

The John Cornforth Lecture
by
Lord Inglewood
on
Wednesday 15 January 2014

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1. INTRO

It was a pleasant surprise and honour to have been invited to give one of this year's John Cornforth Lectures, not least because I think Hutton-in-the-Forest is probably the smallest house to have been the subject of one, and I am neither a Duke nor a Marquess, rather a 2nd Baron so frankly pretty 'Johnny come lately'. Furthermore I have been a beneficiary of the Heritage Conservation Trust for which I am, obviously, most grateful.

I remember John Cornforth, not well. He knew my father and visited Hutton. Indeed he wrote about it in three articles in Country Life in 1960s which begin 'Into a deep forest, that was wonderfully wild, with high hills on every side, rode Sir Gawain in search of the Green Knight, and in The Green Knight, having met him at the Green Chapel, they rode on to the Knight's "castle of Hutton". If indeed the forest is Inglewood, and the castle this house, as has been suggested, it is singularly apposite, for Hutton-in-the-Forest has a medieval ring to it that is tantalisingly evocative.' These articles read in stark stylistic counterpoint to its predecessor written by Oswald Barron in 1907. Subsequently many years later he spent a night at home with

Cressida and me, after which he wrote to us. ‘I think you have been very sensitive and skilful in the way you have improved the house without changing its character, not softening its rugged quality that is now so rare.’ What he, and a number of contemporary art historians achieved was to have put Country House studies on the intellectual map, and showed the houses and their owners’ significant role in the socio economic history of the country, in the case of the great palaces, and their locality in the case of Hutton and other smaller houses.

What he was not concerned about was the Country House style of the Mayfair decorator or the Jermyn Street haberdasher. I suspect he would have agreed with John Martin Robinson that the greatest threat to the Country House is the daughter-in-law from Sloane Street. It is true my wife spent some of her childhood near Sloane Street, but that was tempered by the more benign influence of Kent, Cumbria and Istanbul. I hope my remarks this evening will convey my interest in and respect for his approach and his achievements.

2. **ROLE OF HOUSE**

I have been fortunate and I consider that one of the best pieces of my good fortune is not to have had a vocation to join the Church. If I had, my text this evening would

have been the well-known quotation from Guiseppe di Lampedusa's *The Leopard*. 'If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.'

On occasions like this it is frequently said that House X is first and foremost our family home. It may be the case now but it was never the real rationale. A country house was a business h.q. (for the estate) and a political statement about power. The bigger the house the greater the power.

This was made very clear to me at the recent Houghton Revisited exhibition. Set aside for a moment artistic and aesthetic considerations, and imagine yourself as one of Robert Walpole's client Norfolk gentry, a close relation of Tony Lumpkin. A visit to Houghton, reinforced by Walpole's liquor would have completely overwhelmed the visitor with the proprietor's magnificence. It was an 18th Century instance of Shock and Awe to use a notorious 20th Century phrase.

Now Hutton-in-the-Forest is not on the same scale. But like the 'Great Houses' it was for 400 years the centre of a 'baronet's estate', and reflected the position of its owner in the hierarchy of power in Cumberland where sometimes he was a baronet and sometimes not.

3. HISTORY

Inglewood Forest, the part of Cumbria, previously Cumberland, in which we live was for much of the Middle Ages either in Scotland, or very much affected by it and was on the main road between England and Scotland. Earlier during the Roman period it was part of the demilitarised zone immediately to the South of the Wall. As many of you will know a distinctive type of defensive architecture, the Pele Tower evolved on both sides of the Border. Smaller houses comprised a single tower, larger ones two or more. Hutton had, in fact, at least two.

The Forest, in which some versions of the Arthurian Legend of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight are sited, as I have already mentioned, would not necessarily have been wooded although clearly much of it was. Throughout the Middle Ages it was subject to its own particular legal order under the King who was Lord Paramount. Under him there were three sub-foresters, one of whom was the holder of the manor of Hutton-in-the-Forest – the de Hotons, who also had to hold the King's stirrup at Carlisle Castle and pay him ten shillings. To be on the safe side I offered the Queen a 50p piece when she came to dinner when staying at Lowther, the first reigning monarch to visit Hutton since Edward I. She was good enough to decline. As you can see, royalty visit regularly but not frequently,.

This general state of affairs continued until the end of the 16th Century beginning of the 17th Century when the Union of Crowns changed the character of the Border, and the de Huttons (whether they were one or several families is not entirely clear) ran out of money and sold to Richard Fletcher, a Cockermouth merchant who was knighted by James I. The Fletchers appear to have been a text book example of a family which rose in the 16th Century, and it has been suggested they made their money helping finance the Mines Royal around Keswick.

The House has subsequently passed by descent to me, first through three Fletcher baronets, and then by marriage into the Vanes, who are allegedly descended from a Prince of Powys, and were certainly gentry in Kent in the Middle Ages, before refocussing their activities in the North of England in the 17th Century. The Hutton branch of the Vane family acquired a second baronetcy in the 18th Century which lasted until 1934. My father, also a Vane, a younger branch of the Vanes of Raby, who inherited from distant cousins, managed to do one better and was created a hereditary peer, Lord Inglewood, in 1964.

Since the early 17th Century the supporting estate, almost all of which has been in Cumberland, was the kind of property a prosperous, but not excessively rich baronet

family who went to London from time to time would have owned. They never went spectacularly bust, married great heiresses, or found significant minerals or expanding towns on their land. They could afford some building, but not total rebuilding.

