

History of the Belvoir family

Mrs Delaney was a famous 18th century diarist and friend of the Hill family at Belvoir. She made several visits to the house and described her visits in her diary...

“Mr. Hill is a sort of old beau, who has lived much in the world; his fortune is a very good one. A fine gentleman is the character he aims at, but in reality he is a very honest, hospitable, friendly, good man, with a little pepper in his composition. He has the advantage of seeing his own peevishness and making a joke of it himself.”

NEW WORDS

beau :

a handsome attractive man.

composition :

personality

peevishness :

a person who is “peevish” is very easily annoyed



Describe Mr Hill in your own words and draw a picture of him in the frame. Do you think Mrs Delaney likes Mr Hill? Why?



This is how she describes Mrs. Hill and her daughters:

“Mrs. Hill’s, ...who is a well behaved, good humoured woman.....her eldest daughter; about 16 - a fine young woman altogether; rather a little clumsy, but fine complexion, teeth and nails with a great deal of modesty and good humour.”

NEW WORDS

to have a great deal of modesty
you do not boast about yourself or show off.

civil
polite

employed in their exercises
busy studying

on the footing of a companion
The governess is more like a family friend than staff

This is how Mrs. Delaney described the other daughters:

“...Two other daughters: the youngest of which very plain indeed, almost ten years old; the other not pretty, but lively and natural and very civil. They are all the morning employed in their exercises; the afternoons they spend with us. They have a pretty civilized gentlewoman, who is their governess - I think such a one as you would like; but she is on the footing of a companion, which is a troublesome thing”


Do you think Mrs. Delaney liked Mrs. Hill and her daughters? Why?

Mrs Delaney talks about the daughters' physical attractiveness. Why might these have been important?



Mrs Delaney was a famous 18th century diarist and friend of the Hill family at Belvoir. She made several visits to the house and described her visits in her diary. In 1758, this is how she described the house and grounds:

".... At one o'clock we took our leave with a promise of calling there on our return; Mr Bayly went home, and we came to this place about three o'clock, and this is indeed a charming place; a very good house, though not quite finished, and everything very elegant. This place is much more furnished than Hillsborough, and in a finer country, and much enriched with bleach yards, farm houses and pretty dwellings. On Friday we went in a boat on the river, which runs round the improvements almost, and several turnings of it can be seen from the house. The grounds are laid out in enclosures, which with the hedgerows and woods on the sides of some of the hills make the prospect very rich."



Imagine you are Mrs. Delaney, who has time-traveled to Belvoir today. Write a letter to Arthur Hill describing how his house and grounds are today.

Consider:

- How the house looked (then and now)
- The stables
- The gardens
- The farmlands/golf course
- Sketches to show some differences

The family at Belvoir

