

Town Gardens

Introduction

In the whole of Swindon there can be few places that are as attractive or as well-loved as the Town Gardens in Old Town. This was recognised in October 2000 when the Town Gardens was placed on the 'Register of Parks and Gardens' as a Grade II site by English Heritage. Once experienced, the Town Gardens has an appeal which draws people back again and again to enjoy its atmosphere and superb setting.

Historical Development

Town Gardens were laid out on the site of the old Purbeck limestone quarries. They were formerly owned by the Goddard family, the local Lords of the Manor, whose family home was at the Lawns. The quality of the Purbeck stone quarried here gave Swindon an important industry for several hundred years prior to the arrival of the Great Western Railway.

The Council bought the quarry site and in May 1894 the Town Gardens were opened to the public with further developments carried out in 1902. The Gardens were carefully and artistically laid out making full use of the different levels left over from the quarrying. There were pleasant tree-lined walks and lawns bordered with masses of colourful flowers. There were also two Park-keepers lodges attached to the Gardens, which can still be seen at the Quarry Road and Westlecot Road entrances.

Flowers and Trees

The Rose Garden was added in 1928 on the site of an old maze. The many roses in the garden provide a varied mixture of colour and scent.

Today the Gardens still retain the feeling of their original Victorian splendour. Over six hectares have been laid out to create an environment where visitors can stroll and relax or, during the summer months, listen to a band concert.

The eye-catching feature of Town Gardens has to be the formal flower beds which are so popular with their colour and variety. Visitors to the Gardens in spring are rewarded with a cheerful display of bedding plants, bulbs and flowering cherries, a true sign that summer is just around the corner.

Several trees have been planted in the Gardens over the last century to commemorate a wide range of events including 'Declaration of Peace' in the Boer War in 1902. These trees, now mature, play an important part in creating the calm and relaxed atmosphere of the Town Gardens.