



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Brodsworth Hall

COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATE TRAIL



Work & Play

Life on the Yorkshire Country House Estate

The Brodsworth Estate

The landscape around Brodsworth Hall bears traces of how people have lived, managed, and worked the land in the past as well as today.

A large area of land around Brodsworth has been managed for many centuries as an estate supporting the landowner's family and house. Charles Sabine



Charles Sabine Thellusson

Thellusson, who owned the 8,000 acre estate from 1858 to 1885, did much to shape its landscape as you see it today. He built the present Brodsworth Hall in the 1860s, laid out the park and gardens afresh, and built or remodelled many estate buildings. A great number of people were employed to achieve this. The estate provided their livelihoods and homes, often for their entire lives. In the 20th century this way of life came under pressure to change. In 1990 Charles Sabine Thellusson's great-granddaughter, Pamela Williams, gave Brodsworth Hall and its gardens to English Heritage. The family retained the estate. It now covers 4,500 acres (1,820 hectares) and is still farmed, although now employing

fewer people. The estate buildings and land are privately owned and not accessible to the public. This Trail Guide indicates some parts visible from Brodsworth Hall and gardens.

1 The Park

Standing near the ticket office, look back across the car park.

Charles Sabine Thellusson enlarged the 18th century parkland to create a private setting for his house. The park was bounded by woodland and studded with ornamental trees, some of which remain. It was used by the family for walking, riding and shooting, and by the estate

community for cricket. Events such as sports days were regularly held in the park until the 1950s, bringing together the entire estate community. Since the Second World War much of the park, which had originally been pasture, has been used for growing crops. The slope in the parkland on the other side of the drive to the car-park conceals the site of the former kitchen gardens.



Charles and Constance Thellusson with the estate cricket team outside the pavilion they had built in 1910, near the cross-shaped plantation in the park. The plantation and pavilion do not survive.

This Trail Guide highlights buildings, objects and stories relating to the country estate surrounding Brodsworth Hall, and the people who have lived and worked on it for the last one hundred and fifty years. The Trail Guide, with its central map, takes you around the gardens and then into the house, where the exhibition, *Work and Play: Life on the Yorkshire Country House Estate*, is located in one of the first floor rooms. The exhibition looks at the history of the estate and its past and present community, drawing on photographs and oral recordings. Brodsworth Hall is one of four country houses in Yorkshire exploring the theme of the country house estate in exhibitions and events in 2007 and 2008.

Aerial photograph of Brodsworth Hall, its park and surrounding estate in 1957. (© Crown Copyright/MOD)

Cover image: William Chester, who worked for the estate for over forty years from 1901, as a gamekeeper and woodman, and later in the gardens.

The Head Gardener's house, with the walled gardens, is now a private residence **25**. Higher up one of the estate farms can be seen, now with many modern farm buildings.

2 The drive and gate to the garden

As you pass through the gate, look back down the drive.

The gateway marks the entrance to the gardens from the park. Stone from 18th century gates was reused in the 1860s for its piers. The drive was newly constructed by estate labourers to create a private entrance away from the villages of Brodsworth and Pickburn. In the distance, positioned to be seen from the gates, is the spire of the church built from 1911-13 by Charles Sabine Thellusson's third son, Charles. All Saints Church served the new village of Woodlands, built by the Brodsworth Colliery Company, to whom he had leased the right to mine coal on the estate. The spire is now partially concealed by the colliery spoil heap, which in recent years has been planted with trees and grass to provide a community woodland.



All Saints Church, Woodlands.

3 Church of St Michael and All Angels

The church, like the landowners, has for centuries had an influential role in the community. Brodsworth's parish church has Saxon and Norman origins. It has memorials to the Thellussons and earlier landowners, as well as to many estate workers and residents. The church lies just beyond the boundary of the gardens but is opened on some summer Sundays by local volunteers.



The Whitsun celebrations of 1945, with many members of the local community and the estate owner, Charles Grant-Dalton.

