

# The Landmark Trust

## THE CHATEAU History Album



Written by Charlotte Haslam  
1985

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The Landmark Trust Shottesbrooke Maidenhead Berkshire SL6 3SW  
Charity registered in England & Wales 243312 and Scotland SC039205

Bookings 01628 825925 Office 01628 825920 Facsimile 01628 825417  
Website [www.landmarktrust.org.uk](http://www.landmarktrust.org.uk)

## **Basic Details**

<b>Built</b>	<b>1747/8</b>
<b>Architect</b>	<b>John Platt</b>
<b>Acquired by Landmark Trust</b>	<b>1982</b>
<b>Architect for restoration:</b>	<b>Philip Jebb</b>
<b>Builder:</b>	<b>Simons of Lincoln</b>
<b>Stonework:</b>	<b>Gregories Quarries</b>
<b>Work completed</b>	<b>1984</b>

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**The Chateau**

## Summary

The Château was built in 1747–8 for a prosperous lawyer from Gainsborough named Thomas Hutton. Mr Hutton and his father before him had looked after the local business affairs of the Earl of Abingdon, who owned two small estates nearby - Gate Burton and Knaith - which had come into his family through an earlier marriage and were some distance from the rest of his very large property. In 1744 the Earl was advised to sell the two estates and Hutton, seeing the chance of a bargain, purchased that of Gate Burton. (The neighbouring Knaith estate was sold to a Mr Dalton, and in the early 19th century Hutton's grandson bought it and brought it back to the Hutton family.) Gate Burton at that time had no hall or manor house, and rather than go to the expense of providing one Mr Hutton built the little Château on its wooded knoll above the river, with its garden and plantations around it, as a weekend cottage. There, according to his son, 'he could retire from the Business of his office at Gainsborough, from a Saturday evening until the Monday Morning.' He would have had his rooms on the first floor, with a kitchen and servant's room below.

The architect of the Château was John Platt, and it must have been almost his first work, designed when he was only 19. Platt came from a family of mason architects and for 50 years and more he practised as a builder and statuary mason as well as an architect, all with equal success. He worked almost exclusively in Yorkshire; the Château is almost his only building outside the county. His many works include Mount Pleasant, near Sheffield; Thundercliffe Grange, Ecclefield; and Page Hall, Eccleshall. He added a wing to Tong Hall; designed a fireplace for Renishaw; and staircases, made of marble from his own quarries, for Aston Hall and Clifton Hall.

Thomas Hutton finally began to build Gate Burton Hall in about 1765, and it was mostly complete by 1768. The Château came to be used simply as a summer house, an agreeable destination for picnics or the odd night 'in rural seclusion.' Towards the end of the century, however, alterations were carried out, including the addition of balconies at either end of the building. In the 19th century new windows were inserted, but they were on the wrong scale, being two panes wide instead of three; the exterior, above the rustication, was rendered and the roof was renewed.

In 1907 the Hutton family sold both Gate Burton and Knaith to the Sandars family, wealthy maltsters from Gainsborough. In the sale particulars the Château is described as a shooting box, so the upper floor had probably been kept for the use of the family for shooting lunches and other such entertainments. After the War it was not lived in again, and it was left stranded without natural users. Gate Burton Hall, with its park, was sold again in 1974, but the strip of land along the river, where the Château stands, was retained and became part of the Knaith Hall estate, which had been inherited by a connection of the Sandars family.

The work of neglect and natural decay inevitably continued, accelerated as so often by the activities of vandals, until the building was approaching the point of collapse. In 1982 the owner, concerned for its survival but unable to afford the cost of repair himself, therefore offered it to the Landmark Trust.

## Restoration by the Landmark Trust

When the Landmark Trust took on the Château in 1982, there was little of the building that did not need extensive repair. Under architect Philip Jebb the builders Simons of Lincoln began work by dismantling anything that was unsafe or past repair, and securing what remained. The small balconies at either end, and the steps leading up to that on the west, were taken down. The urns on the parapet, together with some fragments found lying around the building, were sent away for restoration. The parapet itself had also to be taken down, since the brickwork was unsafe. Beneath this, the entablature was also fairly insecure above the openings between the main block and the side wings, and had to be propped up from inside the building. The slates were taken off the roof, so that the condition of the timbers could be judged, and the decayed render hacked off the walls. Inside, what little remained was very rotten; after recording the mouldings, this too was hacked out.

At this point reconstruction could begin. Under the render, fair face pointing was found to the brickwork, indicating that the building had originally been plain brick above the rustication. So after the repair of structural weaknesses (in the niches on the end walls, for example), the brickwork was simply washed and repointed using lime putty. The stone rustication was treated similarly. Elsewhere, stone was renewed only where it was badly weathered, or where a section was missing, as in the balustrade of the central window. All the new work was carried out in Ancaster stone, which matched the original.

