



PORTRAITS OF THE PAST

A People's History
of Gawthorpe Hall



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Introduction



ORTRAITS OF THE PAST took place between summer 2013 and spring 2014.

It explored the long story of *Gawthorpe Hall* through oral history, photography and the creative arts. The project was funded by a generous grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Your Heritage programme and was initiated and managed by *Mid Pennine Arts*.

Almost 850 people have taken part in the project, through an extended series of events and activities. Throughout, we asked local residents to help us create a new photographic collection about Gawthorpe Hall. Contributors have posted their own photos, old and new, from their own family albums or that they had taken on visits.



The resulting online archive contains a multitude of images ranging from celebration events to simply capturing a walk through the grounds. Along the way, we rediscovered the important part this special place played in our own history at Mid Pennine Arts. With the help of the *North West Sound Archive*, we also recorded the stories, memories and recollections of participants to create a new oral history archive.

This book, **PORTRAITS OF THE PAST: A People's History of Gawthorpe**, contains images from the online archive and snippets of transcripts from the recordings. This is just a small selection, but we hope it gives a sense of the affection for the Hall, and the family who lived there, on the part of the local community. We have left some space for you to add in your own recollections.

The full oral archive is stored with North West Sound Archive and the image archive will be online for the foreseeable future. We hope you will enjoy exploring those. And we hope this small volume will inspire you to delve a little deeper into the past or the present of this wonderful place.

NICK HUNT

Creative Director
Mid Pennine Arts

About Gawthorpe Hall and the Project

During 2013, Gawthorpe Hall hosted artist *Catherine Bertola's* commission for MPA's *Contemporary Heritage* series, entitled *Flicker*. *Flicker* was inspired by Catherine's first visit to the Hall, when she discovered a family photograph album from the early 20th Century. She was struck by the difference between the rooms as they currently appear and the photographic images. From this the idea developed to try and recreate a sense of how the spaces in the Hall may have looked at different moments in time.

Flicker evolved into a means of peering into the living past of this erstwhile family home. Camera obscura devices were installed in three key rooms around the house. Each contained a digital slideshow of scenes from that room's past. The scenes had been re-enacted for photographing by an army of costumed volunteers. Over 24,000 people experienced this new view of a much loved location.

Flicker inspired *Portraits of the Past*. With this project, we wanted to capture what the Hall means to the people who live around it. We wanted to encourage local people to engage with its magnificent collections, and to explore the fascinating stories of the people who lived in, worked at and used the Hall and its grounds.

Gawthorpe Hall is a National Trust property managed by Lancashire County Council. Home to the Shuttleworths for over 300 years, it now houses the nationally important *Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth* textile collection, including stunning examples of needlework and costume, alongside one of the biggest loans of paintings to NW England from the National Portrait Gallery.

We used the stories of the Shuttleworths at Gawthorpe to encourage local people to share their own stories about the Hall - how they and their family relate to and use this important local resource. We used creativity as a tool to stimulate learning, sharing and a stronger sense of ownership.

Almost 850 people have taken part in the project, which has included family activity days; coffee mornings for reminiscence sessions; discussion events with heritage experts; school sessions both exploring the Hall and responding creatively back at school; and a family history day, with the group examining the history of the Shuttleworths as inspiration for tracing their own ancestors.

To explore the images in the online archive, to make contact with the NW Sound Archive, or for more information about Gawthorpe Hall and Portraits of the Past:



www.portraitsofthepast.org.uk
www.midpenninearts.org.uk
<http://new.lancashire.gov.uk/museums>
www.nwsoundarchive.co.uk

A

friend of mine, his grandfather used to poach on the estate and he was caught poaching by the landowner at the time. I don't know who that was.

He said that the owner said to him

*"This is my land,
you're trespassing."*

My friend's grandfather said *"How did you get this land?"* The landowner said, *"Well my family fought for it."*

He said, *"Right you are then, I'll fight you for it."*

CHRISTINE ELDER



I live now just within 100 yards of Gawthorpe Hall, but I used to live in Barnoldswick.

