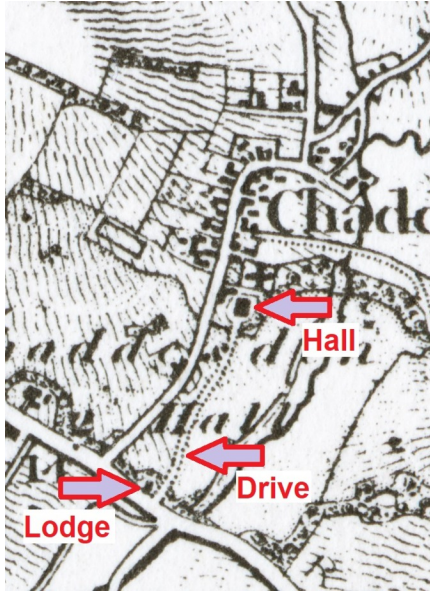


CHADDESSEN HALL

INTRODUCTION

In the opening years of the nineteenth century, anyone journeying from Spondon towards Derby along Nottingham Road might have paused for a moment or two on the bridge over Chaddesden Brook near Meadow Lane to admire the parkland on the north side of the road and get a glimpse of Chaddesden Hall, the seat of the Wilmot family, in the distance. If they then looked down into the brook below they would be rewarded with this attractive scene:

A piece of water at a considerable expence has been tortured into various meanders, in order to form something like cascades, falling about three feet perpendicular, one of which is brought near the road, creating in the passing villagers a momentary surprise at the wonderful works of man!¹



A few yards past this vista stood a small lodge cottage guarding the entrance to a long private drive which ran through the parkland up to the Hall as can be seen in this Ordnance Survey map of 1836.

Two centuries later much has changed. The little lodge cottage was demolished many years ago and its site later occupied by the Essoldo Cinema,² which in its turn was razed to the ground to make way for the present Aldi store. Chaddesden has grown out of all proportion compared with small village it once was and, of course, the Hall itself no longer exists, indeed so few traces of have survived that many people would be hard-pressed to give any account of it at all, other than it was a large mansion in Chaddesden Park, once home to the Wilmot family, and pulled down many years ago. Before discussing Chaddesden Hall in more detail, it is worth examining the possibility that there were earlier halls in the village, not necessarily on the same site.

EARLIER HALLS IN CHADDESSEN?

A medieval hall was usually associated with a manor, for example what is now called the Old Hall opposite the church at Breadsall was known to earlier generations as Over Hall, for Breadsall was once divided into two separate manors – Over Hall in the middle of the village and Nether Hall nearer to Mansfield Road. Confusingly by the fourteenth century the Manor of Chaddesden had been split into eight portions, any of which might have had its own “Hall”. It was around this time that the Foljambe family set about acquiring some of these Chaddesden manorial fragments, so perhaps they were the first to build a hall here somewhere.

More than twenty years ago I came across an interesting document in The National Archives at Kew in London.³ Written in 1529, it listed various property that had once belonged to the de Chaddesden chantry in St. Mary’s Church. The document described various pieces of land in one of Chaddesden’s large open fields called Breadsall Field (in modern terms roughly the whole area between Field Lane – Max Road – Buxton Road – Wood Road) and I was intrigued to see that it referred to North Hall Sitch, a sitch being a local name for a small stream, i.e. the stream by the North Hall, but where exactly was this North Hall? The same document also went on to mention “le Parokks” or “The Park” in the same general area of Breadsall Field. A medieval park was generally set aside for hunting deer and might well have a grand house associated with it. If there was once a North Hall in or near to Breadsall Field, then maybe there was also a South Hall elsewhere, perhaps nearer the centre of the village. One such location might have been on Chaddesden Lane ... the abrupt right angle bend at the bottom of the modern Wilsthorpe Road suggests that centuries ago

1 G. M. Woodward, *Eccentric Excursions, or Literary & Pictorial Sketches of Countenance, Character & Country*, London, 1796, p.189.

2 Previously known as the Gloria Cinema.

3 TNA, DL 43/1/36.

Chaddesden Lane actually made a detour around the perimeter of some important structure. Could this slightly elevated site opposite the Jubilee Club, once have been occupied by a medieval hall? Of course, all this is merely speculation, lacking any real proof!

The de Chaddesden chantry in St. Mary's Church briefly referred to above was founded back in the second half of the fourteenth century so that priests might pray for the benefit of the souls of Archdeacon Henry de Chaddesden, his ancestors and benefactors. One of the richest chantry establishments in the county, our church had to be considerably extended to accommodate the four chantry priests. Is it possible that Chaddesden Hall had a connection with the chantry?

The Reformation of the Church under Henry VIII and Edward VI in the mid sixteenth century put vast amounts of ecclesiastical property in the hands of the Crown, which promptly sold it on to various speculators. The Crown seized so much property that a new government department, The Court of Augmentations, was created to deal with all the lands and goods of former abbeys, monasteries, chantries, etc., and to arrange for their sale. After the Reformation much of the property and assets which had previously belonged to Chaddesden chantry were acquired by the Newton family from Horsley, who, for a few generations, became the squires of the village.

In their turn, the Newtons were bought out by Robert Wilmot after the death of Thomas Newton in 1600. Newton had divided his estate up between his wife and three sons Robert and John by his first wife (Mary Babington) and Thomas junr. by his second wife (Sarah Cradock).⁴ Robert was soon in serious debt to the Wilmot family and John Newton seemingly married Rachel Wilmot, daughter of Edward Wilmot of Derby, in 1607.

