



THE ABBERLEY HALL foundation

Abberley Hall has been described by English Heritage as one of the finest remaining examples of a Victorian Country House, comparable with Osborne House and Brodsworth Hall. The Abberley Foundation is a registered charity (No. 1088863) that seeks to fund the conservation of this historic gem. For further information see www.abberleyhallfoundation.org.uk or e-mail foundation@abberleyhall.co.uk

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Conservatory and Fernery



Constructed by Joseph Jones between 1867-80. The fernery was dismantled by his cousin JJJ c. 1887 to make way for a second wing c. 1887.

The *Journal of Horticulture and Cottage Gardener* published an article on Abberley Hall in its October 13, 1887 edition :

“The mansion is a fine substantial building, with a side wing, but this imparts a one-sided appearance to the structure that is not pleasing to the artistic eyes of its owner, and a second wing is about to be added. The place the latter must occupy is at present filled by the conservatory and fernery. The former is one of the most beautiful glass houses in the country. The floor is of marble, dark and white slabs alternating, and a magnificent marble fountain occupies the centre. The fernery adjoining is a delightful retreat. The Ferns are planted amongst boulders, and the sight and sound of trickling water amongst the latter render it still more enjoyable. A fine view of Mr. Jones’ estate can be had by stepping through the fernery to the broad terrace in front of the house.”

Parkland Plan

Natural England is the government’s advisor on the natural environment and provide practical advice on how best to safeguard our natural wealth for the benefit of everyone. Environmental Stewardship is an agri-environmental scheme which provides funding to deliver effective management of the landscape.

Eighteen months ago we approached Natural England to see if we were eligible for funding. This was dependant on the ecological credentials of the grasslands within the



View of the landscape from Abberley Hill

park. A survey concluded that we had a wide variety of wild species which gave us the green light not just to the Entry Level but to the Higher Level Stewardship Schemes. In financial terms, this means that they will give us 80% of the funding necessary for a Parkland Plan. This is designed to make an in-depth study of all aspects of the historic parkland which has not been done before.

The opportunity to create the plan went to tender at the beginning of September with the successful proposal being presented by Askew-Nelson a landscape architect practice based in Oxfordshire. Max Askew is an O.A. and has been involved in many large scale projects including the recent development of Hagley Hall.

To date we have had visits from an ecologist and an archeologist who discovered another lime kiln on the estate. Jo Roche, a Trustee of the Foundation, has already written a booklet on the history of the hall and



1884-5 County Series 1:2500

has been revisiting Worcester Record Office to discover more about the parkland and the estate as a whole.

We hope to have the project completed by May 2013. It will be a fantastic resource for planning future conservation.

NADFAS

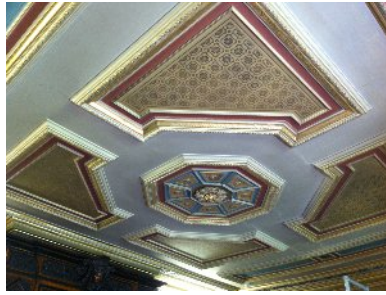
Jane Bridges and her team of volunteers from the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Society (NADFAS) spent several days at Abberley during the summer holiday. They are a leading arts charity who work to advance decorative and fine arts

education and furniture and fittings. These will be presented both in book form and digitally. The exercise has prompted a move to explore the cellars in the hope that we will unearth a wealth of treasures that have been abandoned over the years.

They took detailed notes and photographs of all the

Conservation Continues

The programme of conservation on the interior of the Hall continues. Francesco and Co. returned during the Easter and Summer holidays to work their magic on the ceiling in the Private Dining Room. As it could not be completed in one go it was interesting to see the various stages of the process including the replication and replacement of decorative moulds. As with other areas it is wonderful to see the gold leaf glimmering once more



We are now turning our attention to the Drawing Room. This has the potential to be the most impressive of all the rooms restored. However, it will require a concerted fund raising effort as the initial costing did not include the replacement of the Edwardian wallpaper, which is in a very poor condition, or the restoration of the fabulous oak floor hiding beneath the carpet. We have spent over £90,000 on our

charitable objectives since the Abberley Foundation was set up. We are working hard to secure further funding from several charitable bodies to enable us to implement our aims.



Archive Awareness

We have purchased a set of weather records collated by Frederick William Jones between 1888 and 1904. As well as reporting on the fluctuations of his aneroid barometer and later the more reliable barograph he comments, among other things, on his visits to the Hall or Pensax, moving to The Elms, a sprained ankle and a bout of influenza which make for interesting reading.

Included in our archive is a set of books on The Abberley and Pensax Court Estates which include sale details plus sets of maps from 1867 and 1877. Also, there are the Tithe Apportionment Books for both areas from 1846 and 1842. Both James Moilliet and Joseph Jones bought many farms, lands and cottages during their tenure and these are listed individually.

Recently, we met up with Paul

Johnson, now retired, but formerly the Doctor to the School for many years. He has amassed a large collection of photographs and documents which give a fascinating insight into life in Abberley and Great Witley during the 19th and 20th Centuries. We are looking into the process of digitizing the images which will allow much wider access to research students, historians and members of the public.

Projects in progress

The remainder of our in-house projects are at various stages.

Following on from Annabelle Monaghan's conservation work on the paintings on the staircase Mike Howden has completely restored two of the beautiful picture frames.

During the early summer John Harvey, Director, Auctioneer and Valuer, of Chorley's near Cheltenham, came to photograph

and value the collection.

An impressive delegation from the Country Houses Association paid a visit to Abberley in mid June. This charitable grant-giving foundation supports the preservation of historic houses and gardens and we were looking for assistance with the balustrade.



However, during the afternoon they became more interested in the possibilities of the Pulham garden and grotto. We were invited to submit a full application which will be considered at the next available meeting of the Trustees.

Consequently, the work on the balustrade remains to be addressed.

