

LOOKING FOR PARADISE COTTAGE

Paradise Cottage is a distinctive property in the Montpelier Conservation area which is categorised as “an unlisted building of merit”. The unusual combination of pitched and valley roof can be clearly seen in the photograph and the two different styles of the structure and the large enclosed rear garden give it a distinctly rural character in a central city area; the interior reveals a quaint combination of rooms and stairs, old fireplaces, a range and an unusual arched recess in the parlour and there is said to be a well in the rear garden. The cottage is quaint and charming; it stands out amongst the Victorian buildings which surround it and certainly adds depth to the historic character of the conservation area.



It is obviously old, but how old is it? Bristol Record Office has produced a guide to “Building and House History” but unless you have a complete set of original deeds (or live in Longleat or Windsor Palace) the history of an old building can be quite difficult to trace. Bristol Corporation first required plans of properties to be submitted for drainage purposes in 1851 and they survive pasted into huge ledgers at the Record Office—but Paradise Cottage was built long before then. The large-scale 1855 Ashmead map clearly shows the present structure and the earlier Ashmead map which goes back to 1828 shows a building on the site which looks slightly smaller (both maps are viewable in the “Know Your Place” feature on the Bristol City Council website). The search for records is not made any easier by the fact that until 1833 Montpelier lay outside the city boundary and so was not included in the detailed Bristol property survey of 1823. Until 1845, it came under the ecclesiastical Parish of St Paul and it was part of the Out-Parish of St James and St Paul for administrative purposes. There are some records of buildings and ratepayers for these areas going back to 1787, but Upper Road, Montpelier (today’s Richmond Road) is only recorded in detail from 1813. Paradise Cottage was clearly built in different stages: parts of the building are said to date back to the 18th century but it would take an expert survey of the fabric of the building to conclusively confirm its age. I have tried to find what evidence survives from personal recollection and documentary sources—particularly old maps and rate books--which might provide clues to the history of the cottage.

I start with a summary of what I have discovered, followed by extracts from the evidence itself. At the end I give my conclusions.

SUMMARY.

1. The previous occupant, Miss Gladys Newton identifies features shown on old OS and Ashmead maps of Paradise Cottage, in particular the summerhouse at the bottom of the garden and the greenhouse leading from the parlour into the garden, (taken down after the glass was shattered during an air-raid in 1941.)

2. The executors of William James advertise Paradise Cottage for sale in the Bristol Mercury of April 1874.

3. The 1855 Ashmead map shows Paradise Cottage exactly as it is now apart from the missing greenhouse. When used in conjunction with the 1851 Borough Survey and parish rate books the map can be used to identify the occupants and owners of landmark properties and their first appearance in rating records.

4. In a will dated April 21st 1849 John Wanklyn, owner of Montpelier Villa (now Montpelier House – 84 Richmond Road) leaves Paradise Cottage and adjoining properties to his nephew William James.

5. On March 23rd and June 24th 1844, rooms are advertised at Paradise Cottage in the Bristol Mercury. Mention is made of the garden and the “green-house attached to the parlour”.

6. The earliest detailed map of the area was published by Ashmead in 1828. Although Ashmead maps were issued in 1833 and 1845 they are identical to the 1828 map as far as this part of Richmond Road is concerned and do not show properties which we know from other records were built at this time, which indicates that the Ashmead map for the area was not updated in detail between 1828 and 1855. If we superimpose the 1828 map on the 1855 map we see a single building in 1828 which covers both the end of the 1855 Paradise Cottage and the adjacent Victoria Cottage.

7. In the Consolidated Rate Book for 1839 Godfrey Derrick and Sander Wilson are listed as ratepayers in neighbouring properties in Upper Road (Richmond Road) and their precise address can be cross-referenced to other sources: Mathew’s Bristol Directory for 1840 confirms that Godfrey Derrick is living in Paradise Cottage Montpelier, while an announcement in the Bristol Mercury shows that Sander Wilson is “of Victoria Cottage Montpelier.” Victoria Cottage, which was demolished in the early 1870s and replaced by three terraced houses which stand on the site now, can be identified as the smaller building adjoining Paradise Cottage on the 1855 map.

8. In a will dated September 4th 1822, Samuel Shedden leaves his two Gardens with Summer-houses in the Parish of St Paul to his wife and nieces. The OED shows one meaning of a summer-house at this time to be “a summer residence in the country.”

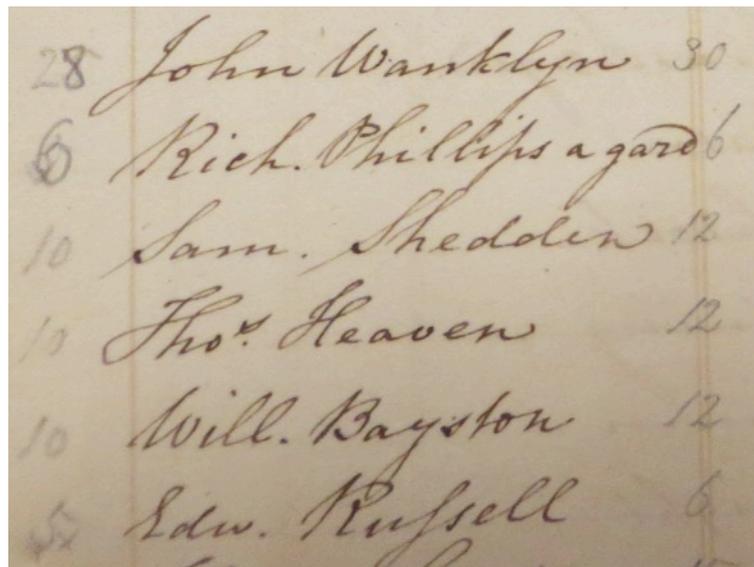
9. The Poor Rate Books for the Out-Parish of St James and St Paul list ratepayers in Upper Road from 1813 and the Church Rate Books for St Paul from 1823. They give names of ratepayers and rateable values of premises arranged in order of residence

