



The Friends of Markenfield

(Parish, Park and Hall) Limited Issue 15. Spring 2018

Message from the Chairman

Our 10th AGM is on 13th April and we hope to see many of you there. However, as there is only limited space in the Great Hall, we do ask you to book your (free) place.

We are fortunate that Lord Norwich has agreed to speak to us again. He is such an entertaining speaker and his books are well worth reading. His new book - *France: from Gaul to de Gaulle* - comes out a week before the AGM, so good timing, and The Little Ripon Bookshop will be on hand with a supply so you can obtain your signed copy.

We have invested in new software for the Hall's website so that tickets can now be purchased online using your credit or debit card, saving having to post a cheque. This should be much easier, but we would be interested in your feedback - you can reserve your AGM place this way.

In the last issue we mentioned the plan to purchase display cases, and have now done so. These will be used for the Caroline Norton exhibition planned to coincide with the Hall's opening this year. They have been made by Woodgate Furniture, a firm based on the Estate, and they will form the basis for future exhibitions.

Next year is the 450th anniversary of the Rising of the North in which Thomas Markenfield and his uncle, Richard Norton (whose two portraits hang in the Chapel) were both involved. The Rising failed and both Thomas and Richard fled abroad. Markenfield was confiscated and its history for the next 200 years has only recently been revealed.



The oak display cases awaiting their conservation-grade linings

Fletcher Norton, who purchased the Estate in 1761, was a direct descendent of Sir Richard. The Rising has been so significant in the life of the Estate that we want to do something to mark it. One irony is that maybe that disaster actually meant that the Hall has been preserved today, barely changed from 1569.

At the last AGM, a booklet on *The Grantley Window in Ripon Cathedral* (Aspect No.4) was launched (price £6 from the Hall or from the Cathedral gift shop). It has recently been reviewed favourably in *The Heraldry Gazette*. Since then, a further Aspect (No.7) *Forgotten Shrines & the Rising of the North*, has been published (price £5). This account by the Benedictine monk and scholar Bede Camm, first published in 1910, includes his own photographs of the Hall as it looked over 100 years ago.

In preparation and expected to be ready for sale at the forthcoming AGM, *Sir Thomas Markenfield & Richard III* (Aspect No.8) is based on a talk given at Markenfield last summer by Professor A J Pollard, Emeritus Professor of History at Teesside University. Work is also in hand to prepare a *new and unexpurgated* edition of the 6th Lord Grantley's autobiography, *The Silver Spoon*, first published in 1954.

A short Addendum to *The Grantley Window*, reporting the latest research, will be published soon, and copies will be available, free of charge to anyone who bought the original booklet, so please let us know if you bought that, so we can send you a copy.



“Mr. Merkynefeld owes this book”

Eleanor Hart, who joined the Group after she introduced herself on one of the Hall's Open afternoons as someone who was related to the Markenfield family, has been making some truly amazing discoveries over the last 12 months. She takes up the story:

The other day, quite by chance, I came across a reference to a Mr Markenfield having owned a Bestiary said to have come from Fountains Abbey. The manuscript was described in a 1956 Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, Manchester, and at this time was in the private collection of Sir Sydney Cockerell - one-time director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Cockerell, who died in 1960, counted John Ruskin, William Morris, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Burne-Jones as friends; and some of the most spectacular acquisitions he made for the museum include William Morris' Kelmscott Press books and a superb collection of medieval illuminated manuscripts.

The trail went cold at that point, so I took a gamble that the manuscript might be known as the Fountains Abbey Bestiary - lo and behold, the name was correct and I discovered that the manuscript is now in the Morgan Library and Museum, Madison Avenue, New York.

The back page bears the inscription “Mr. Merkynefeld owes [sic] this book”.

This could be Thomas IV or Thomas V, depending on when the manuscript came into the family. The Morgan Library and Museum have traced the provenance of the manuscript, and state that it was “probably executed at Fountains Abbey”. They also confirm that it was owned by Mr. Merkynefeld in the 16th century, and then passed into the Ingleby family - they think by marriage when Thomas V married Isabella Ingleby; but it is more likely that it passed to the Inglebys following the Rising of the North. It was sold by the Ingilby family at auction in 1920, when it was bought by Sir Sydney Cockerell.



A glance through the pages brings mediaeval life and beliefs vividly to life: the Bestiary, or Book of Beasts, is part religious text and part description of the world as it was known.

This page depicts an elephant standing in front of a Gatehouse - as Fountains Abbey never had a



Gatehouse, it is tempting to think that perhaps

Markenfield provided the inspiration - although maybe not for the elephant... Research into this peculiar, enigmatic and puzzling book is ongoing. If you would like any further information on the work of The Archive & Research Group, or you would be interested in joining, do please contact the Hall at info@markenfield.com on 01765 692303.