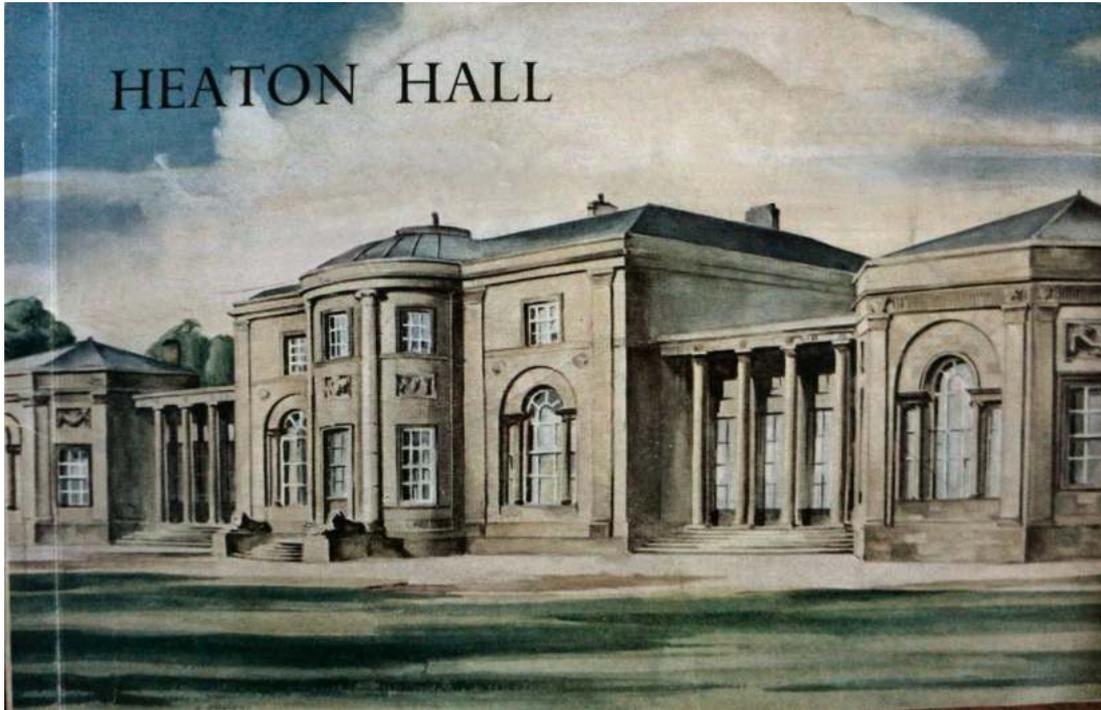


HEATON HALL



An Illustrated Survey of the Lancashire Home of the Wilton Family

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HEATON HALL *HISTORY*

THIS handsome Georgian mansion, which lies four miles to the north of Manchester, was acquired by the corporation, with the Surrounding estate of about 600 acres, from the Earl of Wilton in 1901. The grounds were converted into a public park, which quickly became a popular rendezvous for the city's northern inhabitants, and five years later the larger part of the Hall was opened as a branch art gallery, the remainder being used for catering purposes. It is one of the only four buildings in the Manchester area which have been included in the very select Group I of the Ministry of Town and Country Planning's provisional list of buildings of special architectural or historical interest.

Heaton Hall was built in 1772 by Sir Thomas Egerton, the 7th baronet of a Cheshire family which dates back to the Plantagenets. In Tudor times it claimed among its members a Lord Chancellor who was the ancestor of the Dukes of Bridgewater. Under James I the head of the family was Sir Roland Egerton. He married a daughter of the Lord Grey de Wilton who had been governor of Ireland when Elizabeth was Queen, and was made a baronet in 1617. Sir Roland's estates consisted of Oulton in Cheshire, which he had inherited; Wrinehill in

Staffordshire; and Farthinghoe in Northamptonshire where he died in 1646. It was his descendant, Sir John Egerton the 3rd baronet who, in 1684,



The Centre of the South Front

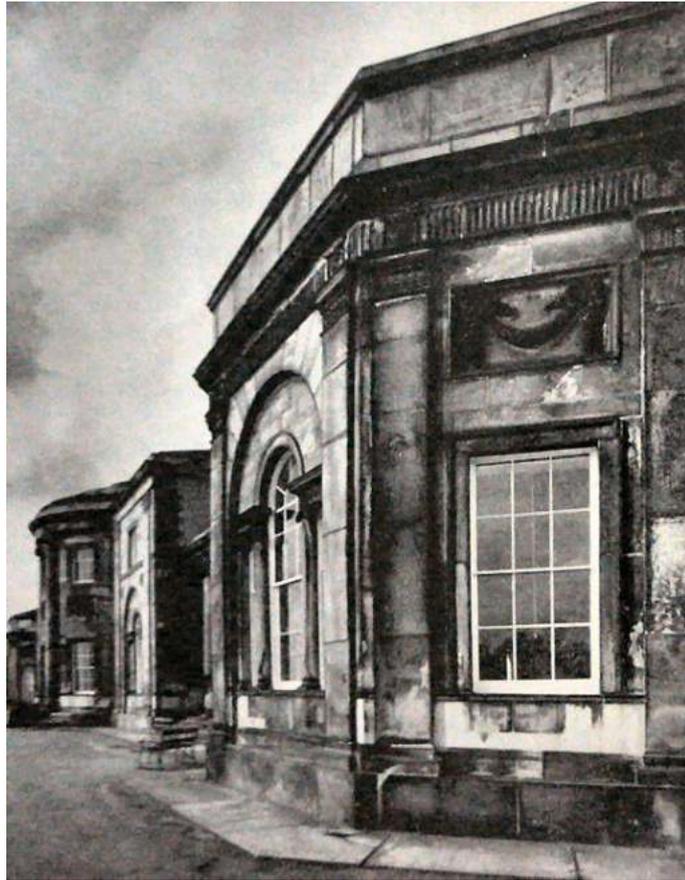


The Entire South Front

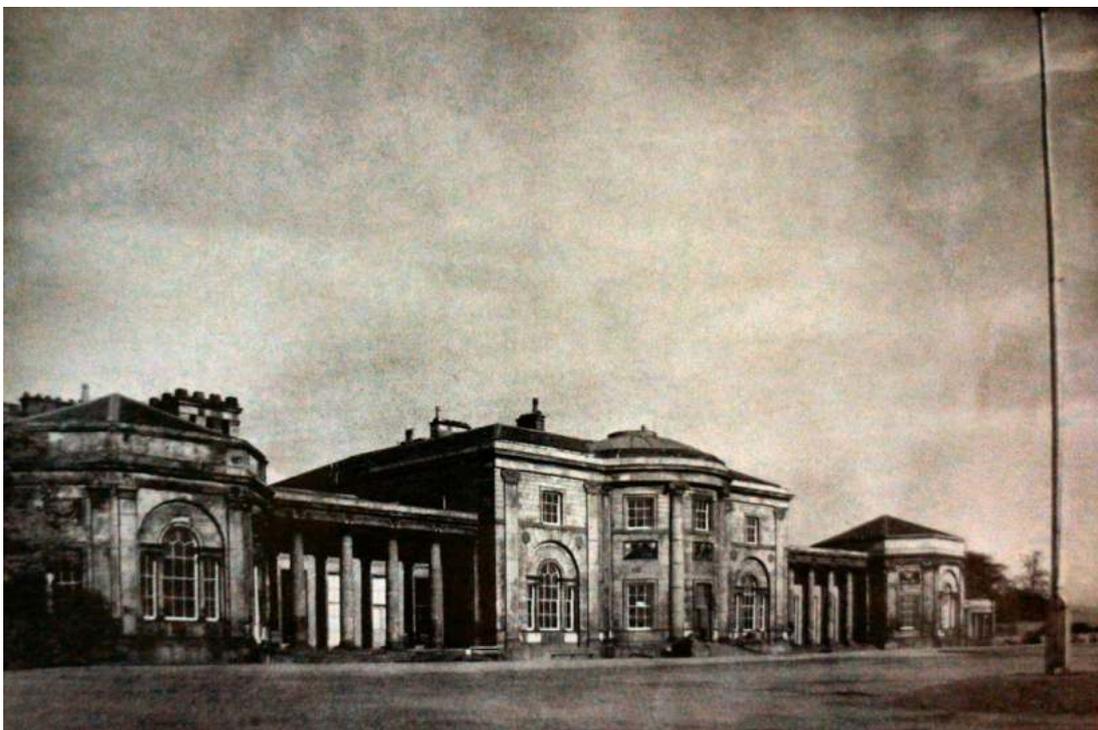
married Elizabeth Holland of Denton and Heaton. Denton, an estate of 35,000 acres, was one of the western manors of the ancient parish of Manchester and the Hollands had been lords of it since the 14th century. They also owned lands in Heaton in the parish of Prestwich, north of Manchester.

