

## The Garden

When the present owners, Tom and Angela Hassall, set about the re-making of the garden they inherited two features which dictated the overall design; the avenue of clipped box trees planted by Mrs Milne in line with a now non-existent extension to the house (the long lawn has now been realigned with the windows of the house) and the two rows of espalier apple trees planted by Tom's grandmother. The garden also contained two medlar trees now dying and several mature orchard trees. Tom and his father built a grass tennis court where the grass maze now is in the late 1950s. During the War the family dug for Victory and for many years afterwards quantities of vegetables were grown by gardeners.

The chief problem faced in the redesign was how to make something which had been primarily functional and disparate, aesthetically pleasing and cohesive. Practical difficulties included making access from one area of the garden to the other (there was no east/west access through the box trees, for instance) and coping with the unusual situation of the ground rising away from the house. As well as incorporating existing features the aim was to make the new garden reflect the character of the house, particularly the back which is less formal than the front. We wanted also to keep the sense of period without being slaves to intricate knot gardens etc. So a series of rooms evolved, hidden from each other and viewed through arches, some natural, some contrived. A firm structure has been softened by planting which is intended to give an impressionistic, painterly effect. This is not a plant-person's garden; the plants have been chosen primarily for their colour and foliage impact and also for their ability to survive the conditions caused by very free draining soil. We do not water.

Use has been made of the space by creating separate areas each with its own character and leading either by design or surprise to the next which contrasts with it. The very plain pool garden (unfinished) is contrasted with the colourful cottage garden, for instance.

An attempt to exploit the different planes of the garden has been made by growing roses up and through trees. Future ideas include a summerhouse on stilts i.e. a kind of tree-house in the orchard and yew topiary in the plain front garden.

As the garden is used by all ages, several of its features reflect this; the many seats, focal points and pathways for the elderly, and the swing, seesaw, and maze for the children.

This romantic garden is the product of a partnership. Angela is responsible for all the design, Tom for all the work, including the mowing. We have no help.

A small enclosed vegetable garden adjacent to the back lane has been retained, and is the work of a second, partnership, that of our neighbours, Katie and David Lane.