4 The gardens and garden staff

Charles Sabine Thellusson's pleasure gardens around the house and their woodland fringe were laid out with the assistance of his Head Gardener, Samuel Taylor, and Head Woodman, William Guest. The cedar tree is one of the elements from the 18th century park and garden which was incorporated

into the new landscape. Samuel Taylor and his successors managed the gardens with a staff of around ten. After the Second World War the number of gardeners and other estate staff fell; by the 1980s only one gardener was employed, and the gardens had become very overgrown.

You may wish to enter the Hall, where the Trail continues (page 7) and to see the Work and Play exhibition.

Alternatively, to continue exploring the grounds, make your way across the front of the house to the South Terrace.



Frederick Larner, Head Gardener from 1913-41, with his staff.

5 South Terrace

The narrow terrace affords extensive views over the park. In the distance the spire of the Norman church at Marr can be glimpsed. Marr is one of the villages on the estate where Charles Sabine Thellusson improved the farm buildings for his tenant farmers. On the right the park is framed by trees, once the edge of Brodsworth Wood, which extended to almost two hundred acres in the 18th century. In the 1940s all but a narrow strip of trees edging the park was felled and the land was ploughed for growing crops.

*Make your way along the path beside the yew hedge, towards the Summer House on its mound. Pass the croquet lawns **6** on the right.*



Sylvia Grant-Dalton playing croquet in the 1930s.

The pleasure gardens were laid out to be enjoyed on walks by the family. Garden sports could be played on the croquet lawns and Target Range. The formal planting and changing display of bedding plants around the fountain was very labour-intensive and difficult to maintain in later years.

7 The Summer House

This was built in 1866 on a mound to catch the eye at the end of the terrace, and to give a vantage point over the gardens and house. The mound also served as an insulated ice house in the days before refrigerators.

Take the gravel path to the left before the Summer House, and look over the iron railings.

A rectangular depression in the ground near the railings used to be flooded in cold weather with water piped from a water tank in the nearby plantation. Once it had frozen the ice was cut into blocks to be stored in the ice house. The estate foreman's son remembered his father, Tom Hindle, in the 1930s bringing blocks of ice from Doncaster in a van to store them in the ice house. It was later used as a tool shed.

Walk behind the Summer House to see the entrance to the ice house and pets' cemetery **8**.



9 The Chicken Farm

The red brick buildings of the Chicken Farm can be glimpsed through the trees beyond the garden wall. This was expanded in 1910 by Charles Thellusson. He kept many special breeds of poultry such as White Faverolles, which won many awards and were sold commercially. After Charles' death in 1919, the buildings were used as the estate joiner's workshop.

*Two flights of steps lead down from the Summer House to the Rock Garden, with its Rockery **10** and Grotto **11**, and on into a wooded part of the garden known as the Grove **12**. Alternatively retrace your steps from the back of the Summer House to the front, and pass under the bridge. This part of the garden has a maze of paths: the main routes are accessible for wheelchairs.*

10 The Rockery and 11 Grotto

The careful arrangement of rocks and plants in the Rockery and Grotto beyond was laid out in 1863-4 by Joseph Barron, who specialised in designing rock gardens. Much labour was required to



create and maintain it – and to restore it in recent years. Ferns have been planted in the Grotto, which has also been called the Fern Dell.

13 The Target House

Archery was a popular sport, particularly for young ladies, when Brodsworth was built. The little Target House would have been used for storing the targets, bows and arrows, and the expanse of grass in front of it was the Target Range. It now contains a small exhibition about the garden.

14 The Rose Pergola

The Grant-Daltons, who came to Brodsworth in the 1930s, enjoyed spending time in the garden. Charles often mowed the lawns, and Sylvia loved to fill the house with flowers. For the garden staff this meant considerable work tidying up the cuttings, and bringing fresh flowers from the kitchen gardens.

From the Target House, walk through the Rose Pergola and up the slope. Beyond the garden wall the roofs of nearby estate buildings, such as Home Farm, can be seen through the trees. At the top of the slope where the path splits in three, bear left, with the Hall and gardens on your right. Look down the steep slope on the left, to see the back of the Stables.

15 Home Farm and 16 Home Farm house

From the 1860s this farm was often managed 'in hand' for the family, supplying the house with farm produce. In 1910 it was partly rebuilt to provide an immaculate tiled milking parlour and accommodation for Charles Thellusson's prize-winning Jersey cattle, becoming known as his Model Farm.

