

Visit to Wightwick Manor: 20th June 2022



Wightwick, designed and built in an ‘Old English’ style between 1887 and 1893, was given to the NT by Geoffrey Mander in 1937. His parents had been inspired by the principles of the Aesthetic Movement and the ideals of ‘art for art’s sake’, and Geoffrey, when he inherited the house, amassed a remarkable collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings by Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Siddal and Millais, and many others, but the house is still very much a home – the artwork is shown in a domestic setting. All the wallpapers, fabric wallcoverings and soft furnishings were bought from Morris and Co, and there is a gallery specifically devoted to William de Morgan and his wife.

It was a glorious June day, and our group was able to enjoy their picnic lunches in the beautiful gardens, designed by Thomas Mawson; the dominant design is the garden ‘room’ – formal closer to the house, becoming more natural as you walk further away. Everywhere there were old roses; two of the three orchards have recently been restocked with traditional varieties, and the traditional Victorian kitchen garden has a heated peach house.

The volunteers could not have been more welcoming and enthusiastic; it was a visit that all were agreed they would be happy to do again.