



THE HISTORY OF BEAUMANOR HALL AND PARK

A Guide for Visitors



Contents

Victorian Beaumanor

- The Present House
- The Rooms
- The Previous Houses
- The Herrick Family
- The Servants
- The Fashions of the Time
- Contemporary events
- Newspaper reports

Beaumanor 1901 - 1941

Wartime Beaumanor

- The W.O.Y.G. service
- The Early History
- The Site
- Life at Beaumanor
- Enigma
- After the War

Present day Beaumanor

- The site
- The activities

Victorian Beaumanor

THE PRESENT HOUSE

The present Beaumanor is at least the third house in the same spot. The style is called neo-Jacobean and it is a copy of the eventual shape of the first house. Jacobean means the style around the time of King James (17th Century).

It is mostly built of local brick, with some of the facings made of Portland stone. The original concourse floor was marble and granite - not carpeted as it is now.

The main house was started in 1842 and finished in 1848. Drainpipes at the front are marked 1843 while those at the back, around the courtyard, are marked 1854.

It was designed by William Railton, a church architect. He also designed Woodhouse Eaves and Copt Oak churches and Nelson's Column in Trafalgar Square (but not the lions which were designed by Edward Landseer).

The new house was expected to cost around £10,000, but it eventually cost £37,000; due not to inflation but to extensions.

When the house was built, mains electricity had not been invented, though battery electricity had been discovered. There was no piped water anywhere; consequently, people did not have flush toilets (water closets) - they used earth closets.

During his ownership of Beaumanor, William Perry Herrick acquired much land and, by the time he died, he owned more than 6,000 acres, stretching from Whitwick to Quorn. Everything visible from the house belonged to it (including Beacon Hill).

The main aspect is the southerly one and originally there was a magnificent avenue of elm trees but, unfortunately, they all died of 'Dutch Elm disease' and were cut down. A new avenue, of conker trees, was planted, but they will not be impressive for another 100 years or so.

The path to the south of the house leads to a sundial, while the path to the west leads to a fountain, presumably run by artesian water as there were no pipes and no hill in the immediate area for a gravity feed.



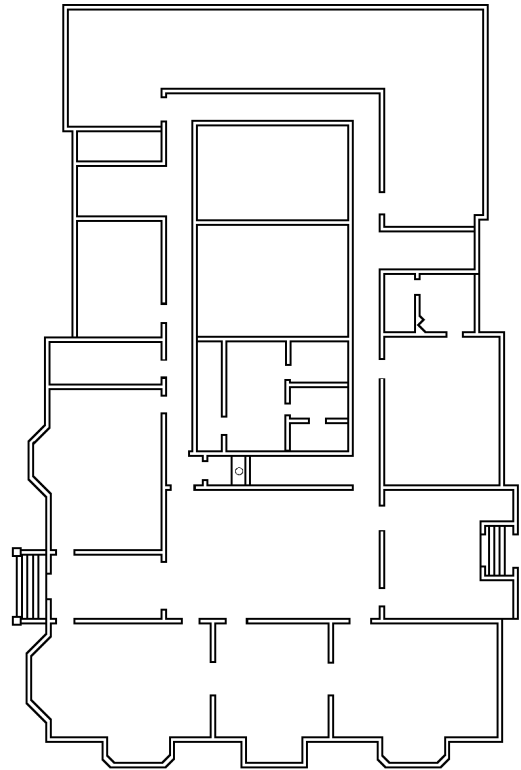
THE ROOMS

The Library (now room 1). The bookshelves are original.

The Morning room (now room 2). It would be sunny in here in the late mornings. Miss or Mrs. Herrick would give the servants their daily orders in this room.

The Drawing room (now room 3). Originally the withdrawing room, the ladies would meet in here after dinner for hot chocolate and a gossip. Unlike the other two rooms, the ceiling is plain, with none of the ornate plasterwork. This is not deliberate. During W.W.2, the room above was the hub of the entire administrative operation. Constant foot traffic caused the ceiling to collapse and it was replaced with a plain ceiling.

The Dining Room (still the same). It still has the ring bolt for the chandelier chain. The gentlemen would stay here for port and gossip, before joining the ladies. Behind the dining room is the servery - originally the billiard room.



The Butler's Room is now the male toilet.

Mr. Herrick's Study is now the bar and the room behind was the strong room for records.

Mr. Herrick's bedroom and dressing room are now the general office.

Miss or Mrs. Herrick's bedroom and dressing room are in the next corner. Did they ever get together?

