



A BARONET'S DIARY

SIR RICHARD FITZHERBERT

ALMOST A CENTURY OUT

The Hall guides and I have always explained that the original structure, built in 1609, was joined to a secondary building (known as the Servants' Wing) around 1902 as per drawings that have survived by architect Arnold Mitchell. There is a plaque on this wing, which we now call the Staff Wing, that I recently had restored by Middleton by Wirksworth stonemasons L Petts & Son. The restoration has revealed an interesting Latin inscription stating the edifice was actually built in 1811. This is fascinating as it reveals that the grandiose building schemes on the Estate were mostly taking place in the early 19th century as the Victorian baronet took over. Now 200 years of weather and grime have been removed and the stone is legible again.



The stonemason with restored plaque in situ

TOO MUCH HOSPITALITY

One hundred years ago the local Ashbourne paper reported that the then Vicar of Tissington, one Revd Arthur Gage Hall, was involved in an 'extraordinary court case, accused of using abusive language and interfering with the comfort of passengers on a Midland railway train between London and Derby.'

The article went on to say that the defendant (the Vicar) called Colonel Dalglish a 'pro-German' and alleged he was in league with the Prussians, and that an altercation took place somewhere

between St Albans and Harpenden.

Quite why the fuss started the paper does not relate but Gage Hall was fined £1 and ordered to pay £5 costs, which equates to £50 in today's currency.

What is intriguing about this is that we have a Cellar Book from that period when Sir Hugo was in residence. An entry dated 2nd September 1918 records that the Vicar came to dinner at the Hall and that one bottle of Barsac and two bottles of Port Bin 29 were consumed! He seems to have been quite a character.

TISSINGTON TO AUSTRALIA AND BACK

In September I received an email from Shirley Hardy Rix who was visiting the UK from Australia. Shirley's great great grandfather was John Allsop who worked on the Estate for Sir Henry, the third baronet, and decided to emigrate to Australia with his wife Ellen in 1865 after their marriage at St Mary's Church. Shirley had a letter of thanks written to Sir Henry in which John enquires touchingly of the family (Sir Henry and his wife had ten children!) and the Estate. Even more fascinating, Shirley and her husband Brian are motorbike mad and had shipped their BMW 1200 from Australia, picking it up at Harwich and driving all over Europe for two months before their trip to Tissington. They have previously even driven back to Australia overland through Europe, Iran and Turkey on a bike



Shirley and Brian from Australia

that had done 270,000 miles! A family of intrepid explorers, both then and now!

FORBIDDEN FRUIT

At the end of August and the start of September I take the opportunity to 'scrump'. This summer's glorious weather and the autumn rain have combined to produce a wonderful crop on our fruit trees. I am familiar with the various locations around the village: the best plums come from a Victoria planted in 2002, and the best cooking apples from the late Oliver Watson's Bramley tree near the old Kitchen Gardens! For rhubarb I raid the holiday let patch at Gardeners Cottage and also have my eye on an untended gooseberry bush! What do I do with all this fruit I hear you ask ... Well, I deliver the produce to our catering champions at Herbert's Tearooms and their delicious pies and crumbles are enjoyed by customers. Available from late August, but this year's bumper crop will mean these delights will be on our menu until November. Do come and sample!

BACK ON TRACK

The disruption at Derby Railway station has caused me to experiment with alternative routes to London. First from Lichfield Trent Valley where the parking is poor, the station bereft of refreshments but the price reasonable. Then from East Midlands Parkway which takes an hour's drive from Tissington but the link from the A50 is good, the parking space is massive and there is a café. The £200m resignalling project at Derby is the biggest rail investment since the 1960s. The results will be revealed in mid-October when I will be returning to the city to catch my East Midlands trains!