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ROTHAMSTED
RESEARCH

The Manor of Rothamsted

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THE MANOR OF
ROTHAMSTED
AND ITS OCCUPANTS



(Ii) Guide to Rothamsted Manor House

Rothamsted Research

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II

GUIDE TO ROTHAMSTED MANOR HOUSE

The visitor approaches Rothamsted Manor from the east, through a drive lined with trees, some of them newly planted. Passing the site of the old coach house, which bore the date 1755 on its studded south door, he reaches in a few steps the main front, which, facing somewhat east of south and looking out over a lawn and low wall towards the trees on the confines of the park, presents a very fine Jacobean façade. Of the forty elm trees, planted in 1721 to form a vista from the main front towards Redbourn Lane, a few remained until 1976. However, the entrance drive never came down this avenue to the front door: the old approaches are those that lead from Hatching Green and Harpenden (see Plate VIII) although both have been re-aligned. The present entrance drive was laid down in 1901, replacing one which curved more to the south, of which traces remain. Some old barns and a horse-powered cornmill were demolished to make way for it. A western approach extended from the lodge on Redbourn Lane to the South-front lawn, perfectly straight for half a mile and flanked by limes of which thirteen survive. Plausibly this drive originated with Sir John Wittewronge. It would have provided a more direct link with Watling Street (being in public life his most important visitors were not local but from London) and justified the emphasis given to the 1654 West front.

The sundial on the front lawn contains, besides some tables, the following inscription:

This dial designed and constructed by Sir Charles V. Boys LL.D., F.R.S. is based upon an ancient stone dial at Thome Madras associated with St. Thomas. It depends upon Euclid's proposition "The angle at the centre of a circle is double the angle at the circumference".

SIR E. J. RUSSELL, *Director*, 1935

It was moved to its present position from the lawn in front of the main laboratory.

The front received its present form in the seventeenth century under Sir John Wittewronge, 1st Baronet, to whom more than to any other individual we are indebted for the loveliness of Rothamsted Manor as it is today, and whose life story is related on pp. 8–16 above. It was Sir John who built the curvilinear gables, which reflect his Flemish ancestry and remind us somewhat of Kew Palace.

The Dutch House at Kew, known since 1830 as Kew Palace, was built in 1631—ten years before Sir John's arrival at Rothamsted—on the site of a sixteenth century house, by a London merchant, Samuel Forterie, whose grandfather (like Sir John's) had been a refugee from the Continent and whose Flemish extraction is commemorated in the style.

He also extended the house at both ends and built a clock-tower, now superseded by a turret in the style of the Gothic revival, in which, however, the original bell bearing the date 1650 still hangs.

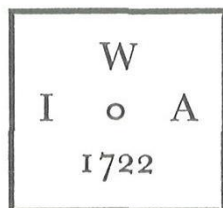
The bell is inscribed *Bryanus Eldridge me fecit* 1650. Bryan Eldridge the younger inherited in 1640 the celebrated foundry at Chertsey, Surrey, belonging to his father of the same name, and carried it on until his death in 1661. There are seventeen of his bells in Surrey, including an entire peal of five at Lingfield, cast two years before the Rothamsted bell. He used no mottoes, but gave simply the date and his name—until 1648 in English, thereafter in Latin.

Proceeding round the south-west corner we pass the west front, of which the first three (southernmost) gables are of the same date as the main front, the remaining two having been added in the same style in 1863.

The stone shield, dated 1665 and bearing the arms of Wittewronge quartering Vanacker, was inserted in the west front soon after 1906. Its original setting was Stantonbury House, Bucks (the seat of the baronets Wittewronge or elder branch), which was enlarged and remodelled by Sir John Wittewronge in 1665. (See Plate X.)

The shield's history is obscure. On the demolition of the house in 1791 it seems to have been transferred to nearby Wolverton, whence it was brought by Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge to Rothamsted. For an account of the Stantonbury branch of the Wittewronge family see below, p. 61.

A cast lead rain-water head bearing the initials of Jacob Wittewronge the younger (1693–1728) and of his wife Anne, *née* Bennet, together with the date 1722, was formerly to be seen on the west front. It was taken down in 1951. Another rain-water head, dated 1761, on the modern part of this front was removed at the same time.



Proceeding beyond the end of the house we come to Sir John Wittewronge's walled kitchen-garden, its wrought-iron gate surmounted with the initial W. (The gables placed on the walls are modern.)

Enclosed in a low wire fence on the left, just beyond the gateway into the kitchen-garden, there is a small plot of experiments on the continuous growth of clover on rich garden soil, laid down in 1854 as a sequel to the clover experiments on arable land (Hoosfield).

The leaden flower-urns lining the paths were cast not later than 1700, to judge from their style and decoration. They may well have been at Rothamsted since Sir John's time.