The 'PH's' on the ceiling must have been added later as William wasn't PH to start with.

THE PREVIOUS HOUSES

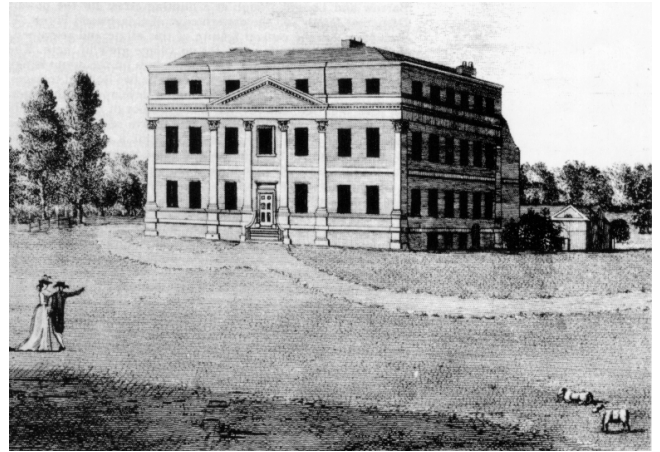
William Herrick (I) bought a house at Beaumanor in 1595, but it was already being described as ancient. It would have been a Medieval manor house, complete with stables, barns and moat and was in more or less the same place as the modern house.

It was extensively redesigned and rebuilt as a Jacobean House in the 17th Century and was finally knocked down in 1726.



By the 18th Century, the hall was becoming harder to maintain and less fashionable. William Herrick (V), who had inherited the estate while still a boy, contracted John Westley to build a new house in 1726.

It was Georgian and classical - plain and well proportioned. There were financial problems during its building and it was probably never completed as exactly planned. It also, was built more or less on the same site as the present day house.



THE HERRICK FAMILY

The Herricks were originally ironmongers in Leicester and it seems to have been a tradition for a Herrick boy in each generation to be called William.

William Herrick (I) 1557 - 1653

Son of John Herrick, he became a goldsmith and was the first Herrick at Beaumanor. His nephew was Robert Herrick, the famous poet, author of such poems as "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may". He also wrote "The Hag" - much more fun and possibly about a Leicestershire witch, 'Black Annis'. William's brother Nicholas (Robert's dad), made his will and tragically died two days later by falling out of a fourth storey window.

William Herrick (II) 1597 - 1671

Son of William Herrick (I), owned, but never lived at Beaumanor, preferring to live in his other house in London.

William Herrick (III) 1624 - 1693

Son of William Herrick (II), he ran the estate into serious debt and soon transferred the property into his son's name in return for having his debts paid.

William Herrick (IV) 1650 - 1705

Son of William Herrick (III), he struggled all his life to keep the Beaumanor estate afloat, pay off his father's debts and raise his family.

William Herrick (V) 1689 - 1773

Son of William Herrick (IV), he inherited Beaumanor when he was 16. He was the originator of the Beaumanor chair (now in Charnwood museum) and the Beaumanor coach (now in Belgrave Hall). He paid for the second house at Beaumanor and is the first Herrick to be buried in the Herrick Tomb at Woodhouse Church.

William Herrick (VI) 1745 - 1832

Son of William Herrick (V), he had no male heirs, so upon his death, Beaumanor passed to his brother's son.

William Herrick (VII) 1794 - 1876

Nephew of William Herrick (VI), he inherited the second Beaumanor house in 1832. He was born in 1794 and lived near Wolverhampton till he was 38. He only inherited the Beaumanor estates because his uncle, William Herrick (VI), had two daughters but no sons. The law in pre-Victorian times was such that women, upon marrying, lost all of their money and property to their husbands. (The "Married Women's Property Act" was passed in 1882.)

He moved to Beaumanor in 1832, but obviously didn't like the house because he immediately started planning to build a new house on the same site. The old house was demolished and the new house started in 1842. He eventually moved into the new house in 1848, along with his sister Mary Ann. At the time, they were both unmarried, and lived a very quiet life with a small staff of servants.