Interestingly in the early 18th Century three successive owners, Sir Henry Fletcher, Thomas Fletcher, his cousin, and then Henry Vane never married. Had one of them married a rich alderman's daughter I suspect they would have aspired to much more than a mere baronetcy and the story of Hutton might have been quite different.

In addition while they were not at the top of the aristocratic ladder – one was a knight, seven were baronets, two peers, and the remaining three commoners, they were the social, but not the political equals of the great magnates in Cumberland, the Dukes of Norfolk at Greystoke, the Lowthers at Lowther, the Earls of Carlisle at Naworth and the Earls of Thanet at Appleby. But they were, at least from the 18th Century, and indeed we still are close to our Vane cousins at Raby who became Barons Barnard, Viscount Barnard, Earls of Darlington, Marquess of Cleveland and Dukes of Cleveland, and then back to Barons Barnard again. This was important because such connections gave a degree of political access and power beyond that of mere baronets, in an age when family power could act as 'a battering ram to knock

down the door of the larder of patronage'.

4. **THE OWNERS AND THEIR INTERESTS**

So who exactly were the owners of Hutton and those who lived there? Rather than enumerate a family tree, rather like the Book of Genesis, I shall attempt a somewhat arbitrary analysis of the 13 owners since 1604 which is a bit sketchy because, and John Cornforth would have regretted this, our archives are thin.

The starting point is that the family at Hutton has been in the eyes of the great sweep of history 'spear carriers'. And I suspect it is that they are relatively insignificant to the World, but not necessarily to Cumbria, which provides whatever interest we may have for anyone else.

First, while not intellectuals, they were not unintelligent. Of the men three went to Oxford, two possibly three to Cambridge. It is clear from the surviving books in the Library the whole family – male and female, read the standard works of literature, and the classics – but some more than others.

They were essentially country gentlemen, and did not hold high positions in politics,

the army, or the law. Three were lawyers – or at least had some legal training, and two were chartered surveyors.

Not only, unlike some county families, did they go to London, they travelled more widely abroad, although none did a conventional Grand Tour. Walter Vane worked in Rotterdam for a time and Diana Olivia Beauclerk who married Sir Francis Vane spent some of her childhood in Italy where her profligate father went to live, and where Shelley supposed her mother to have made a pass at him. Indeed two died abroad, one in Douai in early 18th Century and one in Frankfurt in mid 19th Century. Interestingly there seems to have been relatively little contact with Scotland – over a 400 year period only two wives were Scots.

All were Protestants except Sir Henry Fletcher 3rd Bart who went ‘over’ to Rome and died at Douai, and his cousin Thomas Fletcher who oscillated like the Vicar of Bray. Anglicanism of a relatively unenthusiastic kind, perhaps most reminiscent of the 18th Century, seems to have been the general rule. Few in the family joined the Church, although Barbara widow of Sir Henry Fletcher 1st Bart married secondly Thomas Smith later Bishop of Carlisle. Moreover his grandson Sir George Fleming also succeeded to the Diocese, writing after the ‘45 Rebellion’ ‘went up to Carlisle to see my successor hanged’. His memorial in Carlisle Cathedral reads that he was

“A prelate,
who by gradual and well merited advancements,
having passed through every dignity to the episcopal,
supported that,
with an amiable assemblage of graces and virtues:
which eminently formed, in his character,
The courteous gentleman, and the pious Christian,
and rendred him a shining ornament
to his species, his nation, his order.

His deportment
in all human relations and positions,
was squared by the rules of morality and religion,
under the constant direction of a consummate prudence;
whilst his equanimity
amidst all events and occurrences,
in an inviolable adherence to the golden medium,
made him easy to himself and agreeable to others,
and had its reward
in a cheerful life, a serene old age, a composed death.

His excellent pattern

was a continual lesson of goodness and wisdom,
and remains in his ever reverable memory
an illustrious object of praise and imitation.”

This probably, I think, represents the approach the owners of Hutton would like to think they adopted in respect of these things, albeit perhaps not articulated in quite the way they would have normally done. Certainly there was not a lot of ‘enthusiasm’. with the possible exception of Rachel wife of Sir Lionel Vane whose name is on the fly leaf of three copies of ‘The Welshman’s Candle’ still in the Library.

Politics played a role, not least because owners of Hutton were part of the Establishment and the need for landowners to ensure their interests were well represented in Parliament during the time of the Enclosure Acts. In the 17th Century Sir George Fletcher was a considerable figure; he was for a time Vice-Chamberlain to Catherine of Braganza. In the 18th Century the family played a subordinate role in the famous Inglewood Forest by-election of 1768, the only by-election to bring down a Government in English History. In the 19th Century they were supporters of Henry Brougham in his efforts to break the Lowthers’ power in Westmorland, although in the 18th Century they had been supporters. I have an election medallion inscribed

somewhat improbably 'For Lowther and Liberty'. In the 20th Century my father was MP for Westmorland, 1945-1964 and I was in the European Parliament, 1989 -1994 and 1999 - 2004, and both of us were junior ministers. As far as I can establish the owners of Hutton in the past held political views which appear to have been what you might expect of Cumbrian gentry, with the possible exception of Walter Vane, and his son Sir Lyonel Vane who was a close friend of John Howard the penal reformer.

Field Sports and sometimes horse racing, as is to be expected, were an ongoing interest from the 17th Century and in the first half of the 19th Century. John Peel, the celebrated huntsman, hunted Sir Frederick Vane's hounds, as well as giving displays of virtuoso drinking to the family and their guests after dinner.

