THE TWENTIETH CENTURY AND BEYOND

The Cotswold ideal, with its architecture and landscape, is part of the cultural history of the twentieth century, with its deep-seated nostalgia and resistance to the tide of inevitable change. After the onset of the Industrial Revolution in 1870 had destroyed the old sense of community, the Cotswolds became in so much of the literature of the twentieth century, in the wake of *Country Life* and the Arts and Crafts movement, a place of escape, away from the degrading influence of the cash nexus. It would be salutary to pretend that the story of the Cotswold house has not quite come to an end, and the post-war period has spawned worthy successors in a range of styles, continuing to renew and reinvent the vernacular. Examples of solid integral designs are legion, if not in the grand aristocratic tradition.

If the Cotswolds resisted the precepts of the International Modern Movement, even in diluted form, it was with an

Highgrove, west garden. The plain house of 1796 was rebuilt following a fire in 1893, with a 'facelift' of pilasters and balustrades added to a scheme of Felix Kelly in 1987. The terrace with magnificent cedar by the house leads across pleached hornbeams to yew battlements in the foreground shaped by Sir Roy Strong.

The Orchard Room at Highgrove by Charles Morris of 1997–8; inventive play with elements of the Cotswold vernacular.

instinct for the preservation of the past. Exceptions are isolated. John Campbell was one architect working in the Cotswolds between the wars, who rather unusually had practised many years in Germany imbuing the philosophy and practice of Modernism before settling near Stroud. An example is the Bear Inn of Rodborough, where in 1925 he added a round corner tower, with an eerie Bavarian feeling. After the War, there are little known Modernist oddities. Both Broadbridge Mill, near Ozleworth, and Upper Kilcott, near Hillesley, were remodelled for his own occupation by Berthold Lubetkin (1901–1990) after his retirement in 1951; the style sits uneasily in the Cotswolds, where this émigré architect from Georgia, sometimes described as the most important figure in the British Modernist movement, is popularly remembered as the architect of the Penguin Pool at London Zoo.

Today, the Cotswold vernacular lives on in numerous new buildings, and adaptations to old ones, and traditional building skills have enjoyed something of a revival, more self-conscious and academic. New initiatives in craft training and building crafts skills, led by such prime movers as The Prince of Wales through his Prince's Foundation and the Woodchester Mansion Trust, have become influential forces, planning the country's first Heritage Training Academy.

There have been additions to old houses (from subterranean service rooms at Daneway to a Neo-Georgian façade at Upton House), and so-called 'enabling' development (Northwick Park, Stout's Hill, Highnam), or interpretation centres (Snowshill), as well as demolitions of Victorian and Edwardian offices and servants' wings (Burn's wing at Stanway in 1948–49, and Brandon's wing at Williamstrip in 1946), and improvements for the deprivations of post-war, largely servantless, living (Wormington Grange, reduction and replanning in 1947; Bruern Abbey, demolitions, alterations and external remodelling in three phases from 1956).

The process continues. Planning permission was granted in 2006, after a long battle with conservationists, to demolish the large side wings of 1873 at Barrington Park and permit 'restoration of the house to its original eighteenth-century form.' Great estates continue to adapt old buildings. One of the most successful has been at Badminton, where The Cottage was remodelled as a dower house for David and Lady Caroline Somerset (who became the 11th Duke and Duchess of Beaufort), with the addition of a large library with French windows in the 1960s by the architects Sutton, Griffin and Morgan.

There are also dignified translations from the Classical in the style of the late twentieth-century Neo-Georgian. Among the most successful exercises in 'radical classicism' are two by masters in the genre, Quinlan and Francis Terry. Waverton House, near Sezincote (1978–80), is a stud farm, built for Jocelyn Hambro. It perpetuates the stone vernacular of the Cotswolds to a Classical plan, incorporating the stabling in low extending wings in the tradition of the Palladian rural villa-farm; the whole is raised up elegantly on a balustraded platform. The proportions of plan and sections throughout are governed by whole numbers. The Classical details of the exterior like volutes and modillions are simplified, with plain, unmoulded architraves, using the bolder expression not of Palladio, but of architects such as Michele Sanmicheli. Inside is a single central stairway of imperial grandeur, top-lit, with

Waverton House by Quinlan and Francis Terry, 1978–80.

