deliberate crucifix shape are the good pagan Hannibal and the good emperor Augustus. On either side are the bad pagan Attila, the destroyer of Roman order, and the bad emperor Nero. Alan Brooks dismisses them as 'recalling in a cruder way those at Hampton Court', which were imported by Cardinal Wolsey in 1521, exactly the date registered on a stone, which was originally in the garden, but now set into the chimneypiece in the hall at Horton.[25] But they are not necessarily cruder than Wolsey's conventional five roundels, merely conceived in a different artistic register, brilliantly stylized like Pisanello's medallions. The Hannibal and the Atilla are memorably intense caricatures of savage warriors, every jut of beard and slant of cheekbone sculpted in dramatic relief (**7**). Nero and Augustus are coin-like portraits, but still professionally executed. In the light of the Raphaelesque carving on the jambs of the entrance doorway to Horton Court, which is certainly work of Knight's occupancy, the likelihood is that the medallions in the Ambulatory were Knight's Italian souvenirs, carved from coins or prints which he had brought home, and added to the building in a gesture, perhaps of despair, that his masons could get no closer to Florentine models.

There is something lacking in the planting, or rather the total lack of planting, around that top terrace. Knight would have remembered Italian yew hedges and the near-architectural impact of their dark, straight lines. A yew hedge in an English garden would have been unlikely in 1521, but then so would a garden building like the Ambulatory. Planting of some kind, preferably a compact hedge of rosemary curved around the top of the terrace on each side of the steps, would improve the garden's punctuation immeasurably. This may have been the first Italian garden in England, and a little positive re-creation would be welcome, as would a restoration of all three fishponds in the combe. As for those other green terraces around the corner from the Ambulatory, the upkeep of plain turf is cheap, but grass is most unlikely to have been Knight's Italian solution. Such a sheltered spot is likely to have held a 'herber', of herbs medicinal and edible, but now it would have to co-exist with the swimming pool.

Were the Poyntz lords of Acton Court a little jealous of Horton's flattering topography and discontented with their own flat fields and tamely undulant deer parks? It is more than possible if their severely elegant lodge at Newark, which teeters even further than Horton over the cusp point towards classicism, is considered. Unlike Acton Court, Newark Park at Ozleworth in the high Cotswolds is situated, not like Horton under the edge, but on the very precipitous brink of it. It was a house built between 1544 and 1556 by Sir Nicholas on the proceeds of Kingswood Abbey, which had been Sir Nicholas's reward after the Dissolution of the Monasteries for all his entertaining of the King and his amoral indifference to the implications of royal statecraft.[26]

In the garden chronology Newark has no right to a place in this chapter. It was a sixteenth-century lodge in a walled deer park, perfectly sited for hawking from its own rooftop, but its sixteenth-century park walls were rebuilt in 1792, when the park was being landscaped, its top gate lodge is dated 1798, while the hillside terraces, lake with two islands and the vertiginous scenic drive up from Ozleworth Bottom all date from the late eighteenth century. It is the original house, not the garden, that is just, by one or two years, Henrician in date, and it is Sir Nicholas Poyntz's concept of the house that makes it significant in Gloucestershire garden history. Here, at one stroke of cool, simplistic architectural design, the English villa is being launched. Unlike its Venetian and Palladian contemporary villas it was not part-farm, part-house. Purely and directly it was a resort for leisure and pleasure, a rich family's bolt-hole in which to escape the cares of estate management, to entertain friends and to enjoy sport in wild countryside.

This represents the first, barely perceptible, edging together of garden and park, that process mentioned earlier which would lead eventually to the eighteenth-century Arcadian garden. Standing on the roof of Newark (**colour plate 4**) or on the narrow steps of its south entrance front, it is easy to believe that the Poyntz family were as aware of, and as pleased by, the landscape unfolding below them as William Knight must have been by the little hills, woods, orchards and ponds around his Ambulatory at Horton. And from its conception Newark (New Work) was not a mere lodge for picnics with a viewing stand, like Acton Lodge farm across the road

