



BAKED SCONES AND FANCY CAKES

Miss Windsor samples a cream tea at Hestercombe with Mr and Mrs Hill



Hello, darlings! I say, why not join the gaiety and indulge oneself with a few riveting tidbits about Taunton Deane's very own, illustrious, dynamic duo - Mr and Mrs Hill, who I recently joined for a scrumptious spot of afternoon tea in The Column Room at Hestercombe House.

In fact, this stupendous erection (Oh, I say!) was originally built in the 16th century for the Warre family and is pleasantly plonked within the parish of West Monkton, and beautifully nestled on the Quantock Hills, near Taunton, Somerset.

Oh, and may I relay, while we chumbled away on freshly baked scones and fancy cakes (all handmade at Hestercombe) it was divulged to Miss Windsor that the dynamic duo has just recovered from a frightfully unusual case of "pew bum" (I say, how ghastly) but more about that later.

Darlings, and if you just so happen to be reading this from the comfort of your abode in the ward of Pyrland and Rowbarton, then you've probably known Mrs Hill for the past 24 years by her official title of councillor.

Or, you may have had the pleasure of coming face to face with Mr Hill - keen "castleologist" and member of The Sealed Knot Society (Mrs Hill's also a member) during re-enactments of battles, skirmishes, and sieges of the English Civil War! Also, in 2015/2016, while out and about in Taunton, I dare say you've bumped into Cllr Hill wearing her full regalia - sporting a bright red robe; a triangular hat; and a rather striking ruffled piece of finery known as a "jabot" (well, I never!)

Oh yes, darlings, this type of attire sounds rather like fancy dress, but fear not, as Cllr Hill enunciated to Miss Windsor: "I persevered and persevered, and then the year I retired, bam, I was made the Taunton Deane Mayor" (well, that clearly explains the

elaborate clothing) - what a far cry from Cllr Hill's childhood dream of becoming a prima ballerina.

Moving swiftly on, for the past eight years or so Mrs Hill has been a trustee of Hestercombe Gardens Trust (and house) and very much supports the vision of Philip White MBE (founder and chief executive) whom in 1995 with sheer grit and determination; and with a little help from re-mortgaging his house, set about restoring the landscape to its former glory (and didn't he do well!)

Okey dokey, now onto the quintessential treat of afternoon tea in The Column Room - the ultimate finishing touch to my guided tour of the historical gardens. You see, after toddling around three centuries of garden design - Victorian, Georgian, and Edwardian, Miss Windsor certainly deserved a brisk brew and a scone or two. In fact, the Edwardian garden was designed by the highly acclaimed English architect - Sir Edwin Lutyens, and planted by world-renowned, British



horticulturist; garden designer, and writer - Gertrude Jekyll. My word, what a fabulous fusion of green-fingered greatness and creative construction!

I must say, as I flick through the highlights of my first official engagement with Mr and Mrs Hill, I recall nibbling on a delicious chicken sarnie and supping on Special Earl Grey Tea, as I gazed through the rickety sash window entwined by a rambling plant of some sort, while I absorbed my first celestial taste of "paradise restored". Well, the Formal Gardens of the Victorian Terrace and Great Plat, where work began in 1998 to resurrect such splendour back to its original beauty!

Oh, darlings, I expect by now you're gagging to find out about their unfortunate sufferance of pew bum. Well, during Cllr Hill's appointment as Taunton Deane Mayor they were invited to many church events where for hours on end, one perched their derrière upon a hard-wooden surface, namely a pew! Which of course, caused great and long-lasting discomfort, but thankfully by the end of one's year in office there was no pews insight when they attended the garden party at Buckingham Palace, London, along with their beautiful daughters - and so their road to recovery commenced.

Now, don't forget, Hestercombe House and Gardens is open all year round except for Christmas Day.

Miss Windsor x

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