

concentrating on rarer or more ornamental species like the Italian cypress, the false acacia (eventually named *Robinia pseudoacacia* after the Robins in Paris) and a probable new introduction, the 'Turpentine tree' (*Pistacia terebinthus*, still rare enough for Hartlib to remark on one seen at 'Mr Cupid the Earl of Arundels Gardiner' in his Southwark garden).<sup>26</sup> His son planted many more, not just his new Virginian introductions and new ornamental shrubs from Europe but the common trees of the English landscape – beech, birch, hornbeam, common oak, limes, blackthorn, white and black poplars, mountain ash and the wild service tree. And he was still growing his father's sun-seeking bulbs and flowers, including his favourite pinks and gillyflowers, geraniums, peonies, hyacinths, wallflowers, lilies, daylilies and sweet Williams.

Altogether, the younger Tradescant's plant catalogue represented an extraordinary range of plants. Bobart at the Oxford Physic Garden could match him for simples, perhaps, but his garden lacked many of the tender exotics and star performers collected by both Tradescants over many years.<sup>27</sup> Only his father's orchard fruits were missing, presumably because he was running the orchard as a nursery business and therefore planting stock in considerable quantities rather than single specimens.

Yet when John Evelyn visited Tradescant's museum in September 1657, he noted only 'the chieftest rarities' in his museum, ignoring Tradescant the man and his Lambeth garden. His silence tantalises. Was it because Tradescant's manners were too rough and boorish, his conversation too unlettered? Did Evelyn's own preferences for rare plants and continental garden design get in the way? Was the garden impressive only on paper? Or was it just a case of faulty memory, as Evelyn wrote up or altered his diary entry several years after the event?<sup>28</sup> These are questions the new biography will attempt to answer: even silences must be interrogated.

26. *Ephemerides* 1653 Pt 4, 2 September – 31 December, 28/2/75B.

27. See Jacob Bobart's first catalogue for the Oxford Botanic Garden, *Catalogus Plantarum Horti Medici Oxoniensis* (Oxford, 1648).

28. William Bray (ed), *Diary and Correspondence of John Evelyn*, FRS (London, 1906), p. 222, entry for 17 September 1657. Evelyn's reference to John Tradescant's 'widow' means that the published entry was written or altered after Tradescant's death in 1662.

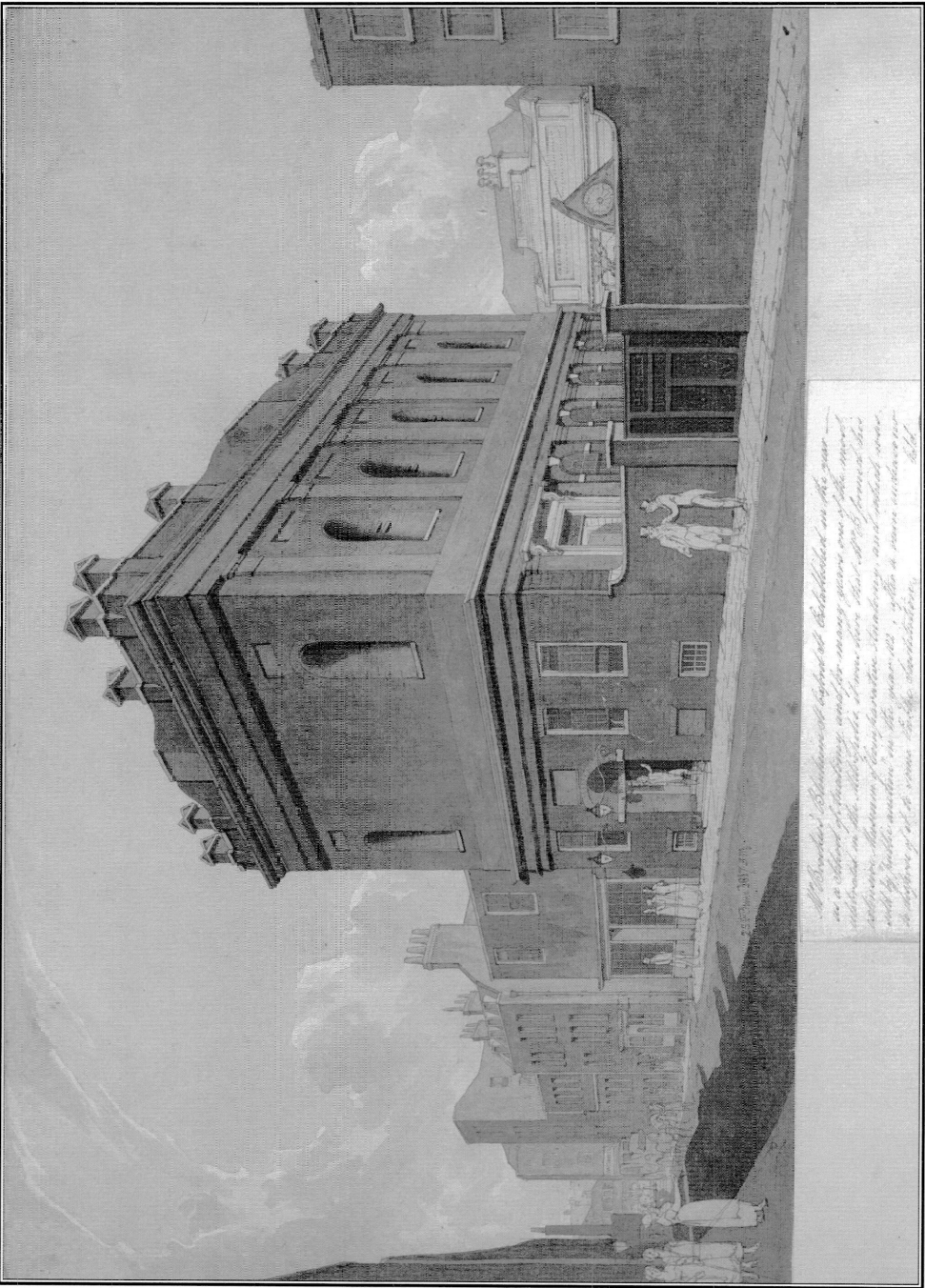
## ANOTHER GLIMPSE of BROOKES'S VIVARIUM

