National Trust

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Front cover: *Giant Leaf Verdure*, *c.*1540–50, Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (NT 1129595) • Photo: National Trust Images/Leah Band

Opposite (left to right): *The 'Indian Hunter'* (see page 29) • Maquette for a bust of Marcus Aurelius (see page 37) • Arit Anderson and Andy Jasper (see page 14) • *Sir Henry Hobart (1554–1625)* (see page 69)

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Hilary McGrady
Director-General,
National Trust

Welcome

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the first issue of this new magazine, showcasing the research and achievements of all of those working on cultural heritage across the National Trust .

One of the things I love most about the Trust is the sheer depth and variety of knowledge represented across our teams. Whether it's 18th-century wallpaper or Victorian plant expeditions, Roman archaeology or the social history of childhood – if you're interested in it, then it's probably reflected somewhere within the Trust.

What unites all those different pieces of work is a shared passion for the places and collections in the Trust's care, as well as the stories of the people, both past and present, associated with them. It's thanks to this combination of expertise and passion that the houses, gardens and landscapes we look after continue to fascinate and inspire, with new layers of their histories constantly being revealed and explored.

Building on the success of the National Trust *Arts, Buildings & Collections (ABC) Bulletin*, the *Cultural Heritage Magazine* will be the place to explore the work of the Trust's cultural heritage teams in depth, with a broad range across curation, conservation, research and beyond. It will also share shorter features, including interviews and photo essays, aimed at giving a deeper insight into the work being undertaken on cultural heritage within the Trust.

In addition to the opening 'Briefing' pages, which share news of forthcoming cultural heritage events and publications, there are also regular sections on new acquisitions to the Trust's collections, loans to major new exhibitions (in the spring issue), and research and conservation project round-ups.

> One of the things I love most about the Trust is the sheer depth of knowledge across our teams.

The magazine will be published twice a year, in spring and autumn, and is available to download from the Trust website. You can also ask to be added to the mailing list to receive it direct to your inbox by emailing chm@nationaltrust.org.uk. Please do share it with all those who you think might find it useful or interesting.

I really hope you enjoy delving a little more deeply into the Trust's work. We'd love to hear your thoughts and comments – and perhaps even suggestions for areas you'd like to see explored; you can share these via the email address above. My hope is that the magazine can champion the sometimes hidden work behind the scenes, and share knowledge and inspiration far and wide.

Above, clockwise from top left *Peter the Great at the Battle of Poltava* (detail) (see page 25) • *Portrait of Maud Russell (1891–1982)* (see page 73) • 'Drawing-Room Chimney-Piece', an illustration from Agnes and Rhoda Garrett's 1876 book *Suggestions for House Decoration* (see page 44)

Briefing

News, events and publications

Stone-carving competition at Corfe Castle, Dorset • Photo: National Trust Images/Mel Peters

Apprenticeship scheme

The National Trust and the Hamish Ogston Foundation, a charitable organisation supporting heritage, health and music initiatives, have announced a new partnership programme that will train apprentices in key heritage skills.

An ageing workforce and lack of training opportunities have led to a sharp decline in the traditional building and heritage skills sector, putting the future of historic buildings at risk. To help train the craftspeople of the future, the Hamish Ogston Foundation has awarded £6.2 million to the National Trust for a new Heritage Crafts Apprenticeship programme. This will offer 52 apprenticeships in stonemasonry or carpentry and joinery, leading to a Level 2 or Level 3 qualification through the government's formal apprenticeship scheme.

Apprentices will also benefit from a one-year work placement designed by the National Trust to further embed their skills and put their training into practice. Apprentices will be trained by heritage skills professionals in the National Trust at one of 12 properties: Attingham Park, Clumber Park, Cotehele, Fountains Abbey, Bransdale, Hardwick, Hughenden, Lacock Abbey, Lanhydrock, Lyme, Montacute House and Saltram. By the time each apprentice has finished their training programme, they will have been employed by the Trust for between three and five years, depending on the level of their qualification. The length and quality of the apprenticeships, combined with the work placements, will ensure that individuals have the skills they need to embark on a rewarding new career, either with the Trust or elsewhere in the sector where they have the potential to make a significant contribution towards saving the nation's heritage.

The programme is open to people of all ages but is particularly targeted at young people to provide them with lifelong employment opportunities.

Over the past five years, the National Trust has been developing its apprenticeships and has launched and developed the careers of some 260 individuals across a range of disciplines including gardens, hospitality, IT, project management and leadership, many of whom have been retained by the Trust.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/news/62-million-grant-from-hamish-ogston-foundation-funds-heritage-skills-apprenticeships

Manchester sky park

Thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery, July 2022 saw the opening of the transformed Castlefield Viaduct in Manchester following a 'greening' project that turned the Victorian landmark into an elevated park in just five months. MC Construction, Twelve Architects and Masterplanners, and four local partners worked with National Trust gardening specialists and apprentices to create the park, which includes thousands of plants and trees.

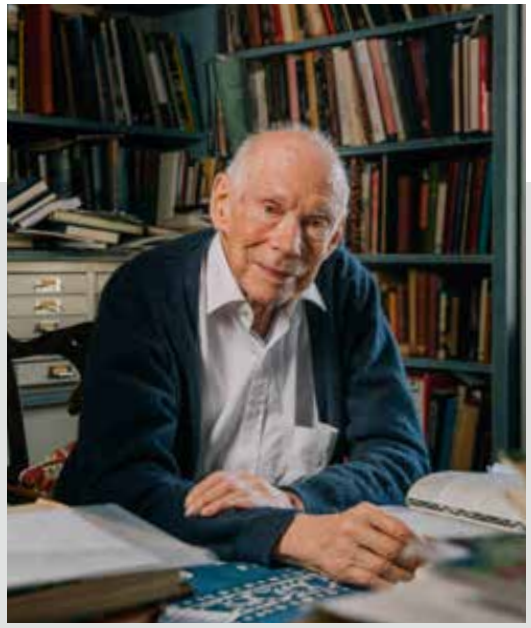
The temporary urban park will remain open for 12 months. During this time, visitors will have the opportunity to learn about the viaduct's heritage and pick up urban gardening tips. The Trust hopes to inspire and capture visitor and community opinions to help shape the longer-term future of the Grade II listed structure. The plans are part of the National Trust's Urban Places work to increase access for all to nature, history and beauty in urban areas. (Photo: National Trust Images/Paul Harris)

Mark Girouard (1931–2022)

The architectural historian, author and heritage campaigner Mark Girouard has died at the age of 90. Girouard was architecture editor for *Country Life* in the 1960s, researching and writing on the Elizabethans during the same period. Over the following decades he published a series of seminal works that examined historic buildings and places through the lens of social history and biography. They include *The Victorian Country House* (1971), *Life in the English Country House* (1978) and *The English Town: A History of Urban Life* (1990). His landmark work on Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture, *A Biographical Dictionary of English Architecture 1540–1640*, was published in 2021 to great acclaim.

Girouard was also an important figure in the early conservation movement that sought to protect historic buildings and areas from demolition or unsympathetic development. He was a founding member of the Victorian Society and the first chairman of the Spitalfields Trust, which fought to save the area's Georgian houses.

His involvement with the National Trust included authoring landmark books on Montacute (1964), Hardwick Hall (1976) and Waddesdon (1998), but extended beyond scholarship to much more practical support. As a great champion of the Victorian country house, Girouard was instrumental in the Trust, helping to save both Cragside (in 1977) and Tyntesfield (in 2002) for the nation.



Mark Girouard at home in Notting Hill • Photo: Daniel Gould/Country Life/Future PLC

His deepest affection, however, was reserved for Hardwick, where he lived as a young boy following his mother's death (it was the home of his great-aunt, Evelyn, Dowager Duchess of Devonshire). Many years later, in his PhD thesis, he would go on to securely identify the architect of his beloved Hardwick, Robert Smythson. Remembering Hardwick in the afterword to *Hardwick Hall: A Great Old Castle of Romance* (David Adshead and David Taylor (eds), 2016), Girouard wrote movingly:

> *Just the sight of its floor plans, with all that they say of movement inside them, and their combination of intricacy within order, and intricacy changing to simplicity and the rooms growing fewer and grander as the house moves up, gives me a lift of the heart … What a joy it was to wander slowly on my own through, all over and all round Hardwick.*

Conservation Focus

The National Trust's collections feature in several internationally significant exhibitions this year, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 'The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England' and a V&A partnership exhibition with the National Trust, 'Beatrix Potter: Drawn to Nature', for which Objects Conservator Felicity Bolton and Senior Textile Conservator Claire Golbourn prepared many of Potter's personal items. Meanwhile, Senior Furniture and Frames Conservator Gerry Alabone is preparing the magnificent 16th-century Sea-dog table from Hardwick Hall to go on loan to the US.

