**Swinton Families talk**

The first house at Swinton was built by Abstrupus Danby. He sold Thorpe Perrow and bought the remaining third of the manor of Swinton and built a house about 1695. Had a garden designed by George London with fountains. Difficult man – quarrelled with vicar – had lots of law suits re earlier family debts and he kept volumes of notes for possible future use of his heirs. Also correspondence of refusing to pay his steward as ‘performed some parts of is work so badly.....

His wife wrote some fascinating job specs for her staff in 1711

He had a son also called Abstrupus and there are a number of letters from the son to a friend complaining that his father would not let him have any money to go to London.

He succeeded his father in 1727 and does not seem to have done much to Swinton. He was succeeded by his son William in 1750.

He was a very intelligent and good business man.

He set about sorting the estate. He reclaimed moorland and improved the farming on the estate – these attracted an eminent agriculturist Arthur Young . He had a coalmine in Colsterdale - there are a great many papers relating to this in the archives and a book has been compiled from them. He let the miners reclaim moorland to farm. Arthur Young writes of one miner who reclaimed land – he worked 12 hours a day and then would come home and work on the land – moving stones, spread lime and ploughed it a great many times – often not having more than four hours sleep a night.

He married Mary Affleck.

Made improvements to Swinton – built the stables and the gatehouse (gardener from Studley Royal)

Laid out the three lakes at Swinton and started to develop the grounds.

He was the largest contributer to the establishing and founding of the Grammar and Free Schools in Masham in 1760.

He died in1781 and was succeeded by his son William aged 29. He was made High Sheriff of the North Riding in 1784 which was a difficult job as it was just after the American War of Independence and elections took place amidst fierce agitation for parliamentary reform.

He married Caroline Seymour and in 1786 they bought a second hand travelling coach and set off on a grand tour of Europe. They got back in 1790 with many works of art they had collected along the way. Some of which are still here.

In 1790 the enclosure award for Masham was passed in parliament and William Danby received 431 acres – he fenced them – planted woods and built roads and more or less formed the landscape we now see.

Tax lists & accounts

In 1791 he started on making improvements to Swinton

Built wing to West – James Wyatt – architect John Foss

Large wing to North to join to stables

Another wing to West to house a library and a museum for his archaeological and other collections. He had consulted Lugar about building the museum and he persuaded him to castellate the house. This was done between 1821 – 1824. – to fit in with rugged countryside

A great benefactor to Masham – charities, the church – installed the organ and set up an endowment for paying the organist £30 a year.

He founded a school in Colsterdale in 1787.He built Healey school and a house for the schoolmaster and set up an endowment to pay him a stipend – about 1822.

Mrs Danby’s rules for schoolmistress in 1818 paid ten guineas a year.

20 children from 3 until employable – 8.0am. to 4.0 p.m. in winter and till 6.0 p.m. in summer. Saturday till 12.00. Church on Sunday morning and afternoon when weather permits.

3 weeks holiday at hay time and 3 weeks at harvest.

The poet Southey visited William Danby at Swinton and described him ‘as the most interesting person whom I saw’ he wrote some very erudite books on ‘Thoughts on serious subjects’ ‘Travelling thoughts’ - said to be very dull!

Patron of the arts and commissioned Julius Caesar Ibbotson to paint in the area and he duly moved to Masham.

At the beginning of the century the Masham Volunteers were set up to protect Masham in case of an invastion by Napoleon. William Danby and Timothy Hutton of Clifton were their leaders. (Beacon fires)

Work done on grounds – lakes – Quarry Gill bridge. Also Foss fortnightly letters from Head Gardener and steward.

Druids Temple about 1800

Died in 1833 at the age of 82 .

He left the estate to his second wife Anne for her life – she married Admiral Harcourt. On her death the estate went to his first wife’s family who subsequently sold it to Samuel Cunliffe-Lister. Solicitor absconded with money!

So we come to the Cunliffe-Lister family.

Samuel Cunliffe-Lister was the younger son of the Cunliffe family from Calverley Hall near Bradford. He started his working life helping his brother with worsted manufacture in America – he had crossed the Atlantic six times before he was 21. He then persuaded a reluctant father to build a power driven worsted spinning mill at Manningham. He worked on a wool combing machine to deal with the finer qualities of wool. He was soon producing machines on which he was charging a royalty of £1,000. He turned the whole of Manningham Mill over to woolcombing and would work there from 6.00 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. with the rest of the workers. By the age of 40 he had made a fortune but went on to risk it all to find a way to comb silk waste. He managed to do this and equipped two new mills – he bought silk growing estates in India – and set about solving the problem of how to weave silk velvet by power – Lister velvet became famous. In 1871 the mills at Manningham burnt down and he rebuilt them over 27 acres. Over the years he took out 150 patents – was a great benefactor to the City of Bradford. He was a enthusiastic believer in Tariff Reform and wrote many pamphlets. He bought Swinton at the age of 68 and came to live there with three unmarried daughters and two sons– built on to it – bought more land including Middleham Castle. Was created Lord Masham by Lord Salisbury in 1891. He was a very good shot and had a new pair of guns made for him when he was 90. Also liked coursing. He died in 1906.

