

# HELP US SAVE WINSTANLEY HALL

## £50,000 NEEDED TO PREVENT DEMOLITION



*Though the gardens run wild Lewis Wyatt's entrance front still proudly surveys the park*

When all seems lost SAVE has intervened to rescue and repair fine historic buildings threatened with imminent demolition. Take 19th century Barlston Hall with its rococo interiors and octagonal Chinese Chippendale sash windows, All Souls Haley Hill in Halifax which George Gilbert Scott thought his best church and 6 Palace Street in Carnarfon and its long forgotten first floor great hall.

Now SAVE is fighting for another great house on

Death Row, Winstanley Hall in Lancashire, a 415 year old Elizabethan mansion near Wigan extensively remodelled by Lewis Wyatt, the talented son of James Wyatt's brother Benjamin in the early-19th century. The buildings are listed Grade II\*.

The stable court and other buildings to the side of the main house are a prize example of English eccentricity, with rugged Primitivist masonry and designed with a heady mix of Norman, Tudor and

Baroque motifs and a Swiss cottage covered in Celtic-style ornament at the end. They were built by Meyrick Bankes II, a colourful character who travelled extensively in Europe and America and adorned his grounds with statues of animals and monsters.

Winstanley Hall and some 10 acres of grounds are currently owned by a leading local house builder, Dorbcrest. After failure to gain approval for a scheme with a substantial element of enabling development the complex of buildings at Winstanley have remained disused. In 2011, English Heritage was on the point of agreeing to a scheme which would have seen the main house and some of the outbuildings demolished when SAVE stepped in.

The immediate need is to halt decay. SAVE has commissioned leading historic buildings engineers, The Morton Partnership to draw up a scheme of emergency works as well as a strategy for long-term repair.

The grounds and parkland were subject to extensive open cast coalmining in the post-war period and, subsequently, the M6 motorway was built along the edge of the parkland, clipping off one of the lodges. The grounds however have been restored after mining and the motorway is mainly in a cutting. Winstanley remains a romantic place, secluded by trees and woodland and approached by a



*The five gabled Elizabethan front built by the London goldsmith James Bankes who bought the estate in 1595*

long drive. Its survival is the more important as so many houses in the area around Wigan have been demolished, though nearby Bispham Hall has been successfully rescued.

At Winstanley our immediate need is for funds towards the emergency repairs. English Heritage has agreed a major grant towards emergency repairs to the stables. This covers some £160,000 out of the total cost of this phase. SAVE urgently needs to raise at least £50,000 in matching funds.