The roof timbers were nearly all unsound, so that a new roof structure was necessary. Enough of the original slates survived intact to cover the back and inner slopes of the side wings; elsewhere a new slate called Corunna Grey was used. The parapets were rebuilt, incorporating lead water chutes, with new coping stones where necessary. The chimney was also rebuilt as closely as possible to the original in John Platt's drawing, which is in the Sheffield City Library. The balconies were not replaced, however; they were almost certainly later additions, and since an internal staircase would have to be built anyway they were not needed for access. The two doorways leading to them have therefore become windows.

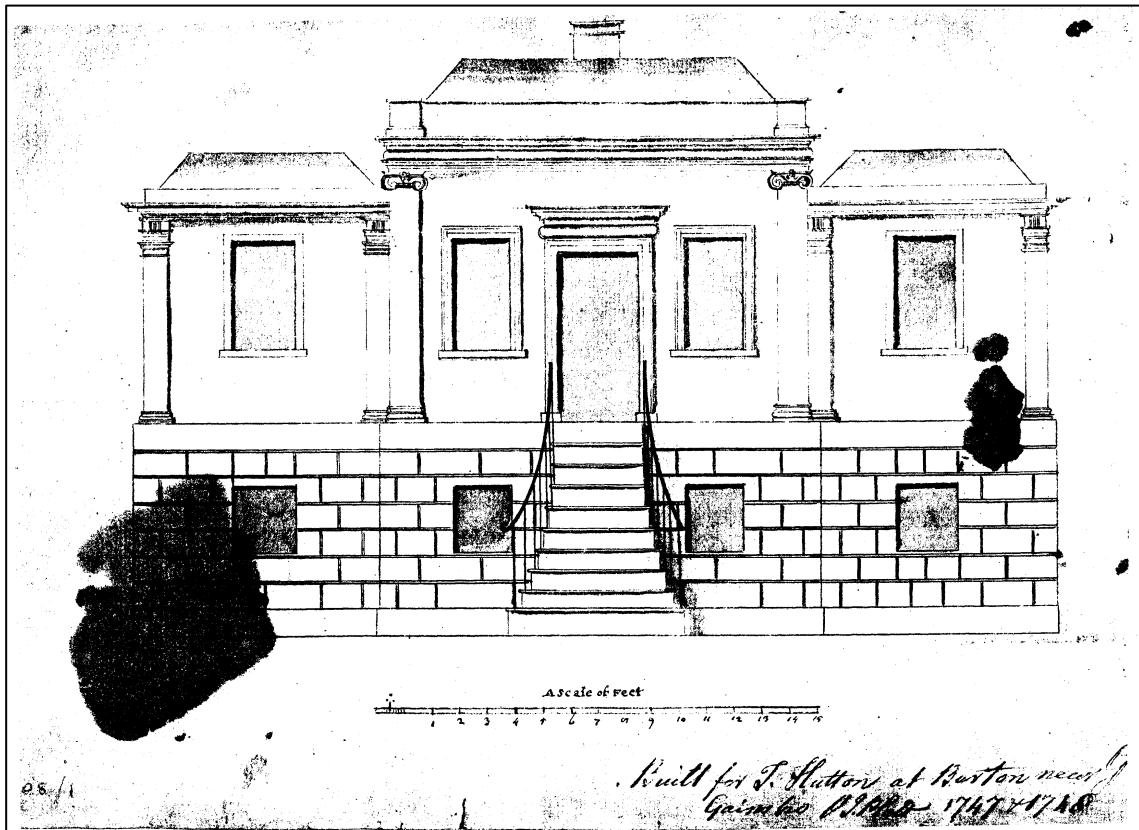
All the windows needed replacing, which has given the opportunity to return to the original proportions of three panes, which suits the scale of the building much better. The work to the exterior was completed by the return of the urns to the corners of the parapets. Only two had proved to be beyond repair, and to replace these matching new urns were carved.

Inside the building, just about everything is new work. Only the first-floor fireplace and some paving stones on the ground are from the building as it was. Since the plasterwork had seemed to be later than 1747, however, it was not replaced with an exact copy but with mouldings more typical of the mid-18th century. A staircase was fitted into one wing, bedrooms into the other, and the kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor. The Château was ready once more for its original purpose as a place of retirement from business, for a weekend or longer.

## The Chateau

The Chateau was built in 1747/8 for Thomas Hutton of Gate Burton, and was intended for the unlikely use of a weekend cottage. Mr Hutton was a prosperous lawyer from Gainsborough; he and his father before him had looked after the business affairs in the area of the Earl of Abingdon, who owned two small estates nearby: Gate Burton and Knaith, which had come into his family through an earlier marriage and were some distance from the rest of his very large property. In 1744 the Earl was advised to sell the two estates, and Thomas Hutton, seeing the chance of a bargain, purchased that of Gate Burton. The neighbouring estate of Knaith was sold to a Mr Dalton and was only bought by Thomas Hutton's grandson early in the nineteenth century. Gate Burton at that time had no hall or manor house that he could move into, and rather than go to the expense of building one, Mr Hutton, it seems, built the little Chateau, on its wooded knoll above the river and with its garden and plantations around it; and there, according to one of his sons; 'he used to retire from the business of his office at Gainsborough from a Saturday Evening until the Monday Morning.' He would have had his rooms on the first floor, with a kitchen and servant's room below.