The Royal Oak Foundation Studio has also supported several exhibitions at Trust properties. Senior Paintings Conservator Sarah Maisey undertook 270 hours of cleaning on Constable's *Opening of Waterloo Bridge*, which has now returned to Anglesey Abbey as the star item in the Constable trail. Felicity Bolton prepared several delicate treasures, including Fabergé rabbits, for Polesden Lacy's 'Treasured Possessions' exhibition.

The team from the Textile Conservation Studio has been on site at National Trust properties: packing and assessing Kedleston's Peacock Dress for conservation treatment, condition-reporting on an Aubusson carpet from Belton House, cleaning Aubusson tapestries at Osterley and surveying and reinstalling the Marian Hangings at Oxburgh.

The Writing Room at Sissinghurst Castle, Kent • Photo: National Trust Images/John Hammond

Textile Conservator Yoko Hanegreefs has begun work on various rugs from Vita Sackville-West's writing room at Sissinghurst (above). She was helped in the wet-cleaning and stabilisation by Scarlet Faro, an MA student from the University of Glasgow's Centre for Textile Conservation.

At Erddig, the re-treatment of the State Bed hangings by Senior Textile Conservator Jane Smith continues. She is currently working on the cleaning and support of the bed coverlet.

Ellen Terry has fascinated costume historians for decades. Textile Conservator Terri Dewhurst has been working to make Terry's costume more accessible for researchers, and conservation of her bejewelled Beetle-wing Cloak has also begun.

Tapestry has been at the centre of the studio's conservation work with the return of The Vyne's six English Soho chinoiserie tapestries (*c.*1720). Finally, the glorious imagery in Packwood House's *Coronation of Marcus Aurelius* tapestry has been revealed by Terri Dewhurst and Textile Conservator Nadine Wilson in a project generously supported by the Wolfson Foundation.

Celebrating two remarkable careers in conservation

In May 2022 a special event at Osterley House, Middlesex (right) celebrated the outstanding contributions to the National Trust of Helen Lloyd ACR FIIC FSA, Preventive Conservation Adviser, and Tina Sitwell ACR FIIC, Paintings Conservation Adviser. Helen had worked for the Trust for 39 years, Tina for 37. Two of their former colleagues, Martin Drury and David Bomford, were on hand to mark their achievements and wish them a very fond farewell on behalf of everyone at the National Trust.

'Helen Lloyd has dedicated her working life to devising ways of striking a sustainable balance between conservation and access,' Martin said. 'Her pioneering work over 40 years has been an inspiration to generations of house staff and of incalculable benefit to the National Trust as the custodian of precious, fragile works of art. She organised housekeeping study days that gradually raised standards all over the country and opened the eyes of cleaning staff to the significance of their work. Thanks to her work on the Trust's *Manual of Housekeeping*, the only publication of its kind, translated into many languages, her name is known in every country where works of art and historic artefacts are shown in a domestic setting. She is also a wonderful person, dedicated, kind and selfless, whose modesty, patience and generosity of spirit won her respect and affection in every corner of the Trust.'

Helen Lloyd (left foreground) and Tina Sitwell (right foreground) • Photo: National Trust/Hilary Jarvis

David Bomford, meanwhile, described Tina Sitwell's selfless and deeply significant contribution to the work of the National Trust. 'It was the feeling that expertise was on hand,' he said, 'that there was a deep well of knowledge and experience that could be drawn on, that characterised Tina's years at the National Trust. Here was somebody who knew exactly what they were doing and did it marvellously well – and always with grace and collegial charm. Tina built up a network of conservators inside and outside the organisation and always encouraged research – what better time to explore the meaning and making of works of art than when they are under treatment? Happily, all this will continue with Tina's successors,' David concluded, 'but let us not forget where it began and flourished'.

Dunkirk painting owned by Winston Churchill goes on display

A painting depicting the evacuation of British soldiers from Dunkirk, which was gifted to Churchill by the artist's son in 1947, has been put on public display for the first time. Following extensive conservation at the National Trust's Royal Oak Foundation Conservation Studio at Knole in Kent, the painting will be on public view at Chartwell as part of a renewed focus on Churchill's wartime leadership at his former home in Kent.

The gift came at a significant point for Churchill, which may have influenced his decision to accept it at a time when he received so many offers of gifts that he had to decline the vast majority. In 1947–8 he was writing about Dunkirk for the second volume of his history of the Second World War.

The evacuation, codenamed Operation Dynamo, took place in May–June 1940. Chartwell's curator Katherine Carter explained: 'Churchill's "We shall fight them on the beaches" speech, delivered to the House of Commons on 4 June 1940, has gone down in history as one of the greatest wartime orations. We are delighted that we have been able to conserve and finally display such an important symbol of Churchill's legacy at his former home. It must have been poignant for him to be given this beautifully painted reminder of such a significant event just at the time he was writing about Dunkirk'.

Dunkirk (following conservation), 1941, Ernest Townsend (1880–1944), oil on canvas, 145.7 x 124cm, Chartwell, Kent (NT 1102534) • Photo: National Trust/Laurence Pordes

Research Round-up

In August we launched our Strategic Framework for Research 2022–2027, which sets out a future vision and identifies priority topics to underpin our research programme.

Collaborations continue to drive the Trust's research ambitions. In July we co-convened a two-day symposium with the University of Oxford on Children and Heritage, which included an international array of speakers who considered many different experiences and perspectives of children and young people. Papers considered the National Trust's own history of engaging children, as well as discussing the nursery at Lanhydrock, The Children's Country House at Sudbury, and musical engagement at Sir Edward Elgar's The Firs.

Working with PhD students is an established part of our research practice, achieved through co-supervision with universities of Trust-designed projects and hosting short-term doctoral placements. This year we have co-developed doctoral fellowships in partnership with the British Library. Two projects considered library dispersals and their acquisitions by the British Library, another studied authors' houses and their creative networks.

In partnership with Dr Oliver Cox (V&A) the Trust is the recipient of a British Academy Innovation Fellowship on *'Private' spaces for Public Benefit? Country Houses as sites for research and knowledge exchange innovation*. Drawing on approaches from across the museum and heritage sector and looking internationally, it will support future ambitions for what our historic houses can achieve. In September, the Art History Festival (presented by the Association for Art History) featured a short film and a panel discussion based on the research project, led by Dr Tarnya Cooper (NT) and Dr Oliver Cox and exploring the issues and challenges of curating historic houses owned by heritage organisations.

Finally, in May and in partnership with the Roman Society, the first research monograph on Chedworth Roman Villa was published through the Trust's Cultural Heritage Publishing programme. With 29 contributing authors, it draws together findings from over 150 years of excavations and archaeological analysis.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/research-at-the-national-trust

White Rabbit toy at The National Trust Museum of Childhood at Sudbury Hall, Derbyshire • Photo: National Trust Images/John Hammond

In Conversation

Arit Anderson
Garden designer, writer and television presenter

Andy Jasper
Head of Gardens and Parklands, National Trust

Arit Anderson is a garden designer, writer and television presenter, familiar to viewers of BBC *Gardeners' World*. She spent 25 years working in retail fashion and creative events before retraining in garden design at Capel Manor College, going on to win RHS show gardens awards and, in 2021, The BBC One Show and RHS Garden of Hope. She is the RHS Ambassador for the RHS Planet-Friendly Gardening campaign and community gardening.

Andy Jasper is the National Trust's Head of Gardens and Parklands. His previous roles include Programme Director, RHS Garden Wisley, and Director of National Tropical Botanical Garden South Shore Gardens, Hawaii.

In the first of a series of dialogues between National Trust experts and professional colleagues in their fields, Andy Jasper talks to Arit Anderson about their shared love of garden design, adjusting to climate change and the healing power of outdoor green spaces.

AJ Arit, thank you for joining me here in the beautiful garden at Ham House. Before we talk about how we shape gardens, maybe we should start by talking about how gardens have shaped us. How did you first get involved in working with gardens? Was there a 'eureka' moment?

AA It was having my own garden that changed things for me. At first, I didn't know whether I could get plants to survive even, so watching them respond and thrive got me more and more curious, and suddenly I was hooked!

I was working in fashion but I'd made the decision to move on to something new. I thought, 'I'm getting a bit older. I've really got to do something now I enjoy.' At that moment, it was the garden. So I came to it a bit later in life, in my mid-forties, and it was having a space to work in that really made it happen. What about yourself?

AJ It started at a younger age for me – even as a young boy I was fascinated by gardens.

