

Visit to Belmont House Nr Faversham, Kent on Wednesday 29 June 2022



A lovely, peaceful day was had at Belmont House; despite road closures we arrived in time for coffee and biscuits in The Orangery and then split into two groups for a tour of the House. Steve and Simon were our most knowledgeable guides, explaining the history of the house, the estate, the family and the magnificent collection of clocks. No photographs are permitted to be taken in the house so these come from Belmont's website



The original house on the site was built by Edward Wilks of the Royal Gun powder works near Faversham. Col John Montresor bought the house in 1780 and enlarged the park and the house. The innovative architect Samuel Wyatt was engaged for the design.

Col Montresor died in prison of gaol fever after being wrongly accused of embezzling army funds – it took many years for the family to clear his name. The estate was seized by the Government and sold at auction to General George Harris who would later become the First Lord Harris.

Each of the Lord Harris's added something of interest to the history of Belmont: The First received the peerage for his efforts in India - and spoils of war.

The Second Lord Harris fought at Waterloo and was presented with The Waterloo sword which is on display in the magnificent hallway.

The Third Lord Harris lived and married in Trinidad where he became a close friend of the local artist Michel-Jean Cazabon who produced a collection of watercolours on commission for the Lord which are on display in the guest room in the house. Lord Harris the third was also Lord in Waiting to Queen Victoria.

The Fourth Lord Harris is known as 'Cricketing Lord Harris', he is responsible for popularising the game in India and probably Australia. The cricket pitch at Belmont is away from the house and has lovely views over the estuary to Essex.

The Fifth Lord Harris is the one that we have to thank for this lovely house – after his military career he worked in the City and managed to restore the fortunes of the Harris family, in 1980, knowing that there were no more heirs to carry on looking after the house, he established the Harris (Belmont) trust to secure the future preservation, maintenance and upkeep of Belmont House and its contents. He also created the clock collection which is said to be the best in private hands; some of these clocks are on display throughout the public areas of the House.

After our tours we sat down to a lovely lunch in The Orangery and then there was time to explore the gardens.



Some of us even 'played' in Hetty Feather's hideaway!





Members of The Arts Society Medway at Belmont House Kent

Photo taken by our Roseway coach driver Phil