The architect who designed the building was called John Platt, and it must have been almost his first work, designed when he was only nineteen. It shows both the confidence and the faults of a young man's work, with a charming and cleverly scaled down facade, which is yet not quite 'correct' in the classical sense, a temple front without a pediment. As Bartholomew Howett, in his 'Views of Lincoln' says, it is 'not of regular architecture.'



John Platt's original Design for the Chateau now in Sheffield City Library.  
There is no evidence that the steps were ever built.



## John Platt of Rotherham

John Platt descended from a family of mason architects who were working at Lyme Park, Cheshire, in the late 17th and early 18th centuries, a father and three sons. Of these sons one, John, designed St Paul's Sheffield, and another, George, left Lyme in 1730, to establish himself in Rotherham, Yorkshire. There he mainly worked as an executant architect for other more distinguished men, but he probably designed Cusworth Hall himself in 1740. He died quite young in 1743 and his wife carried on the business until their son John (designer of the Chateau) was old enough to take it on himself, which he did in 1747.

For the next fifty years and more he practised as an architect builder and statuary mason, all with equal success. He worked almost exclusively within Yorkshire, the Chateau and a bridge near Stockport in Cheshire of about the same date - which was later washed away by floods - being almost his only works elsewhere. From 1763 to 1796 he kept a journal, which now belongs to a descendant, and which gives an excellent record of the life of a provincial architect in the 18th century.

Like his father, he carried out a number of designs for other architects, at Wortley Hall, Wentworth Castle and Wentworth Woodhouse for example. A certain amount of the detail might have been left for him to decide even so, and he also designed a number of country houses, as well as making alterations and additions, entirely on his own account, if relying on published patterns for ideas in some of these cases. His works include Mount Pleasant, near Sheffield, for Francis Sitwell; Thundercliffe Grange, Ecclefield for the Earl of Effingham; and Page Hall, Eccleshall for Thomas Broadbent. In addition he built a number of smaller houses, and public buildings, in and around Rotherham itself, added a wing to Tong Hall, designed a fireplace for Renishaw and staircases, made of marble from his own quarries in Derbyshire, for Aston Hall and for Clifton Hall.



From: **A Selection of Views in the County of Lincoln**, by Bartholomew Howlett, 1805 edition. The original drawings were made by J.C. Nattes in 1793.



Prints from The British Library.

He married into a prosperous Rotherham family and had ten children, but although two of his sons started training as architects, and a third was apprenticed to the sculptor Westmacott, all three abandoned these careers to go into the armed forces, so that Platt's practice and his other businesses died with him in 1810.

## Later History of the Chateau

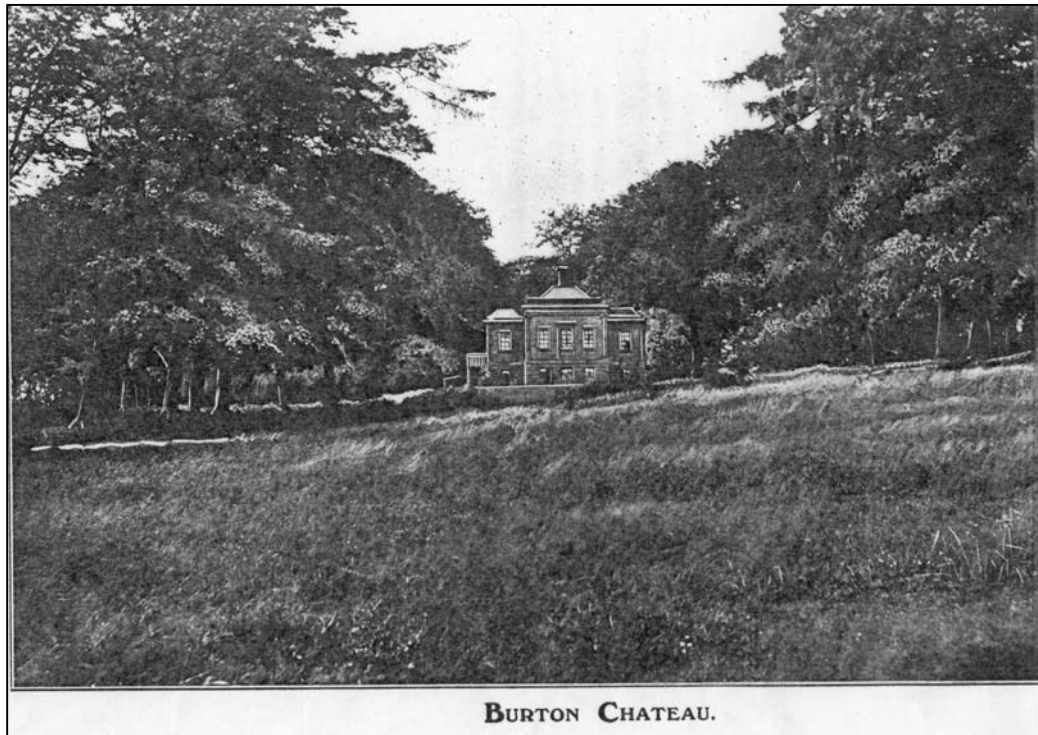
In about 1765 Thomas Hutton finally began the building of a permanent home for his family on the estate, and Gate Burton Hall was mostly completed by 1768, although some work was still being carried out by his son William after he succeeded his father in 1774. The Chateau came to be used simply as a summerhouse, an agreeable destination for picnics, or the odd night 'in rural seclusion.' There may have been, as very often in such buildings, a caretaker living on the ground floor.

