

December 2023 Baronet's Diary

Once again the High Sheriff of Derbyshire's Legal Service took place at the Cathedral in October. Prior to the afternoon service eighty of us assembled at The Museum of Making(formerly The Silk Mill)for a delicious lunch hosted by our own HS Theresa Peltier from Wirksworth. The event welcomes several Judges to Derby as well as neighbouring High Sheriffs from other counties. This year a further 5 celebrated with Theresa as the Procession entered the Cathedral to a Trumpet fanfare. We were treated to a service that reminded us that Britain does do these ceremonies well. Theresa put her own mark on the schedule as Jamie Joseph sang acapella the Sam Cooke classic 'A change is gonna come' and the Cathedral Choir performed a traditional American Spiritual. A great day for Derbyshire a great day for Theresa and a healthy collection for Foundation Derbyshire.

The plan was to have a 60 at 60 party for my sixtieth birthday at Tissington. With a gap in the calendar Fiona and I assembled a congregation of family and friends to fill a Saturday night in late October. In fact, we had 74 accepted to sitting down a week prior but such are the health ailments that befall those of us in this age bracket we actually numbered 69 on the night. Apart from my excellent speech(Is that correct?.....Ed) the highlight was Sophie Sax serenading us with her saxophonist solos as we took the dancefloor and magician Tom Wright(well known at our weddings at Tissington)producing bottles from hanker chiefs and coins from guests' ears! The playlist took us back to the 1980s which was appreciated by other residents in the village as we partied into the early hours. And to celebrate Fiona produced a cake made by baker extraordinaire Rachel Maher of Clifton in the shape of Tissington Hall itself. Firstly the 48 chimneys were consumed before we moved onto devouring the library(lemon drizzle), the dining room(chocolate) and finally the kitchen(Victoria sponge)...in that order. My thanks to all those that contributed to a very special evening with great people. Now to finish the East Drawing Room(salted caramel sponge!).

Fiona now hangs in the Main Hall at Tissington. She has been painted by young up and coming artist Simon Watkins and the image was brought back to the house last month. Fiona sat four times for the picture in his studio in south London after much debate about her choice of clothes and jewelry for the sitting. There are several 'Lady FitzHerberts' on the walls and it is interesting to compare them side by side. Her first outing was at my birthday party so I was able to thank her for organizing the night with the line.' You have seen her on the wall...but she looks even better in real life'. Time for another portrait of me perhaps to replicate Sir Henry and his Lady FitzHerbertt, Agnes, from 1854?

It was well worth catching at the Artcore Gallery *The Derbyshire Windrush Exhibition* and its tribute to the enduring legacy of the African Caribbean community in Derby. It traces their remarkable voyage from Jamaica and the broader Caribbean area since the momentous arrival of the HMT Empire Windrush in the UK in 1948. The exhibition commemorates and acknowledges the priceless contributions made by this community to both Derbyshire and the United Kingdom. It features never-before-seen historical photos and depictions of Derbyshire's Windrush pioneers and influential figures, along with valuable first-hand accounts from members of the African Caribbean community in Derbyshire. Collated by George Grignon in celebration of Black History Month the show is touring Derbyshire venues and I hope to host it at Tissington in the future. Fascinating.

And finally as we approach the festive season, may Fiona and I , our family and all the team at Tissington wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year!

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Photo Cake of Tissington Hall made in celebration of Sir Richard's 60th Birthday