

GRIMSTHORPE CASTLE



by Lucy Williams

Directly south-east of Grantham, accessible via the A151, stands one of the most remarkable historical houses in England. Grimsthorpe Castle, surrounded by its extensive parkland and gardens, serves as a memorable country house in its unexpected combination of medieval, Tudor and Baroque architectural styles; a historical place reflective of its rich culture and history.

The castle is particularly notable for its intense and delicate architecture, a point of focus that continuously contributes to reflecting its vast and intense history. Different sections of the building reflect different historical periods, creating a unique blend of styles.

In the early 18th century, the renowned architect Sir John Vanbrugh, famous for designing Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire alongside Castle Howard in Yorkshire, was commissioned to redesign part of the house. His additions introduced a dramatic Baroque character to the principal north front, an expansion that remains one of the castle's defining features. Grimsthorpe Castle's most notable historical tale, of course, lies in its gifting in 1516 from Henry VIII to the 11th Lord Willoughby de Eresby

and his Spanish bride, Maria de Salinas, lady-in-waiting to Katherine of Aragon.

Through the bestowal of the grounds of their descendants, the house still remains within the possession of the same family, demonstrating a true connection and concern for the importance of historical and cultural heritage.

The occupation of the house by the Willoughbys can be seen by visitors through the house's vast collection of art and furnishings, alongside its many royal thrones and furnishings displayed across the rooms of the castle.

Today, Grimsthorpe Castle serves as both a family home and a popular visitor attraction. Guided tours are offered allowing guests to explore the richly furnished rooms, articulated exhibitions and experiences, and the gardens.

The house offers specific opening times for the house and gardens, as well as hosting special events throughout the year. For the month of July, events such as 'The Malle Mile', celebrating motorcycle culture, and 'Festival of the Unexceptional' celebrating late 20th century cars can be visited (book tickets online). Additionally, July at Grimsthorpe Castle offers a visit from 'The Travelling Bookshop' and even a production of Shakespeare's tragedy 'Othello' and even more throughout the summer to be enjoyed by visitors. From this, it's understandable how greatly a site like Grimsthorpe Castle contributes to not only the historical nature of Lincolnshire, but also the art of preservation, serving as a statement of legacy and a cultural landmark.