Richard Holland went to live at Heaton in James I's reign in a house which became known as the Old Hall. The son of his brother, who had succeeded him, was a colonel under Cromwell and helped in the defence of Manchester in 1642. He was also a member of two of Cromwell's parliaments. In 1661 the succession passed to this Holland's brother, whose daughter, the Elizabeth Holland already mentioned, inherited the Denton and Heaton estates on the death of her brother, Edward, in 1683.

Following her marriage to Sir John Egerton, their son, Holland, who was a distinguished antiquary, showed a partiality for the Heaton residence. It was there that he died in 1730, only a year after he had succeeded his father as 4th baronet. His elder son's death at 25 years of age occurred in 1744 and the younger son, the 6th baronet, was only 35 when he, too, died in 1756. Before then, however, in 1750, this member of the family, Sir Thomas Egerton, built a new house on part of the site occupied by the present Hall. Heaton was then much more remote, since Manchester was still a comparatively small place, and the estate was notable for its picturesque hills, dales and trees. The outlook from the new house was no doubt a considerable factor in the choice of



The South Front from the East



The South Front from the South West



The Main Staircase (first flight)

its elevated position. It had a seven windowed front and a depth of two rooms and has, in fact, been partly incorporated in the Heaton Hall of today.

The 7th baronet was only seven years old when he succeeded to the family estates and was but 23 when, in 1772, he was returned as one of the members of Parliament for Lancashire and commissioned James Wyatt to design Heaton Hall as it now stands. He was created Baron Grey de Wilton in 1784, and in 1801, became Earl of Wilton, with remainder since he had no heir, to the second son of his only daughter who had married Lord Belgrave, afterwards the first Marquess of Westminster. This second son, Thomas, who was born in 1799, succeeded his grandfather in 1814 and took the arms of Egerton in place of those of Grosvenor. He married Lady Mary Stanley, daughter of the 12th Earl of Derby by his second wife, Eliza Farren, the actress. A notable visitor to the Hall in September 1830 when she was acting in Manchester, was Frances Anne, Charles Kemble's daughter and Mrs. Siddon's niece, who would come down to dinner in her stage costume to the surprise of other guests.

She thought her hostess strikingly handsome and the second Earl of Wilton very musical. This earl lived until 1882. His elder son survived him by but three years and the next brother only held the earldom until 1898. It was his son, Arthur, the 5th earl who, in 1901, sold the Hall and the Park to the Manchester Corporation.



The North Front from the North West

HOUSE AND GROUNDS

IN 1772 the architect, James Wyatt, was a young man of 26 who, a year or two before, had suddenly achieved prominence as the designer of the Pantheon in Oxford Street, London, a centre for concerts and other entertainments. The drawings for this building were exhibited at the Royal Academy and, in 1770, Wyatt had been elected an Associate.

He was the 6th son of a Stafford timber merchant and was taken to Rome in 1760, where he stayed and studied for five years. He was 20 when, in 1766, he returned to London but it was some time before his promise as an architect was recognised. Then came the commission to design the Pantheon, which was so successful that Walpole said it "amazed" him, and Gibbon called it "the wonder of the 18th century and the British Empire." Walpole indeed transferred his championship of Robert Adam as the country's leading architect to his young rival and successor. From then onwards Adam's services were in less demand by men of means and taste whilst Wyatt was offered more and more commissions, among the first of which was Heaton Hall.

Buildings of his in the Classical and Renaissance style which he popularised included, besides a number of large country houses, such well known Oxford examples as the Radcliffe Observatory, the Library at Oriel College, and the Canterbury Quadrangle at Christ Church. He also conceived others in the Gothic manner. In 1796 he was appointed Surveyor General to the Office of Works and carried out many improvements at the Royal Palaces.

A Candle Tripod

The Entrance Hall

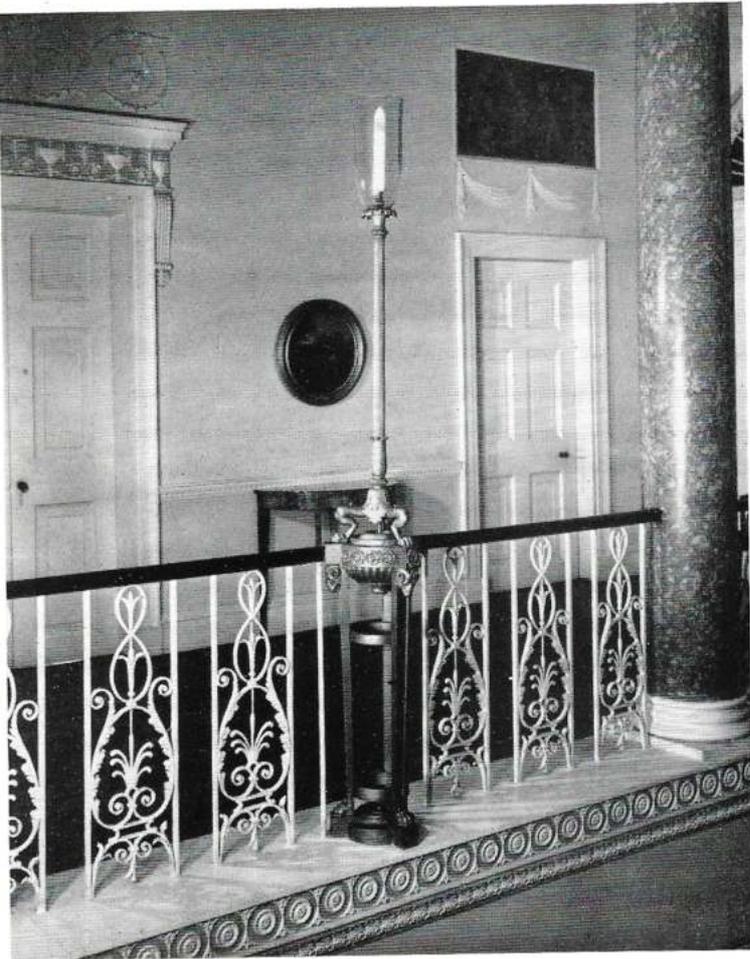
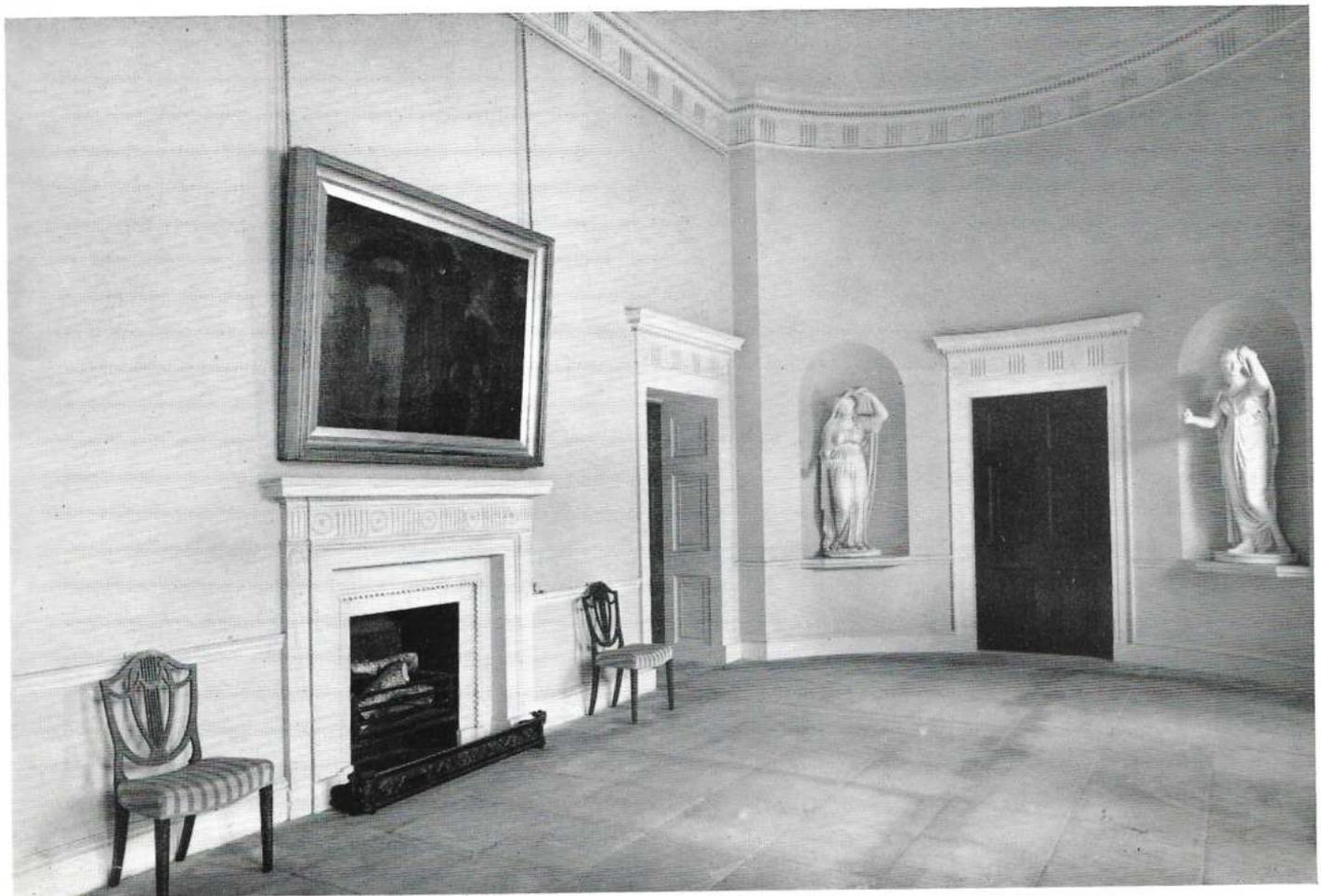


Plate 7

Plate 1



He made Windsor Castle a pleasanter residence and enjoyed the favour of the Royal family. The Royal Academy made him its first architect president.