which from 1817 enable us to identify patterns of long-term occupancy of landmark premises in Upper Montpelier: the most important for us are Montpelier Villa (now Montpelier House) and Montpelier Court—two large properties on either side of the site of Paradise Cottage. Montpelier Villa in its present form seems to date from 1813 when a large void house is listed on the site of a garden, or garden house, owned by William Wanklyn and from then on it is occupied for many years by John Wanklyn, the owner of a vinegar factory. Montpelier Court, which ran from Richmond Road to York Road was owned from 1824 by Edward Russell, a silversmith and pawnbroker (who appears to have expanded a garden into a substantial residence by acquiring the neighbouring house and developing the site). The rate books from 1817 to 1823 list properties between these two reference points occupied by Samuel Shedden and Thomas Heaven.

10. If a chart is made of the rate payments on these properties we can list rate payments which link Samuel Shedden in 1817 to Godfrey Derrick and Sander Wilson in 1840.

11. By analysing the changes in maps and rate payments we can suggest possible changes in the structure and layout of the building on the Shedden site between 1817 and 1840.

POOR RATE BOOK OF THE OUT-PARISH OF ST JAMES & ST PAUL.
September 1818. (Bristol Record Office)



A photograph of a handwritten entry from a poor rate book. The text is written in cursive and lists several names and amounts. The entries are: 28 John Wanklyn 30, 6 Rich. Phillips a garden 6, 10 Sam. Shedden 12, 10 Tho. Heaven 12, 10 Will. Bayston 12, and 5 Edw. Russell 6. The numbers on the left are likely house numbers or identifiers, and the numbers on the right are the rates.

28	John Wanklyn	30
6	Rich. Phillips a garden	6
10	Sam. Shedden	12
10	Tho. Heaven	12
10	Will. Bayston	12
5	Edw. Russell	6

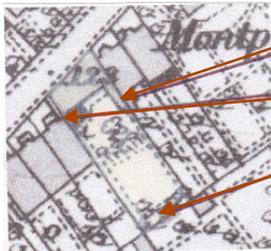
IN DETAIL

1. PARADISE COTTAGE IN LIVING MEMORY

Although Miss Gladys Newton, the previous owner of Paradise Cottage, who moved in with her parents around 1925 at the age of five, remembers being shown old handwritten deeds by her father when she was a girl, she tells me that they went up in flames when their solicitors were bombed during the war. Her father grew vegetables in the garden before the war and she remembers two features which can be seen on large-scale maps from the 1880s and 1855—the small summerhouse at the end of the garden which had brick walls, a tiled roof, slatted wooden shutters and a fitted wooden bench round the walls (only the walls remain) and the greenhouse which led from the rear parlour into the garden and which contained a vine. When they moved in, the house had no electricity or gas and cooking was done on a range in the kitchen (which is still there). She thought the building could originally have been a farm cottage and she could well imagine that it might have been two properties—there were two stairways and odd little rooms and doorways with no doors; the house had obviously been altered and adapted over the years. She remembers the well which never ran dry and went from the garden, under the narrow utility room and which also supplied the neighbouring property (no 80). There used to be a hand pump either side of the sink but their well water was only used on the garden—her mother would not allow it in the house. The supply seemed to come from across the road—when it rained hard you could hear water running down to the well behind a wall in the basement. There was a similar well at Montpelier House and at Cadbury Cottage and she thought they might have been fed from a spring. [This could be a normal well but I think it might possibly be an underground water storage cistern, shared between two houses, an arrangement which was quite common in hilly Montpelier even for a time after piped water arrived in the 1830s—houses were advertised with “both sorts of water”. These cisterns were usually arched structures, brick or stone lined and kept filled by springs or rainwater piped from the roofs. I suggested this to Miss Newton and she said it was quite possible as the well went right out under the garden.]

Paradise Cottage was nearly destroyed in the blitz: Miss Newton remembers the problems her father had when trying to build an Anderson shelter in the floor of the basement, getting down only two feet before meeting solid rock, leaving most of the shelter standing above floor level. This part of Montpelier was vulnerable to bombing because it was close to the goods yard at Montpelier Station and the line linking Bristol to Avonmouth docks. On the evening of March 16 / 17, 1941 the houses opposite Paradise Cottage were struck by bombs and her father and their next door neighbour, Mr Cox, who was firewatching, were both killed; in one of the houses opposite an old lady and her companion died and in the other, which was being used as a St John Ambulance post, everyone was killed. Miss Newton's bedroom was under the flat roof section of the cottage and the stone top of one of the gateposts opposite was blown across the road, through the window of her room and onto the bed. (She was out of the room at the time.) The gas and water mains in the road were fractured. The cottage itself survived but there was some damage to the roof and windows; the glass in the greenhouse at the rear was shattered and it was taken down. (There is a graphic account of the event by Mr H.A.Cox, her neighbour's son, in “Richmond Road Bombing”, a letter to the Bristol Evening Post of October 29, 2002.)

