

the Secret Garden

Manor Road Cemetery was opened in 1872, and the Secret Garden was created because the area was unsuitable for burials. The Victorian fascination with rock gardens was at its height at this time, with rockeries built at Kew Gardens in 1867, and the Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh in 1871. The large rocky fernery is a good example of fashionable Victorian garden design.



The Secret Garden, along with the rest of the cemetery, was designed by Leonard Thompson, the cemetery superintendent, who is buried in Manor Road Cemetery near the path leading under Manor Road Bridge.

At the entrance to the garden was a hinged stone gate, which is now lost.



The new standing stones at the entrance of the garden were designed to reflect the original stone gate.

Many local people remember the garden as it was in the 1940s and 50s, speaking fondly of time spent there as children.

“ Fifty years ago when I was a young person, the Secret Garden was known as the Stonegate and Rockery. It was deeply hidden by trees and shrubs. The stone gate was large and heavy and hinged to a solid stone post. Once inside it was magical. There was a stream and small pond. On either side a high rockery spilling over with plants and flowers (and in summer I believe wild sweet peas). A narrow uphill winding path led to a bench seat. My friend and I went to the Convent School. On our way home we would go to the garden and sit on the bench and do our homework. It was a tranquil place and we were rarely disturbed. I'm sure it was a haven for many people. ”

Elizabeth Pobjee

“ Happy memories as a little boy of 6/7 or thereabouts playing in the Hidden Garden on sunny days and sitting at the side of the little pond watching newts etc. swim around. I remember there were wild strawberries in abundance all around that area, though very small were delicious. The entrance was through a big stone gate that was on hinges and could be opened and shut no problem by me and my pals in those days 1946/7 onwards. The gate was I believe York Stone (as I know now) and had a flat bar bolted onto the hinges. There was, if my memory serves me right, a small bench to sit on. In the holidays we used to spend hours down there. It was to us the “secret garden”. Our respective mums would do us some jam sandwiches and tell us to be back for teatime. Those were the halcyon innocent carefree days when you made your own amusement and had so much fun. Oh how the children of today really miss out. I will take a look down sometime soon, without the jam sandwiches!!! ”

Pip Waller

It was a special place to lots of people and was known by many different names, including:

The Fairy Garden Stonegate The Grotto The Secret Garden The Rockery The Hidden Garden

Over the years the garden was neglected. In 1984 a group of Venture Scouts cleared the undergrowth and won a prize for their hard work.



This hard work wasn't followed up and when the Friends of Dean Road and Manor Road Cemeteries were formed in 2008 the Secret Garden was completely overgrown. Volunteers worked to clear the garden and were awarded a grant by the Heritage Lottery Fund to restore it.



Visit www.scarboroughcemeteries.co.uk and check out the podcasts to discover more local memories of the Secret Garden. You will also find lots of activities in our Education Pack and Cemetery Trail leaflet.



Activities



Podcasts