The young Sir Thomas Egerton, who called on Wyatt to design the present Hall, wished to effect a complete transformation of the modest brick house his father had built soon after his birth. It was to be both bigger and more magnificent. The north or entrance side of the house (Plate 6) was left much as it was, except that the brickwork was covered with plaster and painted, and a stone portico added. But it was greatly extended to east and west by long plastered wings with stone pilasters, whilst the new south front of rich, yellow sandstone projected well beyond the old one and presented an entirely new aspect on a much larger scale. This front is a most effective illustration of Wyatt's type of classicism (Plate 2). It is a well balanced whole and, despite its great length, avoids monotony by being arranged in clearly related parts — a two storey central block with a semicircular columned bay, connected with octagonal pavilions by colonnades, behind which are recessed rooms. As the stone used was not suitable for fine sculpture, the capitals of both the free columns and the flat pilasters are of painted metal, but the carved decorative features about the Venetian windows and the frames of the low reliefs between the upper and lower windows of the central bay, are of stone (Plate 1).

The view from the south front embraces a wide expanse of parkland which was also transformed by

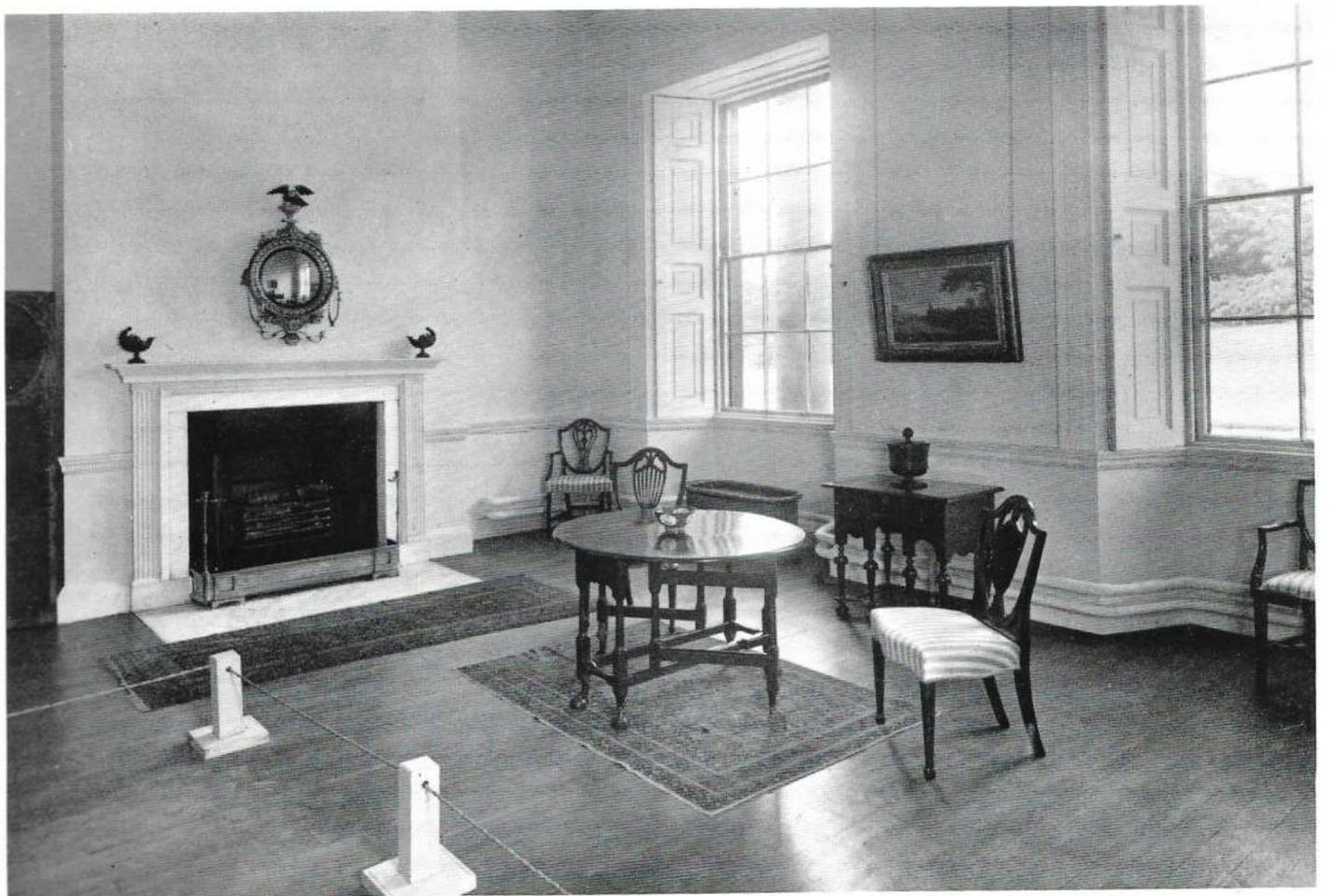
Hepplewhite Chair

The Small Dining Room

Windsor Castle



Plate 9



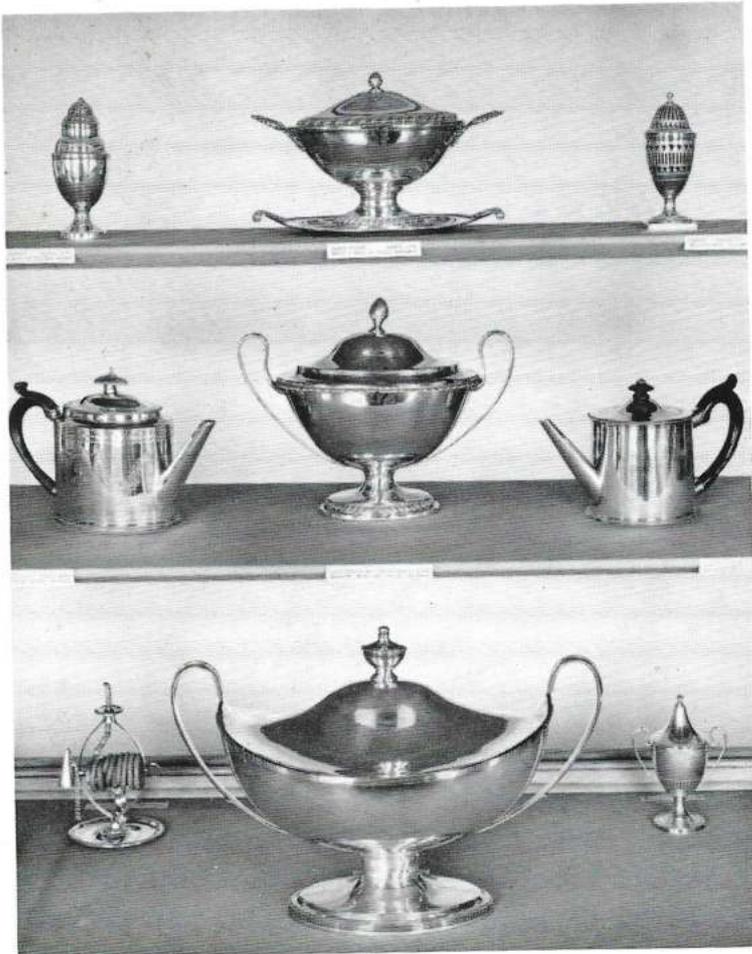


Plate 11

Sir Thomas Egerton. Indeed much of the effect of the landscape gardening in the 'Capability Brown' style, which was carried out in the park at this time, can still be seen from certain viewpoints. It should be made clear, however, that two of the most impressive developments are due to the imagination of the civic authorities. These are the making of the lake and the erection of the colonnade, of the Ionic order, adjoining it. They date from the early years of the present century, for the colonnade formed part of the façade of Manchester's Old Town Hall in King Street, designed by Francis Goodwin early in the 19th century, and was re-erected beside the lake in 1912 when the building was dismantled. So appropriate is it to its new position that, in a recent book on Wyatt, it is described and illustrated as the architect's own contribution to the vista from the house. The lake was made by damming a small stream. Though not on the direct route to the Hall, a good view of it may be obtained, through the colonnade, by descending from the main drive. A glimpse of the house may also be gained from this point.