There are a number of exciting possible



*The Elizabethan front is on the right with the parapets added by Lewis Wyatt.*



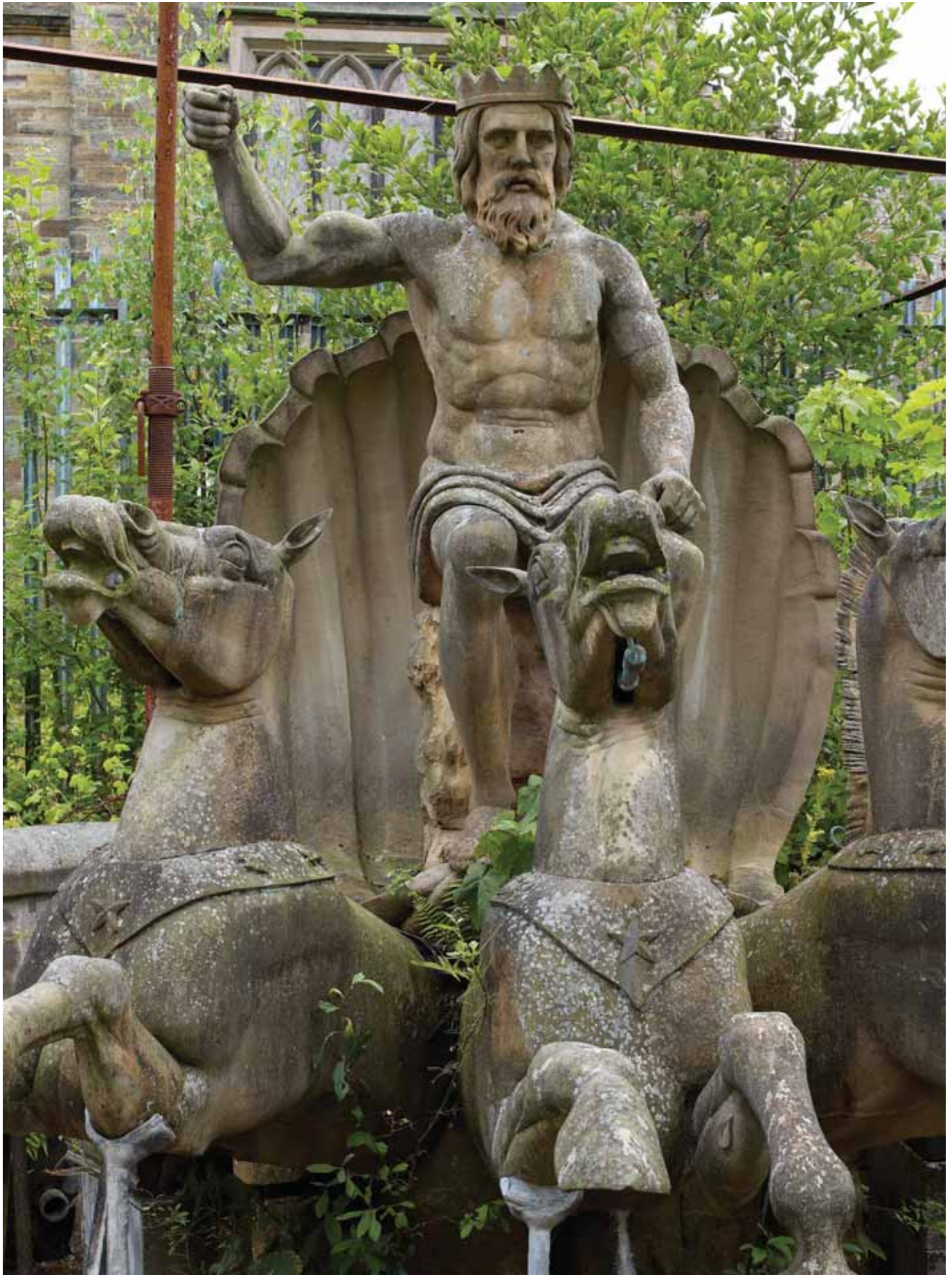


*The stable courtyard built by Meyrick Banks in the 1830s is a classic example of English eccentricity*



*Birds Eye view by Huw Thomas showing the full extent of the house and the impressive stable court surrounded by Meyrick Banks's delightfully eccentric buildings*





The dramatic fountain in the stable court portrays Neptune in his chariot drawn by sea horses and was carved by the Liverpool sculptor William Spence after a design by Meyrick Banks





*Cast-iron gatepost and gate*



*Round arches in the Norman style*



*Grotesque carved head over a doorway*

combinations of uses for Winstanley. Our long-term strategy is being worked up with advice from Kit Martin, the well-known rescuer of major country houses such as Gunton Hall, Burley-on-the-Hill and Tynninghame, and from Roger Tempest of Broughton Hall, Yorkshire, who has pioneered the transformation of service courtyards, stables, coach houses and farm buildings into attractive, highly lettable workspaces for enterprising small businesses.

We are hoping this can be combined, as at Broughton Hall, with an element of public access, particularly at weekends and holidays, with an exhibition and café for visitors. With the Heritage Trust for the North West we are exploring the use of one of the buildings for heritage training skills, a use for which Heritage Lottery funds are available.