17 Stables

The stable block was built in the 18th century, to serve the earlier Brodsworth Hall. Set around a courtyard are a barn, coach houses, stables and tack room for the family's horses, with accommodation for the coachman, grooms and stable-hands above. One section was converted into a garage when Charles Thellusson started to own motor cars in 1908, and fewer horses were kept. Parts of the stable block continue to be used for staff accommodation to the present day.



George Raper, chauffeur, with a Lanchester in the stable yard in about 1908.

Follow the path around, bearing right.

18 Site of the old Brodsworth Hall



Old Brodsworth Hall with the Church of St Michael and All Angels in the background.

The house was situated in the area of woodland between the Stables and Church, just beyond the boundary fence. The building rose to four floors as the ground sloped away, presenting imposing fronts towards the church and village. Some stone from the old house was re-used in the 1860s for Charles Sabine Thellusson's new house, and the bank was partly levelled. In recent years some of the

foundations of the old hall have been excavated by archaeologists.

When the path joins the back drive near the church 3, turn right and follow the drive towards Brodsworth Hall.

19 The north drive

This back drive would have been used by estate and house staff, as it led to a number of estate buildings, including the Head Gamekeeper's house and Kennels 20, the Stables, and Home Farm. The Estate Office 21 was purpose built in 1916. From 1913 electricity was supplied to the hall, Stables, Laundry and Chicken Farm by the Generator House 22, until mains electricity was provided in 1939. An engine in the Pump House 23 probably pumped water to the nearby Laundry 24. This building had been the Brew House for the earlier hall, and was converted into a laundry in the 1860s. It fell out of use in the mid 1920s. This drive also leads to the kitchen gardens beyond the Church. In the mid 20th century the Head Gardener's house and kitchen gardens were leased out as a business, and are now a private residence 25.

As you approach the house, the Game Larder is in the trees to your right, with the modern toilets on the left 26.

27 The Game Larder

This octagonal wooden structure was used to store game shot on the estate such as pheasants, rabbits, and



Ernest Swift, one of the garden staff, by the game larder in about 1915.

hares. It was built on stone blocks to discourage vermin, and is surrounded by shady trees to keep the meat cool. Gamekeepers would have brought a selection of the game shot by the family to be stored conveniently near the hall's kitchens. The game was hung on poles to mature for up to three weeks before being brought into the house and prepared for cooking.

Look towards the back of the Hall, before turning left to the front door to enter the house. You will leave the house through the servants' wing and service yard.

28 The Service Yard

The back door to the west of the servants' wing opens on to the service yard. Used for deliveries of all kinds of produce, it provided a point of contact between the house staff and those working in the gardens and wider estate. The indoor staff depended in many ways on the work of those outside. Along the main wall of the house near the west door, exterior steps give access to the cellars, and windows to the right of these could also function as coal chutes. There was also once a well-head near the modern fence. The room to the east of the north door, under the bell, was the Gun Room where the family's guns were stored and cleaned.

Enter Brodsworth Hall by the front door, under the columns of the porte-cochère 29, intended to shelter passengers as they got out of their carriages.