An urn which seems identical with the smaller type in this garden is illustrated in L. Weaver's *English Leadwork* (London, 1909; p. 206, fig. 343), being at that time at Myddelton House, Waltham Cross. It is interesting to recall that the family of Myddelton, with whom Sir John Wittewronge was connected by his mother's second marriage and by his own first two marriages, possessed property in the county of Montgomery, which contained lead mines, and that Sir John himself held land in that part of Wales.

Two pieces of statuary in the garden are the work of Charles, son of Sir John Bennet Lawes. Near the kitchen-garden, resting on a pedestal in the small lily-pond, is a recumbent female figure in marble, signed and dated 1878; while lying in the 'Warren' to the west, along the avenue of yew hedges, is a large group, also in marble, depicting the death of Dirce.

It carries the inscription: *Death of Dirce*. SIR CHARLES LAWES-WITTEWRONGE, BART., 1908. In 1911 it was shown at the International Fine Arts Exhibition in Rome, at which Sir Charles took a hand in arranging the sculpture; in the following year, after his death, it was set up in its present position in accordance with his wishes. A replica on a smaller scale in bronze is in the Tate Gallery. In style it is closely related to the famous Hellenistic treatment of the same subject, the Farnese Bull at Naples.

Dirce, in the Greek story, daughter of the Sun-god Helios, was the second wife of Lycus, King of Thebes. Her persecution of Antiope, his first wife, brought upon her the hatred of Antiope's twin sons, Amphion and Zethus, who avenged their mother by tying Dirce to a bull and leaving her to die. Her proverbial beauty is alluded to in Landor's quatrain:

Stand close around, ye Stygian set
With Dirce in one bark convey'd,
Or Charon seeing, may forget
That he is old, and she a shade.

The small boy in marble, near the south-west corner of the house, was placed there in 1658 by Sir John Wittewronge. The low walls were built towards the middle of the nineteenth century from the designs of Lady Caroline Lawes.

Returning to the main front of the Manor, we observe over the porch a shield of the arms of Wittewronge. Above it there is fixed to the wall a plaque of the Sun Fire Office, numbered 38391, issued when Jacob Wittewronge the younger insured the house for £1000 in 1726.

Through the fine oak door which still carries its old wrought-iron bolts, bars and hinges we pass into the Hall.

HALL

The hall was the principal room of a medieval manor house, being the only one heated. It had a central hearth and was open to the rafters; a vent in the roof allowed smoke to escape. Rothamsted must have been like this in the time of the Cressys and when it passed to the Bardolphs in the reign of Henry VIII. By the time Anne Wittewronge bought the property, a hundred years later, chimneys had been built and there were rooms over the hall but whether the old house had been altered or a new one built we cannot tell. Parts of the oak framework remain from this house but many of the timbers visible in the

Hall have been reworked and re-used: clearly there has been considerable reconstruction. The Dining-Room, Morning-room and rooms above (all parts of the Tudor house) are completely panelled; in fact, so little of the timber framing is open to inspection that its earliest form and date have not been established. The Hall is depicted on Plate III.

STONE FIREPLACE. The style of the fireplace suggests that 1635 which used to be visible, scratched upon the smoother stone above it, is the date of its construction.

FLOOR. In 1679 Sir John Wittewronge paved the Hall with stone flags brought from Olney. These were replaced in 1862 by oak boarding.

PANELLING. The room was panelled in 1654 by Sir John Wittewronge, the first baronet, who on 24 July 'payd Wat: Hagood for worke setting up the wanschott in the Hall & taking downe &c., £1. 5. 10'. This panelling concealed some sixteenth-century Bardolphian mural paintings.

Of these, laid bare in 1900 and then covered up again, only fragments have survived the passage of time. They include mermen holding two foliaged tails, an archer, and foliage decoration, and were carefully studied by V. T. Hodgson who, in his illustrated account of them in *Trans. St Albans & Herts Architect & Archaeol. Soc.*, 1901-2, pp. 382-4, surmises that the central design, now completely disappeared, was probably an armorial achievement or some subject connected with the family. The paintings are Renaissance in style, and were probably done in the latter half of the sixteenth century. The fact that only the west wall, apparently, was thus decorated bears out the assumption that the dais was at the west end.

In 1900 this panelling was removed and was replaced by earlier linenfold, surmounted by a frieze of flower pattern with male and female heads in high relief, brought from Clare, Suffolk.

WINDOWS. Enlarged when the south front was receiving its present shape in the seventeenth century, they contain nine shields bearing the arms of England from 1189 to the present day (modern glass, inserted about 1900).

MORNING-ROOM

Leading off the Hall to the right is the Morning-room (now the Warden's office) which was originally the site of the buttery, and the lesser parlour. (See Plate II.)

