

## **Report for the September 2014 meeting of the Malvern Civic Society**

On Friday 12 September Vice Chairman Katharine Barber welcomed back a packed audience after the summer break. Our speaker, Catherine Beale, gave us a detailed and enthusiastic talk about Hampton Court in Herefordshire, accompanied by some very interesting slides. She told us about the many different aspects of this fifteenth century building, its gardens and its history. Catherine is a writer and historian and has appeared on radio and television, including Antiques Roadshow. She researched and wrote the guidebook for Hampton Court when the gardens opened in 2000.

Located in the village of Hope under Dinmore near Leominster, Hampton Court is a crenellated manor house which dates from 1434. The talk took us through the key owners of the estate and the various periods of wealth and decline that the estate and its owners saw. The first owner was Sir Rolland Leinthall in whose family it remained until 1510, after which it was sold to the Coningsby family and stayed in that family until 1810. The next owners were the Arkwrights, who carried out extensive renovations but were forced to sell the estate in 1912. Mrs Nancy Burrell then bought the house in 1912, after which it changed hands many times, with the estate shrinking and expanding over time. The contents were dispersed after a huge sale in 1972 by the owners at the time, the Viscounts Hereford. The current owner, an American, has recently put the house and its 935 acres of land up for sale for £12m.

Catherine showed us drawings and photographs of the gardens and explained how the layout of this listed landscape once mimicked that of Hampton Court Palace in London. We admired photographs of furniture and other artefacts that had belonged to the house and which are now on display in the great museums of New York, London and even in Hampton Court Palace itself.

Katharine thanked our speaker for giving us such an interesting insight into what people have owned and loved and which shed a wonderful light on the house.

Paul Backhouse, Chairman of the Management Committee of Malvern Museum then gave us an update on the restoration of the Priory Gatehouse. The plans by the architect have gone to English Heritage in order to gain planning permission. The total work will cover protection against the damp, restoration of medieval stonework, drainage, wall and roof repairs. Paul also introduced us to the new book by the Museum, called "*Malvern in the Great War*".