

APPENDIX B SHOTOVER HOUSE AND THE MILLER FAMILY

Shotover House and Park

Shotover House was built on or near the site of the ranger's (i.e. ranger of the royal forest) lodge for Sir James Tyrrell between 1714 and 1718. His son, General James Tyrrell, according to his epitaph in Oakley church in 1742 'lest after the hardships of war his leisure should be mispent, this remarkable lover and cultivator of all elegant things pressed on with the completion of his house and gardens at Shotover'. The architect is unknown though it seems possible that William Townesend of Oxford who worked with Nicholas Hawksmoor at Queen's College may have been responsible for the design.

Shotover is a tall, narrow house built of local stone and with a slate roof. The exterior of the house has been judged 'dull' apart from the loggia on the garden side with decorated plaster vaults and shell niches in the side walls. Inside there is a lavish plasterwork decoration in the hall and a marble fireplace designed by William Kent in the saloon.

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of Shotover is the rare survival of a naturalistic garden, begun about 1718 and completed in the 1730s. Most of the original layout still remains. There are long avenues and cross-walks and a Gothic Temple closing a vista of formal gardens, with lakes, lawns and woods. William Kent, who has been called the 'father of modern gardening', designed the domed octagonal temple and the obelisk and may have planned part of the gardens, which attempt to make a break with geometrical formality and to introduce a more romantic relaxation.

The Miller Family

Lieutenant-Colonel James Miller who bought the Shotover Estate in 1871 was born the eldest son of Mr Alexander Miller of Middlesex. He married Sarah Dorothy, the only child of Mr Thomas Moore Evans in 1862 and they had a family of four sons and one daughter. He served with the 11th Hussars and held the offices of Deputy-Lieutenant for Middlesex and Oxfordshire, High Sheriff for the County of Oxfordshire and Justice of the Peace. His obituary in Jackson's Oxford Times stated that Colonel Miller 'entertained Liberal views' until Mr Gladstone brought in his first Home Rule measure in 1886 and then he became a strong Unionist, though he did not take an active part in politics. He died in 1909 and was buried at St Nicholas Church, Forest Hill where a large number of the 'neighbouring gentry, tenants and villagers' had congregated to 'pay their last respects to an ideal country gentleman who had won the hearts of all who came in contact with him, by his courteous bearing and kindly and generous manner'.

Brigadier General Alfred Douglas Miller C.B.E., D.S.O., the eldest son of Lieutenant-Colonel James Miller, was born in 1864. He married Ella G Fletcher in 1899 and they had three sons and two daughters. He entered the Army in 1885, becoming a captain in 1893 and a colonel in 1911. General Miller served as Chief Staff Officer to General Sir John French in the South African War 1899 - 1902; he was Mentioned in Despatches and awarded the Queen's Medal with four clasps and the King's Medal with two clasps. In 1920 General Miller was appointed Sheriff of the County of Oxford and from 1930 to 1933 he was Chairman of Oxfordshire County Council. He served as a Justice of the Peace and was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Law by Oxford University. He was M.F.H. of the South Oxfordshire Hounds in 1914. General Miller died in 1933 and is buried in Forest Hill cemetery along with his wife who died in 1935.

Major Alastair Miller, the eldest son of the Brigadier General A D and Mrs Ella Miller was born in 1900. He was educated

at Eton and Sandhurst. He joined the Scots Guards in 1920, becoming a Captain in 1929 and a Major in 1938. Major Miller was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1955-56, Deputy-Lieutenant for the County and County Councillor for Great Milton and Wheatley. He was a keen sportsman and was one of joint masters of the South Oxfordshire Hunt. Major Miller lived in the family seat at Shotover and was an active farmer. He was a recognised breeder of Clun Forest sheep and a former President of the Oxfordshire Agricultural Society. He died in 1982.

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir John (Mansell) Miller, K.C.V.O., D.S.O., M.C., the third son of General A D and Mrs Ella Miller, was born in 1919. He was educated at Eton and Sandhurst and served in the Welsh Guards from 1939 to 1944. He became ADC to Lord Wilson then serving in Washington D.C., 1945-47. He was Regimental Adjutant 1953-56, Brigade Major in the 1st Guards Brigade 1956-58 and commanded the 1st Battalion of the Welsh Guards 1958-61. Since 1961 Sir John has been Crown Equerry, responsible for the Queen's 30 horses, 70 carriages and 20 cars. He has also been President of the Coaching Club 1975-82, of the National Light Horse Breeding Society 1982 and the British Driving Society 1982. A keen sportsman, Sir John's interests include hunting, shooting, polo and driving.