

Hutton-in-the-Forest

Saturday was a bit overcast, but we set off from Carlisle to Hutton-in-the-Forest, home of Lord Inglewood. Like many large houses in Cumbria it is based on a medieval pele tower, probably late 14th century and enlarged over the centuries. The Hutton family were given a tract of the Royal Forest by Edward I, in order to build the tower, hence the name. The Hutton family sold the estate to a wealthy Cockermouth merchant, Sir Richard Fletcher, who filled in the moat, remodelling the hall and turning the 'castle' into a Jacobean mansion. His son, Sir George Fletcher, 2nd Bt added a splendid Classical façade with pedimented windows and Corinthian columns. The 3rd baronet converted to Roman Catholicism, becoming a monk in Douai. After much legal wrangling the estate was inherited



Fig. 15 Part of the romantic garden front of Hutton-in-the Forest

by his sister's son Henry Vane and he did much work to the house during the mid-18th century such as dovecotes, conversion into sash-windows, dog-kennels and interior work. The interior work included plasterwork by the eminent plasterer Joseph Rose, Snr. Other work was done but the most important was in the 1860s by Anthony Salvin and it was he who was responsible for the very romantic silhouette of Hutton's roofline.

We entered the house through a dark, barrel-vaulted hall that was the ground floor of the original pele tower. On a window sill there were a number of those things found in long lived in houses; an iron poacher's trap, a spring-gun – also against poaching – a rare Russian spiked infantryman's helmet from the Crimean War and a wooden-cased lock given by Lady Anne Clifford in the early 17th century. There were also a number of dated joined oak armchairs of Westmoreland origin; one with T-frame panelled backs and scrolled cresting, dated 1681 and another, much plainer T-frame with a gothic arch top panel, undated but c. 1700. A third armchair, also probably Westmoreland, had bobbin turned legs and arm-supports with a fine relief carved back and a scrolled crest rail, dated 1684.

We ascended to the first floor via an elaborate carved oak staircase of cherubs and fantastic beasts. The carving dated from the late 17th century and may well have come from somewhere in the north-eastern counties (showing, as it did, an affinity with carving promoted by Bishop Cosin in Durham) although the distances across the Pennines at this point are so small that it may have started life closer to



Fig. 16 A detail of the carved oak staircase



X Fig. 17 One of two basically 17th-century cupboards cut about to create radiator covers

Hutton-in-the-Forest. The staircase was probably inserted by Anthony Salvin (1799–1881), during a mid-19th-century period of works. The Gallery had much that was interesting and stimulating. On entering there was, to the left, a most unusual curved, very nearly circular glazed room overlooking the garden, with some interesting backstools. Elsewhere two large, essentially 17th-century press cupboards, dominated the room. On opening the lower doors what was revealed were two substantial mid-19th-century large-bore radiators. The entire backboards had been removed in order to make these impressive radiator covers. One was dated, not unreasonably, 1695. There was also a recent addition to the house by Lord Inglewood of a late 17th-century chest of drawers with two lower doors covering three drawers. Decorated with geometric mouldings it also had very distinctive hardwood oval cabochon mouldings to the top drawer, very similar to ones that we had seen earlier in the day at Dalemain and Narworth. There were a number of interesting spinning wheels, evidence of late 19th-century ladylike enthusiasm for the craft in the Arts and Crafts period, and a good early 18th-century oak double-gate-leg table. There was much discussion concerning an late 17th-century cabinet with parquetry doors and a fine, showy brass lock-plate.

The Library, mostly of mid-19th-century decoration had an interesting 'campaign' or travelling office/bookcase made of oak and bound with iron straps; inside were three



Fig. 18 Double gate-leg table and one of the spinning wheels



Fig. 19 A recent acquisition by Lord Inglewood, this iron-bound travelling office/library was bought locally. It dates to c. 1880

drawers along the top with vertical pigeonholes beneath. It was made to sit on a table, bench or similar and its fall front made it look rather like a severe, plain vargueño. This was another recent acquisition from a local saleroom by Lord Inglewood. Also in the library was a quite large set of mid-18th-century lace-back chairs and there was a late 18th-century desk with a tambour top but now used as a vitrine; the design of this desk appears to be associated with John Linnell.



Fig. 20 A fine mahogany fitted dressing chest of drawers probably by Gillows of Lancaster, c. 1770

In the Anteroom after the Library there was a set of four Regency Revival chairs by Lamb of Manchester that were of exceptional quality. The next room was the Drawing Room where there was small ebony cabinet with four drawers and ivory inlay; it was probably from Augsburg, Germany and dated to about 1630 – Italy was another possible suggested country of origin. The ebony and ivory table was certainly Italian, probably from Milan and mid-19th century in date. There was also an interesting mahogany, bombé, three-drawer commode with a waisted top drawer. It was probably Dutch. Also in the Drawing Room was a rare surviving set of 19th-century rococo revival chairs upholstered with 18th-century Aubusson seats and backs set within black plush borders.

In the Cupid room next door, was a bureau-bookcase with a fretted-out swan-neck pediment that caused some discussion but no firm conclusions.

The next room, the Blue Room had two fine pieces of Gillow furniture. The first was a shield-back chair with a drop-in seat. The back-splat was a rather wheatsheaf-inspired splat with gothic overtones. Susan Stuart used the chair to show off the distinctive manner in which Gillow's craftsmen mortised the cross-stretcher into those at the sides with a V-cutout. The other piece was a mahogany serpentine chest-of-drawers raised on, slightly protruding, ogee bracket feet. The top drawer was fitted out with a dressing mirror and many small 'boxes' with domed lids and ivory knobs; there was also a set of slots to fit



Fig. 21 (above) A shield-back armchair by Gillow, c. 1775



Fig. 22 (right) Detail of the Gillow chair showing the way the stretchers were fitted by Gillow tradesmen

cut-throat razors, one for each day of the week – sadly the razors had gone.

The Dining room, created by Salvin, had a fine and very large set of mahogany dining chairs with cabriole legs and wide strap-work like back splats, all set around a large Gillow's table. In Dalmain we had seen some small mahogany tables with straight legs but retaining the older cabriole-leg lappets at the top and rather stylised claw-and-ball pad feet. Here in Hutton's dining room were two more – they were so similar the same hand must have made them. On an early 19th-century two-tier tripod table were a number of char dishes – the char is a relative of the salmon and trout family and is found swimming in the lakes of the Lake District. The earthenware dishes, about 6-8 inches in diameter, have a low rim decorated with green and pink char fish.

The Society is indebted to Lord Inglewood and his staff for laying on such a visit, with an excellent lunch and tea.

Treve Rosoman