

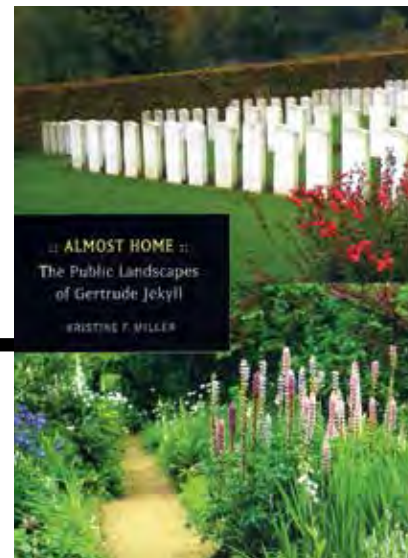
EDITED BY WILLIAM S. SAUNDERS

# ENGLISH WAYS

## ALMOST HOME: THE PUBLIC LANDSCAPES OF GERTRUDE JEKYLL

**BY KRISTINE F. MILLER; CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA:  
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA PRESS, 2013; 176 PAGES,  
\$49.50.**

REVIEWED BY JUDITH B. TANKARD



There's scarcely a landscape architect, garden designer, home gardener, or horticulturist who has not heard of Gertrude Jekyll (1843–1932), the doyenne of the herbaceous border and the consummate English garden style. She was known for her billowing flower borders in exquisite color and textural combinations that inspired generations of British and American gardeners. Russell Page, Mein Ruys, Penelope Hobhouse, Rosemary Verey, and, more recently, Jinny Blom, among others, owe a great debt to her planting and color theories. Jekyll's partnership with dozens of architects—Edwin Lutyens is the most famous—is legendary. As the author of more than a dozen books and hundreds of articles on all aspects of garden design and horticulture, Jekyll is probably the most oft-quoted gardener in history. There's rarely an issue of a gardening magazine today that doesn't refer to Jekyll in some form or other, however repetitiously.

Jekyll's claim to fame was her considerable knowledge of horticulture and her artistic vision of a garden, both of which she combined in her incomparable designs for gardens for private clients. Her passion for native plants, woodland gardens, scented plantings, and bold foliage was only part of her formula. Her early training as an artist came into play in her planting combinations, in which drifts of plants magically merged from one color and texture into the next. As with many sophisticated gardeners, green was her favorite color, ranging from shades of dull grayish-green to vibrant apple green, all of which she incorporated into her famous borders.

Today she is known primarily for several restored gardens that are open to the public. Among the best are the Manor House at Upton Grey (Hampshire), Hestercombe Gardens (Somerset), and the tiny walled garden at Lindisfarne Castle



**ABOVE**  
Jekyll's plantings at the Winchester College War Memorial Cloister were restored by the Hampshire Gardens Trust.

(Northumberland), now owned by the National Trust. In addition, there are a number of other, more fragmentary gardens that are in various stages of renewal. Her most famous garden, of course, is Munstead Wood, her home in Surrey that is still privately owned today. Built by Lutyens in 1896, the house launched his budding career as an architect and solidified his friendship with Miss J. From there, they went on to collaborate on dozens of commissions, most notably Orchards, Deanery Garden, Marsh Court, Folly Farm, Millmead, and Gledstone Hall. Jekyll wrote about Munstead Wood, the building of the house and the intricacies of the garden, in her books and articles. Today it stands as one of the premier examples of an Arts and Crafts house and garden. Although Jekyll never wrote a book about Arts and Crafts gardens, she covered the subject in *Gardens for Small Country Houses* (1912) with her coauthor, Lawrence Weaver. Examples of garden furniture (including the ubiquitous Lutyens bench), ornament, hand-built walls, paving, hedging, water features, gates, and garden houses still inspire landscape architects today.

There's no doubt Jekyll was the creator of what many consider the English country garden. In all, she designed several hundred gardens, mostly for private residences ranging from tiny to expansive. Fortunately Jekyll's extensive archives at the University of California at Berkeley provide researchers and garden owners a treasure trove of information as well as good documentation of her exemplar career. Among these papers are Jekyll's commissions for public (or nonprivate) projects that have received little notice until the publication of Kristine Miller's new book, *Almost Home: The Public Land-*

*scapes of Gertrude Jekyll*. Jekyll's accomplishments in this arena are not well-known mainly because there is no stunning example of that type of commission to visit. Miller, a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Minnesota, discusses Jekyll's designs for the King Edward VII Sanatorium, the Phillips Memorial Cloister, Winchester College War Memorial Cloister, and seven British war cemeteries in northern France, which comprise the bulk of the book. Since this publication is part of a series highlighting the landscape collections in the Environmental Design Archives at UC Berkeley, it includes a number of unpublished plans and photographs from the collection.

