

Holidays with a religious connection

The Diocese of Salisbury



Sturminster Mill (near where we stayed in Fifefield Neville) is now in operation by a Museum Trust as a working tourist attraction, representing hundreds of years of continuous working history. Thomas Hardy once lived in Sturminster Newton. We visited the mill first on our fifth day.

Day 5

On Day 5 of our visit to the **Diocese of Salisbury** we visited the **National Trust Property at Kingston Lacy**.



The entrance to Kingston Lacy.

Kingston Lacy is a country house and estate near **Wimborne Minster, Dorset**. The Kingston Lacy estate originally formed part of a royal estate within the manor of Wimborne. It was for many years the family seat of the Bankes family who lived at nearby Corfe Castle until its destruction in the English Civil War. The gift of the house to the National Trust was formally accepted on 19 August 1982, the largest bequest that it had ever accepted.

We arrived around noon and headed straight for the restaurant – in the old stables!



The restaurant is located in the Stables building.



The Servants' Quarters houses a touchscreen exhibition devoted to the history of the house, along with historic maps of the Bankes' estates in Purbeck and Kingston Lacy.

Unfortunately staff were busy taking down Christmas decorations and the main house floors weren't open for visitors.

However one of the most significant fascinating parts we could gain access to was the display of the map makers' art in the Servants' Quarters, as it applied to the Bankes' estates in Purbeck and Kingston Lacy.

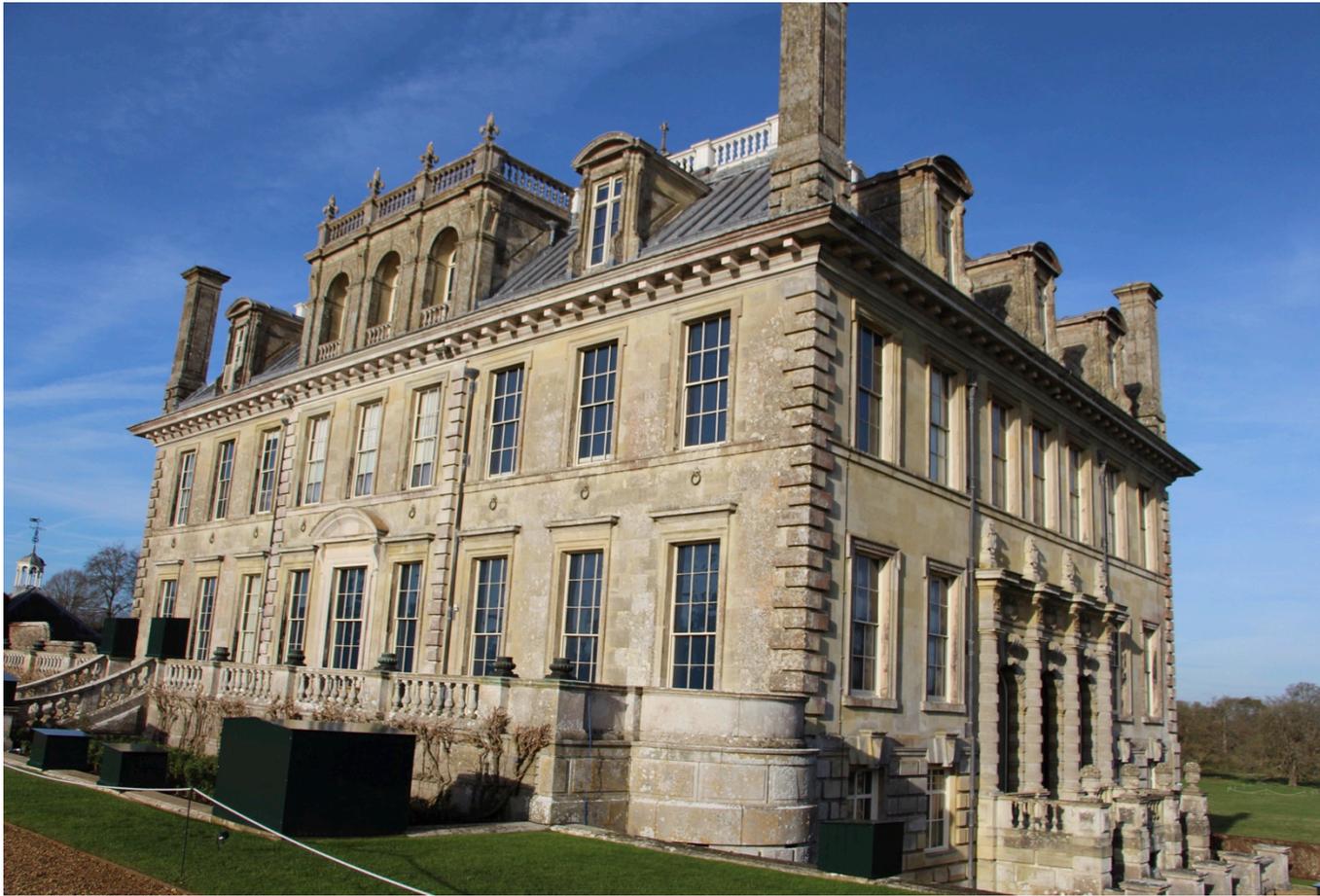
In display cabinets there are superb examples of England's pioneers in the field of cartography, eg Christopher Saxton, the father of English cartography 1574-78; Ralph Tresswell 1586; and William Woodward 1773-74.