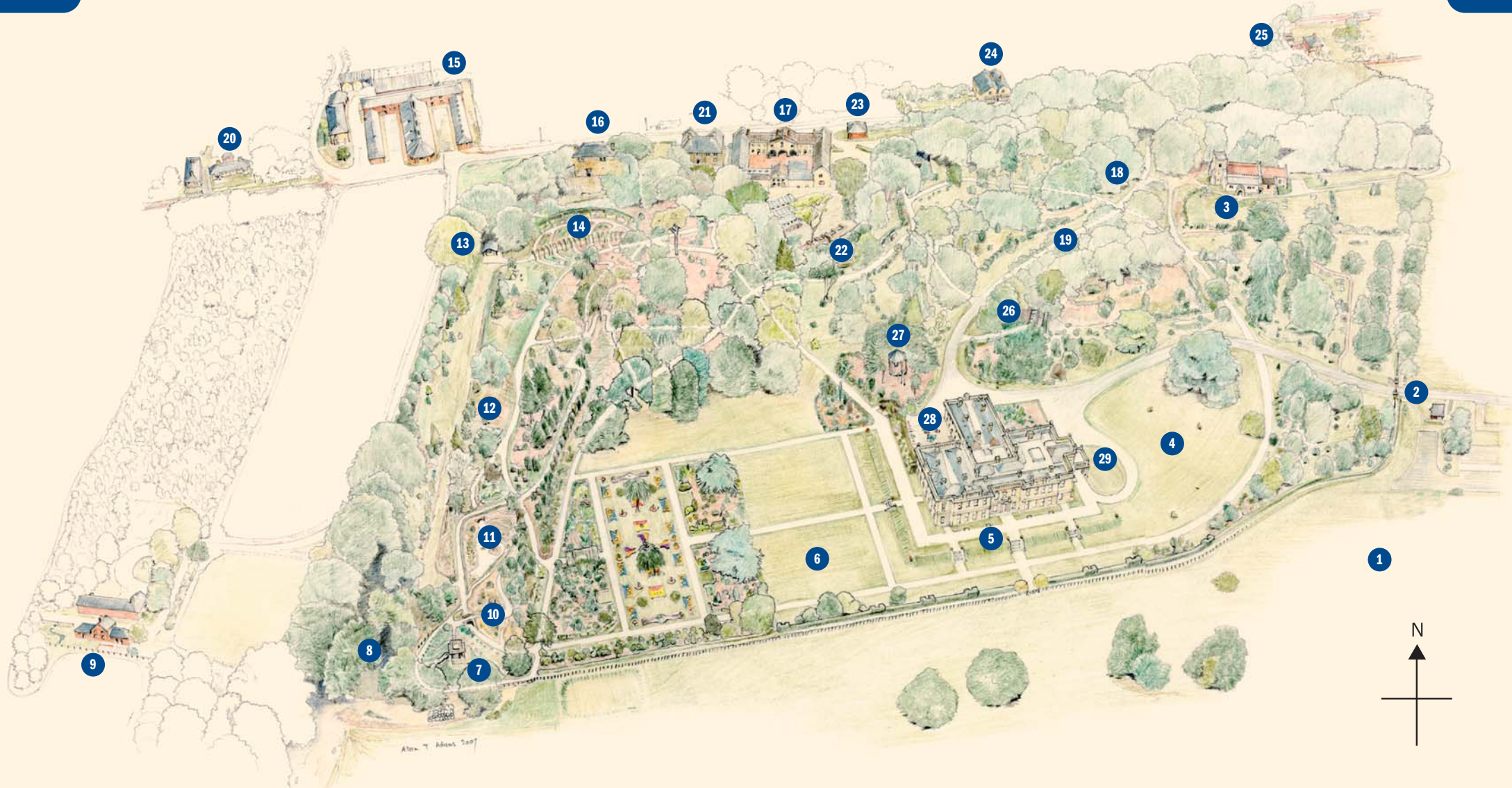
Brodsworth Hall

30 Entrance Hall: coatstand

This was both the formal and every day entrance to the house for the family and their guests. The family's love of outdoor occupations meant that this area would have seen much activity. There was a large cupboard for coats in the lobby to the nearby Morning Room. Muddy boots could have been wiped on the boot brush, but much work would have been made for the footmen and housemaids, who until the 1930s did not have a vacuum cleaner.

31 Morning Room: paintings of dogs

The family kept dogs both as pets and to accompany their shooting; some of the dogs are depicted with game birds.



- | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 The Park | 6 Croquet lawns | 11 Grotto or Fern Dell | 16 Home Farm house | 21 Estate Office | 26 Toilets |
| 2 Gates | 7 The Summer House | 12 Grove | 17 The Stables | 22 Generator House | 27 Game larder |
| 3 Church | 8 Pets' Cemetery | 13 Target House | 18 Site of Old Hall | 23 Pump house | 28 Service Yard |
| 4 Gardens | 9 Chicken Farm | 14 Rose Pergola | 19 North Drive | 24 Brew House, then Laundry | 29 Entrance to Brodsworth Hall |
| 5 South Terrace | 10 Rockery | 15 Home Farm | 20 Head Gamekeeper's cottage and kennels | 25 Head Gardener's house and Kitchen Garden | |

32 Watercolour of Brodsworth Hall

This was probably painted by the architect Philip Wilkinson in the early 1860s for Charles Sabine Thellusson, to show how the new house would look.