By acquiring the Newton family's Chaddesden estate the Wilmots, who had been Derby drapers with no previous Chaddesden connection, became owners of much of the land once belonging to Chaddesden Chantry and significantly in 1616 there is a reference to Robert Newton's "*late house called Chantrie House in Chaddesden, now occupied by Robert Willmot or Edward Shrigley*".⁵ This seems likely to have been the former residence of the four chantry priests at Chaddesden, which must have been quite an imposing house for in the previous century it is known to have possessed a gatehouse and four stables.⁶ So the question remains: Did Robert Wilmot actually convert what had once been the Chantry priests' house into the forerunner of Chaddesden Hall?

When Robert Wilmot drew up his will in July 1638 he made two specific bequests regarding his Chaddesden house.⁷ First of all, his household goods were to be divided amongst his sons Robert, Edward, John and Nicholas, "*But the best and greatest part thereof I bequeath unto my said sonne Robert to furnish the howse at Chaddisden*". Secondly he also gave the sum of £500 to his son Robert "*for the stocking and furnishing of the said howse and lands*." Maybe this means he had recently renovated or rebuilt the Chantry house.

What is beyond doubt is that the Hearth Tax assessments show that the Wilmot family's Chaddesden house was not especially large. Introduced in 1662, hearth-tax was levied at the rate of 2s per hearth per annum. At the time of the very first Hearth Tax assessment for 1662 when the village population would have been around 250 to 300 people there were just 46 households in Chaddesden liable for the Tax as follows:⁸

36 houses	@ 1 hearth (inc. the house of William Chowlorton, my own eighth-great grandfather)
7 houses	@ 2 hearths
2 houses	@ 3 hearths
1 house	@ 5 hearths (the house of Robert Willymott, Esqr)

4 P. F. Cholerton, *Chaddesden Wills and Inventories 1533–1868*, Unpublished MS., 1983. This younger Thomas later went on to build Duffield Hall c.1630. From some 30 years from the late 1970s it served as the HQ of the Derbyshire Building Society.

5 DLSL, DD 15415. Edward Shrigley (died 1633) was Wilmot's brother-in-law.

6 *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, Edward VI, Vol.2, 1548–1549, p.317-9.

7 P. F. Cholerton, *Chaddesden Wills and Inventories 1533–1868*, Unpublished MS., 1983.

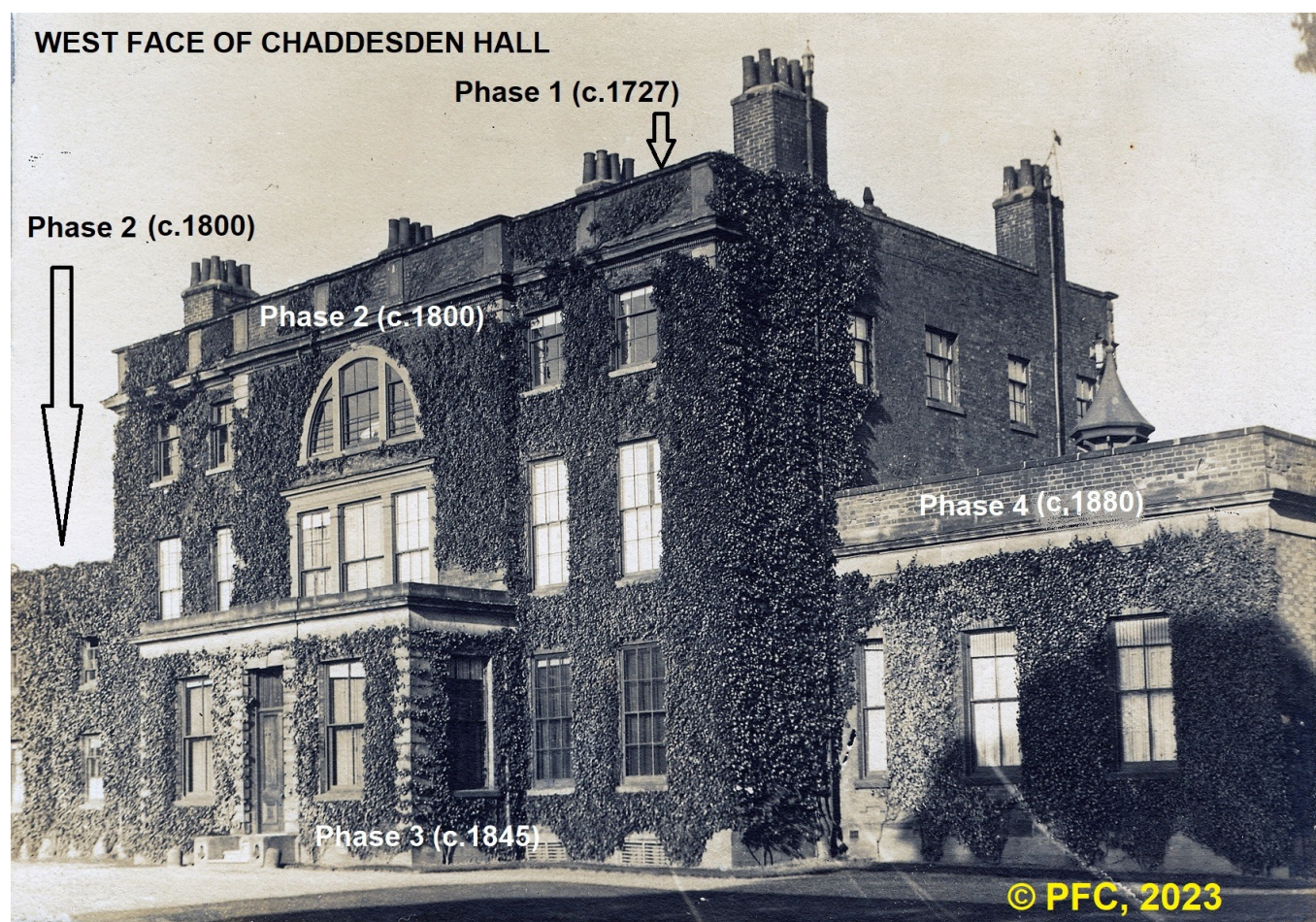
8 TNA, E 179/245/8.

