

Friends of Ickenham Hall

The Kitchen

Standing with your back to the Café Bar you will notice that facing you on the back wall is what appears to be the remains of a fireplace. It is indeed where the original open fire once burned. This is the fire on which all the cooking for the original Georgian residents would have been done. Later in Victorian times and into the early twentieth century, it would have housed a large cooking range with ovens.

Still facing the back wall the door to your left leads into a narrow passage. At the far end of this passage is the outer door giving access to what is now the car park. Next to this is another door giving access to what would have been the Larder. Immediately behind the door facing you is a cupboard in which there are the remains of a spiral staircase. This would have lead directly up into a room immediately above it. Only the first three feet of this staircase remain in situ.

Behind the wall to your left is what is now our kitchen, but would have been originally the Scullery. Thus there would have been a complex of Kitchen, Scullery and Larder with connecting Passage and spiral staircase. However the Scullery, Larder and Passage were added in Victorian times and therefore not part of the original Mansion.

Entrance to the main House is through the door to your right as you face the fireplace. It Leads into the Lower Hallway.

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Lower Hallway

Please turn to face the doorway through which you have just entered. The door to its immediate right leads down to our five Cellars. These include a boot room, a wine room, a 'cool' room and 2 general storage rooms. There is currently no public access to these cellars as the stairway is very steep and the ceiling is very low.

Opposite the cellars is the door to what would have been originally the Butler's Pantry. It is still in use as a storeroom. In earlier times it would have been kept locked at all times and the key would have been held by the Butler or the Housekeeper. It would have contained silver or glassware, fine china, table linen and on occasion fine wines. It is conveniently close to the Dining Room – also on this floor.

Next to the Butler's Pantry please note the tiled fireplace. In those earlier days the only form of heating would have been open fires which accounts for a fireplace in the hallway. Most of the fireplaces are still in situ.

The room to the left of the fireplace is now used as ladies toilets, but in earlier times would have been used as an ante room to the Dining Room; in even earlier days it would have been an Estate Office from which the Crosier family would have run their several farms. The door at the far end of the Hallway allowed easy access to visiting Farm Managers and Trades people.

Before entering the next room please note on, on your left, the original cupboards and single large oak beam above them. This is one of only three timbers that remain of the building that stood on this site before being demolished to make way for the Hall. Note also the original panelling which is of Elm and Pine – some of which is now painted!

The small window and outer door are also original. Please do not attempt to open the door – IT IS ALARMED.

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The Dining Room

This is arguably the finest room in the Hall. The walls, floor and ceiling are all original Oak.

In the earliest days it was probably the main reception room, used for entertaining friends and family. In those days it would have been lit by a centrally hung candle chandelier with smaller ones at either end. You can see the holes in the oak beams from which those chandeliers would have been hung. In Victorian times the lighting would have been converted to gas and in the early twentieth century to electricity. In the mid twentieth century the chandeliers were replaced by the present fluorescent lighting.

Initially the view from the window would have been of the small 'Home Farm'. At one time a wall divided the Hall from the Farm. When the room became converted into a Dining Room the wall was demolished. The window would have then given a good view of finely landscaped grounds of which a few trees remain. Fragments of the wall are still visible in the grounds – the foundations of two gate pillars and buttress. The foundations of the farm buildings are also to be found amongst the grass.

Note in particular the very fine fireplace. The tiles are genuine Delft and most of them are original. A number of them (you will be able to identify them as looking very new) have been specially re-made for us by Delft using their original designs but with new moulds.

The niches on either side of the fireplace would have housed cabinets probably containing ornaments, china, glass or silverware for the dining table.

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The Front Entrance Hall

This large and airy Hall would have been the main entrance for the family, friends and important visitors. Staff and less important visitors would have used the side entrance in the Lower Hallway.

It is particularly striking entrance hall with its high ceiling, wood paneling, oak block flooring (still in situ beneath the carpet), its stairways, balustrades and banisters are all original. Note also the windows at the back of the Hall above what is, in effect, an balcony. These enhance the effect of airiness. The timber used for the paneling is a mixture of Pine and Elm and has only in comparatively recent years been painted.

You will have noticed that you climbed three or four steps up from the Lower Hall on the ground floor, yet you are still only at the front entrance on the ground floor! You are standing on what is, in fact, a mezzanine floor. This is to allow head room in the cellars which are directly below you. If you glance through the window you will realize you are actually a few steps up from ground level and the garden path.

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Morning Room

This room is also known as the 'Tate Room' so named after, not a family member but a relatively recent Councillor.

Note the wood paneling. This, like that in the Entrance Hall, is either Elm or Pine. The fireplace is in need of repair; the tiles are believed to be Morgan. Originally there was a painted over-mantel.

A third window was originally in place in the wall directly facing you as you entered the room. This was bricked up at an early stage to counter the introduction of 'window tax'. This tax was calculated according to the number of windows in any given residence. It gave rise to the saying "daylight robbery" as it was deemed to be a tax on light and air.

Originally this room would have been the 'Morning Room' but, like other rooms in the Hall, it has been used for different purposes over the years. At one time it was probably an after dinner Smoking Room and, in due course, possibly a Library or Study. Like all the rooms at the front of the Hall it affords a good view of the front walled garden.

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Drawing Room

This was, for a period, known as the Music Room, not because it was used by the family for music but simply because it has until recently been an administration office for the Hillingdon Music Services. However there is always a possibility that at some time in its history it was indeed used by the family for musical evenings.

Originally it would have been the Drawing Room or, perhaps more properly, the Withdrawing Room. It might have been used by the Ladies whilst the Gentlemen were smoking in the room opposite.

It still has its original Delft tile fireplace which has recently been repaired. Note the marble surround. Like most rooms in the house the floor is Oak Parquet. You will note the complete absence of wall paneling. For some reason, this particular room has never been paneled.

