

BY DUNCAN MCDOWALL

above:
Southlands Light, 2016
 Oil on canvas
 By Rhona Emmerson

Bermuda is running out of green space.

One of the most densely inhabited landscapes on earth, Bermuda has less than 400 acres of farmland left. The concept of “sustainability,” unfamiliar just decades ago, has installed itself in the island’s dialogue about its future. Heated debate now marks Bermuda’s attempts to find a middle ground between touristic and commercial development on the one hand and the preservation of common ground—parks, playing fields and walking trails—on the other. How different from the lay of the land in Bermuda a century ago, when cedar trees and farmers’ fields tinted the island green. Today Bermuda can no longer portray itself in the famous words of Elizabethan poet Andrew Marvell as a place of “eternal spring/Which enamels everything.”

From an airplane window today, one strains to find a natural break in Bermuda’s panorama of white roofs. Mercifully, there are still a few welcome swathes of unsullied green—golf courses and a handful of parks such as Spittal Pond and Cooper’s Island Nature Reserve.

Bermuda’s throne speech of 2013 boldly bolstered that inventory of green. Southlands, a 37-acre enclave of heritage architecture, forest and overgrown quarries on the Warwick south shore, was designated a national park. Senator Alexis Swan, junior minister of environment and planning and a Warwick native, declared that Southlands was a “Bermuda treasure” and that its preservation would help to strike a sustainable balance between Bermuda’s social, economic and environmental needs. “There is something here for everyone,” she noted. Stuart Hayward of the Bermuda Environmental Sustainability Taskforce agreed: the preservation of Southlands was “an amazing result.” National Park status for Southlands came as the culmination of years of dickering among politicians, developers and naturalists. The property’s terraced landscape, tumbling down to the south shore beaches and offering an expansive panorama of the azure sea, had long whetted the appetite of up-market hotel developers. The 2008 global financial meltdown cooled that ambition and opened the way to an innovative land swap that saw the tourism developers exchange their Warwick holdings for a generous portion of Morgan’s Point, the abandoned American military base in Southampton that juts out into the Sound. Much work remained. Southlands had once been a lovingly tended preserve of horticultural

wonders niched into exhausted quarries and shaded by exotic trees, the passion of a wealthy Canadian Bermudaphile. The gardens radiated out from the estate’s namesake homestead, a classic, late eighteenth-century Bermuda home with a characteristic hip roof and twin butteries. A constellation of smaller cottages dotted the property. But, by the early twenty-first century, the Canadians were long gone and Southlands had fallen prey to neglect and decay. Scrub had invaded its gardens and the main house stood empty and abused by Bermuda’s harsh climate. Against this backdrop, Bermuda as a whole had arrived at a tipping point: could it as a society afford to preserve such inviting glades of serenity or must the ethos of luxury tourism sweep all before it? The choice was made all the more agonising, when the twin pillars of the local economy—tourism and financial services—faltered. In 2008, for instance, then-premier Ewart Brown acknowledged

Southlands had once been a lovingly tended preserve of horticultural wonders niched into exhausted quarries and shaded by exotic trees.

that Southlands was “an unspoiled jewel,” even while negotiating with hotel developers eager to turn the property into quite a different type of jewel. The christening of Southlands National Park in 2013 tipped the balance in favour of sustainability and the preservation of a distinctive piece of Bermuda heritage. Just what was that storied heritage?

Ironically, the name “Morgan” figured at both ends of the 2008 land swap. Morgan’s Point, where Bermuda’s glitzy new hotel development finally took root, derived its name from an island dubbed Morgan’s in the nineteenth century, an island which American military ingenuity in the Second World War transformed into a point connected to the mainland. Over in Warwick,



Welcoming Arms and Bermuda stone steps greet the visitor to Southlands, c.1930

another Morgan—unrelated to the Southampton nomenclature—left his mark on the landscape. From 1913 to 1936, Southlands was owned by James and Anna Morgan of Montreal, whose wealth and love of Bermuda remade Southlands into what a 1928 article in *Canadian Homes and Gardens* described as “a primitive Eden.” Today, the Morgan heritage in Bermuda still echoes in the naming of Morgan Road and several lanes in Warwick, and in Morgan Hall at Warwick Academy. The Morgan name also echoes in the annals

of Bermuda educational reform and hospital modernisation.