33 Inner Hall: ceremonial wheelbarrow and spade

These were presented to Charles Thellusson by the Brodsworth Colliery Company after he had used them for the ceremonial cutting of the first sod of earth for the colliery in 1905. He leased land on the edge of the estate to the colliery company, and in return received both rent and royalties on the coal the company mined.

34 Dining Room: menu cards

The family often entertained house-guests during the winter shooting and social season in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Game shot by the family was often on the menu. The kitchen gardens provided fruit, vegetables, exotic fruit like pineapples and flowers for table decorations.



A supper table of the 1880s.

35 Family portraits

Family portraits express prestige and the link between the generations inheriting the family lands, wealth and possessions. The estate immediately surrounding Brodsworth Hall was always the core of the Thellusson and Grant-Dalton inheritance, but other properties were bought and sold, or acquired by marriage. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries Peter Thellusson and then his Trustees bought much land outside Yorkshire. Charles Sabine Thellusson's wife, Georgiana, whose portrait hangs near the door, brought into the family the London property of her grandfather, John Theobald, whose portrait hangs over the fireplace.

36 The South Hall: electric light fitting

This is one of the fittings supplied when Charles Thellusson introduced electricity to the house in 1913. Electricity was provided by a hot-bulb

paraffin engine situated in the Generator House 22 near the stables, which was maintained by the estate foreman. It was often a struggle to provide enough power, even though energy could be stored in batteries.

37 Billiard Room: Scorebook

Amongst the names recorded in the book, is that of Matthew Baines, the land agent for the estate in the 1890s. He regularly took part in shooting parties, and played billiards with his employer Peter Thellusson.



Tom Hindle, the estate foreman from 1932-1971, outside the Stables.

38 Drawing Room: gas chandeliers

The magnificent chandeliers, originally lit by gas, were converted to electricity in 1913. When Charles Sabine Thellusson built his house all the rooms had gas lighting, powered by a gas house on the estate near the kitchen garden. A gas-man was employed, using coke to create gas.

39 Fireplace

In the 1860s the house was heated by coal fires; house staff brought the coal up from two large cellars, and had to keep the fires going and clear the grates afterwards. After the Brodsworth Colliery started to operate in 1907, coal was delivered annually on what became known as 'coaling day', when the estate's tenant farmers were required to supply a man and cart for a day to deliver coal to the house, stables and the estate office. It was then redistributed to other estate buildings.

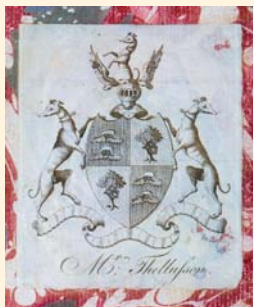


Brodsworth Main Colliery in 1907.

40 Carpet

Estate staff were sometimes called upon to help the house staff with big indoor tasks, such as cleaning the Drawing Room carpet. Wallace Breedon, an estate worker, recalls in the 1920s helping to roll it up and take it out onto the lawn where it was brushed with damp tea leaves. The carpet was also removed for Hunt Balls in the 1930s, when a false floor was laid. Pamela Grant-Dalton remembers the edges of the false floor being decorated with crocuses set in moss provided by the Head Gardener, Mr Lerner.

41 Library: Peter Thellusson's books



Many of the books in the Library date from the 18th century and belonged to Peter Thellusson. He was the first member of the Thellusson family to own the Brodsworth estate, which he bought in 1793. As a successful banker and merchant, he was able to buy land as an investment and to establish the family's social position. He had previously built a country house at Plaistow in Kent, shown in the engraving on the table. The volumes, with his book-plate, on the table are an 18th century French study by Guillaume-Thomas Raynal of the history and commercial

opportunities of the East and West Indies. They illustrate the immense amount of produce brought to Britain from the West Indies, which was often to be found in wealthy houses. This included textiles, pigments, exotic hardwoods for furniture, like the rosewood of most of the furniture in this room, and of course sugar. Peter Thellusson's wide-ranging financial activities included insurance for shipping and funding for plantation owners. This probably led to him owning slaves and plantations as well, and he also owned sugar warehouses in London. The financial house of Thellusson and Company was carried on by his sons after Peter's death, and would have been affected when the trade in slaves was abolished in 1807.

