Institute of Historical Research

M.A. Garden and Landscape History

Research Report for Brenchley Gardens in Maidstone, Kent

Student 210240807

5th April 2022



Brenchley Gardens, Photo: Author, November 2021

Table of Contents		Page No.
Introduction		1 - 4
Domesday book to 16th century		5 - 7
17th, 18th and early 19th centuries		8 - 9
Mid- to late 19th century		10 - 16
The influence of Alexander McKenzie		16 - 22
Late 19th century to the 1940s		23 - 32
Post Second World War to the present day		33 - 39
Conclusion		40 - 41
Bibliography		42 - 44
Appendices		
1.	Chronology	45 - 47
2.	Listed buildings	48 - 50
3.	Surveys	51 - 52
4.	Site maintenance	52
5.	Photographs	53 - 60

Introduction

Brenchley Gardens is a public park situated in the town centre of Maidstone in Kent. The gardens are approximately 800m north of the Town Hall and sit equidistant between the River Medway to the west and Week Street (a pedestrianised shopping thoroughfare) to the east, as in Figure 1.

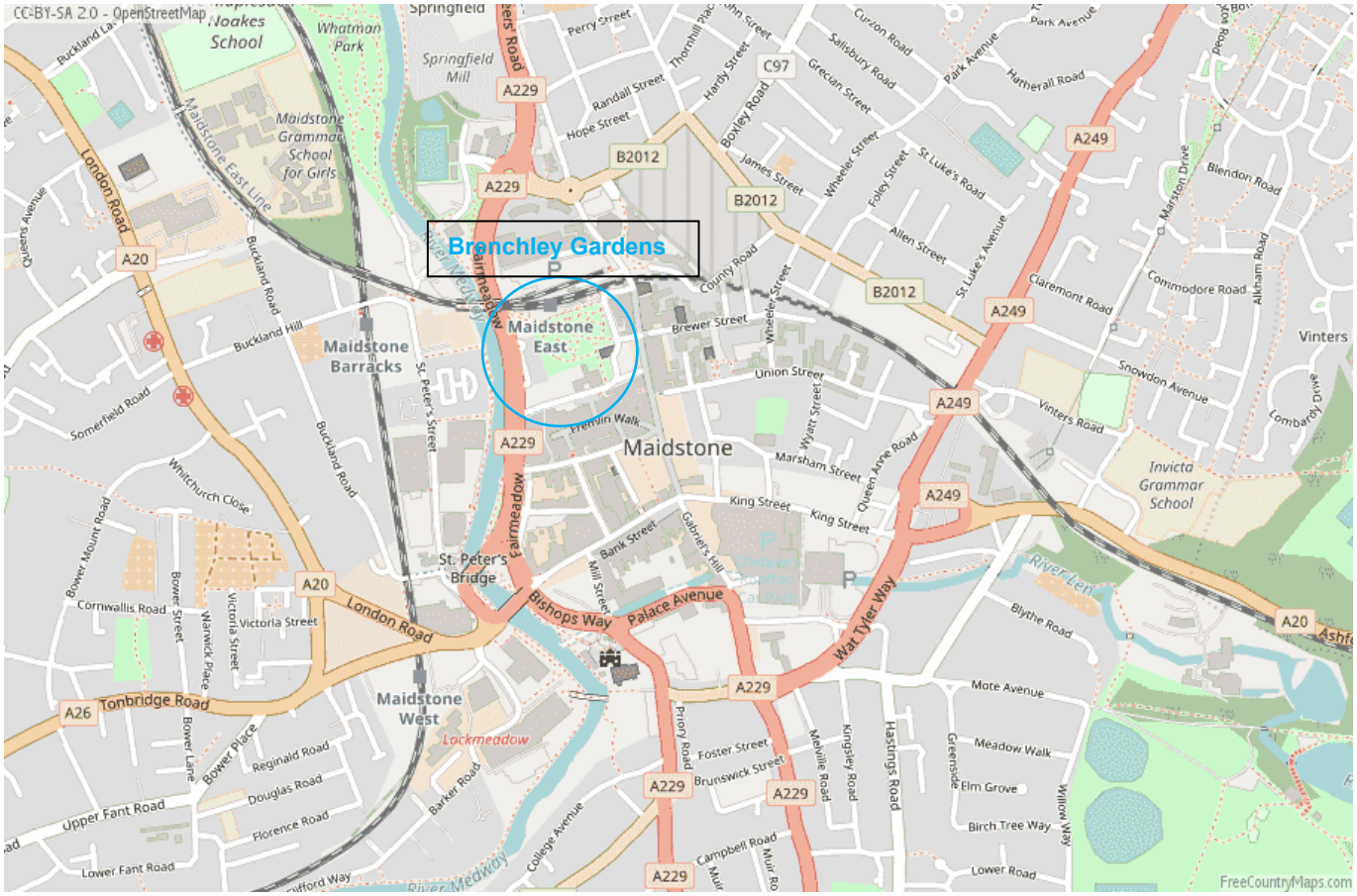


Figure 1 Location plan of Brenchley Gardens, https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid= [accessed March 2022]

The gardens comprise approximately 1.8 hectares of land with a distinct south-west facing slope falling from a level plateau in the north-east. There are no watercourses on the site, either natural or manmade. The site is drained by the River Medway to the west. It is enclosed by retaining walls on the north, west, and parts of the southern and eastern boundaries. Beyond these boundaries lie the railway station (Maidstone East) to the north, Station Road to the east, St. Faith's Street and the Maidstone Museum to the south, and the McKenzie Court apartment block to the west.

The aerial photograph in Figure 2 shows the gardens and their surroundings in this century.



Figure 2 Brenchley Gardens and the surrounding area from above (2007), Alamy, https://www.alamy.com/aerial-view-in-maidstone-kent-uk [accessed January 2022]

The current layout of the site is shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4 (below).

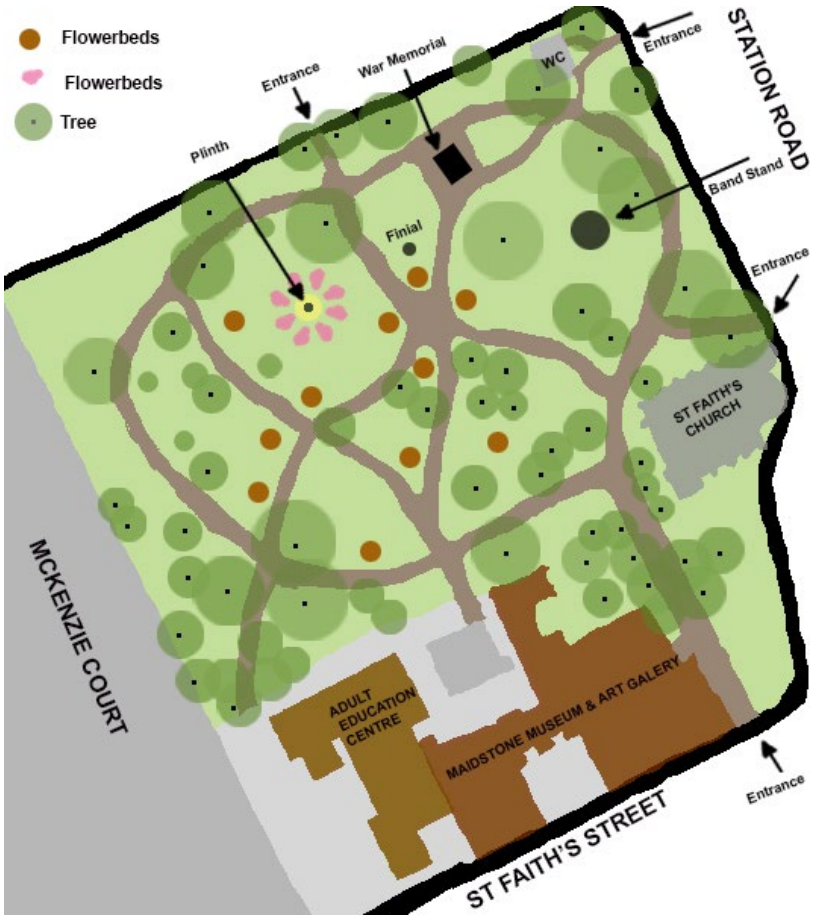


Figure 3 The current layout of the gardens, Image: Author, March 2022

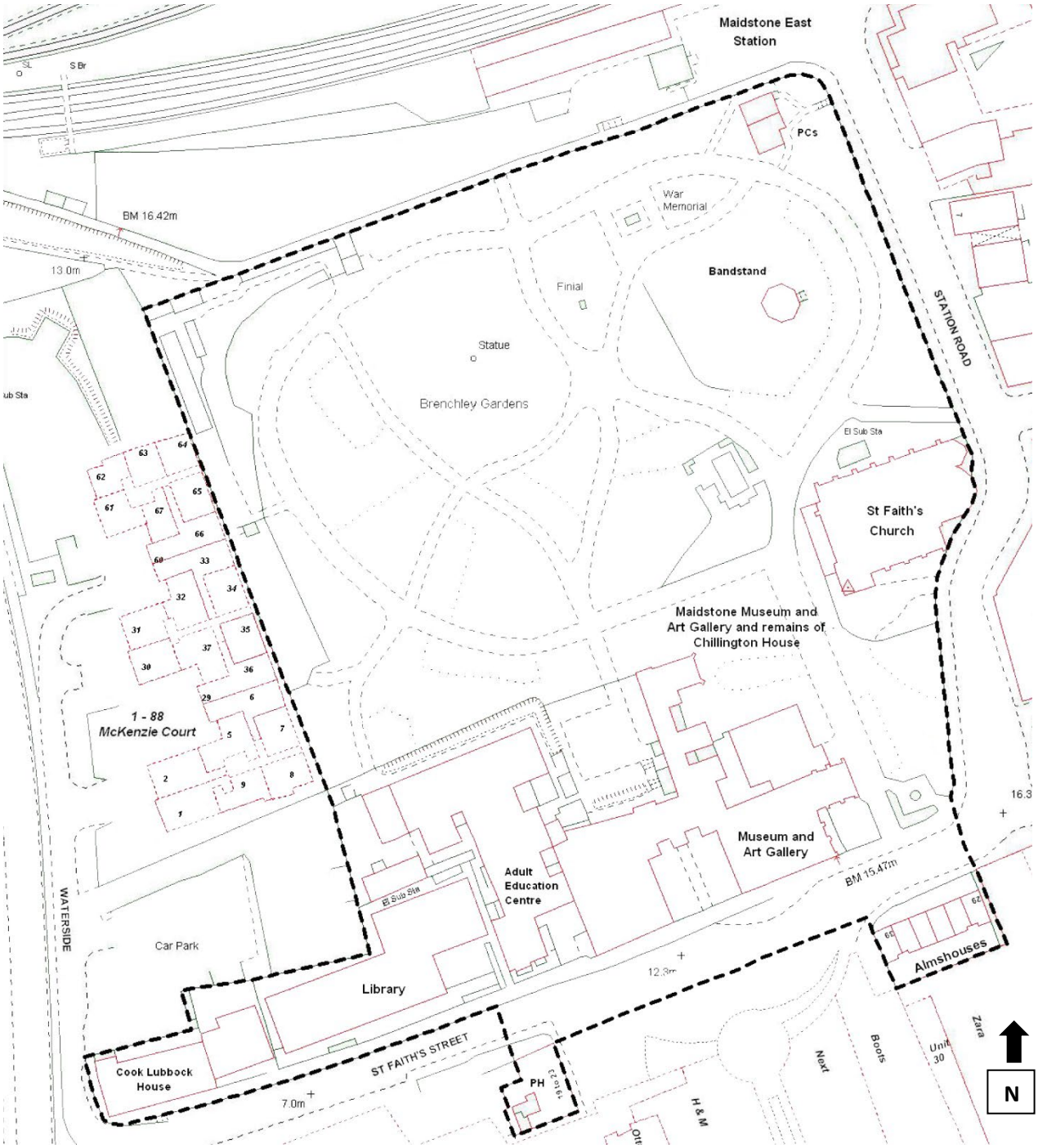


Figure 4 The current layout of the gardens,://maidstone.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/19640/Chillington-House.pdf, [accessed March 2022]

Brenchley Gardens were laid out between 1871 and 1872 and became Maidstone's first public park when handed into civic ownership on the 23rd October 1872. This year, 2022, marks the 150th (sesquicentennial) anniversary of this public space.

When first opened, the park was an instant success, attracting large crowds who came to enjoy the peace and tranquillity and the frequent band concerts. It remained an important symbol of civic pride in the first half of the 20th century. However, since World War II, the site has suffered a decline in its condition and subsequently in its public perception. Following the removal of perimeter railings during the 1940s, the site became increasingly vulnerable to vandalism and has experienced some neglect and the removal of some features.

In terms of its scope, this report traces the development of the site from when it was first recorded as being in private ownership, through to its conversion to a public amenity, and then its evolution as a civic space over the next 150 years. A chronology of owners and managers, changes of ownership and use, and key events at the site has been compiled and is shown in Appendix 1. This forms a guideline to the analysis of the different phases of landscaping and gardening in the body of this report.

The research for this report has included an extensive review of the published and unpublished information available from a range of archival and library resources including the Kent Archives at the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone, Maidstone Museum Archives, Kent Archaeological Society records, and the British Newspaper archives. This archival research was complemented with site visits and observations, and meetings with employees of the Borough Council including the Parks & Open Spaces Manager and Head Gardener, and correspondence with the Heritage Department of Kent County Council.

Domesday Book to 16th century

In the *Domesday Book* of 1086, the entries for the area suggest it was an entirely agricultural community with less than 50 tenant farmers and smallholders.[1] However, by 1200, Maidstone was a recognisable town, one of many created in England and Wales between 1066 and 1190, as monarchs, landowners, and churchmen sought to develop and earn profits from property and markets.

