

The Labyrinth

FRONT GARDEN | EARTH

THE OLD RECTORY

Timeline 3000 BC – 1852



- *Place:* Great Dunmow, Essex, United Kingdom.
- *Time:* Site of Late Neolithic stone circle, grave and chambered barrow. Now an eighteenth century Anglican rectory house has been built on the land, its Gothic Revival gardens, irrigation channels and pathways newly restored in 1848 after a decade of neglect.

Occupant Tobias Crowe



Like his father before him, Master Tobias Crowe is gardener for Reverend Nathaniel Anthony Grey. After years of inattention, Crowe has restored the labyrinthian paths and gardens to their former Gothic glories, using only plants, vegetables and flowers inspired by the illustrated medieval manuscripts of the British Library in London.

Almanack First Moon



- *Hunter's Moon:* Of Man
- *Season:* Autumn (Dark half of year)
- *Opposition room:* The Fountain Courtyard (Earth vs Water)
- *Daimonion:* Jesus
- *Oracle:* XXXXXXXXXXXX



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EARTH

- *Sights:* Stepping through the hornbeam thicket, you enter a beautiful yet practical Victorian Gothic Revival labyrinth garden.
- *Sounds:* Mixed with bird calls and the sounds of early Victorian rural life is the sound of the gardener about his work.
- *Smells:* The natural smells of flowers, herbs and plants.
 - Top note: XXXXXXXXXXXX
 - Middle note: XXXXXXXXXXXX
 - Base note: XXXXXXXXX



TALLISTON
THE SECRET LIES WITHIN



Highlights

- **THE GARDEN DOOR**

At the entrance to the rectory stands an arched garden door. Made from oak using traditional methods and joints, the Gothic design affords a glimpse through the tall hedge of hornbeam, along the brick path and into the medieval-styled gardens beyond.

- **THE VEGETABLE PATCH**

With its red brick path and curved beds, the rectory's kitchens are supplied by this labyrinth-inspired design. A system of underground channels provide irrigation, while adding the melody of babbling water to the gardens.

- **THE COTTAGE GARDEN**

Set around the cruciform pattern of Yorkstone paving and box beds, this area is planted with hardy perennials and bulbs. It also houses a beehive-styled composter and water standpipe, improvised from an old gravestone and marble column base.

- **THE EARTH-FAST STONE**

The house was built on an all-but-lost Late Neolithic stone circle. Though once consisting of over forty stones, set in three rings, now only the earth-fast stone, a pair of tall sarcens and a few outlying stones remain. Upon the back of the standing stone is carved an simple labyrinth, marked with thirteen hollows.

- **THE ALMANACK**

Inset into the hexagonal path are four bronze bees (marking the cardinal compass points) and twenty-eight bronze badges (marked I to XXVIII). Using these markers, a basic lunar almanack is created, allowing the gardener to track the moon cycles used when planting and harvesting crops.

The story of The Old Rectory

This modest presbytery is pleasantly situated at the rural heart of Essex in the quiet, unspoiled market town of Great Dunmow. Built in the mid-1800s, the romantic Gothic Revival-style labyrinth paths and picturesque gardens were added in 1772. Occupied since 1793 by Reverend Nathaniel Anthony Grey, the rectory survives the church at Newton Hall, which fell into ruins in the mid-eighteenth century.

After the death of the head gardener in 1839, the rectory gardens were untended for many years. When Tobias Crowe took over his father's work in 1848, overgrowth and neglect threatened the once-thriving formal garden. His interest in reviving the styles of the Middle Ages mirrors that of the English Pre-Raphaelite movement, harking back to a former golden age before the progression of industrialisation.

Due to being built upon an ancient pagan worship site, the rectory has always been rumoured to be haunted, and its fall into disrepair only encouraged such tales. Smugglers, known as 'owlers,' (a name originating from their nocturnal activities), have said to be seen slipping behind the overgrown hedges. Even now the garden is being restored to its former glories, it is still a place children dare not enter.

The Rabbit Hole

Between the two stones on the north-east side of the path in the Cottage Garden sits an overgrown tunnel and here a wild rabbit has made his home. Usually the bane of gardeners, this particular visitor is an enchanting and much-loved addition.