Towards the end of the century some alterations were apparently made to the building. What remained of the interior plasterwork on the upper floor in 1982 seemed to be of late 18th century date, and must have been due to a redecoration at that time. We do not know how the first floor was reached originally; since the steps in Platt's drawing do not seem to have been built, since there is no trace of them on the stonework. Later, steps led up to one of the two balconies which projected at either end of the building. These balconies existed when the Chateau was sketched by JC Nattes for Bartholomew Howlett's 'Views' in the 1790s, but the doors leading to them, and the steps as well, were definitely later than the original building, so that unless they were themselves altered, they do not date from 1747.

Later, in the 19th century, less sensitive alterations were carried out. New windows were inserted, but on the wrong scale, being two panes wide rather than three. The exterior, above the rustication, was rendered and the roof was renewed. Then, in this century, the chimney, which had no doubt become unsafe, was taken down.

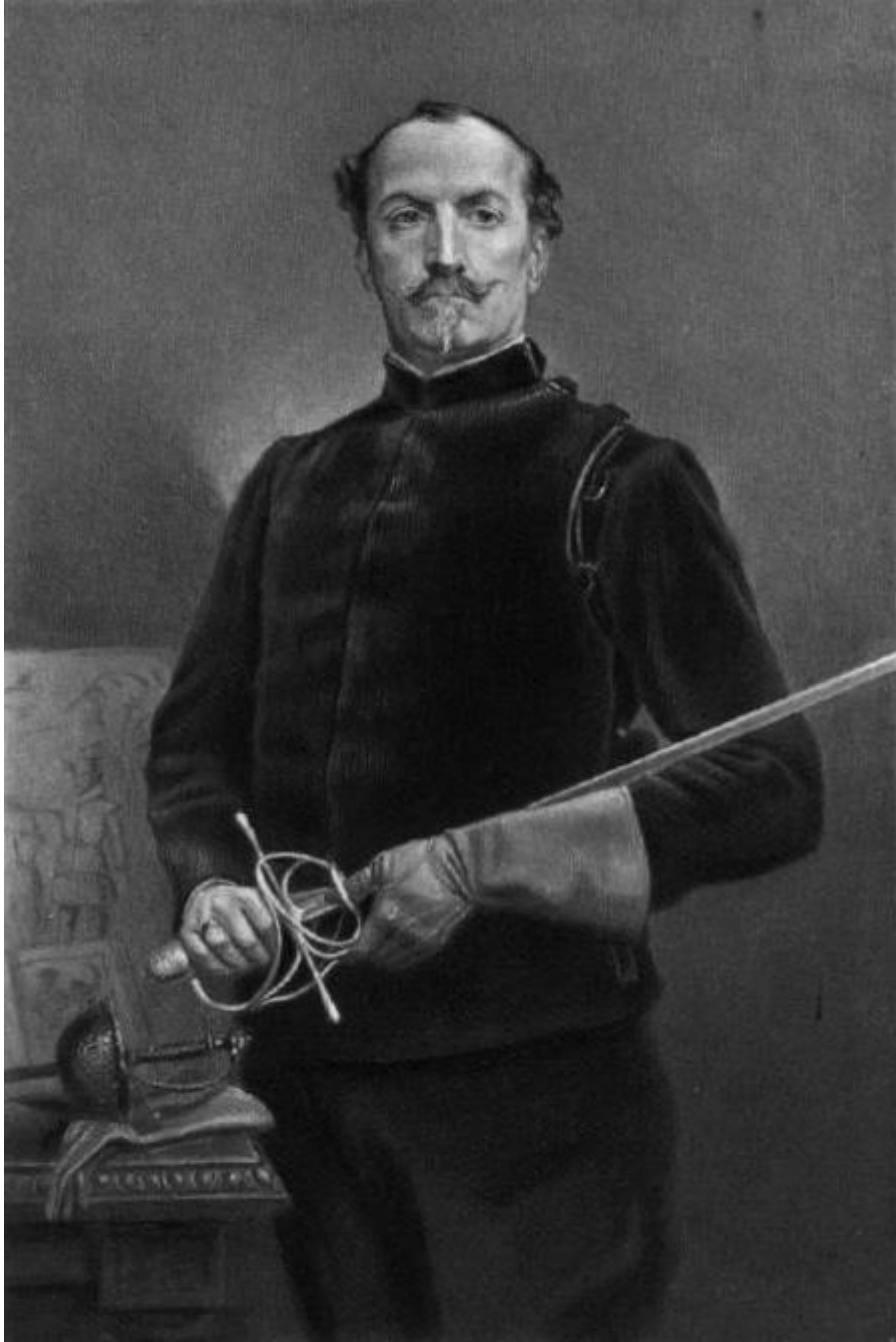
By then the Gate Burton estate had new owners. In 1907 Charles Hutton put both it and Knaith up for sale, and they were bought by Sandars, wealthy maltsters from Gainsborough, establishing themselves among the landed gentry of the county as the Huttons had done in the 18th century. In the sales

particulars the Chateau is described as a shooting box, so the upper floor had probably been kept for the use of the family for shooting lunches and other such entertainments. The Miss J Wright who is recorded as living there at an annual rent of £5 presumably only occupied the lower rooms.



