



Gardens and Grounds

T: +44 (0) 117 3314901
E: external-estates@bristol.ac.uk
www.bristol.ac.uk/estates-services

Why not visit... Botanic Gardens

Located in Stoke Bishop, Bristol, the 1.77 hectare garden, managed by the University of Bristol, is home to 4,500 species. Arranged in four core collections: Evolution; Mediterranean; Local Flora; and Rare Natives and Useful Plants, each collection has been designed to be attractive as well as educational, with some displays allowing visitors to walk through and be 'immersed' in the plantings.

For information and opening times:

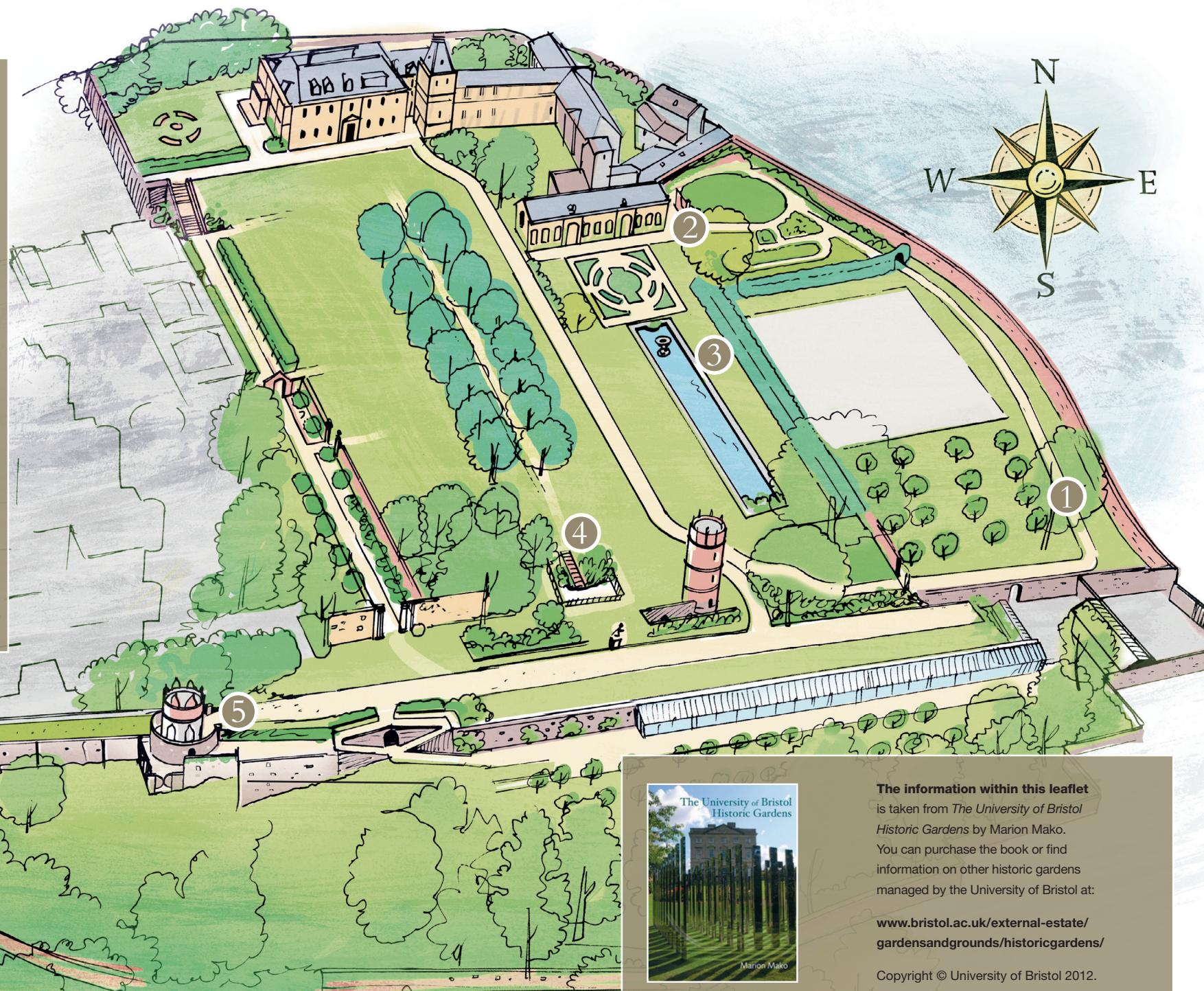


www.bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden

Goldney Garden Tour route

To get the best from the tour please follow the route marked on this map starting from position 1.

Further information on Goldney and his garden is available on our website, scan the QR code below to find out more.