A characteristic feature of such towns was often a planned gridded street pattern such as exists within the Maidstone Centre Conservation Area. The grid plan to the north was complete by 1200, with its northern edge marked by the medieval church of St. Faith. The church now on this site was built in Victorian times, but the original church is likely to have been founded prior to 1200. Brenchley Gardens stands within the immediate vicinity of this church on land sloping downward to the River Medway.

The site of Brenchley Gardens was once part of the Manor of Chillington, and for many years used as domestic gardens and orchards; a source of fresh fruit for the adjacent Manor House (Chillington House) on St. Faith's Street. The current site incorporates part of the private gardens formerly associated with Chillington House, together with the land once occupied by St. Faith's Chapel and its Green.[2]

The total extent of the Manorial lands is unknown, although they are thought to have been limited. During the reign of Henry VIII, Chillington came under the possession of George Maplesden of Digons.[3] It was later conveyed to Nicholas Barham shortly after 1561, where he lived until his death in 1577. Barham was responsible for the construction of the existing Manor House c.1561. Barham's Will of July 23rd 1577 contains the first written record of the site that was to become Brenchley Gardens, including its use for the cultivation of fruit 'his wife would be permitted to walke in the said backside and orchards for the comfort and recreation of herself and family, of the necessary houses of office situate in the end of the old orchard, and that at all

[1] J.Kiff, *Great Domesday Book: Kent: County Edition,* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1987),P.252.
[2] J.M. Russell, *The History of Maidstone*, (Maidstone, Kent: W.S. Vivish, 1881), P356.
[3] Ibid.

such times as it shall please God to send his blessings with reasonable store of fruite, my said wiffe to have of the 20 bushells of apples, whereof one half of the best sorte'.[4]

The earliest cartographic evidence indicating the location of Chillington House, its orchard gardens, and St. Faith's Chapel and Green, is revealed in John Rocque's survey of Kent (c.1760), which shows the location of the Brenchley Gardens site on the northern limits of the town, a few hundred yards east of the River Medway (Figure 5).

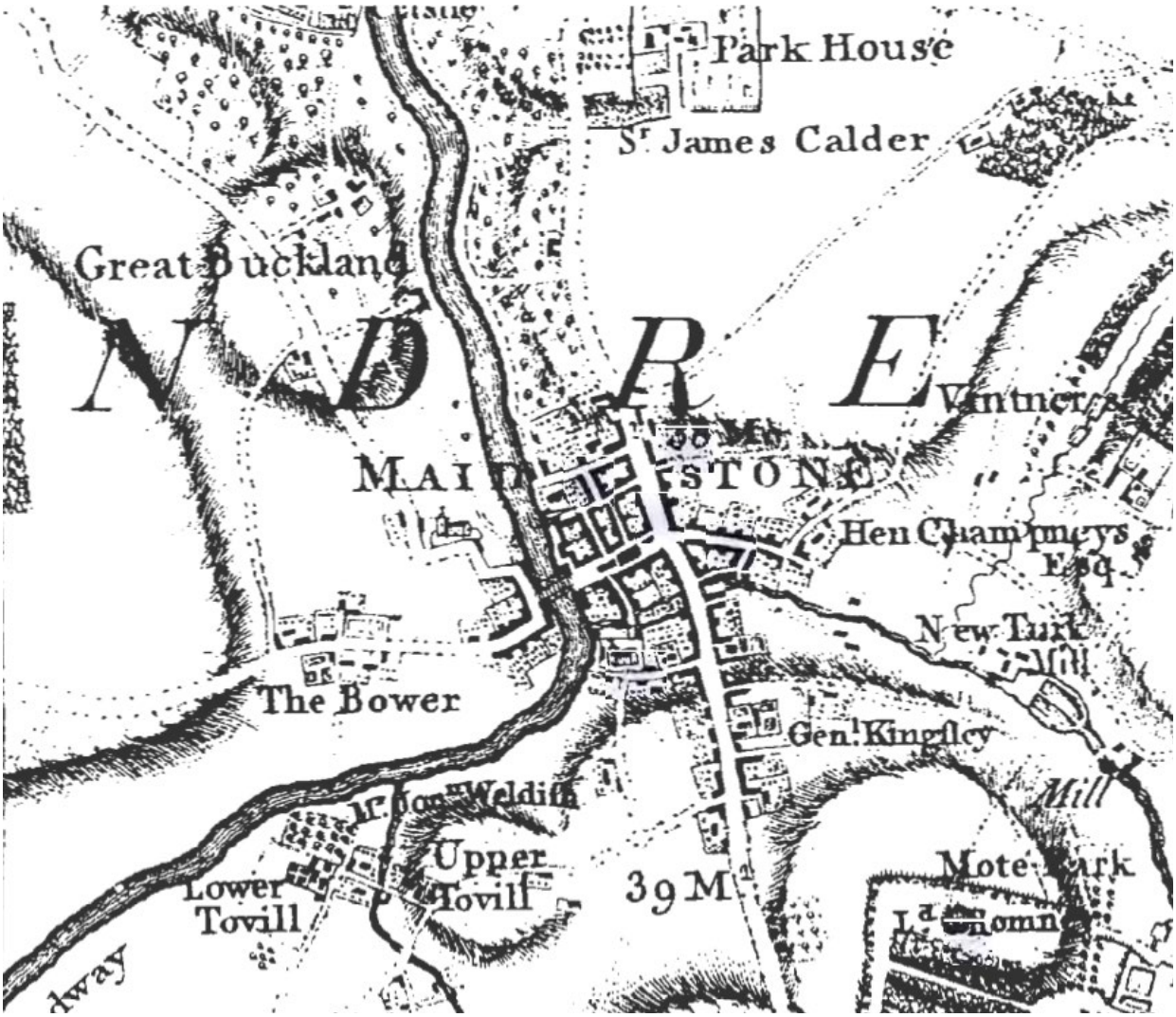


*Figure 5 C.1760. Rocque's Map of the County of Kent,*The Brenchley Gardens site at the northern limit of Maidstone, a short distance from the River Medway, *Source:* Source: Kent History & Library Centre

[4] J.M. Russell, *The History of Maidstone*, (Maidstone, Kent: W.S. Vivish, 1881), P.356.

The 1650 map (Figure 6) was created and drawn in 1974 by Allen Grove of Maidstone Museum and Robert Spain of the Kent Archaeological Society. Its basis was the manuscript rental of Maidstone in 1650 (Figure 7), compiled by Nicholas Wall, and the Maidstone tithe survey map of 1843.George Haule of Park House, Maidstone was the owner of the land (part 45) in 1650 and Robert Barnham a tenant; he was the son of Sir Francis Barnham of Boughton Monchelsea and not a member of the Barham family, the owners in the later 16th century.

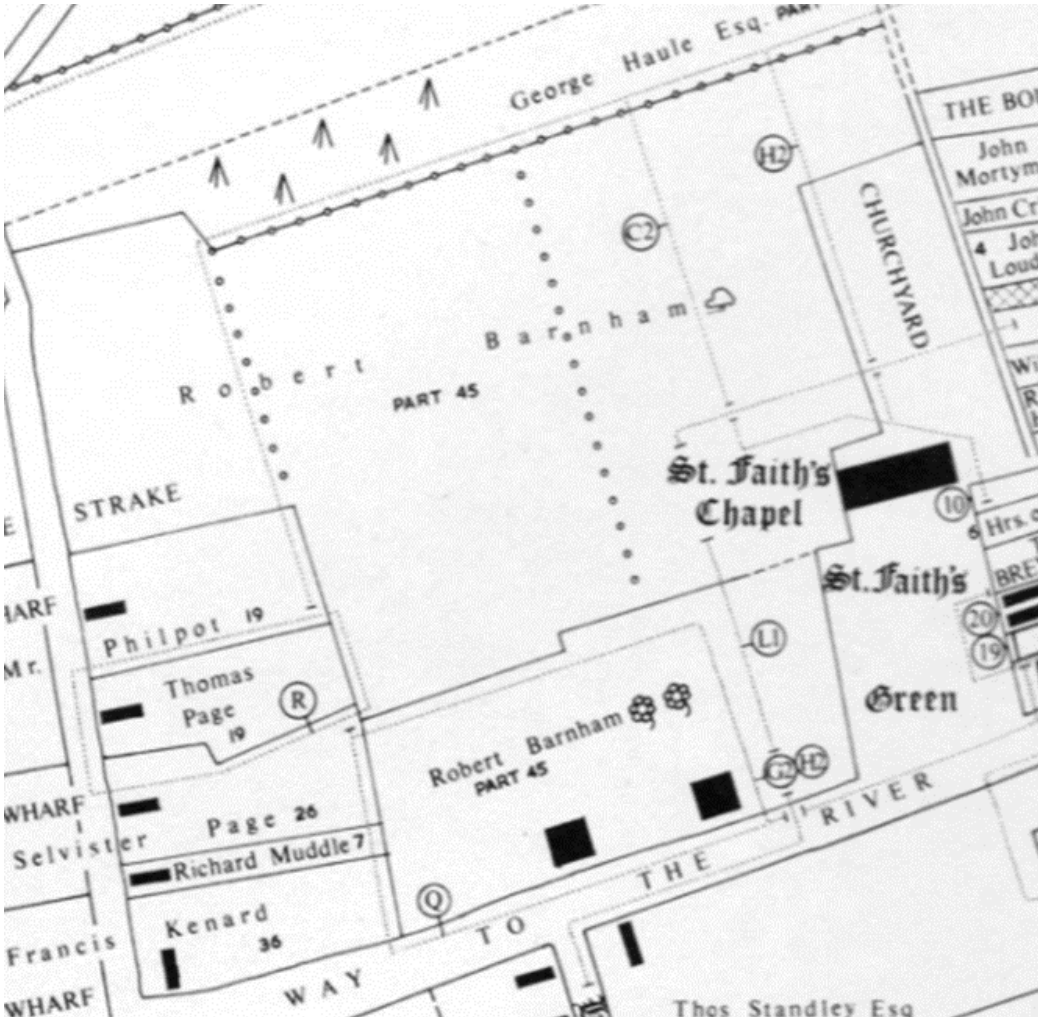


Figure 6 Allen Grove and Robert Spain map, Source: Kent History & Library Centre

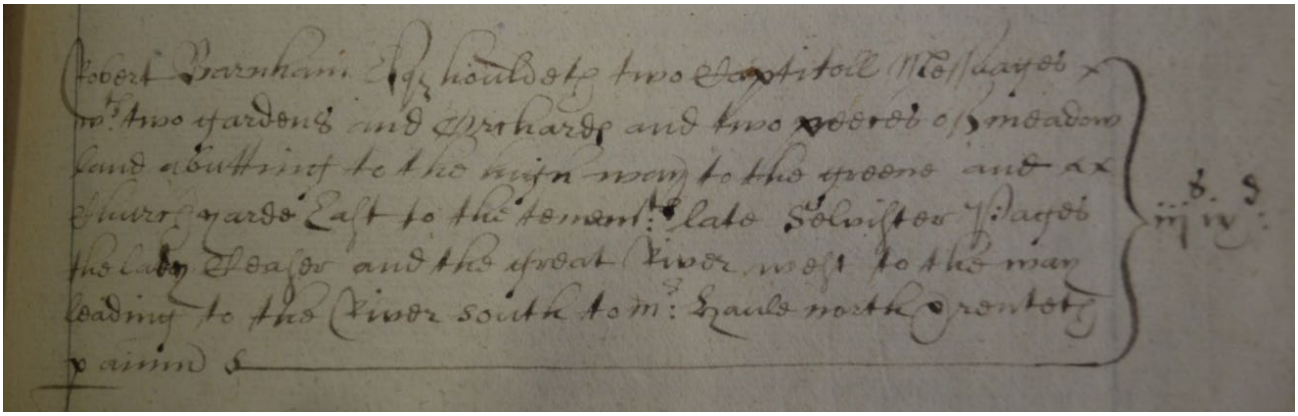


Figure 7 Manuscript rental of Robert Barham in 1650, compiled by Nicholas Wall, Source: Kent History & Library Centre

17th, 18th and early 19th centuries

During the late 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries, Chillington House and grounds were occupied by a succession of different families. Whilst the house underwent alteration and extension, the grounds appear to have remained relatively unchanged during this period.

In 1801 them manor was conveyed to William Charles, a physician and felt manufacturer.[5] The 1821 *Map of the Town of Maidstone in the County of Kent* by Brown and Sons (Figure 8) confirms the continued existence of a kitchen and/or orchard garden to the north of Chillington House, and St. Faith's Chapel and Green on St. Faith's Street. The map also shows numerous buildings close to, or forming an extension to, Chillington House. The manor passed to William Charles' son Thomas Charles (also a medical practitioner) in 1832.[6]



Figure 8 1821 Map of the Town of Maidstone by Brown & Sons, The plan clearly shows the orchards and gardens to the north of Chillington House and St. Faith's Green to the east, Source: Kent History & Library Centre

[5] Hilary Watson, *The Book of Maidstone, Kent County Town*, (Buckingham: Barracuda Books Ltd 1981), P49.
[6] Ibid, P.50.

The 1843 Tithe map (Figure 9), and the 1843 Tithe Apportionments award schedule, (Figure 10) show the apportionment numbers with details of the owner and occupier, together with the quantity owned and land usage.