We have had discussions with the Landmark Trust about using the handsomely proportioned rooms around Lewis Wyatt's entrance tower as a potential holiday let. We have also recruited help from Mark Gibson who drew up SAVE's business plan for the rescue of Dumfries House and who has himself rescued the 3,000 acre estate of Craigengillan, in Scotland, from dereliction.

Welcome help has also come from Sophie Andreae who, while at SAVE, oversaw and masterminded the repair of Barlaston Hall amidst a hard fought and eventually successful battle to secure compensation from the National Coal Board.

The Winstanley Estate was bought in 1595 by James Bankes, a London goldsmith, who built the Elizabethan house. His south-facing front still remains with two projecting wings and a recessed centre stepped back in two stages. The large mullion window of the hall is in the centre with the original entrance to one side.

The original Elizabethan gables were replaced in the early 19th century by a parapet designed by Lewis Wyatt who worked at Winstanley in 1818–19. He designed a new entrance tower to the west with an Ionic portico. Inside, some of his plasterwork remains and a fine cantilevered staircase with iron balustrade.

On the south west corner is a wing with a three-sided bay of 1780. There are also date stones of 1843 and 1889. The stable yard is surrounded by a series of buildings consisting of a west range of 1834 with concave facades and arched entrances. Behind this is



The 17th century barn is suitable as an events and exhibition space

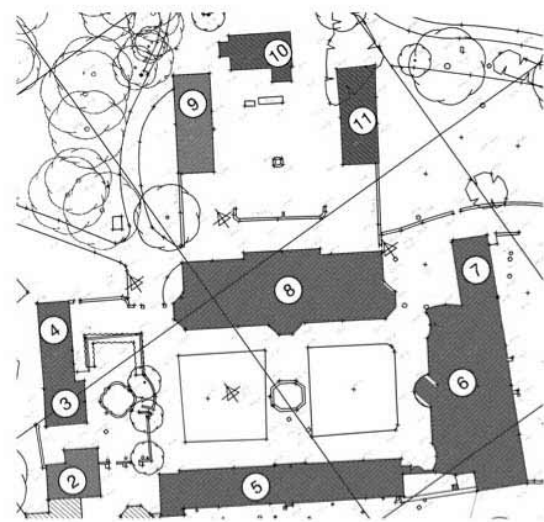


The Swiss Cottage has a hint of Celtic ornament in the masonry detail.

a 17th-century barn with strutted trusses. The south stable range with central clock tower, and octagonal windows and cupolas at the corners also dates from the 1830s. The north range, with rock-faced stone, possibly dates from c. 1859. The Neptune fountain in the centre of the stable court is by William Spence and dates from c. 1830. At the east end of the yard are the central Swiss cottage and adjoining malt house with stepped gable dating from 1884 as well as a late-18th century dairy house. A number of the Lewis Wyatt gate lodges survive.

The rescue of Winstanley Hall is a major task but since the exhibition *The Destruction of the Country House* in 1974, which led to the foundation of SAVE, we have not lost a country house of this age and quality. We hope this project will receive the strong support of SAVE's Friends.

You can help us by making a one-off donation, however small. Our founder donor is Dan Cruickshank. You can donate by cheque to SAVE Britain's Heritage, 70 Cowcross Street, London, EC1M 6EJ, credit card, or via the homepage of our website. Individual donations were a great boost to the campaign to save All Souls Haly. Please help!



**Buildings**

- 2 - The Malt House
- 3 - The Estates Office
- 4 - The Dairy House
- 5 - The Coach House
- 6 - Tithe Barn Mews
- 7 - Tithe Cottage
- 8 - Stable Mews
- 9 - The Forge
- 10 - Keeper's cottage
- 11 - Farrier's Lodge





*A family dog sits on a circular turret*



*A stable range in rough hewn 'Primitive' style*





*The strong convex and concave curves suggest Meyrick Bankes had a taste for the baroque.*

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