The approach and writing in this book is academic, but that should not discourage anyone interested in the subject. The book includes a good bibliography and extensive notes, but oddly absent is a list of commissions in the public sector. A list of Jekyll's projects held in the Environmental Design Archives is available online at [www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives](http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/cedarchives). A complete list of commissions (including those not in the Berkeley archives) arranged by project and by



**ABOVE**  
Jekyll worked on the Phillips Memorial Cloister in Godalming with the architect Thackeray Turner.

architect can be found in *Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood* (Sagapress, 1996) by me and Martin Wood, and a list of commissions arranged by date can be found in *Gertrude Jekyll: Essays on the Life of a Working Amateur* (Michaelmas Books, 1995) by Michael Tooley and Primrose Arnander.

Throughout the book, the author promotes her theory that “Englishness” is being deployed within the realms of health, memorial, and tribute. She writes, “Jekyll was convinced of the virtues of Englishness and of the garden’s power to influence human thought and feeling.” How, exactly, this relates to her so-called public work is the thesis of the book. Like many Britons (and Americans), Jekyll was swept up by the losses of World War I, and it was owing to the intervention of her friend and associate Edwin Lutyens that she became involved with the work of the War Graves Commission. Martin Wood wrote an excellent article in the autumn 2006 issue of *Hortus* on Lutyens’s and Jekyll’s work for the commission, and Tim Skelton’s book, *Lutyens and the Great War* (Frances Lincoln, 2008), provides much-needed information. Lutyens, along with Herbert Baker (his partner in Delhi) and

Reginald Blomfield (his old adversary), were the first three principal architects of the commission. As Miller writes, “The responsibility for commemorating the dead lay wholly with the British government and not with the dead’s families. The bodies became the property of Great Britain but would never be returned to British soil.” Hence the cemeteries in the Somme.

The examples discussed in the book (mostly in collaboration with Lutyens) include Gézaincourt, Trouville Hospital Cemetery, Warlincourt Halte British Cemetery, Fienvillers British Cemetery, Corbie la Neuville British Cemetery, Hersin Communal Cemetery, Auchonvillers Military Cemetery, and Daours Communal Cemetery. The author observes that Jekyll did not merely fill in the spaces on the plans given to her by the architects that were marked “border”; in some cases she actually added entire planting areas. Jekyll planted drifts of roses and iris as well as miniature woodlands. This was a quite different approach from Lutyens’s later, post-Jekyll scheme for the Irish War Memorial in Dublin, where bold plantings of the Peace Rose match the dramatic architectural elements.

A rather different approach was taken with the Winchester College War Memorial Cloister, where Jekyll worked with Herbert Baker. This was a small but significant commission for Jekyll and not far from her home. Again she used tried-and-true combinations of roses, lavender, hellebores, primrose, and nepeta for the border. As Jekyll said, it is “important to have a good proportion of permanent green things, especially at the edges next to the grass.” Jekyll’s plantings were restored a number of years ago under the direction of the Hampshire Gardens Trust and were looking serene when I last saw them. The Phillips Memorial Cloister in Godalming, which languished in recent years, has been refurbished by the Surrey



**ABOVE**  
The gardens at King Edward VII Sanatorium are going to be restored as part of a larger restoration of the estate.

Gardens Trust. (Jack Phillips's claim to fame is that he was the wireless telegraph operator on the *RMH Titanic*.) For this project, Jekyll collaborated with the architect Thackeray Turner, whose home and garden, Westbrook, was featured in *Gardens for Small Country Houses*. The memorial cloister is a small but enchanting project distinguished by its local Arts and Crafts detailing.

