

Welcome to the Aide Memoire for new guides at the Mansion House. I hope this will help you to provide an informative tour. Don't be daunted by the list---you don't have to cover everything. If you want more information, we have made some recommendations at the end of this guide. Few paintings are mentioned as many of them are labelled. The Friends have undertaken a review of the information labels.

Recommended Start of Tour is Front Committee Room

- Give Background
- One of only 3 Mansion Houses in England (others are York and London)
- Building started 1745
- Officially opened in 1749
- It was built for entertaining the gentry but not as a residence for the Mayor
- Designed by James Paine, who had been overseeing the building of Nostell Priory.
- The Mansion House is a Palladian Revival building with Regency and mid Victorian additions and alterations
- Overall cost of building and furnishing £8,000
- Show Paine Display as part of Introduction. Mention façade is all by Paine except top attic storey which is really just a parapet added in 1801 by William Lindley replacing the original giant pediment.
- Explain it later became the centre of Council Business
- Say that it is now used for Open Days, Citizenship Ceremonies, Mayor making, weddings, private hire, welcoming important guests, and, temporarily, a Coroners Court. (This is as 2023. You will need to check the up to date info from others)

Although the Mansion house was built for entertainment, one room, probably this one, was used as a part time magistrate's court presided over by the Mayor.

- Chairs in a Hepplewhite style were made by William Lilley in 1806—for the banqueting room upstairs.
- (In the bay window) are 2 country chairs in a Chippendale style.
- Records of the Mayors including recent photographs.
Large Dial Clock was made by George Halifax in the 1770s (who was Mayor in 1775 and 1790). (known sometimes as an Act of Parliament clock, although the term is not really accurate.)
- The sideboard dates from 1858 and was made for the banqueting room.
- Officer Dress sword – presented to the Authority by RAF Finningley in 1975 to mark the granting of the Freedom of the Borough.
- The large Oval shaped table dates from 1850. It might have been used in

the Magistrate's Court but this is not certain.

The Back Committee Room

The original use of this room is uncertain. Although there was a town hall in the Market Place some Corporation business was carried out in the Mansion House right from the start so this room may have been used.

- Chairs are in the Sheraton style (may date from 1806)
- Table is American black walnut and was made in 1990 by Council joiners
- The bell is from HMS Andromeda (Doncaster's adopted ship) and came to the Council when it was decommissioned in 1992. It was upturned and used as a font for baptisms on shore. Some names of children are inscribed inside.
- Lights are French about 1900 and were bought in the 1980s
- Paintings are on loan from the Museum.
- The clock is by Richard Holt of Newark. He made clocks from 1810 to 1845. Date on the plaque, of 1750, is incorrect.
- Showcase contains items from Gliwice, Herten and Avion, three of our twin towns. Only twinning with Herten remains active.

Staircase

- Pillars with Ionic capitals were painted to look like marble in the 1980s
- Grand Staircase has 39 steps (3 sets of 13). Known as Imperial because it has return flights.
- The squares might have been designed to house murals but they were never started.
- At the top of the first flight is the Grant of Arms, which all councils have; this describes the Civic Coat of Arms
- Above, to the right-hand side wall as you face the back of the building –

This is Mercury, Roman messenger of the Gods. As messenger he would have been appropriate guiding guests upstairs to the festivities. Also god of financial gain, commerce and good fortune. Note the serpent, cleft stick and bag of silver.

On the other side is Minerva, goddess of wisdom, arts, trade and weaving. Note the wise owl and the cockerel.

- The Rococo plasterwork is original by Thomas Perritt and Joseph Rose.
- Top of the stairs – look across to the pillars with Corinthian capitals, that is where the building originally finished. The balcony was added in 1864.

The Ballroom (originally called the Grand Room or Banqueting-Room)

This principal room, in the shape of a double cube (60 by 30 by 30 feet), was used for dancing and dining originally. The Mayor was given 200 guineas in the mid eighteenth century and had to provide entertainment here on various days.

- The Rococo plasterwork throughout is original but the colours are modern. When you turn around and face the back wall you will see two Roman gods:
On the left is Venus, goddess of love, with dolphins and turtle doves
On right Apollo god of music, dance and archery. Note the sun's rays, musical instrument and python.
Note the gallery where the town waits (musicians) played for guests
- The frame chandeliers were originally gas and were converted to electricity. Made by Osler and Co and purchased in 1854. (Cost £125 for 3).
- The stage was added in 1831
- Paintings: - Robert Stockill (local bank manager and philanthropist)/King George the Third/
Sir Frank Lockwood (Solicitor General to the Government in the 1880's)/
The 6th Earl of Fitzwilliam/ Earl of Lonsdale (Senior Steward of Doncaster racecourse and of boxing's Lonsdale Belt fame. Founder and 1st President of AA)/
The Marquis of Rockingham (Prime Minister)/ Queen Victoria//4th Earl Fitzwilliam

The Drawing Room (originally known as the Tea Room)

This is where the ladies would go before dinner and retire to afterwards. The room has survived intact but the colours and curtains are 20th century.

- The dark ebonised furniture dates from at least 1861 and may be earlier. The table and other furniture are more modern.
- Note the lion, part of the coat of arms, over the fireplace mirror.
- Paintings: These are all labelled. Of note is the copy of Gainsborough's painting of Sarah Siddons, a celebrated actress in the 18th century who performed in the Theatre in the Market Place.
- The long case clock is by Robert Hargreaves and dates from around 1760
- International Harvesters bought and presented the chandelier in 1953 to commemorate the coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II.

The Balcony

Designed by the Steward, John Butterfield in 1863/4 to link the tea room to the dining room. Butterfield was the architect of the Market Hall.