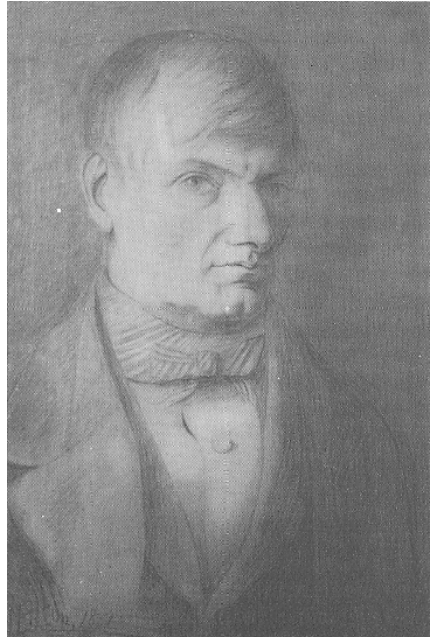
He was very proud of his house and his family history and celebrated it in various ways. At the head of the main staircase, he built a magnificent stained glass window showing his family tree. The wood and stone carvings all over the house also show heraldic details from the window.

He bought "King Dick's Bed" and built a whole bedroom, with antechamber, for it. According to legend, this bed was slept in by King Richard III, in the Blue Boar Inn in Leicester, on the night before he died at the Battle of Bosworth.

After a while (1852), his uncle Thomas Perry died. He was a coal mine owner in Wales and very rich. William inherited his fortune but he had to change his name to Perry-Herrick to comply with the will.

In 1862, William, now Perry-Herrick, married Sophia Christie. This was presumably for reasons of succession because he was 68 years old and 37 years older than Sophia. It didn't work, however, for they remained childless.

He eventually died in February 1876 after falling off his horse while out hunting. According to a letter written by his land agent, Henry Humphreys, he managed to return to Beaumanor, where he went into his study (the present day bar). His wife Sophia went to help him sit down but he died almost immediately, in her arms.



William's Sisters

When William moved to Beaumanor, in 1832, he brought his two sisters and his mother as well. One sister, Lucy died almost immediately and his mother died in 1836, but his other sister, Mary-Ann, lived there for 39 years, eventually dying on Christmas day, 1871. She also did lots of good works, including paying for an 'Old Servant's Home', opposite St. Mary's Church in Woodhouse.

William's Wife

Sophia Christie came from Chelsea in London. She was born the same year (1832) that the Herrick family moved to Beaumanor and when they were married in 1862, their combined ages totalled 98. They had no children and she lived on for nearly 40 years after his death, apparently, well liked by all the servants and local villagers. She was strictly teetotal and would not allow any public houses any where under her control. She eventually died in 1915 and the estate passed out of Herrick hands.

THE SERVANTS

In the 1851 census, the first after the house was completed, but before William was married, there were 14 household servants mentioned. This is a small number, possibly because both William and Mary-Ann were getting on in life and lived very quietly, with no hectic social life. In 1861, after William had married Sophia, this number had increased to 22.

However, it is likely that neither census reflects the true number of servants and many more may have lived in the two local villages.

The youngest servant mentioned in the census of 1871 was 13. By and large, girls and young women worked in the cellars, while boys and men would have worked outside. Most of these would not wear a uniform, such things being restricted to the 'above stairs' servants. The cellars would not be like they are today, they would have been warm and dry, due to all the fires.

Servants generally did not get married. The house owner would expect servants to concentrate on their jobs, not think about their spouses or children; consequently, they would be expected to leave if they wanted to get married.

Downstairs servants (no uniform)



The laundry maid washed the clothes.

The linen-room maid ironed and mended the clothes.

The scullery maid did the washing up.

The still room maid made jams, jellies, pickles, etc.

The kitchen maid helped the cook and made the servants' food.

The cook or chef made the food for the family.

Upstairs servants (uniform)

The lady's maid helped the women get dressed up.

The footman opened the doors to visitors, etc.

The butler was in charge of all the other servants.

The housekeeper was in charge of domestic arrangement.

The house maid cleaned the upstairs rooms (without a Hoover).



THE FASHIONS OF THE TIME

Ladies

The crinoline was invented in 1856 - just after the present house was built. While wearing a crinoline, fashionable ladies found it difficult to sit down and walking downstairs would be a nightmare, as would be going outside. They were also very dangerous to women reaching towards mantelpieces above the large open fireplaces common in Victorian times. This became such a serious problem that Punch joked about "Death by crinoline", and suggested that ladies should wear their crinolines on the outside of their skirts as a fireguard. Girls were forced to wear them as well, and servants often tried to copy their mistresses, using cast-offs.



It was also popular to have a very small waist. An 18 inch waist was considered to be the height of fashion, although this was impossible for almost all women without resorting to wearing incredibly tight corsets, not only uncomfortable but positively dangerous to health. Due to the wearing of corsets, it was actually fashionable to faint, and most ladies carried a small bottle of smelling salts around with them to aid in their recovery.