The *chimney-piece*, of clunch, dating from the seventeenth century, was brought from Rawdon House, Hoddesdon, in 1900. The frieze includes carvings of birds in high relief—a phoenix, a turkey, an eagle and a pelican in her piety; and bears the arms of Rawdon impaling Thorowgood, commemorating a marriage in 1611.

RAWDON: argent, on a fess between three pheons sable a lion passant or; impaling THOROWGOOD: argent, five cross-crosslets in saltire sable.

In 1611 Sir Marmaduke Rawdon married Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of Thomas Thorowgood of Hoddesdon.

Above the fireplace is a wooden overmantel, divided into three niches decorated with marquetry depicting flowers in vases.

The *windows* show shields of arms (modern glass) [*continued from B₄ in the Dining-room*]:

A. EAST (i.e. left). The Wittewronges of Stantonbury, who derive from Sir John Wittewronge's *first* marriage. Four shields:

(1) SIR JOHN WITTEWRONGE (1618–93), of Rothamsted and Stantonbury, 1st Bt.; and his first wife, MARY MYDDELTON (d. 1640). [WITTEWRONGE: argent three bends gules, on a chief sable a bar dancetty or; impaling MYDDELTON: argent, on a bend vert three wolves' heads erased of the field.]

Note. The Rothamsted Wittewronges derive from his second marriage, to Elizabeth Myddelton.

(2) SIR JOHN WITTEWRONGE (1640–97), son of the above, 2nd Bt.; and CLARE ALSTON (d. 1669)—his first marriage. [WITTEWRONGE: 1 and 4 as above; quartered with 2, EVERDEY [?]: gules, a bend between two demi-stags salient or; 3, VANACKER: vert, a chevron engrailed or between three garbs of the same; impaling ALSTON: azure, ten estoiles or, four, three, two and one.

No. 3 alludes to the marriage of his grandfather Jacob Wittewronge (1558–1622) to Anne Vanacker. It presumably puns on Van Acker (originally 'Champaine'), and is first found in the 1669 Visitation of Buckinghamshire, where it is given as: 'azure a chevron engrailed between three garbs or.' The 1669 Visitation of Hertfordshire gives it as: 'sable a chevron engrailed between three garbs or.'

(3) *Idem.* and MARTHA SEBROOK (d. 1698)—second marriage. [WITTEWRONGE, as above, with inescutcheon argent, a sinister hand couped at the wrist and erect gules—the badge of baronetcy; impaling—. His second marriage, to Martha Sebrook. The addition of the inescutcheon is explained by his succession to the baronetcy on his father's death in 1693.]

THE MORNING-ROOM

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(4) SIR JOHN WITTEWRONGE (1673–1722), 3rd Bt., son of above; and MARY WHITE (d. 1716). The title became extinct on the death of Sir John, 6th Bt., unmarried, in 1771. [Arms as above.]

B. WEST (i.e. right): the Wittewronges of Rothamsted, who derive from the *second* marriage of Sir John Wittewronge (1618–93):

(1) JACOB WITTEWRONGE (1671–93), *ob. viv. patre*, grandson of Sir John, 1st Bt.; and ELIZABETH COGHILL. [WITTEWRONGE, as above; impaling COGHILL: gules, on a chevron argent three pellets sable, a chief of the last.]

(2) JACOB WITTEWRONGE (1693–1728), son of above; and ANNE HALE (d. 1727). [WITTEWRONGE, as above, impaling—.]

(3) JAMES WITTEWRONGE (1720–48), *o.s.p.*, son of above; and MARTHA STRANGE. [WITTEWRONGE, as above, impaling STRANGE: gules, two lions passant argent, over all a bend ermine].

(4) THOMAS WITTEWRONGE (1723–63), younger brother of above; unmarried; last of the Wittewronges of Rothamsted. [WITTEWRONGE, as above.]

Note. The arms of James (1647–1721), son of Sir John Wittewronge by his second wife, which should properly have been placed at the head of the above four shields, may be seen in the fourth shield in the Great Drawing-room.

OAK ROOM

Beyond the Morning-room, but now used as private apartments, is the Oak Room, also known as the Study (illustrated on Plate IV below). This room was built in the mid-seventeenth century when Sir John Wittewronge extended the house on the site of a single-storey building with gabled roof shown in the 1624 sketch (p. 3).

Plain *panelling* in oak surmounted by a frieze carved in arabesque pattern. Oaken overmantel divided into three niches bordered with the same pattern, which also appears in more elaborate carving over two of the doors.

WINDOWS. Contain four pieces of stained glass (?Italian seventeenth century) depicting the four seasons, peopled with figures from classical mythology.

DINING-ROOM

Leaving the Hall by the west door, near the foot of the Staircase, we enter the Dining-room (Plate XIX) (now residents' common-room) which was the parlour described in 1623 as 'a verie faire and large Roome'. This door, like several others in the house, carries a finely worked latch of early wrought iron.