Hardly surprisingly estate management, which was the basis of the family's prosperity and farming were on-going concerns. Beyond this they do not appear to have been financially sophisticated with, I suspect, the possible exception of Walter Vane a third brother who as I have already mentioned, worked for a time in Rotterdam in the 1720s for Joseph Furly, the friend of John Locke and radical banker, and subsequently in London with an address in Fenchurch Street and a house at Wanstead.

In general there is no great evidence of widespread artistic patronage and of great interest in culture more generally, with the possible exception of Margaret Gladstone who married Sir Henry Vane 4th Bart who was a great supporter of the Keswick School of Industrial Art, Canon Rawnsley's Arts and Crafts Project in Keswick. They tended to have themselves painted – and their choice of painter was on occasions quite good, but not to venture much further than that, other than the occasional horse. Having said that, the building work and landscaping they carried out shows an awareness of the wider trends of the time and a degree of sensitivity which is far from universally the case among the Country Houses of England.

As far as the contents of the house are concerned there is very little of the highest class. It is a shrine to brown furniture, both mahogany and oak – no gilt here, and contains a considerable quantity of oriental china and delft ware. As I have said, the portraits are on the whole good of their type, and many of the best ones came from another Vane house, Fairlawne in Kent, at the end of the 18th Century. Almost everything is English – except Chinese porcelain, some Dutch items brought by Walter Vane, and some Italian inherited from Diana Olivia Vane, nee Beauclerk.

Having said all this they created and sustained an estate and architectural ensemble and, I daresay to some extent by accident, a collection of miscellaneous pictures,

furniture, china and other contents, all of which is of genuine interest to other people.

With a couple or so of possible exceptions they all appear to have been reasonable people by their own lights.

This then is an indication of the context behind Hutton. In some ways it is more 18th Century or even Anglo-Irish than anything else. Whatever else, it is about as far away as it is possible to get from the world of Country House Weekends and Downton Abbey, which seems to me is simply a comedy of manners about the Super Rich of a hundred years ago, much as Dallas was at the end of the 20th Century.

5. **THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING**

As I have already said Hutton-in-the Forest was originally a border Pele Tower. Interestingly they mainly date from the post Bannockburn-era when as a result of Edward II's defeat the Border became much more turbulent.

The essentials of a Pele Tower are it is not a type of defensive structure, like a castle or fortified town which is designed to withstand a long siege. Rather it is a bolt-hole into which an owner can flee with his animals etc. when the enemy approaches. The enemy, who were raiders, will have been unable to invest it so they will have passed

by, and once they had departed the owner and his animals would emerge intact. The towers themselves are frequently quite close to each other, and it is thought they may have communicated via beacons.

There were, hardly surprisingly, gradations of tower and defensive buildings, some of the less developed are somewhat different and known as bastle houses. In the case of peles a number consisted of more than one tower which in turn became linked by a hall. Hutton certainly had two towers and possibly more.

The ground floor, now known as the Stone Hall, still survives, albeit it was heavily reworked in the later part of the 19th Century and ingeniously turned into an entrance porch.

While the Union of Crowns joined the English and Scots monarchies, it did not follow that Border rivalry and incidents would cease forthwith. However the general trend was more peaceful co-existence which in turn is reflected in the larger houses of the Border, be they English or Scots.

In Hutton's case it appears that during Queen Elizabeth's reign there was some kind of ditch behind which the core of the building stood, while the house itself is sited on

a promontory within the turn of a stream which gives it some natural protection from the South and the West. As the centre of what appears to have been the quite considerable economic and political power of the de Huttons it seems other buildings sprung up outside the moat in the protective lee of the towers, including what is now my office, where I drafted this speech.

It is not at all clear what the building was like at this time but it was certainly quite substantial, and it seems entirely reasonable to suppose that farming, with its associated buildings, was going on around it, as seems invariably was the case in such circumstances.

Once acquired by the Fletchers, whom as I said, were 'rising' men they set their mind to improve the house to reflect their own increasing status and the relatively more peaceful times in which they were living.

It is stated by Sir David Fleming, the well-known historian and antiquarian of Cumberland and Westmorland, who married Barbara Fletcher from Hutton, that the moat was filled in by his father-in-law Sir Henry Fletcher, who had bought his baronetcy in 1640 rather I assume as his father, Richard, had bought his knighthood from James I some years earlier. He did these works, inter alia, in order to build a

Gallery which links the surviving Pele Tower to the range outside the moat.

The Gallery is thought to have been designed by Alexander Pogmire, a Lancashire architect who worked at nearby Lowther and Rose Castles. Pictures of his work at Lowther, which no longer exists, show great affinity to the Gallery at Hutton, and I am entirely satisfied by the attribution. Its interior was sympathetically restored in the 19th Century after having fallen into disrepair and in many ways sums up the character of the House and its Collections better than any other room.

What is curious is first the Gallery is very late for such a room and secondly its style. Is this very late Gothic or is it very early gothic revival? In fact I think the question is on one level misplaced. It seems that right across Europe the Renaissance brought anomaly to architectural design, much of which will have been entirely based on pattern books. In the less cosmopolitan parts not only did old fashions remain prevalent much longer than in the centres of taste, they evolved eccentrically. In England it was Inigo Jones who established a definitive stylistic datum point for this country and his work will have had little or no impact on Cumbrian squires and provincial architects in mid- 1630s.

