

The history of the back garden in detail

In the mid-19th century there were two houses at the western end of Carshalton Ponds. One, on the south side nearest the Greyhound and Pound Street, was known as Honeywood while the one to the north was called Wandle Cottage. Honeywood was demolished about 1884 and the name was transferred to Wandle Cottage which is the building now known as Honeywood. In this note the demolished south side building is called Honeywood 1 while the surviving north side building is called Wandle Cottage before c.1884 and then Honeywood.

Both buildings appear to have originated in the 17th century, but we do not know about the layout of the gardens before the tithe award map of 1847 (figure 1). At that time the garden was divided into three areas. The garden of Honeywood 1 was at the southern end. To the north of this was a narrow strip of land behind the southern end of Wandle Cottage. Both of these were owned by a Mr Lamplow and occupied by a Mr Oliver. There was a shed or outbuilding partly in the northwest corner of the garden of Honeywood 1 and partly at the end of the narrow strip of ground. This is labelled 346b on the map and is described as a cottage in the award schedule. The third garden area, to the north, was associated with Wandle Cottage which was also owned by Lamplow and occupied by Thomas Marfleet. There was an outbuilding on the north side of the house and two other structures against the north boundary wall. There was a pond to the west of the garden largely in the grounds of another house called Wandle Lodge. This pond tapered to a point in the northwest corner of the garden of Wandle Cottage on the site of the present rectangular pond (figure 2). The culvert which now runs under Honeywood appears to be shown crossing the land in front of the house but its course at the back is unclear.

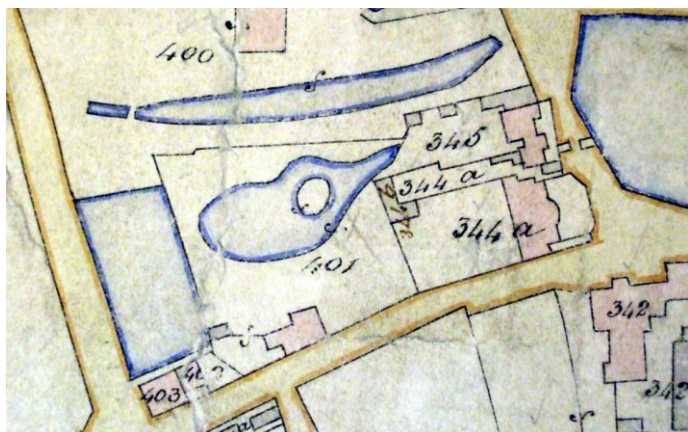


Figure 1. Detail of Honeywood 1 (344a) and Wandle Cottage (345) and Wandle Lodge (401) from the Carshalton tithe award map, 1847.

