

Blaisdon Hall Sold!

Posted, today 13 November 2009, in the Comments site on The Gloucester Citizen:

"The news that a Russian millionaire has bought Blaisdon Hall prompts in me reflections on a historical irony. During the 1950's, teachers at the then, Salesian School Blaisdon Hall, were members of The Civil Defence Corps. Many of their training manoeuvres were predicated on the ever present likelihood of an atom bomb being dropped on rural Gloucestershire or an ICBM launched from somewhere in the Russian steppes.

All the boys were made aware of what to do in that event: as there would be A Four Minute Warning! At least once a day during twice-a-day gatherings in the chapel - a one time ballroom - prayers were said for the conversion of Russia from Communism to the Catholic faith.

Now, not only Communism is dismantled, but as President of The Salesian School Blaisdon Hall Past Pupils Association, I am revising the Russian phrases I learned in preparation should The Red Army come storming up the mile long drive. Spasibo! Comrade! Stratvichia etc., etc.. Who says prayers are never answered!"

Another irony, should it be the Russian Chelsea FC owner, I was given £250.000 by Mathew Harding RIP who was a famous Director of Chelsea FC in the days of Ted Bates. The money was a donation to EMMAUS Greenwich - a homelessness work and accommodation project whose MC Chair I was at the time 1996.

Tony Brady

President of the Blaisdon Salesian Past Pupils' Association

13 November 2009

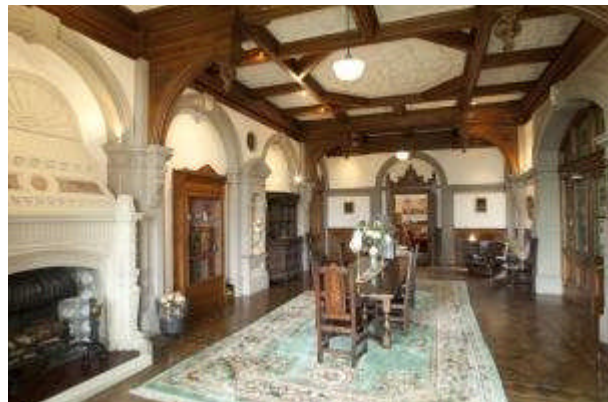
Scroll on to see the photos of Blaisdon Hall

Blaisdon Hall up for Sale

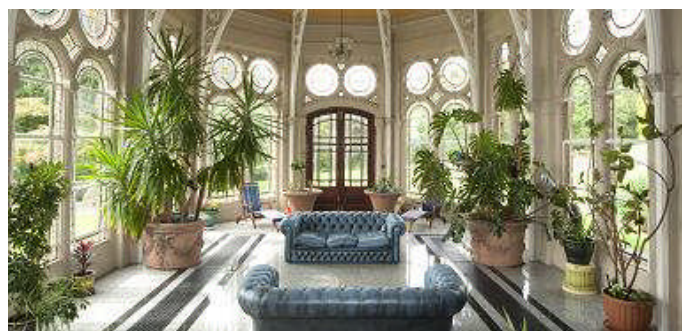


Extract from TIMES on line.. By Marcus Binney 5th September 2009

“Against the odds the grandiose Victorian country house is back in fashion. By the 1950s, indeed the 1930s, most of these mighty piles of masonry were deemed ugly and uncomfortable to live in. High ceilings and vast draughty staircase halls made them impossible to heat. Schools and institutions were the only takers.



Blaisdon Hall, in Gloucestershire, for sale for £4.75 million, represents the reverse of this trend. Type in Blaisdon on the web and you find happy memories of its day as a school run by the Salesian Fathers. Now it is back on offer as a single giant des. res. of 33,000sq ft and 68 rooms, with great hall, morning room, music room, ballroom and 11 bedrooms.