Logic would suggest that Henry Fletcher intended to build a matching wing on the

Southern side of the courtyard, and certainly one is shown in the Kip Engraving of 1705. I have worked up digitally a contemporary photograph to show how it might have looked. Kip, however, was not invariably entirely accurate, and it is interesting that when the gravel of the courtyard was taken off during drainage works, foundations were revealed which did not indicate an oriel window to match the Gallery as shown by Kip. Tradition has it this wing burnt down, but there is no corroboration of this. What is certainly true is that Henry Fletcher was killed fighting for the King at the Battle of Rowton Heath 1645 and that his widow and children had to pay £746.00 (Dring), a very substantial sum in those days, and were for a time locked up in Carlisle Castle.

These setbacks curtailed building at Hutton until the mid 1680s when Henry's son George refaced the façade in the main courtyard, in the baroque style in pink Lazonby sandstone between the two towers. Sandford in his 'History of Cumberland' ascribes the work to Edward Addison who was clerk of works at the rebuilding of Lowther by George's first cousin James, 1st Viscount Lonsdale. Stylistically the work at Hutton is unlike anything else Addison is known to have designed. It is more sophisticated. This makes me think, and I have discussed the point with John Harris, that William Talman, the principal architect at Lowther, may have conceived the design which will have been executed by Addison. Certainly the impact of this part

of the building has certain similarities with the centre piece of the courtyard at Drayton, which I have only seen in photographs. It is interesting too that there is a distinct batter to the building which is, I understand, a characteristic of Talman.

Behind the façade are two big rooms, the Hall which was restored during the 19th Century which retains much of its earlier character, and the Library on the first floor which was substantially altered by Salvin, who to the then Lady Vane's chagrin beeswaxed the oak rather than staining it black.

For the modern visitor this is the most striking aspect of the exterior of Hutton, but it is remarkable that in the early 19th Century plans were produced by George Webster of Kendal to replace it with a gothic ensemble, and according to Lady Vane's diary it was the architect Anthony Salvin who stopped its demolition – perhaps cost may have helped too! He was a family friend and he certainly did the family a favour on that occasion.

As far as the exterior of Hutton is concerned the 18th Century hardly registered, although inside a number of important changes were made.

The Cupid Room is probably the finest room in the House and dates from 1745 – the

year the Jacobite Rebels passed through the County and is one of a suite of three rooms almost certainly designed by Daniel Garrett, the pupil of Lord Burlington for Henry Vane, with plasterwork by Joseph Rose Snr, father of Adam's plasterer. Garrett is now almost forgotten, but had a big practice in Northern England, although he is buried no distance from here at St Martin's in The Field. In my view, and in Lord Burlington's too, he is a very serious architect. I love the understated classicism and the restrained rococo, if that is not an oxymoron, of the plaster ceiling.

In my childhood this room was a furniture store which was decorated in an eccentric Arts and Crafts palette. With the help of Geoffrey Beard and Tim Mowl we restored and redecorated the room and have hung Hogarth's portrait of Walter Vane and his family over the fireplace.

Blue Room

Adjoining the Cupid Room is the Blue Room, currently furnished as a Bed Room, although we don't know its original purpose. Of all the rooms we have restored it was the worst wreck and required considerable restoration. We hang here the collection of Lady Diane Beauclerk watercolours which Sir Henry Vane, her great grandson, accumulated, by design, when members of his family died and their possessions were

being distributed.

Lady Darlington's Room

There is a third room in this series, Lady Darlington's room, which was substantially changed in the 19th Century and to which I shall return later.

It is, in fact, remarkable how little we know about 18th Century Hutton, but this changes in the 19th Century when Francis Vane, who was more or less estranged from his irascible father Sir Frederick, together with his wife Diane Olivia (nee Beauclerk) set up house at Hutton – Sir Frederick lived elsewhere in Cumberland, at Armathwaite Hall on Bassenthwaite, and at one point almost sold Hutton.

The need they felt to introduce a fashionable early 19th Century gothic element led them to commission first George Webster of Kendal, and then the young Anthony Salvin to produce a scheme for the South East tower in that then fashionable idiom.

It stands to this day and works surprisingly well when viewed both from the East and from the South where it is the hub of the façade. Although the building still maintains its essential medieval and 16th and 17th Century footprint, some of the detail of the

South façade has been designed by Salvin and some by William Nixon of Carlisle, an architect/surveyor/builder much favoured by Charles, 12th Duke of Norfolk on his estate at nearby Greystoke, where he built farms for his Grace commemorating British setbacks In the American War of Independence.

The South East Tower contains two big rooms, one on the ground and one on the first floor which replaced a number of smaller ones. The Ground Floor contains the Big Dining Room which is a Webster/Salvin collaboration of the first third of the 19th Century reinforced by William Morris wallpaper.

It is the setting of the most imposing hang of Vane portraits in the house which came from Fairlawne in Kent and includes a pair of posthumous portraits by Thomas Murray of Sir Henry Vane Elder and Younger, the great hero of the Whig Interpretation of History executed by Charles II in 1662 although not a regicide, a Mary Beale of the Duchess of Newcastle, and van Dyck studio of Henrietta Maria, probably given to him by her, a Hanneman of Frances Lady Vane, and what I think is a Clostermans of First Viscountess Vane. I am descended from a number of them, as was my Father, but none of the others whom I have described at Hutton are directly related.

It is dominated by a big Gillow 'imperial' dining table which replaces the worst kind of Victorian oak table. My father bought the mahogany table with his demob money in 1945 from his friend George Chayter of Witton Castle, County Durham, and the table is supposed to have been given to a female member of the family by the Prince Regent.