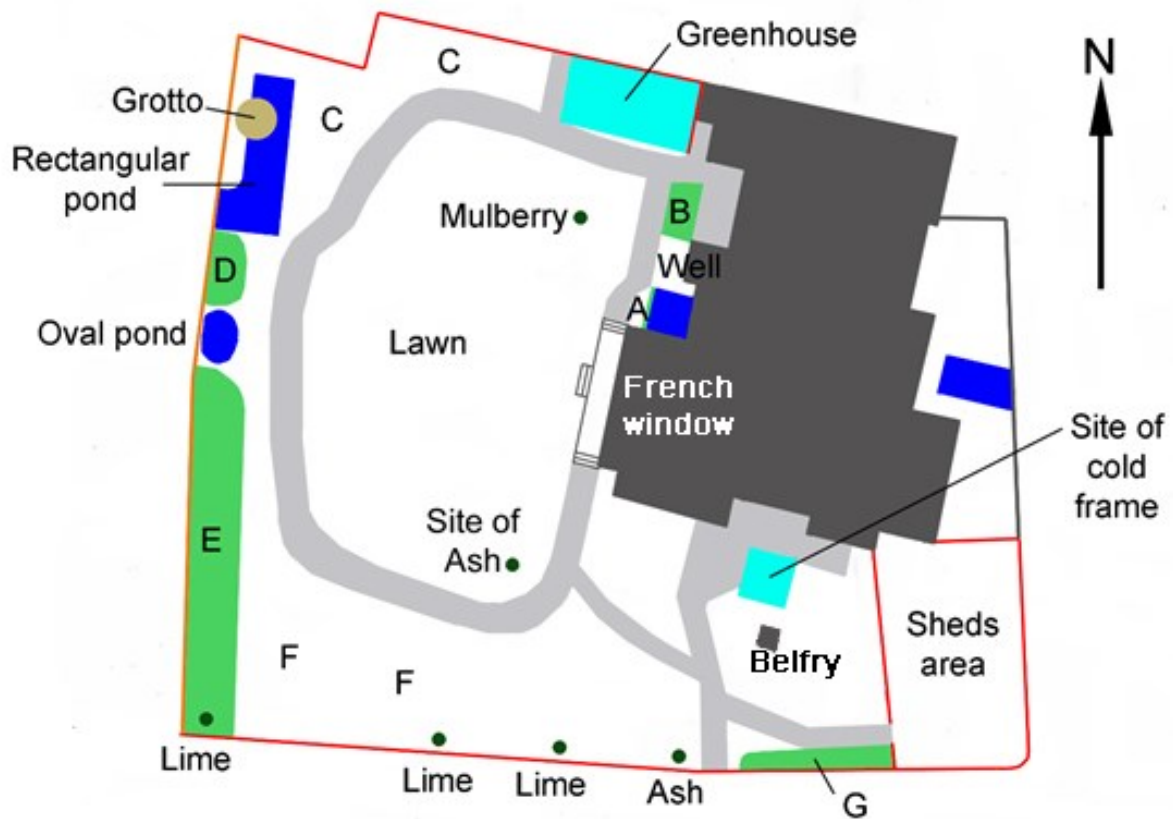


Figure 2. Plan of the present garden showing the location of key features. The plant raised beds are lettered A-G. Those in green have a burr brick edge or other structure. Beds C and F are bounded by the paths and walls.

In 1854 a Wandle Lodge was put up for auction. A map in the sales particulars shows the outlines of the gardens of Honeywood 1 and Wandle Cottage (figure 3). The Wandle Lodge pond appears to have been reshaped and the garden boundary altered slightly. The water from the pond in the grounds of Wandle Lodge entered the garden on or near the site of the present culvert. Buildings are shown to the north and south of the culvert. The southern one may be shown on the 1847 map but the northern one was new.

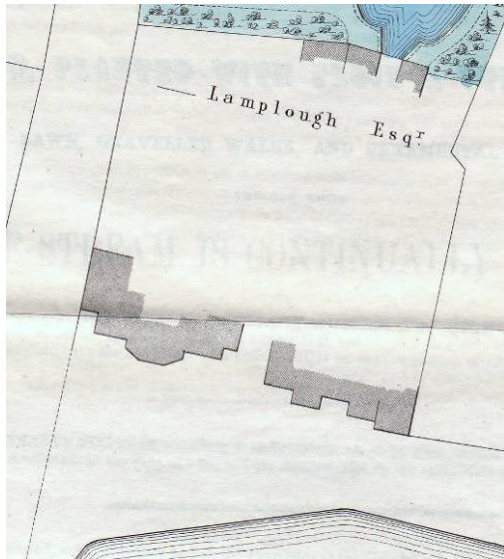


Figure 3. Honeywood 1 and Wandle Cottage from a plan in the agent's details for the sale of Wandle Lodge on 2 August 1854 West at the top. (Sutton Archives 48/4/27).

From July 1864 to September 1865 Wandle Cottage was the home of the author William Hale White and his wife and children. He wrote under the name of Mark Rutherford and his *Autobiography* says:

This was a home of which the boys became fond, for there was a delightful garden at the back of it, which the Wandle, coming from Ruskin's Pond, entered over a waterfall, making a pond of the whole end of the garden furthest from the house, then flowing along the south side of the garden and under the house. When a trap door in the floor of the dining room was lifted they could see the river, and the sound of it was always the accompaniment to their meals. The children Willie and Jack delighted none the less in the pond because they often tumbled into it, and they never tired of putting paper boats in the river in the garden, watching them disappear under the house, and running round to see them reappear in the lake in the village. But their parents found the house, though very attractive in appearance, almost uninhabitable because of its dampness, and their tenure of it was short, only a year.¹

The pond is evidently the rectangular pond which survives in the northwest corner of the present garden.

The first edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1868 shows the garden divided into two areas (figure 4). The largest, to the south, was associated with Honeywood 1 and a building which had been erected behind the gap between Honeywood 1 and Wandle Cottage. There appears to have been a circular path running around Honeywood 1's garden and a single coniferous tree is shown within it. The existing oval pond appears to be shown against the west boundary. The second area, to the north, was associated with Wandle Cottage. The rectangular pond in the back corner is shown with a small building, perhaps a summer house, north of it. There may be a shed against the north wall of the garden and there appears to have been some further structures near the northwest corner of the house.