The Morgans and their money were the product of North America’s Gilded Age, an era when capitalism incubated immense wealth by fitting new modes of production and consumerism to a burgeoning urban-industrial society. At the heart of this revolution was the transformation of the retail trade from a scattered mass of general, dry goods stores operating on a basis of barter and credit into modern mass consumption rooted in a society fueled by cash. The department store epitomised this shift. For the first time, consumers were offered a cornucopia of goods on a cash-only basis, all under one roof. This amalgamation of wholesaling and retailing

left:
Henry Morgan's Store, St. Catherine Street, Montreal, QC, c.1890.



right:
James Morgan Jr., Montreal, QC, 1891



was accelerated by mass production, which standardised manufacture and drove costs down. Modern advertising further fanned this appetite for consumption into what American economist Thorstein Veblen labelled “conspicuous consumption,” that is, buyers purchasing goods that exceeded their actual need, but which flattered their social pretensions.

The late nineteenth century in every western economy was studded with the names of retailers who perfected the art of selling through department stores. These names have installed themselves in the panoply of western retailing: Alvah Roebuck, Charles Henry Harrod, Rowland Macy, Harry Selfridge,

Henry Morgan & Company became the showpiece of Montreal retailing, soon acquiring a reputation as the “Harrods of Canada.”

Frank Woolworth and Théophile Bader, to name some of the best and the brightest. The department store revolution came to Canada in 1845 when a flinty Scottish immigrant, Henry Morgan, partnered with another Scot, David Smith. “Smith and Morgan” combined the traditional wholesaling of English goods into Canada with a front-end retail emporium on Montreal’s Notre Dame Street. Montreal was then colonial Canada’s largest city and leading commercial centre: the store accordingly pitched its wares to Montrealers of substance. Attentive, white-gloved service and top-quality British merchandise became the store’s hallmark. In 1852, Smith departed and Morgan was joined by his brother James as partner. Thereafter, “Henry Morgan & Company” became the showpiece of Montreal retailing, soon acquiring a reputation as

the “Harrods of Canada.” In 1863, James’s son, James junior, and a cousin, Colin, joined the firm and quickly proved their mettle by attaching the store’s well-being to Montreal’s exuberant growth as a metropole. In 1884, they were rewarded with partnerships in the firm. In the words of the family’s biographer, James Morgan was “extroverted and sociable” by nature with an instinct for broadening the store’s market. This became strikingly evident in 1891 when Henry Morgan & Company moved its flagship store to Montreal’s bustling Ste. Catherine Street. The new building was, as its advertising proclaimed “a modern store in every way”: four storeys high with

63 retail stations, a pneumatic cash system and 15,000 square feet of windows to display its wares to the passing world. In 1893, the childless Henry bequeathed his majority share of the company to James and Colin. Not surprisingly, the outgoing James became company president and Colin, always the details man, its vice president.

The glittering store in the heart of Montreal brought James Morgan fame and fortune. By the turn of the new century, the *Montreal Star* rated him a millionaire. His business acumen spread in other directions: he became a promoter of cement, real estate and bank note companies. He embraced Montreal’s tradition of Scottish philanthropy, becoming a governor of the city’s hospital for the insane. He displayed his Fifeshire roots by becoming an influential member of the St.

Andrew’s Society. And he donned the mantle of patron of the arts by joining the patrician Montreal Art Association and personally subsidising aspiring Québec artists such as the soon-to-be-famous Clarence Gagnon. To round out his social eminence, Morgan lived in an opulent home in Montreal’s prestigious Square Mile and married Anna Lyman, daughter of a prominent drug manufacturer.