Fig. 1 Arit and Andy in the historic gardens at Ham House in Richmond, Surrey • Photo: National Trust/Anya Digby

I grew up in Cornwall in an old vicarage with a big garden that had all sorts of interesting plant collections and three acres of woodland. I remember discovering this rockery in a clearing in the woodland. We realised we were looking at a part of the garden that had been designed and planted in the 1790s – this neglected, overgrown rockery – and we cleared it out and restored it. It was the most exciting thing! I've been hooked on gardens ever since.

AA It just goes to show, it doesn't really matter how old you are, how much space you've got or how much free time you have – once you're hooked on gardening, you can't 'unhook' it. I'm interested to know, though, before you started working for the National Trust, how familiar you were with the gardens it cares for. Were you already a fan?

AJ Yes, I was a fan but I didn't go straight into a career in gardens. I was a social worker, working with young offenders and families in crisis. The way I got back into gardens and heritage management was that I used to use the gardens as a place to meet families. If you go into a social-work setting, sometimes all hell breaks loose. In gardens you can have a calmer conversation, getting people to focus on gardening. You can take some of the heat and stress out of the situation and have great conversations.

I think that made me realise that there's something very magical about these places – they can be for everyone.

AA So when you came to the Trust you had an understanding of what the organisation could do for people. What sort of plans and ideas for change did you arrive with?

AJ When I was a director of the RHS Wisley investment programme, I was also on the regional advisory board for the National Trust. So I was excited about the potential for National Trust garden projects at the same time. I could see opportunities at every property where investment in the horticulture could improve standards and provide ways to engage more people with it. That's what really drove me and excited me.

AA I can see that your passion for getting people up close and personal with nature is really key.

AJ Absolutely. And that engagement is vital for National Trust properties in particular.

To be resilient I think we need to engage new audiences at the same time as showcasing our collections and encouraging wildlife. So conservation in the future will need to find ways both to support biodiversity and to create more opportunities for visitor engagement.

I feel really strongly that those aspirations are actually mutually supportive, because greater diversity of plant collections will support a greater array of both wildlife and people.

People are everything with gardens in my view. I don't know if you feel the same?

AA Well, I'm a 'people-person' for sure. I really enjoy helping people switch themselves on – to whatever it is. So the idea of gardens supporting people and wildlife at the same time really strikes a chord with me.

I used to do holistic therapy work and it was really special to help people reach a point of stillness or leave behind the tension they were carrying. And I really love the fact that gardens help people to access healing.

If people can start to look after their inner world, hopefully they have a better connection with their outer world and they're in a better place to take care of that. As we know, the garden often feeds that inner world.

AJ Have you got a favourite National Trust garden?

AA I knew you were going to ask me that! I can't say I have a true favourite because I've not been to all of them. But there's one on the Isle of Wight, Mottistone, that I used to visit when I'd go to my sister's. I guess I have a special connection to it because it would just be me and my sister spending time with each other.

It's a really lovely space – quite small and intimate compared to lots of Trust gardens. At Mottistone you can just pop in, have a little explore and get a couple of plants. So I really enjoy going there. What about yourself?

AJ As Head of Gardens, that feels like a question I should never answer!

AA A bit like 'Which is your favourite child?'

AJ Exactly! But I do have some that are really special for me. I love Glendurgan, in the far south west. Because it's in this hidden valley, you can grow all sorts of things there that you would never think could be grown in the UK. We've recently restored a stunning maze there.

I love Sissinghurst, too. We commissioned Dan Pearson to design a new garden there in 2021. The result is wonderful – really innovative. It's a re-imagining of Delos, a Mediterranean-inspired garden first begun by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson in the 1930s. The design inspires people to grow species that are more disease-resistant and drought-tolerant, so it's carefully adapted to cope with our changing climate in the UK.

Fig. 2 The recently restored maze at Glendurgan Garden, Cornwall • Photo: National Trust Images/John Miller

Hidcote is wonderful, too. So I probably shouldn't say it, but I do have some that are especially close to my heart – gardens that set the standard.

AA One impression I have of National Trust gardens is that visitors like to know that things have been looked after for a long time, that there's a sense of continuity and custodianship.

It's always a balance though, isn't it, between looking after the heritage and not wanting things to feel like they're preserved in aspic, as though they haven't moved on?

AJ There's around 500 years of horticultural heritage sitting within the National Trust gardens, which is really inspiring. But gardens can never be fixed entities either, they are constantly changing. In historic gardens like the ones we look after there's been a kind of flowing process of intervention, with each era bringing in fresh inspiration and imagination to create, recreate and reinterpret the gardens of the past. So I think our role is as much about imagination and looking forward as it is about heritage and history.

I also love the fact that, just in recent years, the pandemic helped us to really value our green spaces and understand that they're there for all of us. Of course, that idea is part of our DNA as an organisation. It's been right at the heart of the National Trust since it was founded in 1895. The Trust was built around that belief that access to nature is one of the cornerstones of well-being and should be available to everyone, not just a privileged few.

AA The pandemic, although it was obviously a devastating time, really drew people out into parks and gardens and other outdoor places, didn't it? It was a space that they could go out into safely but, more than that, it was a place – going back to the people thing – where you would meet the people you love and re-connect with them.

Also, on a smaller, more personal scale, I think gardens were especially important during the pandemic because people could see daily change and that helped them to manage the bigger change and uncertainty around them. You could go out each day and watch the way the garden changes, or the way the seeds you've planted develop.

So our gardens delivered in a time of real uncertainty. The Horticultural Trades Association recently estimated that three million people took up gardening during lockdown, which is incredible.

AJ Going back to what you were saying about how you personally got into gardening, I'm really interested in the transition you alluded to when you were talking about how you moved from fashion into gardens. Are there crossovers between those two worlds? Does it feel as though there's a continuum there?

AA There are some really interesting parallels between those two worlds but they're very different in other ways. So, for example, when you're working for a fashion brand, you have to be really secretive. You're not collaborative. You've got to get your brand out there first. Whereas, in the garden arena, it's the opposite. It's about sharing. It's about longevity.

The similarities are about putting collections together. So when you're designing a garden, I always say it's like putting a wardrobe together. The trees are the equivalent of your coats, your big investment in your wardrobe. Then you've got your shrubs and your perennials, they're the staples in your wardrobe – the skirts, the tops, the things you can change around a bit. Then you get into the annuals and they're like your fast fashion, the high hits that come through.

Fig. 3 The kitchen garden at Ham • Photo: National Trust/Anya Digby

Actually, lots of the fashion designers come down to the Chelsea Flower Show looking for inspiration. They want to see what's coming through in terms of colour. Fashion has always been driven by gardens and plants, of course. Whether it's fabrics – cottons, linens, and so on – or patterns. Look at William Morris, or going back further, the way that tapestries or carvings used floral designs. So the inspiration of nature in fashion is really powerful and it runs right back through our history.

AJ I've noticed that when you're talking about gardens, either on the TV or at Chelsea, you're always very clear about the science behind the design and how you 'read' garden design. Does that design literacy come from the fashion side of your experience?

AA For me, good design is about choosing those elements that are really going to sing to your audience.

I like to work on analogies. So when I did the show garden at Chelsea, for example, it was going to be donated to a mother and baby unit. It was the first show after lockdown and I felt, 'What is it that people need when they don't feel great?' And what we'd all been missing in lockdown, of course, was a hug.

So the whole storytelling of the garden was based around this sort of enveloping hug, whether it was a plant hugging you or the structure itself. It's lovely that the garden can play out an analogy like that. And then people are walking through that story, experiencing it first-hand.

AJ I just love that about garden design. It's a really traditional idea, again with a very long history. If you think of a garden like the amazing

landscape garden at Stowe, you've got an incredible allegorical journey taking you into the darkness, and then into the light, through myths and into philosophical constructs and it reflects different aspects of your psyche – its dramatic in scale but perhaps helps you think differently too.

AA That's right and although we talk about 'healing gardens', actually all gardens, whatever their scale, have healing potential.

In my own career, I'm attracting in more projects around that well-being aspect, and it really appeals to me. If we're sick, we're sick and if we're well, we're well. And the garden helps us respond to those things.

The land obviously needs our help at the minute. Clearly it's going through its own healing crisis, and I just want to be able to help people marry those two things; how we heal the land by healing ourselves and vice versa. It's completely interconnected.

AJ It's interesting how, in an environmental context, we sometimes talk about what man is doing to the natural world. But there's an artificial separation there – we're *part* of nature, part of the natural world. Gardens remind us that we don't have to be separated from it.