An inventory of the landlord's fixtures in Wandle Cottage dated 1869 says that the garden contained a 'Framed temporary summer house with boarded floor back and side Boarded and felt roof returned [?] Seat and Rustic Work'. It also mentions a greenhouse.²

¹ Maclean 1955 p. 166.

² Sutton Legal 19

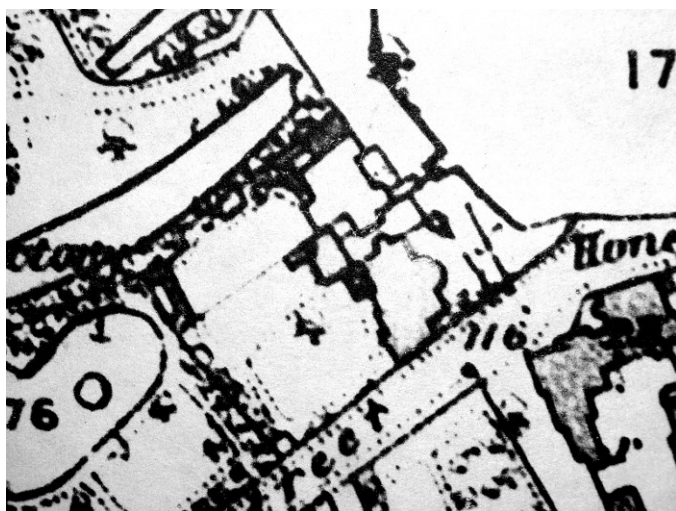


Figure 4. Honeywood from the first edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map, 1868.

John Pattinson Kirk and his wife Leah became the tenants of Wandle Cottage in 1878 and they bought the freehold of both houses in 1883. Honeywood 1 was soon demolished and the two gardens were brought together.

The Kirks must have created the raised beds with burr brick edges (B. E. D and G on figure 2) as they are in both parts of the merged garden. Bed G is also on the site of Honeywood 1.

The 1896 Ordnance Survey map (figure 5) shows the oval and rectangular ponds, the small building at the north end of the latter and a shed or building against the north wall. There is also a small oval feature, perhaps a pond, on or near the site of the former ash tree at the southeast corner of the present lawn.

John Pattinson Kirk rebuilt the north wing in 1898 and then, in 1902-3, added a large extension to the south end of the house. This included a billiards room and a drawing room with bedrooms and a large nursery on the first floor. Kirk was 66 in 1903 so the nursery must have been for the children of his adopted daughter Lily and her husband Henry Edwards. The extension turned Honeywood into a well-appointed upper middle-class house.

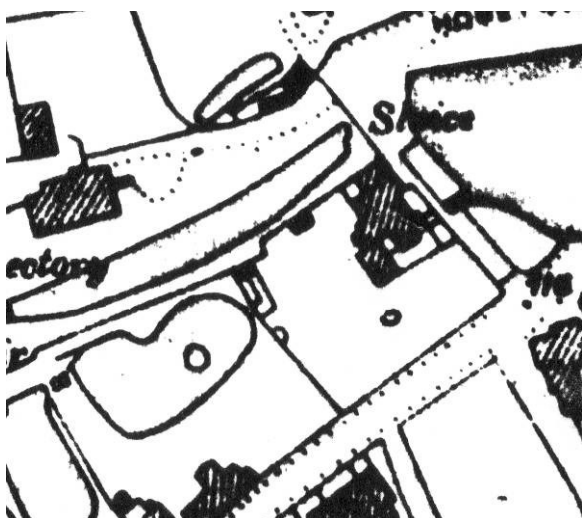


Figure 5. From the 1896 Ordnance Survey map.

The drawing room has French doors opening to the garden directly linking the two spaces. The plans for the extension include a small courtyard in the southeast corner of the garden which was clearly part of the new build. It included a potting shed, a greenhouse, two garden pits, a goat-house, a coke shed and an open shed.

John Pattinson Kirk died in 1913 and the house passed to his adopted daughter Lily Kirk Edwards in trust for her children. She was an artist who exhibited at the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours and the Society of Women Artists.

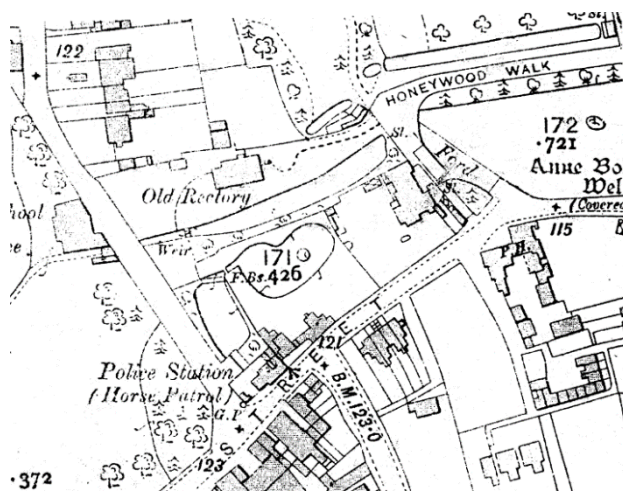


Figure 6. Honeywood from the 1913 Ordnance Survey map.



