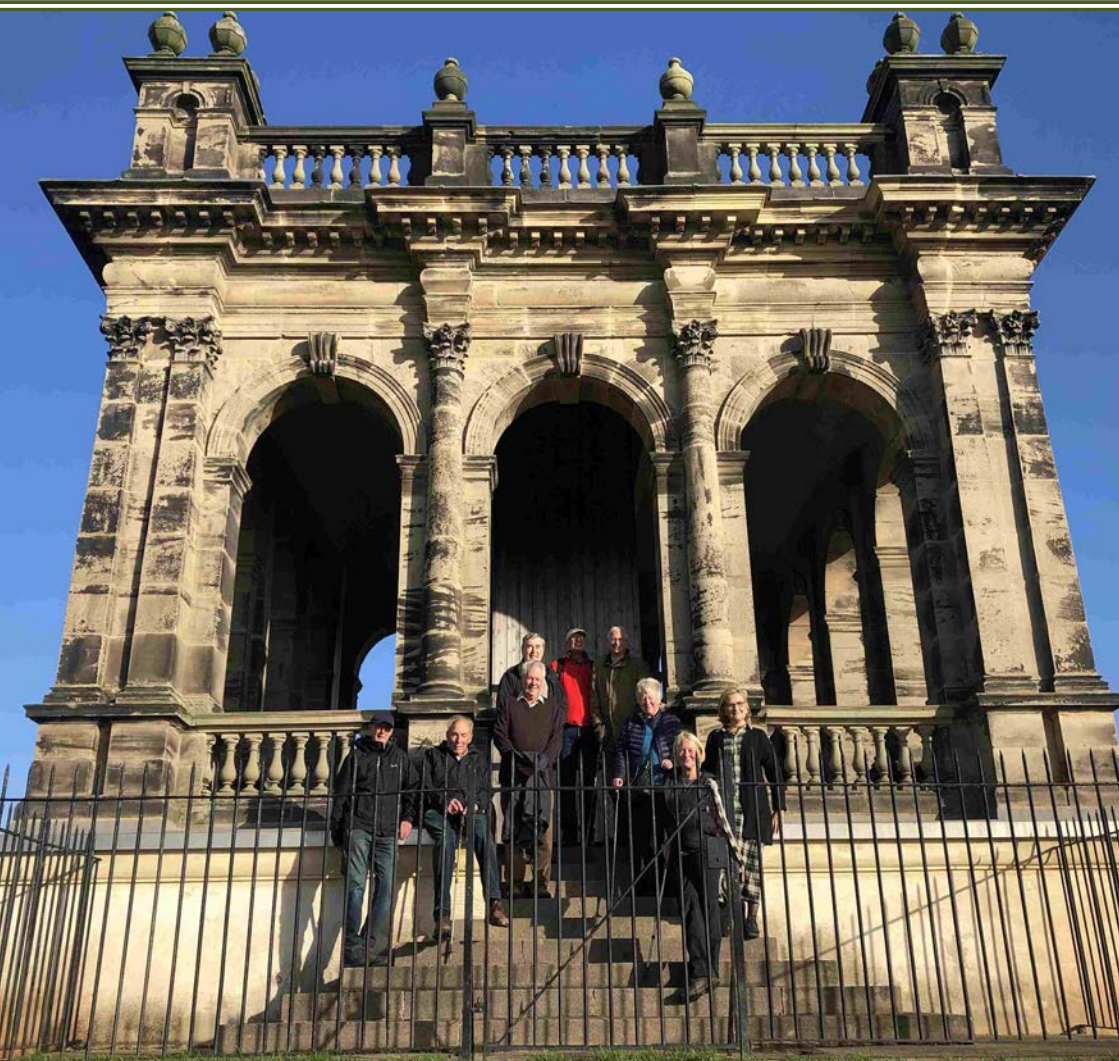


Staffordshire Gardens & Parks Trust

February 2023 - ISSUE No. 66

News Letter





**"BETTER
THAN
BLENHEIM"**

On a Sunday afternoon in late June a party of members ventured into rural Shropshire to visit Upton Cressett Hall, the moated Elizabethan manor house and home of Bill Cash, son of the veteran MP, Sir William Cash.

Situated in the remote hill-top village of Upton Cressett, five miles west of Bridgnorth, the Hall dates from the fifteenth century, when Hugh Cressett built a timber-framed manor house, complete with Great Hall and solar wing. Much of the original hall still survives, though now encased in Elizabethan brick, and reduced in size.

What the visitor sees today, is a late sixteenth century brick-clad Elizabethan manor house, believed to be the earliest of its kind in Shropshire, which still incorporates within it the medieval Great Hall, though now reduced in size.

Upton Cressett, recorded in the Domesday Book as 'Ulton', derives its present name from the two families who successively owned the estate for nearly seven hundred years – the de Uptons from the time of the Norman Conquest until the fourteenth century, and the Cressett family, to whom ownership passed by marriage.

Despite the remoteness of their ancestral home, the Cressetts were fully engaged in the affairs of the nation, including the fifteenth century War of the Roses and the English Civil Wars of the seventeenth century, in both of which family loyalties were divided. During the latter conflict, Prince Rupert spent a night at Upton Cressett before continuing his journey to Bridgnorth, where

the Royalists suffered the latest of a sequence of defeats at the hands of the Parliamentarians.

