

Visit to Hellens Manor - near Much Marcle

The History Group and some friends visited Hellens Manor recently on a lovely summers day. After congregating at The Courtyard, the group split into two for the guided tours of the House as the tour groups were limited to 12 people.

We discovered the House had an interesting and varied history. It was built mainly over the late Medieval, Tudor and Stuart period. It has been lived in continuously and is even used today by the Munte family, so unlike a National Trust house it was possible to use some of the furniture and see rooms without heavy window screening.

The House has had some interesting owners, including a prominent suffragette, a local MP known as the "Minister for Cider", it also has a resident ghost and had appeared on a ghost hunting TV series.

The end of the visit was met with welcomed fresh tea and homemade biscuits.

The gardens are well kept and in places a real gem. Some of the group explored the local church and its mighty 1500-year-old Yew Tree. It is believed to be one of the oldest living trees in Britain.

We also bumped in the Art Group for Ross-on Wye U3A who were painting scenes around the House - an unplanned surprise.

We were lucky with the weather, I think the day will be remembered for quite a while by those who attended.

Many thanks go to member Anne Roberts who put a lot of effort into background planning and supporting me. There were some difficulties to overcome along the way (which were out of our control), but we got there in the end.

Steve