Goldney Garden

A guide



Gardens and Grounds

The information within this leaflet

is taken from *The University of Bristol Historic Gardens* by Marion Mako. You can purchase the book or find information on other historic gardens managed by the University of Bristol at:

www.bristol.ac.uk/external-estate/gardensandgrounds/historicgardens/

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Design: www.greenhatdesign.co.uk
Illustration: www.adrianbarclay.co.uk

And each congenial guest
with joy invades,
the fountains, grottos
and the clear cascades...
A minor Stowe on
Clifton's crown we find,
in epic meekness,
like its master's mind.

from 'Clifton' by Henry Jones

Thomas Goldney III a wealthy merchant inherited the garden you see around you following the death of his father in 1731.

What Thomas Goldney achieved over the next thirty-five years was a garden combining the formal and informal styles of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Compared to the estates of his contemporaries such as Kingsweston, Stoke Park and Prior Park it was diminutive, encompassing only sixteen acres in its prime. But its reputation, as a garden of distinction spread, eventually becoming a popular destination for garden visitors and writers.

Goldney Garden is now owned and maintained as part of the Halls of Residence by the University of Bristol. The purpose of this, and similar guides, is to enable visitors to appreciate and explore the many historic gardens of which the University is the grateful guardian.

We hope you enjoy your visit.



1 / Heritage Orchard

Following the route illustrated overleaf begin your tour at position 1.

These dozen or so fruit trees are re-established specimens of varieties originally planted by Thomas Goldney and his father.

We know from records made in the 'Garden Book' a small notebook he began in 1736 to record plantings, sowings and general work, that Thomas' father took an interest in grafting fruit trees. In true gardening style cuttings and grafts were obtained from friends, including a Nonesuch Pear from the Wallis family at Lucknam Park. The notebook is still in existence, and is held by the University Library Special Collections.

Fruit trees were also liberally planted around the garden by his heir. The book records the planting of over 200 varieties including at least 100 apples.



2 / The Orangery

Continue north along the path through the ornamental garden and original gates to the Grade II* listed Orangery.

By 1712 Thomas Goldney's father had seen his investments in Abraham Darby's ironworks and privateering voyages grow substantially. In 1714, these newly realised profits enabled the building of a large greenhouse, to house the newly discovered tender exotics which were often brought back on the merchant ships.

Although it is likely that these plants included citrus trees which gave rise to the fashionable 'Orangery' of the period, the building was called a glass house and sited on the western edge of the gardens

Later, in 1760, Goldney created a fitting home for this collection of citrus trees, replacing his father's 'glass house' with this Orangery at the northern end of the canal.



3 / Canal and Tower

With your back to the Orangery, walk along the path towards the canal and the tower.

In 1758 Goldney began the construction of the canal, which was completed the following year. Formal in its design, it reflected the Dutch style more current at the beginning of the century, rather than the contemporary fashion for serpentine pools. It contained a basin and fountain as well as "gold and silver fish".

A mount, at the southern end, was raised to enclose the view. Beyond it lay the site for the 'fire engine' constructed in 1764 and housed within the Tower. The engine powered a beam apparatus used to raise water from a depth of 120 feet to cascade in the grotto and eventually make its way to the canal. Finally, a castellated viewing platform on the top afforded visitors with panoramic views over the gardens, the river and the surrounding landscape.



4 / The Grotto

Standing on the path in front of the Tower turn right. You will see the entrance to the Grotto.

Throughout his life Goldney's ambition was to transform his small garden into an Arcadian wilderness. Central to this vision would be the Grotto, a twenty-seven year labour of love. Within the cavern, lit by skylights, and decorated with a combination of carved Bath stone, tufa, various minerals, a few ammonites and 200 species of shells and coral, were pools, a river god and a lion's den!

One other man-made feature that has disappeared, was a free-standing *trompe l'oeil* painting set against a northern wall. In 1778, Samuel Curwen described the painting as a doorway and staircase leading to a garden, which would have added another surreal dimension to the complexity of this grotto.



5 / Bastion and Rotunda

Up the hill beyond the Tower is a level footpath, at the right hand edge of this path is the Bastion and Rotunda.

The Rotunda was probably designed as a simple Summerhouse, with an interior furnished with four chairs and a circular seat carved from walnut. Later, fashion for Gothic architecture inspired many changes, including the castellated roof, windows and the now missing colonnade.

The Bastion (the long grassed walk ending in an oval) can be accessed from the lower level of the Rotunda. In the eighteenth century it would have afforded clear views of the Avon, and the shipping. Such a quasi-military feature was unusual in a merchant's garden, but Goldney adopted the voids below his mock fortification for useful purposes, such as storage space for his fruit and vegetables.