

Baronet's Diary

February 2021

What does Tissington have in common with the Iraqi Parliament House in Baghdad? Quite an unusual coincidence as I am sure you will agree but as I have been looking after our fenestration at the Hall and allocating my trusty WD40 to the hinges and brackets on the 120 year old windows I noticed that the rim had 'H Hope & Sons' inscribed at the bottom. Intrigued, I looked into this company that hailed from Smethwick in the West Midlands and discovered this fascinating fact that they manufactured glasshouses and windows for Barry's new Houses of Parliament in London in 1845-57. I surmise that the architect Arnold Mitchell (who extended the Hall in 1900 to add the library and billiard room) must have discovered the firm who went on to adorn other properties not just in England including ICI House but in Iran as well including their Parliament House. What a connection!

The walks from our front door during Lockdown never seem to amaze me. I have a favourite one that leads to Parwich via Lea Hall, over the Bletch Brook via Shaws Farm and then onto the back lane to the village. With different companions I always make a point of stopping off at the Sycamore in Parwich, sadly not for a pint, but to purchase sustenance for the hill climb back. Each time I spy something new on the walk and I will continue to do so to monitor this wonderful landscape during the different seasons. Great exercise, great views and with great company great conversation. Recommended.

Every year each local Derbyshire Dales District Councillor has a budget of £900 to distribute in their wards to local groups in order to benefit the Community. This year in Tissington the Parish Council and Village Hall Committees clubbed together for a grant to create a collage of all the inhabitants in the village to make a wallpaper that included all the people of Tissington on one wall but in separate photographs. Organisers Debbie & Mervyn King commissioned Rowsley photographer Mike daBell who made numerous visits over six months to take his shots during the different seasons. The unveiling of the finished product was a low-key affair (owing to Covid restrictions) but eventually everyone will be able to study it on the western wall of the Village Hall. Quite an achievement and well worth a view!

I have written before about my communications from St Patrick's Primary School in Stafford. Just before Christmas I was delighted to receive a huge envelope in the post containing over thirty hand drawn cards from the pupils in Miss Madeley's Year 5 class. In the cards were the usual messages for Christmas and the New Year but also demands that I 'stay safe' and 'sanitise on a regular basis.' Prior to the holiday I had taken part in a Zoom session with the children explaining the assets of Tissington as well as showing them our two dachshunds, Daisy & Daphne. I do hope that once the vaccine against this horrible disease is more widely distributed that this charming class can come and visit us physically and also try and find the 'secret passage' in the Library.

I have been fortunate enough to have had four 'Grannies' in my life. The first (and only proper Grand Mother to me) was Norah the mother of our mother and a lady that smoked 20 John Player cigarettes a day until she was 80 and lived until the age of 98! Then our Mother became 'Granny Nutwood' to Freddie and Francesca so that she was distinguished from their other feisty Granny

Barbara, born a Christmas (her surname) and full of fun and verve. The fourth and final Granny was Sheila who sadly died in mid-December and was the Mother of Fiona and Grandmother to Will and Emily. I loved them all, got on with them all and was privileged to have been part of their lives. In total these four magnificent ladies had eleven children and 31 grandchildren between them and I can imagine them all together looking down on us with a gin and tonic, doing the crossword, and watching Pointless! May they all rest in peace.