

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

HILTON MAZE

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

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Name:	HILTON MAZE
County:	Cambridgeshire
District:	Huntingdonshire (District Authority)
Parish:	Hilton
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.278940 Longitude: -0.10695704 National Grid Reference: TL 29244 66220 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000623 Date first listed: 16-Jan-1985

Details

A turf maze on the village green, first cut, or possibly re-cut, in 1660 and re-cut several times since.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Hilton Maze stands on common land at the southern end of Hilton Green, the obelisk which stands at its centre recording that it was cut by William Sparrow in the year 1660. Sparrow lived at Park Farm which looked out onto the Green and the site of the maze and he cut the pattern to commemorate the year of the Restoration of King Charles II. It has been suggested that in fact Sparrow re-cut an earlier maze which had fallen into disuse during Cromwell's suppression (Pennick 1990). Lancelot Brown (1716-83) purchased the manor of Fenstanton and Hilton in 1767 and a map by John Spyers, commissioned by Brown in 1778, records a well-laid-out village green at Hilton which local tradition believes to have been designed by Brown himself. The plan of the maze has changed several times in the last 140 years, the most recent plan having been executed by local historian Philip Dickinson in 1967. The management of the site remains (1999) the responsibility of the Parish Council.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The village of Hilton lies c 12km west-north-west of Cambridge, c 3km to the south of the main A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon road. The village green is situated on the eastern edge of the village, with the maze at its south-west corner, beside the junction of Maze Road and The Grove and bordered to the north by a small stream.

The Green covers c 15ha in all with the maze (scheduled ancient monument) occupying an area c 16.7m in diameter within a low sunken wall. The maze is created by raised turfs, laid in a circular, traditional 'Chatres' pattern, with the inner two circles removed during the re-cutting in 1967. At the centre is a square stone obelisk, Sparrow's Monument (listed grade II), erected in 1729 to mark the death of William Sparrow who cut the maze in 1660 at the age of nineteen. The obelisk is inscribed in Latin: sic transit gloria mundi. Gulielmus Sparrow, Gen, natus ano. 1641. Aestatis sui 88 quando oblit hos gyros formavit anno 1660, which translates to: 'here passes the glory of the world, William Sparrow, born in the year 1641, died aged 88, formed these rings in the year 1660'. On top of the obelisk is a ball ornamented with a sundial. Writing in 1774, J Hutchins records that the Hilton maze was not composed of turf banks but was laid out using paths of pebbles (Pennick 1990) and almost 100 years later,

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in 1854, a local history continues to record the existence of pebbles rather than turf. During the latter part of the C19 however the pebbles became covered with turf and the area was grazed by cattle. In 1899 the maze was restored by cutting turf paths, but not to the original pattern. In 1967 Philip Dickinson again re-cut the maze and uncovered some of the original pebbles. During the past ten years the outer boundary wall has been strengthened with concrete.

REFERENCES

W H Matthews, *Mazes and Labyrinths* (1922), pp 85-6 N Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Bedfordshire and the county of Huntingdon and Peterborough* (1968), p 263 R Halliday, *Three Cambridgeshire Mazes* (1989), pp 44-7 N Pennick, *Mazes and Labyrinths* (1990), pp 68-72 J Dady, *Hilton, Huntingdonshire* (1992), pp 60-1 *Hilton Village Handbook* (1999)

Maps OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1887 3rd edition published 1924

Description written: October 1999 Amended: December 2000 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: January 2001

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.