The room affords views of the front garden – to your left as you entered. It also gives a view of landscaped grounds in front of you as you entered. Very early on that view would have been of Home Farm and, for a period, would have been of the high brick wall separating the Farm from the Hall.

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Bedroom?

You probably noticed the question mark on the door panel as you entered. This room is intriguing for several reasons.

In the cupboard immediately to your right as you entered are vestiges of the spiral staircase the remains of which are to be found in the cupboard immediately behind the back wall of the original kitchen. This poses several interesting questions. Did the staircase communicate between the kitchen and what could have been a dining room? Or did it communicate between kitchen and a bedroom? If the latter why was there such a direct communication?

Note yet another Delft tile fireplace. Such tiles, installed in the 18th century, indicate wealth. It is unlikely that such a fireplace would have been installed in servants quarters – or even a bedroom!

Note the two very large oak beams – these are two further remains of the original ‘Sherwyns’ house which stood on this site until the 1740. Note also the two very small trapdoors: one in the wall above the cupboard near the entrance; the other in the ceiling to your left as you entered the room. These both lead to ‘roof spaces’ with space enough to move around in but without the headroom to become actual attics.

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The Lawrence Room

This room was most probably always a bedroom and is very likely the bedroom used by Dame Agnes Lawrence. It became an office only in the late twentieth century.

Dame Agnes Lawrence was not only the daughter of the then Viceroy of India but also held a Ministerial post in the government. She was responsible for the Women's Affairs and Institutes and was created a Dame in recognition of these services. She bought the Hall in 1917 and lived in it until she died in 1933.

At one time the room was twice its present size. The wall as you entered is false. The room beyond it is currently used as men's toilets but prior to that was part of this bedroom. It is probable that at some time Dame Agnes had the wall erected in order to create an en-suite bathroom.

Her bedroom would have afforded a view of the formal gardens including flower beds, an orchard and vegetable garden. A glance from the window today gives one a view of a very small garden, the Café Bar and the Compass Theatre.

If this was her bedroom (which is most likely) it is where she died in 1933 – of influenza.

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The Crosier Room

This room is another of seven bedrooms. The Crosiers were originally a family of Yeoman farmers. In the early 1700s they were elevated to the social status of Gentlemen Farmers. To mark this rise in society they pulled down their home 'Sherwynes' – named after its builder and original owner. On its exact site they built this house which eventually became known as Ickenham Hall.

Note the corner fireplace. The tiles are thought to be another example of Morgan Tiles. Note the embossed figure of a sea creature.

The floor is of oak. The window is original but the actual glass is a relatively modern replacement.

During the time of occupation by the Crosiers the view would have been over the top of the wall dividing the Hall from the small farm. In later years it would have afforded views of landscaped grounds without the dividing wall.

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The Hilliard Room

The Hilliard family, like the Crosiers, were Gentlemen Farmers. They became the owners of the Hall and all of the Crosier family properties upon the marriage, in 1779, of Elizabeth Crosier to Edward Hilliard.

The fireplace is original and like several of the others in the Hall is in full working order. The corner cupboards would have been walk-in wardrobes.

This room has a double aspect. The window to your left as you entered would have given a good view over the wall of Home Farm (and eventually of landscaped grounds). The window to your right afforded a view of the formal gardens including the orchard, kitchen garden and formal flower beds.

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Foot of stairs / archway

Looking back through the archway and to your left is another door. This gives access to a very narrow stairway to the attics. There are three rooms currently used for storage. For this reason there is no public access. Originally there were only two rooms and each had a tiled fireplace – a most unusual feature for attics! It is probable that originally they were both either bedrooms or a two-roomed living accommodation for senior servants. Alternatively they could have even been family bedrooms.

From the foot of the stairs look up to the small landing at the top of the main staircase you will note that the landing has been blocked off. This affords an extension to the room behind it. Before ascending the stairs your attention is drawn to the door facing you at the top. This was only installed when the room extension was built in the 1940/50's. Originally there was a door immediately to your right as you stand at the top landing. A light tap on the wall will demonstrate this.

The staircase, with its banisters and balustrades are all original.

From where you are standing, at the foot of the staircase, you will realize just how light and spacious the Entrance Hall is.

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Three Bedrooms

This room is also known as the Long Room (for obvious reasons). However it was originally three separate bedrooms, each accessed individually from the landing. The first one to your right as you enter and was access through the door which is now blocked off by that false wall at the top of the stairs.

Standing in this area you will note the fireplace and the 'hanging' window to your left as you face the fireplace. To the left of the fireplace is a cupboard which was probably a walk-in wardrobe. In this cupboard is a small window which like the main window, overlooked Home Farm. On the outer wall of this small window are hooks which held shutters. A shuttered window in a wardrobe is something of an oddity! The two windows opposite the fireplace give a good view of the walled front garden.

Moving into the centre of the room and standing with your back to the windows you will be facing into the slight extension into the area, which in modern times, was built onto the landing. You are now standing in the Middle Bedroom. You will note that there is no fireplace. It is most likely that this room would have been a nursery which, for safety reasons, would not have had a fireplace. It would, in any case, have been difficult to install a fireplace backing onto a staircase landing. There would probably have also been a communicating door from one of the other bedrooms.

Moving even further into the room you will be standing in the Third Bedroom. Here again is a fireplace to the left of which would have been the door onto the landing. The end wall, to your right as you look at the fireplace, included a window which was bricked up to avoid the window tax.

The front garden, best viewed from these 'three' rooms, is bordered by its original Georgian wall. The section of this wall to your right as you face the garden, dates from the days of 'Cherwynes' (the original farmhouse). It is over four hundred years old.

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