



# Friends of Firbeck Hall

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 28

Autumn 2017

## Chairman's Report

### Concern for Firbeck Hall Continues



*Cotoneaster framing the garden steps gives a seasonal touch to this photo taken in the grounds of Firbeck Hall (with permission of the Owner) on December 26<sup>th</sup> 2016.*

The Friends of Firbeck Hall committee continue to be concerned about the condition of Firbeck Hall and have urged Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and the Developers to consider looking into winter protection for all the listed buildings on the Firbeck Hall site. With temperatures falling and the possibility of a severe winter ahead (who can predict such things?) the Friends group have expressed their ongoing concern to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, the Architects and Developers.

Rotherham Borough Council will be considering a revised Planning Application in January 2018, which is encouraging news. Hopefully the Developers, Architects and RMBC will work together to ensure a proper and viable future for the Hall and other listed buildings on the estate before it is too late.

*Simon Drohan and the FoFH Committee, November 2017*

#### DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

An Evening with the Friends of Firbeck Hall

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2018, Village Hall, Firbeck**

**‘Aunt Fanny’s Account Book’**

A new talk about Firbeck Hall in the 19th century.  
Updates and historical displays. Refreshments.  
Friends and friends of Friends Welcome

***Karen Lynch of the Yorkshire Gardens' Trust is currently researching gardens designed by Humphry Repton and thinks that Henry Gally Knight's garden at his Langold Farmhouse was possibly designed by Repton. Following on from this, Karen kindly wrote the following article for inclusion in our Newsletter and has allowed us to publish a previously undiscovered image of Langold Farmhouse.***

### **Humphry Repton at Langold** *By Karen Lynch*

Firbeck is surrounded by beautiful landscape parks. Sandbeck and Roche Abbey were celebrated in 2016 during the tercentenary of the birth of their designer Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. In 2018 we commemorate the work of Brown's successor, Humphry Repton, two hundred years after his death.

Repton's trademark was the beautifully illustrated volumes of proposals that he presented to clients which he called Red Books, because most were bound in red leather. Red Books for a number of Yorkshire sites survive.

I am currently researching Repton's work in Yorkshire in preparation for a new book to be published next year. He worked at only a handful of sites in Yorkshire; some are well-documented, others less so, but one has never been discussed in any of the books on Repton and that one is Langold.

My first clue that Repton had worked for the Gally Knights at Langold was a small engraving, of which more below. Then Hunter's history of South Yorkshire, published in 1828 provided more information. Tantalisingly, Hunter does not directly attribute the landscape to Repton but notes only that he greatly admired the park. I then discovered a letter in which Repton mentions calling on Mr Gally Knight at Langold. Gradually further evidence began to emerge, and a network of people helped. Sadly the Red Book for Langold has not been traced. It may survive in a private

collection, or have been split up and the watercolour drawings mounted separately, or sadly it may have gone the way of so many archives and been consigned to the bin.

Henry Gally Knight abandoned Langold in the 1810s in favour of Firbeck and although the handsome farm and stables survive, there has been no house at the centre of the estate since that date. The engraving I mentioned above is the only known view of the mansion at Langold that was demolished c.200 years ago. Repton provided illustrations for *The Polite Repository*, a pocket book, or diary as we would call it, published annually by Mr Peacock in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Repton provided sketches that were engraved to provide illustrations at the start of each month. In February 1807 the featured seat was Langold. Surviving copies of the pocket books are rare and are mainly found in special collections. However, some of the vignettes survive as it was a popular hobby for ladies to snip them out and collect them in scrapbooks.



*By kind permission of the Nigel Temple Collection, The Gardens' Trust, taken from Peacock's Polite Repository, February 1807*

If anyone knows of any further views of Langold or can help with my research I would love to hear from them. I can be contacted via Valerie Oxley.

Further information on the book and the Repton bicentenary can be found via the websites on the next page.

ON THE SPOT: The Yorkshire Red Books of Humphry Repton, landscape gardener, forthcoming 2018 [www.newarcadianpress.co.uk](http://www.newarcadianpress.co.uk)  
Celebrating Humphry Repton 2018  
<http://thegardenstrust.org/news/celebrating-humphry-repton-2018/>

## The Gardens at Firbeck Hall Over 100 years ago by Valerie Oxley

During August 1896, Mr and Mrs Sidney Jebb held a garden party which was reported on in the Sheffield Daily Telegraph.

