

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

*Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England*

**Inventory of Great Britain**

AVON TYRRELL

Auteur(s) : Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

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AVON TYRRELL

Name: AVON TYRRELL

County: Hampshire

District: New Forest (District Authority)

Parish: Sopley

National park: NEW FOREST

label.localisation: Latitude: 50.802073  
Longitude: -1.7421496  
National Grid Reference: SU 18267 00311  
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden  
Grade: II  
List Entry Number: 1001583  
Date first listed: 18-Jan-2002

## Details

Late C19 formal gardens and pleasure grounds probably by H E Milner, laid out around a new country house by W R Lethaby.  
**HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT**

The land on which Avon Tyrrell house and gardens were laid out was part of the ancient manor of Avon, consisting of cultivated and common lands on the edge of the New Forest. A map of the manor by Richard Richardson, dated 1764, marks the area as burnt heath, and one hundred years later, the area is shown on the 1st edition OS map (1869) as part of Shirley Common. By the 1860s there were scattered coniferous trees on Whitefield Hill; a circular plantation of conifers, known as Avon Clump, to the north, on the highest point of Whitefield Hill; and an area of bog to the south. Tracks crossed the common land including one crossing from west to east. All these features were incorporated in the new landscape laid out in the late C19.

By the late C19 the estate had passed to the Fane family of Clovelly Court, Devon, and following Constance Fane's marriage to Lord Manners in 1885, the property came into the ownership of the Manners family. In the late 1880s, Lord Manners decided to build a country house at Avon Tyrrell, commissioning the Arts and Crafts architect, William Richard Lethaby (1857-1931) in 1889. The house, which was completed in 1892, was designed and sited to take advantage of extensive views to the south and west. The gardens were laid out by Lethaby and a Mr Milner, presumably the landscape gardener Henry Ernest Milner (1845-1906). The house and newly laid out gardens are shown on the 2nd edition OS map of 1897, with terraces immediately to the west and south of the house, lawns to the south enclosed by a ha-ha, an entrance forecourt to the north, stables to the east, and entrance drives along the line of the west to east track. To the south of the house, an enclosed area of common was planted on either side of a lawn which led down to two lakes formed on the boggy ground (OS 1869). A block of woodland was added to the east of the lawn and large clumps of trees were planted to the west, arranged by Milner to allow a series of views down to the Avon Valley (now, 2001, largely blocked by planting). Beyond the gardens and pleasure grounds, few changes were made to the landscape. To the south-west, Whitefield Farm (OS 1869) was renamed Home Farm and a large walled kitchen garden was laid out immediately to the south.

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In the early 1900s, Lethaby was responsible for alterations to the gardens, formalising and ornamenting them. The alterations, shown in photographs taken for a Country Life article of 1910, and on the 3rd edition OS map of 1909, included walls around the entrance forecourt and landscaping the area within the ha-ha to the south of the terraces. Further landscaping had been carried out beyond the ha-ha including the planting of avenues to the north and south of the house, and additional areas of woodland on the east side of the lawn between the ha-ha and the lakes. Small changes were made to the landscape between 1909 and 1939 but these had no effect on the basic structure.

Lord Manners died in 1927 and was succeeded by his son, who moved to Avon Tyrrell in 1928. The family continued to live there until the Second World War, when it was taken over first by the Duke of York School, and then by the military. From 1941 it was occupied by a gun battery. In 1944 Lord Manners decided not to move back to Avon Tyrrell and transferred it in 1946 to a trust under the auspices of the National Association of Girls Clubs and Mixed Clubs (later Youth Clubs UK). After several years of repairs the centre was opened in 1949. Its use as a charitable activity centre for young people continues today (2001).