PANELLING. Mid-seventeenth century plain oak, interrupted at intervals by Composite pilasters with arabesque pattern on base.

OVERMANTEL. The still-life enframed in the central panel above the fireplace is signed by *S. Tilman*, 1638. It is painted in oils on an oak panel lined with canvas, and was bought by Sir John Wittewronge on 17 September 1659 for £2.

CEILING BEAMS of moulded plaster ornamented with arabesques and vine pattern. The date of this plaster-work is controversial—part may be late sixteenth to early seventeenth century, and part may be first-class modern imitation.

CHIMNEY-PIECE of clunch (soft limestone) inlaid with black marble, of the seventeenth century. As there is another fireplace in the same west wall, covered by panelling, the room was probably divided in two by a partition during the mid-seventeenth century reconstruction.

MURAL PAINTINGS ON EAST WALL. In tempera, late sixteenth century (behind panelling, which is hinged):

(1) *Upper half*: Subject uncertain. The majority opinion favours the siege of Edinburgh Castle in 1573, when the Scottish Regent, James Douglas, Earl of Morton, assisted by troops from Queen Elizabeth, reduced to surrender the Governor of the Castle, Sir William Kirkcaldy of Grange, who had held out for five months at the head of the last remnants of the party of Mary Queen of Scots. (One of the Bardolphs is believed to have taken part in this operation.) But it might represent a scene in the Low Countries—or, of course, it might be purely imaginary. (See Plate V below.)

(2) *Lower half, or dado.* A series of niches supporting an entablature containing (left to right) a plump cat, a talbot hound and a bear. It is possible that these animals were intended to represent vices, the cat, for example, standing for sloth. (See Plate VI below.)

The paintings, which would seem to have been covered up between 1632 and 1635, to judge from dates scratched on the wall, have now been rendered permanently accessible by hinging the panels which conceal them. A detailed discussion of them will be found among the appendices below, p. 55.

The *west wall* also was decorated, on an upper cornice above the fireplace, with paintings of a vase and a variety of fruit, over which the panelling has been replaced.

The *windows* are designed to show the coats-of-arms (modern glass) of the owners of Rothamsted from the earliest recorded until 1623, in which year it entered the possession of the Wittewronges. [See windows in Morning-room for continuation of the line of owners.]

A. SOUTH (from left to right):

(1) GUBION. In 1221 Henry Gubion or Gobion is recorded as holder of the manor of Rothamsted which he leased in that year to Richard de Merston (who already in 1212 held some land in Rothamsted); Gubion retained it at least until 1248. [GUBION: quarterly, or and barry of six argent and gules, a bordure sable charged with eight fishes argent.]

(2) NOEL. The Noel, Nowell or Nele family, held the manor from about 1290 to 1355. William Nowell received a grant of free warren over Rothamsted in 1292. The family also owned the small manor of Saunceys, now Sauncey Wood on the east side of the River Lea, which passed with Rothamsted to Ralph de Creçi by purchase in 1355. [NOEL: or fretty gules, a canton ermine.]

(3) The arms of Hoo quartered with St Omer, an inescutcheon St Ledger; surrounded by the Garter motto.

The connexion of Hoo with Rothamsted is as follows: Robert de Hoo received a grant of free warren over his lands in Harpenden in 1292. In the following century Sir William Hoo, Kt. (d. 1410), married as his first wife Alice, daughter and co-heiress of Sir Thomas de St Omer; their descendants quartered Hoo with St Omer. Sir William Hoo sold Hoos Manor (which included one carucate in Harpenden, roughly conterminous with the present Hoosfield) in 1405 to Stephen Spelman of London. Later this Harpenden tenement returned to the Rothamsted manor via Richard Eden, who sold

it in 1540 to Edmund Bardolph. Edmund's son, moreover, likewise called Edmund, married as his second wife Margaret, widow of Nicholas Brocket and daughter of Thomas Hoo.

Thomas de Hoo married about 1340 Isabel St Ledger of Offley.

The arms: quarterly: 1 and 4 Hoo, quarterly, sable and argent; 2 and 3 ST OMER, azure, a fess between six cross-crosslets or; inescutcheon ST LEDGER, azure, a fret argent, a chief gules.

(4) COPLEY-HOO. Sir Roger Copley, Kt., citizen and mercer of London, married Anne, daughter of Thomas Lord Hoo, who however did *not* own the Rothamsted tenement of Hoos Manor, which had been sold by his grandfather [COPLEY: argent, a cross moline sable; impaling quarterly 1 and 4 Hoo, quarterly sable and argent; 2 ST OMER, as above; 3 CRESSY, or, a lion rampant sable.]

