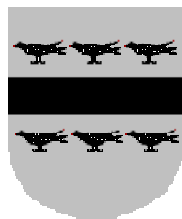




Abberley Hall has been described by English Heritage as one of the finest remaining examples of a Victorian Country House, comparable with Osborne House and Brodsworth Hall. The Abberley Foundation is a registered charity (No. 1088863) that seeks to fund the conservation of this historic gem. For further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

Walter Walsh



By the end of the first decade of Henry VIII's reign, a new society of gentle-born courtiers had emerged whose role it was to attend the sovereign and provide a social milieu in which he would spend most of his time while out of the public eye. Henry was attended by a total of fifteen servants in what became known as the Privy Chamber: six waiters, two ushers, four grooms, a barber and a page. These gentlemen were required to be able to play and compose music, speak several languages fluently and be literate and well read. They needed to be athletic and well versed in games such as tennis, wrestling and hunting.

Walter Walsh was one of the grooms. He married Elizabeth Compton, widow of Sir Thomas Compton on 22nd November 1529, and almost a year later he accompanied Henry Percy on a mission to arrest Cardinal Worsley. As Percy had no warrant, Worsley surrendered to Walter as a member of the Privy Chamber. In recognition of his role the King granted the manor of Abberley to his loyal servant.

# Country Houses Foundation

The impressive sum of £85,000 has been gifted to The Abberley Hall Foundation for the repair and much needed conservation work to the Pulham water garden, grotto and balustrade. Alan Bishop and Associates were awarded the contract for the Pulham garden as one of the U.K.'s leading experts on the repair and renovation of Pulham rock work; he has worked in a number of notable gardens including those at Buckingham Palace and has over twelve years experience in this field. During the work to date, he has repaired much of the lining of the cascade and pools, and cleared away overgrown planting and silt which has revealed the astonishing attention to detail in the original design.

Funding for the balustrade has meant we

As a result of recent investigations we know that the final pool of the cascade would have been plugged for most of the time. However, on high days and holidays, the bung would be removed and the force of the flow of water would activate a fountain in a pool which has long since disappeared but was located on the site of the current ménage. Mick Williams, who was head grounds man at the School for fifteen years, has been able to figure out the network of pipes and discovered the ring main which would have taken the water back up to the house where it was fed back into the cascade. The water supply was fed partly by rainwater from the roof of the house, and we hope to reinstate this system.

can attend to the bays immediately above the water garden and grottoes, which were reasonably intact but badly disrupted by root damage. The stonemasons have been particularly impressed by the quality of the stone and original workmanship. The steps are particularly impressive been made out of single eight foot lengths of stone.



# Wellington Barracks Reception

On Wednesday October 9th we hosted another very successful reception at Wellington Barracks, London celebrating what has been achieved recently and outlining future conservation projects. It was supported by guests from NADFAS and CHF as well as those who have

association with the school and Foundation. It has been one of our aims to broaden our support base and we were delighted to welcome some new faces and some more recent alumni.

We were delighted that Max Askew of Askew Nelson Landscape

Architects was able to report on the work and completion of the Parkland Plan (see over) and Sir John Parsons spoke about the work of the Country Houses Foundation.

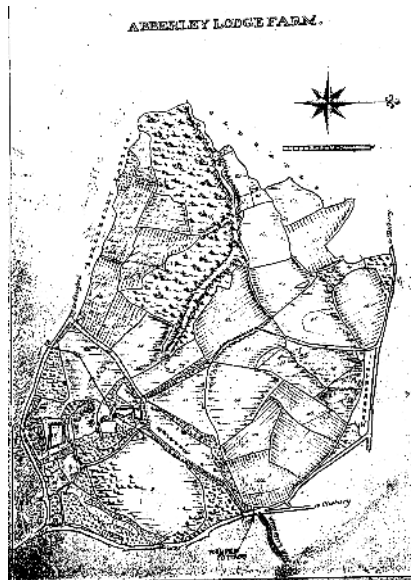
As a result of the evening we have raised a further £20,000.

# Parkland Plan Update

The Parkland Plan was generously funded by Natural England and was published this year in May. It is a comprehensive record of the historical development of the landscape at Abberley Hall documenting the changes from the Domesday period to the present date and includes information of the eight families who have owned the estate, beginning with the Walshes.

One of the significant discoveries made during the course of the research was a leather bound book entitled "Maps of the Cottages and Cottage lands in the Parishes of Abberley, Bayton, Rock and Shelsley Walsh in the County of Worcestershire." This book was commissioned by Colonel Henry Bromley in 1811 shortly after he inherited the estate and was produced by the surveyor Mr. C. Pountney. The maps contained

therein are the earliest surveyed maps of the area.



We learned the sad fate of many historic documents relating to the estate. The estate office was

situated at Home Farm and upon its sale in 1940 the Ballard family enquired as to what Mr. Jones intended for the contents. His reply? Burn them! Fortunately, the family did hold onto a couple of plans of the farm plus the book of maps.

As a result of the Parkland Plan, Natural England have agreed to enter us in their ten year Higher Level Stewardship programme which will pay annual grants to help improve the credentials of the grassland areas and hopefully will lead onto funding for capital projects such as the repair of the front gates, ice house and lime kilns.

It is also hoped that this document will add significant strength to our case when we apply to other grant making bodies for funding our numerous projects.

# Rectors of Great Witley

Early on this year, OA Michael Johnson realized that he knew the descendants of three of the Rectors of Great Witley covering the period 1858 to 1945. Furthering his research he discovered that Thomas Pearson, who was Rector between 1820 and 1858, had a connection to Abberley. He contacted those associated with the suggestion that he organise a morning at Great Witley to be followed by a visit to Abberley Hall.

So, on Saturday 20th July a group

arrived at the Hall in the late afternoon including representatives from the Rectory, the Court, the Parish and Abberley Hall and enjoyed guided tours of the main rooms of the house before visiting the Clock Tower.

One picture in particular provoked a lot of interest. Grown men present recalled that, as boys, they had dared one another to walk past the painting to see if they could see the ghosts. Josceline Dimbleby, great-great granddaughter of Rector David

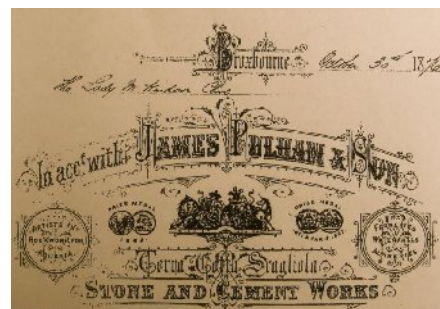


Neville, took a photograph which, when uploaded on to her PC revealed that there were indeed five ghostly figures hidden in the background.

# NADFAS Return

Volunteers from the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts (NADFAS) have been instrumental in compiling an inventory of furniture and fittings in the house. A new team is being formed to begin cataloguing the existing planting within the Pulham garden. One of their works of reference will be the prospectus published by the firm James Pulham and Son circa 1877 entitled

"Picturesque Ferneries and Rock



Garden Scenery" which was sourced from the R.H.S. library at Linley, London. It lists "a few of the most choice hardy plants, shrubs, conifers and flowers having either beautiful foliage, colour or variegation" which were recommended for these particular gardens. The result of this research will help us to develop a good idea of the planting necessary next year once the conservation work is complete.