Beyond the east end of the Hall are loggias and conservatories, in front of which is a formal garden; and further up the hill stands The Temple, formerly used by the Wilton family as a summer house. From this a splendid view of the Pennine range to the north may be obtained on a clear day. There are also stabling and farm buildings which fit effectively but unobtrusively into the architectural scheme.

Georgian Silver

The Ante-room to the Library



TOUR OF THE HOUSE

The rooms are described in their order, on the route normally followed by visitors to Heaton Hall. The arrangement of furniture, pictures, etc., is subject to alteration.

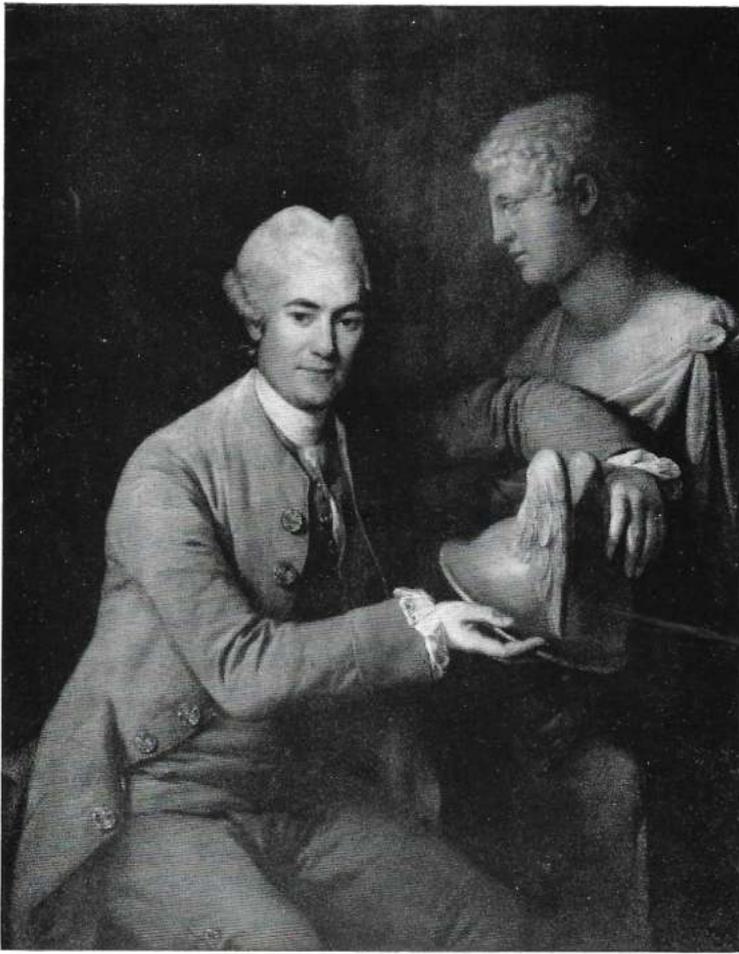


Plate 13

ACCESS to the Hall is gained from the northern side. The small ENTRANCE HALL (Plate 8) has semicircular ends, fitted with niches containing plaster statues, and is lit by a window on either side of the main doorway, immediately opposite which is a finely designed fireplace. The plaster decoration, of the Doric order, is restrained, the floor is flagged and four handsome figured mahogany doors add to the serene effect. Evidently, apart from the outer walls, little remains here of the 1750 house, or in the rooms adjoining to east and west. The latter, only one of which is open to visitors, are very simply treated, though characteristically Wyatt in manner.

The entrance hall leads directly to the GRAND STAIRCASE (Plates 5 and 23) which rises centrally by a broad flight of stone steps to a half-landing, where it divides into two and turns back at each side to reach the first floor. The wrought iron work of the hand-rail is enhanced by the beautiful tripods, of which two balance each other at the foot of the staircase, and three more break the line of the handrail around the landings (Plate 7). These form the bases of tall candlestick shafts. The ceiling is designed as a great plasterwork cove running into a flat, the centre of which opens into a circular glazed cupola. A radiated shell motif, fashionable at the time, is a

*Portrait of John Horne Tooke
by Richard Brompton*

The Library





Plate 15

feature of the corners of the cove. The entablature and ceiling are supported on twin scagliola columns, between which the landing or GALLERY (Plate 25) round three sides of the first floor level, gives on to the staircase well.

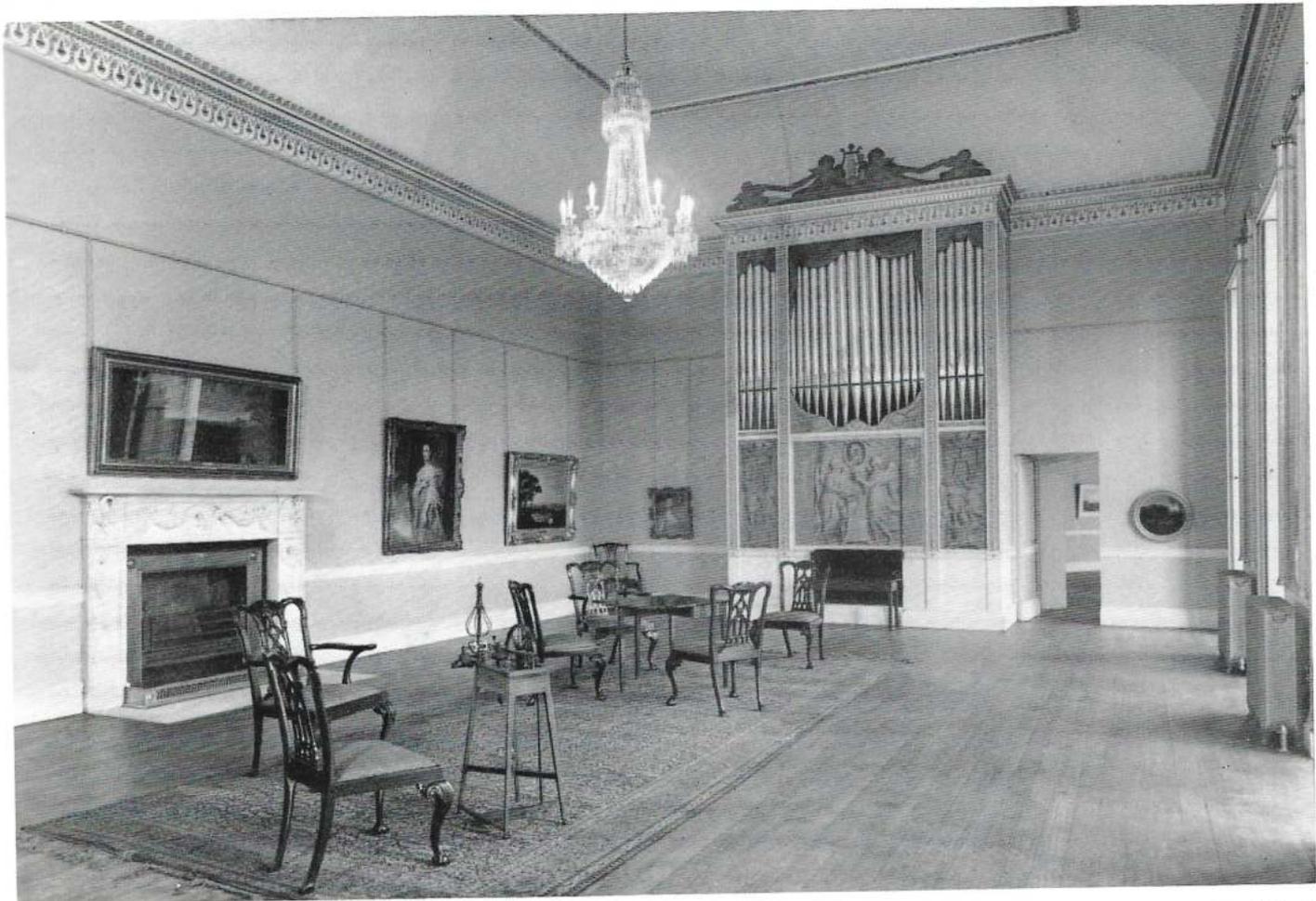
Before inspecting the first floor rooms, however, the circuit of the ground floor should be made. Through a doorway on the left immediately on leaving the entrance hall is the inner hall, and on the left of this another door leads into the small room which formed part of the earlier house (Plate 10). Here as has been pointed out, the decoration is simple, though the carved chimneypiece is a noteworthy feature.