IDENTIFIED BY MISS NEWTON (1880s OS MAP: Know Your Place website)



1. The well “which never ran dry” with hand pumps in the utility room.
2. The greenhouse which led from the back room to the garden and contained a vine; the glass was shattered in an air raid in 1941 and it was taken down.
3. The summerhouse which had a tiled roof and slatted wooden shutters. Only the walls remain.

2. ADVERTISEMENT BY EXECUTORS OF WILLIAM JAMES: “BRISTOL MERCURY” APRIL 18TH 1874 (Bristol Reference Library).

PRELIMINARY ADVERTISEMENT.

Very Important **FREEHOLD PROPERTIES**, comprising a valuable **FARM and LANDS**, at **NAILSEA**, Somerset; extensive **WAREHOUSES and BUSINESS PREMISES**, in **SMALL-STREET**, Bristol, in the occupation of Mr. A. J. Morris, Wine Merchant (late Rankin & Co); **MONTPELIER-VILLA**, **OAK-VILLA**, and **PARADISE-COTTAGE**, **RICHMOND-ROAD**, **MONTPELIER**; **CLAREMONT-COTTAGE**, **YORK-ROAD**, and a piece of very valuable **BUILDING LAND**, in **YORK-ROAD**, **MONTPELIER**; and **HOUSES** at **BLAKENEY**, in Gloucestershire.

Also, some **STOCK** in the **BRISTOL GAS-LIGHT COMPANY**, and a small Sum of **GREAT WESTERN CANAL STOCK**.

MR. **GEORGE NICHOLS** has received instructions from the Trustees under the will of the late Mr. James to **SELL** by **AUCTION**, at the **WHITE LION HOTEL**, **BROAD-STREET**, Bristol, on **THURSDAY**, May 21st, 1874,

The above-mentioned exceedingly desirable **PROPERTIES**.

Detailed advertisements will shortly appear, and further particulars may be obtained of the Auctioneer, 55, Broad-street, Bristol; or of Messrs. **CLARKE & SON**, Solicitors, 28, Broad-street, Bristol. [5246

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TAKEN FROM 1855 ASHMEAD MAP TO SHOW LOCATION OF BUILDINGS
(OCCUPANTS/OWNERS AS SHOWN IN BRISTOL BOROUGH SURVEY 1851 AND DATE
OF FIRST APPEARANCE IN RATE BOOKS 1813 - 1848)

CHATHAM VILLA (Sarah Gilmour/Mrs Wyard) 1834

MONTPELIER VILLA (Edward Linton/Wanklyn) 1813

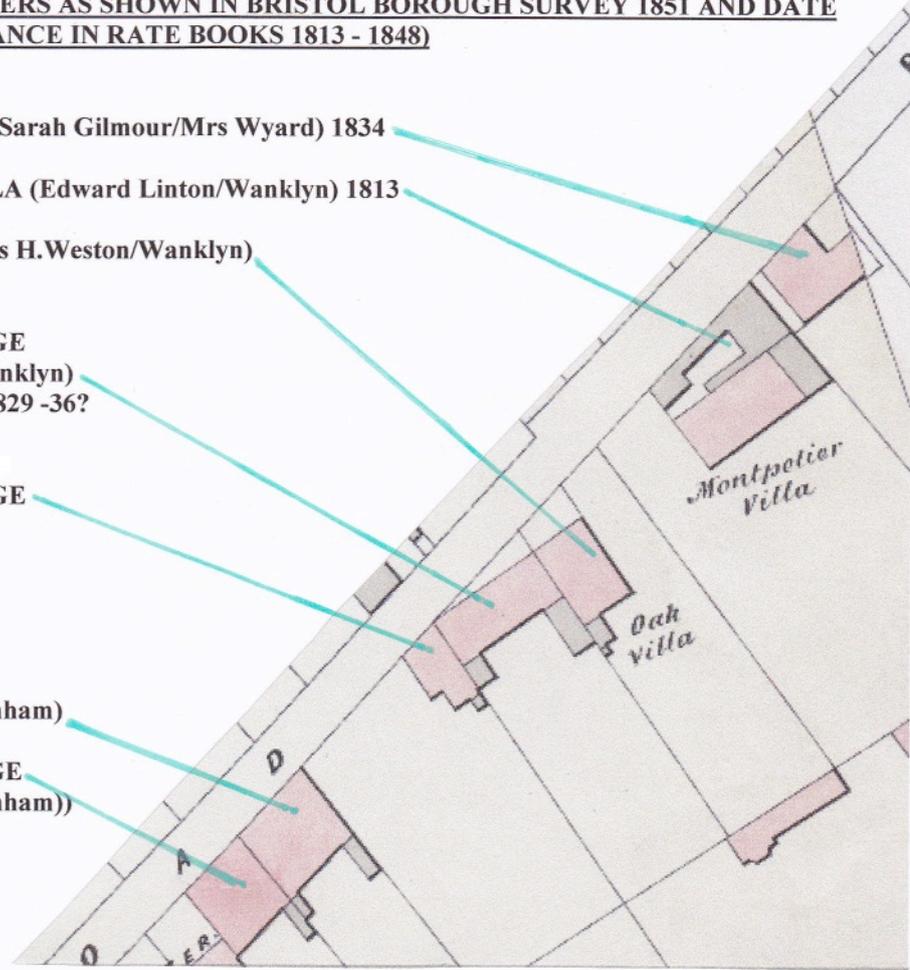
OAK VILLA (Thomas H. Weston/Wanklyn)
between 1848 & 1851

PARADISE COTTAGE
(William Johnson/Wanklyn)
pre-1818 / extended 1829 -36?
See text.