This suggests that whatever Robert Wilmot was living in at Chaddesden in 1662 it was a relatively modest building, even if it was the largest house in the village. By way of comparison, at the same point in time, Robert Wilmot's uncle, Nicholas, who had been given the nearly Osmaston estate by his father some 30 years previously, was taxed on 20 hearths at Osmaston Hall. The Wilmots of Osmaston and Chaddesden were both descended from Robert (died 1638).⁹

CHADDESSEN HALL – THE 18TH CENTURY MANSION

Chaddesden Hall as we know it from old photographs was built or rebuilt c.1727-29 by Robert Wilmot (1668-1729). His wife, Joyce, was a co-heiress of the Sacheverels of Morley so it is possible that her inheritance helped fund the project. As Robert died before the house was completed, it was left to his son, also Robert (1692-1755), to complete the work.¹⁰ From a chance reference I discovered many years ago, it seems a Derby man called Daniel Meet had been contracted to make bricks for the Hall at 4s 6d per 1,000 bricks, rather than the going rate of 5s 0d because he was in debt to Robert Wilmot.¹¹ Disappointingly the architect of Chaddesden Hall is not known, the two most likely candidates being Richard Jackson (Derby Guildhall, 1731) or Francis Smith of Warwick (All Saints' Derby, 1724; Darley Hall, Darley Abbey, 1727; and Locko Park, 1737).

From the mid eighteenth century onward, Sir Robert Mead Wilmot (1731–1793) and his successors were busy buying up and consolidating other smaller Chaddesden estates. Their wealth was also improved by advantageous marriages. No doubt much of this new income went into improving and extending the family's Chaddesden residence, which was seemingly built and then remodelled in four distinct phases:



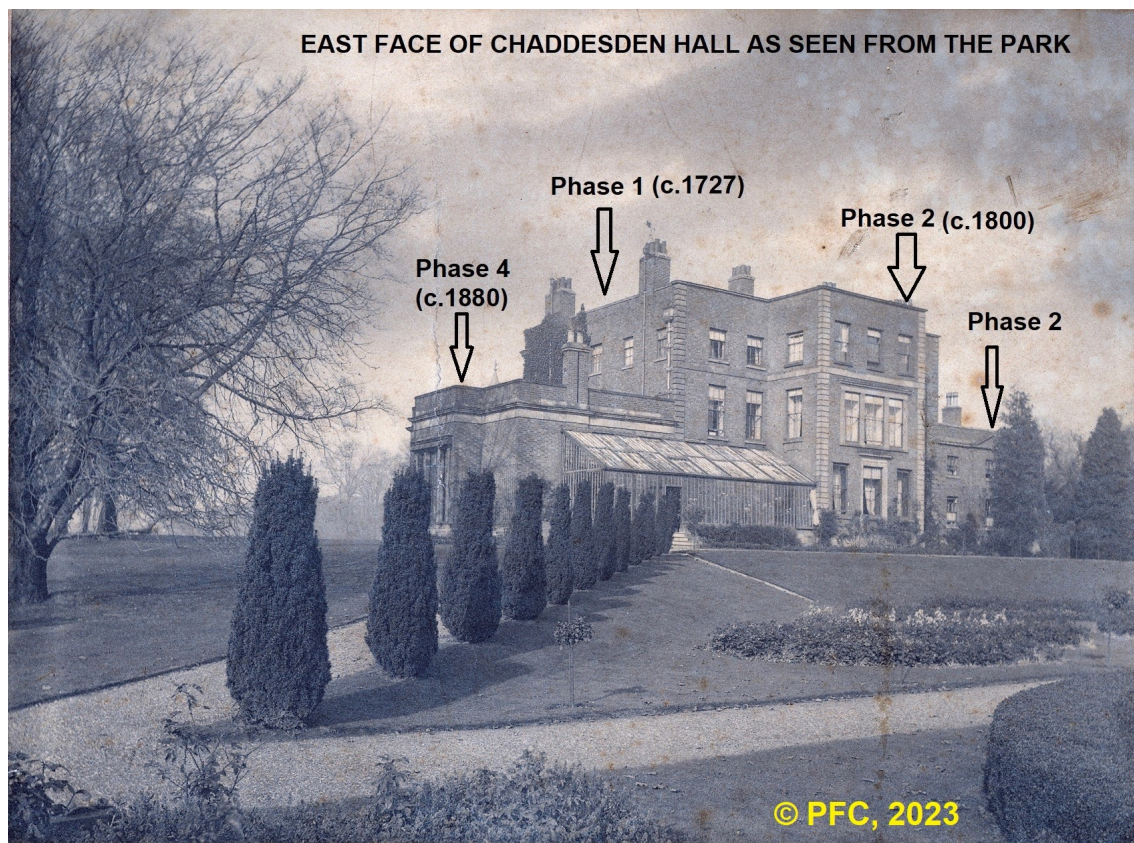
- ⁹ Chaddesden had been Robert Wilmot's first acquisition and he presumably bought the Osmaston estate because of its proximity to Chaddesden. In those days it was possible to ride down Meadow Lane at Chaddesden, follow the River Derwent upstream for a short distance and then cross it by means of the Holme Ford in order to reach the Osmaston estate.
- ¹⁰ Robert died unmarried in 1755 and the Chaddesden estate passed to his younger brother, Edward Wilmot (1693–1786), physician and 1st Baronet.
- ¹¹ DRO, D5955/178; formerly DLSL, Deed TSM 178. To buy 1,000 bricks now (2023) would probably cost in the region of £1,000.

