

Derek Clarke - The Restoration of the Perseus and Andromeda Fountain and the Nesfield Gardens for English Heritage at Witley Court.

Derek made a welcome return visit to the History Group, having spoken at previous meetings. He was the Conservator on the above project and during the presentation used archive photographs, old prints and paintings and original plans, all carefully selected, to reveal the magnificence and importance of the property in its heyday.



Derek Clarke.

Derek started his fascinating and most interesting presentation by giving the Group background information about the Court, placing it into its historical context. He noted the local connection, as the last owner, Herbert Smith, was the Chairman of Kidderminster Carpets. Throughout the presentation the Group was privileged to have detailed information about the restoration project, including costs, materials used, conservation and mobility issues, engineering, underground installations, 'behind the scenes' photographs and his professional opinion.

With humour and an engaging manner, Derek gave the Group his personal recollections of the project, anecdotes of events and famous people connected with it and with the property, and shared the enormity of the project, which started with a vandalised property and a bare meadow. Through painstaking research and exquisite craftsmanship the Nesfield Gardens and the Perseus and Andromeda Fountain have been restored, after many years, to their former glory.



The Perseus and Andromeda Fountain at Witley Court today (photo courtesy of English Heritage).



Witley Court and South Parterre today (photo courtesy of English Heritage).

Derek was warmly applauded by the Group at the end of the presentation and they look forward to welcoming him again next year.

Heidy Hague