Extending eastwards from this room was originally a series of bedrooms, the intervening walls of which have been removed to make a long gallery or exhibition room. But, apart from the windows, there is little of architectural importance in the details.

Leaving by a door at the far end and crossing a passage, the richness and elegance of the south front suite of rooms are encountered as the ANTE-ROOM (Plate 12) and LIBRARY (Plate 14) are entered. Both these rooms are ingeniously shaped. The low ceilinged ante-room has semi-circular ends like the entrance hall. It is lit by a window at one end, and a handsome chimneypiece, surmounted by a tall mirror, fills the other. Through a pillared opening is the lofty library with its octagonal plan and domed roof. When furnished with bookcases of appropriate style it must

The Samuel Green Organ

The Music Room



have been even more impressive. Here, too, the high mirror over the fireplace enhances the scale and the effect of the design.

Thus begins the succession of magnificent rooms, looking out on the south front of the building, in which Wyatt's decorative genius is admirably displayed. A small doorway gives into the large MUSIC ROOM (Plate 16), whose proportions are most satisfying and in which the windows rise almost from floor to ceiling. Between the windows are tall, gilt-framed mirrors. The plaster work is again restrained but the high coved ceiling is admirably suited to the scheme. On the wall opposite the windows is another interesting chimney-piece with carved low relief figures, and at one end of the room is a highly enriched doorcase, framing double doors of beautifully figured mahogany, the handles (Plate 28) and keyhole fittings of which, like those on the doors of all the principal rooms, are excellent examples of the ormolu of the period. At the other end is an organ (Plate 15) perfectly scaled to the room for it is of the full height of the walls, whose entablature is continued to form the top. The organ pipes are gilded and the canvas and wooden panels below are painted with classical figure subjects, the one covering the console illustrating the burning of incense to the composer whose portrait is enclosed in a medallion-shaped decorative frame.

The instrument is of considerable interest, having been made by Samuel Green, organ builder to George III and dated 1790. Until recently it had not been played for more than 50 years but, thanks

Double Doorway leading from Music Room to Billiard Room

The Billiard Room

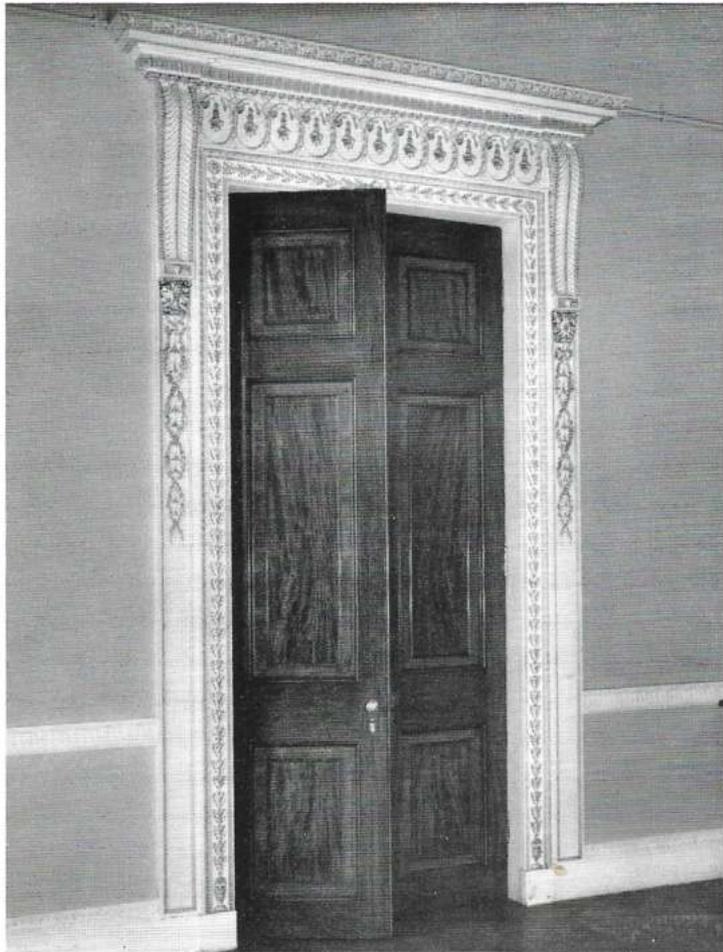


Plate 17





Plate 19

largely to a bequest of money to the Art Galleries Committee by the late Mr. John Thomas Gregson of Bolton, it has now been restored by the Manchester firm of Jardine & Co., Ltd.

As nearly as can be ascertained it is as Samuel Green left it. Except for the provision of an electric blower it has not been modernised in any way. It is of the type known as a two manual and pedal organ and has features which seemed to have anticipated later organ building practice in many respects, probably owing to the fact that Green was a pioneer and experimenter in the craft. The full Compass Swell Organ is thought to be unique at this date and has a full complement of bass pipes. There are two open Diapason stops on the Great Organ, one a large scale stop and the other small. The range of stops is well ahead of the time, the Keraulophon and Dulciana Principal being possibly the first examples of their kind.

On the mechanical side, too, the instrument is years in advance of those of Green's contemporaries and many of the devices employed bear witness to the ingenuity of their creator. One of the pedal couplers is a Great to Pedal Sub-Octave and is believed to be the earliest instance of such a stop in this country. The bellows are what is known as 'concussion bellows', nullifying jerkiness in blowing and hitherto thought not to have been invented before the 19th century. Evidently the organ was built regardless of cost, for 90% of the pipes are made of pure tin and the

Bristol Glass Chandelier

The Billiard Room Chimney-piece



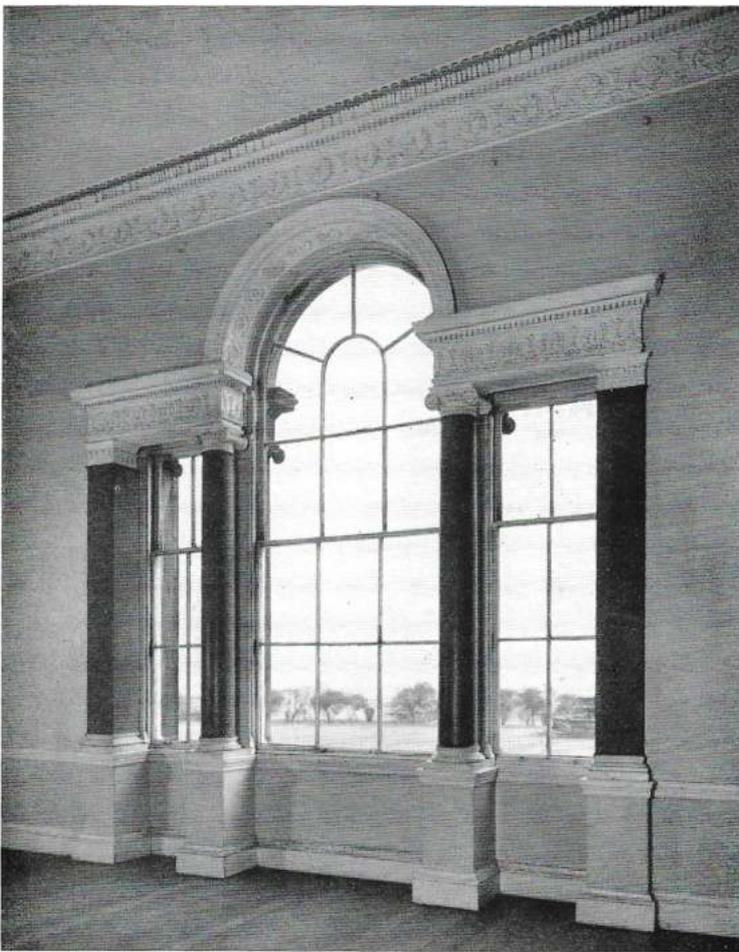


Plate 21

remainder of spotted metal, an alloy of 60% tin and 40% lead. All the front display pipes are tin, as are also certain parts known as conveyances, i.e. pipes for conveying air pressure. The result is an agreeable sweetness and clarity of tone.

The next three rooms on this floor are all handsomely decorated and, with those above, constitute the central block which is so striking an architectural feature of the south front. They are the billiard room, the saloon and the dining room.

The BILLIARD ROOM (Plate 18) which is entered through the double doors of the music room (Plate 17), contains as part of the fixed decoration a series of painted canvases depicting classical subjects. These are attached to the walls and are framed with gilt mouldings in low relief. The ceiling (Plate 22) has a central oval design with a broad band of panels enclosing it. In these the main motif is a tazza-shaped urn, which also appears in the frieze of the chimney-piece (Plate 20). Tall urns are used to decorate the plaster work over the doorways and the frieze of the room itself. The treatment of the Venetian windows is especially noticeable with a richly patterned entablature supported by pilasters and columns.