(5) CAREW-HOO. The arms of CAREW impaling Hoo. The Wheathampstead tenement of Hoos Manor passed, through Eleanor daughter and co-heiress of Thomas Lord Hoo, to Sir James Carew of Beddington, her husband, in 1519. [CAREW: or, three lionesses passant Sable; impaling Hoo as above.]

B. NORTH (left to right):

(1) DEVENISH-HOO. The arms of Devenish impaling Hoo. Elizabeth daughter of Thomas Lord Hoo married as her second husband Sir John Devenish. There is, however, no connexion with Rothamsted. [DEVENISH: vert, a saltire engrailed argent between four cross-crosslets fitchee or; impaling Hoo, as above.]

(2) CRESSY. The manor was held by the Cressys from 1355 until 1525, when it passed by marriage to the Bardolphins. An account of these families is given above at pp. 5, 6. The date 1558 in the glass here is presumably an error for 1358. [CRESSY: argent, a lion rampant double-queued sable.]

(3) BARDOLPH. Rothamsted was in Bardolph hands from 1525 until 1623, when Edward Bardolph (b. 1589) sold it to Anne Wittewrongle *née* Vanacker, and its long connexion with the Wittewronges and allied families begins. [BARDOLPH: azure, a chevron between three cinquefoils pierced or; quartering CRESSY, as above.]

(4) WITTEWRONGE. The manor, mortgaged in 1611 to Jacob Wittewrongle, was bought in 1623 by his widow Anne *née* Vanacker for her son John (later Sir John, 1st Bt.)—at this time only four years of age, but destined to become the first Wittewronge to live at Rothamsted. He became Lord of the Manor on attaining his majority in 1639 and took up his residence in the house two years later.

THE SMALL DRAWING-ROOM

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LOGGIA

Leaving the Dining-room by the north-west corner we enter the Loggia or 'Arches', as it was called by Sir John Wittewronge, 1st Bt., who added it in the 1650s, giving it a chequered floor of Purbeck marble and limestone. Two entries in his accounts for 1659 are:

May 28th. Payd the Luton waggoners for bringing downe 300 foote of purbeck stone for the Arched walke. £3-0-0.

August. To Mr. Young the mason for paving the walke by the Arches. £18-17-0.

The loggia was glazed in and panelled at some time after 1847—probably when the Great Drawing-room was added in 1863.

SMALL DRAWING-ROOM

Leaving the Loggia we pass northwards into the Small Drawing-room, or Spanish Leather Room, as it was later called, likewise added by Sir John Wittewronge, 1st Bt. The north wall of this room remained, until 1863, the limit of the house.

OVERMANTEL. Early seventeenth century, brought from elsewhere in the house. Divided into three niches containing oil paintings—those outside of still life, that in the middle, the arms of Wittewronge with inescutcheon of baronetcy. The carving is picked out in gold and black, and the arabesque decoration echoes that on the chimney-piece.

The moulded *ceiling* was put up in the nineteenth century. It is not known at what date the marquetrined floor was laid.

CHIMNEY-PIECE OF STONE. Carved with arabesques and with a flower and fruit pattern, partly coloured.

SPANISH-LEATHER WALL-COVERING. Probably eighteenth century; added by Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge in 1900 (until which year the room had been lined with panelling which in the nineteenth century had been papered over). The style of the painting on it seems to be English.

BAY WINDOW. Sir John Bennet Lawes added a bay window to this room when the Great Drawing-room was built, but it was removed by his son Charles in 1900.

The *Windows* have two coats of arms in modern glass (left to right):

(1) SIR JOHN WITTEWRONGE (1695–1744), 4th Bt., of Stantonbury. [Arms as in Morning-room shield A4, but not impaled.] He died childless, whereupon the title passed to his brother:

(2) SIR WILLIAM WITTEWRONGE (1697–1761), 5th Bt., also of Stantonbury. Married SYBIL (maiden name unknown). [Arms as above.] On his death the title descended to his son John, the 6th and last Baronet Wittewronge. An account of the Baronets Wittewronge—the elder or Stantonbury branch—is given below, pp. 61–65.

Between these two shields there used to be, as recently as 1925, a third: FOUNTAINE: or, a fess gules between three elephants' heads erased sable, with the motto *Vix ea nostra voce*, 1725. Sir Andrew Fountaine, Kt. (1676–1753), the Annus of Pope's *Dunciad* and a friend of Swift, was an ancestor of Caroline Fountaine, wife of Sir John Bennet Lawes.

GREAT DRAWING-ROOM

We pass through a door from the Small Drawing-room into the Great Drawing-room, added in 1863 by Sir John Lawes, in preparation for the coming of age of his son Charles in the following year.