VICTORIA COTTAGE
(William Watkins)
pre-1818? See text

BEER HOUSE
(George Hanham/Hanham)
1836

CADBURY COTTAGE
(George Hanham/Hanham)
1836



CURRENT PHOTOGRAPH OF PARADISE COTTAGE SHOWING CONTRASTS IN
STRUCTURE AND ROOF DESIGN



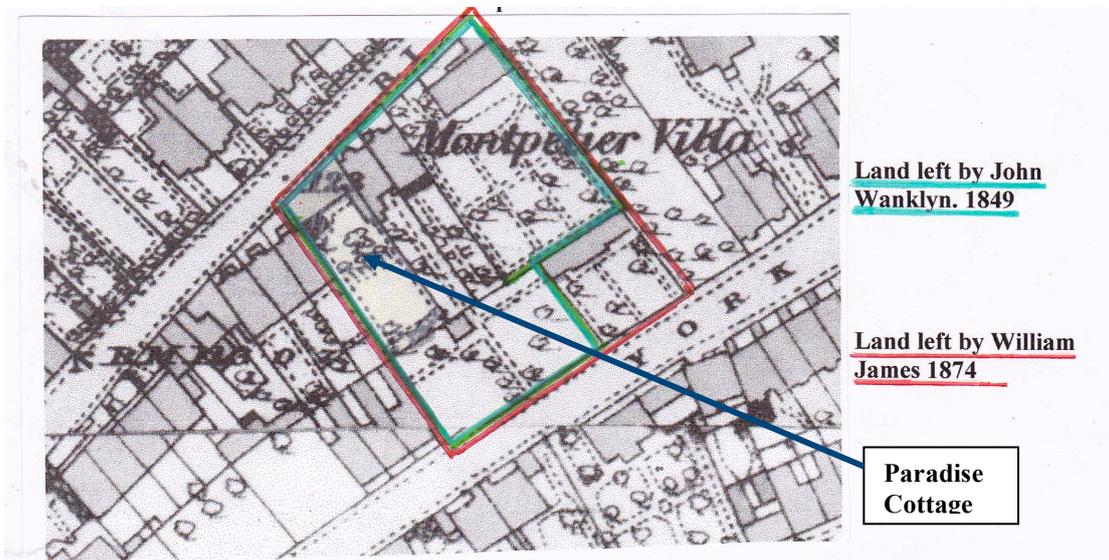
Oak Villa

Site of
Victoria
Cottage

Cadbury
House

4. WILL OF JOHN WANKLYN DATED APRIL 21ST 1849 (National Archives: PCC Wills online.)

"I give and bequeath . . . all my freehold house garden and premises situate at Montpelier in the Parish of Saint Paul in the county of Gloucester occupied by Linton [William Linton, Montpelier Villa, (Borough Survey 1851 BRO)] unto my nephew William James residing in Stokes Croft . . . and give all my three freehold houses and gardens . . . situate at York Road and Montpelier aforesaid (in the occupation of Scott [Edward Scott, Cottage and Garden York Road] Weston [Thomas H . Weston Oak Villa] and the premises called Paradise Cottage adjoining) . . . into the hands of the said William James . . . upon trust . . ."



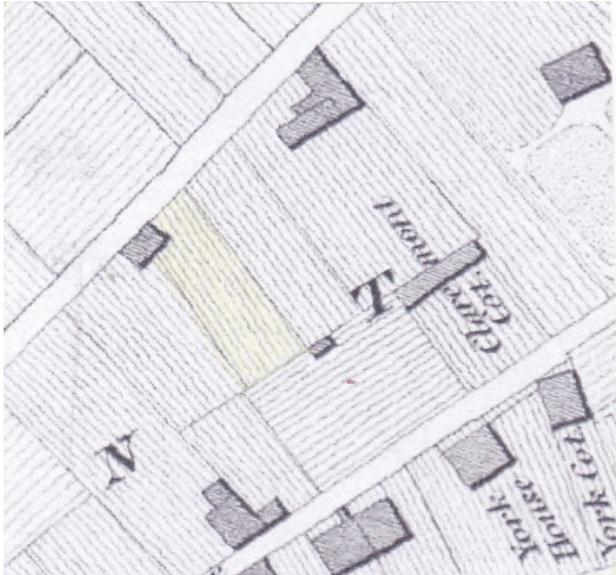
5. ADVERTISEMENT OF ROOMS AT PARADISE COTTAGE, MONTPELIER, ("BRISTOL MERCURY", MARCH 23RD, 1844 (Bristol Reference Library)

Apartments to be Let, Furnished,
PLEASANTLY situate at Montpelier. There is a Green-House attached to the Parlour, with folding doors. The Green-house opens on a Lawn, attached to the Garden, very suitable for an Invalid. The Occupier has no children. Two Bedrooms may be had, if required. Terms moderate. For particulars apply at Paradise Cottage, Upper-road, Montpelier.