#### DESCRIPTION

**LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING** Avon Tyrrell and its landscape of c 17.5ha here registered, is situated in the south-west corner of the New Forest. Avon Tyrrell is located c 1.5km north of Bransgore, c 2km south-west of Burley, and c 8km north of Christchurch. It is surrounded by farmland, heath, and woodland on the Avon Tyrrell estate. The area registered here is bounded by woodland to the west and north-east, woodland and heath to the north-west and north, and heath land and reclaimed pasture to the south and east. The house is set high on the south-facing slope of Whitefield Hill. The landscape is laid out on undulating ground which falls gently to the south and west, giving panoramic views to the south and west (although some of these are now, 2001, blocked by planting). There are also good views from the northern end of the holm oak avenue and from Avon Clump looking west and north. The boundaries are marked by three-strand barbed wire fences.

**ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES** The main approach to the house is from the east, along East Drive, which leads from the Thorney Hill to Shirley road, past White Lodge on the north side of the drive, and then west through fields (formerly heathland until the late C20, and outside the area registered here) for c 700m. The final 250m of the drive goes through woodland, lined by mature trees including large Corsican pines. The drive terminates at a gravelled entrance forecourt on the north side of the house. The forecourt is enclosed by brick walls (listed grade II), with entrances in the north-west and north-east corners (the piers reduced in height and without their vases since the mid C20), and three arched gateways in the north wall and at the south-east and south-west corners. The main entrance to the house is on the south side of the forecourt. The walls were designed by Lethaby in the early 1900s and replaced the yew hedges which were part of the layout of 1892. The forecourt is gravelled around a central grass circle and there are bay trees in tubs set in bows in the walls (restored late C20). From the entrance in the north-west corner of the forecourt, the West Drive leads west for 1.4km to the late C19 Ringwood Lodge (probably by Lethaby, listed grade II), on a road that runs between Ringwood and Bransgore. The drives follow the line of a track shown on the 1st edition OS map (1869).

**PRINCIPAL BUILDINGS** Avon Tyrrell (W R Lethaby 1891, listed grade I) is an archetypal Arts and Crafts country house. It is a three-storey brick building with stone dressings and areas of flint or stone and brick chequer-work, leaded windows, and a plain tiled roof. It is built in an irregular E-shape, with attached service ranges. The entrance (north) front has a two-bay projecting wing containing the porch, with a huge stone arched hood and doorcase over a double door. A stone peacock is positioned either side of the four-shafted chimney stack. A clock is set on the base of a chimney stack to the left (east) of the projecting wing, with a stone bellcote on a low, one-storey projection in front. The garden (south) front has four large gables between a projecting one-bay wing on the west end and a huge stack at the east end, and two-storey canted bays between the gables. The stable block (W R Lethaby 1892, listed grade II) lies c 50m east-north-east of the house and consists of a one and a half-storey U-shaped range around a courtyard. The stables have a tiled roof and are built in brick with flint and stone chequerboard patches.

**GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS** From the north entrance in the entrance forecourt wall, an avenue of early C20 holm oaks leads north-east for c 180m and then north for c 140m to the northern boundary of the pleasure grounds, from where there are extensive views over the heath and woodland. Avon Clump, planted with Scots pines within a shallow circular bank,

is situated c 40m to the east of the north end of the avenue. The avenue runs close to the western boundary of a wood on the sloping ground of Whitefield Hill, with mature pines and some broadleaved trees including sweet chestnut, birch, oak, and holm oak. Within the wood are a campsite, on the east side, a chalet, some log cabins and Avon Lodge in the centre, and a group of caravans at the southern end. An area of woodland lies to the west of the southern end of the avenue, planted with pines mixed with broadleaves and with an understorey of rhododendron and holm oaks.

To the south of the east drive is further woodland on the north-east side of the house. Various late C20 buildings have been built within the wood including an environment centre on the south side of the stable block, a staff block with Portakabins c 15m to the south and south-east, and a store c 30m south of the stable block. From the store a belt of mixed woodland (including pines, oak, yew, laurel, beech, and birch) runs south along the east boundary of the area here registered to the southern end of the pleasure grounds.

