



During the Second World War, the mansion was put into practical use as a base for Canadian soldiers, and then as a training centre for ATS and NAAFI personnel. After the war, Surrey County Council later opened the mansion as a school for severely deaf children, the socially beneficial use of the mansion perhaps mirroring the character of its creator, John Fielden MP. Nutfield Priory School for the Deaf was the first Secondary Modern Boarding School for severely deaf children in England. The first Headmaster was Mr. S. J. Blount, who through his knowledge and expertise made the school a successful place of learning. During this period, the north wing of the building was added, and the mansion as it stands today was now complete.

After the school's closure in 1987, the Priory returned to its former occupation as a hotel, and remains so until this day.

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HOTELS

A TREASURED HISTORY

NUTFIELD PRIORY
HOTEL & SPA
NUTFIELD, SURREY

ORIGINS

Set high on a green Surrey hillside, Nutfield Priory is the country retreat you have always imagined: commanding yet peaceful, grand yet welcoming...

From the early 13th century, the land on which Nutfield Priory Hotel is built was owned by the priory in the town of Reigate. Originally, most of the lands assigned to the monastery are thought to have been granted to it by William de Warenne, the Earl of Surrey, when the monastery was first built in Reigate around 1240 for the members of the Order of St. Augustine.

THE EARLY PRIORY

After the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536 by King Henry VIII, Reigate Priory and its estate was eventually granted to Lord William Howard and his wife Margaret in 1541. The entire estate comprised of the Priory, which still stands in Reigate today as a grade 1 listed building, and its grounds, as well as land in the nearby towns of Dorking, Capel, Betchworth, Horley, Burstow, Headley, Mickelham, Ashtead, Leatherhead and of course, this site in Nutfield on which the hotel now stands. The following year in 1542, Lord Howard was attained for complicity with his niece and in 1543 the Priory and its extensive estate were all regranted to his wife. Lady Howard died in Reigate in 1581, from then the Priory and its lands were passed down through her family until 1703 when it was purchased by Sir John Parsons, Lord Mayor of London.

In 1741 the Priory and its lands were passed on to Sarah Parsons, the daughter-in-law of the afore mentioned John Parsons. After her death in 1759 her daughters kept Reigate Priory, but its lands were sold by Act of Parliament to discharge debts. The land in Nutfield, known as Hungerford Farm and Priors Land, was sold to John Fowler in 1767 and passed on to Thomas Fowler Wood in 1849. Thomas had the original mansion which stood on this site built between 1849 and 1854, which was added to in 1855-1859 for its next owner, the quaker banker, Henry Edmund Gurney. Gurney later became bankrupt, and consequently in 1870 the house and lands were sold to Joshua Fielden, who was MP for the Eastern Division of West Riding, Yorkshire between 1868-1880. Fielden set about pulling down the old mansion, and had the architect John Gibson design the building we see today, which with careful and sympathetic restoration and refurbishment still contains the original wood and stone carvings, wood panels and bosses. The organ displayed in the Grand Hall and the marble fireplaces are all original features as well and are indicative of the opulent and luxurious lifestyle that the mansion was designed to accommodate.

Joshua Fielden MP was also, however, known as 'the poor mans social friend',

an expression that could just as easily have applied to his father. By 1837 the Fieldens were one of the largest textile mill owners in the country, yet despite this they constantly petitioned for the rights and fair treatment of their workers. Joshua and his father, John, were responsible for passing the Ten Hours Bill in 1847, which restricted the amount of work done by women and children in the textile industry to 10 hours a day. This would have been detrimental to the family's financial interests, but greatly improved the working conditions in the manufacturing industries. Joshua was also actively involved with many other social and industrial reforms, including the repeal of the Malt Tax in 1880 – again, a move that greatly benefitted the labouring people of the country, but lost the government valuable financial income each year. Joshua Fielden MP was very much a family man, he had 11 children and on his death in Cannes on the 9th of March 1887 his estate passed to his wife Ellen who lived for a further 40 years, mostly at Nutfield. In 1920 she moved to London and sold the Nutfield house to a Mr. Ferris, who kept it as a private residence until 1930 when Mr. O. Picton Davis purchased it. Davis had the house turned into a hotel, the beauty and grandeur of the mansion finally accessible to the paying public.

