

DARBY HOUSES

Rosehill House

Rosehill House was built in about 1738 for Richard Ford. He was Clerk to the Coalbrookdale Company under Abraham I, and was later Manager of the Coalbrookdale Ironworks. He married Abraham Darby I's eldest daughter, Mary.

Rosehill House has been restored to show it as it was around 1850. It contains many items which were owned by the Darby family. In the mid 19th Century the house was occupied by Abraham III's youngest son Richard and his wife Maria. After Richard's death in 1860, his daughter Rebecca continued to live in the house until she died in 1908.

The Darby family were Quakers and compared with a typical mid-Victorian house, Rosehill is very simply furnished. In 1851 there were only four servants, who were shared between Rosehill and Dale House. A dozen would have been the norm for two houses of this size.



The Hall

The painting in the hall is of Madeley Court, rented by Abraham Darby I from 1712 until his death in 1717. On either side of this are portraits of Richard and Maria Darby, who lived in the house in the 19th Century.

The Study

This room would have been used for business and for keeping papers relating to the estate and family. The portrait over the fireplace is of Francis Darby.

In 1850 the house was lit by oil and candles as paraffin was not discovered until 1859.

The mistletoe patterned wallpaper was reproduced from a strip that was discovered when the house was being restored.

The Dining Room

This was the room where the family ate their supper and entertained guests. The two large portraits either side of the fireplace are of Alfred Darby I and Rebecca Miller Christy.

Between the windows is a wine store or cellaret. Although the Quaker religion discourages the drinking of alcohol, it did not forbid it and guests were not expected to abstain.

The Stairs & Landing

The two small pictures are on the wall are painted on convex glass. One shows the Iron Bridge of 1779, the other the 1796 Sunderland Bridge. The portrait on the upper landing is of Lucy Burlingham, mother of Alfred Darby I, whose portrait can be seen in the Dining Room.

The Bedroom

This room is furnished as if occupied by Richard Darby's youngest daughter Rebecca who was born in 1832. The iron bed is a reproduction of an 1835 design. On the far side of the bed is a small cabinet with a hidden 'close-stool' or night commode.

Between the windows are two samplers, one dated 1772 by Hannah Brook and the other by Hannah Grant, who later married Francis Darby. The turquoise and gold spill vases (for lighting candles from the fire), candlestick and a ring stand are Coalport porcelain and date from c1840.



The Parlour

This room was used as a day parlour by the women of the family for reading, needlework and drawing, and where they all met and also took their guests after a meal for conversation.

The wallpaper has been copied from a fragment of the original paper which was discovered in the room during restoration.

Exhibition Rooms

The exhibition rooms include Quaker books, family papers and many small items of family memorabilia. From a cup carved from stone, to an ivory toy and a selection of beadwork purses. You can also see items from the Museums Quaker costume collection.

The Kitchen

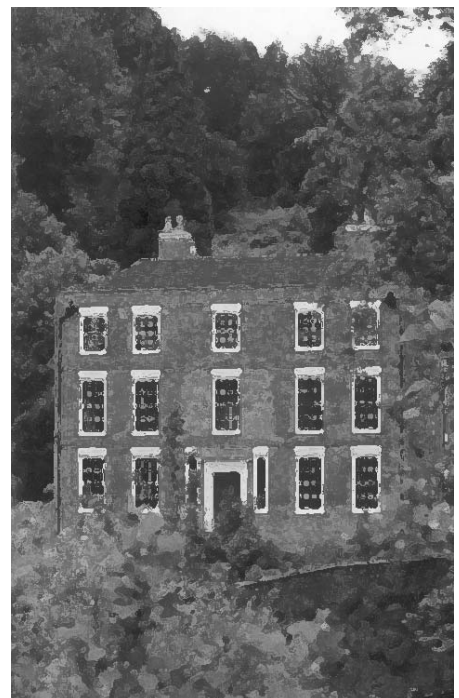
This room was added to the house in 1810 when alterations were made before Richard and Maria Darby came to live there. The large kitchen range dates from this time when it was the latest thing in range design, with a large oven, a hot water tank and additional small fire boxes for heating the hobs. Separate scullery and pantry rooms would have lead off from the kitchen.

Dale House History

Dale House was built by the founder of the Coalbrookdale Company, Abraham Darby I. Completed in 1717; it was subsequently lived in by five generations of the Darby Family. It was built to overlook the Upper Furnace Pool and its associated blast furnace, and was the place where hospitality was extended to visitors to both the family and the ironworks. It was regarded as a true family home by the Darby's, even when individual members had moved away to much grander houses.

The Hall

In 1776 the house was lived in by Abraham Darby III (grandson of Abraham Darby I). He enlarged the house between 1768 and 1776, converting the existing attic into a third storey, adding cast iron window sills and lintels and making substantial alterations to the interior. It is to this period that the house and garden has been restored. Although it would have been the home of a successful businessman, as the residence of a Quaker family, it would also have been relatively simply furnished.



The Study

Abraham III (1750-89) lived in Dale House from 1776-80. This room was his study and it is from here that he directed the building of the Iron Bridge. In 1780 he moved to the nearby Hay Farm which overlooked the Gorge and the Iron Bridge, and it was there that he died in 1789 of Scarlet Fever.

The Parlour

Abraham Darby I never got to live in the home that he built. Shortly before it was completed in 1717 he attended a Quaker meeting held in the Parlour. Sadly on May 6th he died and his body was brought back to Dale House and laid out in the Parlour, before being taken to the Quaker burial ground across the river in Broseley.

