

## **September 8<sup>th</sup> talk by Joe Tierney**

On 8<sup>th</sup> September, Civic Society members were treated by National Trust Officer Joe Tierney to an illustrated brief history of Croome Court and its restoration. He reminded us that the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Coventry inherited the estate in 1751 and commissioned Launcelot 'Capability' Brown to redesign the estate and house, the house design being aided by Robert Adam.

The work involved demolition of the local village and its rebuild 'out of sight'. The original church was also demolished. A new church was built together with other scenic features such as the Pirton and Dunstall castles, the Rotunda, the Park Seat, the Panorama Tower, the Temple Greenhouse and the Grotto at the lake. The House is renowned as having fine features of Neo Palladian architecture and is being restored to the state immediately prior to the First World War.

Since 1914, the estate has been owned by a variety of organisations who, according to their individual needs and the exigencies of the times, variously adapted or neglected the house and grounds. We were told of the ploughing up of land between the wars, the emergence of scrub land and the silting-up and drainage of the lake and overgrowth of park pathways and the more recent reinstatement work.

The whole estate is now the responsibility of the National Trust and, based on the original Capability Brown 'snake' map for design of the park, the restoration work is ongoing. Public access to the grounds started in 2004 and to the house in 2009.