




### Haldon's Hidden Heritage

The Haldon Hills - whose name may be derived from the Old English *How-hill* (hill, meaning 'look-out hill' - are often referred to as the 'hidden hills of Devon'. Apart from its forests and landmark towers, most people know little of its rich heritage.

This unique exhibition touches every aspect of the Hills, through geology and prehistory, to the establishment of its grand country mansions. The panels are available to be shown in local community and school halls.



Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, with help from Arts & Learning Devon, Devon County Council, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and the Forestry Commission.

Organized by Centre for Contemporary Arts and the National Trust Haldon for Wildlife, Exeter EX4 7NS  
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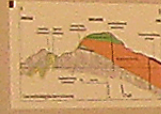

Panel design: Northcott, Exeter

CCAWA and researchers would like to thank the numerous individual organisations for their generous help in mounting this exhibition.

Do you have any interesting local artefacts? Help us get them on display by contacting us at: [info@haldon.org.uk](mailto:info@haldon.org.uk)

### Haldon's Rocks - clues to a past world

The rocks of the Haldon Hills tell a story stretching back over 350 million years to times when there were mountains, deserts and tropical seas near where we stand today. The maps below show the distribution of these rocks around and on Haldon.



### From Prehistory to the Civil War

People have lived and farmed on Haldon for at least 5000 years. It has been used as a place to transport but also a commanding position for the control of the surrounding countryside.



### Early History 650-1050

The Haldon Hills were part of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom of Devon. The Anglo-Saxons were the first to build a castle on Haldon. The castle was built on a hill called Haldon Hill. The castle was built in the 10th century. The castle was built by the Anglo-Saxons. The castle was built on a hill called Haldon Hill. The castle was built in the 10th century. The castle was built by the Anglo-Saxons.



### Country House or Castle around Haldon

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### Haldon Hill - Past & Present

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### Transport over and around the Haldon Hills

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### Wildlife on Haldon

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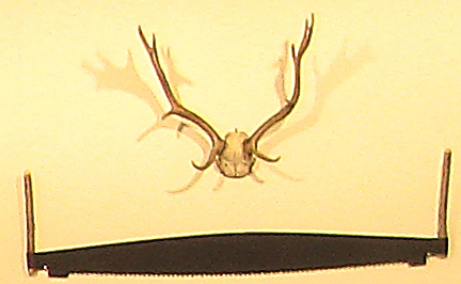



### Forestry on Haldon

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### James MacCallagh's Engineer's Wing

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Information desk area with a wooden table and two chairs. Several brochures and books are laid out on the table.



Two white display cases containing various archaeological artifacts, including pottery and stone tools.





## Haldon House - days of glory

Haldon House was built in the style of Buckingham House in St. James Park, (now Buckingham Palace). Often quoted as one of the finest country seats in Devon, it was the home of the Palk family for 120 years.



Sir George Chudleigh built Haldon House between the years 1719-25, but died before the house was completed. It originally consisted of four regular stories with six rooms to each floor. The front of the house faced east and all the principal family rooms were built around the southern aspect.



The house was supplied by the Kitchen Gardens, covering over six acres with numerous glasshouses and connected by a tunnel under the road.



Further down the road was Home Farm, described as a first class model dairy holding with barns, stables, milking parlours, pigsties, poultry, dairy, washhouse, cider press, wagon and cart sheds.



Robert Palk paid £10,000 for Haldon House in 1769. He quickly set about remodeling the house and improving on the surrounding grounds and plantations. Two wings advancing in front of the house were built and the ground sloping up to the front door removed, exposing the cellar and giving the impression of an extra story.

The mansion, with its thirty-six bedrooms, was lavishly furnished with Chippendale, Sheraton and Louis XV furniture. Thick pile carpets with crimson borders covered the floors, painted paper in iron in carved gilt frames hung on the walls. The art collection was of the highest order and the library well-stocked with old books and manuscripts.



- 1 Haldon House by T. Rowland and L. La Plé (1769)
- 2 Haldon House by G. G. Scott (1870)
- 3 Photograph of the House (1920) Chapman & Son, Devon
- 4 The Kitchen Gardens, Lake Cottage 1820
- 5 The Kitchen Gardens and Haldon House 1820, Chapman & Son, Devon
- 6 Haldon House Park today - Home Farm Court, Plan by Robert Palk 1769, General View of Agriculture of Devon, 1846, November 1899

## The Palk Family



The history of the Palk Family of Haldon House is a tale of great wealth, lost fortunes and scandal.



**Sir Robert Palk (1717-1798) 1st Baronet**  
Born into a yeoman farming family in Ashburton, Robert Palk was ordained as a vicar before embarking on a career as a naval chaplain bound for India. There, his friendship to General Stringer Lawrence led to a lucrative position as Paymaster and Comptroller in the Palk to Seringapatam army and eventually to becoming Governor of Madras, India. Returning home a very rich man, Palk was knighted by King George III and bought the small fishing village of Torquay, Haldon House and the surrounding lands.



