

What is the Mound For?

For more than thirty years I have been the keeper of a historic monument which I have never understood. The main lawn of my Oxford college, New College, is dominated by a big man-made Mound. When I took over the gardens its back slope was adorned with random stone steps which an elderly don . In the early 1990s a gift from the noted British historian Kenneth Rose allowed us to clear the jungly undergrowth and install a stone staircase up the front slope instead. When we cleared out the jungle,

mound at Hampton Court in the 1520s and plenty of mounds in English gardens by 1600. One of the most touching survives at Cranborne Manor in Dorset where it is linked to John Tradescant, the famous gardener for the Cecil family.

In 1616 our accounts show that another £5 was specially voted
signifi Obviously there was already a clear plan for a decent
Mound. More work was entered in 1622-3.

off in 1648-9 just when the King was executed. Across the centuries, some uses of garden space, at least, never change.

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(A version of this note was published in *The Daily Telegraph*; the German traveller mentioned is Georg Christoph Stirn, for whom see in the second issue of *New Early Science in New College I: Robert Plot on New College (1677)* Bodleian, MS Adds. B 67.)