The top-lit stairway at Waverton contributed by the local firm, Rathbones of Kingham.

Hidcote, looking from the house to the pair of pavilions which draw the eye into the stilt garden of pleached hornbeams laid out after 1915.

ironwork by Rathbones of Kingham, and decorations by Colefax and Fowler.

Court Farm at Bibury (1986–88), also by Quinlan and Francis Terry, has long, low elevations, of five wide bays on the main front, seven narrower ones to the rear; and a strong central bay with Serliana and statuary. It sits modestly in its village setting, unnoticed, recalling native prototypes, elevated to the standards of the robust Elizabethan Classicism of Robert Smythson.

Cotswold Gardens

The chief glory of the late twentieth century in the Cotswolds, however, lies in the gardens which many great houses have extended, improved, or reordered, often in sympathy with their own historic architecture. The Cotswold garden, like the Cotswold house, has won worldwide acclamation, and, in a region that never wants for superlatives, Timothy Mowl argues that the limestone belt can lay claim to the best group of gardens in England. This less because it is favoured by micro-climate or soil type, than because of the numerous skilled amateur practitioners living there, among them the great women gardeners of the post-war period: Avilde Lees-Milne at Alderley Grange and Rosemary Verey at Barnsley House, who became hugely influential through their books, their circle of friends and acolytes, and later their consultancy.

The Cotswolds has a group of unrivalled Arts and Crafts gardens, at Hidcote, Kiftsgate, Snowshill and Rodmarton Manor, which have all been well maintained into our own time. Of these, Hidcote, perhaps, has been the most influential of all since its first appearance in *Country Life* in 1930, and was the first garden to be taken in the care of the National Trust in 1948, since when it has been beautifully presented and managed. It was the creation of a naturalised American, Lawrence Johnston, who bought Hidcote Bartrim Manor in 1907. He started to lay out the gardens, aligned on an access parallel to the house, from about 1910, creating a series of rooms defined by hedges and walls – each with a different colour-theme – and with linking vistas. The garden, with its stilt hedges in hornbeam, box parterres and open lawns bounded by yews is renowned for its rare trees and shrubs and planting.

Barnsley House was inherited by David and Rosemary Verey in 1958, an architectural historian and a garden designer

Hidcote, reciprocal view from the stilt garden towards the unassuming house.

Barnsley House, south front of 1697 with the garden developed by David and Rosemary Verey from 1958: the walk of Irish yews with open lawns and cottage garden planting.

and writer respectively, early in their married life. They started laying out a plantsman's garden with a sure sense of architecture, introducing many historical motifs derived from wide reading and reflection in classical horticultural literature: a bibliophile's garden.

There are knot parterres after John Parkinson's *Paradisi in sole: paradisus terrestris* (1656), a lime and golden laburnum walk, a *potager* reminiscent of the French Neo-Classical garden with balls of privet and brick paths, a walk of Irish yews – all of which have created influential precedents imitated since in numerous other gardens. The colours are muted as a Dutch flower painting. Sculpture, early pieces by Simon and Judith Verity, provides focal points: a veiled hunting lady, a frog fountain supporting butting Cotswold rams, and two dwarf gardeners of the Veneto. A sundial has an inscription in italic quoted from John Evelyn, with its hint of Paradise to come: '*As no man be very miserable that is Master of Garden here, so will no man ever be happy who is not sure of a garden hereafter*'.

Highgrove, the family home of The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, was in its origins a house often attributed to one of the region's most successful late-Georgian architects, Anthony Keck, of King's Stanley, for the mill owner John Paul Paul. The original house, dated 1793–96, was gutted by fire a century later, in 1893, and rebuilt the following year, this time as a simplified late Victorian box to a comfortable but undistinguished, broadly Georgian, design.

Highgrove was acquired with its (then) small estate by the Duchy of Cornwall for the occupation of The Prince of Wales in 1980. The Prince asked Felix Kelly to 'improve' on the exterior, and the artist produced a fantasy sketch in 1985. A sense of 'sweetness and light' hangs on the main elevations, now enclosed in a cage of pilasters, with upstanding balustrading, pediment and urn finials to enrich the roofscape in a manner more country Baroque than Neo-Classical. The design was worked on and realised by Peter Falconer of Minchinhampton, a post-war gentleman-architect (who worked on my own house), in 1987. The result has been a happy enlivening of a staid design.