**From Sale particulars 1907.**

In 1974 Gate Burton Hall was again put up for sale, with its park, after the death of J.E. Sandars. But the area of land along the river, in which the Chateau stood, was retained and became part of the Knaith Hall estate, which had been inherited by Mr Sandars' nephew, John Burke. He himself lives elsewhere, so the Chateau, which had not been lived in since the War, apart from occasional parties of Boy Scouts who based their camps there, was left stranded and without natural users. There followed the usual story: the gradual decay of the previous years was accelerated by the activities of vandals, until the building was approaching the point at which, the roof gone, it would begin to collapse altogether. Mr Burke, concerned for its survival, but unable to afford the cost of repair himself, or find a use for the building, therefore offered it to the Landmark Trust in 1982.



Your very truly  
Alfred Hutton

**'Cold Steel'**

## The Hutton Family

The history of the Hutton family was written in 1898 and updated in 1902 to include accounts of those members of it who had fought in the Boer War - by Arthur Wollaston of Hutton. In it he points out that 'it is almost exclusively in the Church or the Army that the Huttons of Gate Burton have served their country.' That sounds conventional enough, and the story of their rise from being yeomen farmers in Nottinghamshire in the 17th century, through two generations of successful lawyers to the purchase of land in the 18th, is not an unusual one. The careers of the eldest sons, from the army or university to company directorships and county administration, and the small amount of surviving correspondence which deals almost exclusively with farming and fox-hunting, would seem to show that they were entirely typical of the English gentry. However the Thomas who bought Gate Burton and spent his weekends there in the Chateau he had built shows signs of less ordinary gifts: he was described by the Earl of Abingdon as 'my friend Tommy Hutton' who was 'particularly endowed, being both silver-tongued and lark-heeled, the former as an eloquent Speaker, and the latter as a most excellent Dancer.'

But it is the younger sons, and the sons of younger sons, going into the church and the army in such numbers, who demonstrate that there was a streak of intellect and talent in the family which was not so typical. Because once embarked on, their careers did not necessarily follow predictable patterns. A number of them, it is true, were given the living of Gate Burton by their elder brothers in the traditional way, and two at least distinguished themselves in the army in the expected fashion. Edward Hutton, who rose to be a General, was knighted and served as ADC to Queen Victoria; and Thomas, who was a hero of Balaclava, wounded in both legs in the charge of the Light Brigade. But Alfred Hutton, while rising to be a Captain of Dragoons, was also a famous swordsman, and expert on the art of fencing, publishing several books and articles on the subject, and being elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries. His portrait,

entitled 'Cold Steel' was painted by John Ernest Breun and exhibited at both the Royal Academy and the Paris 'Salon.'

Three Huttons were painters, two amateur and one, Walter Stritch Hutton, professional; and one was an actor; but it is for the number of authors and academics they have produced that the Huttons are interesting. Even General Sir Edward Hutton published a number of pamphlets on military subjects, while the churchmen in the family went into print on, apparently, any subject they could think of. A number were also Fellows of Oxford colleges, the most distinguished being the historian William Holden Hutton, Fellow of St John's and later Reader in Indian History, Curator of the Bodleian Library and finally Dean of Winchester. In the Dictionary of National Biography - for which he contributed a number of entries - he is described as coming from a family that was 'both clerical and bookish.' His rooms at St John's, which were the meeting place of a circle of literary friends, were adorned with portraits of several 'bewigged divines' and a collection of 18th century literature, theological and historical. This had been collected by his great-uncle, the Rev George Hutton, DD, Fellow of Magdalen, who was, besides being a 'Man of Taste', an ardent Tory and supporter of Pitt, contributing several articles to the 'Anti-Jacobin.' He was also the author of a number of pamphlets with titles like 'An Appeal to the Nation on the subject of Mr Gilbert Wakefield's Letter to William Wilberforce' and 'Remarks upon a late Decision in the Court of Arches on the Question whether a Person not Baptized by a Lawful Minister of the Church of England be Entitled to the Use of the Burial Service of that Church.'