Like many of North America’s emerging captains of industry, Morgan felt a paradoxical urge to escape the hurly-burly of the urban society in which his fortunes had thrived. Academics have labelled this instinct “anti-modernism”: the desire to reconnect with the seemingly simpler, less chaotic rural way of life that had preceded the prosperity of the Gilded Age. There was, of course, hypocrisy underlying this idealism: you needed money, lots of it, to escape the world of capitalist excess and few possessed such wealth. Nonetheless, in the late nineteenth century America’s plutocrats fled Gotham for the serenity of the countryside to places such as Tuxedo Park (a prototype gated community in the Ramapo Mountains north of New York City) and, in winter, to Florida’s Palm Beach, which had been deliberately crafted as a patrician retreat. The wealthy also pursued nature: “camping” in the Adirondacks and prowling through Kentucky’s Mammoth Cave. A good example of such escapism was Marjorie Merriweather Post, heiress to the Post cereal fortune, who built an Adirondack great camp, Topridge, for summer escape and a Palm Beach winter mansion, Mar-a-Lago (now owned by Donald Trump as his country club weekend retreat from Washington politics).

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James Morgan succumbed to the same urge to escape. Very much an inquisitive offspring of the Scottish Enlightenment with its urge to explore and explain the world, Morgan had been a prominent member of the Montreal Natural History Society. He indulged in the nineteenth-century upper class passion for cataloguing nature. Thus, to get closer to nature and away from the maw of commerce, Morgan in 1892 built a baronial home in Senneville at the still-forested western end of Montreal Island overlooking the Lake of Two Mountains. Every day, Morgan was conveyed back and forth to his downtown store in a private railway carriage. His Senneville home, Graystones, quickly became his retreat from the anxieties of the retail trade. He accentuated this sense of apartness by adopting a Gaelic motto: “Royal is in my blood.” It was as if he had moved to the Scottish Highlands. For his children Morgan created the Evergreen Museum, a repository of natural history—butterflies, moths—for their education. Eventually, Morgan assembled an estate of 400 acres, part of which endures to this day as the Morgan Arboretum of McGill University.

Early in the twentieth century, two events altered the trajectory of James Morgan’s life. In 1906, Henry Morgan & Company became a joint stock company. The old partnership had always contained the vulnerability of unlimited liability, the risk of total ruination if the enterprise faltered. Now that risk was spread among many investors and the liability capped. Although James retained 50.1 percent of the store’s equity, he was suddenly freed of daily managerial duties. He remained its chairman, presiding over the store’s strategic direction, but left daily management to the next generation. For James and Anna, leisure now became more pursuable. Trips to Italy yielded treasures for the family museum. Graystones filled up with the work of artists James had taken under his sponsorship, many of whom used Morgan’s support to travel to Europe to immerse themselves in Post-Impressionism.

The second seismic shift in James and Anna Morgan’s orientation came when they journeyed to the British colony of Bermuda. They were not alone in this indulgence. In the late nineteenth century, Bermuda had begun grooming itself as a kind of mid-Atlantic Tuxedo Park—salubrious, exclusive and

steeped in old colonial ways. A Québec-based steamship company had inaugurated weekly service from New York to what Bermuda’s pioneering tourism developers now styled “the isles of rest.” The Morgans liked what they saw. Bermuda offered detachment from the intensity of metropolitan life. It also offered a year-round greenhouse, where they might indulge their passion for nature.

In 1913, the Morgans’ eye fell upon Southlands, an eighteenth-century Bermuda home in Warwick. Over the years, local folklore has dated Southlands’s construction to 1745,

but there is little hard evidence to support this lineage. (In 1929, the parish records of Warwick were bizarrely lost in a shipwreck off the American seaboard making precise dating of Warwick homes difficult.) What is clear is that by the nineteenth century, Southlands was owned by the Dunscomb family. When Lydia Lea Dunscomb, a spinster, died in 1913, ownership of Southlands and the surrounding 31 acres fell into the hands of two cousins, who promptly sold it to the Morgans for £1,000. The price was certainly right. A thousand pounds in 1913 translated

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roughly into five thousand Canadian dollars, a modest sum for a Montreal millionaire and certainly much less than a home in Palm Beach would have commanded at the time. (Title to the property was placed in Anna's name, probably to shield James from any claim resulting from his Canadian business affairs.) Southlands was apparently not in good shape, but for the Morgans it exuded possibility. The property was pockmarked by old quarries, from which had once been taken the stone used to build the main house and several small cottages. Scrub covered the terrain. From the outset, the Morgans determined to avoid symmetrical, formal gardens at Southlands. Instead, they envisaged gardens that would organically blend with the landscape, exploiting the quarries' Gothic irregularity. The house itself invited renovation and expansion. Thus, the plan was set: a splendid Bermuda home would sit amid naturalistic gardens and would feast on sweeping seascapes.

