



The Markenfield Irregular

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THE THIRD LORD GRANTLEY was very proud of having fought at the Battle of Waterloo when he was just 17 years of age. He was wounded, although no record of exactly what happened has yet been found. In his full-length portrait hanging over the stairs in the Great Hall, painted by Sir William Beechey, his Waterloo medal is prominent on his uniform. It is also equally proudly worn in a half-length portrait of him, now in London, also by Beechey who was his father in law.



The actual medal used to be at Markenfield, but was lost - presumed stolen - many years ago. Now it has surfaced again (in a cardboard box marked "medals") and will be put on display as soon as a secure method of showing it has been devised. It shows the date of the battle and the image of the Prince Regent, and round the rim it reads:



ENSIGN FLETCHER NORTON 2nd BATT GRENADIER GUARDS

At the same time, the missing Military Cross awarded to 7th Lord Grantley for his courage and leadership at the Battle of Anzio in Italy in 1944 when he was just 20, has also turned up. It is hoped that it will soon hang over his memorial stone in the Chapel. The citation, describing his bravery, was published in full in Irregular 37. Here is an extract.



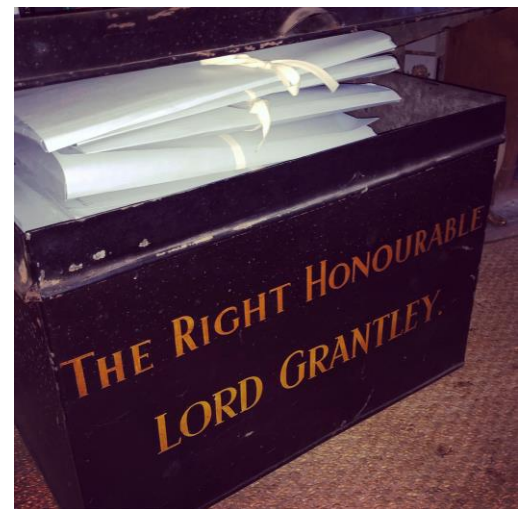
His coolness and bearing have throughout inspired the utmost confidence of the troops under his command, and he has set an extremely high standard of junior leadership. I recommend that his constant courage, determination and efficiency be recognised by the award of a Military Cross.



FOR THE FIRST TIME, Markenfield opened its gardens for the National Garden Scheme on 14 June. This nationwide movement gives visitors unique access to over 3,500 exceptional private gardens in England and Wales for their enjoyment, and raises impressive amounts of money for nursing and health charities such as Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie and other similar causes. The house itself was also open and teas available. 135 people came - many had never seen the house before - and £960 raised for the scheme, with the help of our volunteer stewards. It was so popular, albeit hard work for all concerned, it may become an annual event.



THE ARCHIVES continue to expand. Recently, Markenfield was given a large tin box by the solicitors Hutchinson & Buchanan of Ripon, covering the affairs of the 5th Lord Grantley from 1880 onwards. Janet Senior and Dr Maryon Dougil are busy sorting and



cataloguing this large collection, and discovering some gems... such as the fact that Brimham Rocks was once owned by the Grantley family, and that there was a (mercifully failed) attempt to sell off Markenfield after the War.



PTOLEMY DEAN, the 19th Surveyor to the Fabric of Westminster Abbey, visited Markenfield recently. His predecessors include Sir Christopher Wren, Nicholas Hawksmoor, James Wyatt and Gilbert Scott; and he is a distinguished architect himself, so a great tradition came with him.

He was bowled over by the Hall, which he had never seen before, and kept noticing angles and views which no one had previously commented on. As a compliment to Markenfield, he drew

the Gatehouse and South side of the Courtyard from the North - an original viewpoint as other people invariably draw the opposite view - working quickly on site and later working it up in the studio. This miniature reproduction doesn't begin to do it justice but gives something of the *feel* of the picture - firm and strong with an edge of *rustico* as befits a farm just outside...