Figure 7. Honeywood from the south. Detail from a postcard postmarked 1924 and based on an Aerofilms photograph of 1921 which is now included in the *Britain from Above* database number AFL3033.



Figure 8. Detail from an air-photo of Carshalton showing Honeywood from the southeast. The photo was taken after the demolition of Wandle Lodge which was standing in 1938. The cars on other parts of the photo look post 1950.

An air-photo taken in 1921 (figure 7) shows the back and part of the south side of the house with the greenhouse, the east side of the lawn and the sheds area and adjacent garden. The greenhouse is clearly visible against the north wall on the site of the existing foundation. There was a path in front of it which turned and ran to the end of the steps by the drawing room. This was more-or-less on the line of the present concrete path. There was a flower bed along the south and west side of the path. The 1950s photo showed that this curved northwards around the end of the greenhouse.

There were further beds around an ash tree at the southeast corner of the lawn, against the west end of the south side of the house and in the vicinity of the present belfry. A large part of the garden south of the house is hidden by a tree and the Pound Street boundary wall.

The garden contained two greenhouses one against the north boundary wall and one in the sheds area. The former was erected between 1896 and 1913, the latter in 1902-3 when the sheds area was created. There were also three cold frames against the wall of the sheds area. The cold frame found near the belfry does not seem to have existed when the air photo was taken. The material filling it was very recent so it must have been made after 1921.

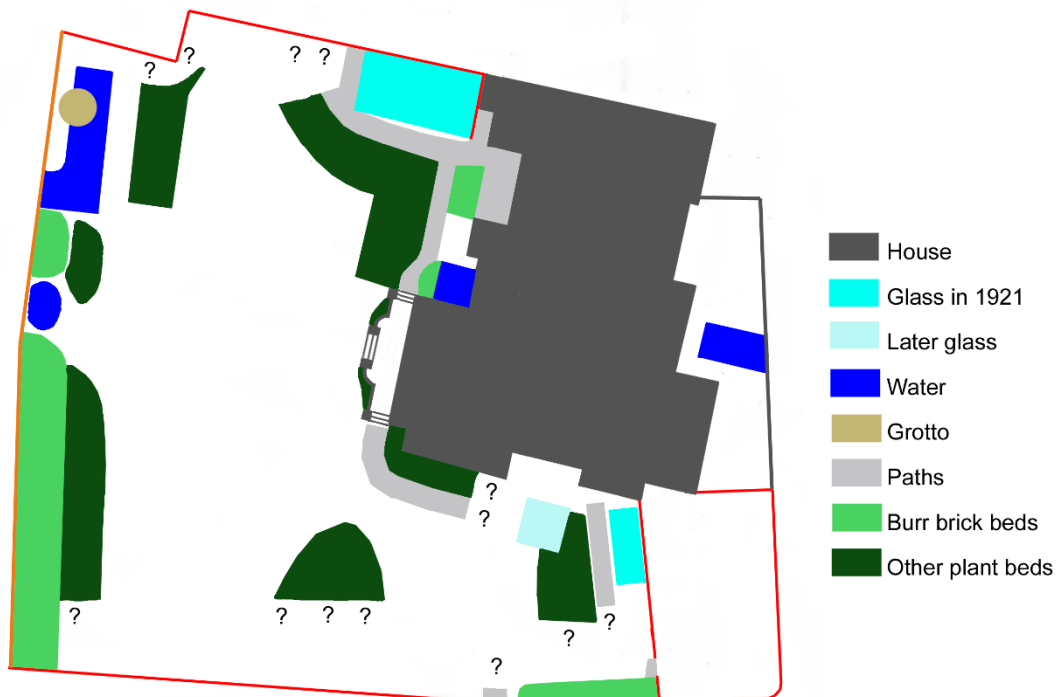


Figure 9. The garden with the approximate position of the flower beds shown on the air-photos of 1921 and about 1950 in dark green. The beds with burr brick edges are in light green. Most of the concrete paths did not exist and it appears that the plant beds had been extended into the lawn. The photograph shows that the burr brick edged beds (light green) were then heavily shaded.

