



The Markenfield Irregular

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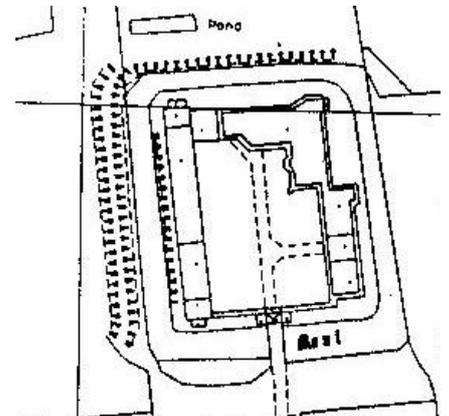
ARCHIVES are not always about the distant past. The story of Markenfield continues and even now is creating or recording what is happening here today for future generations. Janet Senior, who of course wrote the authoritative *The Markenfields of Markenfield Hall*, and Dr Maryon Dougil have, weekly for over a year now been reading through and cataloguing boxes of twentieth century papers, letters and reports - in particular relating to the 1980s restoration.

We had already acquired the working papers of the architect of that time John Miller, with all his sketches, proposals and ideas; many never carried out. These will now live alongside such things as the Condition Report of 1962 which proposed that the mediaeval first-floor entrance directly into the Great Hall - a grand exterior staircase over the present front door - be rebuilt, and the five boxes of papers pertaining to the two-day Court Case of 2014 when Markenfield fought to retain a vital section of the Estate which had been part of the 1761 purchase by Fletcher Norton - and won, being awarded most of the £50,000 costs.

What Markenfield lacks so badly is a proper Archive Room where we can shelve and store all these fascinating materials in dry, temperature controlled conditions as fits a collection as important as this, and that includes the already catalogued post-1600 archives; plus all the work of the much larger Friends' Archive & Research Group that is working to bring together the great variety of material now scattered in other collections.

THE GARDENS at Markenfield are a great joy to visitors. Our Tenant Farmer Andrew Foster in 2014 generously released either side of the Gatehouse for ten years from his farm lease; they were stripped and totally re-planned and re-planted by Head Gardener Giles Gilbey and Lady Deirdre and are already bursting with flowers and new life.

Andrew is immensely energetic - running not only the farm, but his own highly successful business, UK Site Painters, and has no time to spare, so he has now released the gardens between the Farmhouse Wing and the moat in a similar arrangement. Complete stripping has commenced. Giles will now have control of all the gardens around the entire moat.



THE CHAPEL is, of course, an ancient Catholic one, at which Anglicans also worship by Catholic invitation. In practice, they alternate. The Schedule of Services between now and the end of the year is included in this mailing. The Catholics have recently given the Anglicans two half-crates of wine via Sir Paul Kennedy to help the small gatherings which often seem to assemble at the end of the Services, and now the Anglicans have started to reciprocate. Long may this enological ecumenism continue.

THE NIDDERDALE AONB drystone wallers have been working on the reconstruction of the Eastern section of the mediaeval Park Pale nearly every Wednesday since 11th January. Under the watchful eye of Historic England (formerly English Heritage) they are doing a magnificent job on this Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Before (right)
During (below left) and After (below right)



This is not only part and parcel of the slow restoration of the House and Estate, which began in 1980, but a step closer to inviting Nidderdale to extend its boundary of its AONB to include us. This would in no way affect our complete independence but would mean that if there was a threat - more overhead cables across our landscape, or some building wildly unsuitable planned to ruin the magnificent, uninterrupted landscape view to the East, towards York - then we would be in a better position to oppose it than trying to stand alone.

Let us hope none of these things happens. At present we lie on the edge of the AONB and geographically and environmentally are part of it; it would be not only simple but natural to include us in it.

OUR CONGRATULATIONS go to PhysioNet who are being given The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2017, for their splendid work providing essential equipment for the disabled in war-torn countries. It is to raise funds for them that *Christmas at Markenfield* will be held in the Great Hall on 7th December, taken by Canon Keith Punshon, with the Willow Consort of Singers and readers Ian Curteis and Dr David Shephard. Tickets on sale from 1st November.