I was just thinking about how we got to know each other. I'd met you at Chelsea but I think I really first understood who you were and what you did when we were opening RHS Garden Wisley's Hilltop Building– the home of gardening science. Some of the projects at Wisley focussed on the science behind what it is about gardens that makes them so beneficial for the mind as well as the body, whether it's the colour or the scent or just the process of gardening, or planning forward and visualising

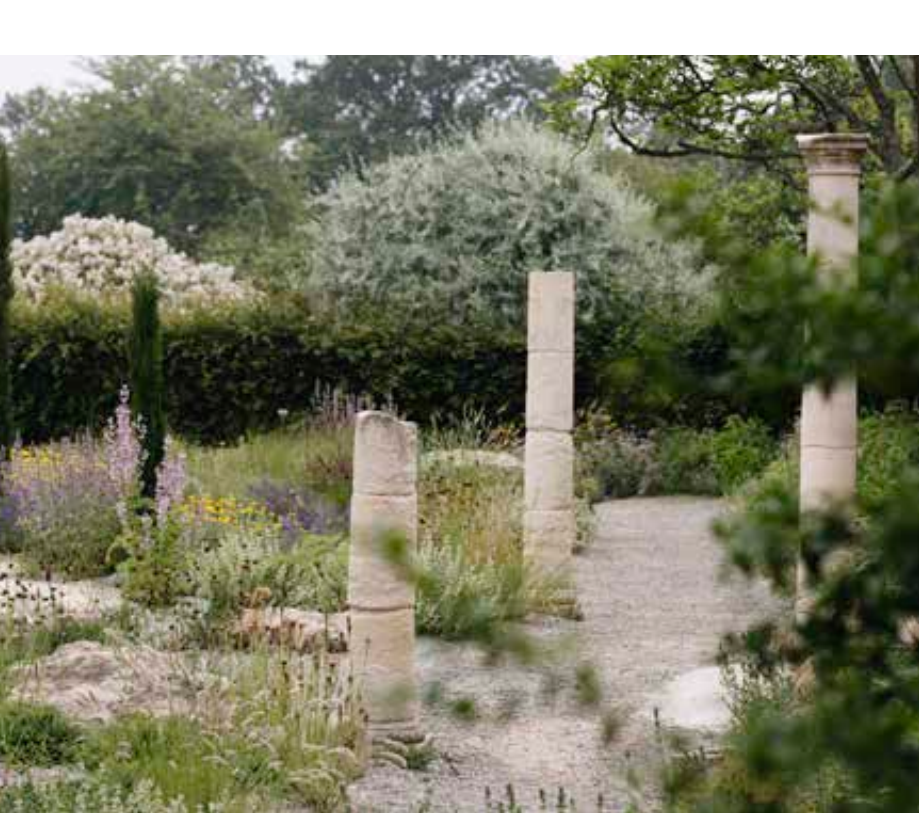


Fig. 4 Delos, the redesigned Mediterranean garden at Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Kent, which is based on a garden laid down in the 1930s by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson • Photo: National Trust Images/ Eva Nemeth

the results. Finding scientific evidence to underpin that was just fantastic.

When you were introducing the concepts behind the building I remember you were interested in scientific approaches that tackle the impact of climate change in gardens. Its interesting that now, in the National Trust, we are looking at plant collections in this way, because some historic collections that would traditionally have been grown are just not viable anymore. The project I mentioned at Sissinghurst is a good example of how we're adapting and future-proofing planting in response to this new context.

So we're gardening in a rapidly changing climate, with unprecedented weather events and new pests and diseases. In the National Trust we are setting ourselves up in the best way to weather this storm, though, with our eyes on the far horizon. So, for me, ambitious investment in infrastructure, people and collections is the way forward – that's the best way to safeguard the extraordinary garden heritage we look after for future generations.

AA I agree, but I think there's lots still to do to encourage gardeners to take a more natural approach too. I think the National Trust can maybe help to show the way here. You could have signage, for example, that helps to remind people that this amazing garden at Ham wasn't created at the cost of using lots of harmful pesticides and peat-based composts.

I need to have the story of why this garden looks and feels so wonderful. There's a lovely feeling about this space because I know it's not been sprayed and 'picked upon'. And that leads on to the situation in people's own gardens, because we all have things that have been munched and gone over.

Of course, if you pay to go into a space there's a certain expectation. You want to see excellence. But excellence doesn't mean that leaves haven't been eaten by what we're very quick to call pests – but which, of course, are actually part of the ecosystem. So maybe part of the answer is to get a dialogue going with people. You have to kind of explain: 'It's fine that we have black fly here …', for example, '… we're waiting for the larval stage'. Then people go into their own gardens and relax because they think 'Oh, it's okay in the National Trust'.

Also, nature doesn't know a boundary. A wall is just somewhere for a bird to perch. So when we start to see that everything is joined up, that the National Trust gardens are just bigger versions of our own, we see it's all part of the wider environment.

That's one way the National Trust can be really instrumental, by saying: 'We're just a bigger version of what you have. And we're able to show you some different methods and techniques for caring for your garden naturally.' That way visitors to all these wonderful sites leave with some kind of take-home rather than just floating around and essentially spectating – admiring these lovely gardens and going home again.

I think that's the thing, helping the nation to understand that you're not here just to hold things in trust. As you said earlier, the National Trust started out with the goal of bringing people and nature together. And everyone needs nature.

AJ Exactly. I think we are both committed to inspiring people with the art of the possible – taking the best from the past, but focussing firmly on the future.

Thank you Arit. I hope you continue to visit our gardens often and help us to continue to advocate the art, science and practice of horticulture in every area from vegetable gardens, glass houses and orangeries to designed landscapes, lawns and mazes through to our big, blousy herbaceous borders.

Weaving Alliances

Gifts of tapestry and the language of diplomacy

Helen Wyld
Senior Curator of Historic Textiles, National Museums Scotland

> 'But what we call a present is not simply a question of goods; because on both sides they adjust the value so precisely, that there is no real benefit either for he that gives, or he that receives the present: and they regulate it as though their reputation were at stake. On this subject there are many things one could say, but since this is beyond our subject, I will finish the first book of this treatise here.'
>
> Abraham de Wicquefort, *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions*, 1676[1]

Abraham de Wicquefort seems to have hit upon an argument more familiar to us from the work of 20th-century anthropologist Marcel Mauss; sensing that he had strayed into a realm for which his age had not yet found the words, he quickly retreated.[2] But if there were no words to theorise reciprocal gift giving in the 17th century, that did not matter, because there were tapestries.

In fact tapestries had been given as diplomatic gifts since the dawn of large-scale production in Europe, in the second half of the 14th century. In this period a small group of patrons began to commission lavish narrative hangings at enormous cost from producers in Arras and Paris. They included the most powerful people in Northern Europe at this time: Philippe le Hardi, Duke of Burgundy, and his brothers Charles V, King of France, Louis, Duke of Anjou and Jean, Duke of Berry. Very quickly, lavish and costly sets were being given away in the context of diplomatic encounters: for example, Philippe le Hardi gave three sets of Arras hangings to King Richard II in 1386; and in 1393 he gave numerous rich tapestries to the dukes of Lancaster and Gloucester, English

Fig. 1 *Knight with the Arms of Jean de Daillon*, *c*.1477–80, Guillaume Desremaulx, Tournai, tapestry, wool and silk, 5–6 warps per cm, 357 x 292cm, Montacute House, Somerset (NT 598106) • Photo: National Trust Images/ James Dobson

ambassadors, and members of their party, as well as the English king, in the hope that this would ease the negotiation of a peace with France.[3] A nuanced language of diplomacy through gifts of tapestry would develop over the centuries that followed.

The ostentatious display and giving of rich tapestries in the medieval and Renaissance period is often discussed in terms of the concept of 'magnanimity' (in Greek, 'megalopsychia'), described by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. For Aristotle, the magnanimous man should pursue magnificence through various forms of public display, including the decoration of his house in a mode suitable to his wealth, and through gift giving; this was a way of securing political virtue.[4] As large and costly objects, tapestries obviously performed this duty perfectly. But what made tapestry distinct from other art forms was that it was almost always recognisably the product of the giver's own realm.

In the 14th century, when the dukes of Burgundy were the primary givers of tapestries, the term 'Arras' became the accepted word across Europe for rich tapestry – its first use actually recorded in England in 1373. It is no coincidence that the greatest tapestries of the 15th century were made for the dukes of Burgundy; those of the 16th century, for the Habsburgs; and those of the 17th century for the French king Louis XIV; all these rulers controlled the centres of tapestry production, and the display and ostentatious giving of tapestries made in their own land became a way of establishing national prestige because they embodied not only taste and luxury but a successful manufacturing economy. The rush among European princes in the late 16th century to set up their own workshops using emigré weavers is also symptomatic of an urge not only to have tapestries, but to make tapestries, and show the world that you can.