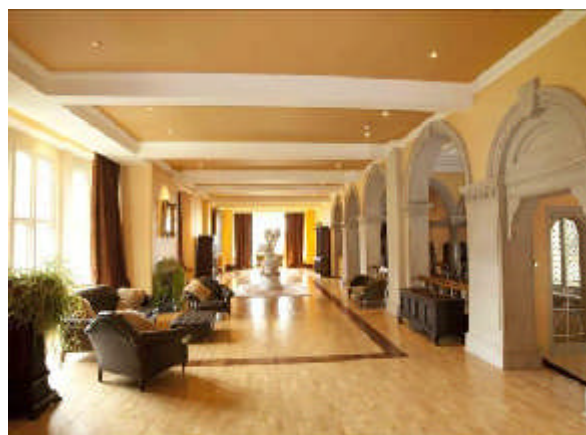


It comes with 85 acres of parkland and wood, approached through a gabled gate lodge. The half-mile-long drive delivers you to a terrace with a stunning panorama over the Severn Valley. The huge carriage arch over the front door, topped by a four-storey tower, is a Cotswold-style counterpart of Prince Albert's Osborne House on the Isle of White.



The gabled garden front has a trio of splendid bay windows, ending in best Victorian fashion with a handsome conservatory, with pairs of arched windows surmounted by glazed roundels. Around the windows are delicate carved stone details.

The man who has nursed Blaisdon back to life is Tony Haynes. With a fine art gallery in Broadway, the most fashionable village in the Cotswolds, he knew how to find good craftsmen. For the stained glass windows he called in Michelle Butler, who was working on the medieval glass in Gloucester Cathedral. Every missing chink has been replaced with matching glass, and new coloured glass introduced in the tower. Stonework repairs were done by one of the masons at the cathedral. Ornamental ceilings, which proved to be papier mâché, have been repaired, and missing pendants put back on the stairs.



As you walk along the terrace you can see no trace of institutional use, and the classroom block that stood on the main lawn has been replaced by a water garden. It's only on the raised terrace behind the house that you find, along with the Edwardian stables, a run of modern school buildings

On the first floor the grand stair opens through a pair of stone arches on to an 86ft-long ballroom. The main bedrooms all have dressing rooms as well as spacious bathrooms. The attic storey has an 80ft-long entertainment hall over the ballroom, in addition to the 30ft-long games room.

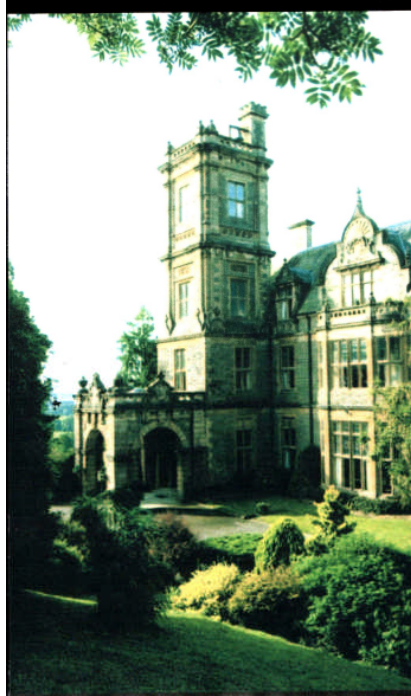
Blaisdon Hall was built in the 1870s by a Gloucester architect, F.S. Waller, for Edwin Crawshay. Crawshay had to sell after buying an ironworks just as the industry went into decline. The purchasers, the Stubs family, added the spectacular conservatory to Waller's design and threw out a still larger service wing in 1906-09, which provided a boot room, laundry and ironing room. There is now also a sauna, steam room and gym



In continental Europe a house of this size would be called a palace. What Blaisdon needs is a Midlands business magnate with an empire to run, who likes large parties and wants to work from home.”

To enjoy a stunning video tour of Blaisdon Hall's magnificent interiors and spectacular gardens log on to the selling Agents, Knight Frank, and follow the links.

Sourced by Tony Brady 10/10/2009



Hi John,

My thanks to you and Tony Brady for the article and photographs relating to the sale of Blaisdon Hall. I am sure your readers will, like ourselves have experienced a deep feeling of nostalgia and sorrow to learn that once again, the ownership of our 'Alma Mater' is about to change.

My sadness seems to increase with each change of owner; not that it has anything to do with the owner per se; but I fear that with each such transaction, the marvellous work done within its walls by the Salesian Fathers will be forgotten by the local community.

What is certain of course, is that the affectionate memories held by our members will never fade; neither will our gratitude to St. John Bosco be forgotten.

PS Tony & John - Please keep going on our behalf.

Dear Michael,

On Tony's behalf and myself, I thank you for your kind words. They are really appreciated. We will continue to do our very best for the Blaisdon Association.

Best wishes,

John