My first memories of Gawthorpe Hall are coming here for a course, for a diploma in industrial management. I'd never been to the hall before, it was dark at night and I walked around the front of the hall looking for the entrance. There was a security trip wire there, which tripped me up very, very well.

So my first memories of Gawthorpe Hall are falling flat on my face and having a very painful evening.

PAUL NUTTER



I remember coming to Gawthorpe in the early '70s for a jazz concert one evening.

I think it was an Easter concert and it was specifically written for Easter and it was *Maurice Jarre*. I remember it because I'd never been in Gawthorpe Hall and I don't think I've ever been here since actually.

I've been in the grounds a lot, I've walked in the grounds a lot but I've never been in the hall itself. It was an evening performance and I remember it being very dark and very atmospheric and just a wonderful evening.

ANGELA HUGHES





came to Burnley as a young teacher,
fresh from university in 1969.

My first post was at Burnley Grammar School,
which is basically just across the road from
here. I used to bring A Level students down
to the hall for drama workshops, Shakespeare
workshops and in particular to this room that
we're in now, the dining room.

At that time the room
was unfurnished and
what's interesting
about it for a teacher
is that the dimensions
are very similar to an
Elizabethan stage.



So if you stand with your back to the windows
and you have the balcony, which would be at the back in
an Elizabethan stage, you have two entrances which were
typical of the Elizabethan stage, and then you had a floor
area which was clear. You could get some feel of what it
must have been like to work within those dimensions
for Shakespeare artists. So the students used to love the
experience of coming here. They'd get a real sense of history
and of occasion.

DAVID SMITH



live at Hargrove Farm, opposite Gawthorpe Hall.

In November I've been there 60 years.
I remember going to Gawthorpe and they were
asking everybody where they'd come from.

I said *"I'm your
neighbour,
I've come to
borrow a cup
of sugar."*

She said *"Where are
you from?"*

I just pointed out of the window.
That was funny.

GEOFFREY
HERD





T

he memory I have is when
Princess Margaret came to Gawthorpe for the
75th anniversary of the girl guides.

We had to line up all down the lane
and I was one of the flag bearers and
she came past in the big black car and
went up to the hall for reception.

CAROL HIGSON

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I

have very, very happy memories
of Gawthorpe Hall in childhood.

We went through the faith school which was St
Matthew's and it's very close to Gawthorpe Hall and
the Shuttleworth family were patrons of the school.

So in childhood we used to go down from time to time,
they used to treat us to coffee and buns and we used to
have to sing a few songs for them.

BOB CLARK



once had a near miss with an old oak tree down by the river.

One summer we were out walking and I heard a *crack* and I thought it was some of the kids nearby with an air weapon, then I heard another crack and a very large branch fell off, just missing us. We actually had to run as it was breaking up. They chopped it down completely shortly afterwards.

We come down in the summer and have a picnic on the picnic benches and stuff, and then in winter come down to build snowmen and have snowball fights. We've been doing that since we were kids.

In 1960, the old Burnley Grammar School in the town moved to Byron Street, just off Padiham Road, half a mile, maybe a mile away from Gawthorpe. I lived in Burnley then and I used to spend my lunch hour sometimes in school sometimes wandering about. In the summer on a few occasions we ventured down towards Gawthorpe Hall and just nearby there's a pond, but we called it a lake. We used to go down there and have a woodbine by the lake and a packet of crisps for lunch. The woodbine cost 2d. I would have a splash sometimes and one occasion we got a bit silly and we didn't go back to school because we all got wet.

ANON

I used to work at Martins Bank. It was Martins before it was Barclays. *Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth* was a customer at the bank. I left to have a baby, but when you left banking in those days you couldn't go back, men could, of course, but not women. Anyway after I'd had her a bit my mum said she'd have her in the afternoons.

I worked at Gawthorpe Hall three afternoons a week for the Gawthorpe Foundation for about three years from 1957. *Lady Kay-Shuttleworth* would make tea every afternoon and she'd ring her little bell on the stairs and,

"Mary, tea time,"

and whatever I was doing I had to stop and go and have tea. Little sandwiches and cake and sometimes she'd keep you talking you see, telling you all about her mum and dad.

