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Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BRAMPTON BRYAN

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Name:	BRAMPTON BRYAN
District:	County of Herefordshire (Unitary Authority)
Parish:	Brampton Bryan
label.localisation:	Latitude: 52.340474 Longitude: -2.9419671 National Grid Reference: SO 35921 71795 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000874 Date first listed: 28-Feb-1986

Details

A deer park of late C15 or C16 origin with surviving wood pasture and launds; some ornamental planting of sweet chestnuts of possible late C17 date.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the Middle Ages Brampton was part of the Barony of Mortimer. The tenant family, who took their name from Brampton, assembled considerable holdings in the C12 and C13. It was possibly in the C13 that the chief house of the lord was moved 600m north-east, from within the later park (see below) to the castle site in the modern village. In 1309 Sir Robert Harley married Margaret, daughter of the last Bryan de Brampton, and it has remained in the same family ever since. The Harleys' fortunes reached a peak in the mid to late C17, during the time of Sir Robert Harley (d 1656) and his wife Brilliana who died in 1643 during the siege of Brampton Bryan; Sir Robert's eldest son Sir Edward (d 1700), and Sir Edward's two sons, Robert (d 1724), first Earl of Oxford, and Edward 'Auditor' Harley (d 1735).

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The village of Brampton Bryan is on the A4113 from Ludlow, c 15km to the east, to Knighton. Brampton Bryan Park lies on high ground south-west of the village, the knoll in its northern half forming a notable local landmark and providing expansive views north and east across the valleys of the rivers Teme and Clun towards Ludlow and westward to Wales. The area here registered is c 191ha.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES A road runs from the village, via the park, to Park Cottage.

PRINCIPAL BUILDING Brampton Bryan Hall, and the castle which it succeeded, lie 500m north-east of the area here registered, in the village of Brampton Bryan. George London (d 1714) made alterations to the gardens there in the 1690s.

Within the eastern part of the park is Park Cottage, an ornate, mid C19, brick lodge or hunting box. This lies above (north of) the chain of ponds, with a sweeping view across the laund of the south-east quarter of the park. The Cottage probably lies on or close to the site of the lodge first mentioned in 1661.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Around Park Cottage, and extending to the chain of ponds, are lawns with specimen trees and shrubs.

PARK Brampton Bryan Park is roughly square, and 1.5km in diameter. Its eastern half is fairly level grassland with some specimen trees, while its western half rises onto a north/south ridge. West and north of the ridge the ground falls away to the park boundary. The park is fenced with an iron-railed deer fence, generally in a poor condition. Deer were last kept in the early C20. The Park is entered via a gate on its north-eastern side. As the Park is entered there is grassland (Park Meadow) to the right (north), and to the left. Within Park Meadow there is a deer shelter, while down its west side is a lime avenue. Some 50m south of the entrance gate to the park is a low mound, possibly a motte. East and south of it is ridge and furrow. To its south is a low hill, Broomy Hill Plantation. The road through the eastern half of the Park runs south-west, south of and following Whittings Brook, which is dammed to form a chain of ponds. Between the third and fourth ponds the road turns north, into the grounds of Park Cottage. The fourth pond, 100m long and 60m wide, is markedly larger than the others, and was already present by 1815. The others were created between then and 1839.

The Cottage, actually a fairly substantial residence, looks south and south-west across the large pool to the grassland of the Main Valley, which runs south-west to the wood gate at the bottom of the Greenold Bank. Running south-west up the north side of the Main Valley is a 600m long, dog-legged line of mature sweet chestnuts, some fallen, probably (see below) planted in the later C17. A second line, 200m long and aligned east/west along the bottom of the south side of the valley, meets the main one at its south-west end. At this point there is a gate into the woodland to the west, and the arrangement emphasises how the chestnuts once served to carry the line of the road, and the eye, across the Park from the point it turns north to Park Cottage to one of the main wood gates. To either side of the main line of chestnuts are three smaller clumps or 'phalanxes' of chestnuts, while on its north side, 300m from its west end, is the site of a former deer shelter marked on later C19 maps.

West of Park Cottage is a lesser valley; a track runs uphill to the west, up the north side of Park Plantation. This passes through rough grassland with large numbers of mature parkland oaks. There are notable views north, to the knoll which dominates the northern part of the park, and panoramically east, across the valleys of the rivers Teme and Clun towards Ludlow. Some 600m west of Park Cottage the track emerges on the north/south ridge which runs down the west side of the park, and again there are dramatic views, this time towards Wales. Downslope to the west, on the park boundary, is Laugh Lady Well. The ridge-top track, with mature conifers along its east side, extends either north, along the ridge for 500m before dropping down past disused quarries to a gate on the northernmost point of the park, or south towards Heathy Park.

Although Whitehead (Landskip and Prospect 1996) argues that it was created in the later C15 when the Harley family's fortunes were in the ascendant, Brampton Park is first documented only in 1577, when it appears on Saxton's map of the county. The western and northern parts of the park may previously have been common land, occasionally disputed between Pedwardine to the south and Brampton, whereas its eastern part, as shown by the ridge and furrow, had once been within the village's field land. The 'new park' is mentioned in 1625, and may be synonymous with the 'Heathy Park' or 'Heathy Banks', which the late C20 OS map locates outside and south-west of the modern park boundary. Field survey (Landskip and Prospect 1996, fig 1) has identified banks within, and extending beyond, the present boundary, which may in part represent earlier park boundaries. A bank, for instance, looping outside the south-west corner of the park past a pool on the north-west side of Heathy Park, presumably represents that part of the boundary paled in 1664, which ran down from Laugh Lady Well to the Great Pool before crossing Heathy Banks to Constableshead, the last probably close to the meeting point of Brampton Bryan Park, Heathy Park and Pedwardine Wood. Some banks, however, may be remnants of some of the various internal compartments named in documents of the C17-C19 (see below). The park was despoiled in the Civil War, on the eve of which it was well wooded with timber and coppice (including forty acres in the new park), and was grazed by a large herd of deer and by oxen. Further damage was done by a great storm in 1658, which coincided with the death of Oliver Cromwell, when some of the finest trees in the park were blown over. Whitehead (op cit) argues that it was probably at about this time that the rows of sweet chestnuts were planted. The park's woodlands continued to be managed, producing both standards and cordwood, the latter largely destined for the Bringewood forges. The woodland lay within various named sections of the park, some at least fenced compartments; only a few of these can be located with confidence. By the late C18 the park was receiving notice from tourists with 'sensibilities'.

REFERENCES A Williams, Brampton Bryan 1643-1956 (1956) Brampton Bryan Park: A Description and Survey, with Proposals for its Management, (Monks Wood Experimental Station 1979) Trans Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club 43, (1980),

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pp 186, 200 Brampton Bryan Park, Herefordshire: Historical Research, Aesthetic Evaluation, Advice on Replanting, (Landskip and Prospect 1996)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 2 SW, 1st edition published 1889 OS 25" to 1 mile: Herefordshire sheet 2.14, 2nd edition published 1903

Archival items Brampton Bryan Papers (Herefordshire Record Office): Estate records (C46/1), Estate sale particulars, 1920 (M5/5/43).

Description written: March 1998 Register Inspector: PAS Edited: August 1999

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.