

Sutton Scarsdale Hall – Clarke Family Property

Following our successful summer bus tour of former family residences of our school founders, in early November, the Association subsequently offered an opportunity for members and their partners to visit the grandest of these.

Once the property of one of the wealthiest men in Europe, Sutton Scarsdale Hall was the venue of a conducted tour led by fellow OC, Paul Halksworth, author of a definitive recently published book about the property. The Hall, built 1724-1728 by the 4th. Earl of Scarsdale, Nicholas Leake employing the architect, Francis Smith of Warwick, was bought in 1740 by Godfrey Clarke of Somersall Hall, (one of the locations included in our earlier summer tour) and direct descendent of one of our founders.



Paul Halksworth (4th from right) explains the former architectural splendours of Sutton Scarsdale Hall to an attentive group of the OC visit, Nov 2019

The Clarke family sold it on at auction in 1824 to the son of Sir Richard Arkwright probably the richest commoner in Europe, for £216,000, today's equivalent of £23 million, for his son Robert. Paul also led us to the site of the medieval archery practice, the former gardens and the still intact ha ha, and explained to us how such an opulent residence suffered the transition **from Riches to Ruin.**

At the conclusion of the visit, we were invited by the churchwarden into the adjacent church for a welcome hot drink, much appreciated in view of the chill of a damp November afternoon!



Sutton Scarsdale Hall – northern facade, modelled on Chatsworth House, with which it was regarded as equal in its original state.

Subject to continuing members' interest, your current OC organising group is open to facilitating a further programme of similar occasional visits towards which your suggestions and participation are invited.

Courtesy of Paul Halksworth, Brian Heathcote and Derrick Priestley