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6. HOW THE MAPS LINE UP

ASHMEAD 1828



ASHMEAD 1855



Paradise
Cottage

Montpelier
House

ASHMEAD 1828 SUPERIMPOSED ON 1855.



7. CONSOLIDATED RATE BOOK OF THE OUT-PARISH OF ST JAMES AND ST PAUL 1839 – 40 : UPPER ROAD MONTPELIER (Bristol Record Office)

Bottom of the page: John Wanklyn (House)/ Godfrey Derrick (House)/ Sander Wilson (House)/ George Hanham(House)

ANNOUNCEMENT BY SANDER WILSON IN THE “BRISTOL MERCURY”, JANUARY 4TH, 1840 (Bristol Reference Library)

BIRTHS.
 December 25, at Kington-house, near Thornbury,^o the lady of R. K. Barrow, Esq. of a son.
 December 25, at Croscombe rectory, near Wells, the lady of the Rev. W. Purvis, of a daughter.
 December 29, at Weston-super Mare, the lady of Henry Davies, Esq. a son.
 Jan. 1, at Hampton-hill, the Hon. Mrs. Broderick, lady of the Rev. W. J. Broderick, rector of Bath, a son.
 January 1, in Lansdown-crescent, Bath, the lady of Sir William S. B. Cockburn, a daughter.
 January 2, at Victoria-cottage, Montpelier, the wife of Mr. Sander Wilson, of a daughter.

BIRTHS.
 January 2, at Victoria-cottage, Montpelier, the wife of Mr. Sander Wilson, of a daughter.

MATHEW’S BRISTOL DIRECTORY, 1840 (Bristol Reference Library)

Derrett Mrs. oculist, 48 College street
 Derrick George, livery stable keeper, Duck lane, Nelson street
 *Derrick Godfrey, Paradise cottage, Upper Montpelier
 Derrick Samuel, spirit dealer, Golden bottle, Back
 Derrick Wm. smith in general, 4 Ellbroad street
 Derrick W. London paper hangings warehouse, 8 Lower Arcade
 Derrick Wm. grocer, 13 Milk street
 Despard Rev. G. P. Churchill villa, Cotham
 Despard Philip Henry, 14 Freeland place, Clifton

Derrick Godfrey, Paradise Cottage, Upper Montpelier

8. THE WILL OF SAMUEL SHEDDEN

The will of Samuel Shedden, dated September 4th, 1822, was witnessed by John Wanklyn and Eliza Wanklyn of Montpelier Villa and was proved on September 30th 1823. Samuel Shedden is described as a Gentleman living in Stoke's Croft [in the Directory he is called "Accomptant, financial / brokering services"]. He leaves the house in which he resides in Stoke's Croft and its contents to his wife for life and after her death to his niece Georgiana Wright now living with him, to whom he leaves mortgages he has granted on other properties in Stoke's Croft. His two Summer Houses in Montpelier he leaves in the first instance to his wife Sarah and, after her death, to their unmarried nieces Louisa and Caroline:

"I give devise and bequeath my two gardens with the Summer Houses thereon and every their appurtenances situate at Montpelier in the said Parish of Saint Paul one of which said Gardens and the Summer House thereon is now in my occupation and the other in the occupation of William Watkins Cordwainer unto my said wife for and during her natural life and immediately after her decease I give devise and bequeath the said Gardens and Summer Houses and appurtenances unto my two nieces Louisa Shedden and Caroline Shedden daughter of my late brother Alexander equally between them as tenants in common and not as joint tenants for and during the period of their natural lives and from and immediately after the decease of either of them the said Louisa Shedden and Caroline Shedden and my said wife I give devise and bequeath the said Gardens Summer Houses and appurtenances to the survivor of the said Louisa Shedden and Caroline Shedden, their heirs and assigns for ever . . ."

[He goes on to leave considerable sums of money to various other family members]. His niece Louisa died in 1826 and his wife Sarah in 1828, leaving Caroline Shedden, who lived until 1878, to inherit the summer houses.

Today we think of a summer-house as a small structure with seats placed in a quiet corner of a garden but the 1933 OED gives two definitions:

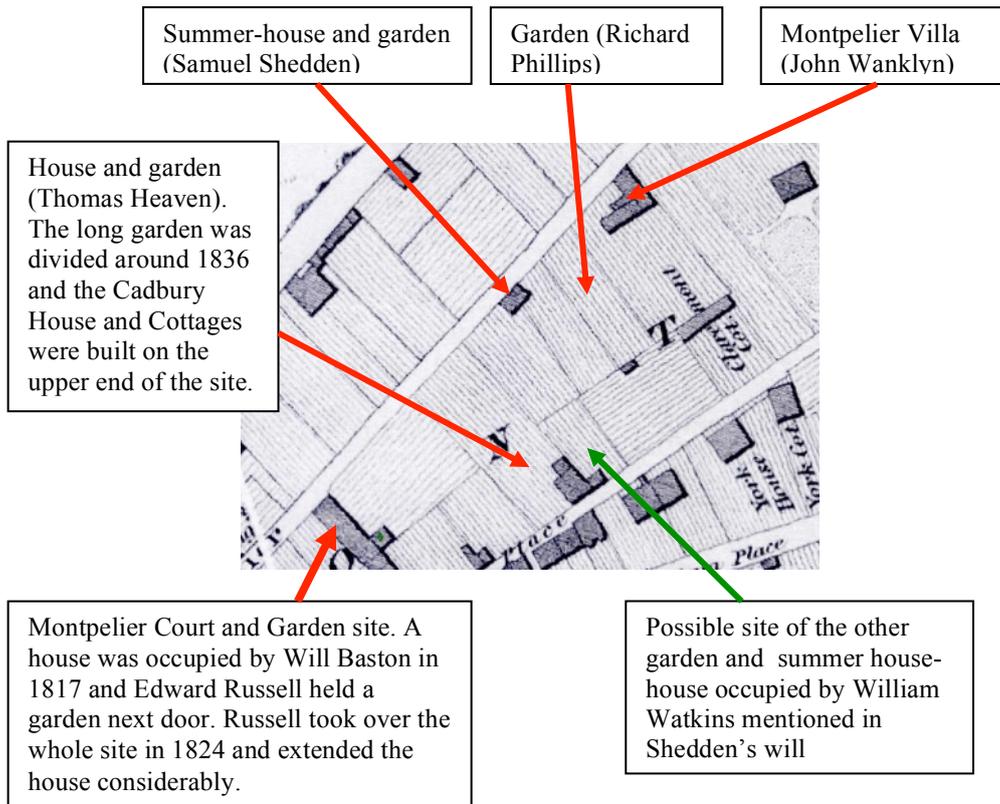
1. A summer residence in the country. Now *rare*. **1797** W. Johnson tr. *Beckmann's invent.* II.38 [Privies] are at present considered to be so indispensably necessary that few summer-houses are constructed without them.
2. A building in a garden or park, usually of very simple and often rustic character, designed to provide a cool shady place in the heat of summer. **1762-71**. H. Walpole *Vertue's Anecd. Paint* (1786) At the end of the terras-walk are two summer-houses.

Although the present Paradise Cottage has the remains of a small summer house of the second kind in the garden, I think the will is more likely to be referring to a summer house as a permanent structure in the first sense, especially as the rateable value of the Shedden property stays the same after 1823 when it is listed as a house as it had been when it was previously listed as a garden.

9. WHERE DID THE RATEPAYERS OF 1817 LIVE (OR GARDEN) ? (How properties from the 1817 rate book can be linked to the Ashmead map.)

Until 1829, any property which abutted onto Upper Road was included in the list for Upper Road (Richmond Road), even if the house (like Thomas Heaven's) was down on East Street (York Road). In 1829 the name of the occupant of that house (Thomas Pickering) was moved from the Upper Road list to the East Street list. In 1836 the long garden of that property was divided and the Cadbury House and cottages were built on the upper part of the site. There were constant changes in the development of these properties and those of the Shedden summer-house are detailed on the next two pages.

	<u>Montpelier Villa (now Montpelier House)</u>	<u>Garden (Now 80 and 82 Richmond Road)</u>	<u>Samuel Shedden's Summer House</u>	<u>Property running from York Road to Upper Road. Divided in 1836</u>	<u>Montpelier Court site</u>	<u>Montpelier Court Garden.</u>
<u>1817</u>	<u>John Wanklyn 12</u>	<u>Rich Phillips 2</u>	<u>Sam Shedden 4</u>	<u>Thos Heaven 4</u>	<u>Will Baston 4</u>	<u>Edward Russell 2</u>



**10. RATE ABLE VALUES 1817 – 1839 (WITH POSSIBLE INTERPRETATION)
OUT-PARISH OF ST JAMES & ST PAUL; POOR RATE (1817 – 32). CHURCH
RATE (1834) & CONSOLIDATED RATE (1835 – 39) (Bristol Record
Office.)**

	Montpelier Villa (now Montpelier House)	Garden (Now 80 and 82 Richmond Road)	Samuel Shedden's Summer House	Property running from York Road to Upper Road. Divided in 1836	Montpelier Court site	Montpelier Court Garden.
1817	John Wanklyn 12	Rich Phillips 2	Sam Shedden 4	Thos Heaven 4	Will Baston 4	Edward Russell 2
1818	John Wanklyn 30	Rich Phillips 6	Sam Shedden 12 (G)	Thos Heaven 12 (G)	Will Bayston 12	Edward Russell 6
1821	John Wanklyn 28	R. Phillips 6	Sam Shedden 12 (G)	Thos Heaven 12 (G)	James Kingstone 12	Edward Russell 3
1822	John Wanklyn 28	Mr Phillips 6	Sam Shedden 12 (G)	Thos Heaven 12 (G)	Jas Kingstone 12 (G)	Edward Russell (H & G) 13
1823	John Wanklyn 28	Late Phillips	Sam Shedden 12 (G)	Thos Heaven 12 (G)	Jas Kingstone 12 (G)	Edward Russell (G) 13

1823. Sam Shedden leaves his summer house to his wife and daughters. His garden is divided in half and one half is let to Salmon. The other half is let with the house to Josiah Thomas who continues to pay the rates on a £12 valuation.