In 1900 it was remodelled by Sir Charles, who raised the ceiling to its present height, replaced the four original Victorian windows and added modern panelling of rectangular design, which he hung with fine sixteenth-century Flemish tapestries, but replaced soon after 1906 with the present elaborate and painted linenfold. The design, including that for the chimney-piece, were by T. G. Jackson. The chandeliers, and sconces bearing the arms of Wittewronge and Bennet Lawes, put up by Sir Charles, were secured for Rothamsted by Sir John Russell at the time of the sale of the furniture in 1936.

The *overmantel* bears the arms of Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge, 2nd Bt., 1843–1911. The motto *Pour la foi* alludes to the flight of Jacques Wittewronghele (1531–93, grandfather of Sir John Wittewronge 1st baronet) from religious persecution in the Low Countries, 1564.

PORTRAITS. Each of these is numbered. Notes on them are on p. 59.

The *windows* (modern glass) have the arms (left to right) of:

(1) JACOB [JACQUES] WITTEWRONGHELE (1531–93). [WITTEWRONGE: argent three bends gules, on a chief sable a bar dancetty or]. For a fuller

account of the members of the family commemorated in these windows see above, p. 6 *et seq.*

(2) JACOB WITTEWRONGE (1558–1622), son of above, and ANNE VANACKER (his second wife). [WITTEWRONGE: as above; impaling VANACKER: vert, a chevron engrailed or with three garbs of the same.]

(3) SIR JOHN WITTEWRONGE (1618–93), 1st Bt., and MARY MYDDELTON [as in window A1, Morning-room, but with addition of an inescutcheon of baronetcy].

(4) JAMES WITTEWRONGE (1647–1721), second son of the 1st Bt., and ELIZABETH DICONSON. [WITTEWRONGE: repeated from window A2 in the Morning-room with a crescent for difference; impaling DICONSON: argent, a chevron gules between three molets voided sable, on a chief azure three stag's heads cabossed or.]

This shield would more properly have been placed with those of the Rothamsted Wittewronges in the Morning-room.

(5) THOMAS BENNET (1665–1706) and ELIZABETH WITTEWRONGE (1675–1734), daughter of James Wittewronge above. [Blank; impaling WITTEWRONGE, as in Morning-room, window A2.]

Note: The Bennet arms were gules, a bezant between three demi-lions argent (*VCH*, 303).

(6) SIR JOHN BENNET LAWES (1814–1900) and CAROLINE FOUNTAINE. Sir John Bennet Lawes, founder of Rothamsted Experimental Station and the Lawes Agricultural Trust, married on 28 December 1842 Caroline, daughter of Andrew Fountaine, of Narford Hall, near Swaffham, Norfolk. For an account of his life see above, p. 22. [LAWES: or, two flaunches azure and a chief nebuly azure with three stars or therein, with inescutcheon of baronetcy; impaling FOUNTAINE: or, a fess gules with three elephants' heads erased sable.]

(7) CAPTAIN CHARLES GEORGE FOUNTAINE (brother of Caroline Fountaine) and ROSE SARAH RAVENSHAW. [FOUNTAINE, as above; impaling RAVENSHAW: argent, a chevron and in the base a raven's head erased sable, on a chief engrailed sable two raven's heads erased argent.]

(8) SIR CHARLES BENNET LAWES-WITTEWRONGE (1843–1911), 2nd Bt., and MARIE A. R. FOUNTAINE, daughter of Capt. C. G. Fountaine. LAWES-WITTEWRONGE: quarterly of four: 1, WITTEWRONGE, as above; 2, EVERDEY [?], gules a bend between two demistags salient or; 3, VANACKER, vert a chevron engrailed between three garbs or; 4, LAWES, or two flaunches azure, on a chief nebuly azure three molets or, with inescutcheon of baronetcy; impaling FOUNTAINE: or, a fess gules between three elephants' heads

erased sable. (This achievement figures above the fireplace and in the centre of the ceiling.)

Sir Charles Bennet Lawes-Wittewronge, 2nd Bt., only son of Sir John Bennet Lawes, married in 1869 his cousin Marie Amélie Rose, daughter of Captain Charles George Fountaine, of London. In 1902 he revived the old family name of Wittewronge, adding it to his own by royal warrant. Some account of his life is given above, p. 33.

THE FLOOR. In a note made in 1896 Sir John Lawes states 'A floor was for sale which was used by the Marquis of Breadalbane when as Lord Chamberlain he gave a ball to the Queen [Victoria], so I purchased it.'

The iron *fire-dogs*, dated 1583, came from Slaugham Place, Sussex, the seat of the Covert family from the end of the fifteenth century until 1784. They bear the initials and arms of Walter Covert.

The areas of panelling formerly covered by some of Sir Charles's Flemish tapestries can be distinguished by their freedom from paint.

