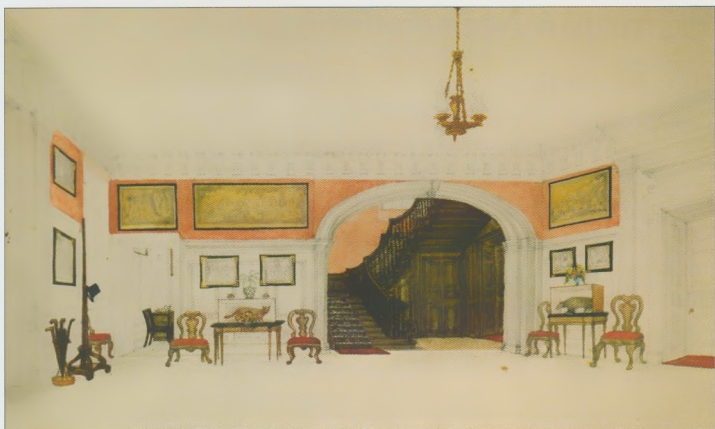


Frampton Court

To the south of Frampton Manor lies Frampton Court, built 1731-33 and ascribed to the Bristol architect John Strahan. The Palladian façade in Bath stone with tightly detailed giant pilasters and carved pediment stands, dolls' house-like, between stuccoed service wings. Built by



A watercolour view of the hall at Frampton Court, painted during the 1840s or 50s, probably by one of the ladies who painted the Frampton Flora. Courtesy of Mr Rollo Clifford.

Richard Clutterbuck who inherited the Clifford estates, it proudly proclaims his wealth as head of the Customs House in Bristol. Lectures over the weekend emphasised the importance of the Bristol timber trade and the splendid interiors of the court were evidence of this.

An hierarchy of timbers and of increasing elaboration was evident from the pine panelled hall ('pickled' circa 1900) to the oak staircase with holly inlay, with upside-down cherubs. An unusual example of a dog gate was recessed into a marquetry panel and pulled out concertina-wise across the foot of the stair.

The hall led into the saloon or great dining room and was fitted out in Baltic oak of the finest quality. The timber had been stained at a later date but a buffet niche surviving behind a door revealed the original honey colour. Adjoining was a more richly carved drawing room. The highlight of the furniture collection was an extensive suite, circa 1735, consisting of a pair of settees, side chairs with compass seats, and a fold-over games table. These had traditionally been described as walnut, but on close inspection were identified as ash with burr ash veneered splats.

A bedroom contained a secretaire bookcase circa 1735-40, identified as not being of imported mahogany as previously thought, but black walnut stained to look like mahogany. A pair of wall lanterns with Vauxhall glass were a remarkable survival in the hall which also contained early examples of the work of the Yorkshire maker Robert Thompson (the 'mouse man'). Many of the fireplaces were lined with Bristol delft tiles.

The delightful Strawberry Hill gothick orangery of 1750 by the architect William Halfpenny, now comfortably furnished as holiday accommodation, boasted two Batty Langley-derived Bristol stone chimney pieces inset with Bristol and other English tiles.

We were grateful to Mr and Mrs Speed who conducted us round the court, and to Mr and Mrs Clifford and their

daughter Jessie, who accompanied us, eager to glean new information, and who gave us generous and unrestricted access to both houses and their gardens.

Christopher Hartley