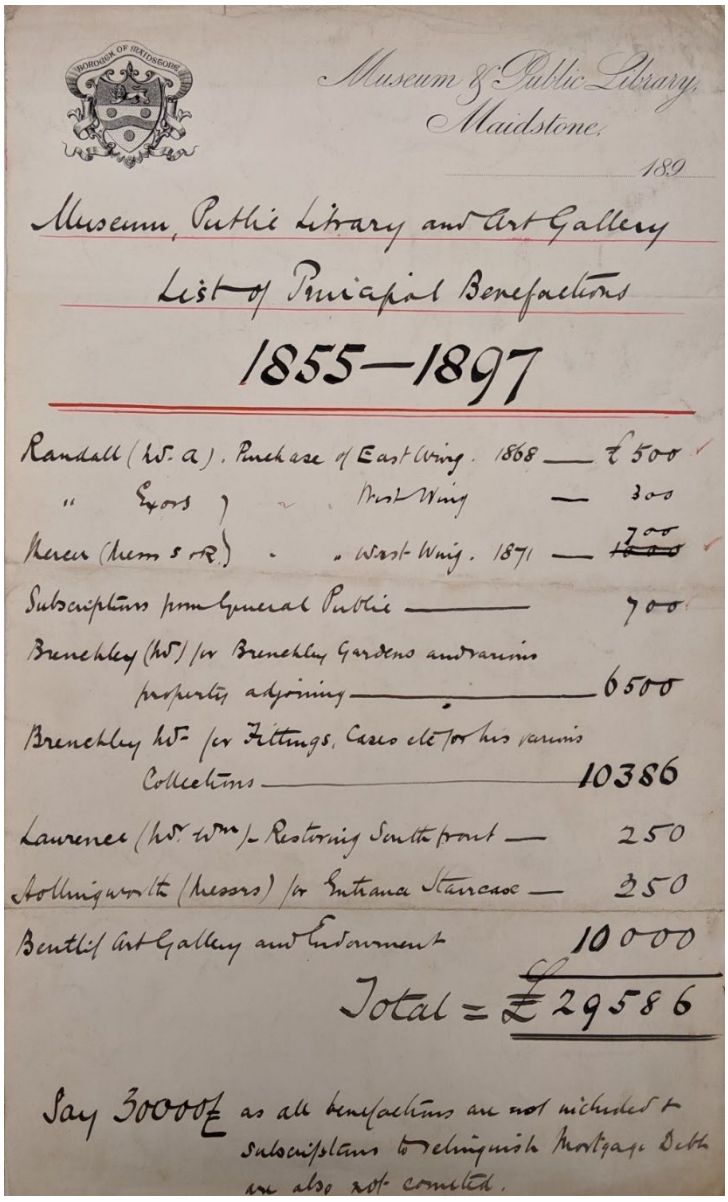
Figure 9 Tithe survey map of 1843, Source: Kent History & Library Centre

Owner	Occupier	No.	Description	Cultivation	Quantities	P' Curate
Alfred Wigan	Joseph Fletcher	3125 3127 3128 3129	…… …… …… ……	Garden Orchard Orchard Garden	0.0.20 0.2.29 1.1.31 0.0. 8 1.1. 5	0.2. 0 0.5. 1 0.5. 6 0.0. 5 0.13.0
Edward Sanders	Himself	3142 3143	Town Portion Garden House & Garden	Garden Garden	2.2.17 0.3.11 3.1.28	2.16.0
George Earle	George Prentice	3110	Town Portion ……	Garden	0.2. 2	0.10 0

Figure 10 Tithe Apportionments 1843, Source: Kent Archaeological Society

Mid to late 19th century

In 1855, Thomas Charles bequeathed a substantial quantity of antiquities, books, and pictures to the town of Maidstone, so they might be permanently preserved as a collection to be known as the 'Charles Museum'.[7] After accepting this bequest, the Corporation was faced with the task of housing it, and this was resolved by the Corporation's purchase of Chillington House in 1857 (Figure 11 below). The 'Charles Museum' opened to the public in 1858, and ten years following its opening, it was extended with the addition of the east wing in 1868 (Figure 12).[8]



Museum & Public Library,
Maidstone.

189

Museum, Public Library and Art Gallery

List of Principal Benefactors

1855—1897

Randall (Wm. a). Purchase of East Wing.	1868	£500
" Exors) " West Wing		300
Mercer (Chas & R.) " " West Wing.	1871	~~1000~~ 700
Subscriptions from General Public		700
Brenchley (Julius) for Brenchley Gardens and various property adjoining		6500
Brenchley Julius for Fittings, Cases etc for his various Collections		10386
Lawrence (Revd Wm) - Restoring South front		250
Hollingworth (Messrs) for Entrance Staircase		250
Bentlif Art Gallery and Endowment		10000
Total =		£29586

Say 30000£ as all benefactions are not included & Subscriptions to relinquish Mortgage Debts are also not counted.

Figure 11 List of Principal Benefactors of the Museum, Julius Brenchley paid £6,500 for the land and adjoining properties so that land could be extended and turned into Brenchley Gardens, Source: Maidstone Museum

[7] J.M. Russell, *The History of Maidstone*, (Maidstone, Kent: W.S. Vivish, 1881), P.357.
[8] Hilary Watson, The Book of Maidstone, Kent County Town, (Buckingham: Barracuda Books Ltd 1981), P119.



Figure 12 1868.Ordnance Survey 1st Edition; 25", The Orchard to the rear of Chillington House with the house extended northwards into the former timber yard, Source: https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed March 2022]

The commissioning of Brenchley Gardens

The creation of Brenchley Gardens is inextricably linked with the development of the Charles Museum. Brenchley Gardens was commissioned by Julius Brenchley (1816-1873) (Figure 13).

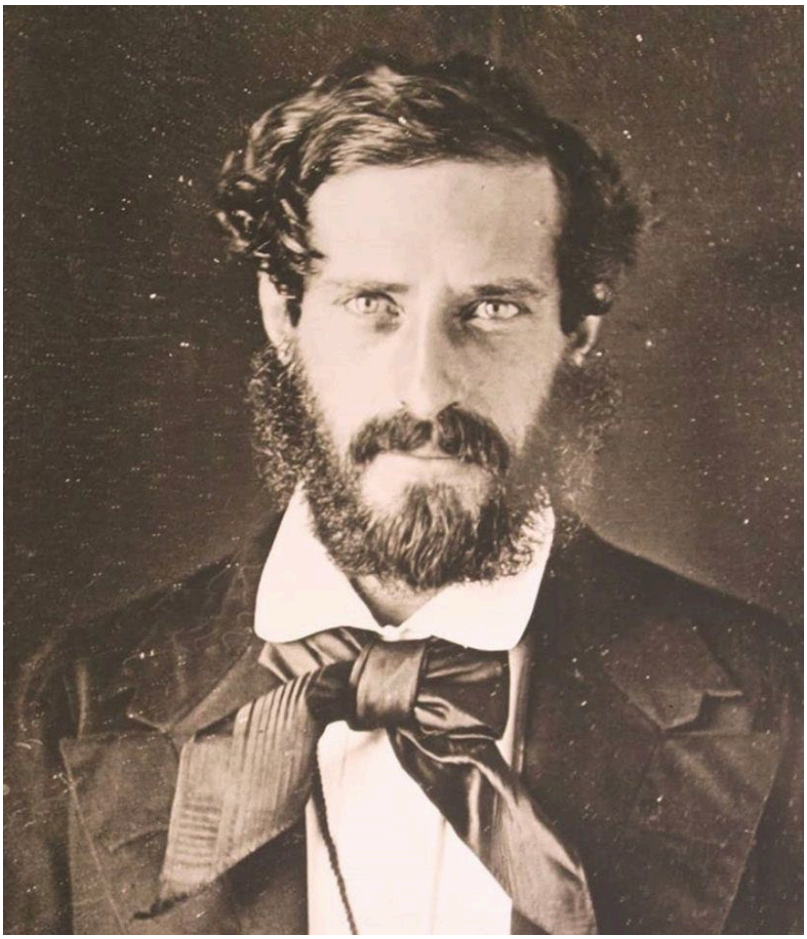


Figure 13 Julius Brenchley, aged 35, Source: Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery

A traveller, naturalist and author, Brenchley was a major figure in 19th century Maidstone and one of Charles Museum's chief supporters and financiers. He purchased and generously financed the west wing of the museum throughout its rebuilding and restoration (begun in 1871, completed in 1873);[9] this wing was destined to house his eclectic and substantial collections of ethnography, natural history, oriental objects and paintings, amassed during his travels.

Julius was born at Kingsley House, Maidstone on 30th November 1816 and was part of the wealthy Brenchley family, owners of two local breweries in Maidstone. He was educated at Maidstone Grammar School and St. John's College, Cambridge, where he obtained a BA and an MA.[10]

[9] J.M. Russell, *The History of Maidstone*, (Maidstone, Kent: W.S. Vivish, 1881), P.361.
[10] Ibid, P.362.

Following his university studies, Julius returned to his native town and was set for a life in the Church, receiving ordination at Holy Trinity, Maidstone, in 1843. However, in 1845, he was persuaded to accompany his father on a European tour, an essential cultural activity for the wealthy at that time.[11] This first experience of travel was to inspire him to embark on a series of travels around the world. These subsequent travels began in 1847, shortly after the death of his father, and continued with only one short intermission until 1867.

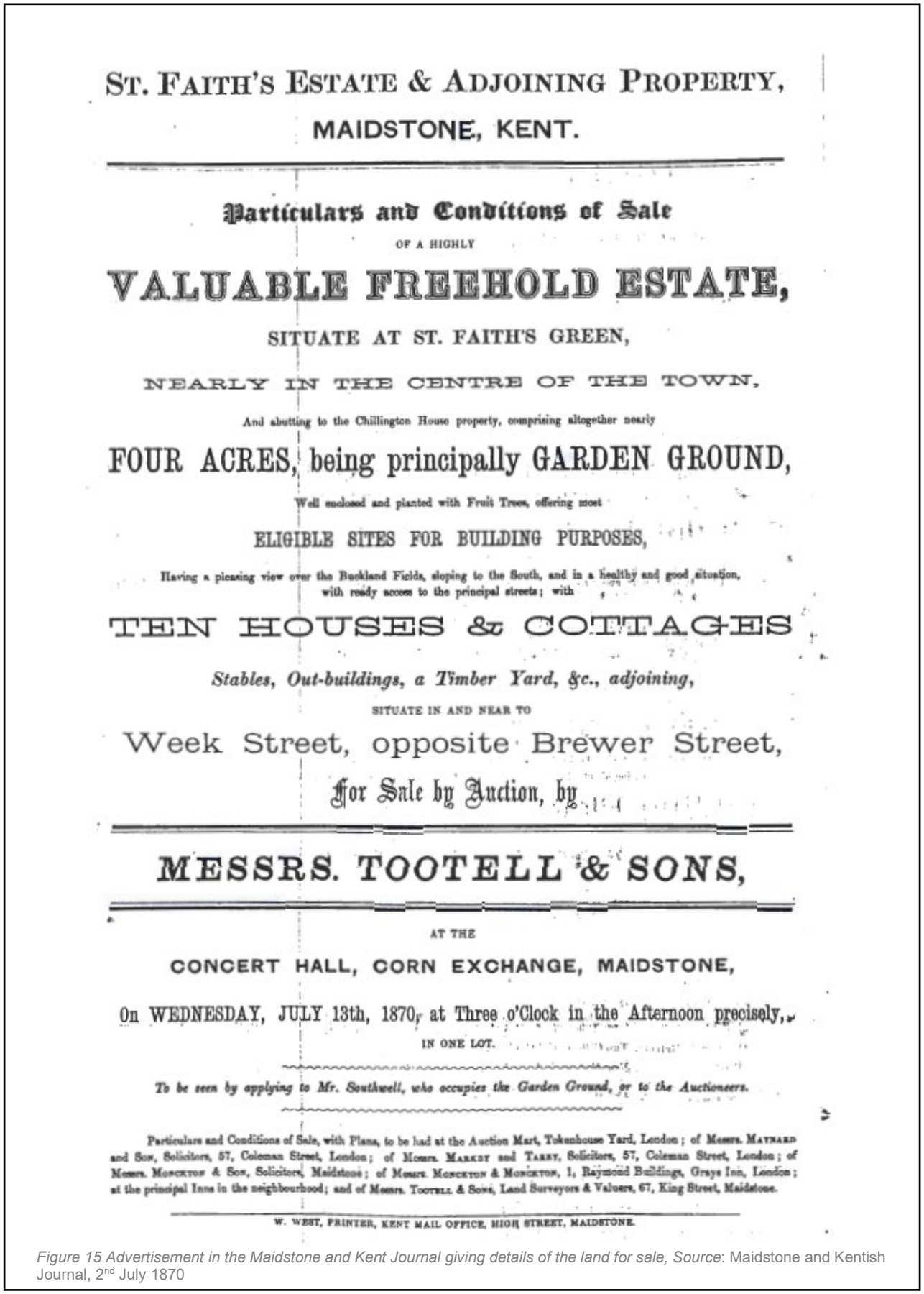
During his travels, Brenchley visited many areas of the globe, including North America, South America, Europe, India, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and a cruise of the South Sea Islands. He returned to Maidstone in 1867, and on the 13th of July 1870 took the opportunity of buying the orchard and cottages to the northeast of the museum grounds to secure it from future development and thus safeguard its setting (Figure 14).[12]



Figure 14 The orchard when Brenchley secured the land in 1870, Source: Maidstone Museum.

[11] The gallery at Maidstone Museum for Julius Brenchley's collection.
[12] Ibid.

Four acres of orchard land and cottages, believed to have been linked to Chillington House from the Middle Ages, were bought at auction for the sum of £2,800 (Figure 15).