Arthur Wollaston Hutton, who wrote the family history, was a follower of Cardinal Newman, 'going over' to the Roman Church with him, but returning in old age to the enclosures of the Church of England and a parish in Kew. He published works on Anglo-Catholicism and other matters. His brother, Frederick, was the family's only scientist, and a follower of another figure who rocked the 19th century, Charles Darwin. He emigrated to New Zealand where he took part





GEORGE MORLAND HUTTON, C.B.  
*(Taken in 1892.)*



WILLIAM HOLDEN HUTTON, B.D.  
*(Taken in 1896.)*



ARTHUR WOLLASTON HUTTON, M.A.  
*(Taken in 1891.)*

in the Geological Survey, helped to set up museums and held various academic posts. He maintained his links with scientific institutions in Britain, however, and in 1892 was elected Fellow of the Royal Society. His publications, inevitably, were numerous.

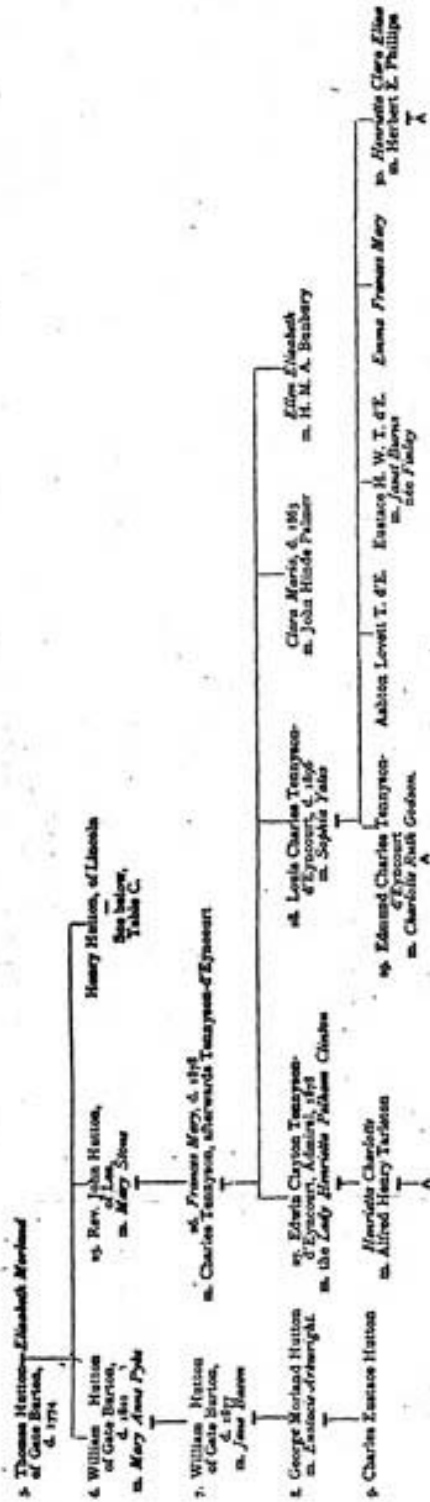
In all, of the male descendants of 'Tommy' Hutton bearing the surname of Hutton, of whom in 1900 there had been 36, at least seven had published their writings in one form or another. Added to these were the works of Hutton daughters: a volume of hymns, and translations of a pair of French religious works; and of their children, which ranged from medicine to Hellenic travel to 'Universal Yacht Signals.' It is a record which must have been equalled by few other families.



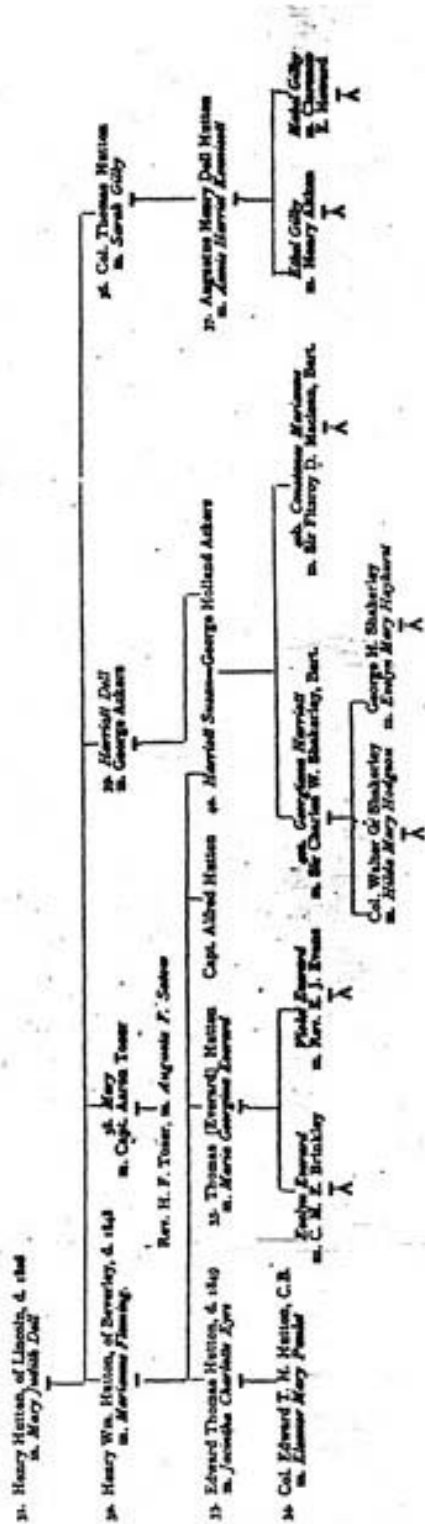
**Arms of Hutton, of Gate Burton, as recorded at the  
Heralds' College, 1898**