ONE OCCURRENCE THAT WAS NOT SO WELCOME happened on the second Monday of our June Open Days. Sarah had, as usual, come across to the Hall at 1:00pm to light the fire, switch on the lights, and generally prepare for the arrival of the public. She went back to the Gatehouse at 1:45pm leaving everything as it should be. Just then the heavens opened. There was one small rumble of thunder, and a deluge of rain unlike any we had seen before. The gutters on the farm buildings turned into fountains and the moat was quite literally foaming.

During a brief respite Sarah ran across the Courtyard and into the house - to find a scene of devastation in the Undercroft, with water cascading through the ceiling. Shouting for Rob, our Handyman, she ran upstairs to find one of our Volunteers soaked to the skin and trying to save books from a similar fate. Looking up it was clear where the water was coming from: the internal gutter that runs across the Great Hall had also become a fountain and water was pouring out over the top of the north end of it.

Rob quickly made his way onto the roof and could be heard shouting "it's not blocked". He later reported that the standing water in the lead gullies was nearly ankle deep. The sheer amount of water that came off the roof in the space of those 20 minutes simply overwhelmed the C18th system and water took the path of least resistance - straight down into the Great Hall.



Eventually the rain stopped, and the water stopped flowing. Our Volunteers worked tirelessly for an hour to help save what we could - which turned out, thankfully, to be most things. The postcard table downstairs took the full force, but postcards are easily replaceable. Upstairs in the Great Hall the two Charters to the right of the fireplace had been hastily unscrewed from the wall whilst the water was still pouring. The books in the bookcase underneath were transported along a human chain to safety. The large Turkish carpet and the sofas were saturated, and the water had flowed under the library table so soaking large amounts of the seagrass flooring.

We had dehumidifiers and heaters in the Undercroft within an hour, and once we had got the electricity back on we could start to assess the damage. Our Electrician Alec Ward was marvellous - he arrived later that afternoon and took a hairdryer to the Great Hall's fuse box, before drying out the floor sockets. The only thing he could not dry was the chandelier in the Dogs' Entrance, which had apparently also turned into a fountain at one point. Books were propped open to dry, cushions were placed in baths to drip and we were starting to consider ourselves quite fortunate - it could have been so much worse.



Thankfully - with the aid of some judiciously-placed chairs, and a few signs - the Hall was able to reopen the following day. The public found it fascinating and were extremely sympathetic to the circumstances we found ourselves in. The heaters stayed for four days and the dehumidifiers drew out spectacular amounts of water. The Insurers took a few days to arrive en-mass, but their assessment was that we had been fortunate. It was not until the Conservators arrived a fortnight later that the problems started.



The list of items identified as in need of restoration was extensive - rugs, Charters, portraits, furniture, books - all were to be taken away, assessed and restored. They also carried out a moisture survey, and identified residual moisture (to saturation point) in the oak beam of the Dogs' Entrance ceiling. The beam is clad in lime plaster and countless layers of lime-wash, and so not accessible from the underside. The only way in was down. And so, with the help of our Architect, we started to lift the floorboards in front of the fireplace in the Great Hall. Thankfully many of these had been lifted (and indeed several replaced) during the re-building of the fireplace in 2004, so we were not dealing with the historic fabric of the building. There was a certain amount of debris under the floorboards that was resting on top of the ceiling of the Undercroft and Dogs' Entrance ceilings below. This was holding moisture, but the beams that ran from east to west were reading as saturated.

It was agreed that no further heat should be introduced to the room, and that the best course of action was to allow the area to dry naturally through ventilation. And so this summer will be spent playing musical-floorboards: up for ventilation, down for a wedding, up for ventilation, down for a lecture, up for ventilation, down for the Ripon International Festival. Fire on and windows open. This will happen until mid September when the Hall quiets down and floorboards can remain up until the area has dried fully.



We are intending to leave the floorboards up during guided tours, and will be providing extra interpretation regarding the work taking place - we hope that they will find it as interesting, and be as sympathetic, as our visitors did during the Open Days. We will soon find out as we have three tours this week, four the following week, and five the week after that - plus a wedding, a lecture, and then another wedding. Up for ventilation, down for...