PHASE 1 (1727–1729): The central portion of the Hall, a rectangular brick building some 60ft x 45ft of three storeys above a basement was constructed. Its west front was divided into seven bays, the middle three projecting forwards by maybe a foot, and was decorated with stone pilaster-strips or lesenes, as was the seven-bay east face. The north and south aspects of the Hall were of four bays. The house's second floor windows were noticeably smaller, presumably because many of the servants' bedrooms were on this floor. The roof was seemingly flat or nearly so. The lead rainwater down-pipes of the house bore the monogram R–W–J for Robert and Joyce Wilmot.

PHASE 2 (c.1790–1800): Sir Robert Mead Wilmot (1731–1793, 2nd Bt.) and his son Sir Robert Wilmot (1765–1842, 3rd Bt.)¹² seem to have been responsible for substantially enlarging their property. On the east side of the Hall, a massive three storey extension was added to the centre of the building, whilst on the west side a new semi-circular Diocletian window was installed in the central bay,¹³ underneath which was a new tripartite window. Over on the north side of the Hall a new two-storey three-bay annex with an attractive pediment was added.

PHASE 3 (c.late-1840s–1850s): A lumpish central entrance porch was built on the west side of the Hall by Sir Henry Sacheverel Wilmot (1801–1872, 4th Bt.). It was probably around this time that the drive leading up to the Hall from Nottingham Road through the parkland (see above) was discontinued, with Chaddesden Lane providing the main access for pedestrians and horse-drawn vehicles.

PHASE 4 (c.1880): A large single-storey extension on the south side, the last building project at the Hall, was constructed by Sir Henry Wilmot (1831–1901, 5th Bt.) as a dual-purpose ballroom and billiard room, leading to a large conservatory built up against the east wall. Externally, the most imposing feature of the new ballroom was its massive south-facing window, which at first glance could easily be mistaken for a tetrastyle portico. Another noticeable feature was this attractive polygonal conical structure on its roof, which was a lantern-like louvre designed to conceal either a chimney or a ventilation shaft.



¹² His second wife, whom he married in 1817, was Bridget Craufurd, daughter of Henry Holland the architect (1745–1806) and grand-daughter of Lancelot “Capability” Brown (1716–1783).

¹³ Diocletian windows were so named because they are to be seen in the early 4th century Baths (*Thermae*) of Diocletian in Rome. They are sometimes known as thermal windows for the same reason.

OTHER MISCELLANEOUS STRUCTURES, ETC: A short distance north of the Hall and attached to it at right-angles was a further range of domestic buildings such as the laundry, washing-room, airing-room, etc., whilst an archway provided access to yet more outbuildings – the coach houses, stables, and harness room.

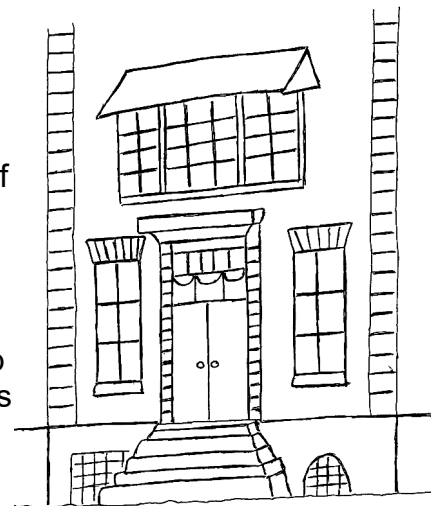
On the other side of Chaddesden Lane, across the road from the Hall was an extensive garden area of some 5 acres including a walled 1.25 acre Kitchen Garden where fruit and vegetables for the house were grown by a team of gardeners.¹⁴ Without the benefit of electric refrigeration, the cook at the Hall would have tried to keep food fresh by utilising both the Hall cellars and the ice-house – this building, situated in the Park somewhere in the vicinity of the modern Richmond Road,¹⁵ was essentially a purpose-built structure, its deep chamber covered by a large earth mound and reached by means of an airtight entrance passage. Each winter the chamber would be filled with ice from the nearby brook, enabling food to be stored, hung on hooks above the frozen ice.

