

## Doddington Hall Visit August 2025

I decided to visit the Hall with the Art Appreciation Group as it had a Sculpture Trail (I'm not into Historic Houses!), and yet I spent more time in the house than walking round the gardens and parkland admiring the sculptures.

There were two reasons for this.

First, the house was full of paintings. From the portrait of Tommy Taylor, who commissioned the house in 1595, to the current owners (The Birch Family) The house is only one room deep at the centre but very wide as you can see from the photo of the back garden. Almost 200 paintings line the walls of the many rooms on the three floors. Most are unattributed except there are two Joshua Reynolds.



Photo Earl of Mexborough.

When Rhoda Delaval inherited the house in 1749 from her mother, she gave her patronage to Arthur Pond, (1705 -1758) an artist and engraver, who also taught her to paint. There is one painting of her six children in which she painted the faces and another artist completed the picture. There is a portrait of the Duke of Cumberland in one room by him and I'm pretty sure several reproductions were probably by him. Portraits of James 1<sup>st</sup> and Charles 1<sup>st</sup> probably copied by him. Charles 1<sup>st</sup> is very like the Van Dyke portrait.

My second fascination with the house was that that it was owned by Rhoda , wife of Captain Francis Delaval of Seaton Delaval Hall, which I visited as a boy a few miles north east of Newcastle upon Tyne. It was a huge mansion with massive parklands at Seaton Sluice ( bit like Holkham) It is now a National Trust property if you are ever up in Northumberland. The guides in the house called them De Laval, we Geordies just called them Delaval!

photo Francis Delaval



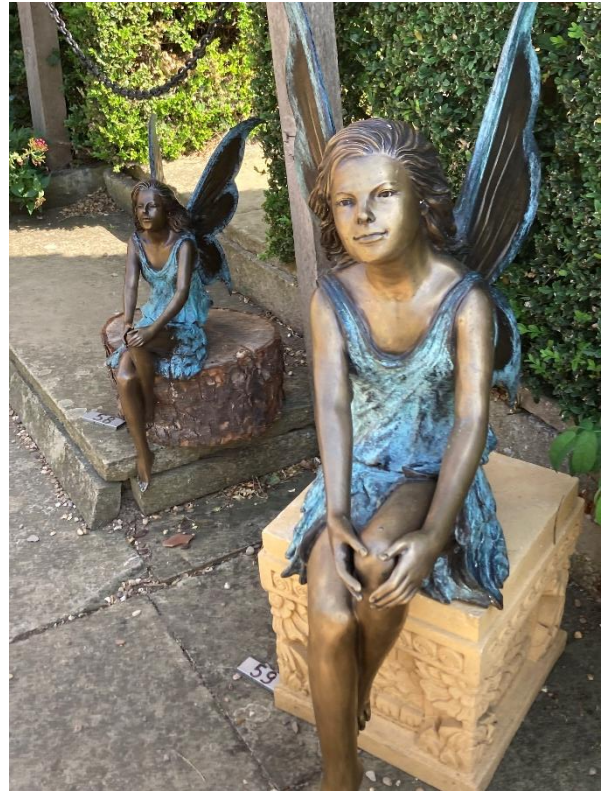
I didn't do justice to the gardens and parkland as there were over 300 sculptures. They were strategically placed to their best advantage, and ranged from metal, stone construction to wood. One even made of nuts and bolts and figures cleverly made from metal netting. Some of the animals were incredibly life like and others abstract.

It was a long trip as it is near Lincoln but well worth it.

Report and images by Martin Peacock

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More Images below by Jill Davis





These Sweet Chestnut trees (*Castanea sativa*) were planted well before the Hall was built, so they are at least 450 years old.

'No. 1 Chestnut Avenue' is featured as part of the Ancient Canopy dedicated to her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in celebration of her Platinum Jubilee.

All three trees are registered in The Tree Register, No. 1 is in the top 5 largest in the British Isles.

We ask you not to walk under them, or the soil will be compacted, damaging their fragile roots.

Please no climbing - it is dangerous for you and the tree