



# THE ABBERLEY HALL *Foundation*

The Abberley Hall Foundation is a registered charity (No. 1088863) one of whose aims is the restoration and maintenance of the hall, a splendid example of a Victorian country house, clock tower and grounds. For further information contact [www.abberleyhallfoundation.org.uk](http://www.abberleyhallfoundation.org.uk)

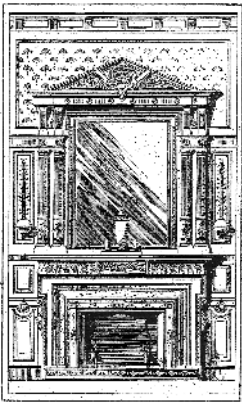
Issue 2

December 2011

## James Lamb

At the same time John Joseph Jones commissioned the Clock Tower he engaged James Lamb to embellish the interior of Abberley Hall with new chimney pieces and over mantels, a bookcase for the library, wall coverings and several pieces of bespoke furniture.

James Lamb was one of the finest provincial furniture makers of the Victorian period and was responsible for the decoration of several merchants' houses around Manchester and large public buildings in Lancashire including Bolton Town Hall.



Working drawings were produced in the Artists' Room and were overseen by Mr. Estall.

We would like to thank Catherine Gordon for sourcing the drawing of one of Lamb's fireplaces. Catherine is a Trustee of The Foundation and is an architectural historian. She has written and contributed to several books, and currently she is assisting on an NT project to restore Croome Court to something of its eighteenth century glory.

## Phases Two and Three Successfully Completed

Since March of this year Stephen Paine and his conservation team have taken up residence at Abberley Hall on two occasions.

At Easter the team focused on the Main Office, formerly the Boudoir, which had suffered from the effects of an arson attack in the 70s when the curtains were set alight by a disgruntled pantry man. The original paper survived albeit damaged, unfortunately, the panel was 'rescued' with a coat of gloss in a similar colour to the original! Consequently, the team were unable to fully restore that particular panel to its former glory, however, the overall effect is much brighter and the friezes tidier. Once again the work came in on time and on budget at



£6,600 including VAT.

At the same time, the corner of the ceiling in the Headmaster's Office, formerly the Library, was repaired. We are hoping that a new electricity supply will be installed to the central light fitting so that the strip lighting can be removed and then a complete overhaul may be executed.

In preparation for the work on the staircase two flights of scaffolding were erected and then the paintings were removed to the Private Dining Room (PDR). Anabelle Monaghan, a specialist in the conservation of paintings and frames, undertook the cleaning of the pictures which were in an extremely dusty condition. The pictures were then repositioned and secured in their frames.

Once cleared, Francesco and Marta, the specialist conservation team, were able to get to grips with the repair of the plasterwork. As with the hall the gilding has come up beautifully by virtue of a simple cleaning process. The staircase has undergone a transformation and looks resplendent with its new chandelier.

## Focus on Fundraising

The Chairman of AHF Trustees, Rhoddy Swire, was delighted to note that to date we have raised in excess of £150,000 with much of it received through the generosity of our Old Boys. However, The Foundation was also delighted this year to receive a donation from the

next generation, the Leavers of 2011.

Initially, they decided to purchase two lecterns crafted by Jo Summers for the school, however, the collection was so successful that a balance of £1,500 was given to The Foundation towards the work on the PDR.

The very successful visit by members of Heart of England branch of The Historic Houses Association on 14th May further boosted our funds by the sum of £750.

To support the AHF log on to our website and click onto the Donate button—simples!



## Pulham garden

Relatively recently we became aware that we have an early example of a Pulham water garden and grotto in the grounds.

Jo Roche researched relevant documentary and archival records to establish the time frame within which the garden was constructed. She discovered that John Lewis Moilliet, who purchased Abberley Lodge in 1844, commissioned the landscaping of the grounds, including the balustrade and terracing, by James Pulham II. However, as a result of a fire in 1845, the construction of the water garden and grotto did not begin until around 1850.

Pulham was becoming known for creating a wide range of pictur-



esque rock and water gardens, grottoes and garden ornaments using both natural and artificial rock made from a propriety cement with a striking resemblance to natural stone which became known as Pulhamite. Examples of his work can be seen in St James, and Battersea Parks and Madres-

field Court, Malvern.

A couple of months ago, Alan Bishop was invited to do a preliminary survey of the water garden and his findings will form the basis of a funding proposal to potential grant making bodies.

With this new project on the horizon we are delighted that Max Askew, an Old Boy of Abberley Hall, agreed to become a Trustee of The Foundation. Max is an historic landscape architect and has worked on many projects of national importance and prepared several successful funding applications for the restoration of historic parks and gardens and his input will be greatly valued.

## Balustrade

Fiona Paterson met Alan Taylor of English Heritage, architect Nick Joyce and structural engineer Clive Hayward to discuss the condition and remedial work necessary for the restoration of the balustrade.

The balustrade is in desperate need of repair. Balusters and plinths have fallen off as the foundations have crumbled. However, the good news is that there is very little subsidence. The disintegra-



tion has been caused by neglect over the last century, allowing the pointing to fail, roots to establish and erosion to occur. The esti-

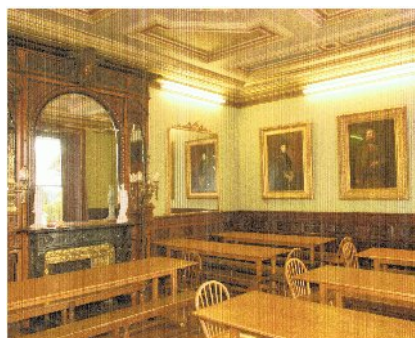
mated cost of the work is in the region of £250,000.

We are considering three avenues for the funding of this enormous project. These include English Heritage and Natural England, grant making trusts such as the Country Houses Association and a campaign to Sponsor a Spindle which will be kicked off with events in London and Abberley beginning with OA Day on April 21st 2012—pop it in your diary.

## Back to the future

Easter 2012 will see the return of Stephen Paine and his team to continue the work on the internal conservation programme.

The focus of their work will be the ceiling in the Private Dining Room. There are several areas where the plaster work needs replacing and repairing where it has come away from the infrastruc-



-ure. They will also be cleaning and re-touching all the painted surfaces. The agreed budget for this work is £9,000.

In 1996 James and Lister Lea of Birmingham produced an inventory of the Hall's oil and water colour paintings and it is hoped that we can organise a digital catalogue of our holdings in the very near future.