ST. FAITH'S ESTATE & ADJOINING PROPERTY,

MAIDSTONE, KENT.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale

OF A HIGHLY

VALUABLE FREEHOLD ESTATE,

SITUATE AT ST. FAITH'S GREEN,

NEARLY IN THE CENTRE OF THE TOWN,

And abutting to the Chillington House property, comprising altogether nearly

FOUR ACRES, being principally GARDEN GROUND,

Well enclosed and planted with Fruit Trees, offering most

ELIGIBLE SITES FOR BUILDING PURPOSES,

Having a pleasing view over the Buckland Fields, sloping to the South, and in a healthy and good situation, with ready access to the principal streets; with

TEN HOUSES & COTTAGES

Stables, Out-buildings, a Timber Yard, &c., adjoining,

SITUATE IN AND NEAR TO

Week Street, opposite Brewer Street,

For Sale by Auction, by

MESSRS. TOOTELL & SONS,

AT THE

CONCERT HALL, CORN EXCHANGE, MAIDSTONE,

On WEDNESDAY, JULY 13th, 1870, at Three o'Clock in the Afternoon precisely,

IN ONE LOT.

To be seen by applying to Mr. Southwell, who occupies the Garden Ground, or to the Auctioneers.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale, with Plans, to be had at the Auction Mart, Tokenhouse Yard, London; of Messrs. MAYNARD and SON, Solicitors, 57, Coleman Street, London; of Messrs. MARSBY and TARRY, Solicitors, 57, Coleman Street, London; of Messrs. MONCKTON & SON, Solicitors, Maidstone; of Messrs. MONCKTON & MONCKTON, 1, Raymond Buildings, Grays Inn, London; at the principal Inns in the neighbourhood; and of Messrs. TOOTELL & SONS, Land Surveyors & Valuers, 67, King Street, Maidstone.

W. WEST, PRINTER, KENT MAIL OFFICE, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE.

Figure 15 Advertisement in the Maidstone and Kent Journal giving details of the land for sale, Source: Maidstone and Kentish Journal, 2nd July 1870

Thereupon, the houses forming the north side of Bone Alley down to Week Street, and the cottages intermingled with those of the future gardens, were also acquired. Furthermore, all premises on the west side of St. Faith's Street that imposed on the museum were purchased bringing the sum to £6,500.[13]

On the acquired land, Brenchley set about establishing a public garden as a gift to the people of Maidstone. This acquisition was timely, as by the 1870s the industrial development of Maidstone, like many other towns and cities in England, was expanding rapidly, and recreational spaces for the local population were becoming increasingly scarce.

Brenchley was concerned that the area of land he had purchased was rather small for its purpose as a pleasure garden and he enquired about the possibility of including the neighbouring area of St. Faith's Green within the scheme. Situated to the east of the new museum the Corporation-owned site in the early 1870s consisted of 'old squalid, tumble down hovels, inhabited by the lowest classes of the town, on the east side, with ugly sheds and smoke-begrimed buildings on the west side'.[14]

When Brenchley approached the Town Council and the Local Board in 1870 requesting that he might include the site with the land which he had already purchased for the creation of a public garden, his suggestion was received extremely favourably 'the gardens would confer inestimable benefits upon the Town, for they would prevent the accumulation of building in the centre of it and preserve an open space for the health and recreation of the inhabitants'.[15]

A portion of the acquired space was ceded to improve the site of the Chapel (where a new church was to be built), and a few feet yielded to the Local Board for the widening of the thoroughfare (Station Road) from the end of the church toward where the railway was about to enter. Brenchley then sought the Corporation's acquiescence to the demolition of two houses on St. Faith Street, and other unsuitable structures on the site of the future gardens.

[13] List of Principal Benefactors of the Museum, Maidstone Museum.
[14] *Maidstone and Kentish Journal* 8th August 1870.
[15] Ibid.

On Wednesday the 23rd of October, Julius Brenchley transferred ownership of the deeds of Brenchley Garden to the Corporation as trustees for the public. Brenchley himself was too ill to attend the formal opening ceremony on Friday the 25th which took place inside Chillington House due to heavy rain. At this ceremony, speeches were given while food and drink were served and the1st Kent Rifle Volunteers band played a selection of music.[16]

Unfortunately, Julius Brenchley was never to see the completion of his plans. He had retired to Folkestone in 1872 due to ill health where he died on 24 February 1873, aged 56 years. He is buried in the family vault at All Saints, Maidstone.[17]

The influence of Alexander McKenzie

With the boundaries of the site now clearly defined, Julius Brenchley commissioned Alexander McKenzie (Figure 16) to design the new gardens.



Figure 16 Alexander McKenzie, London Picture Archive

[16] *Maidstone and Kentish Journal* 28th October 1872.
[17] Ibid, 5th April 1873.

McKenzie was a landscape designer of the highest reputation, and at that time was the at Alexandra Park in north London. By 1871 he was considered an influential pioneer, alongside other notable landscape designers including Joseph Meston and William Robinson.McKenzie was a student to Robert Marnock, a leading landscaper in the 1860s. Marnock designed in a manner described by Elliot in *Victorian Gardens* as the 'English Landscape style as improved by 19th century horticulture'.[18] However, both McKenzie and Robinson were to move beyond Marnock into a non-architectural and more 'natural' style. This is illustrated by the emphasis McKenzie placed on nature and informality at Alexandra Park which he designed in 1863.

McKenzie went on to work as a landscape designer for the Metropolitan Board of Works and laid out four further parks: the Victoria and Albert Embankment Gardens (1864-1870) (with Meston), Southwark Park (1869), and Finsbury Park (1869). Brenchley Gardens is believed to be McKenzie's only surviving commission outside London.

There is no record of McKenzie's terms of employment or involvement in the supervision of the layout of the gardens, but his 'Proposed Plan for a Recreation Ground at Maidstone', signed and dated in 1871, attests to his scheme for the site (Figure 17). A copy of this watercolour original is kept in the archives at Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery.

McKenzie's design was a gardenesque approach typical of its period, with serpentine paths, island and perimeter shrub beds, specimen trees, large swathes of grass and elaborate fleur-de-lis bedding displays. The gardens also had an attractive aspect with long views west towards Buckland Fields over the River Medway.[19] The bandstand (still existing today) provided the main visual focus within the park, whilst the collection of museum buildings to the south provided an attractive backdrop. All elements within and outside the site were carefully controlled by the designer to create a pleasing visual and spatial experience.

[18] Brent Elliott, *Victorian Gardens*, (London: B.T. Batsford,1986), P.169.
[19] *Maidstone and Kentish Journal,* 29th April 1873.

The main entrance was to be via a lodge on St. Faith's Street from where a broad path swept through the site of St. Faith's Green between the museum and St. Faith's Church and into the park. Once entering the main body of the park, the keystone of the layout unfolded, consisting of a wide circular perimeter path with access to the interior via further sinuous paths, crossing each other at strategic points at the centre of the gardens. McKenzie proposed to ornament the major path junctions with elaborate fleur-de-lis flower displays.

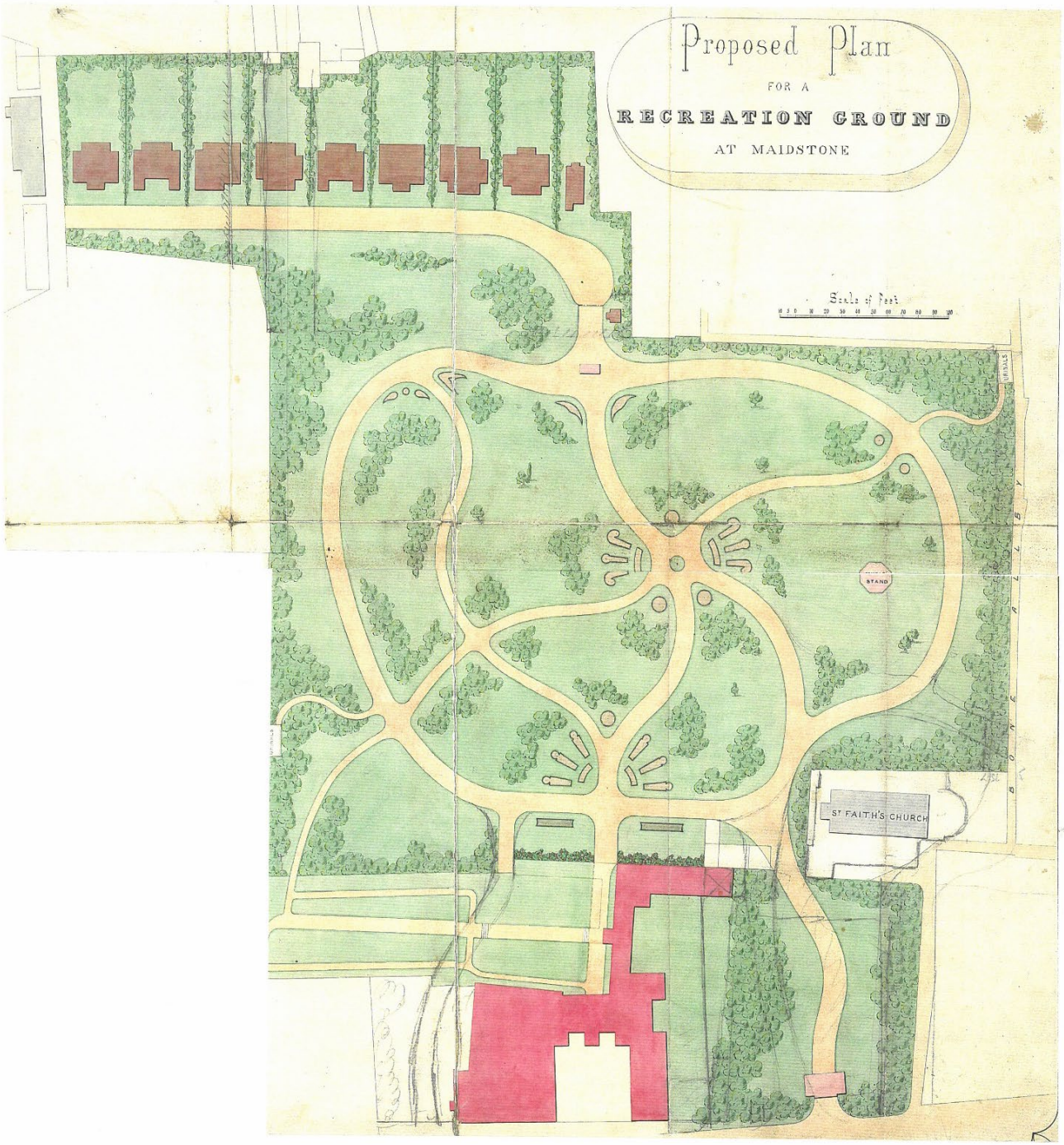


Figure 17 1871 Proposed Plan for a Recreation Ground at Maidstone, the original plan for Brenchley Gardens designed by Alexander McKenzie, The Gardens are believed to be the only surviving example of his work outside London, Source: Maidstone Museum

These new paths connected with the existing path network and gardens north of Chillington House and to a proposed further gated entrance/exit point to the north of the gardens where a row of residential properties is indicated, probably included in the original design as a method of raising the necessary finance to lay out the gardens.

Other features in the plan include a north lodge, two urinals, an unidentified structure near the north lodge, and substantial perimeter shrub planting and island beds (the location of the shrub planting on the plan appears to be indicative only).

The gardens were laid out between 1871 and 1872. Over the same period, St. Faith's Church was erected on the site of the ancient St. Faith's chapel, and Bone Alley to the east was widened to accommodate the new Station Road.[20]

In April 1872, an article entitled *The Brenchley Garden and Chillington House* was published in the *Maidstone and Kentish Journal*.[21] This article describes the garden being enclosed by a boundary wall along its perimeter with broad, gracefully curved and smoothly gravelled paths. Lawns were seeded or laid with turf and were adorned with 'prettily devised parterres' (bedding), seeded with annuals and rare shrubs and plants which were all labelled with their botanical and common names and their country of origin.

McKenzie is said to have planned his design around the most picturesque trees of the old orchard. The old wall dividing the museum from the gardens was retained and planted with roses, creepers and wall flowers on one side, whilst on the other side (north), a large collection of ferns was planted.[22] A rotunda band stand (Figure 18) was erected in the middle of a large sweep of grass, with a commanding view over the whole gardens with Buckland Fields in the background (Figure 19). The principal entrance to the gardens was arranged from St. Faith Street, with access via the new lodge-house to which a broad carriage drive was created.

[20] *Maidstone and Kentish Journal,* 27th April 1872.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid, 29th April 1872.



Figure 18: The Bandstand has always been an important focus within the garden, particularly for band concerts during the summer months, Source: Kent History & Library Centre



Figure 19 Late 19th century from within the garden, west towards Buckland fields and beyond the River Medway, Source: Kent Archive Centre.

Following their construction, the first published plan of the gardens was produced by Tootell in 1884, (Figure 20). This shows that McKenzie's basic layout was executed in accordance with his 1871 plan, with a few notable exceptions. The most significant divergence was the construction of the railway station on the northern section of the site which called for a new entrance.