Above it is the Drawing Room which now is a mixture of 1830's conceived by Salvin with an Arts and Crafts overlay which gives it a sunny feel as opposed to oppressive gothic or heavy carved mahogany. Of especial interest are the portraits of the First Lord Barnard by Francesco Trevisani, painted in Rome in 1701, and Margaret Lady Vane by Carl Bauerle a now, for the time being at least, almost forgotten painter born in Stuttgart, and a late 18th Century Swedish secretaire very much in the manner of Georg Haupt which was inherited from great aunt Louisa Gough whose husband had been in the Embassy in Stockholm.

At the end of the Century, Margaret Lady Vane refurbished Lady Darlington's Room, the third of three mid-18th Century rooms, so called after Caroline Lowther, sister of so called Wicked Jimmy, 1st Earl of Lonsdale aka 'Jimmy Grasp-all, Earl of Toadstool' from Maulds Meaburn, who married Henry Vane Earl of Darlington who used to stay here when her husband was Governor of Carlisle Castle.

Originally it was larger but a corridor was taken off its Eastern side, and it was given a 'makeover' with the help of Morris wallpapers. We have kept this room as a reminder of and shrine to Arts and Crafts at Hutton, not least because Cressida's family were also involved in the Keswick School of Industrial Art and we have added a number of items of our collection.

The late 19th Century, as elsewhere, saw the creation of additional servants' quarters, much of which have subsequently been demolished.

I have no regrets at all about the demolition my father and I (with, I hasten to add, listed building consent where appropriate) carried out. While more space can always be filled with something, the visual impact of the decent bits of architecture at Hutton has been enhanced by the elimination of these third class accretions.

Thus far have I concentrated on the front part of the House which was always, as far as I can be sure, where the best rooms were. Certainly Sir Henry and Lady Vane, my parents' predecessors, lived in the wing where we now live when they were alone.

We are not prepared for our personal living quarters to be subject to the public gaze. I

make no apologies for that. There is a clear ‘Berlin wall’ of doors between the Front of the House which we use on high days and holidays, and our everyday accommodation.

Nowadays the kitchen plays an important and different role from that which was traditionally the case. An awful lot flows from that. When Cressida and I moved in we reconfigured this part of the building with the help of Jeremy and Caroline Gould who are architects from Somerset, but also friends – then and now. Not always the case with one’s architects.

In the old kitchen at the base of a third tower at the back of the building we installed a modern kitchen, which now links directly to our sitting room. Paradoxically this retreat into the back of the building means we have not enough space for a separate dining room, which everything else being equal, we would like. As a result the Sitting Room doubles up as a dining room, where we use a table Cressida inherited which was made by Peagram for her grandfather Sir Stephen Tallents when he left the Empire Marketing Board.

The other serious design problem we faced was the staircase, since we were going to demolish the reconfigured gerry-built late 19th Century servants’ staircase which

served this part of the Building. Jeremy Gould told me that whatever else we did we must open up the early 19th Century water tower and make a feature of it, which was the death warrant for this old staircase. He was right.

Eventually we came up with a satisfactory alternative scheme and then my first cousin William Proby very generously gave me the staircase which our mutual grandfather had installed at Elton and which he had taken out. Our grandfather had always been disgruntled with it because he left instructions for its installation when he and my grandmother went off for a cruise after Christmas. He returned to find it was oak, not deal which he thought he had ordered because it was cheaper. I am very grateful for the mistake, and I think and believe that William and Merry and I all agree it looks much better where it is now!

During my time as owner we have spent our energy and money on maintenance and trying to improve the condition of the house which my father kept in the face of advice to the contrary and the worst efforts of the Inland Revenue. I don't feel any regret at not having added anything to the building's volume and by only making a small contribution to its exterior when reconfiguring our domestic entrance. It is interesting that while the urge to build is a very fundamental human characteristic, the compulsion many of our ancestors felt to sweep away and replace the past with

the most recent, fancy architectural style seems much less compelling now than it might have been in earlier generations.

6. THE GARDENS

There must have been some kind of produce and presumably flower garden at Hutton prior to the Fletchers buying the House in 1600, and Sir George Fletcher is thought to have modelled the Terraces in the second half of the 17th Century, but we have no knowledge of any detail. Indeed we know almost nothing about the garden until the end of the 17th Century beginning of the 18th Century.

At that time Archdeacon Nicolson, later Bishop of Carlisle, wrote that while rats were chewing the furnishings inside there was a good garden outside. Secondly the Kip engraving of 1707 gives an indication of what was there at that time.

To the North of the Gallery was a Dutch garden. To the West and South of the house are terraces on which was a certain amount of formal planting which has now gone.

The approach to the House from the East was through fields formally planted with trees. The Park as I shall explain was further to the East, entirely separate from the House as was so often the case in those days.

In the gardens around the house were a few water features including, possibly, a tank below the South Terrace, now all gone, and some statues – van Nost type, some of which survive having endured a partial theft 20 or so years ago. They have now been put away.

It shows a different layout to the South of the House from that today but it contains a number of similar features which either survive or can be identified.

Changes came in the middle third of the 18th Century after the house was inherited by Henry Vane, who subsequently used the surname Fletcher. He was unmarried and enjoyed the garden and planting rather than politics and social life. He made considerable changes.

First he built, in the 1730s, the brick and stone wall around what is now the Walled Garden on the North side of the House. This survives to this day, and the internal layout, as opposed to the planting seems to date from this time.

Secondly he clearly planted a significant number of fruit trees on what he described as the ‘pallisadoes’, whatever they may have exactly been on the Western and

Southern side of the house – his planting book still survives among our papers.

Thirdly he built the Middle Pond which now dominates the Southern aspect. It would seem, since otherwise the view from the House would be impeded, that he took down the perimeter garden wall on that side. It also looks as if there was some kind of ‘tank’ with two rills in the beck on the West side of the building. This has been ‘overtaken by events’ but it could I think quite easily be reinstated.