8 Newark Park, built in the 1550s, interprets an Italian Renaissance villa in Tudor Gothic with just its entrance doorway gesturing towards correct Serlian forms

from Acton Court. It was a house for full-time residence with a whole party of guests. The requirements of the house in planning terms appear to have constrained its unknown architect into a remarkably advanced design. Its east front (**8**), three bays wide, three storeys high, with a broad central canted bay, anticipates everything, except the sash windows, of the villas that Sir Robert Taylor would be designing, as

a novelty, in the mid-eighteenth century: Harleyford, Asgill and Sharpham. As a final, confident touch the architect, Court trained, gave his client, who had been prepared a mere twenty years earlier at Acton Court to rush up a gauche heap of late Gothic provincialism, a chaste Doric doorcase for his garden entrance.

Earlier in the century, such was the feudal mind set, the Duke of Buckingham had laid out gardens at Thornbury that were in every detail akin to those described by King James I of Scotland in his poem 'The Kingis Quair', written between 1425 and 1435:

> Now was there maid fast by the touris wall
> A gardyn fair, and in the cornerer set
> Ane herbere grene, with wandis long and small
> Railit about; and so with treis set
> Was all the place, and hawthorn hegis knet.[27]

Less than 30 years later in Henry's reign a house was being built simply for the enjoyment of its grounds and prospects. The relationship of a house with its park was taking primacy over the medieval need for a fine house to act as the centre for a village economy or to assert political prestige; and Newark's garden door could have come straight out of the pages of Sebastiano Serlio's *L'Architettura* (1537–75). Now at Newark symmetry, order and classicism were in the wind.

2 Lost gardens of the Elizabethan–Jacobean continuum

Owlpen Manor exemplifies the problem with the Elizabethan gardens of Gloucestershire: not one of them really survives. The county may seem to abound in enchanting examples, multi-walled, multi-terraced, teeming with dark clipped yews, quaint sundials and staddle stones, but these are all either satisfying and ingenious fakes of the turn of the nineteenth century or else, like Owlpen, gardens of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century which have mellowed into Elizabethan appearances to be hailed, by Arts and Crafts enthusiasts, as genuine Tudor creations.

The reason why no gardens survive from the Elizabethan period is that the building boom in Gloucestershire only started in the late sixteenth century, and the vast majority of the houses of this period are actually post-1600.[1] If houses like Stanway and Cirencester had elaborate gardens, they would have been swept away in later alterations. A 1615 estate map of Badminton suggests how little pleasure ground was attached to even the grandest houses at this time.[2] In addition, to survive, like the fortunate Henrician trio of the last chapter, a garden has to become unfashionable, neglected and finally abandoned so that only its hollow places and the bones of its walls remain untouched by later revisions. The wooded valleys and sudden viewpoints of the Cotswolds have always proved too attractive to permit that benign decay. Undoubtedly there are a few scraps of Elizabethan garden walls surviving unremarked in later gardens but, apart from Kempsford's riverside terrace and ruined garden house, there is nothing of any significance; certainly nothing to equal the Henrician three.[3]

As some compensation for these losses Gloucestershire's good fortune is that the county's gardens, as they were in 1712, have been richly recorded in Sir Robert Atkyns's *The ancient and present state of Glostershire.* Several other counties – Oxfordshire, Staffordshire, Hertfordshire and Kent – had their county histories published at around this time, but none of them as generously illustrated as Gloucestershire was by the bird's eye views of John Kip, the celebrated illustrator, with Leonard Knyff, of England's greater country estates in *Britannia Illustrata* (1707). By 1712 the prevailing garden fashion across the country had been, for some 50 years, that of Franco-Dutch formalism. Professional nurserymen working in highly organised capitalist enterprises had transformed the appearance of whole areas of parkland and their conventional formalities lie heavily on most of Kip's Gloucestershire plates. Nevertheless, it is possible, by cautious detective work, to piece out, underneath Kip's conventional garden symbols – his over-neat alternations of round and conical bushes in the borders of frets, his multiple cabbage patches,

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Appendix AC 7
Historic Depictions of Thornbury Castle

West Front of Thornbury Castle, Gloucestershire.

South East View of Thornbury Castle.

North View of Thornbury Castle, Gloucestershire.