It is a long-held belief that, in 1483 Cressett Hall gave shelter to the thirteen-year-old Edward V, proclaimed King at Ludlow and now on his way to be crowned at Westminster Abbey, only to be intercepted by his 'wicked' Uncle Richard and taken instead to the Tower of London, at that time a royal residence as well as a prison, where he was to die before the year's end.

As befits a house with such an historic CV, Upton Hall has a priest-hole and a secret tunnel, yet to be excavated, which runs from the Gatehouse to a field close to the church, used, no doubt, by Catholic priests and Royalist fugitives seeking to elude their pursuers. The Church of St. Michael, rescued from a state of steep decline by Bill Cash Snr. and now in the care of the Historic Churches, is all that remains of the medieval village that once stood on the site, abandoned, it is believed, when the site was emparked in the 16th century and deer introduced. It is said that it was before the altar of this church that Prince Rupert knelt in prayer before completing his ill-fated journey to Bridgnorth.



Amongst its treasures is a Norman font, taken, it is said, at Prince Philip's request to Gordonstoun School, where the then Prince Charles was a pupil, as part of a scheme to surround the young Prince with historic objects and, presumably, to encourage an awareness of and sensitivity to the history of the country he would later rule.

The font has now been returned to the church, together with brasses removed by the Diocese for safe keeping during the time it had been abandoned.

There is also evidence in a nearby field of an earlier Roman road-side settlement, evidence of which had been uncovered by ploughing which had turned up a hoard of pottery as well as brooches, coins and other evidence that metal-work had been carried out at the site (at the conclusion of the visit, some of our members were taken

to view the site by Jonathan Cash, the archaeologist brother of Bill Cash Snr., who had played a prominent rôle in the subsequent excavations).

In the grounds there are several Spanish chestnut trees planted in 1815 to commemorate the battle of Waterloo, joined by a new sapling cultivated at Hougemont farm, a key defensive position which the failure of successive assaults by French troops to seize was thought by Wellington to have contributed significantly to the final outcome of the battle.

The Cressett family retained ownership of the Hall when they moved to the more spacious and more-strategically situated newly-built Cound Hall, close to Shrewsbury in 1703, but sold it in 1926. Near derelict by the 1950s, when its last occupant had been a pig farmer, whose pigs and hens had enjoyed the freedom of the ground floor, it was purchased by the present owner's

The Hall viewed from the rose garden



father, who, an ardent conservation and member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, was looking for a derelict historic building in danger of demolition whose restoration he and Bidy, his wife, could undertake. At the time a complete stranger to Shropshire, he nonetheless saw it as the ideal subject for his project, and, undeterred by the advanced state of dereliction in which they found the Hall, Bill Cash took possession in 1969, and restoration work began in 1971. This included replacing the stolen Jacobean panelling. By 2011 the Hall had been sufficiently restored for it to be taken off the "Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings" 'Buildings at Risk' register. By January of that year, the main restoration work had been completed, though renovation work still continued. By that time, so much had been spent on it that it had become known as 'Money-Pit Manor'!

Following completion of the restoration work, the Hall (listed Grade II in 1951 and described as being unoccupied and in a dilapidated state) was, together with the Gatehouse, upgraded to Grade I. At about the same time both the remains of the Roman settlement and the medieval village were scheduled as Ancient Monuments, which would later save both hamlet and estate from the intrusion of first a pig farm and then wind turbines.

The first glimpse of the house visitors see as they make their way up the three-mile-long, hedge-lined, winding lane is almost certainly the twisted cut-brick chimneys of the sixteenth century turreted Gatehouse which stands a short distance in front of the Hall (It is thought that there are fewer than fifty 15th and 16th century gatehouses surviving in the UK and even fewer still that are, like Upton Cressett's, attached to the main house).

Now no longer the main entrance to the house, the space between the two buildings has been laid out by Bidy Cash as a small formal garden in which yew topiary, planted in the 1970s, is now a prominent feature. In this project she was advised by Percy Thrower, at the time the nation's favourite gardener by virtue of his rôle as presenter of "Gardening Club", the BBC's forerunner to "Gardeners' World".

In its early stage is the 'Dragon Pool Garden, a two-acre circular nature trail which will take visitors round the entire garden. It will start below St. Michael's Church and lead to pools which were originally medieval fish-ponds.



including, in 2011, the prestigious Hudson's Heritage Award in the 'Hidden Gem' category, but surely none has given more quiet pleasure to those who have dedicated so much of their time, skills and resources to its restoration than the comment written by an earlier visitor in the visitors' book following her visit - "Better than Blenheim"!

(Acknowledgements: In the preparation of this article, the following literary sources were consulted: "Restoration Heart", a memoir by William Cash; Historic England List for England - Entries for 'Upton Cressett Hall'; 'Gatehouse at Upton Cressett'; 'Former church of St. Michael, Upton Cressett'; 'Medieval Settlement'; and 'Roman Settlement 390 metres NE of New House Farm, Upton Cressett'; various websites)



Murals by Adam Dant

Now a holiday rental, the Gatehouse has in recent years accommodated a number of celebrated guests, including Margaret and Denis Thatcher, Sir John Betjeman, the former Poet Laureate (and passionate conservationist, particularly of Victorian architecture – and saviour of St. Pancras Railway Station), and Boris Johnson, who, a young political journalist at the time, had not then achieved the level of public exposure he was later to acquire – so much so, that no one can remember which bedroom he slept in!

