

Personal Profile

Name: Pauline and David Williams

Family members: Children:
Lydia Jane – born May 1991
Harvey David – born May 1993
Hugh Alexander – born May 2000
Henry (Harry) Richard - born July 2003

Address: Sibbersfield Hall

Dates lived at Sibbersfield: March 2003 to present

How did you come to live at Sibbersfield?

We bought the hall in 2003, two months before our fourth child, Harry, was born. We originally viewed the property in November 2002 and decided that if it was still for sale the following Spring, when we were planning to sell our own property, we would make an offer. We had moved to Chester 2 years earlier to be closer to David's parents, because his mother had been diagnosed as terminally ill. We had bought a 16th Century property on Hope Mountain which turned out to be a mistake, (the house was surrounded by mist most mornings and the sun would often forget to shine all day)! We decided to move and thankfully the Hall was still available (two previous sales had fallen through during this period).

When we drove into the courtyard, David's first reaction was NO and he didn't want to view. We rang the doorbell and on entering the double doors into the hall, our decision was made! David's first recollections of the hall were the oars on the wall and the large table in the middle of the hall, covered in the plans for Shirley and Bob's new house, The Greaves, which was in the process of being built. My decision was made based on the light rooms, amazingly high ceilings and the landing; also the house had the aura of a happy family home. Bob and Shirley were very accommodating, allowing us to take extensive photographs of the hall on our second visit, which we thoroughly enjoyed looking through.

The quality of the hall still continues to delight us; we especially enjoy the high ceilings and the corresponding sense of space, mouldings, oak panelling and central landing with all the children's' bedrooms leading off it.

What condition was the property in when you purchased it?

The building was in excellent condition, with all sash windows in perfect working order and the roof was new 10 years previous.

What changes did you make to the property?

We bought the hall in March 2003 but didn't move in until 8 weeks later, on our daughter Lydia's 12th birthday. Prior to moving in we prepared the hall for the arrival of our new baby by replacing the bathrooms, moving the kitchen from the Playroom to the Butler's Pantry (the room with the Safe in) and some decorating. Over the past 6 years we have combined the former Tack room and Cloakroom into a new Kitchen. We used a bespoke kitchen manufacturer from North Wales called Tegla. We felt that although the hall was never designed to have a kitchen, we should install one that would have been appropriate for the house when it was built. Tegla agreed and produced the kitchen with large proportions to suit the room. We also converted the former flat into an Office area, again we used Tegla to produce the oak panelling and bookcases. We have replaced the main bathroom again, this time removing the old immersion tank and incorporating this space into the room which has enabled us to add a walk in shower. We had the gardens plans drawn up and we have begun work i.e. herbaceous border, dwarf wall and rose borders.

In 2012, after 5 years of wrangling with Chester Planning department, we were granted permission to convert the Stables into a single dwelling. A condition of the permission was that we had to build a garage/bat-house to accommodate the long-eared bats that currently use the stables (10 in total!!!).

What are your main memories from living here?

It was very obvious to us, even before moving into the Hall, that we were joining a tight community. Bob and Shirley spoke very highly of all the neighbours and stressed the importance of harmony within Sibbersfield. In particular John and Brenda were extremely helpful in explaining the workings of the hall, i.e. the complex water system and John has been very kind and patient when helping with DIY jobs.

John went beyond neighbourly help a few years back when I locked us out of the house and David was away on business; he kindly climbed a ladder to get in through a top window, and it has just occurred to me that his legs disappearing through the window would have been a great shot for the Historical Society document!!!

It occurs to me that everyone is passionate about Sibbersfield and very content living here. It has been a joy getting together to explore the history and each evening has been very entertaining, very enjoyable and occasionally productive!

What significant occasions/milestones happened while you were living here?

We have held several parties over the past 7 years, most notably David's 50th, my 50th, Lydia's 16th and 18th, Harry's Christening, several Black Tie Christmas Parties and many children's birthday parties. (No matter how hard I tried to sell the idea of a party in a play barn, without exception, the children have asked to have their parties at home)!

Lydia joined the Cathedral Choir and quickly became a Leading Chorister which enabled us to spend many happy hours admiring her singing. She also left home to study Music at the University of York in October 2009.

Potted history of personal information (occupation, hobbies and interests etc.)

David was born in Barnston on The Wirral the only child of Elsie and The Venerable Leslie Williams (Archdeacon of Chester 1973-1989). He attended Liverpool University where he gained a B.Ed. He joined Littlewoods Organisation 1978 as a Graduate Trainee which is where we met in 1983 when we were both working in the Training Department.

He subsequently worked for Bass, Rolls Royce, Wickland Westcott Management Consultancy and in 1994 we became self employed by setting up a Management Consultancy business called Opsis Consulting.

David is passionate about Liverpool Football Club and a wide variety of music. He really enjoys concerts, (we have seen Bruce Springsteen 8 times, including New Jersey!) the theatre and the cinema. He enjoys travelling and before starting the family we enjoyed some wonderful long haul holidays together. Being self-employed enables David to take time off for all the children's school holidays and the consequence of this is he has a lovely relationship with all four children.

Pauline was born in Liverpool to Edna and Richie Newell she has one brother, Philip.

Pauline worked for Applied Biosystems as the U.K. Marketing Coordinator, until the birth of Lydia.

Pauline works part-time in the business but her number one passion in life is the family. Pauline really values long term friendships and maintains regular contact with several former school friends and work colleagues. Pauline's hobbies include visiting the theatre, cinema, ballet and opera. She practices yoga and has recently started ice-skating lessons! Pauline is responsible for the interior design and upkeep of the Hall and the organisation of all parties!!

We both enjoy eating out and regularly visit the Grosvenor Arms at Aldford! We recently bought a small holiday home in Conwy and dabbled in boating, an experience we enjoyed, on warm days in Conwy, but something we have decided to postpone until Hugh and Harry are a few years older. We enjoy family time and slightly more stressful travelling, with 4 children!