We know, in fact, little more than what I have described. Clearly this ‘outdoor’ work complements the suite of three 18th Century rooms inside the House, but we have no knowledge of any architect/landscape architect involved.

The next milestone is the early 19th Century when Sir Frances and Diana Olivia Vane carried out considerable works to the House, and a reference in the Losh papers indicates William Sawrey Gilpin advised on the landscaping, including, no doubt on what he called the ‘dress grounds’ around the house, later modified with topiary in the second half of the 19th Century, although it is unclear what precisely was done at that time except for the construction of a now demolished ‘lean to’ greenhouse in the Walled Garden.

Later in the Century Sir Henry and Margaret Vane introduced schemes of the then fashionable bedding out, rhododendrons, topiary and ‘American conifers’, much of which ran wild in the middle of the 20th Century and some of which we have and are continuing to eliminate, thus opening up the building and displaying it to better effect.

The reason for the late 19th Century planting running wild was a result of the late 19th Century Vanes apparently living slightly beyond their means, very possibly as a result of the Agricultural Depression of 1870s, death duties, the World Wars, and my parents having very little spare cash. In the overall scheme of things the garden was a low priority and gardens can be salvaged relatively easily at a later date, unlike, for example, roofs.

My parents, in particular my mother, did some small scale flower gardening around the house, and some of the main walks were kept open. In addition, like many in their circumstances, they did some market gardening in the Walled Garden and for a number of years regularly sent chrysanthemums and gladioli to London, overnight by train to Covent Garden. Needless to say it was not a robust business proposition, and Dutch competition put paid to it.

Obviously if 'Visitors' are coming to the House they expect some kind of garden, and when my parents began to open the House more regularly they began to turn the tide. This has continued with more vigour and ambition under Cressida's direction – she is keen and knowledgeable. The tsunami of ponticum mixed with indifferent conifers has been rolled back, the Walled Garden developed into an enclosed area of fruit trees and herbaceous plants, and we are now thinking more carefully about the West and South fronts where largish areas have been cleared and vistas re-identified. Most advanced is the Walled Garden. There is much more to be done.

The House was not the only backdrop to the Garden since in the past there were farm buildings and stables on both the North and South sides of the House. Almost everything on the South side has gone, but we have carried out work on the main stable yard on the North side, which bears the mark of Salvin's hand, tidying up a number of older buildings and creating a coherent architectural whole.

Gardens are relatively transient and tastes change, but I hope the skeleton we have formed and are now using is one which posterity will generally adhere to, albeit the detail will no doubt move with the times.

7. **THE PARK**

I have quite deliberately described the Garden separately from the Park since up until the beginning of the 19th Century it was entirely separate from the House and is supposed to have contained, inter alia, some fallow deer. I think it also probable it was always at least partly used for agisting stock, since it is near one of the main drove routes between England and Scotland.

An early 18th Century Bridgemanesque plan survives but the detail does not tie in with the ghostly outlines of earlier formal planting shown in the early Ordnance Survey Maps, most of which was cut down in the First World War.

The area between the Park and the House was clearly landscaped to provide a suitable and formal approach to the main entrance and front courtyard. To the West and North of the Garden were plantations.

This all changed in c.1820 when William Sawrey Gilpin got to work creating one and possibly two, new ponds. In order to set the Big House in 'rolling parkland' the Park moved Westwards so that now the House and Gardens are set on the edge of an open grazed landscape, and some of the Eastern side of the Old Park has been divided up

into fields and is used for conventional farming. The woods on the West and North of the house itself were 'reinforced' with American Conifers which now dominate since the earlier generation of deciduous trees are now coming to the end of their life.

The principal impact on the Park in the twentieth Century was of course World War II when there was a satellite grass airfield for Silloth with airplanes and bombs hidden under the trees. It did not see real action, and perhaps remarkably the Forces did not destroy the house as happened in so many cases. Perhaps this was because my aunt, Margaret Vane, who was a housing manager, who went on to manage a large cape coloured housing estate in Cape Town, was left in charge, when my father was away fighting.

He was a keen and knowledgeable forester who always tried to ensure the woods adjacent to the House contained a younger generation to replace those coming to the end of their life and I have tried to continue this process. In addition, as I have already mentioned, I am anxious to reopen the vistas, envisaged, I am sure, by Gilpin, a pupil of Repton, from the House into the Park, and from the Park back to the House. Invariably one is insufficiently brave, and does not cut down nearly enough.

A second aspect to be addressed is the planting in the Park itself, which requires

'beating up' in places as the wind and old age take their toll. In the 'Near Park' there are probably too many trees which are beginning to go back, while across the Penrith Road there are probably insufficient numbers thanks to felling in the First World War

On top of this there is the substantial area of the Old Park, now in conventional agriculture which is surrounded by the surviving but dilapidated 200 year old dry stone perimeter wall c. 6½ miles long. I hanker after bringing it back to parkland, while recognising the economic implications and the fact the HLS scheme is indispensable. DEFRA and Natural England have hitherto shown what to me is an almost inexplicable lack of interest in this complete historic landscape, for what reason I know not and have been unable to discover.

8. LAND USE AND THE ESTATE

In my experience unravelling the past land use priorities of estates is not always easy since one has to get into the minds of previous generations which is far from straightforward, and then correlate that with what is on the ground.

Farming is, obviously, something which has played a big part at Hutton, although it is not always clear what was done 'in hand' and what was carried on by tenants.