William Bankes was an Egyptian explorer. Another exhibition in the Servants' Quarters displays some of the tablets he acquired on an expedition to Nubia in 1815 and 1818.



In the gardens there is an astonishing obelisk, which was shipped over from Egypt by William Bankes, who commissioned Venetian explorer Belzoni to bring it to Kingston Lacy in 1821. The Philae obelisk is one of two obelisks discovered in 1815 at Philae in Upper Egypt. It has an important bilingual inscription in Greek and hieroglyphics - which assisted linguists in the deciphering of hieroglyphics.



After the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the Bankes family regained their properties. Rather than rebuild Corfe Castle, the eldest son Ralph Bankes built a house on their other Dorset estate near Wimborne Minster. The house was built between 1663 and 1665 by Ralph Bankes, son of Sir John Bankes, to a design by the architect Sir Roger Pratt. The original red brick was later encased in Chilmark stone by Charles Barry. The house is of Italianate design.



The grounds at Kingston Lacy are absolutely beautiful, even on a cold winter's day. There is an extensive kitchen garden.



After our long walk, we returned to the Stables Restaurant for afternoon tea.

On leaving Kingston Lacy, we made for the nearby town of **Wimborne Minster**. The **Minster** is dedicated to St Cuthburga, sister of Ina, King of Wessex. She founded a Benedictine Nunnery here around 705 AD; there may also have been a monastery. Nuns from Wimborne were sent to Germany with St Boniface of Crediton (c. 680-755) to help convert the pagan tribes.



Outside Wimborne Minster; there is an unusual sundial with three sides so the time can be told throughout the year. The other two 'gnomons' (the pieces that cast the shadow) are just visible to either side. It stands separately from the building.



Inside Wimborne Minster red candles were placed at the end of pews - it was still decorated for the Christmas season.

A revival in the 19th century included the extensive restoration of the whole church (1855-1857). As a result, the Minster has a range of fine Victorian stained glass and a rich decoration of 'encaustic' tiles (decorated by burning in colours as an inlay, especially using coloured clays or pigments mixed with hot wax) and geometric tiles around the chancel and high altar. Medieval wall paintings were almost completely whitewashed over; one remains, a complex 'palimpsest' (painted over several times), which was recently restored.



The arches in the nave at Wimborne Minster.



Wimborne Minster's Astronomical Clock. The earth is represented by a green/blue sphere positioned in the centre of the clock face. The sun points to the hour of day. The gold/black orb represents the moon, and shows the lunar phases. At full moon, it is golden and at new moon it is black. For intermediate phases it is partially black and gold in proportion to the phase. The casing on the wall contains cogs which move the sun and moon around the face of the clock. The movement is in the belfry.



On the outside north wall of the Minster is a full size Grenadier, called the Quarterjack, which strikes the quarter hours. The first documents relating to the clock concern repairs carried out in 1409.



The pulpit at Wimborne Minster.



An altar with beautiful altar cloth, at Wimborne Minster.



15th century tomb of John Beaufort, 1st Earl of Somerset, and his wife Margaret Holland, Wimborne Minster.

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Sources of information:

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Astronomical Clock Wimborne Minster:

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