VESTIBULE

From the Great Drawing-room we pass into a Vestibule. In the *windows* are two shields (early glass):

(1) SOHIER WITTEWRONGHELE of the city of Ghent, great-great-grandfather of Jacques Wittewronghele first of the English Wittewronges who came to England in 1564. [WITTEWRONGHELE of Ghent: argent, on a chevron between three roundels or, three escallops argent.]

(2) JAN WITTEWRONGHELE (died *c.* 1477) and MARGUERITE VAN COUDENHOVE, great-grandparents in Ghent of Jacques Wittewronghele. [WITTEWRONGHELE, as above; impaling COUDENHOVE: argent, a bend wavy gules].

Over the outside of the door leading into the Vestibule from the garden is the same achievement, painted on wood, as appears on the fireplace and the ceiling of the Great Drawing-room.

LIBRARY

We proceed from the Vestibule into the Library (now a conference room), which is Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge's only structural addition to the house. It was built in 1900 on the model of the library at Rawdon House, Hoddesdon, which had shortly before been bought for conversion into a Jesuit convent, both the ceiling and the panelled doors

which conceal the bookshelves being closely copied under the supervision of the architect, V. T. Hodgson. Part of the wall of an existing studio was built in, which accounts for the room's askew position in relation to the rest of the house.

The *fireplace* is seventeenth-century work. Above the mantelshelf, which rests on supports carved in the likeness of satyrs, two niches, containing seated figures in high relief playing the harp, gong, cymbals and diaulus, are flanked by pillars around whose feet *putti* are executing a dance; and over all runs a sculptured frieze showing the sun centred between scenes containing men and dogs.

The whole is richly decorated with arabesque designs in low relief, picked out in pastel colours. It was brought over from the library at Rawdon House, whose new occupants would doubtless have found its robust paganism rather too strong for their taste.

The *east window* contains two pieces of heraldic glass:

(1) Azure, a lion rampant argent; probably intended to be the arms of *Flanders* (or, a lion rampant sable), the native land of the Wittewronges.

(2) Gules, two hands outstretched above a foursquare turreted keep argent; the arms of *Antwerp*.

The *prints* are part of the collection of the late Lord Northbrook.

MAIN STAIRCASE

We return through the corridor to the Main Staircase, dated in style to about 1630. It was probably constructed at the same time as the Hall fireplace although we have no record of its insertion. Imitation balustrades were painted on the walls; those on the first flight are covered by modern panelling.

The Back Staircase (Plate XX) is similar but slightly less rich in design and of lighter construction. Here also matching balustrades were painted on the wall.

The *window* on the half-landing contains the oldest glass shield in the house, *c.* 1520, showing the arms of Heyworth of Mackerye End, an estate lying about two miles north-east of Harpenden.

Quarterly, 1 and 4, HEYWORTH: Argent, three bats sable; 2 and 3, BOSTOCK: ($\frac{1}{3}$) sable, on a fess wavy a molet argent, impaling ($\frac{2}{3}$) or, two lions rampant argent.

This shield is very similar to one which appears on the brass of John Heyworth (d. 1520) in the north transept of Wheathampstead Church (see *Victoria History of Hertfordshire*, II, 311). It may be connected with Margaret, daughter of Thomas Hoo, whom a later John Heyworth (last of the Heyworths, d. 1558) made his heiress and who succeeded to Mackerye End. She married as her third husband Edmund Bardolph of Rothamsted.

TAPESTRY ROOM

Turning right at the top of the Staircase we enter the Tapestry Room (now residents' study), which in Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge's day was lined with tapestries of the seventeenth century, hung there in 1659 by Sir John Wittewronge.

The stone fireplace has a seventeenth-century surround and overmantel of carved and painted wood. Enframed in the central panel is a sixteenth-century painting, in tempera on an oak panel, of the Last Supper. It is unsigned but has been attributed to the Flemish painter Floris (1516–70).

The *windows* contain coats of arms (seventeenth-century glass).

A. SOUTH:

WITTEWRONGE impaling MYDDELTON (as in morning-room, window A 1).

B. NORTH:

(1) WITTEWRONGE (argent three bends gules, on a chief sable a bar dancetty or), with helm and crest.

(2) The same, with slightly different crest.

(3) WITTEWRONGE impaling MYDDELTON, as in the south window, but with more elaborate crest which includes the hand of baronetcy.

A portion of a *painted frieze*, about 1 yard in length, remains on the East wall just below the ceiling, and may be seen by opening a hinged section of panelling. Executed in white on terra-cotta, it runs along the plaster and over the beams indifferently, and would seem to be of about the same date as the mural paintings in the dining-room below; that is to say, late sixteenth century.

The *prints* are part of the collection of the late Lord Northbrook.

SIR CHARLES'S ROOM

Leaving the Tapestry Room by the south-west door we enter Sir Charles's Room with its fine double outlook to the south and west. In the days when Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge used this room as his bedroom, it contained one of the finest surviving Elizabethan four-poster beds, richly carved and marquetryed.