CHADDESSEN HALL – A MOMENT IN HISTORY

On Saturday 8 October 1831, the Reform Bill, which was intended to increase the size of the electorate, was unexpectedly defeated in the House of Lords. News of this reached Derby by coach at 7:00 pm that evening. Crowds of people gathered in the Market Place waiting to hear confirmation that the Bill had been passed, suddenly realised that their hopes for parliamentary reform had been thwarted. The mood quickly turned ugly and a mob formed, some members of which gained access to three church towers and began tolling bells as if in mourning. Various properties in Derby were attacked and then the mob split into two halves, one went to Markeaton Hall, the other to Chaddesden Hall, which they submitted to a two-hour attack, breaking most of the windows and shutters and vandalising the outbuildings. Henry Sacheverel Wilmot himself must have been baffled by this attack on his property for he was by no means an opponent of reform; not only had he refused to sign an anti-reform petition, but also he had also attended a county meeting in which he had shown his support for the concept of parliamentary reform.

A FEW UNANSWERED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HALL

Some years ago I saw a copy of a sketch made around 1845 by Emma Wilmot (née Darwin, 1820–1898), a talented but not very well known local artist, of the west face of Chaddesden Hall just a few years after her marriage in 1842 to Edward Woollett Wilmot, brother of Sir Henry Sacheverel Wilmot. Edward Wilmot was Land Agent to the 4th Duke of Newcastle at Clumber in Nottinghamshire. Emma's drawing clearly showed a very different entrance to the one described in Phase 3 above, with double doors reached by a short flight of five vertiginous-looking steps. This drawing of the central section of the Hall is a quick sketch that I made of that particular piece of her artwork. Such a steep and awkward entrance led me to recall a conversation I had many years ago with the late Mrs. Phoebe Oldershaw of Jasmine Cottage, who had been told that the main entrance to the Hall was originally on the east side of the building, overlooking the parkland.



There is another interesting question: Were traces of an earlier house incorporated within the Hall's outbuildings? Two factors suggest this might indeed have been the case: First, in 1979, Jack Henderson co-wrote a book about the history of Etwall¹⁶ in which he noted that the music room of the property called Etwall Lawn on Main Street had been constructed c.1930 with ceiling beams from the demolished Chaddesden Hall. Some years ago Max Craven told me that Henderson was of the opinion that these were substantial structural beams predating the 1727–1729 construction of Chaddesden Hall and very likely came from its earlier predecessor.¹⁷ Secondly, Frank Pratt, the Derby antiques dealer, had also told Max Craven that before the Second World War he had sold a massive wooden bressumer beam of c.17th century date (such as would have been used as a lintel

¹⁴ See the separate article on Chaddesden Historical Group's website entitled *The Chaddesden Hall Kitchen Garden*.

¹⁵ My father and grandfather both knew the bend in Chaddesden Lane near its junction with Richmond Road as Ice House Corner.

¹⁶ J. B. Henderson & E. R. Robinson, *The Etwall Heritage*, Ilkeston, 1979, pp.71–2.

¹⁷ *Personal Communication*, 17 October 2012.

over a large fireplace) “*from the sheds at Chaddesden Hall*”; once more implying that it had come from an earlier Hall, largely built of wood.¹⁸ Did the old outbuildings contain remnants of the Chantry House I mentioned earlier – I doubt we will ever know!

A VICTORIAN DESCRIPTION OF THE HALL

In September 1862, Ela Theresa Talbot was staying at Markeaton Hall, from where, on the fourth of that month she wrote to her father, William Henry Fox Talbot (the photography pioneer):

“We are just returned from Chaddesden where we had a very pleasant visit (with the exception of pouring rain) but they are people who know how to make themselves comfortable and fires were made all over the house in consideration of the bad weather – there was plenty to do however in examining all the curiosities the house contained, in fact it is quite a museum, & Major Wilmot displayed a large collection of Chinese dresses – enamels and china etc brought back by him from the seat of war. He also has a number of photographs done on the spot by a photographer accompanying the army, which give a very good idea of Peking and the surrounding country all swampy and barren looking. Some of the curiosities come from the Emperor’s own apartments in the palace. Major Wilmot himself returned home after the death of his elder brother,¹⁹ he is just married and both he and his wife are very agreeable people.”²⁰

The Major Wilmot referred to in the letter was Henry Wilmot (later Sir Henry, VC), who had been on duty in China as a Major in the Rifle Brigade at the time of the Second Opium War. In 1860 when peace negotiations between Britain and China broke down, the British High Commissioner to China ordered the troops to loot and destroy the Imperial Summer Palace in Peking.

THE HALL INTERIOR IN LATE VICTORIAN TIMES:

Thus far this article has dealt mainly with the external appearance of the Hall, but what was it like inside? Unfortunately photographic evidence is virtually nil. To date, I am aware of only two pictures of the interior, a negative and its print in the Derbyshire Record Office, which show a fireplace, some adjacent wood panelling and no other details!²¹

By piecing together various brief accounts of the Hall from trade directories, miscellaneous references, etc., the basic layout of the Hall seems to have been as follows:²²

GROUND FLOOR

MAIN ENTRANCE AREA

Porch on West side of the Hall, overlooking Chaddesden Lane.

Entrance Hall containing 2 old cannons on their carriages; numerous pairs of antlers, and many glass cases filled with mounted butterflies and stuffed birds, probably those collected by Sir Henry Sacheverel Wilmot (4th Bt, 1801-1872).

DOMESTIC AREA

This was located on the north side of the building, i.e. to the left as viewed from Chaddesden Lane and contained:

Footman’s bedroom – This needed to be close to the main door as he would be expected to receive visitors, no matter what time of day.

Butler’s bed-sitting-room – Also near to the main door so he could attend as and when required.

Butler’s pantry – This seems to have been used mainly for storing china and glassware, etc..

Housekeeper’s room – Used for storing tea-ware, dinner-ware, linen sheets, towels, etc.

