

Chiswick House, 28th June 2023



Everyone arrived early and well prepared for changeable weather on this delightful visit to a restored national treasure. A small(ish) but perfectly formed Palladian mansion set in beautiful peaceful historic gardens near the Chiswick flyover. After several unfortunate last minute withdrawals 37 people boarded the coach, with time for a coffee before meeting our guides outside the main entrance and dividing into 2 groups for tours of the house and garden.

Lord Burlington returned from his 2 Grand Tours with a large amount of antiquities which needed a suitable backdrop to set them off to best advantage, so from 1726 to 1729 he worked with William Kent to design and build a magnificent party house cum gallery space next to his tudor mansion, and a garden with all the expected features – temples, cascades, vistas with



statues and an obelisk plus a lake that looks like a stream.



Later the house passed to the Devonshire family, including the famous Georgiana, who used the house as a party venue and commissioned the rose garden at the beginning of the 19th century, also adding 2 extra wings to the house to turn it into a residence. Later, the family rented out the building, and by 1924 it was an asylum for troubled aristocrats who were encouraged to commune with nature in the gardens.

After the 2nd world war it was sold to Middlesex County Council and fell into disrepair. The gardens were neglected and the two wings had to be demolished because of bomb damage, damp and rot. Happily the Heritage Lottery Fund and a huge effort has restored the house to its former glory, though many of its original artefacts reside in Chatsworth. The gardens are a national treasure, known as the birthplace of the English Landscape Movement.

After a refreshing cup of tea, the coach picked us up at a nearby bus stop to take us back to the Rugby Club.





Inigo Jones Gate