THE BLUE ROOM

Retracing our steps into the Tapestry Room, and quitting it by the north-west door, we leave a dressing-room on our left and enter The Blue Room. The stone *fireplace*, which is painted to resemble marble, has a carved and painted wooden overmantel, in the centre of which is a Flemish landscape painting, c. 1720, executed in oils on canvas. It is unsigned and the painter has not been identified.

The piece of sixteenth-century panelling on the north wall bears the arms of Vere, Earl of Oxford, quartered with Neville, Lord Latimer.

When John de Vere, 14th Earl of Oxford, died without issue in 1526 his four sisters became his coheirs. One of them, Dorothy, married John Neville, 3rd Baron Latimer. The motto *Verité vient* puns on the name Vere. When and whence this panelling came to Rothamsted is not known.

It was moved here from the bedroom fitted up by the youthful Sir John Lawes as a laboratory (as described in his memoir quoted above on p. 23), in which he carried out preliminary experiments which were to lead to the development of the process of manufacturing superphosphate. (This bedroom, used in later life by Sir John as his dressing-room, was opposite the Red Room mentioned below.)

THE BROWN ROOM

We return past the head of the stairs, and turn right into the Brown Room. The plain squared oak panelling is surmounted by a carved frieze of sunflower pattern. The elaborately carved early overmantel, divided into three parts by grotesque figures in high relief, was bought by Sir John Wittewronge on 2 May 1655 ('Payd Mr. Gregory for the Chimney peece for the roome ouer the hall—£1. 0. 0').

The adjoining dressing-room is lined with early linen-fold panelling much repaired—probably by Andersen, a fine Danish craftsman who spent some years at the house when Sir Charles was carrying out his alterations.

THE RED ROOM AND THE PINK ROOM

Beyond the Brown Room to the east are two more bedrooms now incorporated in private apartments. The Red Room again is panelled in oak with a carved frieze above. This was used by Sir John Lawes as his bedroom. A photograph taken in 1906 (Plate VII below), shows the room as it was in Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge's day.

The seventeenth-century stone *fireplace* of the Pink Room was brought from Rawdon House, Hoddesdon, in 1900. Supported by jambs partially carved into human form, a plaster frieze depicts in high relief various beasts, including a lion, a stag, a goat, a leopard, a boar, a squirrel, a unicorn, a camel and a hooded monkey playing the bagpipes. The oaken overmantel is divided into three panels of which the outer two form niches with scalloped heads; in these panels, carved separately from the background, stand the Three Fates, Clotho having lost her 'abhorred shears'. The central figure has the appearance of being a later addition.

This east end of the first floor was considerably altered by Sir Charles Lawes-Wittewronge when he succeeded to the property.

APPENDICES

1. THE ARMS OF WITTEWRONGE

On 27 November 1648 Sir John Wittewronge's coat-of-arms was certified in Letters Patent, signed and sealed by Garter King of Arms. The information conveyed in these letters, which are preserved among the Wittewronge papers, concerning the family's arms is of some importance:

“...Sçavoir faisons, qu'estant venu a nostre cognoissance par l'Attestation de Iehan Lycenich dict de Luxemburg et Henry Prevost dict de La Val Roys des Armes a tistres respectiues des Comptes de Haynau & d'Artois, que les Armoiries de *Wittewronge* sont d'Argent à trois bendes de gueules au chef de Sable à la viure d'Or... Lesquelles Armes escartelé de gueules à une bande accompagnée de deux demy Cerfs d'Or, ont este portées par *Iaques Wittewronge* natif de Flandre, Père du feu *Jacob Wittewronge* de la mesme païs... Lequel Jacob Wittewronge fust père du Sieur *Iehan Wittewronge* de Rothamsted... Chevalier.”

Perhaps the charge (gules a bend between two demi-stags salient or) with which Jacques Wittewronghele, Sir John's grandfather, quartered the arms of Wittewronge, and which has so far not been identified, belonged to the family of his wife, Mary Everdey. At any rate, the text and painted coat-of-arms in this document establish that the correct form of the Wittewronge arms, which have been variously represented and blazoned, is: argent three bends gules, on a chief sable a bar dancetty or.

2. THE MURAL PAINTINGS IN THE OLD DINING-ROOM

The left-hand portion of the battle-scene on the east wall, discovered in 1901 when the mid-seventeenth century panelling was removed, formed the subject of papers by C. E. Keyser (*Proc. Soc. Antiquaries*, 2nd ser., vol. XIX, 1901–2) and V. T. Hodgson (*Trans. St Albans & Herts. Archit. & Archaeol. Soc.*, New Series, vol. I, pt. 4, 1901–2).

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