

Institut Européen des Jardins & Paysages

Inventory of Gardens and Designed Landscapes of England

Inventory of Great Britain

THE IMAGE GARDEN

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

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Name:	THE IMAGE GARDEN
County:	Cumbria
District:	Eden (District Authority)
Parish:	Crosby Ravensworth
label.localisation:	Latitude: 54.552158 Longitude: -2.6138920 National Grid Reference: NY 60391 17608 Map: Download a full scale map (PDF)
label.overview:	Heritage Category: Park and Garden Grade: II List Entry Number: 1000670 Date first listed: 01-Jul-1985

Details

A small, rural, domestic C19 terraced garden, built by the self-taught sculptor, painter and composer Thomas Bland for himself, and extensively ornamented with his own sculptures.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

Thomas Bland (1799(1865) was a self-taught sculptor, painter and composer who came from a local family of Westmorland yeoman farmers. Bland created his garden, at Yew Tree Farm, Reagill, to celebrate the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837. He built a central bandstand (since gone) set in a terraced garden where the boundaries were embellished over time with a series of up to eighty sculptures, and many paintings, all created by Bland. The pieces have no overall iconographic scheme and represent a range of subjects. To celebrate the accession of the Queen an annual celebration was held on the terraced lawns. Little is known about Bland himself, although his garden represents an example of the way in which the less well off aspired to the fashions of the rich.

Following Bland's death in 1865 the garden remained part of a working farm, but became neglected. The paintings were all destroyed, the last one having been removed in 1907 (Foster 1985), and many of the sculptures have become eroded. The site remains (2000) in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING The Image Garden lies 8km south-west of Appleby-in-Westmorland, towards the south end of the small village of Reagill, adjacent to the east side of the village street. The c 0.25ha site is bounded to the south-west by the village street, to the south-east by a lane leading from the main village street north-east to a back lane, to the north-west by Yew Tree Farm, and to the north-east by a late C20 house and associated garden. It is enclosed by drystone walls and overlooked by the farmhouse to the north-west and the late C20 house to the north-east. The garden lies on a Pennine moor, in a rural village setting, with long views extending over the surrounding moorland.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The garden is entered from the west corner, via a gateway set in the boundary wall leading south-west from the farmhouse, this giving access from a small entrance yard adjacent to the village street.

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GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS The garden, surrounded by drystone walls, is laid largely to lawn with three terraces which fall from the south-west to the north-east and are linked via several flights of stone steps set into the terrace banks. Niches and alcoves set into the walls were formerly filled by Bland with his own oil paintings (gone, late C20). Some seventy of his stone sculptures (listed grade II) remain, scattered around the walls, some set on drystone block plinths. These garden ornaments include statues of Robert Burns, William Shakespeare and Sir Walter Scott, which were formerly flanked by bas-reliefs and paintings depicting scenes or characters from their novels, poems and plays, the compositions being known as 'galleries'. Elsewhere on the terraces stand pedestals, urns and further statues of both humans and animals, including lions, dogs, a deer and a sphinx.

REFERENCES

B Jones, *Follies and Grottoes* (1979), pp 250(1 R Foster, *Landscape Pieced and Plotted: a History of Gardens in Cumbria*, (exhibition catalogue, Carlisle Museum and Art Gallery 1985) 'The figures speak for themselves', *The Telegraph*, 29 January 2000, p 16 (Weekend section)

Maps OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition surveyed 1859

Description written: February 2000 Register Inspector: SR Edited: April 2000

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.