

Society Outing

Tour of Waddesdon Manor 24th September 2016

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It was rather disappointing that only 19 people booked for this most interesting trip.

I shall do my best to briefly set the scene as to what was missed as Sheila Cope has contributed a wonderful article on the extensive gardens at Waddesdon.

With a three-hour journey to Buckinghamshire we were away from Dover by 0715. Rather poor signage for the coach access route to the Manor but once found gave us a most majestic drive through acres of most well-tended parkland. Note when you arrive by car this experience is missed.

Waddesdon is the creation by Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839 -1898) when he purchased the farmland from the Duke of Marlborough in 1874. Ferdinand, being the son of Anselm who had taken over the Viennese bank in 1849, was born in Paris and raised in Frankfurt and Vienna.

I have looked at many articles on Waddesdon and the grandeur of the French architecture in the "English shires" is a sight to behold and has always intrigued me. The following is an extract from a guest to Waddesdon, possibly following a house party in the 1880's, that I feel perfectly sums up Waddesdon. "Waddesdon is a marvellous creation – not an old mansion taken over with its gardens, park, and stabling – but a vast chateau built by its present owner, surrounded by endless gardens planted by him and towering over a big park

reclaimed from agricultural meadows by our host. However, I failed to gather that his priceless treasures gave him true pleasure. His clock for which he gave £25,000, his escritoire for which £30,000 was paid, his statuary, his china, and his superb collection of jewels, enamels and so forth – gimcracks he calls them – all these things give him meagre satisfaction. I felt that the only pleasure he derives from them is gained from showing them to his friends".

With such a collection, it is difficult to do justice within a brief article but to say it is "priceless" and contains the opulence associated with any French Châteaux is an understatement.

At the time of our visit an interesting exhibition of work by Kate Malone was on show within the Coach House gallery. Some small ceramic items were on sale but sadly a little too pricey for me.

Late afternoon we had a private tour of the wine cellars including tasting two Rothschild wines. A fine "2014 Rupert & Rothschild Baroness Nadine" Chardonnay from the Western Cape. Our second taste being "Caro 2012" a beautiful red wine (75% Malbec and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon matured in French oak barrels for 18 months). Of interest is the Rothschild family have recently invested in planting a vineyard in China.

After this we returned home with more stories that may be told in the future.