

Trentham Ballroom



As part of a major investment and development, Trentham Gardens Ltd built the Entertainment Hall which opened in 1931.

The architect, Mr Stanley T Drew of Lincoln's Inn, London designed the interior and exterior in the Italian Renaissance style and character of the former mansion. The ceiling was tinged in various shades of colour. Installation of the lighting was managed by a London firm and included bronze lamps that had previously hung in Trentham Hall and other lamps of artistic design with shades of oiled silk.

The Trentham Gravel Company produced the concrete aggregate for the floors from its quarry in Trentham Park.

Unobstructed views of the gardens were visible from the windows. It was intended to serve alfresco teas on the new grass terraces and gravelled walks.

A Trentham Gardens booklet for 1931 advertised the new Entertainment Hall for the first time. "Its method of construction throughout is of steel and concrete work with roofing of old-fashioned pan tiles...the dance floor is of polished maple wood and 18,000 sq. ft. in extent making it one of the largest in the UK. A special feature of the Dance Hall is its lavish decoration throughout, the dominant note of which is gold and bronze cellulosed lacquer work... Arcading on either side of the main hall is designed for the service of drinks and refreshments. Throughout this thoroughly unique building no effort or cost have been spared to ensure the comfort and enjoyment of the visitors to Trentham Gardens - that most popular and very beautiful rendezvous of the Midlands". Free garage accommodation for 600 cars and charabancs plus a waiting room for chauffeurs.



The clearing operation at Trentham

Over the winter of 1938, improvements were made to the ballroom to accommodate greater numbers of dancers. Enclosed balconies surrounding the ballroom and a series of private rooms were added. Dances took place on Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoons and evenings. There was a resident band, but famous broadcasting bands like the Victor Sylvester Ballroom Orchestra were also engaged.

The ballroom closed for the duration of the Second World War when it was used as the Central Clearing House by the commercial clearing banks. Millions of cheques were cleared during that time, making an important contribution to the national war effort.

Bank staff also made good use of the swimming pool and local sporting activities and made their own entertainments. They finally left in August 1946.

The ballroom reopened on 7 April 1947 and quickly regained its popularity as a premium venue for ballroom and old time dancing. Local resident bands were led by Norman Jones and later Reg Bassett and Ken Jones. Big bands like Joe Loss and Ivy Benson also made appearances. Dancers flocked from near and far.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s it was also a concert venue for many rock and pop bands. These included The Beatles, Pink Floyd, The Who, and Led Zeppelin.

Lack of investment led to a decline in the fortunes of the ballroom and the building was used for conferences and antique and craft fairs, before it finally closed in October 2002. It was demolished to make way for a Garden Centre, but six of the distinctive arches remain in the car park.



BALLROOM, TRENTHAM GARDENS.