

## **ARCHITECTURE GROUP**

### **TOUR OF AUBOURN HALL AND GARDENS – 11 JUNE 2026**

27 members travelled to the destination of our June meeting, in the pouring rain. However, on arrival, we received the warmest of welcomes at the impressive 17<sup>th</sup> century Aubourn Hall.

The tour was originally planned to start with a guided tour of the beautiful gardens before visiting the historic ground floor of the Manor House, but in view of the weather, it was agreed that we should see the House first.

The Aubourn Estate has been in continuous ownership of the Nevile family for generations and therefore it was a wonderful surprise when Christopher Nevile, the current owner, introduced himself as our guide for the House tour. He began with a potted history of the House, which has been described as an “architectural riddle”. Thought to be the design of the Smythson dynasty, Sir John Meres was believed to be responsible for its construction. After sharing the high and low points of the Neviles, together with snippets of amusing information, Christopher led us through several ground floor rooms pointing out various items, furniture, paintings and other artifacts of historic interest. Our attention was drawn to the carved Jacobean oak staircase and to our amazement we were invited upstairs to view some of the bedrooms and their contents. What a privilege!! We must have made a good impression on Christopher.

Armed with waterproofs and umbrellas most of our party followed head gardener, Tam, into the magnificent landscaped gardens. Others enjoyed a hot drink and a chat in the tea room. Unfortunately, the rain prevented us from appreciating the full splendour of the different gardens. However, as we negotiated the damp terrain, Tam delivered her talk with such passion, enthusiasm and expert knowledge that we were able to imagine how spectacular the prized rose and dahlia “garden rooms” must look on a sunny day.

It was still raining as we returned to the House and joined our fellow members for an excellent buffet lunch. In spite of the weather, it was a memorable visit and our hosts were thanked for their hospitality.

Jenny Porter