He was succeeded by his two sons – Samuel and then John. John was married and his wife was Master of the Bedale hounds with the hounds being kept at Swinton.

First World War – Lady Masham helped run a convalescent home in the newly opened Town Hall. We have memories of the War from a butler who came to work at Swinton in the 20s and then came back in the 50s. He wrote a fascinating account of his experiences first in battle on the front and then as a prisoner of war.

One of Samuel Cunliffe-Lister’s daughters married Rev. Charles Boynton from Burton Agnes in East Yorkshire and had one daughter – his only grandchild. In 1912 she married Philip Lloyd-Graeme from Sewerby Hall in Bridlington. He was a Conservative candidate in 1911, enlisted in 1914 winning the Military Cross in 1916. He was elected to parliament for the Hendon constituency in the 1918 election. He was knighted in 1920 for his service as a civil servant in the War Office. In the same year he became a minister in the Department of Trade and was appointed President of the Board of Trade in 1922. He went on to be a Cabinet Minister under Bonar Law, Baldwin, Macdonald, Chamberlain and Churchill.

On the death of her uncle in 1924 Lady Lloyd Graeme and her husband changed their name to Cunliffe-Lister and came to Swinton. Their eldest son John was 11. *Staff photos of that time.* (Clarksons -Lisa Overall – great granddaughter)

In 1934 there were celebrations for John’s Coming of Age. Two years later he married Anne Medlicott.

In 1935 Sir Philip was created Viscount Swinton and was made Air Minister with the job of building up the RAF. He set up a scheme of shadow factories and ordered Spitfire and Hurricane planes straight from the drawing board as there was no time for prototypes and he established the RAF Volunteer Reserve. There was controversy about getting the country ready for war and it was felt that the Air Minister should be in the House of Commons to answer the criticsm so Lord Swinton resigned. On the outbreak of war Winston Churchill appointed him to preside over the Security Executive dealing with security in this country and overseas. In 1942 he was appointed Resident Minister in West Africa to ensure the continuation of essential supplies from there and then Churchill appointed him as the first Minister for Civil Aviation

On the outbreak of war John Cunliffe-Lister enlisted in the Staffordshire Yeomanry and went to serve in North Africa never to return to Masham as he was killed in a battle in the desert in 1943 having survived many fierce engagements. He was a tank commander – many were killed as they had to look out of the top of the tank and visibility was very poor and they were an easy target for snipers.

The younger son Philip joined the RAF, served in 608 and 521 Squadrons. In 1943 he had to make a forced landing in Germany – evaded capture for 4 days but was eventually captured and was in a prisoner war camp until the end of the war. He died in 1956.

Lady Swinton joined the ATS worked tirelessly to support the war work locally. Swinton was taken over by Harrogate Ladies College which was evacuated from Harrogate with the family continuing to live in the Southwest wing.

At the end of the war Lord Swinton came back as a minister in Churchill’s government in the 1950s serving as Secretary for Commonwealth Relations and retired with Churchill in 1955 when he was made an Earl. He continued to attend the House of Lords and be very much involved in the corridors of power until his death at 88.

The Ladies College returned to Harrogate – as two thirds of the house had been set up as a college it was decided to offer the facilities to the Conservative Party as a College.

John’s widow married again and went to live in Wales. Her two children spent a lot of time at Swinton with their grandparents.

The eldest grandson, David, married Susan Sinclair who had broken her back in a riding accident. When they were first married they lived at Swinton while they built a bungalow at Dykes Hill on the road to Masham. He was a county Councillor for many years and supported a wide variety of local organisations especially as a school governor. Susan was appointed a Life Peer in 1970 for her work with the disabled. She is still doing this work today and is now the longest serving Life Peer. On his grandfather’s death David joined his wife in the House of Lords and was appointed Deputy Chief Whip which also meant he was Captain of the Yeoman of the Guard.

I worked for Lord Swinton as his secretary when he was writing a book Sixty Years of Power. He was 81 at the time and had been a close friend and confidante of 12 prime ministers and was able to give an insider’s view of their prime ministerial careers. Working at Swinton – drawing room, fishing on Top Lake. I married his younger grandson, Nicholas and came to live in Masham.

Lord Swinton died in 1972 and Lady Swinton in 1974. The new Lord Swinton let and then sold the house to Lindley Lodge, a Christian community which ran management training courses. They converted some of the wings into self contained flats for the families who lived there and ran the courses. They were excellent custodians of the house for 25 years. They then sold it to Birchin who ran down the conference business, got planning permission for a 58 bedroom hotel and put it on the market. Mark was getting married to Felicity and they wanted to come back to Yorkshire. After protracted and secret negotations we managed to buy it back in May, 2000. We changed the planning application to a 30 bedroom luxury hotel, did the conversion and opened in March, 2001.