The most interesting project discussed in the book is the King Edward VII Sanatorium in Midhurst, designed in collaboration with Percy Adams in 1907. Although the buildings have been altered and the grounds and Jekyll plantings have been greatly simplified over the years, the property has regular open days under the National Gardens Scheme. This was a large and important project for Jekyll, who created more than 50 planting plans, of which only 10 survive. She used her expertise in designing private gardens to tie the building and garden together with stone walls, terraces, and border plantings. The scheme relied heavily on fragrant and attractive plants that would have a soothing and therapeutic effect on the patients and visitors alike. Jekyll's planting philosophy in general and her use of smothering walls with cascading plants is reminiscent of her work at Upton Grey and also Millmead, which she was working

on at the same time. The caption for a photograph of women working in the garden erroneously identifies them as "female patients" when, in fact, they were a team of lady gardeners from Frances Wolseley's famous Glynde College for Lady Gardeners nearby.

*Almost Home* is an interesting and thoughtful book with much to offer. It shows that Jekyll was a perceptive designer and extraordinary plantswoman, but her range of ideas and solutions were formulaic and more limited than that of a landscape architect. She was in fact a gardener and garden designer, but by no means a landscape architect.

The author comments that relatively little has been written about her work with architects other than Lutyens. The reason for this is that Jekyll's work with Lutyens is not only exceptional, but it is also well documented. This is not the case for many of the 50 other architects with whom she collaborated, such as Robert Lorimer, Walter Brierley, Herbert Baker, Sidney Barnsley, and others, where the documentation is limited and the photographic record is poor. I discovered this while working on my most recent book, *Gertrude Jekyll and the Country House Garden: From the Archives of Country Life* (Rizzoli, 2011). I was able to include projects with Thackeray Turner, Inigo Triggs, L. Rome Guthrie, and Oliver Hill, but others had to be eliminated for lack of information and those all-important visuals. In truth, Jekyll never had a more suited partner than Lutyens. Her working methodology with architects is discussed in detail in *Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood*. Jane Brown's excellent exhibition catalog, *Miss Gertrude Jekyll, Gardener* (Architectural Association, 1981), discusses the King Edward VII Sanatorium and the Winchester War Memorial Cloister as well as several projects Jekyll did with other architects. ●

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BOOKS  
OF INTEREST



**CLAUDE MONET'S GARDENS  
AT GIVERNY**

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEAN-PIERRE  
GILSON, TEXT BY DOMINIQUE LOBSTEIN;  
NEW YORK: ABRAMS, 2013; 136 PAGES,  
\$35.

This book is a showcase of Claude Monet's home and gardens at Giverny, where he moved with his family in 1893 and lived until his death in 1926. The flower and water gardens he created there, featured in vibrant photos from all four seasons by Jean-Pierre Gilson, provided inspiration for hundreds of paintings. Dominique Lobstein's text, though fictional, is based on real people and events and written from the perspective of Monet himself and some of the important people in his world. Good for garden enthusiasts and art fans alike. ●

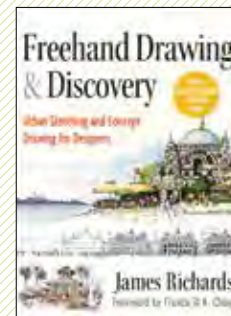
**DRAWING THE PLACES  
YOU LOVE TO DISCOVER  
WHAT MAKES THEM WORK.**



**PARKING REFORM MADE EASY**

BY RICHARD W. WILLSON; WASHINGTON,  
D.C.: ISLAND PRESS, 2013; 244 PAGES,  
\$40.

A creative design can run afoul of parking requirements, and Richard W. Willson, a professor and chair of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, knows it. He examines the case for minimum parking requirements and offers alternatives that focus on local data and trends rather than a cookie-cutter formula that treats every situation the same. ●



**FREEHAND DRAWING &  
DISCOVERY: URBAN SKETCHING  
AND CONCEPT DRAWING  
FOR DESIGNERS**

BY JAMES RICHARDS, FASLA; HOBOKEN,  
NEW JERSEY: JOHN WILEY AND SONS,  
2013; 265 PAGES, \$65.

Landscape architects who love to draw freehand—or who want to improve their skill so they can learn to love drawing—will want to have this book on their shelves. James Richards, FASLA, has filled the pages with instruction and inspiration, as well as lots and lots of drawings. Although many of the drawings are by Richards, other contributors include Christine Ten Eyck, FASLA; Robert Chipman, ASLA; and Kevin Sloan, ASLA. ●