

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

BEDGEBURY NATIONAL PINETUM

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Name: BEDGEBURY NATIONAL PINETUM

County: Kent

District: Tunbridge Wells (District Authority)

Parish: Goudhurst

label.localisation: Latitude: 51.075739
Longitude: 0.45491122
National Grid Reference: TQ 72070 33579
[Map: Download a full scale map \(PDF\)](#)

label.overview: Heritage Category: Park and Garden
Grade: II
List Entry Number: 1000932
Date first listed: 01-May-1986

Details

A national pinetum developed by the Forestry Authority from the 1920s onwards, with a scattering of conifers planted in the late C19.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

The Pinetum at Bedgebury (the land within the present registered site) was developed on part of the Bedgebury estate which, as the manor of Bedgebury, dates back to pre-Norman times. The estate passed through the hands of the de Bedgebury and Hayes families, and the Great Lake in the park to the north-east of Bedgebury House dates from between 1769 (Andrews, Dury and Herbert) and 1801 (Mudge). The later history of the estate however had most impact on the Pinetum site. Bedgebury was owned by Viscount Beresford and his family from 1836 to 1890 and the oldest conifers in the present collection, around Marshall's Lake, were planted during this period. Lodges were built at outlying points on the road boundary and drives connecting them to the house were planted with avenue trees. Other garden developments included the walled fruit garden adjacent to the western boundary of the Pinetum. The Bedgebury estate was divided up in 1919 and the Crown purchased most of the land. The house and its grounds, to the north of the Pinetum, became a private school and the Home Farm together with part of the parkland became a riding school later in the C20. The Forestry Commission took on Bedgebury Forest, within which lay the present area of the Pinetum. The Commission began to plan and plant the site in association with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, following aesthetic principles with the aim of creating a National Pinetum containing the most comprehensive collection of conifers in the temperate world. The work was carried out in the late 1920s under the direction of W Dallimore and W Castle of Kew who laid out a series of broad formal avenues and linking walks. Since 1965 the site has been the sole responsibility of the Forestry Authority. Plans are currently (2002) underway to extend the Pinetum onto agricultural land to the west (outside the area here registered) which when complete will almost double its size.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Bedgebury Pinetum is situated on the east side of the A21, c 15km south-east of Tunbridge Wells. The c 40ha rural site occupies markedly undulating ground falling generally to the north and divided into two main valleys running south to north, with streams meeting at Marshall's Lake in the centre of the northern

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boundary. The Pinetum is bounded to the north by the grounds of Bedgebury Park School, to the north-east, east, and south by Bedgebury Forest, and to the west by farmland, currently (2002) being developed as an extension to the site.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main access into Bedgebury Pinetum is from the western boundary. From Lady Oak Lane a drive enters the walled kitchen garden (outside the area here registered) built for Bedgebury house in the C19. This now (2002) acts as a car park for the Pinetum, from the north-east corner of which a path leads east into the site. On the north-east boundary of the Pinetum stands Park House and the present Forestry Office, beside which a second, small pedestrian access point enters the Pinetum. Several of the C19 drives which linked the surrounding woodland, via the Pinetum site, to Bedgebury House, survive as forest tracks. These include the C19 Pine Avenue and Cypress Avenue.

OTHER LAND The main plantings in the Pinetum are on the crests and upper slopes of the undulating ground, allowing fine views out of the site and giving extensive valley prospects within the Pinetum, which is cut through with avenues and serpentine walks. The sweeps of grass along the lower valley slopes are varied by the planting of broadleaved species including birch, maple, oak, and liquidamber. To the west of the site are pines and larches, with spruces beside Dallimore's Avenue which runs north-east to south-west close to the western boundary. Beside Marshall's Lake on the north boundary are several large swamp cypress together with the remains of C19 plantings of conifers and rhododendrons. On the south side of Marshall's Lake are collections of mature Wellingtonia and American firs, standing beside the late C19 Cypress Avenue which runs north to south along the valley floor. This avenue is lined with mature cypress trees and formed one of the C19 approach drives to Bedgebury Manor from Bedgebury Lodge (c 1.5km to the south-west). At the southern end of this area are collections of larch, pine, and yew.

On the north-east boundary stands the visitor centre, set beside the A W Westall collection of dwarf conifers (begun 1970). To the south-east of this is the North Avenue amongst a varied planting of pines. The southern end of the North Avenue joins Hill's Avenue which runs from the eastern boundary north-west to the end of Cypress Avenue. Immediately to the west of the Avenue is a collection of Japanese conifers, beyond which to the west are Douglas firs, cedars, junipers, and various redwoods.

REFERENCES

Country Life, 110 (12 October 1951), pp 1144-5; 117 (28 April 1955), pp 1108-09; 178 (4 July 1985), pp 12-13 T Wright, Gardens of Britain 4, (1978), pp 23-6 The Garden, (September 1980), pp 357-62 Bedgebury National Pinetum, guidebook, (1983) M Scott, Forest Plots (Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest Plots), guidebook, (1986)

Maps J Andrews, A Dury and W Herbert, A Topographical Map of the County of Kent $\frac{1}{62500}$, 2" to 1 mile, 1769 W Mudge, Map of Kent, 1" to 1 mile, 1801

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1872-7 2nd edition published 1899 3rd edition published 1910 1947 edition OS 25" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1870 3rd edition published 1908 1938 edition

Description written: January 2002 Amended: February 2002 Register Inspector: EMP Edited: November 2003

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.