For the next two decades, the Morgans became loyal winter residents of Bermuda. Every autumn, the *Royal Gazette* announced their arrival on the New York steamer and subsequently chronicled their activities as they sank into the rhythms of Bermuda life. Southlands became the epicentre of their new semi-tropical life. As *The Bermudian* would later record: "Bermudians were more familiar with Mr. Morgan by reputation than

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they were with his ruddy, good-humoured countenance, his burly, heavily-knit frame and his shock of white hair, for he took little interest in social life, and while in Bermuda seldom crossed the boundaries of his property, preferring to devote his time and energy to 'Southlands'."

James Morgan spent his Bermuda energy well. The aesthetic key to the unfolding Southlands estate were the forty-two quarry pits on the property. Each became a niched garden accentuating a horticultural theme—Italian, Egyptian, Sicilian, Japanese and Chinese, for instance. Some became ponds. To craft the quarries into sustainable gardens, Morgan brought in 50,000 loads (presumably donkey-cart loads) of stone rubble and another 12,000 of top soil. To add panache to the effect,



'Southlands' photo by John Lyman, perhaps taken in 1913 during Lyman's first visit to Bermuda to visit his aunt, Anna Morgan.

Morgan obliged visitors to enter his paradise through a tunnel which he excavated through the sandstone. Over the tunnel's portico, Morgan inscribed the motto "Live-for-Ever." Around the quarries, a palette of indigenous and imported trees appeared: Bermuda cedar, pride of India, banyan, cannonball, rubber, fiddlewood, and calabash trees. Thirty-two varieties of century plant were deployed. Peacocks freely strutted on the lawns. Palms towered above oleanders and mimosas.

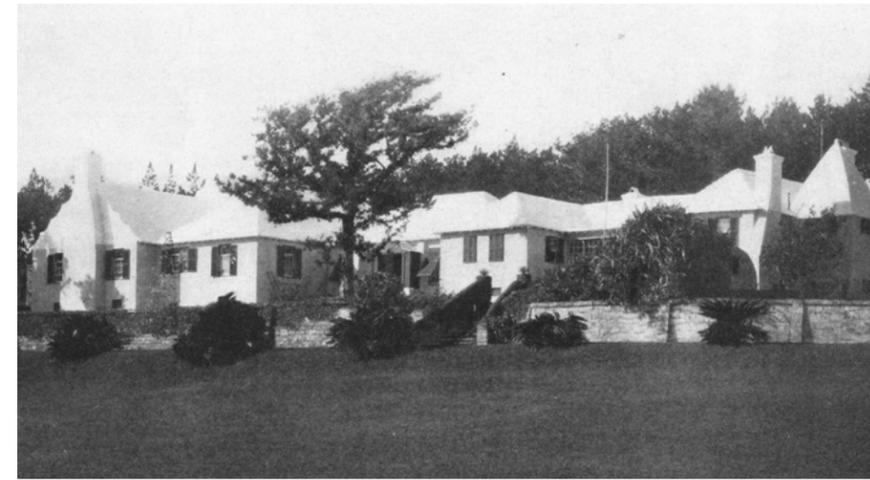
The garden was designed to integrate with nature, rather than discipline it into manicured formal gardens. Paths were cut through

the vegetation to allow visitors to wander amid nature. Flower beds interspersed the quarry gardens, so that the colour of geraniums, passion flowers, nasturtiums, morning glory, verbena and primroses might bring vivid colour to the overall canvas. When *Canadian Homes and Gardens* commissioned Adele Gianelli, a well-known social reporter, to visit the Morgans in their garden in 1928, she was overwhelmed by the beauty of the place. It was "petulant, passionate and [full of] a thirst for life." In her mind, it also epitomised the allure of the whole colony: "For Bermuda is an Ever-Ever land," she gushed, "where dreams never end and life is only real when it is beautiful."