			Half of garden.	Summer House and other half of garden			
1824	John Wanklyn 28	Rumney 6	Salmon 4	Josiah Thomas 12	William Underwood 12	Edward Russell 30	Edward Russell 12
1826	John Wanklyn 28	Rumney 6	Salmon 4	Josiah Thomas 12	Thomas Pickering 12	Edward Russell 30	Edward Russell 12

1827. Josiah Thomas's valuation is lowered to £10

1827	John Wanklyn 28	Heywood 6	Slade 4	Josiah Thomas 12 ('10' written in pencil)	Pickering 12	Edward Russell 30	Edward Russell 12
1829	John Wanklyn 28	Heywood 6	Slade 4	Josiah Thomas 10	Pickering 12	Edward Russell 30	Edward Russell 12

1830 - 2. Josiah Thomas moves to Lower Cheltenham Place and Slade takes over the Heywood garden. The house is now divided and each half of the house is given its own half of the garden.. The two properties are valued at £9 for rates and are let separately. Pickering's property next door now appears on the East Street list.

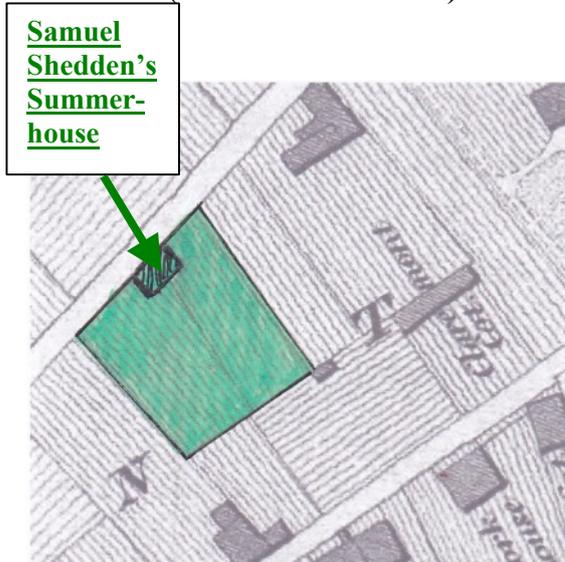
1832	John Wanklyn Vinegar mfr 34	Slade, Druggist 6.	Cowley China dealer 9	Robert Mercer Overseer of Poor 9	(Pickering listed in East Street 12)	Edward Russell Pawn broker 38	Edward Russell Tenement & Garden 11
1834 (taken from Church Rate book.)	John Wanklyn 34	John D. Slade 6	William Cowley 9	James Prosser 9	(Pickering listed in East Street)	Edward Russell 38	Edward Russell 9
1835 (first Rate)	John Wanklyn 34	John Dyke Slade 5	William Cowley 9	Benjamin Charles Quick 9	(Pickering listed in East Street)	Edward Russell 38	Edward Russell 12 (12)

<p>1836 The long garden of the Pickering property is divided and the top part sold to George Hanham, who builds a beer house and a cottage on it. Following new legislation, from now on the rate books have to give two valuation figures: the previous rateable value and the assessed gross annual rental income (in brackets). The new figure was much higher—more so for a house than a garden—but it made little difference to the amount actually paid, as the rate was adjusted accordingly.</p>							
1835 (Second Rate)	<u>John Wanklyn 34 (45)</u>	<u>John Wanklyn 6 (5)</u>	<u>William Cowley 9 (12)</u>	<u>Benjamin Charles Quick 9 (12)</u>	<u>George Hanham 11 (14)</u>	<u>Edward Russell 38 (50)</u>	Edward Russell 12 (12)
1836	<u>John Wanklyn 34 (45)</u>	<u>John Wanklyn 6 (5)</u>	<u>William Cowley 9 (12)</u>	<u>Benjamin Charles Quick 9 (12)</u>	<u>George Hanham 11 (14)</u>	Edward Russell 38 (50)	
<p>1837. William Cowley's property (Paradise Cottage) is extended and the valuation goes up from £9 to £13.</p>							
1837	<u>John Wanklyn 36 (45)</u>	<u>John Wanklyn 6 (6)</u>	<u>William Cowley 13 (16)</u>	<u>Benjamin Charles Quick 10 (12)</u>	<u>George Hanham 11 (14)</u>	Edward Russell 40 (50)	
1838	<u>John Wanklyn 34 (45)</u>	<u>John Wanklyn 6 (6)</u>	<u>William Cowley 13 (16) (House)</u>	<u>Daniel Pound Williams 10 (12) (Cottage & Garden)</u>	<u>George Hanham 11 (14)</u>	Edward Russell 44 (55) House and Garden	
1839 (second rate)	<u>John Wanklyn 36 (45)</u>	<u>John Wanklyn 6 (6)</u>	<u>Godfrey Derrick 13 (16)</u>	<u>Sander Wilson 10 (12)</u>	<u>George Hanham 11 (14)</u>	Edward Russell 44 (55) House and garden	
1839			<u>This building is identified as Paradise Cottage</u>	<u>This building is identified as Victoria Cottage</u>	Cadbury House		

11. HOW THE PROPERTY MAY HAVE CHANGED (based on Ashmead 1828 map and rating valuations)

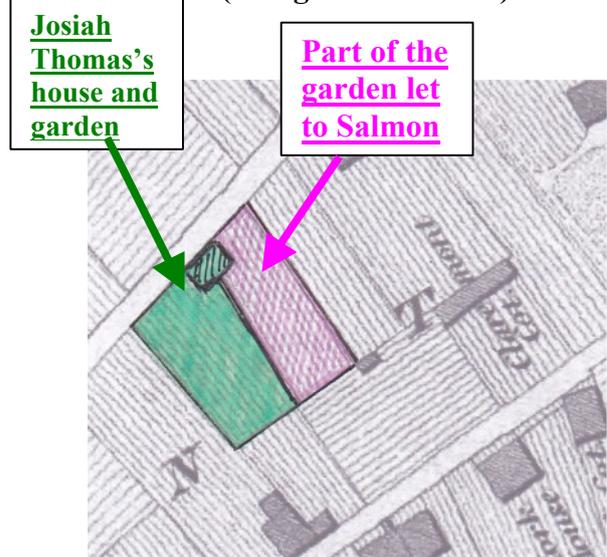
1. 1817 onwards

(The Summer-house)



