



# A BARONET'S DIARY

SIR RICHARD FITZHERBERT

## 'JUDGEMENT OF WESSINGTON'

It is not often that I am asked to act as a wine-tasting judge in a small tent in a mowed orchard in Wessington late on a Sunday afternoon in September... but that is exactly what I was invited to do by wine buff Barry Lewis for his 'Judgement of Wessington'! The session was to blind taste a selection of champagnes and English sparkling wines in order to contrast, compare and collate the best in the business – such is the rise in the popularity and consistent quality of English viticulture. Barry had gathered a crack foursome of local connoisseurs Will Armitage, Jean-Claude Schmitt (the French, independent wine merchant and owner of The French Wine People in Matlock), Andrij Jurkiw (Derbyshire resident, wine reviewer and writer for *Great British Wines*), and me (a wine merchant prior to my inheritance). Faced with 14 wines to sample, we set about our task with alacrity and excitement. The wine that came out top was the 2004 Chapel Down Pinot Reserve from Tenterden in Kent. Please note that we were independently adjudicated by Andie



**TOP:** Barry Lewis;  
**ABOVE:** the judging panel

Darlington, editor and owner of *Taste the Seasons* magazine, so all was above board! Check out the winning vintage, and also Barry's own Derbyshire wines at [www.ambervalleywines.co.uk](http://www.ambervalleywines.co.uk) – you'll be impressed with the quality!

## DERBYSHIRE DAY

My appearances on BBC Radio Derby's Breakfast Show have come to an end as the Loudmouths' slot (9-10am) has ended – presenter Ian Skye now starts his show at 6.30am and finishes at 9am. However, on my last appearance I agreed to take part in Derbyshire Day in late September when the station offered free tickets to 12 attractions. I gave away 40 tickets to guided tours of the Hall, which were snapped up in 30 minutes! Subsequent applications meant that we had over 200 people on the waiting list. On the day, Ian himself turned up to interview me at my place of work, which made rather a change after all my early starts to get to his studio!



## STAY IN A STATELY!

Now that all four offspring have flown, with a sensitive refurbishment of the North Wing Fiona and I have created a separate one-bedroomed apartment in the Hall, with its own front door. Not only can North Wing accommodate couples attending wedding parties here, it can also lodge them for one or two nights during the week. We are experimenting with the AirBnB portal but can take bookings direct via the Estate Office. Look us up online and come and stay in a Stately!

## COUNTRY HOUSE FOR SALE

Ever fancied owning an historic house yourself? Well Allestree Hall near Derby is up for sale from the City Council. The Hall is an impressive 19th century, three-storey, stone-built, Grade II\* listed former country house with various outbuildings. The interior boasts an original stone staircase and Robert Adam style ceilings but the building does require sensitive refurbishment – quite a task but there is huge scope for a new life for the building. Formerly the home of eminent Derbyshire family the Thornhills, other occupants



have ranged from the Sherwood Foresters Regiment to the National Fire Service. Let us hope for the county and for heritage's sake that the next attempt to regalanise it will be successful. Watch this space.

## ANTHONY MILLWARD

The recent news of the passing of Tony Millward, Derbyshire Dales District Councillor for Ashbourne North, was particularly poignant. Tony died having fought a brave battle with cancer. To sum up Tony you have to say that he was 'Mr Ashbourne'. At his funeral at St Oswald's Church his great friend Stuart Lees read out a list of charitable organisations Tony was involved with that included practically every one in our wonderful town. In 2015 Tony was extremely proud to be conferred with the British Empire Medal for services to the county and town.

To his wife Linda and his family we offer our condolences in memory of a great man.