**TABLE B.**  
**KEY PEDIGREE,**  
**SHOWING THE DESCENDANTS OF THE REV. JOHN HUTTON, OF LEA.**



**TABLE C.**  
**SHOWING THE DESCENDANTS OF HENRY HUTTON, OF LINCOLN.**



## The Sandars Family

J. D. (John Drysdale, known as Jack) Sandars, who bought the Gate Burton and Knaith estates in 1907, was the third of a line of maltsters and brewers who had set themselves up in Gainsborough in the late 18th century. Both Jack and his father kept diaries, and in them it is possible to see the expansion of the business, and the growth of other interests. For some time before 1907 Jack had been buying farmland in the area, and much of his spare time, particularly when he was at Cambridge, was spent on sport of one sort or another.

In 1905 Jack married Maud, daughter of Lord Graves, and it may have been in honour of this successful marriage that he bought Gate Burton. Certainly, as soon as he had bought it, he set about modernising and enlarging the house, employing the architect Detmar Blow for the job. The gardens too were remodelled, and the whole estate run with great efficiency.

Jack died in 1922 and was succeeded by his son, J.W.E. Sandars, who was still a minor. His mother Maud, who did not remarry, had a great love of music and was an accomplished musician herself. She organised the Gate Burton Choral Society and also ran the Gate Burton Players, who performed Christmas pageants in which her children and friends took part, and which were very popular in the area. The Sandars family enjoyed at Gate Burton, in fact, the last flourishing years of country house life, which was to change so greatly after the Second World War.

After the War, J.W.E Sandars continued to uphold this life as well as he could, farming ever more efficiently and carrying out local duties, but land had to be sold, and after his death in 1974, the house went as well. What remains of the two estates is now farmed, in absentia, by his nephew.



**J D Sandars, the successful maltser who bought Gate Burton in 1907.**



**The Gainsborough (or Gate Burton?) Choral Society performing Bach's Peasant Cantata in 1937**



**The Gainsborough Choral Society, 1937**

**GATE BURTON TO LONDON.**

To-day is an important one in the history of the hamlet of Gate Burton and by the time this issue is on sale many of the tenants, their wives and members of the staff of Gate Burton Hall, the home of the Sandars, will be on their way in motor coaches to attend the wedding in London of Miss Rosemary Sandars to Mr. Anthony Burke. Miss Sandars, only daughter of the Honble. Mrs. Sandars and the late Mr. J. D. Sandars, has, in common with her mother, taken a great interest in the musical life of Gainsborough and district and in addition to the part she has played in the actual work of the West Lindsey Musical Competitions has always been willing to assist on the platform when orchestral concerts have been given in the town. Lately her interests have been centred in the Louth district where, as the Master of the Southwold hounds, she has resided at Goulceby House. The wedding will take place at the famous Brompton Oratory and tenants from Gate Burton, the family residence, are going in force to witness the ceremony, which will be one of the fashionable events of the season in London.

\* JULY 1937 \*

The marriage of J D Sandars's daughter, Rosemary, to Mr Anthony Burke, as reported in the local press, July 1937



## The Restoration

There was little of the Chateau, when Landmark took it on in 1982, which did not need extensive repair. As always in such a case, work began with the dismantling of what was unsafe or past repair, and the securing of what remained. So the small balconies on either end, and the steps leading up to that on the west, were taken down. The urns on the parapet, with some fragments found lying round the building, were sent away for restoration. The parapet itself also had to be taken down, since the brickwork was unsafe. Beneath this, the entablature too was fairly insecure above the openings between the main block and the side wings, and props had to be inserted inside the building to hold it up. The slates were taken from the roof, so that the condition of the timbers could be judged, and the decayed render hacked off the walls. Inside, the plasterwork on both ground and upper floors, where it hadn't already fallen, was very rotten. When the mouldings had been recorded, this too was hacked out.

At this point reconstruction could begin. Under the render, fair face pointing was found to the brickwork, indicating that the building had originally been plain brick above the rustication. After structural weaknesses had been repaired, therefore, in the niches on the end walls for example, the brickwork was simply washed and repointed using lime putty. The stone rustication was treated in a similar manner. Elsewhere in the building stone was renewed only where it was necessary for weathering, or where a section was missing, as in the balustrade of the central window. All the new work was carried out in Ancaster stone, which matched the original.

The roof timbers were nearly all unsound, so that a new roof structure was necessary. Enough of the original slates survived intact to cover the back and inner slopes of the side wings; elsewhere a new slate called a Corunna Grey was used. The parapets had been rebuilt by this time, incorporating lead water chutes, and with new coping stones where necessary. The chimney was also rebuilt, as



**Photographs by Matthew Jebb, 1982.**



closely as possible to the original shown in the drawing by John Platt in Sheffield City Library.