The very earliest tapestry in the National Trust's collection, the *Knight with the Arms of Jean de Daillon* at Montacute House in Somerset (Fig. 1), was implicated in this international power play. It was part of a set commissioned in Tournai between 1477 and 1479 by Jean de Daillon, Seignure de Lude (1423–81), a French nobleman and a childhood friend of French king Louis XI. Although Daillon commissioned the tapestries, in 1481 the Tournai authorities decided to pay for them, and ordered that they be presented to him as a gift 'in remuneration for numerous favours and friendly gestures that he has made to this city'.[5] The exact reason for the gift was previously unknown, but a letter from the French king shows that in 1477 Jean de Daillon had been tasked with making sure that the city of Tournai

Tapestries embodied not only taste and luxury but a successful manufacturing economy.

was properly remunerated after French troops caused havoc among its inhabitants during the violent struggle for the Burgundian succession of 1477–9.[6] A set of tapestries woven in the city would have been a fitting gift in gratitude for his assistance, especially as Tournai's wealth rested largely on textile production.

Gifts to departing ambassadors – known as presents 'because one must give them into the hands of a person [who is] present'[7] – became a codified form during the 16th century, their value calculated to reflect the importance of the relationship being cultivated. Presents of gold or jewels were the most common, but a gift of tapestry marked a special relationship.

When displayed in a foreign palace, a set of tapestries would act not only as a memorial of a diplomatic meeting but also a monumental and immersive representation of the cultural and economic power of the giving nation – even, perhaps, a recreation of the physical environment of a foreign court. Such gifts went beyond mere monetary value, as hinted at by Wicquefort. Mortlake tapestries, similar to a *Story of Hero and Leander* tapestry series at Lyme in Cheshire (NT 500301), were used in this capacity by the Stuarts in the 17th century. John Finet, Master of Ceremonies to Charles I, reflected on a gift to the Spanish ambassador in 1641:

Fig. 2 *Peter the Great at the Battle of Poltava*, 1764, St Petersburg Manufactory after Louis Caravaque, tapestry, wool and silk, 7 warps per cm, 438 x 506cm, Blickling Hall, Norfolk (NT 355711) • Photo: National Trust/ Robert Thrift

the king was pleased to send him a regale, not of gylded plate, the matter usuall of presents bestowed on ambassadors, but of … tapistry for the ornament of his chamber where he and his posterity might behold the mark of his majestyes more especiall regard to him, witnessed, I said, by his majestyes own coat of arms which he had purposely commanded to be set on them.[8]

The gift is framed as a mark of personal favour, but in reality it represented the importance of maintaining the fragile peace between Britain and Spain, the subject of ongoing negotiations when this gift was made in 1641.

During the 1630s similar gifts of Mortlake tapestries are recorded to the courts of France and Sweden, both also strategic allies; the Swedish *Hero and Leander* tapestries, originally

Fig. 3 Detail from Fig. 2: *Peter the Great at the Battle of Poltava*, 1764, St Petersburg Manufactory after Louis Caravaque, tapestry, wool and silk, 7 warps per cm, 438 x 506cm, Blickling Hall, Norfolk (NT 355711) • Photo: National Trust/Robert Thrift

given to the ambassador, Johan Oxenstierna, still survive in the royal palace in Stockholm. Interestingly it was only in these years, when the Mortlake works was at its height through lavish royal financial support, that high-profile gifts of tapestries were given by the British Crown; they were clearly intended to express more than just personal favour or royal magnanimity, but something of Britain's cultural identity and accomplishments.

At Blickling Hall, Norfolk, we find a late but spectacular example of a diplomatic gift of a tapestry, in an over-life-sized representation of Peter the Great, Emperor of Russia, on a rearing horse set against a panoramic battle scene (Figs 2 and 3). This monumental tapestry – it is over 5m wide – is the only work from the State Manufactory of St Petersburg to survive in a public collection in Britain. It was brought back to Norfolk by John Hobart, second Earl of Buckinghamshire (1723–93) in 1765, on his return from a stay in St Petersburg as British ambassador to the Russian Empire. He installed it along with other trophies of his mission in a suite of specially constructed state rooms at Blickling.

Buckinghamshire's official dispatches describe how well-liked he was at the Russian court, and the tapestry might have the appearance of a mark of personal favour from the Russian empress Catherine the Great. However, Buckinghamshire had actually failed in his mission to secure a treaty, and was recalled to Britain after three years. The gift was probably a calculated gesture by the astute Empress Catherine, intended to influence the future course of the negotiations. She hoped to secure a military alliance, and not merely the commercial treaty that the British government intended.

The presence of the spectacular tapestry at Blickling also serves as a statement of Russian imperial identity – both in its imagery, of the now-mythic figure of Peter the Great in triumph, and also in the fact that it was woven at a national manufactory in St Petersburg. As Catherine II put it, '[Tsar] Peter in establishing the state tapestry factory could have had no other intention than by means of this splendid craft to embellish, develop and multiply all the arts which could serve the glory and advantage of the Russian Empire.'[9] Catherine's comment reflects the national prestige associated with the tapestry medium: the complexity and expense of establishing a successful manufactory made it a symbol of national economic as well as cultural power, regardless

They were clearly intended to express something of Britain's cultural identity and accomplishments.

of the financial troubles of many such state-supported workshops.

It is in France – whose *manufactures royales*[10] provided the model for the St Petersburg manufactory – that we find the most systematic use of tapestries in diplomacy. Although in France, as elsewhere, gifts of gold and jewels were the most common, tapestries were presented on special occasions. The imagery of these tapestries was designed to glorify the French monarchy, spreading the image of the king to foreign courts.[11] An example is a *portière* – a small tapestry designed to hang over a doorway – at Castle Drogo in Devon (NT 904075). It shows the French coat of arms on a triumphal chariot, and is of a type hung in many French royal palaces, and also presented as diplomatic gifts.[12] French gifts of tapestries were an advertisement of the quality of French weaving, especially for

the *manufacture royale* at Beauvais, which frequently sold to foreign clients. A set of Beauvais *Verdures with Birds and Animals* at Petworth in West Sussex (Collection of Lord Egremont) may originally have been such a gift – tapestries of this sort are known to have been given to departing ambassadors.[13]

A tapestry called *The 'Indian Hunter'* from a series known as the *Nouvelles Indes* or *New Indies* represents a more complex chain of international gift giving (Fig. 4). Although dated 1788, the tapestry is based on a series of cartoons given to Louis XIV by Johann Maurits, Prince of Nassau Siegen (1604–79) in 1679.[14] The cartoons represented just one of a series of lavish gifts of drawings, paintings and books that Prince Maurits gave to various European rulers after his return from a spell as governor of the Dutch colony in Brazil between 1636 and 1644. Maurits had taken artists and scientists with him to Brazil with the aim of recording the landscape, flora and fauna of the country, as well as its human inhabitants. Although the colony was economically unsuccessful, the paintings and drawings that Maurits returned with formed a valuable cultural capital, which he utilised strategically by presenting them as gifts.[15]

With their meticulous representations of the natural riches of the 'New World', this body of images signified an intimate knowledge of a land whose potential for exploitation by European powers was beginning to be realised; the problematic inclusion in the Montacute tapestry of the indigenous 'Indian Hunter' with his back turned to us, alongside the flora and fauna, is symptomatic of a larger sense in which the human inhabitants of Brazil were also viewed in terms of their economic usefulness.[16] In addition, a number of European animals were introduced into the designs when they were woven at the Gobelins, indicating that their popularity had as much to do with the European imagination as the Brazilian reality.[17]

The tapestries woven after the original *Indies* cartoons proved so popular that an updated version was created in the 1730s – the *Nouvelles Indes* – on which our tapestry is based. These French tapestries were in turn presented as diplomatic gifts by the French Crown,[18] acting as a representation of France's status as a colonising power, but also indicating that visual knowledge of the Brazilian landscape gleaned through colonial expeditions itself had value as a commodity to be exchanged between European nations.

A tapestry could also record a diplomatic event in visual form. An unusual tapestry at Powis Castle in Powys takes an idiosyncratic approach to this kind of subject matter. *The Reception of an Embassy* represents the meeting of a European delegation with a Muslim ruler, outside the gates of a city filled with minarets

The Powis tapestry is based on a Venetian painting made some 30 years earlier.

and roof gardens (Fig. 5). While the exact event depicted in the tapestry remains a mystery, it bears the date 1545, and almost certainly relates to the alliance between France and the Ottoman Empire in that year – one condemned by much of Europe as the 'Impious Alliance'.[19] In representing an encounter between two rival powers, the Powis tapestry relates to high-profile commissions such as the *Battle of Pavia* series, commemorating the victories of the Emperor Charles V over the French king François I, or the *Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, celebrating the English defeat of the Spanish fleet in 1588.