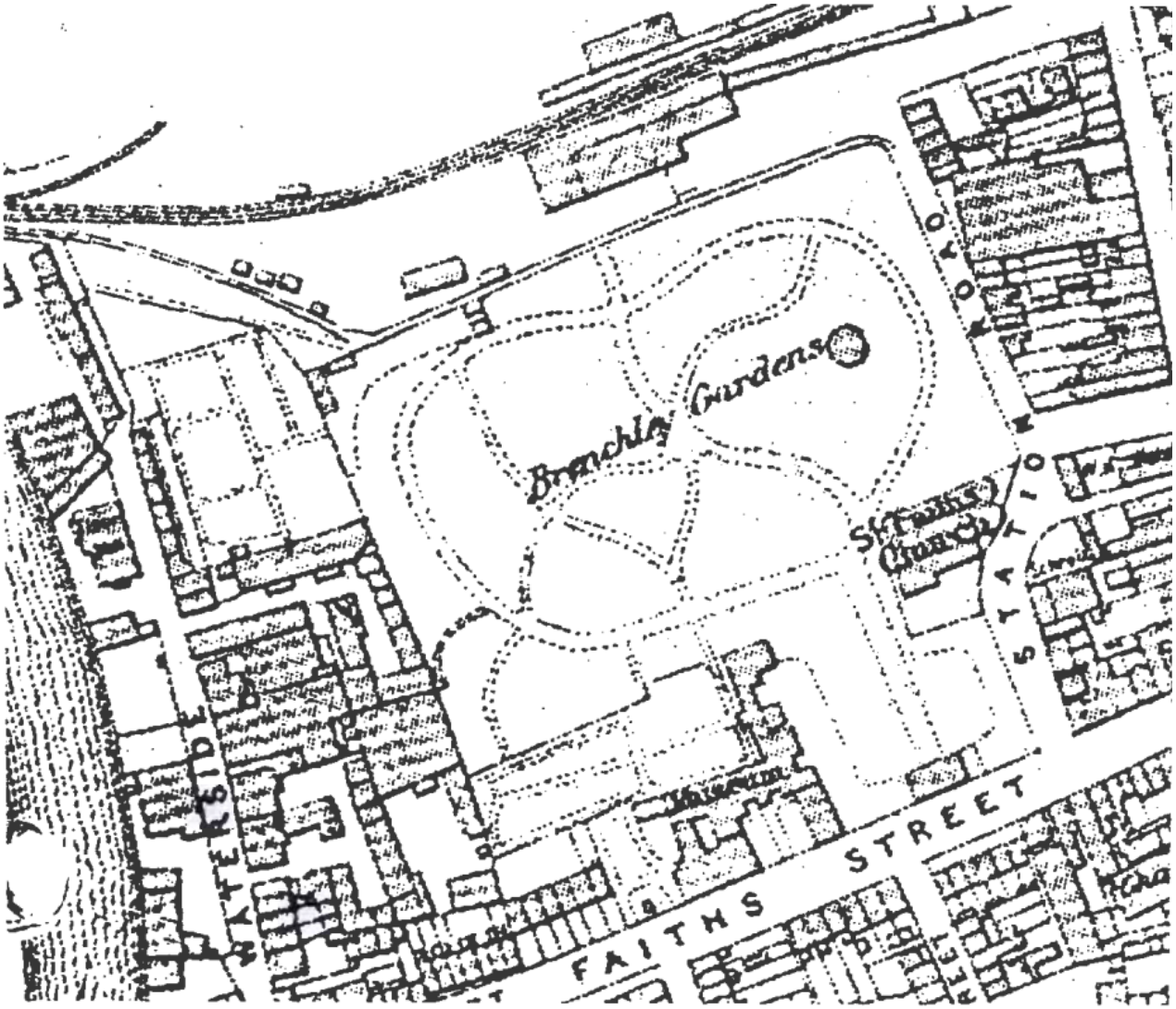


*Figure 20 1884 Tootell's Map of the Town of Maidstone (enlarged to 25"),*shows for the first time the layout of Brenchley Gardens constructed 12 years earlier to the designs of Alexander McKenzie, Source: Kent History & Library Centre

McKenzie arranged for the work on this to be carried out by Meston [23] who constructed the gardens in 1872 from McKenzie's plan. [24]

This resulted in a modified northern entrance and the abandoning of proposals for the residential properties, gated entrance and north lodge. The main entrance from St. Faith's Street was also modified on execution following the demolition of part of the east wing attached to the new museum. This allowed for a straight and more direct route into the gardens.

An early addition to the gardens, which was not recorded in contemporary accounts of the opening of the park, was the brick-built conduit head (Figure 21), one of seventeen erected in the town in 1819 for the supply of water. It was moved to Brenchley gardens from Stone Street for re-erection and preservation shortly after the layout of the gardens.[25]



Figure 21 Grade II Listed Conduit Head, Source: Kent History & Library Centre

[23] *McKenzie's letter dated the 27th March 1874*, London Metropolitan Archive.
[24] Ibid*, 28th February 1872.*
[25] Cyril, Cooper, *Maidstone: A History*, (West Sussex: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 2008), P.140.

Late 19th century to the 1940s

Following their establishment, the gardens evolved under the influence of successive management regimes that periodically removed, added or altered elements within them. These reflected changes in society and the economy of Maidstone for more than I00 years.[26]

The most significant changes from their public opening until the end of World War II are as detailed below.

Gatehouse and avenue

In 1889 McKenzie's original lodge-house on St Faith's Street was pulled down and rebuilt to the plans of H. Bensted, as a monumental gatehouse (Figure 22).[27]



Figure 22 Gothic entrance gateway from St. Faith's, Source: Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery

[26] A detailed step-by-step account of the evolution of the gardens is given in the chronology in appendix 1.
[27] Peter Clark and Lyn Murfin, *The History of Maidstone, The making of a Modern County Town*, (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd 1995), P.242.

A few years later, an avenue of *Tilia x europaea* trees was added to the path leading into the gardens (Figure 23).



Figure 23 Early 20th century view looking south towards Bensted's gatehouse from Brenchley Gardens, Source: Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery

Loss of the medieval wall

In 1897, the lower eastern section of Chillington House old gardens was destroyed to allow the construction of the New Technical Schools of Science and Art (Figure 24), and in the process, the medieval wall which had been preserved in the laying of the gardens was pulled down.[28]

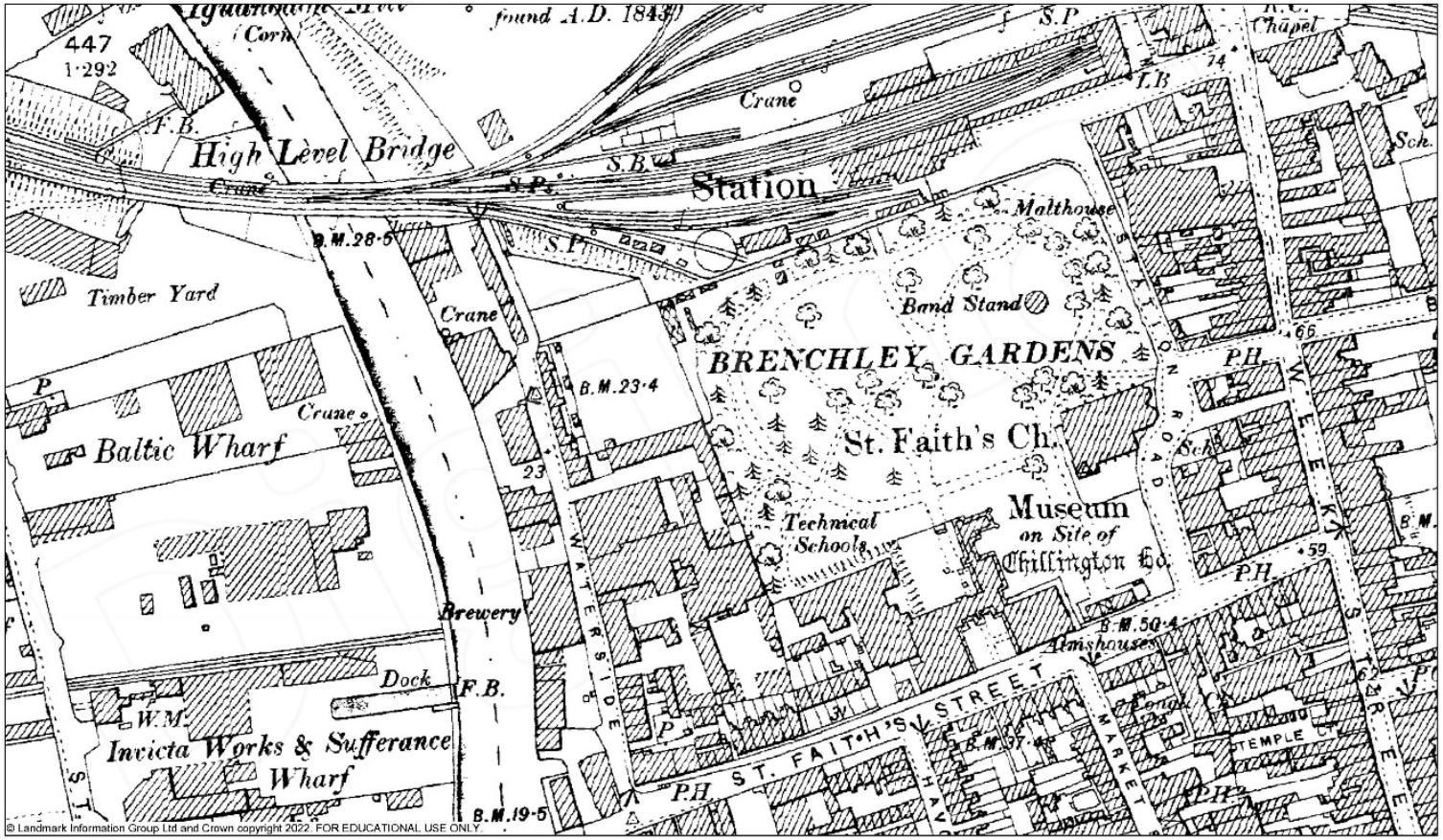


Figure 24 1897 Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 25", The construction of the New Technical Schools in the gardens adjacent to the Museum, Source: https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed March 2022]

[28] Cyril, Cooper, *Maidstone: A History*, (West Sussex: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 2008), P.145.

Statue of Acis and Galatea

In 1904, a statue by John Thomas (Figure 25 and Figure 26) originally on display in the gardens of Preston Hall, Aylesford, was relocated to the centre of Brenchley Gardens amongst display beds.[29] The statue, depicting the mortal Acis and the sea nymph Galatea from Greek mythology, was to become one of the main focal points of the garden.



Figure 25 A postcard in 1978 of Acis and Galatea in Brenchley Gardens, Source: Old Maidstone Postcard Club



Figure 26 Acis and Galatea,
Source: Maidstone Museum.

[29] James Henry Sephton, *Preston Hall, Aylesford,* (Aylesford: James Henry Sephton, 1997), P24. (Sephton used the wrong names in his book calling the statues Daphne and Apollo).

War Memorial

One very prominent addition to the gardens in 1921 was the War Memorial designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens (Figure 27). This is a two-thirds replica of Whitehall's cenotaph built in Portland stone. The cenotaph in Brenchley Gardens (which is Grade II listed) commemorates the 6,866 men of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment who lost their lives in the First World War.[30]



Figure 27 War Memorial, Photo: Author, October 2021

Carpet bedding

An important feature following the First World War were elaborate carpet bedding displays. A number of greenhouses and cold frames were built in the northwest corner of the gardens for the propagation of bedding plants and the works depot was also increased in size.[31]

[30] Kent County Council Heritage Department.
[31] Cyril, Cooper, Maidstone: A History, (West Sussex: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 2008), P.152.

The photographs of the post WW1 period show mosaic bedding being used to illustrate Aesop's fable *The Lion and the Mouse* (Figure 28) and to celebrate the golden Jubilee of Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles (Figure 29).

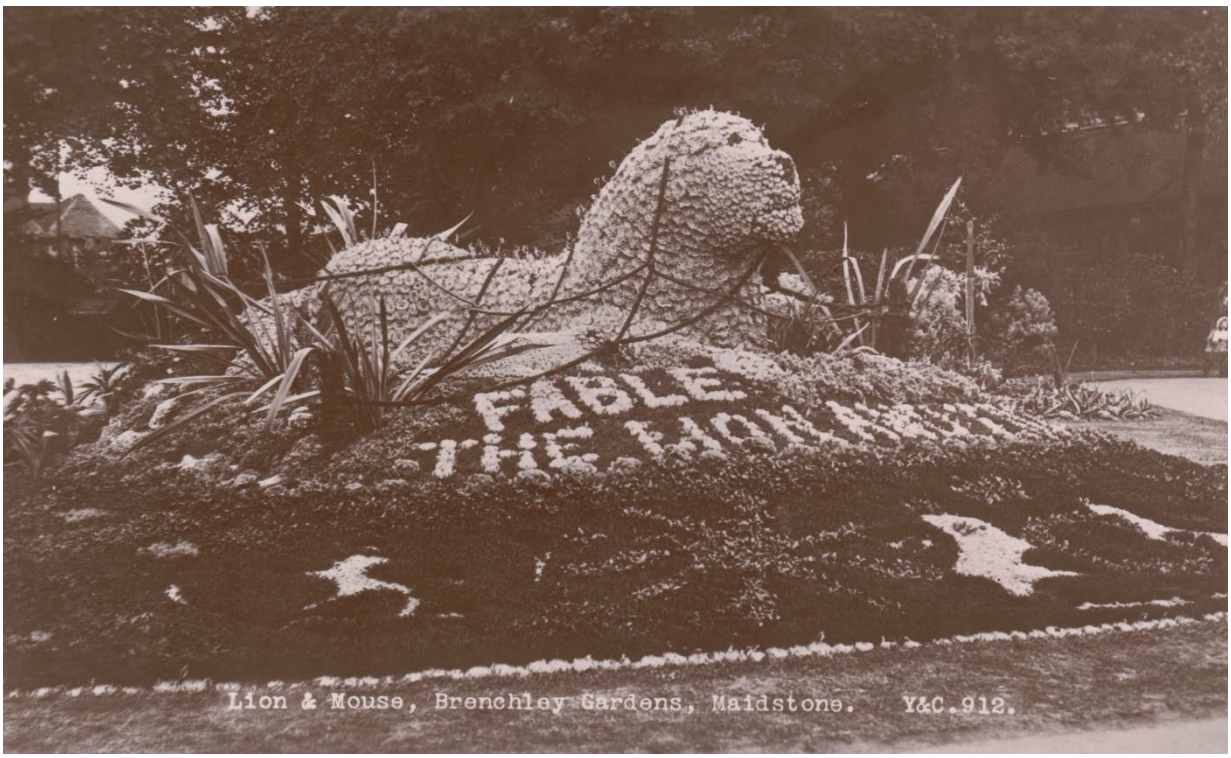


Figure 28 The Lion and the Mouse, An example of the intricate bedding displays which once characterised the garden,. Source: Maidstone Museum.