The Trust's visit concluded with tea and cakes in the Dragon Hall, an eighteenth-century barn, now a newly-created dining and events space a short distance from the Hall decorated in the style of a fifteenth-century Florentine palazzo by Adam Dant, an award-winning artist who has also carried out extensive mural decorations throughout the Hall, updating and re-interpreting sixteenth-century designs previously in the building, using paints identical to those originally used.

Since its restoration, carried out in the spirit of conserving its original essence ("I saw the restoration as another chapter in the house's worn history, with myself as just a small actor on its stage") Upton Cressett Hall has justifiably received several accolades,

Ilam Hall and Park



Ilam Hall and Park are a property of The National Trust. A small party from our Trust paid an interesting and informative visit to the Park in July. The following notes are a brief history of the site.

Looking east towards Thorpe Cloud

Ilam Hall is situated in the Peak District National Park about five miles from Ashbourne. The house sits at the top of a steep bank looking east towards Thorpe Cloud across the dramatic bowl containing the village and the Church of the Holy Cross. Steep grassy slopes descend from the terrace around the hall to the church and the River Manifold, overlooked from the south by the precipitate hanging treescape of Hinkley Wood.

Although not mentioned in the Domesday Book, Ilam was a possession of Burton Abbey from at least the tenth century. It is uncertain whether it was a monastic grange (farm) or if there was a religious cell. No archaeological evidence has yet been found to show if there were any buildings associated with the landholding and how they might have related to the present parish church, which still contains late Anglo-Saxon masonry.

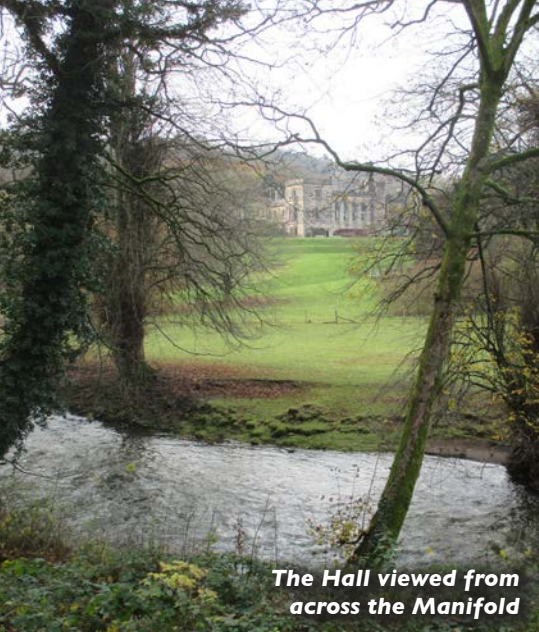
At the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539 most of the lands of Burton Abbey, including those at Ilam, were acquired by the Paget family (of Beaudesert). In 1547 the Ilam estate was sold to John Port,

evidently a prosperous local yeoman. By the 1560s the Ports had erected a new dwelling-house, possibly on the site of the present mansion, or of the stables slightly to the west. Only one indistinct sketch of the house is known, depicting a three-storey structure in a hybrid Jacobean-Georgian style, possibly constructed of stone.

The Ports remained at Ilam until the early nineteenth century. They evidently undertook landscaping works around the house. The full details of these are

Paradise Walk





The Hall viewed from across the Manifold

impressed by the picturesque setting for James Boswell to mention it several times in his biography of the great lexicographer.

In 1809 the estate was sold to Jesse Russell, a wealthy soap boiler from London, who bought it as a house for his son upon his marriage. The younger Jesse Watts-Russell, who joined his name with that of his wife, Mary Watts. Daughter of a London wine merchant, she died in childbirth in 1817 and is commemorated by the Watts-Russell memorial in the style of a medieval Eleanor Cross in the centre of the village.

He commissioned the London architect John Shaw to remodel and enlarge the hall between 1821 and 1826. The substantial ashlar crenellated house in broadly Tudor Gothic taste stood to the south and east of the surviving entrance range and portecochere, occupying much of the space now forming the lower forecourt and upper balustraded terrace overlooking the church and river valley.

Watts-Russell served as MP for the rotten borough of Gatton, in Surrey, between 1821 and 1826, but failed to secure election for North Staffordshire in 1832. He was described as a man “with no blood but immensely rich”, and was well regarded in society. During his occupation,