There is another air-photo probably taken in the 1950s which shows the western side of the lawn although it is not so clear (figure 8).

By early 1920s the burr brick edged beds along the west side of the garden were heavily shaded and, by the 1950s, they seem to have been more or less superseded by beds set into the edge of the lawn. There were three of these, one near the rectangular pond and two further south adjacent to the burr brick beds.

The photos therefore show that the burr brick beds were not really a feature of the 1921 arrangement. They were mostly in heavy shade and tucked back behind other beds. The burr brick beds belong to an older garden layout presumably created by the Kirks in the late 1880s or 1890s.

The bed to the east of the rectangular pond was cut by an archaeological trench in 2010.³ The bed edge was marked by a change in the soil but there was no sign of burr brick suggesting that it was a later addition. The beds on the lawn edge were probably abandoned in the late 1950s or 1960s, possibly to simplify maintenance, possibly when the existing concrete path was laid around the edge of the lawn.

The layout shown in the 1921 air-photo could have been made in the First World War or the immediate post war years. However, the planting looks well settled and it seems more likely that it was the Edwardian arrangement established before the war.

³ Phillips 2015 b p. 47.

The Carshalton UDC guide for 1932 has an advert for ‘Honeywood Tea Rooms & Charming Old World Garden’ ‘Apply Mrs L. K. Edwards’.⁴

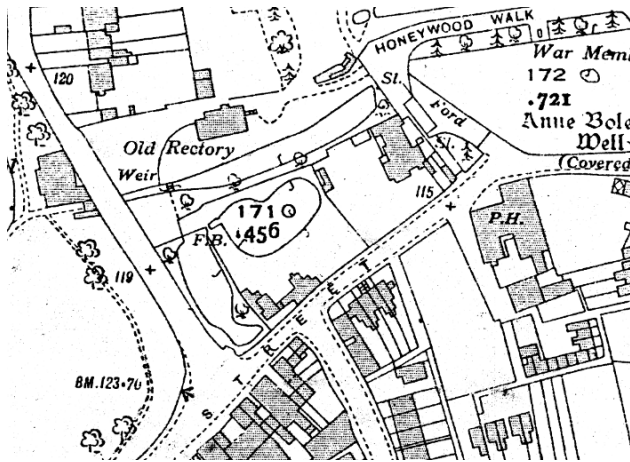


Figure 10. Honeywood from the 1933 Ordnance Survey map.

The 1933 Ordnance Survey map is similar to the 1913 one except that both the small round ponds have disappeared.

In 1940 Lily Kirk Edwards sold Honeywood to the Carshalton Urban District Council. They used the building for various wartime purposes and then turned it into offices and a venue for social activities such as wedding receptions.



Figure 11. A Conservative Party ladies coffee morning in the garden possibly in the 1950s.

⁴ Page 56. The advert is not in the books for 1930 or 1936.

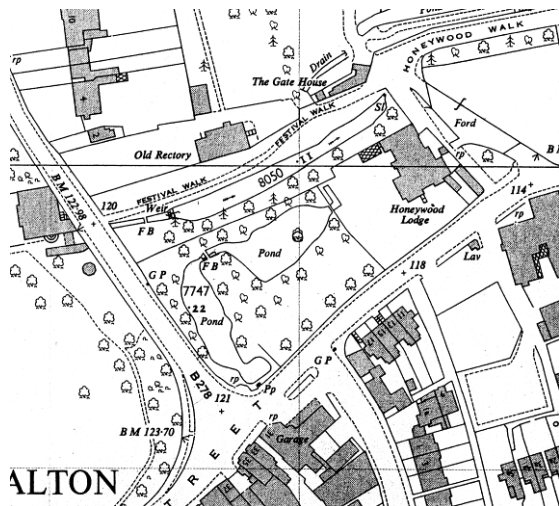


Figure 12. Honeywood from the 1957 Ordnance Survey map.

In 1989-90 Honeywood was turned into a Heritage Centre. The garden was then in a very poor state and the Council's landscape architect Sandra Willis produced a number of designs for a complete re-landscaping which would have destroyed many of the older features. This was resisted by the Heritage Service staff and in the end the historic hard features were retained but the garden was totally re-planted in non-period style. The trees and grass were the only planting to survive from the earlier arrangement. The beds along the western boundary were largely planted with snowberry. A square herb garden was created towards the northwest corner of the lawn which was a mixture of paving and planting. A mulberry tree was planted in the northeast corner of the lawn. Several historic exhibits were also added including the belfry from Cotswold Road School south of the house, a section of Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Railway track in the northwest corner with the snuff mill stones from the Grove Ironworks mill to the south of them.

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