Figure 29 Display for the Jubilee of Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles, Source: Maidstone Museum.

The Pool Garden

A Pool Garden (Figure 30) is first recorded on the 1936 Ordnance Survey (Figure 31), but was probably built during the 1920s. Undated photographs show a formal garden in a style typical of many Edwardian country gardens and parks. The garden was accessed from the east by steps and was open downhill to the west. Its main feature was a rectangular pool adorned with vases and urns planted with agaves. The pool, planted with aquatics, was set against crazy paving margins and edged on one side by a low dry-stone wall.[32]



Figure 30 The pool garden, Source: Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery

[32] *South Eastern Gazette,* 15th August 1940.

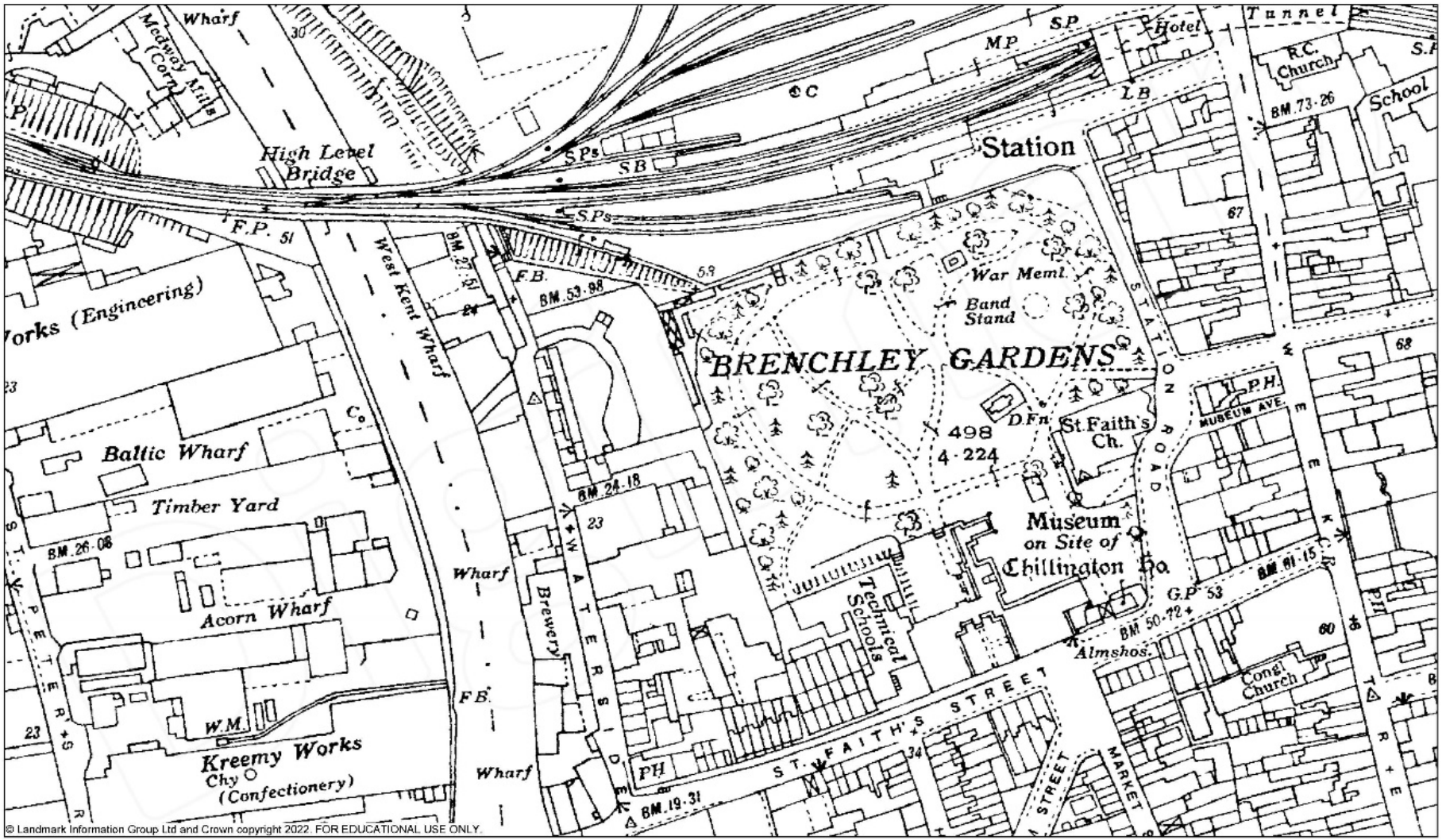


Figure 31 1936 Ordnance Survey; I :2500 25', shows some minor additions to the gardens including a drinking fountain, war memorial, ornamental pond and a rockery, Source: https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/ [accessed March 2022]

World War II

The impressive gatehouse designed by H. Bensted stood in the gardens until September 1940, when it was hit by a German bomb (Figure 32) and was subsequently demolished.[33] Although not documented, it is also likely that the railings and gates which once enclosed the eastern boundary of the park were removed during the war to be melted down and re-used for armoury.



Figure 32 World War II bomb damage to the gates, Source: Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery

[33] Peter Clark and Lyn Murfin, *The History of Maidstone, The making of a Modern County Town*, (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd 1995), P.245.

At the end of the 1940s, the finial that once crowned the main wall of the House of Commons debating chamber was moved to the gardens. It had been salvaged during the German Blitz of London and was given to Maidstone by the town's Member of Parliament, Alfred C. Bossom, on the 8th June 1948.[34] The limestone finial (Figure 33) is Grade II listed and is a weathered feature within the gardens.[35]



Figure 33 The finial, Photo: Author, November 2021

[34] Plaque on the finial.
[35] See appendix 2 – listed buildings.

Post Second World War to the present day

Since the Second World War, reductions in maintenance expenditure, occasional vandalism and some insensitive alterations and additions have taken their toll on the appearance of the gardens. Nevertheless, Brenchley Gardens remains a charming Victorian Park, reflecting the legacy of Alexander McKenzie's original design. Compared with many Victorian parks of a similar era, it is in good condition with well-tended shrub beds, and its infrastructure and park furniture are in a reasonable state of repair[36].

In the 1950s, a new greenhouse (Figure 34) was built in the lower central section of the gardens.[37] It was dismantled in the early 1990s because it had become too expensive to run and had become subject to vandalism[38].

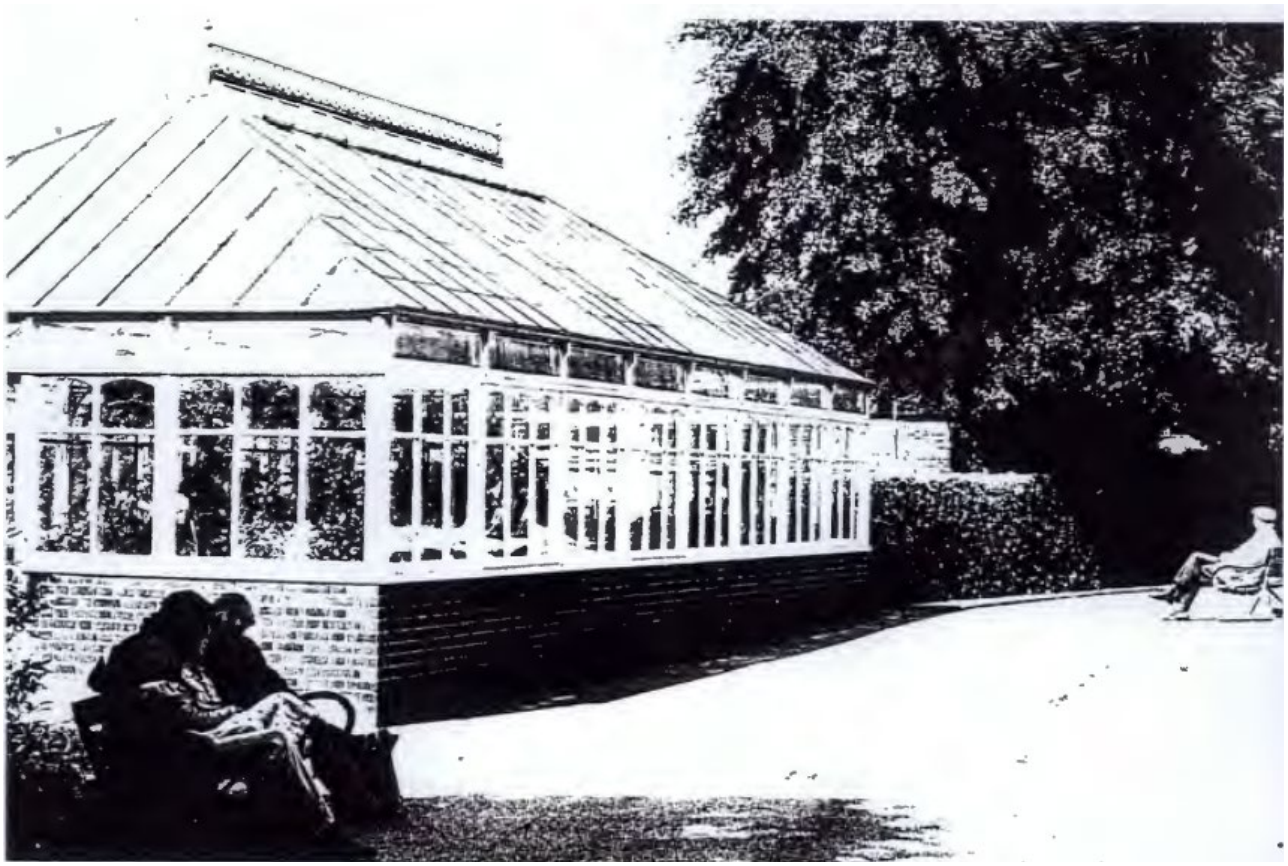


Figure 34 In the 1950s, a new greenhouse was built in the lower central section of the gardens, Source: Maidstone Museum

[36] See appendix 3 – survey
[37] Cyril, Cooper, *Maidstone: A History*, (West Sussex: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 2008), P.143.
[38] See appendix 4 – site maintenance

Since the war, the vacant land left by the removal of the gatehouse has made way for a raised bedding display (Figure 35).



Figure 35 In the raised beds near Maidstone Museum, Photo: Author, March 2022

In 1972 the Maidstone Rotary Club constructed a small seating area and stone wishing well there as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations (Figure 36). The wishing well was crowned with wrought ironwork which had previously decorated the top of the Lower Brewery in Lower Stone Street, Maidstone, once owned by the Brenchley family.[39] The wishing well was removed from the gardens in the 1990s for health and safety reasons.



Figure 36 The wishing well in 1972, Source: Maidstone Museum

[39] Irene Hale, *Old Maidstone's Public Houses From Old Photographs,* (Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2010), P24.

The Pool Garden was demolished in 1965 and the statue of Acis and Galatea removed in 1990 after being decapitated by vandals, now only the plinth remains (Figure 37).



Figure 37 All that remains is the plinth after the statue of Acis and Galatea was removed in 1990, Photo: Author, March 2022

In November 2011, a statue of a 2-meter bronze soldier (Figure 38) was unveiled in Brenchley Gardens to honour the 36 soldiers from Maidstone Invicta Barracks that died in the Afghanistan War.



Figure 38 The soldier statue was erected in November 2011.
Source: Photo: Author, October 2021

A plaque (Figure 39) in the gardens was unveiled in July 2017 to commemorate the Battle of Maidstone in 1648, which saw Parliamentary forces defeat Royalist troops whose last stand was on St Faith's Green.



Figure 39 Plaque to commemorate the Battle of Maidstone in 1648,
Photo: Author, October 2021

Maidstone Archaeological Group dug a number of trial pits before the statues were erected, unearthing human remains from the medieval period as well as objects dating back to the Saxon and Roman period.

The original features still remaining in the gardens today include the small boiler house (Figure 40), which was added in the 1880s and the Victorian bandstand (Figure 41).



Figure 40 The tiny boiler house, Source: Photo: Author, November 2021



Figure 41 Victorian bandstand, Source: Photo: Author, August: 2021

From its visual prominence in the town's landscape in 1929 (Figure 42), Brenchley Gardens has become increasingly enclosed (Figure 43).



Figure 42 Brenchley Gardens in 1929, Source: Source: https://sales.britainfromabove.org.uk, [accessed December 2021]



*Figure 43 Brenchley Gardens in 2007,*Source: Alamy, https://www.alamy.com/aerial-view-in-maidstone-kent-uk [accessed January 2022]

Conclusions

Brenchley Gardens is important both nationally, as a product of one of the 19th century's most celebrated landscape designers, and locally, as Maidstone's first recreation ground designed to be in public ownership. Its historical links with the development of the Charles Museum, and with the 19th century adventurer Julius Brenchley, are a significant and tangible link with the development of Maidstone in the 19th century.

Although Brenchley Gardens is not included on English Heritage's Register of Historic Parks and Gardens its designation as a conservation area means it does receive substantial protection from potentially adverse development. The gardens occupy much of the conservation area, and the original design and layout by Alexander McKenzie is still largely apparent today within its naturalistic park design, serpentine path network, clumps of shrubbery and native trees that McKenzie planned (Figure 44).

The history of the gardens over time reflects significant changes in the life of the town and the lives of its inhabitants, its civic society, its industry and commerce. This local history is itself a microcosm of successive periods of change within the United Kingdom since the Middle Ages. From an agricultural community of tenant farmers to the concentration of wealth in private ownership and then the desire of the wealthy to leave a civic legacy.

