

The coach left Whaley Bridge with 26 members on board for Brodsworth Hall near Doncaster with the weather forecast debateable. We travelled the scenic route and arrived around 10.15am to some fine weather, although most of us kept our waterproofs with us just in case. First stop was the teashop for a drink and then off to explore the extensive gardens.

There was still a lot of colour around and one of the most impressive features of the gardens was the topiary - it was very well done and very effective. There was also a very beautiful old cedar which had been allowed to grow naturally. The gardens were a series of themes including a colourful enclosed garden of different plants in reds and silver with statues and a fern grotto as well as a croquet lawn and access to the old Church, although this was closed. The Hall opened to the public at 1.00pm and all of us took the opportunity to look around at our leisure - it had been left in a time warp as far as possible and there was a narrative around an English warship captured by the Dutch at the time of King Charles in the 17th century with a painting of this event done by a Dutch master featuring in the Hall. It did show the deterioration of certain fabrics and wallpapers due to damp getting into the building before it was taken over, but this has been deliberately left by EH for people to see. There was a Jazz band on the lawn from 1.00pm which was very easy to listen to and most of us had a late lunch outside the cafe which was very pleasant. However, by around 3.00pm there was a touch of rain in the air and by the time we left at 4.00pm it had started in earnest. Everyone said they had found it interesting and very enjoyable.