

A Reminder of the Manor House

by *Kate Quinton*

Abbots Langley Manor House

The Manor House occupied the site opposite Kitters Green. There are several pictures of it on the ALLHS website showing a gabled 17th century house with tall chimneys. Inside it had some fine Jacobean panelling made of quartered oak that still exists. In 1641 the house was left by Francis Combe, a wealthy landowner from Hemel Hempstead, to Sidney Sussex, Cambridge, and Trinity College, Oxford. It continued to be inhabited by various descendants of his wife, the Greenhills, until 1820, when it was leased out.

During the war it was used as a hospital and as evacuee accommodation. In 1950 it became a temporary school until Langleybury mansion was ready to receive secondary pupils. The manor had had no tenant since 1938 and had become increasingly dilapidated, so the decision was taken by the Parish Council to demolish it in 1953.

Washington Old Hall

A house has been on this site since before 1183. It was acquired by William de Hertburn, who took the name of Washington and lived there with his family. One branch of the Washington family emigrated to the New World in 1656 and in 1732 George Washington was born, becoming the first president of the United States in 1789. The Washington descendants still living in the Old Hall sold it in 1613 to the Bishop of Durham. The house was rebuilt soon after in 17th century style. Eventually it was let to

tenants and its condition gradually deteriorated until by 1932 it was derelict and no longer fit for human habitation. A preservation committee was formed but no work could be done during World War II. In 1951 it was decided to restore it to a 17th century state. This was greatly helped by American benefactors, who donated funds and furniture. The first picture shows the appearance of the house in 2002.

The panelled room would have been the private room of the owner and his family. It now contains the panelling from Abbots Langley Manor House. The second picture shows this panelling when we visited the Hall ten years ago.

Washington Old Hall was given to the National Trust in 1956 and is to be found in Tyne and Wear, NE38 7LE. It is a good example of a 17th century manor house and garden, and as far as I know, contains the only part of Abbots Langley Manor House still in existence. ■

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References

- Letter from Eileen Wiles to Elizabeth Manning, editor of Abbots Langley Project 2000.
- An Introduction to Washington Old Hall, the National Trust.
- Abbots Langley, a Hertfordshire Village by Scott Hastie.
- ALLHS website. Photo archive.
- George Washington and our Manor House by Clive Clark. ALLHS Journal No 3 Autumn/Winter 1995.



Above: Washington Old Hall, Tyne and Wear.
Below: Panelling from Abbots Langley Manor House now in Washington Hall. *Photos: Mike Quinton*