Such tapestries clearly reflect the international role of the medium. But whereas great patrons such as Charles V were able to commission new designs for tapestries, here instead an old image has been repurposed: although dated 1545 and made in Northern Europe, the Powis tapestry is based on a Venetian painting made some 30 years earlier (Fig. 6). The coarse quality of the tapestry and its recycled design suggest it was commissioned not by a king or an emperor but by someone of more limited means – perhaps one of the diplomats it represents. An emulation of the international language of the great tapestries commissioned by rulers such as Charles V, the Powis tapestry reminds us of the power and reach of this form of representation.

Helen Wyld was the National Trust's Tapestry Curator from 2010 to 2013.

Fig. 4 *The 'Indian Hunter'* from the *Nouvelles Indes*, 1788, workshop of Jacques Neilson, Manufacture des Gobelins, tapestry, wool and silk, 8 warps per cm, 280 x 380cm, Montacute House, Somerset (NT 598122) • Photo: National Trust/John Hammond

Fig. 5 (overleaf) *The Reception of an Embassy*, 1545, Southern Netherlands or France, tapestry, wool and silk, 5½ warps per cm, 360 x 540cm, Powis Castle, Powys (NT 1181082) • Photo: National Trust Textile Conservation Studio


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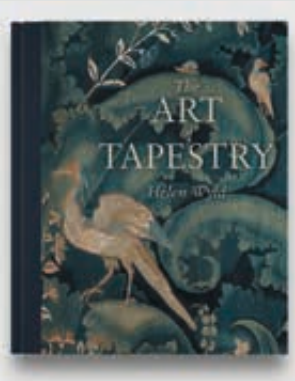
Fig. 6 *The Reception of the Venetian Ambassadors in Damascus*, 1511, unknown Venetian artist, oil on canvas, 201 x 175cm, Musée du Louvre • Photo: RMN-Grand Palais/dist. photo Scala, Florence

The Art of Tapestry



This article is an edited extract from Helen Wyld's new book *The Art of Tapestry* (October 2022, Philip Wilson/ National Trust Cultural Heritage Publishing). To order copies, visit: **shop.nationaltrust.org.uk**

Notes

1. Abraham de Wicquefort, *L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions* (1676), repr. 1690, vol. 1, p.457. Translation by the present author.

2. Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (1925), trans. Ian Cunnison (1954), repr. Mansfield Center, Conn., 2011.

3. Alexandre Pinchart, Tapisseries flamandes, part 3 of Jules Guiffrey, Eugène Muntz and Alexandre Pinchart, *Histoire générale de la tapisserie*, 3 vols, Paris 1878–85, pp.11–12.

4. Thomas P. Campbell (ed.), *Tapestry in the Renaissance: Art and Magnificence*, New York 2002, p.15; Thomas P. Campbell, *Henry VIII and the Art of Majesty: Tapestries at the Tudor Court*, New Haven and London 2007, p.7.

5. Jean-Bernard de Vaivre, 'L'Origine tournaisienne de la tapisserie de Jean de Daillon', *Archivum Heraldicum*, vol. 88, nos 2–3 (1974), p.18.

6. Letter from Louis XI to the inhabitants of Tournai, 8 June 1477; *Louis XI*, Joseph Vaesen and Étienne Charavay (eds), *Lettres de Louis XI, roi de France: vol. 10, 1482–1483 et Supplément*, Paris, 1908, pp.392–3.

7. Antoine Furetière, *Dictionnaire Universel*, 1690, quoted in Corinne Thépaut-Cabasset, 'Présents du Roi: An Archive at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, vol. 15, no. 1, Fall–Winter 2007–8, p.4.

8. John Finet, *Ceremonies of Charles I: The Note Books of John Finet 1628–1641*, New York 1987, p.303.

9. A. Polovtsoff and V. Chambers, 'Some Notes on the St. Petersburg Tapestry Works', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 35, no. 198, Sep. 1919, p.111.

10. Louis XIV and his first minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–83) reorganised France's existing tapestry-production centres into three *manufactures royales* in the 1660s: the Gobelins in Paris (1662–4), Beauvais north of the capital (1664) and Aubusson in central France (1666). Each centre had a different place in the French ecosystem: the Gobelins, formed out of the earlier Parisian workshops, produced tapestries for the king and the court; Beauvais catered for the nobility and the export market; while Aubusson, home to a constellation of small private workshops with an existing market share, produced tapestries at the lower end of the cost range.

11. See Isabelle Richefort, 'Présents diplomatiques et diffusion de l'image de Louis XIV', in Lucien Bély (ed.), *L'invention de la diplomatie*, Paris, 1998.

12. For example, two *portières* given to the Swedish ambassador in 1715; Maurice Fenaille, *État général des tapisseries de la manufacture des Gobelins depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours*, 1903–23, vol. 2, p.14.

13. Jean Coural and Chantal Gastinet-Coural, *Beauvais: manufacture nationale de tapisserie*, Paris, 1992, p.13.

14. Vittet 2014, pp.163–73; Forti-Grazzini in Campbell (ed.) 2007, pp.390–3.

15. See Carrie Anderson, 'Material Mediators: Johan Maurits, Textiles, and the Art of Diplomatic Exchange', *Journal of Early Modern History*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2016, for a discussion of the role of the *Indies* tapestries as gifts.

16. For detailed discussions of the imagery created during Maurits's time in Brazil see E. van den Boogaart (ed.), *Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, 1604–1679: A Humanist Prince in Europe and Brazil*, The Hague, 1979; Rebecca Parker Brienen, *Visions of Savage Paradise: Albert Eckhout, Court Painter in Colonial Dutch Brazil*, 2006.

17. Charissa Bremer-David, '"Le Cheval Rayé": A French Tapestry Portraying Dutch Brazil', *The J. Paul Getty Museum Journal*, vol. 22, 1994.

18. Sets were given to the King of Austria, the King of Russia, the Archduke of Austria, the King of Denmark, and the Sardinian ambassador in London. Op. cit., note 12, Fenaille, vol. 4, pp.61, 65.

19. See A.J.B. Wace and Muriel Clayton, 'A Tapestry at Powis Castle', *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 73, no. 425, Aug. 1938. My interpretation of the meaning of the tapestry differs from theirs; see entry on the National Trust Collections website.

‘Hollows for Statues and Heads’

The triumphant return of the Roman emperors to Coleshill

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Cultural Heritage Curator,
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Entering Coleshill village in Oxfordshire from the east, visitors are shepherded in by a long line of pale estate wall that rises and falls beside the road. The wall is momentarily broken by two large gate piers and a set of wrought-iron gates. The piers, which rise up like chimney stacks, are decorated with egg-and-tongue moulding and topped by two carved stone vases.

For all their grandeur, the Great Piers are among the last remaining elements of Coleshill House. Completed in 1662, it was regarded by John Betjeman (1906–84) and James Lees-Milne (1908–97) among others as ‘the first absolutely classical house of the English Renaissance’,[1] probably the work of Sir Roger Pratt (*c.*1620–85), the cousin of Sir George Pratt (*c.*1600–73) for whom Coleshill House was originally built. Following a devastating fire in 1952, what remained of the house was almost entirely demolished in 1958.

On the other side of the gate piers, facing the parkland, two Roman emperor busts once looked back towards Coleshill House. The busts echoed the interior decoration of the original building, and specifically its remarkable Entrance Hall and staircase. An account of this space in around 1700 refers to ‘… hollows where statues and heads carved finely are sett’.[2]

Country Life photography from the 1920s shows a number of classical busts, all placed within roundels recessed into the walls of the Entrance Hall (Fig. 1). This designed interior, presenting the glories of the classical world, was echoed in the design of the Great Piers. Unfortunately, the Great Pier emperors (Figs 2 and 3) went the way of the house, disappearing following their theft in the 1990s.[3]

Since their disappearance, the possibility of replacing the busts has been regularly discussed. The creation of the Coleshill Conservation and Skills Centre, led by West Oxfordshire’s General Manager Christian Walker, has acted as a catalyst to the busts project, which finally saw the Roman emperors return to Coleshill in November 2021.