Certainly there are two essentially undistinguished model farms, both of which I farm in hand today. First Whitrigg, on the edge of the old Park will have been built around the middle of the 18th Century. I had wondered whether it might have been designed by Daniel Garrett, who specialised in these, but I think not. Secondly there is Home Farm which was built in 1870 by John Ross of Darlington, who was the architect for the Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith Railway and built the Keswick Hotel. Sir Henry Vane was a director of the railway, but he does seem a rather surprising choice, since as far as I have been able to establish this was his only farm.

Currently I am farming just over 1,100 acres at Hutton, as well as some hill land in the Lake District. This is not large by South of England standards, but it is in a Cumbrian context. I have always been interested in farming and believe it is important for houses like Hutton to control their curtilage and surroundings. It must be emphasised farming has to pay which is not always easy thanks to the vagaries of government and EU policy, the caprice of the weather as in the last two years, or plagues such as Foot and Mouth. We have suffered from all of them.

Equally there is a forestry tradition on the estate which can be seen in the pattern of woods around Hutton. It has always been a family interest, and it is to our ears curious that in the late 19th Century Lady Vane complained about those pests, red

squirrels, which were doing so much damage to the trees and which we are now doing all we can to preserve.

While the House has always been open to visitors the configuration of capital tax, and the character of the tourist economy has meant this has increased over the last half Century, although nowhere on the scale of some houses which have mutated into attractions. Hutton is not an attraction or a leisure destination as such, rather it is a place which those who are interested in and enjoy this kind of thing can visit, which is rather different. Visitors can enjoy what it is, rather than finding it overwhelmed by the paraphernalia of the leisure industry which so frequently destroys so much of interest.

In parallel we have been expanding the use of the Park for 'Events' to generate income in a tax efficient way, necessary to keep the House and its surroundings in 'good shape'.

9. **THE ENTITY**

The three main elements of any traditional country house are the building, the contents and the surrounding garden/park. Each adds to the other so that the whole is

more than just the sum of the component parts. It becomes an installation, which my daughter at the RCA tells me is defined as a site specific work of Art. The work of Art itself is not inherently static, the component elements can and do change, although if too many good individual elements are removed the whole is diminished.

For those with an historical sensibility the relationship with the past and the personalities of the past provide an added interest. Country houses of the traditional kind are one of the few places, other than, perhaps, cathedrals, churches and Oxford and Cambridge colleges where this can be found.

An obvious and easy contemporary example of this at Hutton is the portrait in the Drawing Room of Cressida, Miranda and me by Tony Eyton. It hangs in the room where it was painted, and if one looks at the actual windows you can still look at the view which now has changed - for the better I believe.

Ghosts of real people walk. Obviously portraits are important, but past personalities equally relate to archives and books as well as to favourite pieces of furniture and china. All this in turn may link to parts of the building, the garden and the park.

This is, I think, especially apparent at Hutton where the disparate architecture clearly

belongs to different owners, many of whom are buried in the churchyard in the corner of the Park a quarter of a mile from the house whither I hope my final journey will eventually be made.

From the perspective of the owner and his family it is arguable that too strong a presence of the past may be a dangerous shadow, but from the perspective of the house its collections and surroundings it helps explain and give life to what is there and from the point of view of the visitor who comes, in a susceptible frame of mind, substantially increases the enjoyment it offers.

This, of course, throws up the question of the contribution of what we lawyers would probably describe as the owners for the time being. Country House Collections are living entities and the taste, interests and depth of pocket of the owners is often very apparent. Cressida and I, as did my parents, have added to what is at Hutton, as well as changing the building and altering the garden and grounds. Sometimes these complement what is there, on other occasions they are completely new. It is my clear view added things are as much an inherent part of the whole as the oldest heirloom so long as they are introduced with care and discrimination and fall sensitively with what is there already.

The key, I believe, is to respect the *genius loci*, which entails taking trouble to learn and understand the history of the place and its owners and of the objects and the architecture. Having done this they must be allowed to speak, which if permitted to do, they will.

Certainly it took me a long dark chilly winter's afternoon alone in the wreckage of the Blue Room to figure out the original configuration of the Georgian features. Things aren't done either indoors or outside by accident, although sometimes incompetence plays a big part which is too frequently overlooked. The key is to fathom out what was going on. This is not always possible, but in my experience it is remarkable how taking time and looking carefully and asking the right questions reveals a great deal. Against that background informed and sensitive individuals then can make quite radical changes which invariably retain the fundamental aesthetic and historical integrity of a place. This cannot be done by a Committee, rather it is a personal interaction today between individuals and what has gone before.

For my part I am very cautious of great schemes drawn up in a hurry by an outsider however eminent or experienced since their author tends to impose the ideas from within his/her head upon what is there rather than listening to the 'still small voice' of the past.

Before we carried out any building works to the part of the house in which we live we spent 18 months thinking about it and poring over drawings. The outcome was that after those 18 months I think we found the best solution which gratifyingly was also the cheapest. I am sure the right thing is to wrestle with the structure of the building to find a way in which it will allow you to deploy contemporary technology and 21st Century lifestyles, rather than forcing the building to accommodate them. Subdividing rooms and adding small extensions is almost invariably a mistake both structurally and aesthetically.

10. **THE FUTURE**

Discussion of Country Houses tends to focus on the Past and the Present, but I think the Future is just as interesting and possibly more important. Just as I have inherited Hutton from my father so I shall have to bequeath it. There is no alternative. We have not committed much of our lives, energy and money to this place to be unconcerned about what comes next. The old ways and conventions I believe made it easier for a parent who does not wish to play King Lear with his children. That King's fate and the fate of his family is evidence enough why it is not a good thing to do. But of course the old ways are not now so strong, and a traditional country estate is no

longer the first prize in the Lottery of Life as it was in Trollope's day. What should one do, both from the perspective of the house and of the future owner and the family?

