

John
Evelyn

Museum at Village Club, Ridgway, S.W.19.

Society for maintaining the amenities of Wimbledon.

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Althorp, the Northamptonshire home of The Earl Spencer Lord of the Manor of Wimbledon is the choice for this year's outing on the 19th June, but due to the postal strike, it has been very difficult to get into touch with Earl Spencer, and I did not receive his final agreement until his letter of the 4th April.

Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to secure the booklet about the history of Althorp, and consequently I have been precluded from preparing my customary write up about the house and its chief features. Incidentally, Althorp is not normally open to the public on Saturdays, and therefore it was imperative to obtain the Earl's consent before making any arrangements.

I have managed to get some information on Althorp, to enable my readers to have a shortened version of some of the chief features of the house.

The Spencer family moved here in 1508, and the medieval house was altered in 1573, again in 1666, and lastly by Henry Holland in 1790.

Robert Spencer 2nd Earl of Sunderland collected many of the Italian and Dutch masters, and panelled the Picture Gallery (115 feet long) for portraits by Van Dyck, Lely and Kneller.

Sarah Duchess of Marlborough's personal collection is also at the house.

Other pictures belonging to the Earl are by Rubens; Kneller painted four portraits of the Duchess of Marlborough; Reynolds' contribution is of Georgina, Duchess of Devonshire and deserves special attention; Gainsborough also painted a portrait of the same lady. Lucas de Heere is represented by a portrait of Lady Jane Grey, who as most people may know was executed at the age of 19 years, so presumably portraits of this ill fated 9 days Queen of England are rare.

Of the same period is a painting of Henry VIII by Holbein. The picture of Anne of Cleves is by Bern van Orley, and there is a self portrait by Murillo. Another self portrait is by Rembrandt, from whose brush is a painting of his mother.

Other portraits in the Spencer collection are by Raphael, David Teniers the Younger, del Yaga's painting of Cardinal Pole, Cornelius Janssens, and Robert Walker's picture of Oliver Cromwell.