

Cornwall and Scilly Historic Environment Record

Historic Environment Cornwall Council
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25 May 18

DesigUID: DCO20	Type: Registered Park or Garden	Status: Active
Preferred Ref 1642	National Ref 1000651	Other Ref
Name: MENABILLY	Grade: II	Date Assigned: 11/06/1987
	Amended:	Revoked:

Legal Description

C19 woodland garden, pleasure grounds, and parkland.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the early C16 Philip Rashleigh, a merchant from Barnstaple, Devon, began trading from Fowey. Through his son's marriage with Alice Lanyon the family acquired property in Cornwall, and was able to build a new town house in Fowey. In 1596 Philip Rashleigh's grandson, also John, purchased property at Menabilly, outside Fowey and began to build a new house which was completed by his son Jonathan. During the Civil War the house was looted; it was restored and improved in 1710-15 by Jonathan Rashleigh II and his son Philip, to whom the estate was given in the early C18. Philip Rashleigh II was also responsible for developing the pleasure grounds which benefited from the coastal climate; Borlase noted (1727) that 'every thing that belongs to the flower-garden, and grows in any part of England, will thrive and flourish here'. Philip Rashleigh III, who inherited Menabilly in 1764, continued the development of the grounds, constructing a grotto near the coast at Polridmouth and, in the late C18, calling in Thomas Gray to landscape the grounds. Gray's work at Menabilly was criticised by Philip Rashleigh's cousin, Sir Colman Rashleigh of Prideaux, who commented that 'in destroying the formal features of that place entirely divested it of the charm which belonged to it in a more formal condition. It is now nothing more than a house in a tame, flat field, at least as far as Mr Gray's alterations are concerned' (Memoirs, CRO).

Philip Rashleigh died in 1811 when the estate passed to his nephew, William (b 1777), who was already noted for his interest in new and exotic plants. William Rashleigh maintained close connections with the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (qv), exchanging plants and seeds and developing a valley garden at Menabilly which was known as Hooker's Grove as a compliment to his friend, Sir Joseph Hooker (1817-1911); by 1822 Loudon identified Menabilly as a 'show-place' in his gazetteer of Cornish gardens (Loudon 1822). When William Rashleigh died in 1855 his son, also William, built a new marine villa, Point Neptune, at Readymoney Cove west of Fowey in preference to residing at Menabilly. At Point Neptune he developed an ornamental carriage drive and built a family mausoleum on St Catherine's Point. William's brother, Jonathan Rashleigh V (1820-1905) inherited in 1871, and together with his son, Jonathan VI (b 1845), made significant additions to the plant collections at Menabilly including many bamboos and eucalyptus. In the 1930s the house was left unoccupied, and in 1940 it was let to the author, Dame Daphne Du Maurier (1907-89), who drew upon Menabilly for inspiration in her novels Rebecca and The King's General. Today (2000) the site remains in private ownership.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING

Menabilly is situated c 2km west of Fowey and c 0.5 km south-east of the village of Polkerris. The c 65ha site comprises some 15ha of pleasure grounds and c 50ha of parkland and ornamental plantations adjoining a network of carriage drives. To the north, northwest, east, and south-west the site adjoins agricultural land, while to the west the boundary is formed by a minor road which runs south from Polkerris to Menabilly Farm. The northern boundary to Ash Wood and Menabilly Wood is formed by a sunk fence, as is the south-east boundary of Tregear's Wood. To the south the site adjoins the beach at Polridmouth. The site comprises level ground to the north-west, which drops away steeply to the east and south-east where a valley extends south-south-west through the site from East Lodge to Polridmouth. A stream flowing through this valley is dammed to form a chain of pools. There are significant views south from the pleasure grounds to the coast at Polridmouth and south-west to the Gribbin Tower, a navigation marker on Gribbin Head. A

view west from West Lodge to St Austell Bay is today (2000) obscured by vegetation.

REFERENCES

W Borlase, The Natural History of Cornwall (1758), p 228
 D and S Lysons, Magna Britannia (1814), pp 316(17)
 C S Gilbert, Historical Survey of Cornwall ii, (1820), p 874
 J C Loudon, Encyclopaedia of Horticulture (1822), p 1247
 F W Stockdale, Excursions in Cornwall (1824), p 41
 Lake's Parochial History of Cornwall ii, (1868), p 32
 Gardeners' Chronicle, I (1886), pp 817(21; I (1903), pp 234(6)
 N Pevsner and E Radcliffe, The Buildings of England: Cornwall (2nd edn 1970), pp 116(17)
 B Jones, Follies & Grottoes (1974), pp 288(9)
 S Pring, Glorious Gardens of Cornwall (1996), p 20
 D E Pett, The Parks and Gardens of Cornwall (1998), pp 155(8)

Maps

OS 6" to 1 mile: 1st edition published 1881

Illustrations

G Boney, watercolour view of the grotto, Menabilly, 1805 (reproduced in Pett 1998, p 156)
 Aerial photographs, 1959 (HAW 9399/28, 29), (NMR)

Archival items

Memoirs of Sir Colman Rashleigh, mid C19 (FS/3/1127/1), (Cornwall Record Office)
 Correspondence from Jonathan Rashleigh V to Kew Gardens, late C19 (FS/3/1190), (Cornwall Record Office)
 Rashleigh family collection including planting records, nursery catalogues, and correspondence (DD/R), (Cornwall Record Office)

Curatorial Notes

Designating Organisation: Historic England

Location

Grid Reference: Centred SX 1027 5142 (1423m by 1992m)

Map sheet: SX15SW **Area (Ha):** 707,203.92

Administrative Areas

Civil Parish Fowey, Restormel, Cornwall

Postal Addresses - None recorded

Sources - None recorded

Associated Monuments

	Monument: POLRIDMOUTH - Modern sea defences, Modern ornamental pond, Modern winch
	Monument: POLRIDMOUTH - Medieval ford
	Monument: MENABILLY - Post Medieval drive, Post Medieval ornamental garden
	Monument: MENABILLY - Post Medieval lodge
166480	Monument: MENABILLY - Second World War bombing decoy
167334	Monument: MENABILLY - Modern gun emplacement
20493	Monument: TREGAMINION - Medieval cross
20494	Monument: TREGAMINION - Medieval cross
20615	Monument: MENABILLY - Medieval settlement
26685	Monument: POLRIDMOUTH - Medieval settlement
26706	Monument: TREGEAR WOOD - Iron Age round, Romano British round
26740	Monument: MENABILLY - Medieval cross
26741	Monument: MENABILLY - Medieval cross
26742	Monument: POLRIDMOUTH - Post Medieval corn mill
26824	Building: MENABILLY - Post Medieval country house

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Name: MENABILLY

26824.10 Landscape: MENABILLY - Post Medieval garden, Post Medieval park
26828 Monument: POLRIDMOUTH - Post Medieval folly and grotto
26851 Find Spot: FOWEY - Medieval findspot
60055 Building: TREGAMINION - Post Medieval church

Additional Information