In our case we have always made it clear that there is a presumption our son, who will also inherit the title, will succeed me, which must of course not entail leaving the other children penniless. Titles, of course, are not what they were, and for all I know may change, or I suspect more likely may cease to exist. Certainly owning an historic house is likely to curtail and possibly make impossible some careers and is not something every wife wants to support. It is clearly far from the dream ticket, yet equally it is far from the worst in the draw. It also requires training, but what that should be is not always what a text book or a bureaucrat might suppose since 'What do they know of England who only England know'.

Like a huge range of projects in this World, it has to be run by a team which entails collaboration and I must put on record my debt, and that of Hutton to Cressida, to whom the credit for most of the considerable improvements of recent years must go as well as almost all the photographs this evening, and to my parents who in the words of the Abbé Sieyès 'survived'. One of their most interesting decisions in doing that was not to put heat or light into two thirds of the building, which is still the case,

and no doubt contributes to Hutton's 'rugged quality' John Cornforth so liked. It is also important, too, not to overlook the contribution made by the wide range of helpers who have assisted in various ways over the years.

11. THE STATE

In reality, even more important than the qualities of any heir or owner to the survival of the English Country House is the State – whichever political party may be in charge at any particular time. It is within its gift to wipe them out in a generation or less if it feels inclined or even by accident if it is not thinking. In the case of Hutton had Sir Henry Vane's nephew Major General Fred Wing not been killed during the Retreat from Loos a month before as opposed to a month after his widowed aunt died, it is inconceivable, I think, that I would be giving this lecture this evening – tax would have destroyed Hutton more or less immediately.

Until quite recently at least some of those who had their hands on the levers of power in this country understood country houses and estate management. Indeed it is my view that estate management with its blend of the forensic and the intuitive is a good training for politics and public affairs. This is no longer the case, although the legacy of the past relationship of country houses and political power, now entirely gone in

my opinion, still stains some political attitudes. It is certainly true the last generation has seen some significant improvements in some aspects of the legal and fiscal framework which surround houses like Hutton. But there is also real evidence that politicians and civil servants just 'don't get it'. There is, I believe, a real possibility it may all come to naught over time.

We have seen over the last few years how short termism and greed has wreaked havoc across the City and our financial institutions. Equally party politics is entirely dominated by the electoral cycle. The Treasury is greedy because politicians are greedy, not in the same way as the worst bankers, but in a way which is closer than they like to suppose. Governments invariably want things 'on the cheap'. This can be a successful approach in the short term but invariably it does not work in the long run.

Country houses like Hutton have taken many hundreds of years to become what they are today and unless there is a recognition across the political spectrum both that they matter and that long term, and dull things like maintenance and sustainable solvency are the essential pre-conditions for long-term survival, they are doomed, regardless of ownership or use. We must not forget they are 'black holes' into which money is poured like water into a bucket with a hole in the bottom. This is why the National

Trust seeks endowments, National Museums get grant in aid, and the new English Heritage Charity is being endowed, albeit in my view inadequately. The widespread commercial exploitation of innovation and novelty, an essential element in most markets is of little help for the Country House, because the underlying point, its setting and contents and hence their greatest contribution depends on their continuing to exist much as they were in good condition and not in a state of permanent revolution. Such businesses require steady ongoing sustainability and not, necessarily, an endless series of new projects of, for example, the kind demanded by the Lottery. They cannot be moved like, for example, a factory or a financial services business because of the constraints to which they are subject, either imposed in the national interest by the State or fixed inexorably by geography and the laws of physics. This means that they are qualitatively different from most other businesses.

Equally the fallacy at the heart of Nicholas Ridley's well known dictum that if the ancien pauvre cannot go on they should be replaced by the nouveau riche has not been properly examined. If the point of such places is the history and the continuity, much of that is lost by the kind of change he advocates, and in turn that will be repeated when the riche become pauvre and another plus nouveau plus riche replaces them. This is likely to happen because looking after them, especially a long way from commercial centres, inhibits and sometimes precludes the creation of wealth away

from the house. Certainly this is the case in Cumbria.

This might not matter if the State had a sensible alternative to the private owners for the houses still privately owned. It does not - the National Trust would rather not, and anyway is probably not a desirable option. It is not honest of the State to enthuse about Britain's Heritage as a core part of its ever more important tourist industry, while positively contributing to its destruction in a number of ways – albeit perhaps unintentionally. The underlying issue is well recognised in the case of the Lake District, the country's premier National Park, which I know well where it is appreciated that the economic value of the hill farmer is far greater to tourism than to agricultural production. There is no sensible way the tourist industry can pay its contribution direct. Measures are in place to deal with this. It is not that the same mechanisms need or should apply, it is just that the basic relationship is the same.

Instead of focussing on the owners whose houses are incidental, policy should focus on the houses whose owners are incidental. Speaking as an individual I hope my family will continue at Hutton, but if not I hope the place will not be destroyed forever. If we go, and with it 400 years of history, to be replaced by a second class country club and wedding venue set in an indifferent golf course, the country as a whole is the loser. If so, the Government that brings it about is a bloody fool because

I can think of no country anywhere, however iconoclastic it may be at one particular time, which does not subsequently regret the loss of its historic and cultural patrimony.

Richard Inglewood

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