In the saloon beyond, the side walls have similarly styled chimney-pieces as the central feature. These are flanked by niches in which remain the original marble statues. Above the chimney-pieces are low relief figures, with a delicate festoon of plaster work around them, surmounted

The Dining Room Window

The Billiard Room Ceiling

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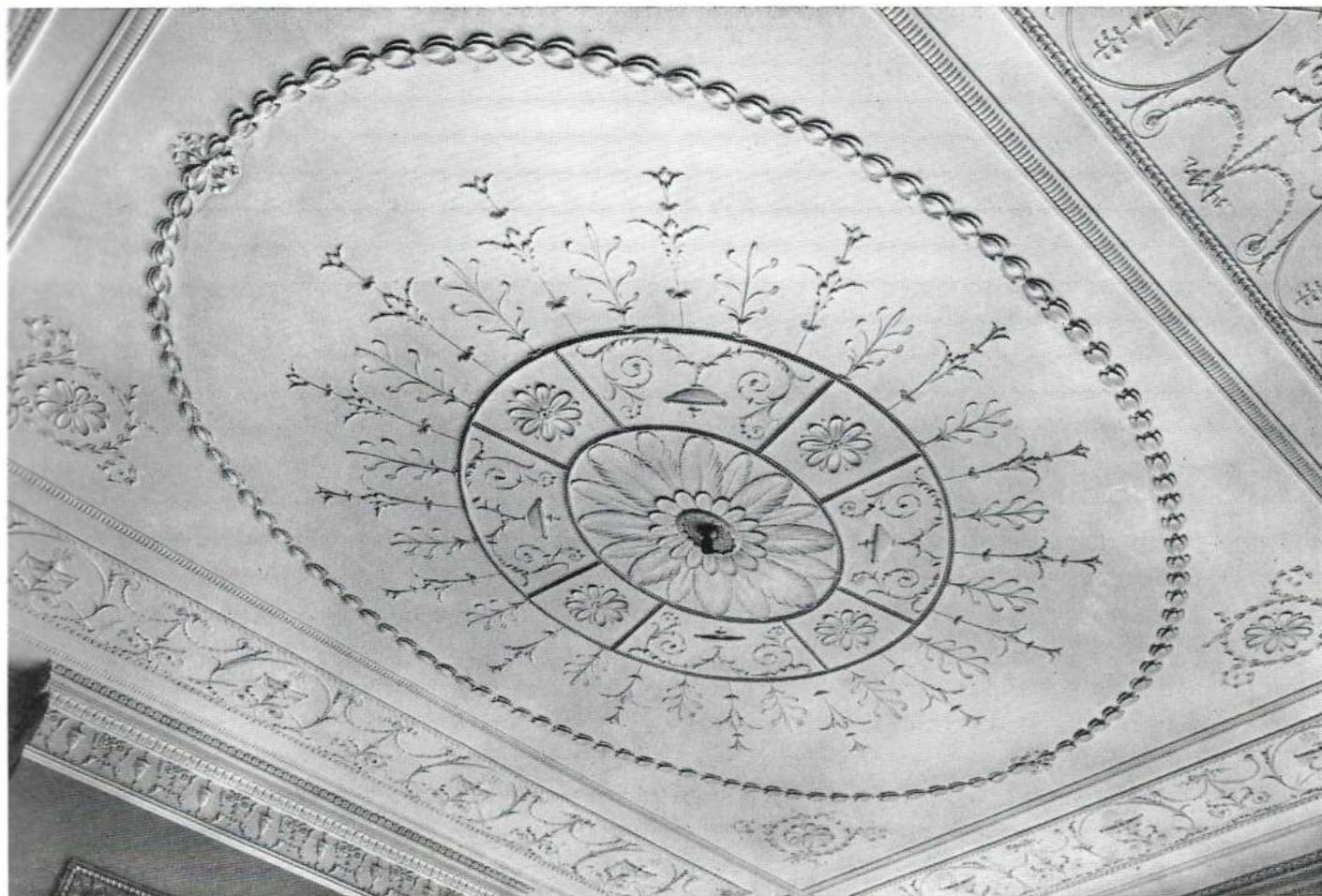




Plate 23

by the three-arrow crest of the Egerton family. The end of the room, opposite the window in the projecting bay, is made into a corridor-like space by the introduction of scagliola columns about 6 feet short of the wall. In this space the ceiling is barrel shaped, the four doorways all open into it, and the centre of the wall is slightly recessed. The entablature of the rest of the room is carried round above the columns and its design is repeated in the chimneypieces. Here, too, the ceiling is richly decorated.

The last of this series of rooms, for the rest of the south front was probably made up of domestic offices with a kitchen occupying the octagonal pavilion at the west end, is the dining room, in which the south wall of the 1750 house has been pierced to provide a semi-circular recess or apse (Plate 24), no doubt originally for a sideboard. Three painted panels are incorporated in the plasterwork design of the ceiling of this recess. The pattern of the frieze around the room and over the doorways is echoed in that of the chimneypiece, which has a centre panel with animals and an urn as the decorative subject, and carved heads carrying the side supports. Venetian windows (Plate 21), similar to those in the billiard room, form another arresting feature.

Doorways from the saloon and the billiard room lead back again to the foot of the grand staircase up which the first floor rooms should now be reached. One of these, the CUPOLA ROOM

The Main Staircase (second flight)