By Tim Knox

Veteran readers of *The London Gardener* may recall in volume III (1997–98) my article entitled 'Joshua Brookes's Vivarium: an Anatomist's Garden in Blenheim Street, w1'. Here I presented the story of the remarkable menagerie-garden of the anatomist Joshua Brookes (1761–1833), who ran a private anatomical academy for medical students in Blenheim Street, off Oxford Street, from 1786 to 1830. My article was illustrated with a reproduction of an original watercolour by George Scharf in the Department of Prints and Drawings of the British Museum, depicting Brookes's garden. The principal feature of this strange elysium was the 'vivarium', a sort of rockery especially constructed to display Brookes's collection of living birds and animals, garnished with shells, plants and architectural fragments, and topped by a sprightly fountain. Nearby was a Gothick hermitage, its arched front formed from the immense jaw bones of a whale. The watercolour view is relatively well-known, as it was engraved by C Hullmandel and published in 1830. My article also reproduced a detail of Horwood's *Map of London* (1813 ed.) showing the site of Brookes's Museum and garden, and a drawing by Appleton of 1888 showing what I thought was its exterior. However, it is now clear that this view depicts Brookes's house at no. 13 Great Marlborough Street and its household offices. Brookes's Museum lay further north, towards Oxford Street, and is not visible in Appleton's view.

Thanks to Dr Simon Chaplin, Senior Curator of the Hunterian Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, I can now offer readers an actual view of Brookes's Museum and garden. 'Sketched on Wednesday 25th June 1817', the watercolour, possibly by Robert Blemmel Schnebbelie, depicts the 'beautiful new apartment' which stood behind Brookes's house, built by the natural philosopher, Henry Cavendish, who used it as his laboratory.<sup>1</sup> It is a curious structure, built of red brick and of two storeys, the upper being a lofty windowless apartment,

1. Royal College of Surgeons of England, catalogue no. RCSSC/P 320.



69. Attributed to R.B. Schrebbelie, View of Joshua Brookes's Museum, 25 June 1817.  
Note the gable of the hermitage, and one of the cenizens of the vivarium  
just visible above the garden wall.  
(COURTESY THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS OF ENGLAND)

its exterior articulated with pilasters and round-headed niches. The cornice is surmounted by a high parapet adorned with battlement-like pedimented 'altars'. Both as an architectural composition and as an early purpose-built laboratory, the building that housed Brookes's Museum was a distinguished edifice that deserves further study.

The galleried 'saloon' within, in which Brookes displayed his skeletons and preparations, was top-lit, while downstairs, where Brookes worked, the artist has shown the window sashes open - the view was taken on a hot summer's afternoon and John Flint South recalled in 1888 that in hot weather Brookes's 'little dissecting room' had the 'strong smell of a ham shop'. The blind basement window to the right of the door to the Museum may be the notorious hatch through which the resurrection men delivered fresh 'subjects' - illegally exhumed human corpses - for Brookes's anatomical demonstrations. The watercolour is also interesting as it shows what Brookes's menagerie-garden looked like from the street. Defended by a high brick wall and secured by an elaborate green painted gate or grille bearing the inscription 'Dr Brookes', the animals and birds could be inspected through a pair of trellis panels. Presumably this was the 'iron gate' that Henry Angelo recalled in his reminiscences of 1818.

From the other side of the street, however, a tantalising glimpse of the gable of the hermitage can be discerned, while a bird of prey flutters on its perch on the summit of the rockwork *vivarium*. The watercolour also illustrates how the back wall of the garden was treated as a stuccoed architectural composition, similar to an earlier garden eye-catcher of 1739 that survives behind no. 71 South Audley Street in Mayfair. The parapet of this facade bears what looks like an inscription, possibly an advertisement extolling the interest and curiosity of Brookes's Museum to passers-by.

F I N I S

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