

## MM&DHS - Second Summer Outing 2022

On Saturday 16th July a group of 35 that included both society members and their friends joined together to enjoy a trip to **Brodsworth Hall and Gardens** near Doncaster. We left Melton Mowbray at 09.00 and arrived back at 18.00 having rested on our “luxury coach” whilst continuing to enjoy one another’s company.

### **History Of Brodsworth Hall.**

Brodsworth Hall in South Yorkshire is one of England’s most complete surviving Victorian country houses and has remained almost unchanged since the 1860s. Not only has Victorian life been ‘conserved as found’ at Brodsworth Hall, but the estate’s pleasure gardens have been restored, boasting a unique Rose garden.



Whilst the Gardens are known as being a “Victorian time-capsule”, the house and village lay where settlements have been since the Iron Age. The Romans popularly used a major route along the ridge to travel north to their garrison that later became Doncaster.

The house and land was owned by several notable families from Norman times until the 17th century, when the owner Darcy Wentworth of Brodsworth became involved in the English Civil War on the Parliamentarian side. What the manor at Brodsworth looked like at this time is unknown.

The estate was bought in 1791 by Peter Thellusson, from a long established European mercantile family. Later his grandson, Charles Sabine Thellusson inherited Brodsworth and he needed both a house to suit his family but also to accommodate his extensive social life. The Hall we see today was built between 1861 and 1863 and by the end of the 1860s, the remodelling was complete and Brodsworth was an impressive Italianate – style Victorian mansion.

In the 20th century however, the great estate was too expensive to manage and faced an uncertain future. Major work was needed to make it safe and bring the gardens back from their jungle-like state. English Heritage took charge of Brodsworth Hall and Gardens in 1990, and it opened to the public in 1995.

### **Brodsworth Hall and Gardens today**



In this beautiful Victorian country house today visitors find that almost everything has been left exactly as it was when it was still a family home. Possessions that took more than 130 years to gather together, from the grandest piece of furniture to family mementoes and humble domestic items, are still in their original places.

Its fragile interiors have been carefully cleaned, stabilised and conserved, while the gardens have been returned to their earlier formality. Visitors can also tour the house, seeing objects that transport them back to the

splendour of the Victorian age. Highlights include the folding bed, Hadlock's Horse, Italian sculptures and magnificent family portraits along with lavish furnishings.



The pleasure gardens – stretching 6 hectares wide – reflect the house's Italianate style and boast spacious lawns and terraces with marble steps which have now been recovered from being in a near jungle-like state. Visitors can wander and stroll through the "Statue Walks" finding the white marble statues popping out of the greenery as well as a 3-tier fountain, a rockwork "Fern Dell Grotto", the Wild Rose Dell, the "Victorian Privy" and the "Target" garden, all surrounded by fabulous topiary which many people find wonderful to behold.

Brodsworth now stands and survives as a mid-Victorian vision of a comfortable country house, with many of its original furnishings and the formal gardens laid out around it.

### **Our Time At Brodsworth**

On arriving at Brodsworth we were met and welcomed by volunteer members of staff who also presented individual "tasters" of locally made "Ginger Wine". Many members gratefully took advantage of this unexpected gesture before eagerly following our welcomers to the entrance.

Obviously everyone's first thought was to visit the café which we did as we had already been told that it was open for refreshments of tea/coffee and cake etc!!

Once fully refreshed most headed to where the "Garden Tours" were to start from. We were split into two groups, each of which was led by one of the very informative and knowledgeable "Garden Guides". Without them I think everyone agreed we would not have learned as much about the gardens, their history or the stories surrounding them and the tours proved to be very worthwhile and were thoroughly enjoyed by all concerned.

By now we had all returned to the "Hall" and to the café which we found was again serving suitable refreshments that we might need before continuing our visit by taking a tour of the Hall itself. This too was made very much more interesting by the presence of very knowledgeable guides who did their very best to make our visit special.

Throughout our day visiting this wonderful house and its gardens members also had to remember that due to the "very hot weather" we all had to remember to drink plenty of fluids and ensure we didn't expend too much energy without topping up. Obviously, this is why it was necessary to make return visits to the café which was also providing ice creams and cold drinks too!!!!

After a very pleasant and full day everyone re-boarded the coach for our return journey to Melton Mowbray where we arrived on schedule in time for everyone to return home after a really enjoyable day out.

Many thanks to all those members who joined us today.

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