The Dining Room Apse

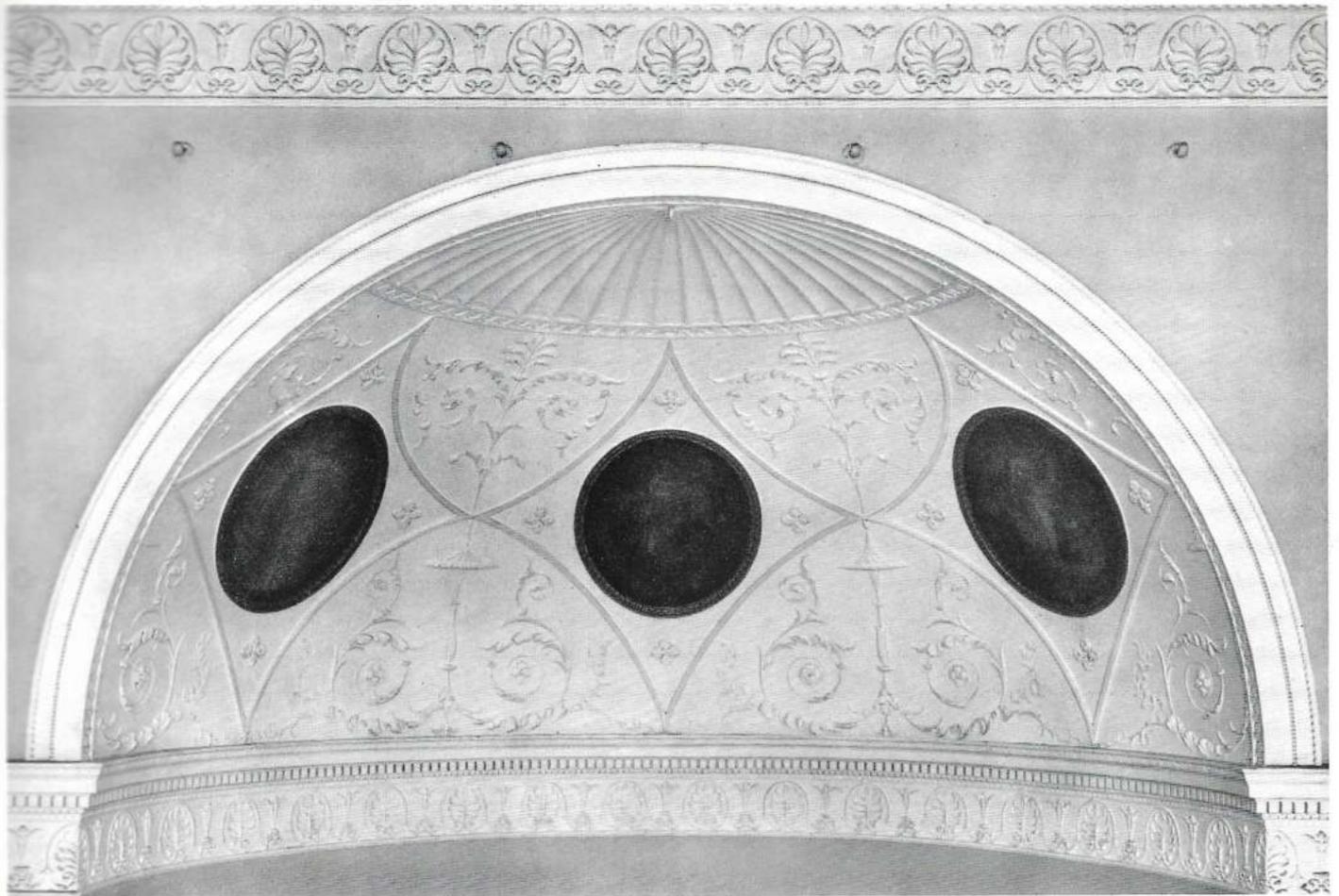




Plate 25

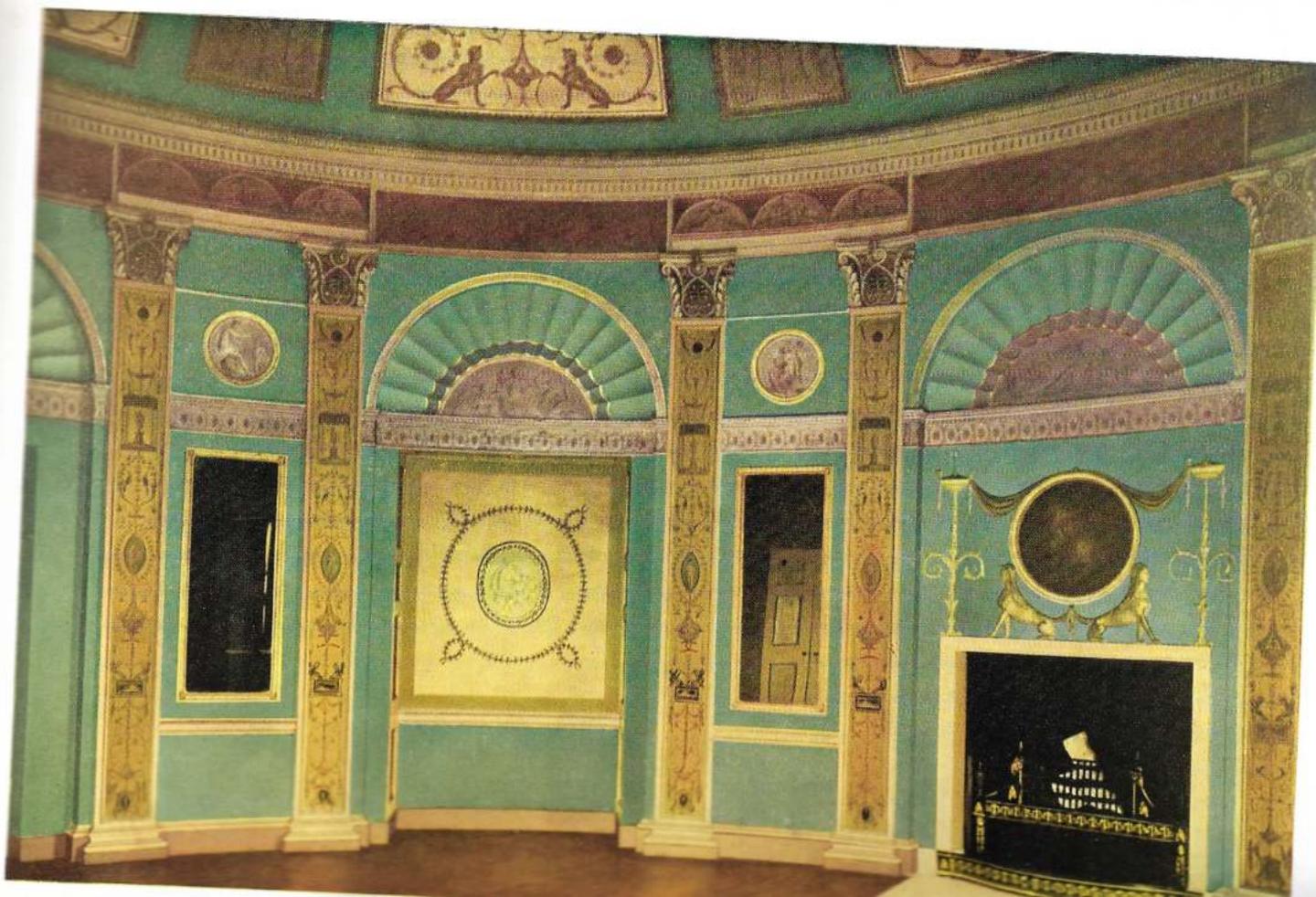
(Plate 26), is a remarkably well preserved example of the so-called Etruscan type of decoration, which was a blending of the style of Raphael and his school of designers with actual Roman motifs, and with subjects taken from vases then believed to be Etruscan but now known to be Greek. It was carried out by the Italian, Biagio Rebecca, who was associated with Wyatt in other interior schemes. All the painted work on the walls and ceiling of this room, which is cupola shaped and embraces the upper part of the projecting bay of the south front, is by him. The panels of the pilasters contain strips of paper on which the design was painted before they were pasted in position. Roundels, lunettes, the wide and narrow tapering panels on the ceiling, and the sphinx and other decorative work over the simple marble chimneypiece, including a circular portrait in a countersunk frame, complete his scheme. In addition there is such plaster work as the pilasters, entablature and cornice; the fan-like motifs over the double doorway, over the recesses on either side, and over the fireplace; and the central feature of the dome. Mirrors in the spaces between the pairs of pilasters add to the elaborate effect. The views from the windows include a fine one of the lake and colonnade referred to earlier.

The other rooms on this floor are very simply decorated, though the chimneypieces and doorways are worthy of notice. On the landing round the

The Staircase Gallery

The Cupola Room

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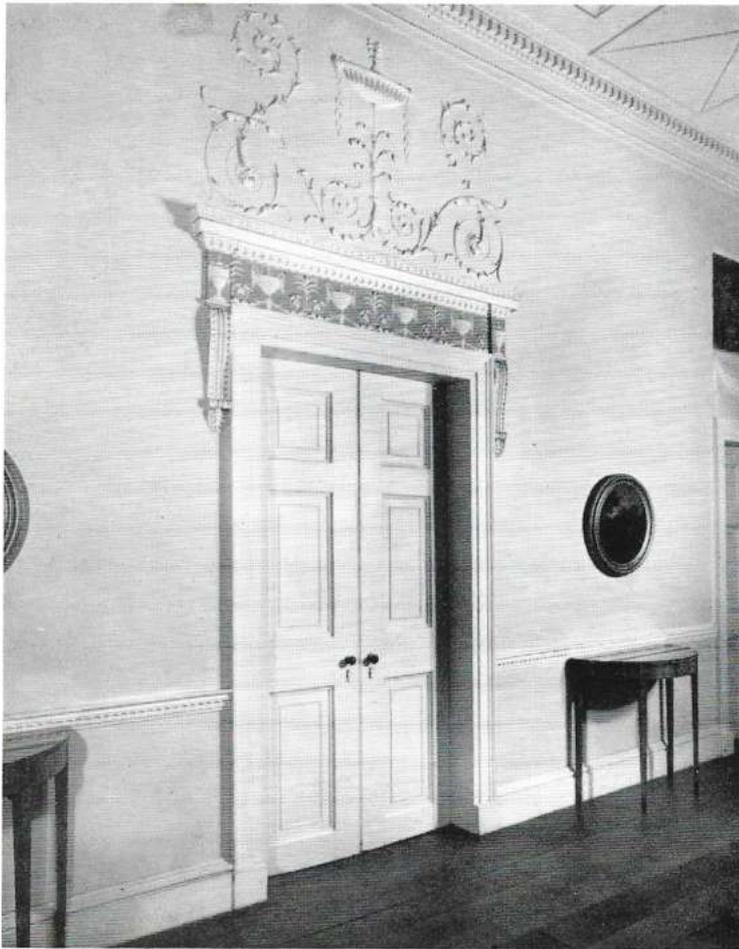