Kitchen and Scullery – A crucial part of the Hall where meals were prepared, dishes and cutlery washed and cleaned, etc.

¹⁸ *Personal Communication*, as above. The implication being that a brick and stone residence would have fireplaces arched with those materials, not wood.

¹⁹ Robert Edward Eardley Wilmot (1830–1861).

²⁰ The Correspondence of William Henry Fox Talbot website: <https://foxtalbot.dmu.ac.uk/> Document no. 8597.

²¹ DRO, D331/2/21/184–185.

²² The details which follow should not be regarded as definitive.

Servants' Hall – Here the staff would meet for their own meals.

Pump Room – The Hall would have used copious quantities of water each day for cooking, cleaning, washing, personal hygiene, etc.

Laundry and Wash-house – When the Hall was full of guests, the laundry staff would have been kept extremely busy. There were no easy-care fabrics, electric washing-machines or driers in those days!

Large cellars – Mostly used for the bulk storage of wine bottles, but some perishable food-stuffs might have been kept there too. In 1987 a workman in Chaddesden Park accidentally broke through the roof of one of the cellars, which had evidently not been filled in when the Hall was demolished.

FAMILY & ENTERTAINING AREA

Boudoir – A private room for the lady of the house.

Oak Room and Dining Room – Both with panelled walls.

Drawing Room – Overlooking the Park, this room was particularly well set-out with numerous English and Chinese miniatures, as well as portraits of Alex Pope (Poet, 1688–1744), John Nash (Architect, 1752–1835), William Harvey (Doctor who discovered the circulation of blood, 1578–1657), and a picture of “Death & the Old Man” by Joseph Wright of Derby (1734–1797).²³

Study – Where the head of the house would spend time dealing with personal and estate business.

Library – No doubt well-stocked with suitable reading material.

Billiard Room – Decorated with family portraits, Indian furniture, together with Chinese and Japanese miniatures, this room provided access to the Conservatory.

From the main entrance hall a door led to an inner hall, off which was the main staircase to:

FIRST FLOOR

Staircase landing, with cabinets of fine English China and a portrait of Queen Caroline (Wife of King George II); Principal bedroom with its own dressing room; 3 more bedrooms and another dressing room

Staircase and landing to:

SECOND FLOOR

9 bedrooms; 2 valets' bedrooms; Housemaid's bedroom; 3 servants' bedrooms; Servants' landing

A grand total of 19 bedrooms in all.

The 1891 Chaddesden Census provides a glimpse at the people who would have needed these bedrooms. Apart from Sir Henry Wilmot, his wife Charlotte, his sister, Constance Wilmot, and a female visitor, there were ten indoor staff, i.e. Butler, Footman, Housekeeper, three Lady's Maids, three Housemaids, & a Scullery Maid. Sadly Charlotte Wilmot died only a month after the census.

Just a few weeks after his wife's death in 1891, Sir Henry Wilmot (5th Bt.) drew up a new will. He left *“my said Mansion called Chaddesden Hall and all other my real and leasehold estates whatsoever”* In trust *“to permit my said Sister [Constance] to use and enjoy the same during her life And from and after her decease In trust for my Nephew Ralph Henry Sacheverel Wilmot ...”* Another intriguing reference was to *“all the subjects of the Museum of Nature and Art in my Museum House at Chaddesden aforesaid which were principally collected by my late father Sir Henry Sacheverel Wilmot”*. Sir Henry died childless on 7 April 1901, aged 70, but Constance Wilmot lived for a further 15 years at the Hall until her death on 11 March 1916, aged 80.

A month after Constance's death in 1916 a very detailed inventory of the Hall's contents for probate purposes was prepared by Heathcotes the Derby auctioneers. The inventory was contained in two volumes, one of which acquired by the Derbyshire Record Office in 1999.²⁴ This volume covers the house and its fittings and runs to 160 pages, with the individual valuations written in code to ensure that a casual observer would have no idea as to values allocated to specific items. Unfortunately the

²³ This last painting was acquired by the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Connecticut, USA, in 1953.

²⁴ DRO, D5126/1/119. This volume contains a summary of both books.

second volume detailing curios, medals and books at the Hall is missing. The total value of the Hall's contents amounted to £8,500 from which was deducted £2,100 as regards items of National and/or Historic interest classified as being exempt.

To give some idea of the wide range of individual items and values here is a small selection:

<i>Location</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Value</i>		
		£	s	d
Stairs & Landing	Portrait of Queen Caroline ²⁵	105	00	00
Inner Hall	Trophies of swords, guns and bayonets	12	12	00
Inner Hall	Zulu shields and 8 assegais	2	02	00
Study	Bordered Turkey carpet	3	03	00
Kitchen	20 tin and copper moulds, pewter ice-pail	0	10	06
Butler's Room	Lino to floor	0	15	00
Library	Pair of Blue John urn-shaped vases on pedestals	12	12	00
Entrance Hall	82 cases of stuffed birds and butterflies	75	00	00
Entrance Hall	Two old cannons on carriages	52	10	00
Entrance Hall	Bronze gong on stand with beater	1	01	00
Housekeeper's Room	220 damask serviettes	5	10	00
Billiard Room	Portrait of Lady Mary Wilmot by Wright of Derby	200	00	00
Billiard Room	Circular carved jade bowl and cover	25	00	00
Lady Ada's bedroom	Colour print of Queen Victoria	0	05	00