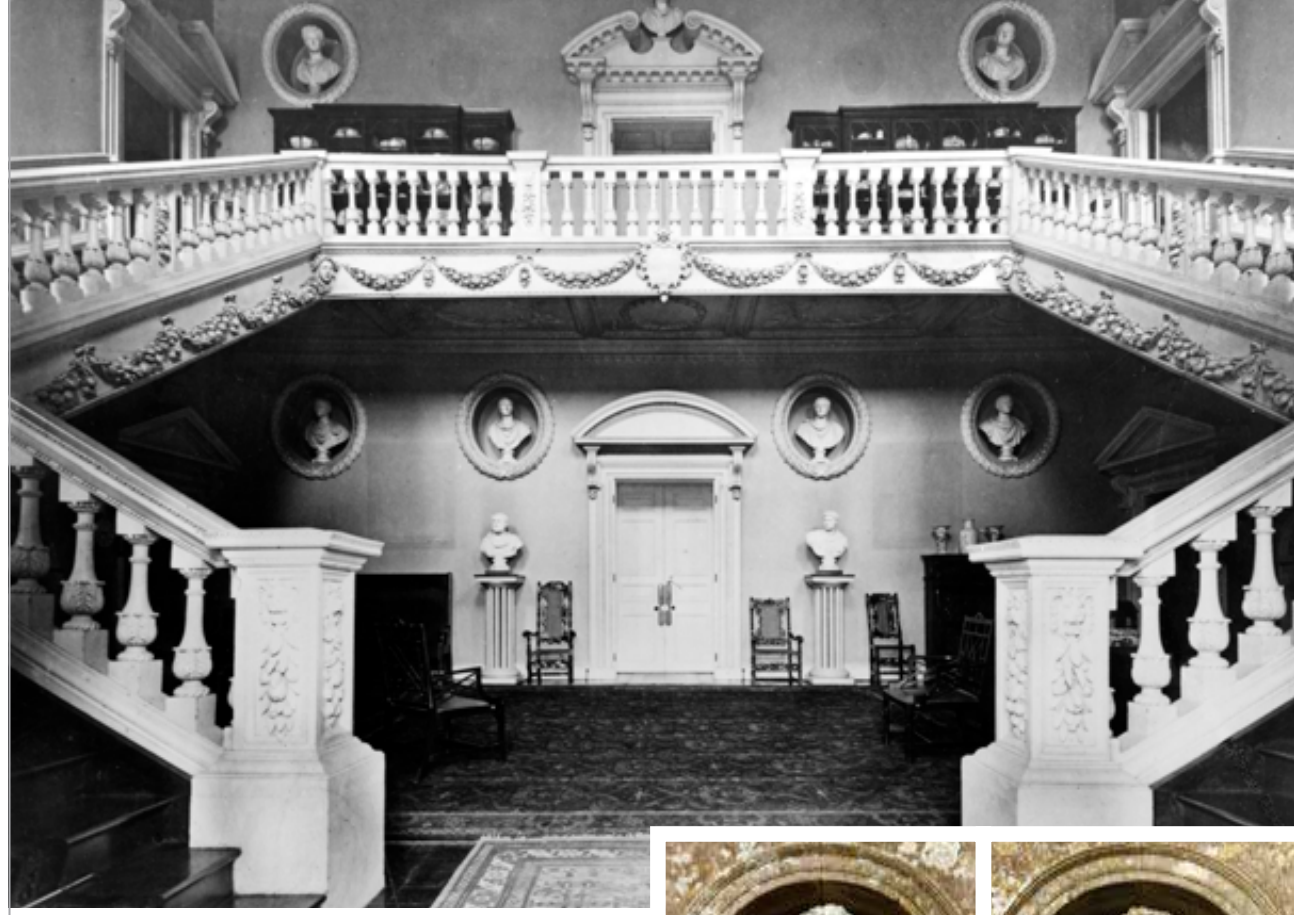


Fig. 1 Entrance Hall at Coleshill in 1926 • Photo: *Country Life*/Future Publishing Ltd

Figs 2 and 3 The original busts in the Coleshill Great Piers photographed *c.*1980s • Photo: National Trust

Two good emperors

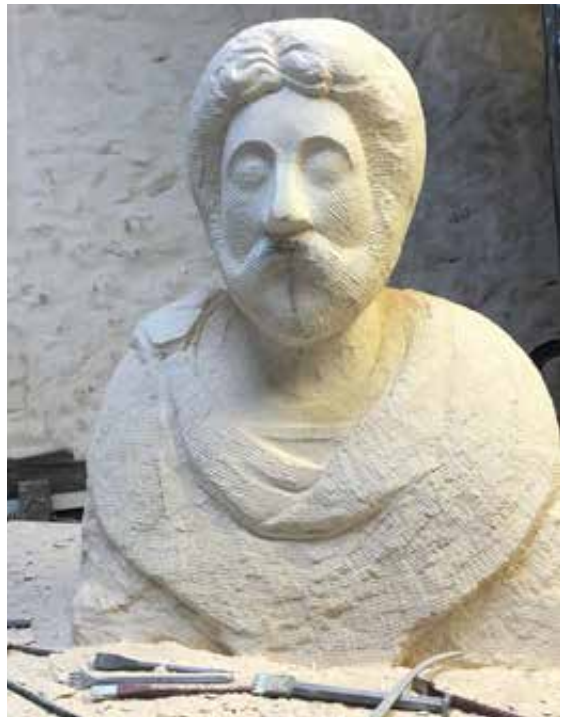
In a memo[4] from 1997, Timothy Knox, then Architectural Historian for the National Trust, noted that the original busts were almost certainly carved in the 1600s by English mason sculptors expressly for Coleshill. Knox suggested they may have been carved using contemporary plaster or marble copies of emperors from Italian collections, or were based on engravings of antique busts that were published in England during this period.

Those fortunate enough to see the original busts in situ would have been presented with the faces of Roman emperors Antoninus Pius

(AD86–161) and Marcus Aurelius (AD121–180). Both men were part of a select group, beginning with Nerva in AD96 and culminating with Marcus Aurelius in AD180, who became known as the 'Five Good Emperors'. The term, coined by Niccolò Machiavelli in the 1500s, promoted the idea of an empire ruled by good governance, which brought about a period of relative peace and prosperity. The two emperors sat comfortably within the Coleshill design aesthetic, which drew so heavily on classical architecture.

As with all rulers during this period of the Roman Empire, the relationship between Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius is not one of familial succession but rather adoptive selection. Hadrian had named Antoninus Pius as his successor on the provision that Antoninus in turn name Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Versus as his heirs. Antoninus is famed for his peaceful reign, and particularly in the United Kingdom for the construction of the Antonine Wall north of Hadrian's Wall between the firths of Forth and Clyde. Marcus Aurelius, who became known as the 'Philosopher King', is similarly associated with effective governance but is also known for his deep interest in philosophy. In his most famous work, *Meditations*, Aurelius recorded his thoughts about how best to live his life and rule the empire, using Stoic philosophy as a basis for his reign. Both emperors are classical figures with whom the progressive, historically conscious landowner of the 17th century might well wish to link themselves.

The busts of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, with their full curly hair and beards, follow the blueprint laid down by Emperor Hadrian. Both portraits radiate a benign, reflective quality that reinforces the link between the two emperors and their deified predecessor. However, there is an element to the bust of Marcus Aurelius, and particularly the rendering of his expression, that separates



the two portraits. The eyebrows and eyes are more stylised than is usually seen in busts made during Marcus Aurelius's reign, and whoever recreated the Coleshill busts in the 17th century was likely working from an example of a young Aurelius.

There are few historical references to the physical appearances of Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius but those that do exist help frame our interpretation of the Coleshill busts. In the collection of biographies known as the *Historia Augusta*, which provides accounts of the emperors and other politically significant figures between AD117 and 284, Antoninus Pius is described in the following terms:

> *In personal appearance he was strikingly handsome, in natural talent brilliant, in temperament kindly; he was aristocratic in countenance and calm in nature, a singularly gifted speaker and an elegant scholar.*

The description in *Historia Augusta* is echoed in *Epitome De Caesaribus*, a work often

Fig. 4 The bust of Marcus Aurelius during carving • Photo: © Tom Ball

Fig. 5 Plaster maquette (right) and unfinished stone bust (left) of Marcus Aurelius • Photo: National Trust/Ben Alsop

attributed to Roman historian Sextus Aurelius Victor, which characterises Antoninus as having a '… serious, handsome countenance, long of limb, suitably robust'.

The imperial image of Antoninus Pius purposefully echoes that of his predecessor Hadrian, so the 'handsome countenance' described in *Epitome* is clearly visible in the Coleshill example. There is a similarly calm expression in the face of Marcus Aurelius, although it apparently lacked the intensity of his adopted father's. In *Historia Augusta* Marcus is described as being a solemn child and as an adult:

> *… such was Marcus' own repose of spirit that neither in grief nor in joy did he ever change countenance, being wholly given over to the Stoic philosophy.*

This lack of expression is evident in the Coleshill bust, seemingly gazing into the distance, lacking the more thoughtful expression on the face of Antoninus.