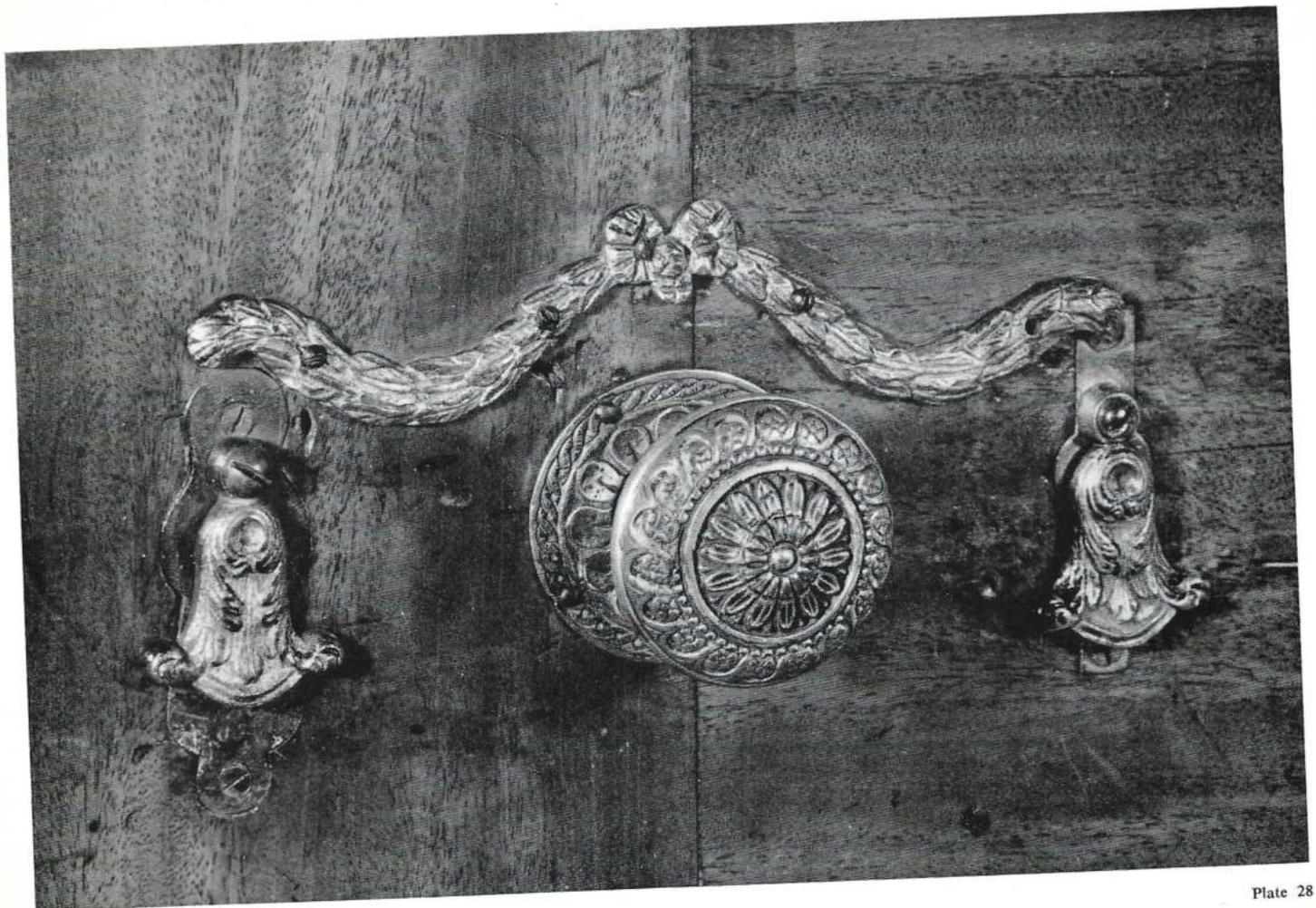
Plate 27

staircase well, however, are several attractive plasterwork devices over the doorways, (Plate 27), and in the centre of the north wall where a round convex mirror is incorporated in the design (Plate 29).

With the exception of the contemporary fenders in the various fireplaces, none of the exhibits now on view belonged to the house, the contents of which, unfortunately, were not acquired when the estate was bought by the Manchester Corporation. The works of art to be seen in the several rooms, however, are for the most part of the late Georgian period in which the Hall was built. They have been selected from the city's art collections or have been specially bought or borrowed to help furnish the building and to reflect the elegance and graciousness so characteristic of the best English design in the domestic arts of that time. Thus throughout the house, in addition to the decorative craftwork which forms part of the attraction of the building itself, will be found exhibits carefully chosen to enhance the period atmosphere.

In the small dining room and the library, most of the furniture is typical of the Hepplewhite (Plate 9) and Sheraton styles, whilst that in the music room is largely of the type associated with the name of Thomas Chippendale. Other noteworthy pieces are the wine cooler and the gilt convex mirror in the small dining room; the square piano made by Longman and

*The Doorway to the Cupola Room**A Brass Door Handle*



Broderip of London about 1790 with its beautifully painted decoration, the spinning wheel by John Planta and the delicately designed chandelier of Bristol glass (Plate 19), which is wired for electric current, in the music room; the architect's table and the tambour topped secretaire in the library; and the painted chairs in the billiard room, the entrance hall and on the staircase landing.

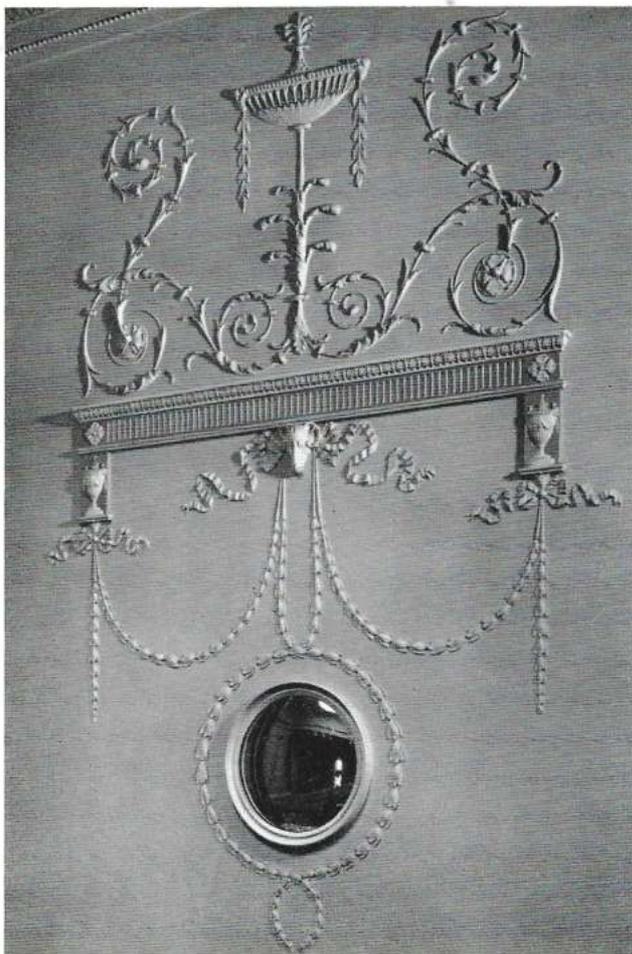
The oil paintings include, besides the portrait of John Horne Tooke by Richard Brompton (Plate 13), examples of the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds, Thomas Gainsborough, George Romney, Sir Henry Raeburn, William Marlow, Richard Wilson, Alexander Nasmyth and other well known 18th century artists; whilst water colours and other drawings by such members of the early English School as David Cox, Copley Fielding, Samuel Prout and John Varley, or colour engravings of the period by Bartolozzi, John Raphael Smith, William Ward and P. W. Tomkins are also shown from time to time.

A feeling for classical design, so apt in a Wyatt building, is again evident in the small but choice collection of Wedgwood pottery in the billiard room. Here are to be found specimens of the cameos, vases and other ornamental jasper stoneware in blue and white, green and white, lilac, pale green and mauve, and of the black basalt ware, which were Josiah Wedgwood's chief innovations when he established his works at Etruria in Staffordshire, in 1768.

English porcelain of the 18th and early 19th centuries is shown in one of the upstairs rooms. There are typical products of the Bow factory which was started about 1744 and of those at Chelsea, Derby, Plymouth, Bristol and Worcester which were founded within the following seven years. One case contains a representative group of the pieces made

Wall Ornament on Staircase

The Rose Garden





at Worcester under the inspiration of Dr. John Wall between 1751 and 1783.

The showcases in the ground floor exhibition gallery contain many fine examples of English glass and silver. Indeed the development of the drinking glass in England from the late 17th century to the end of the Georgian period is amply illustrated in the series, which begins with heavy baluster stems and shows the progressive lightening and increasing delicacy of the glasses as the air bubble or 'tear' is drawn down the stem to form a decorative twist. Several of the bowls are also finely engraved with Jacobite emblems. The silver covers an even longer period. Plate II shows a group of Georgian table silver of which there is an ample range.

In a recess in the library has been placed a plaster model of the fireplace designed by Alfred Stevens for Dorchester House, London, the original of which is preserved in the Tate Gallery.

All these exhibits are of a standard to be enjoyed independently of the contribution they make to the

dignity and seemliness of this attractive architectural setting.

THE PARK

THIS affords the public ample and varied space in which to roam. A pleasant rose garden (Plate 30), an azalea garden and an old English garden offer a feast of colour throughout the summer and autumn. In the spring, hosts of golden daffodils brighten the sloping sides of the valleys. Fine specimens of trees abound and different varieties of shrubs, especially rhododendrons, thrive well, despite the surrounding industrial areas. Early in the year graceful sprays of yellow forsythia grow freely in the shrubberies and flowering cherries in the plantations. Facilities for golf, tennis, bowls, football and cricket are provided and, in the summer, bands, concerts and open-air plays are arranged.

The buildings comprising the main entrance to the Park, an archway with two-storied octagonal structures on either side, were also designed by James Wyatt.

- The text has been written by Mr. S. D. Cleveland, Director of the City Art Galleries, Manchester.
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MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN

*Back Cover—In Heaton Park
(Kemsley Studios)*

