

Lincoln Conference

Wednesday 23–Sunday
27 June 2021

The Lincoln conference went ahead largely as originally planned for 2020, except for two cancelled visits to privately-owned houses. At most venues we were required to be arranged in a variety of ‘bubbles’ in strict time slots. The rearrangement of the programme proved fortuitous as we were able to visit Glentham, Snarford and Hackthorn churches to the north of Lincoln, in addition to churches at Ewerby and Walcot with their contrasting medieval chests.

Jeremy Bate
Events Organiser

Wednesday 23 June

Doddington Hall

Doddington Hall, six miles from Lincoln, is a charming Elizabethan brick house and gardens built by the leading architect of the period Robert Smythson and completed in 1600, with interiors largely updated in the 1760s. It contains a typically mixed country house collection with interesting paintings, glass, ceramics, arms, and textiles,

as well as British and Continental furniture, which has accumulated over the centuries. It is notable that the house has never been sold, although it has been passed on five times in the female line. Each generation has added its own contribution including the young family currently in residence.

The Great Hall where we entered is dominated by a huge refectory table made in the 1980s in a traditional manner from one oak tree on the estate. It is surrounded by an impressive set of fourteen oak bobbin-turned armchairs, the core of which seem to be mid-seventeenth-century. Also in the Hall is a very pure seventeenth-century oak cupboard on bun feet containing drawers, the handles of which retain some tinning, and a pair of unusually large oak armchairs with wooden seats of c. 1800.

Col George Jarvis, who was bequeathed the house in 1829 on the death of his fiancée, was a keen woodcarver and, rather like the Browne family at Troutbeck, examples of his decorated furniture remain, here with an orientalist flavour, among them a massive oak table in the Hall, and a card table and a solid yew breakfast table (most likely from another tree on the estate) in the Brown Parlour.

The Library has an interesting set of mahogany bookcases that Jarvis seems to have brought back from



Yew breakfast table carved by Col George Jarvis. *Photo Christopher Claxton Stevens.*



Seventeenth-century oak cupboard containing drawers. *Photo Christopher Claxton Stevens.*



Large oak armchair c. 1800. *Photo Christopher Claxton Stevens.*

his posting at Dover Castle, glazed above and below with sliding doors which lock at their ends: an eighteenth-century version of the Wren Library model of 'press'. There are three of this type and two larger breakfront examples of later date.

On the staircase, with its grand divided flights, is a good set of six tall walnut chairs of c. 1700 with stuffed backs in show-wood frames and elaborate stretchers. There was uncertainty as to their country of origin. Although not regional, the suite of four magnificently carved and gilded rococo picture frames in the Long Gallery is worthy of mention. One, containing a Reynolds family portrait, is dateable to 1761; another is crudely 'cut and shut'. Also, from the time of Sir John Delaval's modernisation, are the four splendid gilded oval papier mâché mirrors with pendants and other wall decoration in the Drawing Room. They are thought to be the work of Crompton & Spinnage, upholsters and paper hangers of Gerard Street, Soho, and are an uncommon survival due to the fragile nature of the material. In the same room are two chests of drawers of similar date veneered re-using late seventeenth-century marquetry panels, and a tall provincial walnut chest of drawers divided into three parts in rather unexpected places, presumably to move it through a small space.

We were made very welcome at Doddington and the way in which they were coping with a one-way system and other Covid rules was impressive.

Christopher Claxton Stevens