

HIGH BEECHES HOUSE

HANDCROSS

High Beeches Gardens
High Beeches Lane
Handcross
West Sussex. RH17 6HQ

<http://www.highbeeches.com/index.php>

CMG Archives

<http://www.campbellmgold.com>

(2012)

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*High Beeches House and Estate
(Date Unknown)*

High Beeches (1848)

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the building of the Brighton Pavilion, and the subsequent increase in traffic, prompted the construction of the London to Brighton post road. The post horses were stabled at the Red Lion Inn at Handcross and many people began to settle on the Forest Ridges, attracted by the beautiful unspoiled landscape.

A substantial mansion with spectacular views across the downs, together with extensive formal gardens and stabling was built at this period.

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Sir Robert Loder

In 1848 the High Beeches mansion and estate were bought by Sir Robert Loder, who enlarged the house and stables and built the Clock tower and Coach House.

Members of the Loder family went on to found other great Sussex gardens at Wakehurst and Leonardslee.

High Beeches Gardens is 27 acres of rare plants, trees and shrubs, which has been declared "Outstanding" by English Heritage as an exceptionally well preserved example of a landscaped woodland garden, dating from the early 20th century. The year 2007 was the centenary year of this the garden at High beeches.

Sir Robert Loder, 1st Baronet DL, JP (07 Aug 1823 - 27 May 1888) was an English landowner, magistrate and Conservative politician.

Loder was the son of Giles Loder, of Wilsford Salisbury, and his wife Elizabeth Higgbotham, daughter of John Higgbotham, of St Petersburg.

Robert Loder was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge. He inherited from his father a considerable fortune and had extensive estates in Northamptonshire and Sussex as well as in Russia and Sweden.

Loder was a Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant for Sussex and a JP for Northamptonshire.

In 1877 Robert Loder was High Sheriff of Sussex.

At the 1880 general election Loder was elected Member of Parliament for New Shoreham, and he held the seat until 1885.

In 1887 Robert Loder was created a Baronet, of Whittlebury in the County of Northampton, and of High Beeches in Slaugham in the County of Sussex.

Loder married Maria Georgiana Busk, fourth daughter of Hans Busk.

Their fourth son Gerald was ennobled as Baron Wakehurst.

Robert Loder died at Beech House, Worthing, in May 1888, aged 64.

His eldest son Edmund Loder succeeded in the baronetcy.

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Colonel Giles Loder

The estate descended to Sir Robert Loder's grandson, Colonel Giles Loder in 1906.

The house was burnt down in 1942, after being hit by a crippled Canadian bomber returning from carrying propaganda leaflets to drop over Germany.

Colonel Giles Loder was one of the outstanding gardeners of his day; and he subscribed to overseas plant collecting expeditions and was a patron of Veitch's nursery.

Colonel Loder died in 1966 and the High Beeches site was divided up and sold.

The Boscauwens bought the Woodland Gardens with the site of the old Mansion house.

High Beeches has now been home to the Boscauwen/Bray gardening dynasty since 1966.

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Leonardslee Gardens (1889)

The Loder family also own the well-known Leonardslee Gardens at Lower Beeding.

In 1889, Sir Edmund Loder acquired the Leonardslee property from his in-laws, Leonardslee; and it has become synonymous with spring plants that give dazzling colour displays, including the well-known hybrid *Rhododendron loderi*, which takes the family name.

Another family member, Sir Robert Loder acquired the nearby High Beeches estate in 1848 - a second woodland garden filled with spring delights.

And Edmund's younger brother, Gerald Loder created the wonderful gardens at Wakehurst Place.

So the Loder family have left the nation with a remarkable garden legacy.

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High Beeches Gardens

High Beeches has been gardened with knowledge and distinction throughout its existence.



*High Beeches House
(Date Unknown)*

Plants survive from his day including historically important specimens collected by Ernest Wilson, Frank Kingdom Ward and George Forrest. These and other plant hunters travelled to places such as China, Japan and North and South America to find rare and beautiful plants.

Their expeditions took years and were dangerous affairs. Taking no notice of wars, diseases, travelling difficulties and lack of funds, they brought back many specimens. The plant hunters sought out the best of each species in terms of flowers, fragrance and foliage – the ultimate in wild plants, trees and shrubs.

High Beeches has a particularly fine collection of species - the best "wild" forms. In other words High Beeches has an outstanding and superb "wild plant" collection from all over the world.

The Boscawen/Brays are knowledgeable plants-people and have won many prizes for their horticultural exhibits. They have been invited to join overseas plant hunting expeditions and have been horticultural judges. Their aim is to plant only the finest specimens and to display them to best effect within the natural landscape. The effect is supremely elegant, as if nature just happened to create a stunning garden, when in fact the gardens have been carefully designed.

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High Beeches Destroyed - 11 March 1943, 0206

High Beeches House was destroyed when struck by a crippled Halifax Bomber.

DT492 - Halifax of 76 Squadron was returning from an operation to Stuttgart coded MP-H.

The aircraft was severely damaged by flak shortly after bombing. Too seriously damaged to return to Linton On Ouse, the aircraft succeeded in crossing the South Coast where the aircraft was successfully abandoned.



Halifax Bomber of the type used by the Canadian Air Force

Unfortunately, the aircraft crashed into High Beeches House, the family home of Colonel Loder MC, the High Sheriff of Sussex. He and his family survived but three maids living at the back of the house died. The house itself was destroyed.

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Halifax Crew

The crew of the Halifax were:

- F/Sgt. T Gallantry
- Sgt. Middleton
- Sgt. Webster
- Sgt. Myers

- Sgt. Exton
- Sgt. Whitmore
- F/Sgt. Farrer

Edited to add: Airborne 1915 11th March 1943, crashed 0206 12th March 1943.

Information from *Chorley's Bomber Command Losses and the Lost Bombers website*.

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