The Hall from the south-east looking past the plunge pool

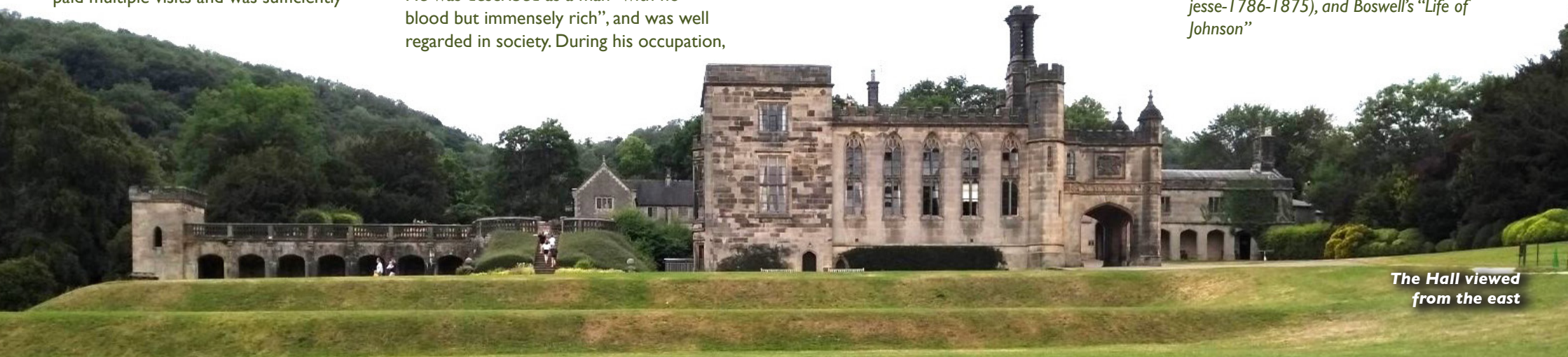
the original drive from Blore across St. Bertram’s Bridge in the valley bottom was replaced by the present carriage road from the north-east of the village, passing the new lodge by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Although earlier farm premises survive, the estate village was substantially remodelled after 1839, when Russell-Watts provided many new cottages designed by Scott for his tenantry in what has been described as “Swiss cottage style”, and a new school.

After his death in 1875, the property descended to his son David Jesse Watts-Russell, MP for North Staffordshire, but, after his death in 1879, it was sold to Robert Hanbury MP. Hanbury carried out various improvements to the estate during his occupation, including laying out a large walled kitchen garden to the west of the stables and coach-house.

In 1910 the estate was again sold and used as a hotel until the owner went bankrupt in 1927. Ownership then passed to a demolition contractor, who dismantled most of the Hall, leaving only the entrance range, which still stands. The site was levelled, and the higher level enclosed by a stone parapet to match that of the earlier parterre to the west. Sir Robert McDougall, a Manchester philanthropist and member of the flour-milling family, acquired the estate in 1934 and passed it to The National Trust on condition that the Hall be used, as it still is, as a Youth Hostel.

“Dr. Johnson paid multiple visits”

Sources: This article has drawn on the historical account of the Ilam Conservation Area Appraisal document published by the Peak District National Park in 2012, the History of Parliament Online (www.historical.ac.uk/volume/187532/member/watts-russell-jesse-1786-1875), and Boswell’s “Life of Johnson”



The Hall viewed from the east

THE UPPER PARK AT SANDON HALL

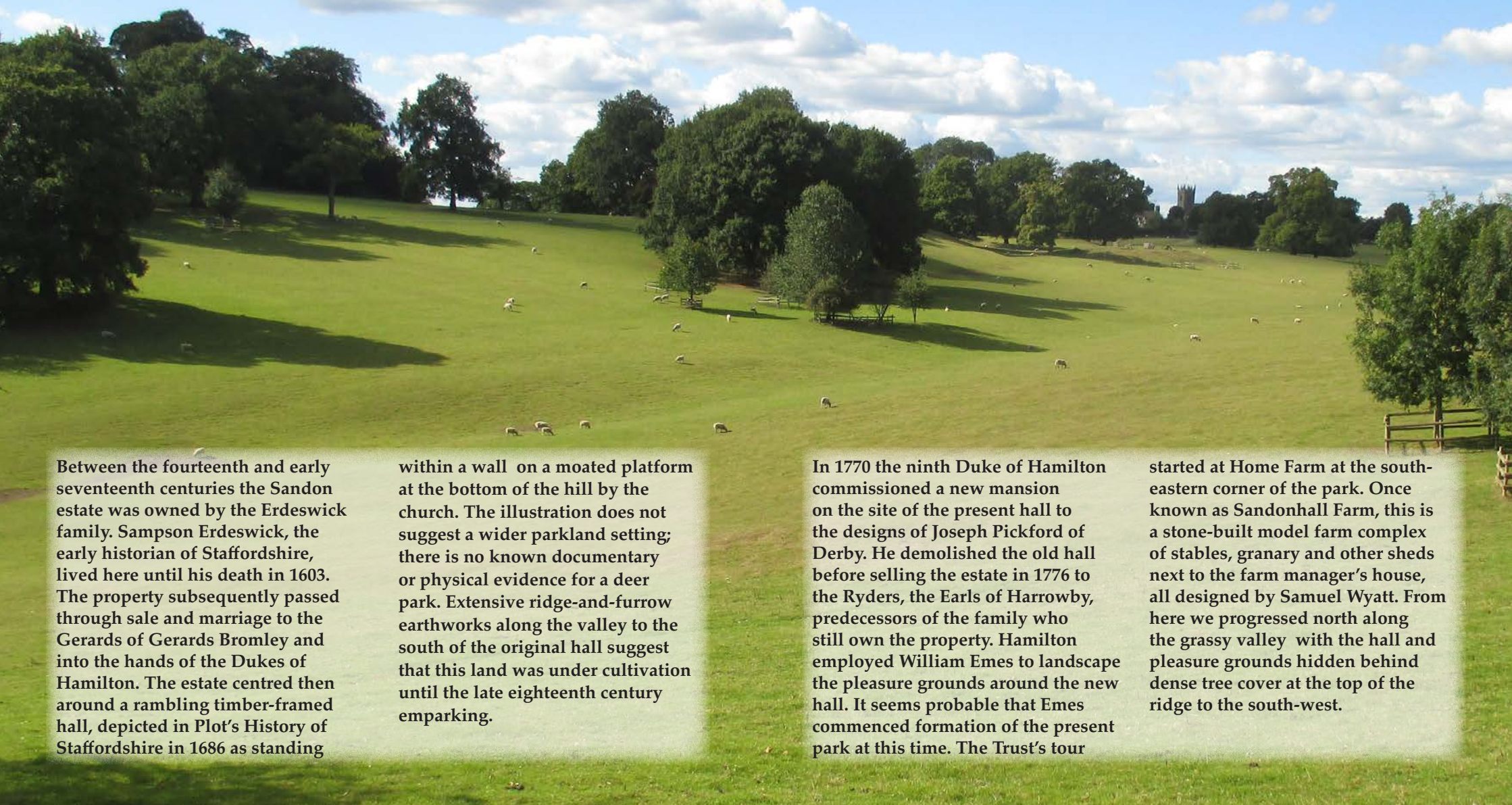
Sandon Park occupies about 250 hectares of rolling countryside on the northern side of the Trent Valley in mid-Staffordshire. The present-day designed landscape runs along two parallel, roughly north-south ridges separated by a central valley. The nineteenth-century hall, pleasure grounds and extensive kitchen garden lie on the western ridge in the Lower Park. The Trust has previously paid two visits to this area; our visit in October was to the Upper Park along and beyond the north-eastern ridge.