To tend his garden, Morgan employed local gardeners, paying them an above-average

wage of \$5 a day. His head gardener lived in a cottage, Periwinkle, on the grounds. Over the years, Morgan either erected or renovated other cottages. He also pushed out its frontiers, buying the nearby 25-acre Rockland estate. By the 1920s, Morgan was the squire of over 80 Bermuda acres. Through all the grooming of his estate, Morgan respected the long-evolving ethos of Bermuda's coral stone vernacular architecture. A local architect, Edward Tucker, was employed to keep the Morgans close to that aesthetic. As the *Royal Gazette* observed, Morgan "added to and enhanced" the beauty of Southlands "without marring its Bermuda character." Periodically, Morgan placed advertisements in the local papers inviting Bermudians to stroll through his gardens. In a spirit of Scottish egalitarianism, Morgan ignored the racial segregation of the colony, opening his gates to white and black Bermudians alike, as the invitations Morgan placed in Bermuda's black newspaper, the *Bermuda Recorder*, attested. On other occasions, he brought groups of his Montreal employees to Bermuda to bask in the warmth of his hospitality.

While James and Anna Morgan may have been fixated on their garden in the winter sun, they were never oblivious to the world beyond their gate. James brought his sense of Scottish philanthropy with him to Bermuda. He believed that wealth entailed social responsibility. His native Montreal was dotted with instances of Scottish benevolence, McGill University (endowed in 1821 by merchant Peter McGill) being a prime example. And in this same sense, Morgan was determined to



The classic Bermuda architecture is characterized by long, low lines and quaint Butteries, c. 1930

leave a legacy in Bermuda that extended far beyond his quarry gardens.

War prompted Morgan's first sortie into Bermuda affairs. He had arrived in Bermuda loaded with the strongly pro-British mind-set of Anglo-Canadians. In this view, Britain was Canada's mother country and, when she called, Canada must come. That moment came in August 1914. This meant not only foot soldiers,

but also sacrifice on the home front. In this atmosphere while the "Hun" became the foe in Europe, "drink" became the foe at home. Calls for prohibition had long been heard in Canada, but war provided the moral imperative for its introduction. By 1916, virtually all of Canada had gone "dry." Morgan reasoned that a similar prescription should be issued in Bermuda. After all, it was British to a tee.

As the war deepened, Morgan engaged in a campaign to have the Bermuda Assembly adopt prohibition by "local option" — the right of individual parishes to go dry. Morgan mailed postcard questionnaires to Assembly members asking them to commit to the cause. He wrote to the *Royal Gazette* assailing "Rum and all its Allies." The idea gained little traction in a colony that had always liked its rum and instinctively understood that the increasing number of tourists coming to the isles of rest also liked their tippie. Furthermore, some Bermudians resented an outsider sanctioning their behaviour. The *Royal Gazette* urged local politicians to reply to Morgan's postcard by saying "yes, in favour of prohibiting visitors interfering in local politics." Morgan backed off.

Peace brought new opportunities for the Morgans in Bermuda. James applied his passion for horticultural improvement to what he believed was the backward state of local farming. He donated prizes for the annual Corn Show held on the grounds of Government House—for instance, £1 for the farmer displaying the best Warwick vegetables. He worked with Warwick's Parish Development

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Committee, lecturing it on the “importance of keeping pigs.” Anna Morgan took a keen interest in the provision of modern medical equipment in Bermuda. In 1920, the colony was in the throes of modernising its humble Cottage Hospital into what is today King Edward VII Memorial Hospital. The Morgans’ son James was a doctor with wartime service in x-ray stations near the front. So when Anna used her Canadian Red Cross connections to facilitate the donation of beds and x-ray apparatus to the new hospital, Dr. Morgan came from Montreal to oversee the installation of the new machines. Anna further supported hospital modernisation by hosting fund-raisers—for instance, a “Gypsy Tea” on the beach below Southlands.