*"A large party assembled at Firbeck Hall to enjoy the beauty of one of the loveliest gardens of South Yorkshire. Tea was served in the large dining room whilst outside the conservatory, tables were arranged with an abundance of fruit, ices and cooling drinks.*

*Several sets of tennis were going on, but the flowers were the chief attraction, and these were in full perfection, reflecting the highest credit on Mr. Egglestone's care, who has, with the help of his assistants, made a garden just what it ought to be.*

*In the evening the gardens were thrown open to those living in the neighbourhood, there was dancing on the lawn. The Rotherham Temperance Band was in attendance and gave some excellent selections of music to the enjoyment and satisfaction of all present."*

The conservatory mentioned above can be located on the plan below. It is a separate building, shown on the plan with a cross-hatched pattern, left of the hall.



The photo below of Firbeck Hall was taken by WILLIAM WESTOBY (1850 – 1936) a photographer who had premises at St John's Street, Goole.

This photograph is in the archive of the Turbutt family of Ogston Hall, Derbyshire. The conservatory can just be seen to the left of the Hall.



In June 1909, Firbeck Hall was offered for sale. In the sale catalogue there is mention of a "large valuable conservatory, with palms, ferns, and other decorative plants, etc., etc."

Head Gardener at Firbeck Hall, Mr William Egglestone, first appears on the 1881 census, by 1901 he is still Head Gardener aged 64, but by 1911 he has retired.

If you have any information about the large conservatory at Firbeck Hall we would be most interested to hear from you. We know that oranges and myrtles were grown in pots at Firbeck Hall in the eighteenth century.

There was an extensive walled garden at Firbeck Hall with a range of glass houses supplied by Mackenzie and Moncur Ltd., of Edinburgh.

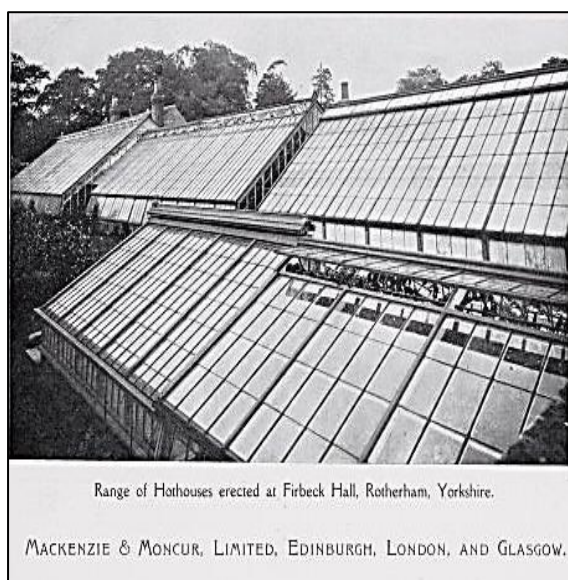
This company started in business in 1850 and the Firbeck Hall glasshouses appear in their catalogue. The company manufactured and constructed hothouses and provided heating systems throughout Scotland and in various parts of England.

Sadly, the glasshouses no longer exist but if you have any information about what might have been grown there we would be interested to hear from you.

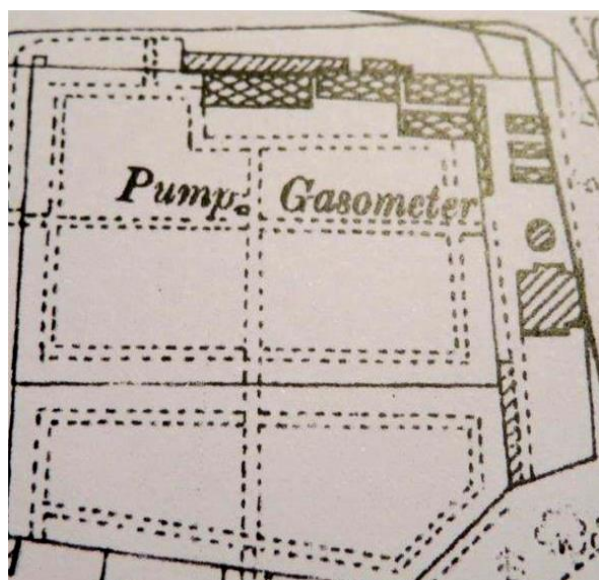




Advert for Mackenzie & Moncur



The range of hothouses is shown cross-hatched on the following plan . It is possible they were constructed for Mr Sidney Jebb.



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*The observations and opinions expressed in the various articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Editor or of the FoFH Committee and their accuracy cannot be verified.*

*Do you know of someone who might like to join?*

## **FRIENDS OF FIRBECK HALL FRIENDSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME

ADDRESS

TEL. NO.

EMAIL

*I agree to my name and address being kept on a computer and understand that this information is only given to friends of the 'Friends of Firbeck Hall' group and is not passed on to any other organisation for any purpose. (This is to conform to the Data Protection Act)*

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Friendship costs just £1. If you would like to join please return your completed form and £1 to FoFH Friendship c/o Brookside, 6 Kidd Lane, Firbeck, Worksop, Notts S81 8JZ*