Between the fourteenth and early seventeenth centuries the Sandon estate was owned by the Erdeswick family. Sampson Erdeswick, the early historian of Staffordshire, lived here until his death in 1603. The property subsequently passed through sale and marriage to the Gerards of Gerards Bromley and into the hands of the Dukes of Hamilton. The estate centred then around a rambling timber-framed hall, depicted in Plot's History of Staffordshire in 1686 as standing

within a wall on a moated platform at the bottom of the hill by the church. The illustration does not suggest a wider parkland setting; there is no known documentary or physical evidence for a deer park. Extensive ridge-and-furrow earthworks along the valley to the south of the original hall suggest that this land was under cultivation until the late eighteenth century emparking.

In 1770 the ninth Duke of Hamilton commissioned a new mansion on the site of the present hall to the designs of Joseph Pickford of Derby. He demolished the old hall before selling the estate in 1776 to the Ryders, the Earls of Harrowby, predecessors of the family who still own the property. Hamilton employed William Emes to landscape the pleasure grounds around the new hall. It seems probable that Emes commenced formation of the present park at this time. The Trust's tour

started at Home Farm at the south-eastern corner of the park. Once known as Sandonhall Farm, this is a stone-built model farm complex of stables, granary and other sheds next to the farm manager's house, all designed by Samuel Wyatt. From here we progressed north along the grassy valley with the hall and pleasure grounds hidden behind dense tree cover at the top of the ridge to the south-west.



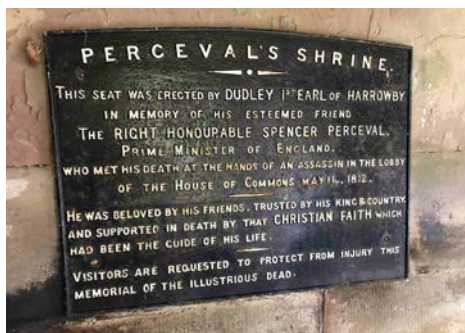
Erdeswick's Seat is a large sandstone outcrop on the wooded northern slope. The derivation of the name is unknown and, apart from one shallow, almost indistinct alcove towards the base of its western face, it appears a wholly natural feature. Its prominence and west-facing prospect towards the hall clearly indicate that it had a design significance in the landscape.



The Perceval Shrine

Slightly beyond and cut into the scarp is Perceval's Shrine, an open-fronted stone shelter in Strawberry Hill "Gothick" design. It was erected in 1815 as a memorial to Lord Harrowby's friend (and fellow Staffordshire landowner), the late Spencer Perceval, who had been assassinated in 1811 while Prime Minister. The architect is unknown, but its slightly provincial design suggests that it might have been the work of the Trubshaws, the architect-builders from the nearby Haywoods. Stone revetments in the valley side and the faded evidence of a former track route to access the shrine as part of a circuit of the park.

The moated platform of the old hall marks the termination of the valley. A broad rectangular channel, still watered, remains with a small, probably nineteenth-century brick cottage on the platform. The platform



and banks around the enclosure are now heavily treed, making it difficult to comprehend its sixteenth- and seventeenth-century character.

The medieval church of All Saints stands at the top of the ridge to the west, overlooking the site of the old hall. Undulations and indentations in the slope of the intervening hill indicate the site of the original Sandon village, before it was re-located out of the new park to its present position along the Stone road in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century.

At the top of the steep slope overlooking the former village and nestling into the southern end of Black Hill is Helen's Tomb. This is a brick, barrel-vaulted rectangular cistern of eighteenth-century date, originally with an ashlar facing in semi-classical style. The purpose of the cistern is unknown, but it may have helped feed the moat in times past, The stone casing is currently in a ruinous condition and badly in need of repair.