The 1920s thus saw Warwick Academy hit its modern stride: enrolment grew and better teachers were hired. In another first for Bermuda, Warwick students went off-island on school tours. The same decade saw three Warwick students win Rhodes Scholarships. The benevolent instincts of James Morgan pervaded all these advances.

For his part, James Morgan turned his attention to the modernisation of Bermuda education. At the core of the Scottish Enlightenment lay a belief in man’s rational improvement. Education mattered. Hence James McGill’s benevolent endowment of his namesake university in Montreal and Andrew Carnegie’s belief in the power of libraries. The provision of education had been on the Bermuda agenda since the days of the Somers Isles Company. As early as 1664, Warwick offspring had been schooled in a fledgling two-room school presided over by the famed surveyor-turned-teacher Richard Norwood. From the outset Warwick Academy, as it came to be known, laboured to survive. The colony proved stingy in supporting education, so much so that by the mid-1700s the school was obliged to seek shelter at nearby Southlands, which at the time was also housing the clergy of nearby Christ Church Presbyterian. Inadequate funding persisted in the early nineteenth century. In 1819, the Warwick Parish Council asserted its control over the faltering school, appointing trustees and directing taxes to its support.

The new arrangement, however, did little to improve the quality of pedagogy. Few of the teachers were properly trained. Many were missionaries from the Churches of Scotland

and England. School buildings decayed. Not surprisingly, truancy became a constant problem. In short, education in Warwick became parochial to a point of dysfunction. Ironically, the academy boasted some famous Bermudian graduates, such as the Reverend Francis Landey Patton who had risen from his initial ill-education to become president of Princeton University by the 1890s.

In 1896, help arrived from Scotland. Robert Robertson was appointed headmaster and soon removed the school from any oversight by the Bermuda Board of Education. Robertson increased classroom size for the first time since the school’s 1664 inception. But there improvement stalled—chronic underfunding and outdated pedagogy stifled further change.

In the wake of the First World War, Robertson luckily found two reformist allies: James Morgan and Francis Landey Patton. Morgan came to Bermuda steeped in that Carnegie-like conviction that education served as the foundation of a stable and prosperous society. Patton had returned to his native Bermuda after a 14-year stint at Princeton University, one of America’s progressive colleges.

In 1920, Patton wrote in the *Royal Gazette* that the history of education in Bermuda was one of “abortive efforts.” Teaching methods were behind the times and access to schools was limited to those with money. Morgan agreed and launched the Warwick Academy War Memorial Fund aimed at raising £2,000 to enable poor kids to attend. Patton, Landey and Robertson determined that Warwick Academy’s best hope lay in shedding any central control over its affairs. In 1922, they petitioned the Assembly to vest control of the parish lands set aside for the sustenance of the school in the hands of an autonomous board of trustees. They modelled their vision for Warwick Academy on that of the English grammar school. Thus, when the Assembly centralised control of Bermuda schools in the Schools’ Act of 1922, the academy bowed out, obtaining its own trust act which allowed it

control of its own assets, fees and governance. The *Royal Gazette* remarked that Warwick Academy now had the making of a “miniature of an English college.”

