**Report on Heritage Visit to Hall Barn: 20 September 2017**

Wednesday 20 September saw 25 members of the Society visit the Hall Barn estate home of the Lawson family since 1881. We were hosted by The Hon. Jenefer Farncombe daughter of the late 5th Lord Burnham and the current resident of the Hall Barn Manor House. Having been greeted by our host we assembled in the main entrance hall where numerous paintings were on display, two of which showed two water colour landscapes of Hall Barn which were painted from the same viewpoint but in reverse.

Moving on we entered the staircase hall where a selection of pictures depicting the Scots Guards lined the stairway. On one wall was an elegant painting of Jenefer’s grandmother. We next moved to the library where it was noted that many of the books dealt with Africa, some being signed by Stanley the explorer. A large Persian carpet covered virtually the whole floorspace upon which stood a stool with needlework views of the house and other parts of the estate; this had been worked by our host’s mother and drew some nice remarks from several of the ladies in the party.

From there we moved into the dining room where the dining table, when extended, could accommodate 22 diners, it contained eight extensions which when fully extended would reach onto the terrace outside. Our visit then took us through a short passageway where a delightful figure of a boy and his dog filled one of the alcoves lining the inner wall. It was made of copper and covered in silver plate. We were told that care is taken when cleaning the figures that the silver plated is not worn away by excessive polishing. A cabinet containing awards and decorations presented to members of the family occupied another alcove.

We then entered the largest room in the house which can best be described as the Banqueting Hall. Many paintings graced the walls and above the fireplace was hung a painting of Hugh Lawson the 5th Lord Burnham. Mrs Farncombe had arranged several publications covering the many aspects of the estate. This room had previously been the stables of Hall Barn which was evidenced by the height of the doorway which had since been converted to a window looking out upon the forecourt of the house.

A delightful tea with a selection of cakes was taken after which some of our party enjoyed a short tour of the gardens which rounded off an excellent visit.

John Burton