Our tour now returned southwards along the north-eastern ridge beyond a narrow perimeter planting belt suggestive of William Emes. The ridge top path enjoys extensive views across Staffordshire and Shropshire, taking in the Maer Hills, the Wrekin,



Helen's Tomb

and Clee Hill. It is little wonder that the Harrowbys chose to re-erect the upper storey of the former Trentham belvedere tower here in 1912 after the demolition of Trentham Hall, closing a vista from Sandon Hall and to capture and enjoy the views.

The ridge-top walk terminates in Monument Wood, a promontory at the south-western corner of the park, just above our starting-point at Home Farm. At the corner of the wood is Pitt's Column, a 22 metre-high stone Doric column modelled on Trajan's Column in Rome. It was erected by the Harrowbys in 1806 in memory



Pitt's Column

of their friend, the former Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger. The monument is in good condition, but it is to be hoped that the surrounding overgrowth can be tidied to enable this part of the very attractive park to be seen the best advantage again.

Alan Taylor



The Trentham Tower



Chiswick House and Gardens, by Jacques Rigaud, 1736

“CHISWICK HOUSE AND GARDEN 300 YEARS OF CREATION AND RE-CREATION”

The Trust’s 2022 programme of events finished on a high note with a talk by Dr. David Jacques, OBE, on the history of Chiswick House and Garden, with which he had been closely associated as consultant, English Heritage Inspector and trustee for the past forty years and which now formed the subject of his recently-published book.

Chiswick House was built between 1726 and 1729 by Richard Boyle, the 3rd Earl of Burlington, in the neo-classical style of a Palladian villa, so-called because they were designed by the Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio, who lived between 1508 and 1580 and whose guiding principles, influenced by Classical Roman and Greek architecture, were symmetry and proportion.

Burlington, an architect in his own right, was assisted by William Kent, better known these days as ‘the father of English landscape design’, but perhaps better known in his own time as a painter and furniture designer.

Burlington first met Kent in Italy in 1719 while on his first Grand Tour (he was to undertake two more), and both were greatly impressed by both the architecture and the landscape they saw.

Burlington House was one of the first houses built in the Palladian style in England and replaced the till-then popular ornate Baroque style.

Burlington had brought back from Italy a notebook full of architectural drawings which would provide him with the inspiration he needed in building Chiswick House, but when it came to designing a garden which would complement the building there was practically no literature he could consult (the best known, Pliny the Elder’s ‘Natural History’, runs to 37 volumes, and covers a multitude of topics, including sections on botany, horticulture and even agriculture, has nothing to say on garden design), and no surviving example to copy.

Between 1721 and 1723 Richard Bradley, Cambridge University’s first (honorary) Professor of Botany, published ‘A General Treatise of Agriculture both Philosophical and Practical displaying the Arts of Husbandry and Gardening’, which contained a chapter on garden design, dismissed by David as “all fantasy”!

However, Bradley’s knowledge of plants was extensive (it was said that he was acquainted with every nurseryman in the country), and he was widely consulted by landowners looking to ‘improve’ their gardens.

In tracing the development of the garden, David’s approach was to single out individual elements, starting with water.

Flowing water has always been a desirable feature in a designed garden, but up to the 1720s the preferred form had been that of a canal, long and straight, (the canal at Chiswick House was dug in 1727). However, as garden designers turned away from formality in a move towards a more naturalistic design (a move in which Lancelot “Capability” Brown was at the forefront), the rigid canal gave way to a winding river, ultimately flowing into a lake.

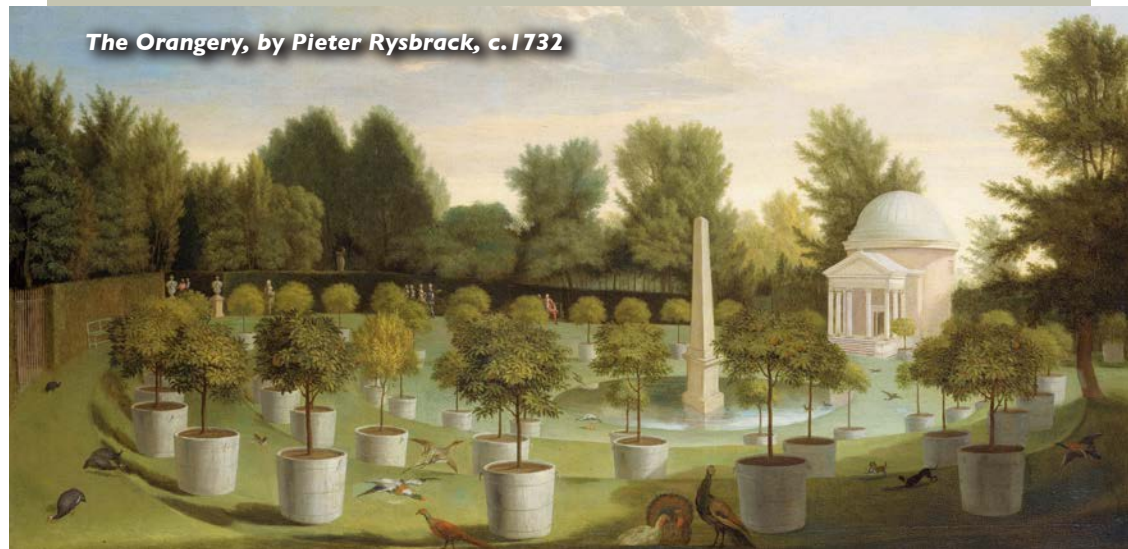
One of the earliest examples of this development was The Serpentine, in the forty-acre Hyde Park. Excavated in 1730 at the command of Queen Caroline, wife of George II, and under the supervision of the Royal Gardener, Charles Bridgeman, an early exponent of the ‘naturalistic’ style of landscape design, it was created by damming the River Westbourne and was one of the first artificial lakes to be given a ‘natural’ appearance.