- 4 mirrors in carved wood frames are limewood on pine . Restored c1990 with new candle arms cast to suit. They were provided by Christopher Richardson in 1755 and may have been designed by Paine. Across on the landing are 2 more mirrors plus 2 card tables also original to the building.
- Two bronzed cast spelter statues of pages made by Miroy Freres, a French firm. Acquired by the Corporation in 1865.
- Peace Window was made by Harry Harvey of York in 1986 and is dedicated to peace between nations. See appendix
- The Coat of Arms was created for the new Council in 1974. Details are in an appendix.

The Dining Room, later the Council Chamber, now the Chamber.

- Built in 1806 by William Lindley.
- Originally used as a banqueting suite but later as Council Chamber.
- Now used for wedding receptions, events and afternoon teas.
- The large mirror was added in 1836. It cost £130
- Musicians gallery
- Apse was painted by artist David Venables in the 1980s.
- The chandeliers date from 1850 and again are made by Osler

The Salon

Originally a card and gaming room for gentlemen only. Much altered and enlarged with removal of staff stairs by William Lindley in 1806 and raising of ceiling light by William Hurst in 1831.

- Battle Scene in fireplace is of Agincourt
- Large Dial Clock by Hallifax
- Paintings Royal Family members all labelled. Of note is
 - The Queen Mother (at 80), specially commissioned by the Council and painted by Norman Hutchinson.

Other paintings of note are:

- Sir Edmund Beckett who brought the railway and plant works to town (formerly Edmund Denison) MP for the West Riding 1841-1859).
- Alderman George Tuby (Mayor 1921/22) the fairground mayor

Added Kitchen Tour if open.

Members Room

- Halifax longcase Clock
- The 'Rossington Chair' specially made for Mayor Whittaker in 1779
- Large central specimen table is Italian and came from St.Catherine's, once a country house which became a hospital.
- Large Sideboard is Victorian but its origins are unknown
- Outside the room, in the lobby, is another Halifax clock

Passageway

Collection of Military and Railway Pictures all labelled.

Items from Twin Towns including a tapestry from Dandong and a picture of Wilmington.

Hall (outside Great Kitchen)

- Clock by Benjamin Huntsman who later developed crucible steel in Sheffield.
- White Ensign of HMS Andromeda, Doncaster's adopted ship, which served in the Falklands. After the war, Captain Weatherall gave the ship's Ensign to the town.

The Great Kitchen—now used for weddings.

There were several kitchens originally but this was the main one. Food was prepared here for the banquets and taken along an open colonnade and into the main building.

The room is now a wedding venue but note the two ovens and the various kitchen utensils below and by the side of the entrance.

- The pillar was painted in 1986 by two students from Sheffield University to look like marble

Courtyard

- Two gas street lamps dating from 1870's
- Chickens were originally kept here. Town fire engine once kept here.

On Way Out if you wish to show:

Entrance Hall

- Large Dial Clock by Hallifax
- Paintings: St Georges Church (the Minster) and Regent Square.
- The plaque commemorates the men from the 40th Division of the Royal engineers (Doncaster's Own) who lost their lives in the First World War
- Card tables dating from around 1750 are original to the House

APPENDIX FOR PEACE WINDOW

- Peace window detail: -
 - Sprig of broom represents King Richard I, who granted the town its Royal Charter in 1194. The Latin for broom is Planta Genista hence Plantagenet
 - The white rose of Yorkshire and red rose of Lancashire (John of Gaunt).
 - The heraldic lions represent Doncaster's connection with the Royal Family
 - The Norman helmet represents William the Conqueror
 - The griffin represents the Rockingham China factory that operated at Swinton until 1840
 - The eagle represents the Roman settlement of Danum
 - The Parliamentary helmet is turned upside down to represent the bloodshed of the Civil War.
 - Portcullis—Henry VIII. Priory was on the site.
 - The Doncaster lion has been the symbol of the town since about 1300
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- Coat of Arms
 - The shield is half black, half green

- The black represents the Western side of the borough, which was predominately coal mining
- The green represents the East, which was predominately agricultural
- 8 white roses on the shield – represent the 8 councils that amalgamated to form DMBC in 1974
- The two wavy lines at the bottom of the shield represent the River Don and the canal system
- The castle in the middle comes from the banner of 1467 and indicates that Doncaster was once a fortified town.
- On the lion on the left you have the British Rail 'flash' for the railways and plant works.
- The Miners lamp represents the mining industry.
- On the lion on the right the blue flash represents the power stations and the ship's anchor representing shipbuilding at Thorne.
- The helmet with the visor shut indicates we are a town
- The castle towers represent the castles of Conisbrough and Tickhill
- The oak leaves around the owl represent the Roman settlement of Danum.
- The Owl represents the Savilles of Mexborough- around its neck you have the yellow and blue which represents the De Warren family, the Norman rulers of Conisbrough Castle.
- The motto adopted by Doncaster MBC in 1974 is 'Be Steadfast'

This guide is an introduction to the Mansion House. We hope you are finding it useful. If you cannot answer any question we recommend that you wait until the end of the tour and seek a more experienced volunteer.

Recommended:

1 The revised guide to the Mansion House is on the Friends website and is excellent background reading.

2 In the 1980s the Mansion House was redecorated and items such as modern light fittings removed. A room by room description of the work, described by the architect, John Holmes, is also on the site, as is a description of redecoration by artist David Venables. You may well find the recordings of interest once you gain experience of the tours.

3 Also on the website is an atmospheric early description of a visit to an event at the Mansion House from a journal written by Amelia Staniforth of Firbeck Hall.

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