It was lovely, it was really lovely and I should have made a lot more of it, but I was young with a child and you want to get home, don't you? You know your husband will want his tea and my mum would want me to take the baby home. But it was a lovely time and I really enjoyed it.



MARY HARTLEY

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I remember as a kid I went down to Gawthorpe with a couple of my brothers after autographs from Burnley players.

We had just started walking down the private road towards Gawthorpe Hall when this great big car pulled up alongside us, it was like a shed on wheels. The old lady driving it asked us what we were doing, and when we told her she gave us a lift down the lane.

We later realised she was *Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth*, the last occupant of the hall before it passed to the National Trust.

TERRY HODGSON



We used to go to Gawthorpe Hall with Girl Guides during the war. We volunteered, no we got our arms twisted to volunteer.



We had to pretend to be drowned and they had to practice saving us. I got this big woman who nearly crushed me.

Then *Rachel Kay-Shuttleworth* took us home in her car, and all I could think was

'I wish someone could see me'.

KATHLEEN KEENE

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liked the long room where they had the felted wallpaper. They used it for cricket. I reckon I would have got in trouble for that. You could smash things. In the past they might knock something over and you would just apologise and it would be ok, but now if someone did it you might be in trouble and it would cost you thousands of pounds.

The things in Gawthorpe are precious to everyone. We don't really see stuff like that, and people like things that we don't normally see. Like a posh chair, we'd never have one of those in our houses. It's not just precious to the family who lived there.

It's a good thing for Padiham, lots of people know where it is and it brings people to Padiham.

I'd tell people about the spiral stairs, because you could see in the middle where it had been worn, from them walking up and down every day with the coal scuttles and water tubs for the baths. There was no hand rail either. I could imagine someone with a bowl full of water, heaving it up every step.

I'd tell people about the furniture, how rare it is and how you don't normally see things like that. I'd tell them about the pottery and the paintings. How much work has gone into it, the details, and every little pattern and how smart they are.

It's a nice place, you don't feel lost in it. Some big houses you go in and you feel lost, you don't know where you are going, but Gawthorpe Hall is not too big and not too small.

We had to set the table and people had a certain place to sit. We go to the table and sit wherever we want to now, but then they had to sit in their own place. There were a lot of rules. They had a lot more rules then than we have now.







was working on the bit of the grass at the end of the courtyard with my friends from the Probation Service and nipped to the office to do something, came out again and one of the men said *“Martin, what are these stones here?”*

I said *“I don’t know, but that looks like a stone pitched pathway and fairly big.”*

We’ve no evidence of Roman remains here but what we saw had the slight look of a Roman road paving, so I said *“Don’t touch it”,* and I got hold of the Trust’s regional archaeologist. He came down the following day and he couldn’t make head or tail of it, but decided we should investigate it, which we did. We got Oxford Archaeology in to do a dig and investigation and they couldn’t decide what it was either.

MARTIN HOLTBY

The explanation came to light some years later when a visitor was talking to my successor, the present Estate Warden.

He’d been working here in the early 1980s when the Manpower Services scheme employed quite a lot of young people here and this visitor had been a supervisor, and on a couple of days when they’d had nothing else for the lads to do they got them, just for practice, to make a stone pitch causeway. This had been buried and so it turns out it wasn’t Roman at all, it was from the 1980s!



I once came as a student to an art weekend, before the hall was refurbished in the 1980s, when Nelson & Colne College used the house for its art classes and embroidery classes.

The whole of the house was used and I remember coming with my paints and my canvas and we sat in the dining room and sketched. There was no furniture in the dining room at all, only the piano, so where the table is now was empty and we sat on the floor and ate our picnic lunches in there.

We'd all brought small bottles of wine, so in the afternoon we went up into the woods and, well, it flowed more after lunch did the art!



W

hen *Eddie Stinchon* was custodian here he lived in one of the cottages, so he did a lot of patrolling at night.



He tells a lovely story about coming down one morning with the dogs, just as it was coming light, and in front of the door was this man on a horse in full roundhead armour!

He was knocking on the door and calling on *Sir Richard Shuttleworth* to come and bring his army to fight at the battle of Whalley. Apparently this man was a bus driver from Bolton and each year he did his own reconstruction of this battle.

