

## Temple Newsam House

Temple Newsam is one of the great historic houses of England, famous as the birthplace of Lord Darnley, husband of Mary Queen of Scots, and sometimes called 'The Hampton Court of the North'.

There has been a substantial dwelling on or near this site for nearly a thousand years. In the early Middle Ages it was the property of the Knights Templar (hence the prefix 'Temple'), but it was Thomas Lord Darcy who built a new four-sided courtyard house here which was probably complete by about 1520. After Darcy's execution for treason it was given by Henry VIII to Lord and Lady Lennox whose son Lord Darnley was born here. It later fell into disrepair until it was bought by the self-made financier Sir Arthur Ingram in 1622. He rebuilt it as the three-sided courtyard house we see today, retaining the central west wing from the earlier building. His descendants lived here for the next 300 years becoming Viscounts Irwin in 1661, although the title died out one hundred years later.

In 1922 the mansion and 917 acres of gardens and parkland were sold for a nominal sum to Leeds Corporation by the Hon Edward Wood (later Earl of Halifax). The city was already encroaching onto the outlying parts of the estate and the elected representatives were anxious to secure the future of such an historic place for the enjoyment of the people of Leeds and their visitors.

Almost all the contents were dispersed at this time, but later the house was developed as an art museum, building up superb collections of paintings, furniture, silver, ceramics and textiles. The original treasures are continually being returned to the house. The Home Farm is now a Rare Breeds Centre and the gardens are famous for their displays of rhododendrons and azaleas while also containing five National Collections of plants. The extensive parkland has been developed for sport and leisure activities including golf, walking and open air concerts.

