

A Day in Waddesdon

Our coach trip to Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire on 15th June started well with a beautiful sunny morning. The first disappointment however was that our Leader Barry was unable to join us due to ill health. He made sure we were all safely on the bus. The second disappointment was that Barry's large sweetie bag was not passed round the coach as usual but we soon got over this when we realised we were in the capable hands of Kate and the driver, Maurice, who apparently had worked together years ago and they were an excellent team. When we arrived at Waddesdon, we were welcomed by the friendly staff and given our appointed time slot. We disembarked to see the splendid French chateau style Manor, built 1874 - 89 by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild and the surroundings decked with bunting and lined with tents preparing for a Food and Drink Festival in the grounds. We went off in search of refreshments and found we had walked a circuitous route via the forest to the Café as the signposting was not very effective. Inside Waddesdon Manor we were bowled over by the sumptuous rooms and lavish furnishings.

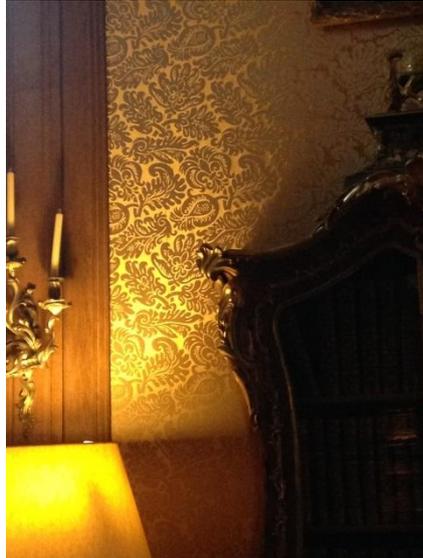


The beautiful furniture and paintings including Gainsboroughs, Reynolds and many Old Dutch Masters.



Gainsborough "The Pink Boy"

We marvelled at the decorative treasures, Sevres porcelain, jewellery, statues including an enormous mechanical elephant made by the famous clock-maker Hubert Martinet around 1770. Kate enquired about the silk wall hangings and was told that Baron Rothschild would only have French silk. However, Kate found that the wall hangings in the West Hall had been replaced not by a French Company but by Richard Humphries' Weaving Company of Sudbury.



Silk Wallhanging by Humphries Weaving Company

The multi-media guide informed us that the man who built Waddeson, Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild, sadly lost his wife Evelina and his only child after only one and a half years of marriage and although he surrounded himself with beautiful objects and entertained lavishly, he remained a lonely soul. The friendly Waddesdon staff waved our coach goodbye. We came to the conclusion that we had a wonderful day but not enough time to see all the Wonders of Waddesdon. We arrived back in Sudbury tired but happy!