The garden has an important role as a place of remembrance for the fallen soldiers from local regiments who died in two world wars and other conflicts. A communal sense of grieving and a need for a sense of beauty, a place for reflection and a celebration of life perhaps inspiring the floral displays of the inter-war years. The garden has been changed by the addition of several memorials, including the cenotaph, whilst at the same time losing the majestic original gatehouse that was irrecoverably damaged following an air raid in 1940.

Post war, the garden has been gradually reduced in terms of its utility and self-sufficiency as a public garden. It has been subject to the wider changes in society which have included, for some at least, a loss of a sense of community, shared ownership, and civic pride. In planning

terms, it has lost its place as a central focus in the town to which it was gifted, as the town has developed into a commercial and retail shopping centre. Nevertheless it continues to fulfil the role envisioned for it in the 1870s, to ‘preserve an open space for the health and recreation of the inhabitants’. The gardens remain a clear and open space for wandering and meeting with others in the centre of the town and offer a calmer contrast to the bustling shopping streets. The purpose for which it was designed, and for which it can be renewed, with the value given to open public spaces increasing as local populations are housed in the higher densities of the 21st century.



Figure 44 In the summer. Source: Photo: Author August 2021

Word Count – 5,491 including image captions, quotes and footnotes

Bibliography

Books: primary sources

Desborough, V.F., *Archaeological Cantiana ,vol. LXXII*, (Kent: Kent Archaeology Society, 1958)

Kiff, J, *Great Domesday Book: Kent: County Edition* (London: Alecto Historical Editions, 1987)

McKenzie, Alexander, *The Parks, Open Spaces and Throughfares of London* (London: Waterlow and Sons, 1869)

Russell, J.M., *The History of Maidstone*, (Maidstone, Kent: W.S. Vivish, 1881)

Newspapers

Gardeners' Chronicle (1870 to 1875)

Kent Messenger & Maidstone Telegraph (1870 to 1920)

Maidstone & Kentish Journal (1870 to 1902)

South Eastern Gazette (1871 to 1973)

Journals

*Local Board Minutes Book (*Maidstone: Maidstone Borough Council, 1870 to 1910)

The Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts. MDCCCLI, The Eighty-Third, (London: W Clowes and Sons,1851)

The Floral World and Garden Guide (1874 to 1875)

Books: secondary sources

Clark, Peter and Murfin, Lyn, *The History of Maidstone, The making of a Modern County Town*, (Gloucester: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1995)

Cooper, Cyril, *Maidstone: A History*, (West Sussex: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 2008)

Elliott, Brent, *Victorian Gardens*, (London: B.T. Batsford,1986)

Evans, John, *Images of Maidstone by Kent Messager Group Newspapers,* (Derby: The Breedon Books Publishing Company, 1996)

Green, Ivan, *Maidstone a Pictorial History*, (West Sussex: Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 1988)

Hale, Irene, *Old Maidstone's Public Houses From Old Photographs* (Gloucestershire: Amberley Publishing, 2010)

Sephton, Henry, James, *Preston Hall, Aylesford* (Aylesford: James H Sephton, 1997)

Watson, Hilary, *The Book of Maidstone, Kent County Town*, (Buckingham: Barracuda Books Ltd, 1981)

Journals

Maidstone Borough Council Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan for Chillington House (May 2020)

Websites

Alamy Images - https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo/uk.html

Britain Above - https://britainfromabove.org.uk/

Digimap - https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/

Historic England - https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/what-is-designation/registered-parks-and-gardens/

Kent Archaeological Society - https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/

Kent Messenger Online - https://www.kentonline.co.uk/maidstone/

Magic Defra - https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap

Organisations

Kent County Council Heritage Department

Kent History & Library Centre

London Metropolitan Archives

London Picture Archive

Maidstone Archaeological Group

Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery

Old Maidstone Postcard Club

Parks and Open Space's Team at Maidstone Borough Council

Royal Horticultural Society

Chronology

Date	Event	Reference
Pre 1300	Medieval Chapel of St. Faith first recorded in 1268, but probably in existence prior to 1200.	J.M. Russel
Early 16th century	The Manor of Chillington is annexed to the College of All Saints, before being granted to Lord Cobham. The property then fell into the possession of George Maplesden of Digons who forfeited it for his share in Wyatt's rebellion.	J.M. Russel
1561	Queen Elizabeth I restores the Manor of Chillington to the Maplesdens. The property together with St. Faith Chapel is conveyed to Nicholas Barham, Sergeant-at-Law, one of the first members of Parliament for Maidstone. Nicholas Barham rebuilt part of the manor house and constructed the central Elizabethan section of the present building.	J.M. Russel H Watson
1577	Nicholas Barham's Will mentions the use of an old orchard at the back of Chillington House.	J.M. Russel
Pre 1700	Bee Boles in an old ragstone wall to the east end of Chillington House, reputedly pre-Tudor.	V.F Desborough
17th and 18th century	Chillington House changes hands many times and undergoes minor alterations.	J.M. Russel
1801	The property is conveyed to the Charles family.	J.M. Russel
1823 Map	St. Faith Green is shown on St. Faith Street bounded on three sides by various buildings. To the rear (north) of Chillington House two separate enclosed kitchen or orchard gardens. The garden east of Chillington House is also represented.	Brown & Son
1848 Map	No substantial change from the 1823 map in the immediate vicinity of Chillington House.	J. Tootell
1855	Thomas Charles bequeaths to the town of Maidstone his collection of antiquities and some of his books and pictures with a request that they might be permanently preserved and known as the 'Charles Museum'. The Corporation receives the gift and adopts the 1855 Public Library Act ten years later after having adopted the Museums Act.	J.M. Russel
1857	The Town Council buys Chillington Manor.	H. Watson
1858 onwards	Opening of the 'Charles Museum' within Chillington House and its subsequent alteration and extension. St. Faith Chapel is pulled down and two pillars with capitals are transferred to the garden at the back of the museum	O.S. 1st edition 25''

Date	Event	Reference
1868 Map	A large orchard and adjacent gardens are depicted to the rear (north) of Chillington House. The surrounding area is becoming more urbanised: Steam Mill and Perseverance Brass Foundry along Waterside (east), housing development south of St. Faith street (south), Malthouse and cottages (west). Also shown is St. Faith Church Chapel of Ease before its destruction and re-erection.	J.M. Russel
1870	Julius Brenchley offers £2,800 for the old orchard garden at the back of Chillington House. He also purchases the cottages forming the north side of Bone Alley as well as the cottages on the west side of St. Faith Green, and the premises in St. Faith Street to the east of the Museum.	J.M. Russel
1871 Plan	Brenchley commissions Alexander McKenzie to design a recreation ground to the rear of the Charles Museum on the location of an old orchard and part of St. Faith Green.	1871 Plan of the Gardens by McKenzie
1871-73	The west wing of Chillington House is pulled down and rebuilt to the plans of H. Bensted.	J.M. Russel
1871-72	Creation of Brenchley Gardens. Erection of St Faith Church on the site of the ancient chapel, together with the widening of Bone Alley into Station Street.	J.M. Russel
October 1872	Brenchley Gardens are handed over to the Corporation as trustees for the public.	South Eastern Gazette
Sept. 1873	Official opening of the new west wing and Gardens.	Kent & Maidstone Journal
1875	Extension of a greenhouse in the lower part of the garden.	Local Board Minutes
1884	First map record of Brenchley Gardens after completion. The design of appears very similar to McKenzie's proposals of 1871. The map shows the following elements of the gardens: the band stand, the gardener's lodge on St. Faith Street, and a series of structures to the north-west.	J. Tootell. Map
March 1887	Aborted proposals by H. Bensted, architect, to build a tropical and orchid conservatory on the lower portion of the Museum gardens.	H. Bensted plans
1889	A new monumental Gatehouse by H. Bensted on the former location of the gardener's lodge.	H. Bensted elevation
1890	Planting of an avenue of trees from the gatehouse.	Photograph
1893	Demolition of mediaeval ragstone wall with gateway, to give way for the erection of the New Technical School of Science and Art.	H. Bensted plans
1897 Map	Collection of mixed deciduous and conifer tree planting, mainly to the perimeter of the Gardens. Four greenhouses shown in the north-west corner. Additional access path off Station Road along St. Faith Church. Gatehouse (1889) on the location of the former gardener's lodge.	O.S. 2nd Edition 1:2500

Date	Event	Reference
1897 Map	Collection of mixed deciduous and conifer tree planting, mainly to the perimeter of the Gardens. Four greenhouses shown in the north-west corner. Additional access path off Station Road along St. Faith Church. Gatehouse (1889) on the location of the former gardener's lodge.	O.S. 2nd Edition 1:2500
1904	Transfer of statue of Acis and Galatea by John Thomas, from Preston Hall, Aylesford, to Brenchley Gardens.	J.H. Sephton
1908 Map	No major alteration to the general layout of the gardens but for the addition of a path north of the church leading in the direction of the band stand. The gardens hold six Greenhouses.	O.S. 3rd Edition 1:2500
Post WW I	A field gun is placed beside the bandstand as a tribute to those who fought in WW I.	Photograph
Post WW I	Mosaic bedding illustrating the fable of The Lion and The Mouse	Photograph
1920	Cenotaph mosaic bedding planting within the gardens.	Dated photograph
1922	Mosaic bedding planting commemorating Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles.	Photograph
1920-36	Erection of the War Memorial to the Men of the Royal West Kent Regiment, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens.	Kent Messenger
1936 Map	The major changes have been the erection of the War Memorial and the construction of the Pond Garden. Another un-identified structure is recorded south of the Pond Garden. Two or three greenhouses retained, and additional structures (possibly cold frames) added to the north-west corner of the gardens.	O.S.1:2500
Sept. 1940	Gatehouse (off St. Faith Street) damaged by German air raid and demolished.	Dated photographs
June 1948	Unveiling of the finial of the House of Commons within the gardens.	Dated photograph
1965	The pool garden is demolished	Kent Messenger
Mid 1970s	Erection of the decorative wrought ironwork, once at the top of the Lower Brewery, Maidstone, over the wishing well in Brenchley Gardens.	I. Hales
1990	The statue of Acis and Galatea is vandalised, it was removed afterwards and only the plinth remains	Kent Messenger
1990's	The greenhouse is vandalised and removed from Brenchley Gardens.	Kent Messager
1998/9	Application to the Heritage Lottery Fund Urban Parks Programme for restoration of the gardens.	Maidstone Council Minutes
1990's	The decorative wrought wishing well is removed	Kent Messenger
Nov 2011	Statue of a soldier to remember the soldiers of Maidstone Invicta Barracks	Kent Messenger
July 2017	A plaque to mark the 369th anniversary of the Battle of Maidstone which took place in June 1648	Kent Messenger

Listed buildings

Maidstone Borough Council recognises its stock of listed buildings as a finite resource of increasing importance as time goes on. Brenchley Gardens are of outstanding quality and historic merit providing both an appropriate historic and aesthetic setting for listed buildings within its vicinity. Six buildings (in or directly adjacent to Brenchley Gardens) are listed on English Heritage's Register of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest They are:

(i) The Maidstone Museum & Art Gallery Grade II*

(ii) Wall and gate piers to rear of Chillington House Grade II

(iii) Old Conduit Head Grade II

(iv) Lutyens War Memorial Grade II

(v) Finial from House of Commons Grade II

(vi) Statue set on stone plinth (Acis and Galatea Grade II removed to storage) only plinth remains Grade II



Figure 1 (iii) Grade II Old Conduit Head, Source Maidstone Museum

One of seventeen erected in the town in 1891 for the supply of water. It was removed to Brenchley Gardens from Stone Street for re-erection and preservation shortly after the layout of the gardens. Consisting of the stone base and iron waterspout, it sits within a brick alcove with a beautifully built half dome with exquisitely crafted brick 'rubbers'.

Unfortunately, this feature has been prone to vandalism and in particular graffiti.



Figure 2 (iv) Lutyens War Memorial Grade II, Source Maidstone Museum

Designed by Edward Lutyens and unveiled on 30th July 1921. Constructed of Portland Stone, in tiers, tapering towards the top, the monument is an important focus for Remembrance Day.

Wreath and inscription at sides. Set on steps the Cenotaph monument is an exact replica of its Whitehall brother, but to two-thirds scale.

Maidstone was first in line for the cenotaph to recall the 6,866 men of the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment who lost their lives in the First World War.



Figure 3 (v) Finial from House of Commons Grade II, Source Maidstone Museum

The Limestone octagon finial dating from ca. 1834, which originally crowned the main wall of the House of Commons Debating Chamber, was destroyed during the German Blitz on London, I0th May 1941. The finial was given to Maidstone in 1948 by Alfred C Bossom, M.P.,



Figure 3 (vi) Statue set on stone plinth (Acis and Galatea Grade II removed to storage) only plinth remains Grade II, Source Maidstone Museum

Originally supporting the statue of Acis and Galatea this sculpture was recently destroyed by vandals. The 19th century original statue was positioned here to provide a dramatic focal climax from the view north from the Museum and Art Gallery entrance hall.



Figure 4 Bandstand is not listed, Source Maidstone Museum

One of the oldest features of the park, surviving from the inception of the garden through to the present day and still used occasionally for performances. Octagonal in plan with a rubble wall, raised platform, and robust timber columns the bandstand is in good condition and has changed little since its original construction. An unusual feature is the inclusion of the names of famous composers painted on the timber below the eaves of the pitched metal roof. Early photographs appear to show infill panels between the timber columns - these are now missing.

1872 One of very few structures included in the original design concept by Alexander McKenzie.



Figure 5 Ragstone wall and iron gate is not listed, Source Maidstone Museum

The ragstone wall was part of McKenzie's 1871/72 design of Brenchley Gardens, the iron gate was an additional feature by McKenzie in 1874 when Maidstone East railway station was built.