On the south side of the west drive, c 20m north-west of the north-west entrance from the forecourt, is a small car park surrounded by woodland. To the south of the wood are a sports court and a tennis court laid out on a late C19 terrace, bordered by yew hedging which also runs between the courts. The terrace was conceived by Lethaby as a flower garden but was simplified in the 1920s to a lawn, used as a grass tennis court, and has had a hard tennis court on it since the 1950s. The south side has bay trees in 1950s brick planters either side of a flight of steps through the retaining wall down to the Rose Garden to the south. A flight of early C20 steps, and a late C20 ramp, lead up from the tennis courts to the main terrace (W R Lethaby, listed grade II with the retaining walls, balustrades and steps) which wraps around the west and south sides of the house. The terrace was laid out in the late C19 with grass banks but the banks were replaced by retaining walls as part of the alterations in the 1900s. The terrace is paved, with strips of grass either side and shrubs against the house walls. A row of late C19 bay trees in 1950s brick planters (which replaced the original late C19 wooden tubs) runs adjacent to the balustrade on top of the early C20 retaining wall. The east end of the south terrace is terminated by a stone and brick gazebo set on a high brick plinth (W R Lethaby 1891, listed grade II), with a hipped tiled roof. From the south terrace a flight of steps leads south down to the Grass Terrace, which is bordered on the south side by a yew hedge. A path runs from the steps across the terrace to an opening in the hedge leading to the Lower Gardens to the south. A late C20 swimming pool is sited on the Grass Terrace, on the east side of the path. The west side of the Grass Terrace has an open lawn, with clipped yew cylinders at the western edge, beyond which the lawn slopes down to the Rose Garden. The Rose Garden was laid out in the late C19 on a grass terrace but the roses were removed in the mid C20 and it is now a lawn, bordered on the west end by an early C20 rockery.

Lining the south side of the Rose Garden, but approached from the Lower Gardens to the south of the Grass Terrace, is an early C20 Beech Walk which terminates at the woodland on the western boundary of the gardens. The Lower Gardens are bounded by a ha-ha and consist of a large lawn, flanked by the Spring Garden (with spring-flowering trees, shrubs, and bulbs) to the west and the East Garden (with ornamental trees including liquidambers, magnolia, azaleas, and a red oak planted by Princess Elizabeth) to the east. The gardens were laid out in the 1900s and have additional planting and a circular pool in the East Garden from the 1920s and 30s.

To the south of the ha-ha is a lawn backed by woodland belts, with a ropes course and climbing wall within the wood on the west side. The lawn leads down to a pair of late C19 lakes, which are open on the north side but enclosed by woodland with dense undergrowth around the west, south, and east sides, along the boundary of the area registered here. The larger, western lake has a small jetty and a small island.

**KITCHEN GARDEN** The late C19 walled kitchen garden lies c 500m south-west of the house (outside the boundary of the area registered here). It was connected to the gardens by walks through the woods but although some of these can still be traced they no longer connect the gardens with the kitchen garden, which is cut off from the rest of the registered landscape.

#### REFERENCES

Country Life, 27 (11 June 1910), pp 846-52 N Pevsner and D Lloyd, *The Buildings of England: Hampshire and the Isle of Wight* (1967), p 86 J Brown, *The Art and Architecture of English Gardens* (1989), pp 15-16 D Ottewill, *The Edwardian Garden* (1989) S Wade, *Avon Tyrrell: Historic Landscape Restoration and Management Report*, (report for Avon Tyrrell Youth Activity Centre, 1994)

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Maps Richard Richardson, A Plan of Sir John Webb's Estate, 1764 (reproduced in Wade 1994)

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1869 2nd edition published 1898 OS 25" to 1 mile: 2nd edition published 1897 3rd edition published 1909

Description written: November 2001 Amended: February 2002 Register Inspector: CB Edited: January 2004

## Legal

This garden or other land is registered under the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 within the Register of Historic Parks and Gardens by Historic England for its special historic interest.