Brown was especially adept at creating spectacular lakes; one such notable example is at Blenheim Place, whilst, in Staffordshire, we enjoy the splendour of his lakes at Trentham and Chillington.

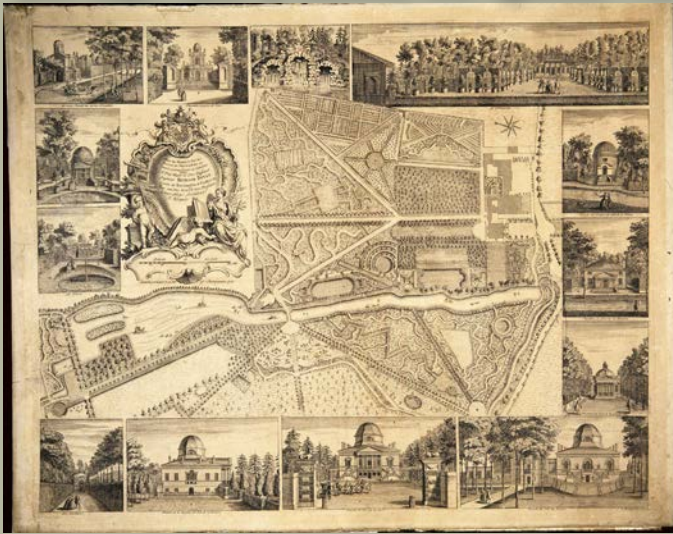
At Castle Howard, cited by David, water was in plentiful supply owing to the presence of natural springs. A reservoir had been built in the early eighteenth century to supply water not only for the House but also for cascades and fountains. The South Lake was created in 1724 by the 3rd Earl of Carlisle and the great North Lake by the 4th Earl towards the end of the century.

An early example of this particular feature is the Cascade at Chatsworth House; built

The Orangery, by Pieter Rysbrack, c.1732



John Roque's plan of Chiswick, with vignettes, 1736



by Monsieur Grillet, the noted French hydraulics engineer who had worked at Versailles; it took two years to complete and was finished in 1696, only to be remodelled twelve years later by Thomas Archer, who added the Baroque Cascade House.

At Chiswick House (which the fourth Duke of Devonshire was to inherit through marriage following Burlington's death without male heir in 1753), water entered the canal by means of a cascade at the south end, which plunges down the hillside through a series of arches and grottoes, giving the impression that it was being fed by a mighty river, whereas, in fact, it was supplied from a tank into which water was pumped by a steam engine. Originally classical in design, it was given a rustic appearance by William Kent in 1738.

Amphitheatres, another feature to be found in designed landscapes of this period, are classical in origin and were originally intended for dramatic performances, but the amphitheatre at Chiswick House, laid down in 1727, served a more decorative

purpose, though it has been used as a stage for concerts in modern times. . Shallow, grassed and semi-circular in shape, it looks down on a circular pool with a plinth-mounted obelisk at its centre and an Ionic temple beyond.

In the late eighteenth-century, flower gardens were composed of clumps of tulips and small shrubs planted into the grass, and it was Georgiana, wife of the

5th Duke of Devonshire, who planted at Chiswick the first known rose garden in England.

Georgiana was a socialite, leader of fashion and active in Whig politics, who described the house and gardens at Chiswick as her 'earthly paradise'. She was passionate about all things French, and, inspired by the example set by the Empress Joséphine, Napoleon Bonaparte's first wife, whose collection of roses at the Chateau de Malmaison amounted to 250 different varieties, including the first China roses imported into Europe, planted what is regarded as the first ornamental rose garden in England.

This feature went on to be developed by Humphry Repton, whose 'Rosary', complete with arbour, was one of one of a number of gardens of varying design he created at Ashridge in 1813.

Parterres are, as the name suggests, French in origin, but there had been no significant parterres in England for the past hundred years when the 6th Duke of Devonshire commissioned Lewis Kennedy,

who had advised the Empress Joséphine at Malmaison, to design one for the garden at Chiswick House.

Thereafter, the fashion for parterres grew, as did their extravagance in design; in 1813 Repton designed a parterre for Wanstead Abbey that was never implemented, while, in 1828, George IV had a parterre laid out at Windsor Castle, though, laid out high on a hill and in chalk (which necessitated the introduction of vast quantities of soil), it presented the royal gardeners with a serious challenge to maintain!

The 6th Duke was an enthusiastic horticulturalist, as well as a lavish entertainer (whose most notable guest was Tsar Nicholas I). He commissioned Samuel Ware to build a large conservatory in which to grow exotic fruits. Completed in 1813, it was 300 feet long and preceded Joseph Paxton's at Crystal Palace,

Always extensive to maintain, it was in a ruinous state by the end of the last century, but has been saved from complete collapse by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and now houses a collection of camellias.