Surveys

Tree Survey

A tree survey was carried out in May 1999. Each tree has been tagged with a number for reference. Tree canopies have also been recorded and are shown on a redrawn survey plan. Early accounts of the park relate that McKenzie's original scheme incorporated the best of the existing orchard trees; although there is no evidence of these today, the Gardens do boast some exceptional specimens, perhaps most notably a very fine Ginkgo situated towards the south of the site.

Ecological Survey

A site visit was undertaken on 25th July 1998. This consisted of a walkover of the entire gardens. The preliminary assessment of ecological importance was based on historical descriptions, photographs and information gained from those with previous knowledge of the site, for example, Dr Edward Jarzembowski (keeper of natural history at Maidstone Museum). This preliminary assessment was confirmed during the course of fieldwork.

Brenchley Gardens is composed of improved, amenity grassland. A significant amount of tree planting has been undertaken, along with some shrub planting, particularly around the perimeter of the gardens. A number of mature trees were noted. The tree planting is of intrinsic value and provides a habitat for birds and invertebrates. The grassland currently has little value because it is not diverse - in terms of structure or species mix. It is likely that the gardens will continue to require to be managed in a formal manner; this will preclude allowing the grass to grow wilder. A programme of tree maintenance and replacement should be undertaken to ensure the continued presence of mature trees in the gardens.

Socio/economic context

Historically, Brenchley Gardens, like most other public parks, was laid out as a means of providing recreation and clean air to the inhabitants of a rapidly industrialising town. As well as providing a welcome respite from the surrounding urban blight, the park soon became a major venue for public events, and especially for the regular music events held at the bandstand. The high levels of use and the importance of the park to town life were reflected in the impressive levels of maintenance and financial resources lavished on its upkeep.

Appendix 4

Site Maintenance

Maintenance was originally the responsibility of the Local Board before being transferred in 1875 onwards to the Corporation's Gardens Committee. Today, the maintenance of the garden is overseen by the Council's Park and Green Spaces Department.

Brenchley Gardens is today managed by one gardener who has worked in the gardens for 40 years. When they first started work there, they were in a team of three full time gardeners. Funding for maintaining the gardens has been reduced, the public toilets have been closed, and the Victorian greenhouse has been removed meaning the staff no longer propagate their own plants. The depot has been made a lot smaller, so they are not able to compost the leaves in autumn and there are no longer flower bedding displays. The neighbourhood has changed, and the gardener is now having to deal with some people who use the gardens for substance misuse (drugs, alcohol) and for other anti-social behaviour.



Figure 1 Families walking in Brenchley Gardens in 1880, the ragstone church of St. Faith's built in 1872 in the background, Source: Maidstone Museum



Figure 2 View in 1884 from within the formal garden which was once associated with Chillington House, Most of this area was destroyed during the construction of the New Technical School of Science and Art built in 1893, Source: Kent Archaeological Society



Figure 3 The Museum (Chillington house) Maidstone, from Brenchley Gardens in 1884, Source: Kent Archaeological Society

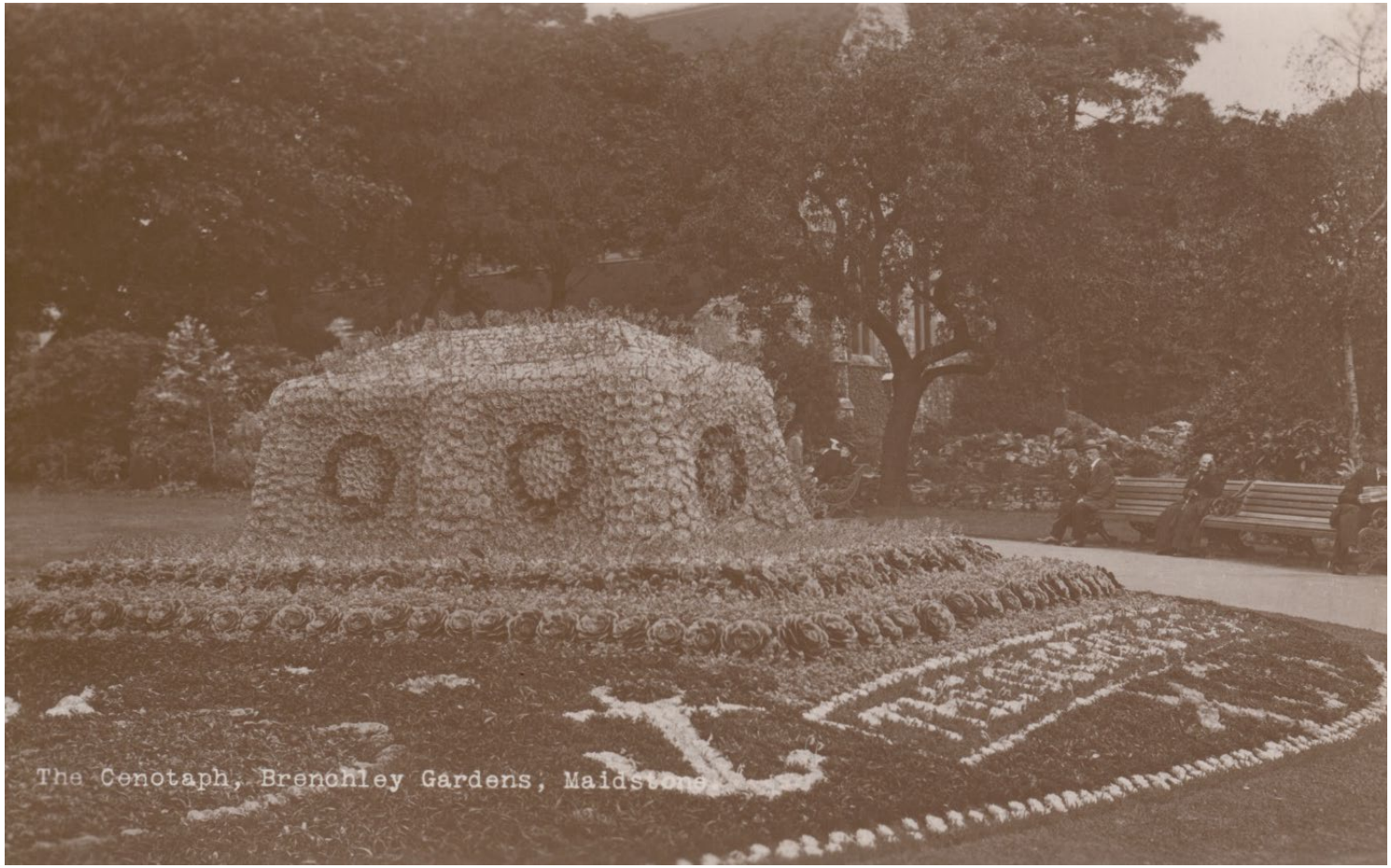


Figure 4 Bedding display depicting The Cenotaph in 1920, Source: Maidstone Museum.



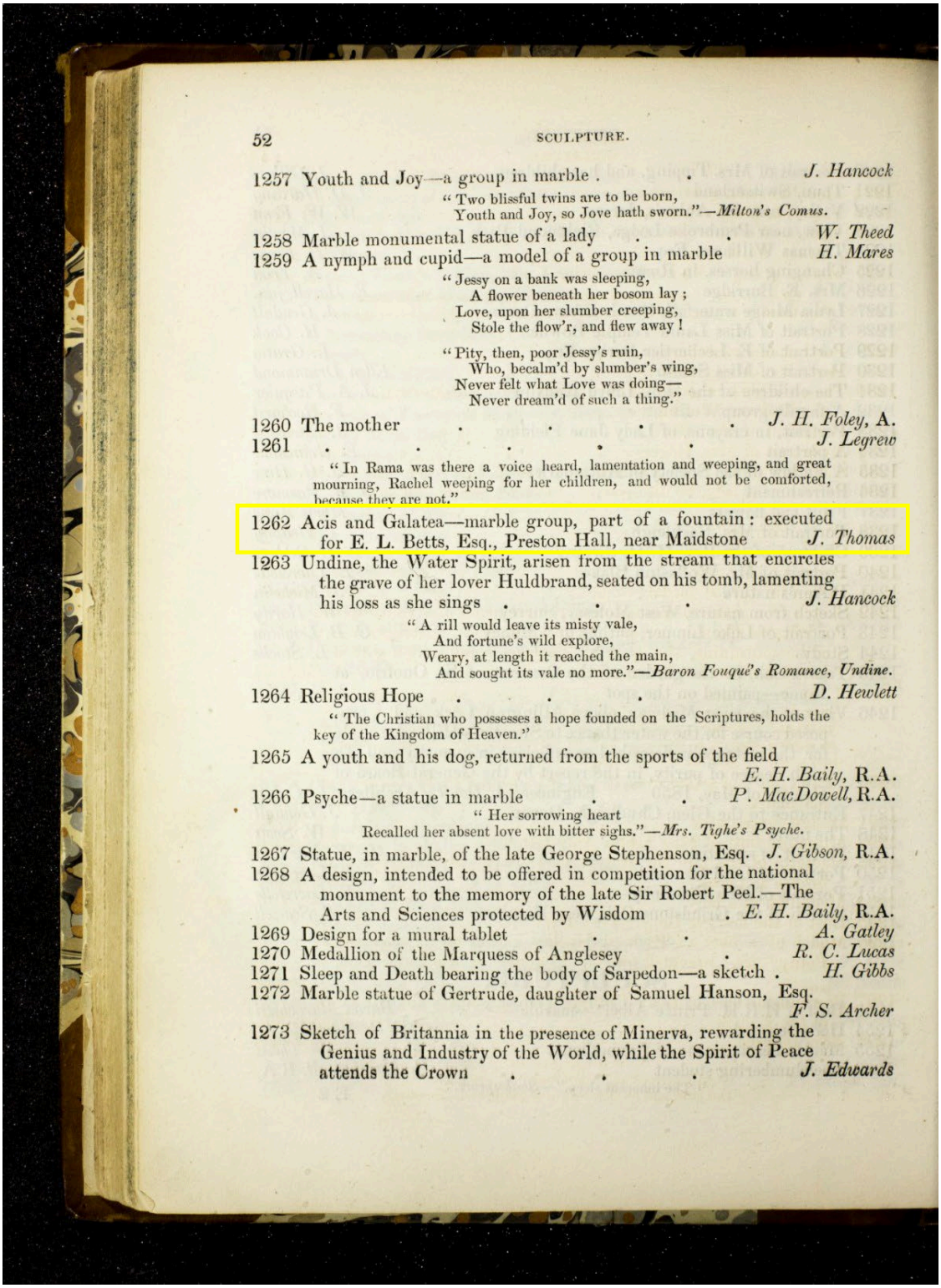
Figure 5 Bedding display in 1920 with the characters from Pickwick Papers to mark the centenary of Charles Dickens birth in 1912, Source: Royal Horticultural Society, RHS Lindley Collections



Figure 6 The War Memorial and Finial to the Men of the Royal West Kent Regiment in 1948, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, Source: Maidstone Museum



Figure 7 Acis and Galatea surrounded by Tritons (Gods of the sea) at Preston Hall in 1858, Source: Maidstone Museum



52 SCULPTURE.

1257 Youth and Joy—a group in marble . . *J. Hancock*

"Two blissful twins are to be born,
Youth and Joy, so Jove hath sworn."—*Milton's Comus.*

1258 Marble monumental statue of a lady . . *W. Theed*
1259 A nymph and cupid—a model of a group in marble *H. Mares*

"Jessy on a bank was sleeping,
A flower beneath her bosom lay;
Love, upon her slumber creeping,
Stole the flow'r, and flew away!

"Pity, then, poor Jessy's ruin,
Who, becalm'd by slumber's wing,
Never felt what Love was doing—
Never dream'd of such a thing."

1260 The mother . . . . *J. H. Foley*, A.
1261 . . . . . *J. Legrew*

"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

1262 Acis and Galatea—marble group, part of a fountain: executed for E. L. Betts, Esq., Preston Hall, near Maidstone *J. Thomas*

1263 Undine, the Water Spirit, arisen from the stream that encircles the grave of her lover Huldbrand, seated on his tomb, lamenting his loss as she sings . . . *J. Hancock*

"A rill would leave its misty vale,
And fortune's wild explore,
Weary, at length it reached the main,
And sought its vale no more."—*Baron Fouqué's Romance, Undine.*

1264 Religious Hope . . . . *D. Hewlett*

"The Christian who possesses a hope founded on the Scriptures, holds the key of the Kingdom of Heaven."

1265 A youth and his dog, returned from the sports of the field *E. H. Baily*, R.A.
1266 Psyche—a statue in marble . . *P. MacDowell*, R.A.

"Her sorrowing heart
Recalled her absent love with bitter sighs."—*Mrs. Tighe's Psyche.*

1267 Statue, in marble, of the late George Stephenson, Esq. *J. Gibson*, R.A.
1268 A design, intended to be offered in competition for the national monument to the memory of the late Sir Robert Peel.—The Arts and Sciences protected by Wisdom . *E. H. Baily*, R.A.
1269 Design for a mural tablet . . *A. Gatley*
1270 Medallion of the Marquess of Anglesey . *R. C. Lucas*
1271 Sleep and Death bearing the body of Sarpedon—a sketch . *H. Gibbs*
1272 Marble statue of Gertrude, daughter of Samuel Hanson, Esq. *F. S. Archer*
1273 Sketch of Britannia in the presence of Minerva, rewarding the Genius and Industry of the World, while the Spirit of Peace attends the Crown . . . *J. Edwards*

Figure 8 Acis and Galatea recorded in The Royal Academy of Arts Exhibition in 1851, Source: Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts. MDCCCLI, The Eighty-Third, (London: W Clowes and Sons,1851), P.52