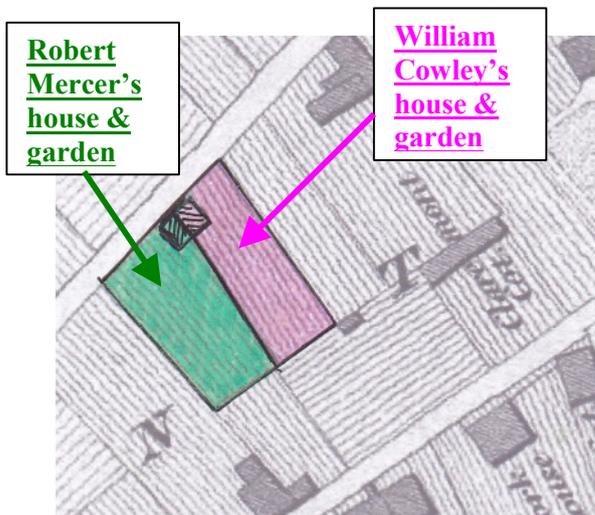
2. 1824 onwards

(The garden divided)



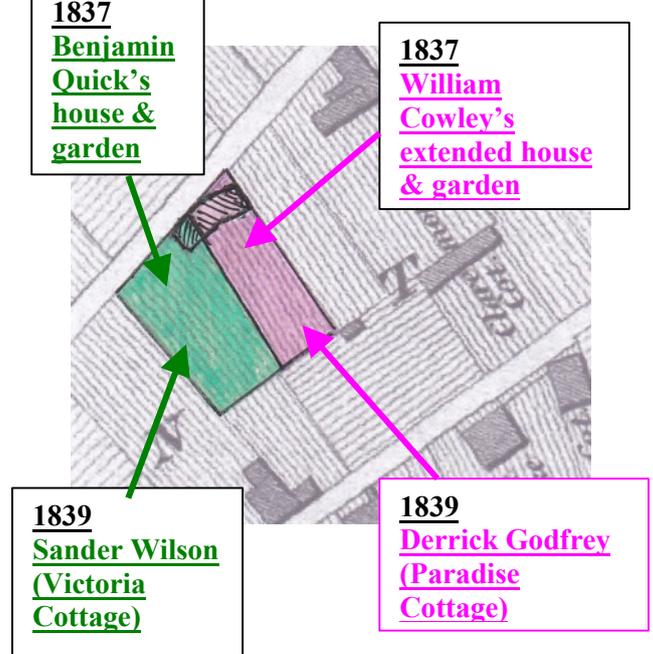
3. 1832 onwards

(The house divided)



4. 1837 onwards

(The house extended)



1839 Sander Wilson (Victoria Cottage)

1839 Derrick Godfrey (Paradise Cottage)

CONCLUSIONS

The current Paradise Cottage clearly contains two contrasting structures in different styles and it seems very unlikely that it was originally built as a single unit. There are a number of possibilities on how that came about. There is a firm identification of the present building in 1839 and relevant documentary evidence going back to 1813, when individual ratepayers in Montpelier were first listed, but tracing the structural history of Paradise Cottage before 1839 becomes more difficult; both Miss Newton, the former owner, and the proprietor of Richmond Builders, who did a lot of work on the premises in the 1980s, thought that parts of the building were older than 1813, as did several of the responses to the planning application (in particular the detailed appendix to the Montpelier Conservation Group response). The building seems to me to be partly based on Samuel Shedden's Summer-house, which dates from at least 1817 and could be much older but the rise in rateable value in 1837 suggests to me that it may have been extended to its present dimensions at that time. In the rate book entry of 1838, which came shortly after the government had brought in more rigorous requirements for parochial assessments, Paradise Cottage is described as a "House" while Victoria Cottage is described as "Cottage and Garden".

My theory is that Paradise Cottage and the neighbouring Victoria Cottage were originally part of a single property which was split up; Paradise Cottage was later extended in a different style and Victoria Cottage demolished. Another possibility is that there were two 'semi-detached' properties in different styles that were combined into one to form Paradise Cottage after 1828, the boundaries were realigned and a new cottage—Victoria Cottage—built on the garden next door. Both are possible but the boundaries from 1828 and 1855 line up so closely and the rate book valuations for the properties are so consistent that I think the first possibility is more likely. It is noticeable that the distinctive pointed arch at the left-hand side of Paradise Cottage is similar to one at Chatham Villa (currently 92 & 94 Richmond Road) which is a garden entrance—as it would have been at Paradise Cottage before it was extended, if my theory is correct. Chatham Villa appears in the records in 1834 but there is a possibility that it stands on the cellar of a much older building.

My theory relies on an interpretation of the rate books and the accuracy of the large-scale Ashmead maps of 1828 and 1855. Without contemporary drawings it has to be conjectural but it seems to be supported by an analysis of the rating valuations. Only an expert technical survey of the building could establish the full facts about ..



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