**Sir Lawrence Palk (1818-1883) 4th Baronet, 1st Lord Haldon**  
Lawrence enthusiastically tried to revive the family fortunes. He invested heavily in building Haldon Pier in Torbay and built the Triggs Valley Railway Line. He was also Chairman of the Torquay Hotels Company which built the Imperial Hotel. Reputably he was a good friend of Prime Minister Disraeli.



**Sir Lawrence V Palk (1793-1856) 3rd Baronet**  
Although a capable farmer, the first Sir Lawrence did not show any of his father's business acumen and spent much of the family fortune in a short space of time.

**Sir Lawrence H. Palk (1845-1903) 5th Baronet, 2nd Lord Haldon**  
Known throughout his life as 'Fingy Palk', the 5th Baronet had to liquidate the bulk of the Haldon Estates and was forced into bankruptcy. He ended up living in lodgings in Hampton Wick.

**Sir Lawrence VI Palk (1793-1856) 3rd Baronet**  
Following in his father's footsteps, the third Baronet was not interested in banking after the estates preferring to lead a glib and social life. He had to leave England to avoid his creditors.

**Sir Lawrence W. Palk (1856-1933) 6th Baronet, 3rd Lord Haldon**  
He worked abroad in the mining industry and also fought in the Boer War in Africa, inheriting the title of Lord Haldon without an estate or money. He was also made bankrupt and was known to sleep in park benches in London.

**Sir Lawrence E. Palk (1896-1933) 7th Baronet, 4th Lord Haldon**  
The last of the Palks saw nothing of the once grandiose lifestyle of his forebears. Impoverished many times for theft, he eventually died on the docks, aged 42.

- 1 The Palk Coat of Arms
- 2 Sir Robert Palk, painting by Thomas Bouch (1760)
- 3 Lawrence Palk 2nd Bar, by Sir John Crome 1793
- 4 Lawrence Palk, 1st Lord Haldon 1859
- 5 Lawrence Palk, 3rd Lord Haldon by Sir Henry Hall, 1884

## The Palk art collection



For over 100 years the walls of Haldon House were adorned with many excellent paintings, especially Dutch works of art. Due to the eventual financial decline of the family, all the paintings were either disposed of through family members or ended up in one of the many sales that took place at Christie's from 1891.

Of the one hundred or more paintings that were on the walls at Haldon House, most seem to have disappeared without trace. Shown here are a selection of the Palk collection at Haldon House.



**Lady Haldon (1760-1830) 1st Baroness**  
Portrait of Lady Haldon, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793. The portrait is a full-length standing figure in a blue dress, shown in a landscape setting.



**Lady Palk, 1790**  
Portrait of Lady Palk, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793. The portrait is a full-length standing figure in a blue dress, shown in a landscape setting.

**A Scene on the River**  
A scene on the river, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793. The painting shows a river scene with a boat and figures on the bank.

**George Lawrence (1793-1879)**  
Portrait of George Lawrence, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793. The portrait is a full-length standing figure in a blue dress, shown in a landscape setting.

**Henry Palk (1818-1883)**  
Portrait of Henry Palk, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793. The portrait is a full-length standing figure in a blue dress, shown in a landscape setting.

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## Haldon Belvedere

Erected by Sir Robert Palk in 1788, the Haldon Belvedere, originally called Lawrence Castle, was built as a memorial to his great friend, Major-General Stringer Lawrence, known as the 'Father of the Indian Army'.



Lawrence, a veteran of the Battle of Colliedon (1758), the building was lost at auction for a 1000. It then became the home of the Palk family until 1924.

Built of red and white stone and modelled on Struth Tower in Kinross, Scotland, the Belvedere from the Haldon Estate (a view) cost in the region of £2,000 (£3,000 to build).

Haldon Belvedere is one of only a few remaining reminders of the Palk empire. The Grade II listed triangular white tower is an extraordinary landmark, visible for miles around. On a clear day the views from the roof extend to Torquay Hill, the Quantock Hills, Dartmoor, the Exe estuary and the cliffs of Beer and Seaton.

It made a great impression on King George III and his entourage who visited in 1783. In order to protect himself with the commonsense, a special cartography was built so that the Royal party and other dignitaries could travel from Haldon House to the tower by the many grand paths held there.

**Haldon Belvedere**  
A view of the Haldon Belvedere, showing its unique triangular shape and the surrounding landscape.

- 1 Haldon Belvedere, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793
- 2 Sir Robert Palk, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793
- 3 Sir Robert Palk, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793
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- 6 Sir Robert Palk, painted by Sir J. Crome, 1793

House were especially especially financial decline posed of of the from 1891.

### Haldon Belvedere

Designed by Sir Robert Parker in 1888, the Belvedere, originally called 'Lawrence's Memorial' to his great friend, Major Lawrence, known as the Father of the



### Haldon House For Sale

The house was built in 1888, the year of the 1888-89 season. The house was built in 1888, the year of the 1888-89 season. The house was built in 1888, the year of the 1888-89 season.