42 Lathe Room: shooting tent

On the floor by the table is a large folded canvas tent, used by the family for meals during shooting parties. Shooting was the main leisure pursuit of the Thellusson



Charles Sabine Thellusson's sons and friends in front of a shooting tent in the 1880s.

family, and other items relating to shooting, such as gun cleaning rods, can be seen in the room.

43 Games and garden equipment

Garden games, such as croquet and tennis, were enjoyed by the family, but also gave work, such as lawn-mowing and white-lining, to the garden staff.

44 Stuffed birds

The glass cases of birds and animals in this room were to be found throughout the house in the 1880s, in accordance with the Victorian taste for the decorative use of wildlife. The specimens were almost all acquired commercially, rather than being shot by the family. Many were preserved by local taxidermists, such as J T Storrs of Doncaster. They include some game birds, such as pheasant and blackcock.



The Lift provides access to the first floor for wheelchair users. At the top of the stairs, turn right to look out of the window. The views to the north from this window, and to the west from the room beside it, are illustrated on stands in front of the windows.

As you pass along the main bedroom corridor, visit the exhibition **Work and Play: Life on the Yorkshire Country House Estate**. You can see objects ranging from an enormous map of the estate in 1892 to a teapot won as a prize at an estate sports day. You can find further details of many buildings and places on the estate on the interactive computer and listen to recordings of former staff and tenants.

45 Bedroom 8: Plymouth Rock Club Challenge Trophy

This trophy was awarded to Charles Thellusson each year from 1910-1912, for his White Plymouth Rocks, one of the poultry breeds he specialised in.



46 Bedroom corridor cabinet: Derby dessert service

Hunting was a major pastime of 19th century landowners. Hunting scenes are depicted on the early 19th century Derby dessert service displayed in the tall cabinet.



A meet of the Badsworth Hunt in the park.

47 Badsworth Hunt book

This has a panoramic pull-out illustration of the Badsworth Hunt's 1908 season, giving the names of all the riders and even the hounds. It does not include the Thellussons, who favoured shooting. However they, and later the Grant-Daltons, supported the local Badsworth Hunt, allowing it to meet on the estate and hosting hunt

balls. The hounds were sometimes kept at the gamekeeper's kennels during the Grant-Daltons' years.

48 Dressing Room: tenants' addresses

The illuminated address on the table was presented with a silver vase by the tenants of the Brodsworth estate to Charles and Constance Thellusson on their Silver Wedding in 1910. The Thellussons also had land at Amotherby in North Yorkshire, and the decorative address hanging to the left of the door was presented by the tenants of this smaller estate.

49 The Education Room

Next door to the bathroom where the view to the south can be seen, this large room was formerly the Day Nursery, and was used as a sitting room from the early 20th century. Staff recall it being filled with flowers brought up to the hall by Mr Lerner, the Head Gardener. He was famed locally for his chrysanthemums, for which he won many prizes.



Pass through the first set of baize doors separating the main bedrooms from the children's area.

50 Housemaids' sink, and water supply

This sink would have been used by housemaids to empty buckets and water jugs. A water supply and drainage were essential for a country house. When the house was built, water was pumped from ponds at Bilham on the west of the estate to storage tanks in the woods and in the roof of the house, from where it fed the bathrooms and water closets. Mains water was installed in the mid 1930s.

51 The 1892 estate map

Blocks at the top of the wall in the narrow corridor behind the main stairs mark the position where the huge 1892 map, now hanging in the exhibition, was found.

At the bottom of the short flight of stairs, go through the baize doors into the first floor of the Servants' Wing. Wheelchair users need to return to the lift, but can rejoin the tour at the Larder 55.

52 Servants' Landing: log box

Estate staff had to bring logs up to the house for fires, and some were stored in this box. House staff then had to carry the logs and coal to the fireplaces, keep the fires going, and clear the ash afterwards. The estate staff also had to make sure the chimneys were kept free of birds' nests, which required many rods to clear. If not removed, they could catch fire. This happened the first time Sheila Parkin-Coates lit a fire in the Library as a new parlourmaid in 1947, but luckily it was seen by a passing bus-driver, and was put out.