Following the death of the 6th Duke in 1858 the Devonshires began renting the house, when their most distinguished tenant was Albert, Prince of Wales, who continued the tradition of lavish entertainment (one of his guests was his mother, Queen Victoria).

Between 1892 and 1928 the house became a mental institution, and the following year the estate was sold to Middlesex County Council. Then, in 1948, ownership passed to The Ministry of Works, who demolished the two wings added by the 5th Duke to accommodate Georgina and his mistress, together with their children, thus restoring the integrity of Burlington's original design. Following the passing of the Local Government Act in 1963 and the consequent re-organisation of administrative areas, English Heritage assumed responsibility for the house while the grounds, now under the control of Hounslow Borough Council, were run as a public park. Finally, in 2005, to overcome the problems caused by divided responsibility, the Chiswick House and Gardens Trust was set up. Since then, the Trust has undertaken extensive restoration of both house and gardens.

The place of Chiswick House Gardens in the early development of English landscape design makes a visit a 'must' for any enthusiast of gardens and garden history, preferably with a copy of David's book† in hand! His fascinating talk must surely have been an encouragement to his audience to consider adding such a visit to their summer programme!

† *"Chiswick House and Gardens: 300 years of creation and re-creation"*: Liverpool University Press: £40 hardback.



Chiswick House Café, winner of the RIBA London Building of the Year Award

DATES FOR YOUR 2023 DIARY

The following visits have been arranged for 2023:

Sunday, April 16th: at 2.00 pm
*Weston Park, Weston-under Lizard,
nr. Shifnal TF11 8LE*

Talk by Gareth William, Curator and Head of Learning, followed by guided tour of house, gardens and parkland. Dr. Williams is the author of several books, the most recent being "Weston Park: The House: the families and the influence".

Wednesday, June 7th: at 7.00 pm
*Sugnall Hall, Sugnall, Eccleshall
ST21 6NF* (the home of our President, Dr. David Jacques)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, July 15th: at 2.00 pm
*Betley Court, 25 Talke Road Betley,
Stoke-on-Trent ST7 4PW*

Built in 1716 and listed Grade II, the house was remodelled by John Nash in 1809, but devastated by fire in August 2019, and is now being reconstructed. The garden, designed by William Emes, covers ten acres and features a walled garden, dove cote, lawns and a parterre laid down by William Barron, named "The Great Tree Mover" because of his expertise at transplanting mature trees, including the Cedar of Lebanon which dominates the parterre. The garden also features a woodland walk and a lake. The visit will be hosted by the owner, Dr. Nigel Brown.

Saturday, October 7th: at 2.00 pm
*Shugborough Hall, Milford,
Stafford ST17 0XB*

This is a follow-up tour of the gardens and parklands to see the progress of the plan outlined by Hayley Mival and Caroline Beacall in their talk to members in November 2021.

*Other visits
currently being arranged:*

Late May at 2.00 pm:
*Cloister House, Blithfield Hall,
Admaston, WS15 3NL*

A visit to see the bluebells and rhododendrons, the date depending on the onset of the flowering season. (Our hosts, John and Barbara Hyde, have recently taken delivery of a small herd of Bagot goats, believed to be Britain's oldest breed of goats, which are said to be descended from a gift from Richard II to Sir John Bagot in 1387 after the King had enjoyed a successful day's hunting in Blithfield Park)

November (at a date to be announced):

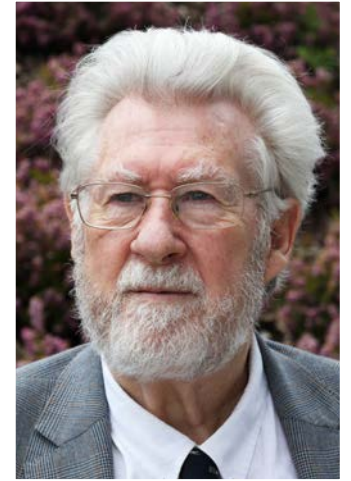
Winter talk (with seasonal refreshments)
Full details of all these visits will be sent to members near the date of each visit.

NEW PRESIDENT

After ten years Charles Bagot-Jewitt has decided to step down as the Trust's President.

We are most grateful to Commander Bagot-Jewitt for his support of the Trust over that time, both in attending meetings and hosting visits, including our AGMs at his home at Blithfield Hall.

We are pleased to announce that Dr. David Jacques has accepted the Trust's invitation to become our President. Dr. Jacques, a former Chairman of the Trust, is renowned as a scholar, author and lecturer, and was awarded the OBE in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Honours List for services to garden history and conservation.



Christmas Tree

The Trust once again entered Lichfield Cathedral's Christmas Tree Festival, which ran from Saturday, November 26th, 2022, to Monday, January 2nd, 2023, and, while not finishing amongst the winners, was well placed to promote the Trust to the thousands who visited the Festival. The total number of daytime visitors was over twenty thousand, an increase on last year's attendance.

This year, the tree was decorated by Julie Hall, a member of the Trust's Council of Management, who is to be congratulated on the attractive appearance of the tree, a feature of which was the discs, each of which contained a miniaturised image of an historic garden.



Acknowledgement

The Editor would like to place on record his appreciation of the support given him in the preparation of this Newsletter by John Hyde, David Jacques and Alan Taylor who contributed both texts and illustrations.



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Assistant Editor: Richard Sullivan

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Michael Faruup

Julie Hall

John Hyde

Bryan Sullivan

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