

Chilland

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N.G.R. S24 32S

Martyr Worthy, 4 miles NE of Winchester, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile W of Itchen Abbas. Signposted 'Chilland' leading S from B3047.

One of the marks of the really successful garden is to know when to stop. What a temptation it is to all keen plantsmen to extend, as long as ground is available, areas of cultivation and the collections of plants within them. Frequently garden, not gardener, becomes the master and all time away is taken as it were surreptitiously. At Chilland a satisfactory balance seems to have been struck and in doing so a most satisfactory garden evolved, of interest to casual viewer and specialist alike.

Entrance is by a dark and rather unprepossessing drive but as soon as the house appears (good, Regency) so do interesting plants. Throughout the garden their association is the product of much thought, much trial and presumably even error (the two usually go together). Few areas are allowed to have only one season of display hence attraction is frequently both sequential and stratified.

An immediate example exists at the sweep before the house (this carries yellow and red fruited pyracanthas) where the small apple *Malus transitoria* is underplanted with *Tulipa orphanidea* to accompany the spring flower and *Cyclamen hederifolium* the autumn fruit. Left of the porch grows *Clematis alpina* 'Frances Rivis' – by far the best of the group.

The main garden area is now at hand. From the south front ground slopes gently to the River Itchen, its course marked by meadowsweet and rushes, then rises again on the other side to a low tree-covered hill. No exotic gardening competes with this gentle scene – the grass is first mown then rough-cut – except one vast, and surprisingly narrow, London plane, as old as the house and quite part of the place. To the left *Magnolia x veitchii* and a few rhododendrons share an area of prepared soil; to the right an exactly laid York stone path leads round to the west.

Borders and walls of the house combine to offer sites to a wide range of good plants. On the south is *Abutilon vitifolium*, several hebes, *Magnolia grandiflora* through which the brittle-stemmed grey *Senecio leucostachys* has climbed to reach first floor level. From the corner a diagonal vista aligns through groups of shrubs to the river meadows and cornfields. Beyond is *Buddleia crispa* from North India, good in leaf

and flower, and further round winter sweet and *Stachyurus praecox* make a fine winter pair. Turning to the west front a wide ride leads ahead ending in a yew-hedge apse broken by central wrought-iron gates. On the right, linking with the flagged path that here has taken on a terrace role, a rectangular pool is set in further flags. It is backed on two sides by a wide raised bed full of good bulbs and corms. Big clumps of *Haberlea* sp. and other damp-impatient alpine flourish on the vertical sides. The prostrate *Daphne blagayana* makes a fine plant and here is a couple of feet nearer the nose than usual for its exquisite scent to be enjoyed. In summer *Tropaeolum polyphyllum* tumbles from between the stones and although Chilland is not a warm garden *Euphorbia mellifera* seeds itself about. Opposite, mention must be made of a huge yew which has been cut back almost to a telegraph pole but which shoots into growth to form a cypress-like column up which rose 'Bobby James' has climbed. A good way of dealing with a plant which threatened to darken every aspect. Moving along the ride a broad tree-backed herbaceous border marches to the right and, to the left, several intercommunicating areas in which Chilland's best plant associations are seen. At the apse, openings right and left lead to tennis court and swimming pool respectively, both out of sight from the main walks. Turning to the mixed borders at a broad hybrid oak – perhaps a Turkey – there is much to see; roses and especially clematis climb about. Hence clematis 'Royal Velour' clammers over purple *Cotinus*