He'd come on his horse, which he called *Oliver*, and he came every year at the same time and knocked on the door for Lord Shuttleworth to bring his troops out. Then he used to go down the drive shouting "*stand aside the army are coming through*".

Eddie said he couldn't believe it when he saw this man in full armour but he came for a good few years and people used to see him riding round the lanes as well.

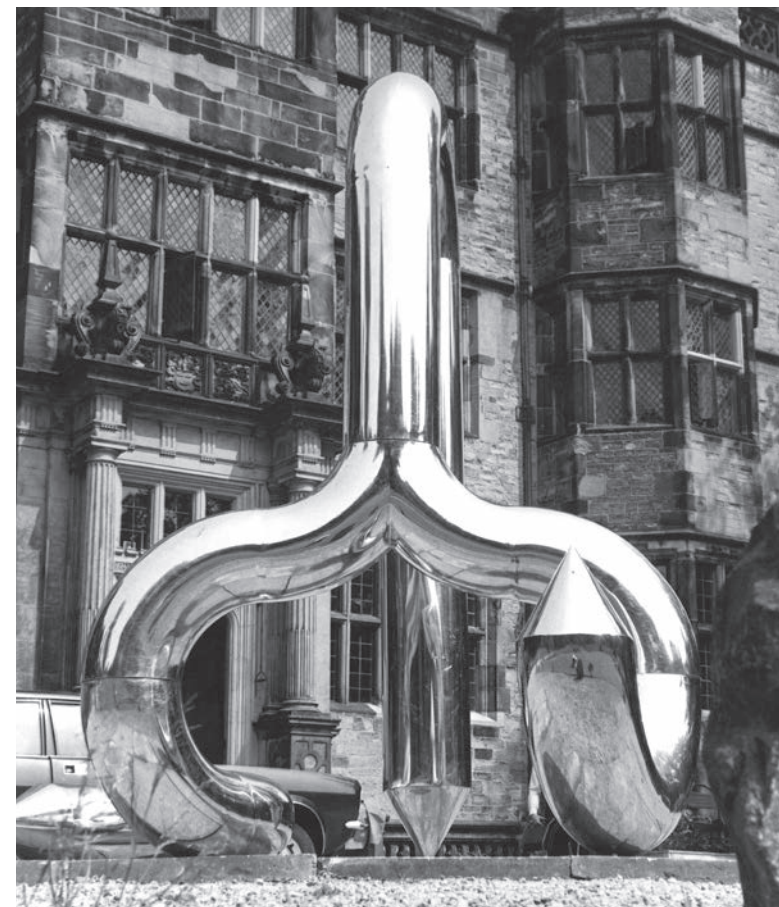
It must be 10 years since we've seen him though, so he must have got too old to fight!

I came to work in Lancashire in 1970, as the second Director of the Mid Pennine Arts Association. Resident artists were established at Nelson College, and the College took on the management of Gawthorpe Hall as a resource for the College and a wider public. The Barn became a museum, a lecture room, a venue, while the ground floor rooms housed our displays, poetry readings, recitals, and weekend music schools for young people. To mark the change for both Hall and College, a Royal visit was planned.

How to enhance the new, more public role of the Hall? An outdoor exhibition of contemporary sculpture was the choice.

Our aim was to surprise a little, and to delight.

The shiny steel sculpture of William Pye was a highlight. His sinuous piece was collected from Sheffield, and installed to reflect (and reverse) the historic front of the Hall. Across the lawns spread exotic, sculptural flowers and fungi, and as a contrast, a stark enclosure made of timber, a stockade that proved popular with children hiding, and with dads longing for the corral.



Up at the end of the avenue, the mysterious Memorial to the First Astronaut, by Welfare State, a circle of tall outward facing charred poles, within which a white surface cradled the figure of a man, silver-coated, whose limbs hosted mosses, plants and flowers. A powerful statement of man's failed ambition to conquer, a reminder of humanity. It was too much for the College Principal, who did not escort the Important Visitor to see it, and later required its premature removal. The memory remains, as powerful as the first day I saw it.

JENNIFER WILSON

Your Memories

Add your own stories or pictures of *Gawthorpe Hall*

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