Sir Henry's nephew, Sir Ralph Henry Sacheverel Wilmot (1875–1918, 6th Bt) duly inherited the property, but death duties compelled him to sell the Chaddesden estate comprising some 2,200 acres with its annual rent roll of £5,000.²⁶ Furthermore he was not a well man, having developed lung problems in the trenches of World War I and died in January 1918,²⁷ leaving his young son Arthur Ralph Wilmot (1909–1942) as the 7th Baronet, aged just 9 years. Although Sir Ralph had spent part of his boyhood at Chaddesden Hall, he never took up permanent residence at the old family home as an adult.²⁸ His widow, Lady Wilmot, and their three children did however, spend a few months at Chaddesden after Miss Wilmot's decease,²⁹ but after Sir Ralph's death in 1918 they relocated briefly to another family estate at Stubton, Lincolnshire, which was also sold later that same year whereupon they moved back to their home at The Grove, Winthorpe, near Newark.

The sale of the Chaddesden estate which Sir Ralph had originally agreed on 16 May 1917 was already well in hand at the time of his death a few months later and the trustees acting for his son continued on with its sale for £100,000 to Samuel Arthur Wallis, a Long Eaton Lace Manufacturer. Other sub-purchasers quickly joined in, such as Henry Witham, a Long Eaton contractor, and William Alfred Wallis, a Long Eaton solicitor (Samuel's brother). Much of the disposal of the Wilmot estate was facilitated by Ernest Terah Hooley, the so-called "splendid bankrupt" of Long Eaton and Risley, who was second cousin to the Wallises.³⁰ To recoup some of their capital the new owners quickly sold off various surplus farms, etc.

THE HALL'S FINAL YEARS

No-one could be persuaded to take on the now empty house and use it as a grand residence so it quickly became something of a white elephant. For a few years after 1918 the Hall became a temporary short-term home to a few workers at the new Celanese site in Spondon and a slightly longer-term residence for several other families (e.g. Litherland, Ruffels, Lummas, Heathcote, etc), some of whom were working for John Hartopp Holt, a newcomer to Chaddesden, who was a farmer, butcher and businessman (and also Ernest Terah Hooley's son-in-law).

²⁵ Wife of King George II.

²⁶ *Derby Mercury*, 8 June 1917.

²⁷ At Mundesley Sanatorium in Norfolk.

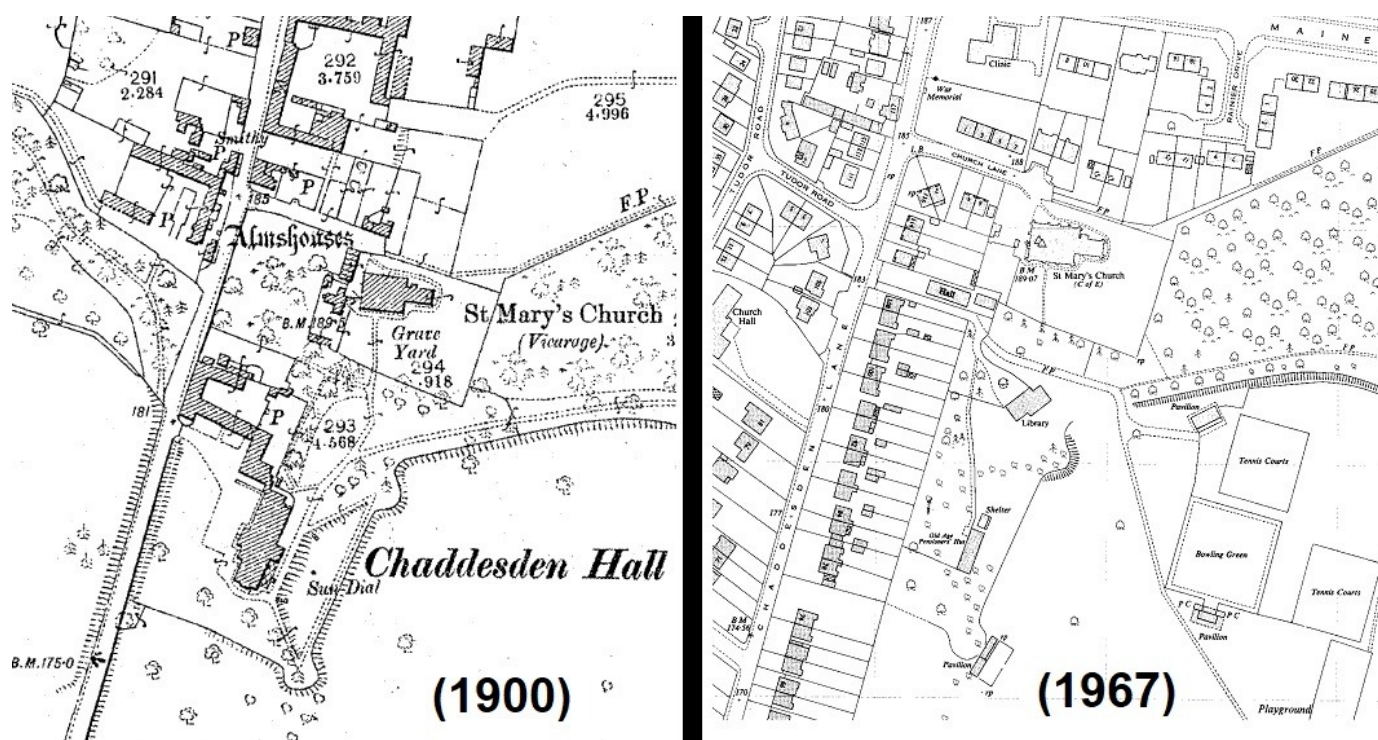
²⁸ *Derby Mercury*, 25 January 1918.

