

“What wond’rous life is this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine”

Andrew Marvell, ‘The Garden’

Great Hall has water to a depth of 8ft (3m).

Although the planting reflects the medieval style, many of the decorative flowers and herbs remain garden favourites today. There are roses, pinks, lavender, bay, sage and thyme. Others are less likely to be cultivated deliberately now, but are well known as wildflowers or weeds. These include herb robert and Scotch thistle.

In medieval times, all plants were grown for a purpose, and most had a variety of uses. Onions were important for the kitchen, but also valued for their dyeing properties. Decorative flowers, such as pinks and marigolds, were also eaten and used to make tonics. The highly-poisonous alkaloid, deadly nightshade, *Atropa belladonna*, was valued for its medicinal properties by careful physicians. It was, however, rather dangerous to the high-born ladies who used it as a cosmetic to dilate their pupils. The opium poppy, *Papaver somniferum*, white bryony and lilies-of-the-valley all



Both the opium poppy (above left) and black henbane (above right) were used for pain relief by medieval physicians. Both are poisonous.

have a decorative appearance in Jane’s Poison Bed. This belies the risks they presented when used medicinally by physicians of the period. Other plants in the bed include monkshood, hemlock, foxglove, mandrake and henbane.

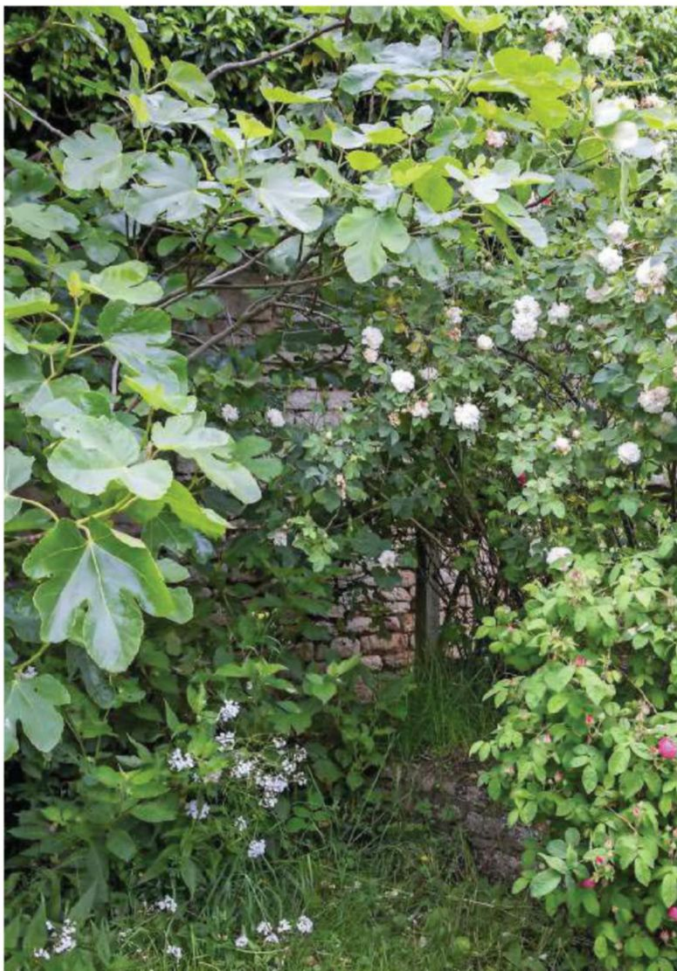
Ensuring privacy

One of the first parts of the garden to be developed in 1996 was a herber with turf seats. A herber was a planted garden, often entirely enclosed. The screening helped deter animals, and also created privacy, something always in short supply in medieval households. Jane’s first herber backs onto a boundary wall and one side of the imposing dovecote. Trellis screening makes up the other two sides.

Scented roses clamber through and around the screening, as seen in medieval depictions. In an era with little sanitation, plants with pleasing fragrances were especially appreciated. The enclosed nature of the herber encourages scent to linger, to be enjoyed by those sitting within.

More fragrance is provided by underplanting with wild strawberries, catmint and sweet-smelling herbs, while the central grass sward is dotted with daisies. A sweet bay tree, *Laurus nobilis*, towers to almost 20ft (6m) in one corner. Thistle, geranium and violet provide structure, colour and more perfume. Fruit is provided by a fig tree.

A previous resident of the Manor, the physician Nicholas Colnet, inspired the development of Jane’s second herber. He received the Manor after attending Henry V during the Agincourt campaign in 1415. Wealthy enough to maintain >



A corner inside the Enclosed Herber, filled with scented white *Rosa alba* and red apothecary’s rose, a fig tree and sweet rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*.