The balconies, however, were not replaced; it seemed certain that they were later additions, and since an internal staircase would have to be built in any case, they were not needed for access. The two doorways leading to them have therefore become windows.

All the windows needed replacing, which has given the opportunity to return to the original proportions of three panes, which suits the scale of the building much better.

The work to the exterior was completed by the return of the urns to the corners of the parapets. Only two had proved to be beyond repair, and to replace these new ones were carved, matching the originals as closely as possible.

Inside the building just about everything is new work. Only the fireplace on the first floor and some paving stones on the ground are from the building as it was. Once again, however, since the plasterwork had seemed to be later than 1747, it was decided not to replace it with an exact copy, but with mouldings more typical of the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.

A new oak floor was laid in the main room, and the staircase, fitting so neatly into one wing, has oak treads. With bedrooms in the other wing, and the arrangement of kitchen and bathroom on the ground floor, the Chateau was at last fitted once more for its original purpose as a place of retirement from business, for a weekend or longer.

Charlotte Haslam  
August 1985



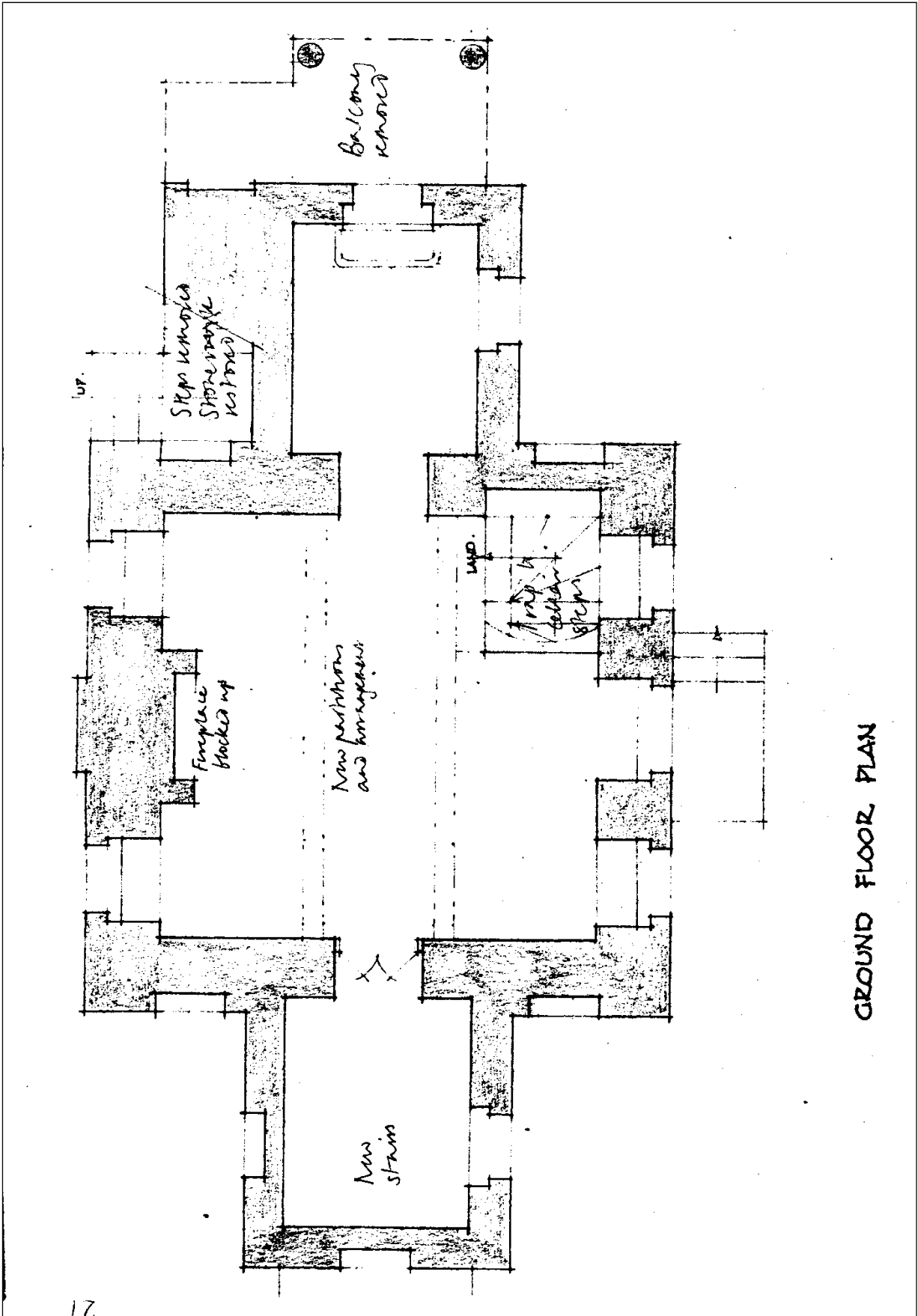
**First Floor. Photograph by Matthew Jebb.**



**First Floor. ,Photograph by Matthew Jebb.**



**1982 Photograph by Matthew Jebb.**



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

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