²⁹ *Derby Mercury*, as above.

³⁰ Hooley (1859–1947) was a company promoter, property speculator, financier, fraudster and bankrupt!

Demolition seems to have begun in mid-1926, when the Hall's new owner, Sir Charles Markham, took advantage of that year's General Strike to provide himself with a source of cheap labour. In September 1926, foreman Joe Burton was advertising "*Good crushed brick rubble for concrete for sale, price 7s 6d a square yard ... Apply Burton, Chaddesden Hall*". Joe Burton was originally from Ashbourne and later settled in Chaddesden at 152 Chaddesden Lane, opposite the Jubilee Club. In November 1926 the Hall was described as "*practically disappeared*" and by 1927 – its 200th anniversary year – the old house was no more!

Very little now remains to mark the site of the Hall. If you look carefully amidst the rather dense vegetation opposite the new library in Chaddesden Park, you might just spot the level house-platform of the Hall, together with remnants of the two rows of yew trees that once diverged outwards from its east front. On Chaddesden Lane, two stone pillars marking the former entrance to the Hall have been incorporated into the front garden walls of numbers 96 and 98. A comparison of the two Ordnance Survey maps shown below shows just how much the area has changed!



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WILMOT FAMILY?

Unfortunately three consecutive generations of the family were short-lived. As described above, Sir Ralph Henry Sacheverel Wilmot (6th Bt) died in 1918, aged 43. His son Sir Arthur Ralph Wilmot (7th Bt) died in 1942, aged 33, and his son, Sir Robert Arthur Wilmot (8th Bt) died in 1974, aged 35. The current head of the family is now Sir Henry Robert Wilmot (9th Bt), and in 2006 I contacted him to see if he knew whether the former estate documents, property leases, surveys, etc., relating to Chaddesden Hall and the village had survived, since a substantial collection of such documents spanning perhaps the seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries must once have been kept in the Estate Office at Chaddesden. Although I had an interesting phone conversation with Sir Henry, he wasn't aware of any surviving papers relating to the Chaddesden estate. The most likely scenario is that all these historical documents were destroyed in 1918 when the estate was being sold off, but there is a small chance that maybe they remain stacked on shelves in some forgotten corner of a solicitor's office awaiting discovery ... if so we might still one day learn the name of the architect of Chaddesden Hall.

© Peter Cholerton, 2023

See below for another account of the Hall

APPENDIX

Some thirty years ago Harold Fearnough, the former Headmaster of Cavendish Close Junior School, published a book about the history of Chaddesden, which included this extremely interesting eye-witness account of the Hall, written by Mrs. V. M. Clewes.³¹

Chaddesden Hall was a long oblong building constructed of greyish stone and having a flat roof. The entrance hall was panelled with oak, had a floor paved with large sandy stone slabs edged with black and a huge fireplace. Off the hall was the dining room, which was also panelled throughout in dark oak, even the ceiling, which had carved oak scrolls and ribbons running all over the room and the doors. The massive fireplace was similarly carved and in addition up its sides and along its top were finely carved sprays of oak leaves with acorns.

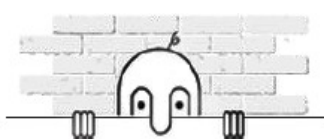
To the left were the kitchen, sculleries and pantries. The water for these was drawn from pumps on long stone sinks. There was a block in the kitchen floor for chopping wood. The wine cellars were on this side of the Hall too and were reached by descending a flight of stone steps to another pump. Down there it was lovely and cool, even on the hottest days.

On the other side of the entrance hall was the sitting room, a very large billiard room, a gun room and a toilet. The staircase was very wide and had broad, shallow steps that curved and led up to the picture gallery at the top. There was a very large room on this floor, panelled in oak and painted a very pale grey and white and having a frieze of ornamental plaster. Here the large fireplace was of white marble with fluted pillars. The doors of this room were semi-circular like the windows and could be rolled back. The main bedrooms were also panelled and painted in pastel shades of green and blue and had small attached dressing rooms. On the second floor there were many smaller rooms and one very large one with a semi-circular window which, I was told, was used by the Wilmots as a nursery.

I did not know any of the Wilmot family as the Hall had already been empty for some time before I lived there. By then it was beginning to fall into decay and in many of the rooms there was paper peeling off and hanging from the walls. How long it had been there I do not know but a pump in the laundry garden bore the date 1749.

This reminds me that there was a part of the Hall set aside for this purpose and there was a room for washing, one for airing and another for ironing. There was a special laundry garden which was walled in and had many small lawns where clothes used to be dried. An old white owl used to come and sit on the top of the ironing room door and got very tame. He looked very weird when he turned his head round to watch us. We christened him Oswald. There were then two owl boxes in the big cedar tree which still stands in Chaddesden Park.

Mrs. Violet May Clewes (1903–1975), had actually lived at the Hall with her parents, Harry and Daisie Ruffels, from c.1920 until her marriage in 1923. She clearly had an eye for detail and took a keen interest in her unusual residence. Thanks to her narrative we can visualise the Hall in its final years as it gently decayed.



Click me to go Home
(Chaddesden Historical Group)

31 H. W. Fearnough, *Chaddesden a History*, Sponson, 1991, pp.26–27. Mr. Fearnough was also my old Headmaster.