But the undisputed glory of Highgrove today is the garden. The Prince of Wales inherited a blank canvas save for depleted shelterbelts and a banal walk of golden yews marching from the terrace into the landscape, set on a rather unpromising level site by a road. He claimed disarmingly that he knew nothing about gardening. The transformation on an unpromising site of thin stony soils without views has been complete, embodying his gardening ideals and organic principles. Now it is embellished with wooden temples and primitive huts by Julian and Isabel Bannerman set in a sacred grove, apt inscriptions (one from Horace, mediated by Montaigne, reads: *virtutem verba putant, lucum lignam*, from *Epistles*, VI), a meditation room or 'sanctuary', incorporating Keith Critchlow's Neo-Platonic sacred geometry, Orthodox icons set among *gunnera*, Neo-Rococo conceits such as root houses, a stumpery planted with hostas, ferns and hellebores, a whimsical pigeon house in Cotswold stone, arbours and seats, and pools. There is statuary throughout, a copy of the bronze gladiator from Wilton, busts of the owner and his admired friends (one recalls Kathleen Raine, another Miriam Rothschild), a nude sylvan goddess. And planting curious and cunning.

The planting was undertaken with the advice of gardening gurus. Molly, Lady Salisbury (of Hatfield and Cranborne) was involved with an early project: the sundial garden of 1981–82, connecting to the south front, in black and white, hedged in by yews. Rosemary Verey planted the cottage garden, free form with serpentine paths, but her genius presides elsewhere. For instance, the walled kitchen, recalling the *potager* at Barnsley, transforms the utilitarian with formal pergolas and tunnels of arching apple trees, and crossing paths, roses, aromatic plants – all the product of a good deal of labour. Topiary is shaped to Renaissance forms of sweeping battlements by the hands and shears of Sir Roy Strong. Dame Miriam Rothschild, the 'Queen Bee' naturalist and entomologist, scattered seeds of wild flowers in the meadows. Despite a committed post-modern Internationalism, its sacred grove and the meditation halls, which are the *locus amoenus* of a prince-like Lorenzo de Medici and his philosopher Ficino, Highgrove is still at heart a Cotswold garden, continuing the insights of Rosemary Verey into a new millennium and constantly evolving.

An Islamic carpet garden is a recent addition, quite un-Cotswold, a walled sanctuary animated with water reflected in rills and myrtle pools, or playing in a marble bowl sculpted into sixty-four lobed segments. The rich textures of *azulejos* and mosaics sparkle with colour by sunken beds along the cross walks, planted with delphiniums and citrus trees; a recreation of paradise garden traditions found from the Alhambra to Isphahan.

One of The Prince of Wales's recent projects is the Orchard Room by Charles Morris of Norfolk, dated 1997–98. It is of course not a country house, but a utilitarian annexe to one, a single-storey enclosure for versatile spaces, which adapt as tearooms, a conference and reception room, shop, lavatories, and offices. These are the amenities typical of a country house open to the public in the twenty-first century, but everything here is furnished and finished with princely taste and wit – a figure sculpture by Nicholas Dimbleby in low relief, rugs and textiles gathered on travels in the East.

It is domestic in scale, a garden pavilion fronting a paved courtyard, and inventive in its play with the elements of the Cotswold vernacular. There are stone-tiled roofs, rendered walls (limewashed, of course), fat stumpy columns like those in local market halls at Tetbury and Dursley, plasterwork by Steve Welsh. The cross gables are reduced in proportion, standing back from the strong wooden eaves cornice, which functions as a gutter all round the building.

The Orchard Room represents a moment in the unfolding story of the Cotswolds, built in stone, drawing on vernacular traditions but telling a particularly late-twentieth-century story about the attractions and pleasures associated with this region, rightly celebrated as the quintessence of Englishness.

Highgrove, reflected in the stone pool. The west garden has a thyme walk flanked by an axis of golden yews, now formally sculpted, virtually all that remains from the garden taken over by HRH the Prince of Wales in 1980.

Garden seat at Highgrove on a raised platform, a hidden enclosure in the Arts and Crafts manner.