Sheila Parkin-Coates, parlourmaid from 1947-1955.

53 Servants' bedrooms: trunks

These bedrooms accommodated female members of house staff, who often came from families living on the estate, although some came from further afield. They brought their few belongings in small tin trunks.

54 Corridor: electric bells

The arrival of electricity in 1913 meant that the servant's bell-pull system was replaced by electric push-button bells. One of the 'new' bell-boards can be

seen at the top of the wall on the bedroom corridor, near the board for the old bells. Another electric bell-board can be seen downstairs outside the Butler's Pantry.

Go down the Servants' stairs and walk straight on to the Larder.

The Ground Floor and Cellars of the Servants' Wing

This would have been an area of great activity for the house staff. Food would have been brought in to this area from the gardens and wider estate, to be prepared, cooked and stored. The cellars below were also used to keep meat, game and coal. They are still used for storage so there is no public access to them.



55 The Larder

The Larder now has many jars used for preserving fruit and vegetables from the gardens. Food would have been protected from flies in the cupboard with gauze doors. The refrigerator in the corridor used ice from the ice-house in the garden to keep its contents cool; once the ice melted the water could be drained out from beneath it. The electric

freezer introduced in the 1950s meant this was no longer required.

Return along the corridor towards the Kitchen

56 The Scullery

Vegetables from the estate were washed and prepared for cooking, and dishes were washed up, in the Scullery opposite the Kitchen. There is no public access at present to this room, but it is intended to open it in the near future.

57 The Kitchen

The cook and kitchen maids prepared meals in the Kitchen using produce and game from the estate. Coal for the huge Eagle range, fitted in about 1910, as well as for all the fireplaces, had to be brought up from the coal cellar.



Carne Pie with Jelly

58 Telephone

The Ericsson telephone outside the Kitchen was installed in about 1916, for communication between the house, new estate office, and stables.

59 Butler's pantry: linens and picnic ware

Food for a day's shooting was prepared by the kitchen staff, and taken to the shoot by the butler or footmen. Large sets of table linen were kept for this, marked up and laundered by the staff. Women from estate families were paid to lay on lunches for the keepers and beaters. Wicker covered bottles were also used on picnics or journeys; the Thellussons regularly travelled in summer, either on the continent, or to the south coast for

yachting, and the Grant-Daltons spent many summers on the island of Mull. Some members of staff often accompanied them, leaving others to maintain the house and estate in their absence.

The remaining rooms of the Servants Wing are now used for the shop and tea rooms.

These were once the Servants' Hall,

Housekeeper's Sitting Room, Butler's and Footmen's bedrooms, and the Gun Room. Leave the house by the west door, near the shop, which leads into the Service Yard (28).



Images from English Heritage, Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management of 1888 (pages 10 and 16), and by courtesy of Doncaster Archives (brochure, page 4), the Edwards family, Margaret Handley (cover), Sheila Hopkins, Ministry of Defence (aerial photograph), Mollie Nicholls, Edna Tagg, and Ena Thompson.

Work & Play

Life on the Yorkshire Country House Estate



Participating Houses:

① Brodsworth Hall & Gardens

Brodsworth Hall,
Doncaster DN5 7XJ
Tel 01302 722598
www.english-heritage.org.uk

② Burton Constable Hall

Burton Constable,
Skirlaugh Nr. Hull,
East Yorks HU11 4LN
Tel 01964 562400
www.burtonconstable.com

③ Harewood House

Harewood House,
Harewood, Leeds LS17 9LG
Tel 0113 218 1010
www.harewood.org

④ Temple Newsam

Temple Newsam Road,
Leeds LS15 OAE
Tel 0113 264 7321
www.leeds.gov.uk

Burton Agnes Hall ⑤ near Bridlington and **Sledmere House** ⑥ between Driffield and Malton are also featured in the estates trail for Burton Constable Hall.

Pioneered through **THE YORKSHIRE COUNTRY HOUSE PARTNERSHIP**, a collaborative research venture between the country houses of Yorkshire and the University of York, and generously supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, through the 'Your Heritage' scheme.