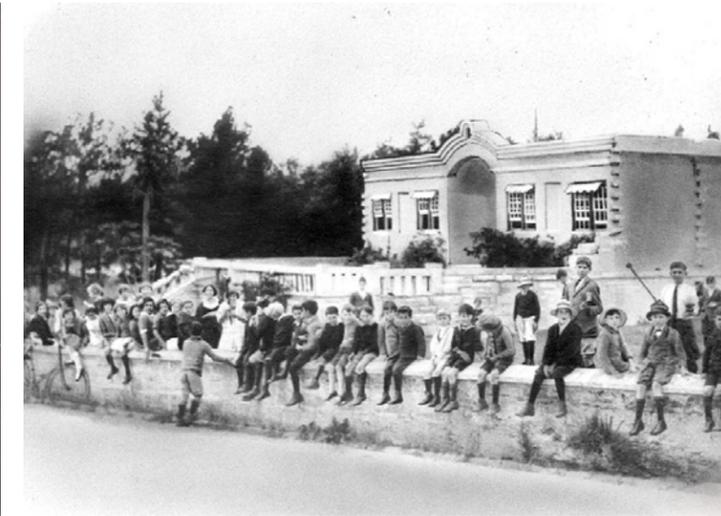
James Morgan threw heart and cheque book into making this vision a reality. His largesse added three new buildings to what was quickly becoming an academic campus. More classrooms were added to the existing building and new buildings were clustered around it centering the campus on what now became a quadrangle. Morgan Hall with its innovative ventilated roof provided more teaching space. For the first time, Bermudian students, for instance, had access to physics and chemistry labs. Morgan’s benevolence then gave the academy an auditorium for assemblies. And, again for the first time in Bermuda, Morgan arranged for motion pictures to be screened on the campus. Films, he believed, opened new avenues of instruction. Morgan also spearheaded the construction of a home for the headmaster and new athletic changing rooms. His passion for horticulture was evidenced in the creation of gardening plots where students could develop skills beyond book learning.

But book learning dominated Morgan’s passion for Warwick Academy. He personally oversaw the building up of the school library, selecting and donating 600 volumes. To reinforce student motivation, Morgan financed academic prizes and proudly attended the academy’s sports day each year in the hope of seeing students from Morgan House triumph over those from rival Patton and Rhodes Houses. The 1920s thus saw Warwick Academy hit its modern stride: enrolment grew and better teachers were hired. In another first for Bermuda, Warwick students went off-island on school tours. The same decade saw three Warwick students win Rhodes Scholarships. The benevolent instincts of James Morgan pervaded all these advances. In 1927, the *Royal Gazette* likened the “noble hearted James Morgan” to Cecil Rhodes—generous and far-sighted. A year later, the trustees of the academy unveiled a portrait of their benefactor, by Canadian artist Alfonso Jongers.

Even in paradise, death intrudes. “Live-for-Ever” may be an uplifting philosophy for life, but it does not confer immortality. In 1928, Anna Morgan died and was buried in a mausoleum carved into a quarry wall at Southlands. Four years later, James died after



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left: Portrait of James Morgan by Alfonso Jongers, 1928

right: Warwick Academy c.1920's

a last winter at Southlands and was buried beside his wife. The eulogies were heartfelt. The *Bermudian* saluted Morgan’s “simplicity and modesty,” “his sincere dedication to the cause of education” and “his remarkable zeal for creating beauty.” For the *Royal Gazette*, Morgan was “a true Prince, not one in a fairy tale” but one who made “dreams come true!”

Southlands was never the same. The property was dedeed to the Morgan Trust Company, a

subsidiary of the Morgan retail empire. For the next four years, the Morgans’ son, Dr. James, lived at Southlands, but his medical career had not prospered and in 1936 he reluctantly sold his parents’ beloved home in the sun. Despite the fact that North America was locked in depression, Bermuda had retained a cachet in the minds of the rich. Consequently, Southlands passed into the hands of Lyle and Grace Torrey of Detroit. Grace was a daughter

of William Metzger, a motor city magnate involved with the birth of the Cadillac marque. The Torreys plunged into the Bermuda expat social whirl, partying and golfing with other prominent Americans each winter. Beyond American friends such as James Roosevelt, the Torreys counted Eldon Trimmingham and Lady Watlington amongst their Bermudian friends. The Detroit newspapers reported that Grace Torrey was so “enthralled” by Bermuda that



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Aerial view of Southlands property showing the beach and vast unspoiled acreage.

she had a Bermuda buggy bell installed on the hood of her Cadillac.