Eventually, crinolines mutated into bustles, which allowed more movement and the ability to take part in lots more physical activity. In 1887, Amelia Bloomer invented trousers for women but became a social outcast. These did allow women to cycle, however, which was the Victorian leisure passion.



Gentlemen

The frock coat was normal for most of William's Beaumanor life. He would have worn a top hat.

CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

In order to put Beaumanor into historical context, here are a few other events that were happening during the life of William Perry Herrick and the present Beaumanor Hall

Date Beaumanor event

1794	William Herrick (VII) born
1807	William starts at Rugby School
1832	William moves to Beaumanor
1842	Work starts on present Hall
1848	Hall completed
1852	William becomes William Perry-Herrick
1862	William marries Sophia Christie
1871	Mary-Ann Herrick dies
1876	William Perry-Herrick dies
1915	Sophia Perry-Herrick dies

Date Other event

1789	French Revolution starts
1815	Battle of Waterloo
1832	First photographs
1837	Victoria becomes Queen
1848	Gold rush to California
1854	Crimean War
1864	American Civil War ends
1871	Trade Unions made legal
1876	Graham-Bell invents telephone
1914	1st World War starts

The Loughborough Advertiser

Thursday February 17th, 1876

DEATH OF W. PERRY-HERRICK, ESQ.

It is with deep regret that we have to record in our columns the announcement of the above named gentleman which occurred on Tuesday afternoon last, at his residence, Beaumanor Park, near Loughborough. It is stated the Mr. Herrick was out in the morning, when he went to the meet of the Quorn Hounds, at Woodhouse. He joined the hunt, and a fox being found hard by - at Bawdon Wood - it gave deceased much pleasure. Mr. Herrick was then to all appearance in good health for a gentleman of his age, he being in his 82nd year. When at Bradgate, it is said, he complained of feeling unwell, and he and his groom (Holland) started for Beaumanor which was duly reached. On arriving at home, Mr. Herrick was assisted to alight from his horse, and on entering the hall he was almost immediately taken worse, and shortly afterwards expired. Medical aid was summoned, but the vital spark had fled, and the public had lost another benefactor whose place it will be difficult to fill.

Mr. Herrick has only survived his sister (the late Miss Herrick) about four years, she having died on Christmas Day, 1871. And death has now cast another heavy cloud of gloom and darkness about Beaumanor, and indeed over the neighbourhood all around. For it is not only at Beaumanor that the loss of Mr. Herrick will be felt; but wherever he was known the tidings of his decease will be received with general lamentation. In him was to be found all that could be looked for in a gentleman of wealth and position; though it is not ours to be able to record the many acts of munificence and liberality to institutions both

public and private, which have been performed by him, nor the many little kindnesses and mercies which have held his name in such popular favour with all classes in our midst. But we are confident we are only giving expression to the general feeling when we say that a deep sense of mournful sadness pervades all classes among us.

The painful intelligence of Mr. Herrick's death reached Loughborough with great rapidity, though it was some time before the public could give credence to the report, so heavily were they stricken with sorrow at the sad tidings; and hopes were anxiously entertained that the worst was not true. But so it proved, and the melancholy event may be said to have put the whole neighbourhood into mourning. The villages of Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, &c, present a remarkable appearance, nearly every house having its blinds drawn down. At Loughborough also the same sign of mourning is before us in almost every direction; and in the market place and other of the principal thoroughfares most of the shops have their shutters partially closed.

Mr. Herrick has (like his inestimable sister) left behind him "an example worthy of a lifelong ambition to imitate, and a manner of dispensing benefactions unstained by narrow considerations of sect or party." He also was largely possessed of that grace without which the meretricious advantages of wealth become unworthy of human ambition.

The Loughborough Advertiser

Thursday February 24th, 1876

FUNERAL OF W. PERRY-HERRICK, ESQ.

Which took place at Woodhouse Church, at midday on Tuesday last, was in accordance with deceased's wishes, of a simple and unpretending character in itself; but the desire to shew respect for his memory, was evinced by the great numbers who flocked to witness it. Besides those from the immediate neighbourhood of Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves, many were there from Loughborough, the fact of all the principal tradesmen's shops being closed during the time, affording opportunities to many to be there. A number of

neighbouring gentry were also present, and many of the tenants of the deceased.

The muffled bell at Woodhouse Church was solemnly tolling all the morning; and at about 12 o'clock the mournful procession left the hall, and proceeded across the park, the body being conveyed on a bier. On reaching the highway, the procession was joined by a large number of gentlemen, who were desirous to shew by their presence, their reverence for the memory of the deceased.