War broke the Torrey's idyll in Bermuda. The menace of German submarines made crossing the Gulf Stream risky and ultimately impossible for tourists. In 1942, Southlands was leased to the United States Army as an anti-aircraft training school. Ack-ack guns arrayed along Southlands' once-tranquil beach pumped round after round of munitions out over the south shore. Magazine sheds, control towers and instruction halls blighted the garden. In 1945, the Americans transferred the school to Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and Southlands soon passed into the hands of an eccentric retired British military engineer, Brigadier Harry Dunbar Maconochie. The brigadier, it is whispered, embraced the bottle more than the beauty of Southlands with the result that the Morgans' garden never regained its Edenic majesty.

In 1977, Southlands was bought by the Willowbank Foundation, a Canadian non-denominational Christian trust. Earlier, Willowbank had bought a beachfront property in Sandys, which it turned into a resort dedicated to low-key, restorative visits by harried North Americans. Willowbank's acquisition of Southlands was predicated on a vision of building a 130-unit retirement complex for a similar constituency. The plan never advanced; Willowbank lived with perpetual financial troubles (its hotel would eventually close in 2011). In its absence, Southlands deteriorated. Quarry walls collapsed. Fiddlewood overwhelmed the gardens and its rustic paths became encroached.

The ultimate indignity came when vandals raided the Morgan mausoleum, presumably in vain search of pharaonic loot. Horrified Morgan relatives had their forebears' remains brought to Canada. Southlands was left to intrepid naturalists who explored its now-tangled wonders.

In 2005, Bermudian businessmen Craig Christensen, Nelson Hunt and Brian Dupereault purchased Southlands from Willowbank. Their company, Southlands Ltd., then began to craft a new vision for the remaining 37 acres of the estate, one that capitalised on the property's intrinsic beauty by marrying it with a vision of five-star tourism. The Bermuda government, recognising the acumen of the investors and acutely aware of the island's faltering tourism, enthusiastically engaged the process of possible redevelopment. In due course, negotiations were opened with the Jumeirah Hotel group, a Dubai-based operator of luxury hotels famed for their daring hotel designs and high-spending clientele. Many Bermudians, however, recoiled at the idea of turning one of the last unspoiled tracts of natural Bermuda into a gated sanctuary. Petitions were circulated and widely signed. Letters to the *Royal Gazette* described the hotel proposal as a "monstrosity." Bermuda thus found itself at a crossroad: nature versus job creation and the rebranding of Bermuda as a "private island."

It took a flash of inspiration from then-Premier Alex Scott to cut the Gordian knot. In 2006, Scott suggested that Southlands might be saved for posterity if the developers

would accept a swap of its 37 acres for an 80-acre chunk of the still-unutilised former military base at Morgan's Point. An intricate negotiation followed, buffeted by the 2008 economic crisis. Good politics is about finding the middle ground and in 2010 the Morgan's Point Resort Act struck that balance. Bermuda would get its glittering, high-end resort—the Ritz-Carlton Reserve Resort at Caroline Bay on Morgan's Point—while Southlands would be reserved in its own right as a piece of Bermuda's natural heritage. As if to sanctify the deal, the Bermuda National Trust staged its Palm Sunday Walk at Southlands that year, allowing Bermudians to take in the still-evident natural beauty of its paths and exotic plants.

Seven years have passed since the politicians and developers put down their pens. Architects have now finalised the design of the hotel, spa and restaurants that will soon grace the shore of Caroline Bay. A grand marina on the bay was ready for the America's Cup festivities, giving proof of what the 2010 deal promised would be "a glorious future for Bermuda's tourism product." Alas, on Bermuda's south shore the news is not as encouraging. Despite being designated in 2014 as a "listed" historic building, Southlands still stands pretty much as it did in 2006. A few more shutters have fallen off the Morgans' once-grand home, more quarry gardens have subsided and the overgrowth of the paths and gardens continues. A group called the Friends of Southlands has initiated a programme of community gardens on the estate. But there has been precious little evidence of a concerted effort by Bermuda's government to turn Southlands into an accessible national park. The rhetoric is still there, but the purse would seem to be currently closed. Is it not time for Bermuda to see in Southlands what Anna and James Morgan saw in it a century ago? Or what the poet Andrew Marvell long ago saw in the beauty of a garden:

*Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy dear sister!
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men;
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow,
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious solitude.*