Although the busts sat serenely in the Great Piers until the 1990s, the position of the piers themselves was changed in the 1700s. The original position of the structures was in the 'Green Court' of Coleshill House, much closer to the main building and therefore more stylistically and aesthetically linked with the house's interior decoration.

Documents in the Berkshire Records Office list a summary of works carried out at Coleshill between the late 1770s and 1830.[5] These include the relocation of the Great Piers to sit alongside the turnpike road that ran through the village in around 1780. When the piers were rebuilt by the roadside, the decorative busts were positioned facing inwards, towards the house, instead of out onto the road to greet visitors.

The movement of the piers was part of a significant programme of alterations and improvements undertaken in the 1700s, initially by Sir Mark Stuart Pleydell, 1st Baron of Coleshill (*c.*1692–1768) who owned the house from 1728 until his death, and subsequently by his successor Jacob Pleydell-Bouverie (1750–

Fig. 6 The completed busts of Antoninus Pius (left) and Marcus Aurelius (right) installed in the Great Piers • Photo: © Tom Ball

Fig. 7 The completed busts of Antoninus Pius (left) and Marcus Aurelius (right) before installation • Photo: © Tom Ball

1828). While Coleshill was often lauded for its seemingly unchanging appearance, both owners planned and undertook changes to the house and setting that had a lasting effect. This legacy is evident in the rebuilding of the Great Piers, removing them from their courtyard setting and placing them on the edge of the parkland rather than at its heart. This change is significant: Coleshill no longer possessed the formality of the three areas known as the Green, Fore-Base and Upper Base Courts, and instead set the house in a fashionably informal environment of open parkland and rolling countryside.

Tom Ball and the emperors' return

Stone carver Tom Ball has been renting a workshop in the Model Farm at Coleshill for a number of years. After studying Historic Carving at the City and Guilds London Art School, Tom has had an award-winning career working on original carving and restoration projects throughout the country. In April 2019 he began work on the replacement busts. The process began with the enlarging to life-size of historic photographs, and the creation of scale drawings and templates that were used as a reference to produce clay models. Photographs of busts of the two emperors from other museum collections were also referred to, since the best front-facing images of the original Coleshill examples were taken after the noses had been lost.

The clay models were then used as a basis for casting plaster maquettes (Fig. 5) from which the final stone busts could be carved. Once cast, a trial of the plaster models took place to check dimensions and appearance in the piers. Before carving could begin, a decision had to be made about which stone to use. Tom ultimately selected Bath stone, a type of limestone. After the basic shape had been cut from the great slabs of Bath stone, it took him about two months to carve each bust.

On 12 November 2021, after Listed Building Consent had been granted, the new busts were unveiled. Once again, Marcus Aurelius and Antoninus Pius watch over the Coleshill parkland from their elevated position in the Great Piers (Fig. 6), a reminder of the importance of classical art and architecture to both the interior and exterior of the lost house. Their return is an echo of the site's former greatness and a testament to the great skill of Tom Ball and the other craftspeople who have found a home at the National Trust Conservation Skills Centre in Coleshill.

Notes

1. Letter to *The Times* newspaper of 3 January 1953, signed by John Betjeman, James Lees Milne and others.

2. Account of Coleshill House by Celia Fiennes in *The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes, c.1685–1712*, Christopher Morris (ed.), London, 1982.

3. Sadly, the theft of art and artefacts continues to be an issue for museums, heritage organisations, cultural institutions and private collectors alike. The National Trust continues to work to trace and secure the return of stolen collections, such as the Coleshill busts, using a range of resources including the Art Loss Register and by monitoring the art market.

4. Memorandum from Timothy Knox to Tracey Avery (Historic Buildings Representative) and Alastair Laing (National Trust Curator of Paintings and Sculpture) concerning the stolen busts from Coleshill. Copy of memo held in the historic reference boxes at the National Trust Chilterns Hub (ref. 10173.2/4/6).

5. Coleshill House and its setting underwent considerable renovation during the 1700s. Much of the detail relating to this work was taken from *X Marks the Spot: The History and Historiography of Coleshill House, Berkshire* by Karen Fielder.

Acknowledgement The author wishes to thank Tom Ball for allowing him to document his work and for answering his many questions about the carving process.

Fig. 1 The south front of Standen, West Sussex, the Beales' country home • Photo: National Trust Images/John Miller

Fig. 2 Rhoda (left) and Agnes Garrett, undated • Photo: Private collection

Pioneering Women and Progressive Clients

A&R Garrett and the Beales of Standen

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Agnes and Rhoda Garrett are remembered, when they are remembered at all, for their 1876 book *Suggestions for House Decoration in Painting, Woodwork and Furniture,* part of Macmillan's 'Art at Home' series. The book was aimed at the metropolitan middle classes, offering advice on how to tastefully furnish a London home on a limited budget. The Garretts established their own business supplying furniture and architectural decoration, and from 1875 operated from their home in Bloomsbury as A&R Garrett. Today, the largest known collection of their furniture, together with a copy of the book, is displayed at Standen in West Sussex (Fig. 1). The house was the country home of Margaret Beale (née Field, 1847–1936) and her husband James Beale (1840–1912), and was built in 1891–4 by Philip Webb (1831–1915), a leading architect of the Arts and Crafts Movement. The furniture was bought for the Beales' London home and brought to Standen nearly 50 years later when the London house was sold following the death of James Beale in 1912. The connection to the Garretts reveals more about the Beales than their taste in interior decoration: the commission was underpinned by progressive ideals, principled thinking and the promotion of societal reform.

Cousins Agnes and Rhoda Garrett (Fig. 2) were the first women to work as interior decorators in Britain. Agnes (1845–1935), the daughter of a successful Suffolk maltster and brewer, came from a prosperous family.

It was a family, however, with fluctuating fortunes and as one of ten surviving children Agnes may well have needed to earn a living. Rhoda Garrett (1841–82), who came from a less affluent branch of the family, certainly needed to work. The cousins were no doubt encouraged in their desire to forge professional lives by the example of Agnes's elder sister Elizabeth Garrett Anderson (1836–1917), the first woman in Britain to qualify as a physician and surgeon. By the time Agnes and Rhoda began to look for professional training, Elizabeth Garrett Anderson had already achieved a medical education and set up a practice in London. Garrett Anderson freely acknowledged her influence over her sister; in a letter to her mother about Agnes's desire to find work, she wrote: 'I know you will be ready to think I am in some way at the bottom of it, and as far as the silent example of my happy solution of the same puzzle goes I dare say I do influence Agnes'.[1]

Both Agnes and Rhoda Garrett were active in the women's movement at the time they were starting their career. They supported the campaign for women's suffrage, were active in the London branch of the National Society for Women's Suffrage and, in 1871, joined the executive committee of the Central Committee of the National Society for Women's Suffrage. In addition, Rhoda was a prolific speaker and gained recognition in the early 1870s for her speeches on suffrage (Fig. 10). The Garretts were both conscious of the need to expand occupational prospects for women, and this inspired their decision to forge careers in the male-dominated field of interior decoration. Millicent Vince claimed that the Garretts were 'determined to find a new profession for women in the decoration of houses' and aimed to convince the public that 'in their *womanly* hands' house decoration 'could be a business and a sound business, as well'.[2]

The Garretts' decision to choose interior decoration over any other field of employment was likely influenced by a combination of factors. The economic landscape of mid-Victorian Britain had resulted in an expanded middle class with more money to spend on their homes. This growing market needed new suppliers. At this time, interior decoration had no regulating body and it was a field in which a variety of professionals (including architects, upholsterers and cabinet-makers) were active. Various sources claim that Rhoda Garrett initially aimed to train as an architect, but could not find an office willing to take her on as an apprentice. With interior decoration lacking a formal entry process, this barrier was reduced. The field could also be positioned as suitable for women; the skills provided by a traditional middle-class feminine education (such as drawing and needlework) formed a good basis for the work. Most importantly, it both concerned and could be practised from the home. The Garretts were able to subvert the connection between the home, domesticity and femininity to define interior decoration as a profession particularly suitable for women.

The Garretts founded their business in *c.*1874 and went on to fully participate in the contemporary market for interior decoration. Despite their sex, their professional life and working methods were not substantially different from those of their male competitors. Like their male rivals, the Garretts designed and sold wallpaper, textiles and furniture, as well as entire decorative schemes, and promoted these designs at national and international exhibitions. Well-known metalworkers,

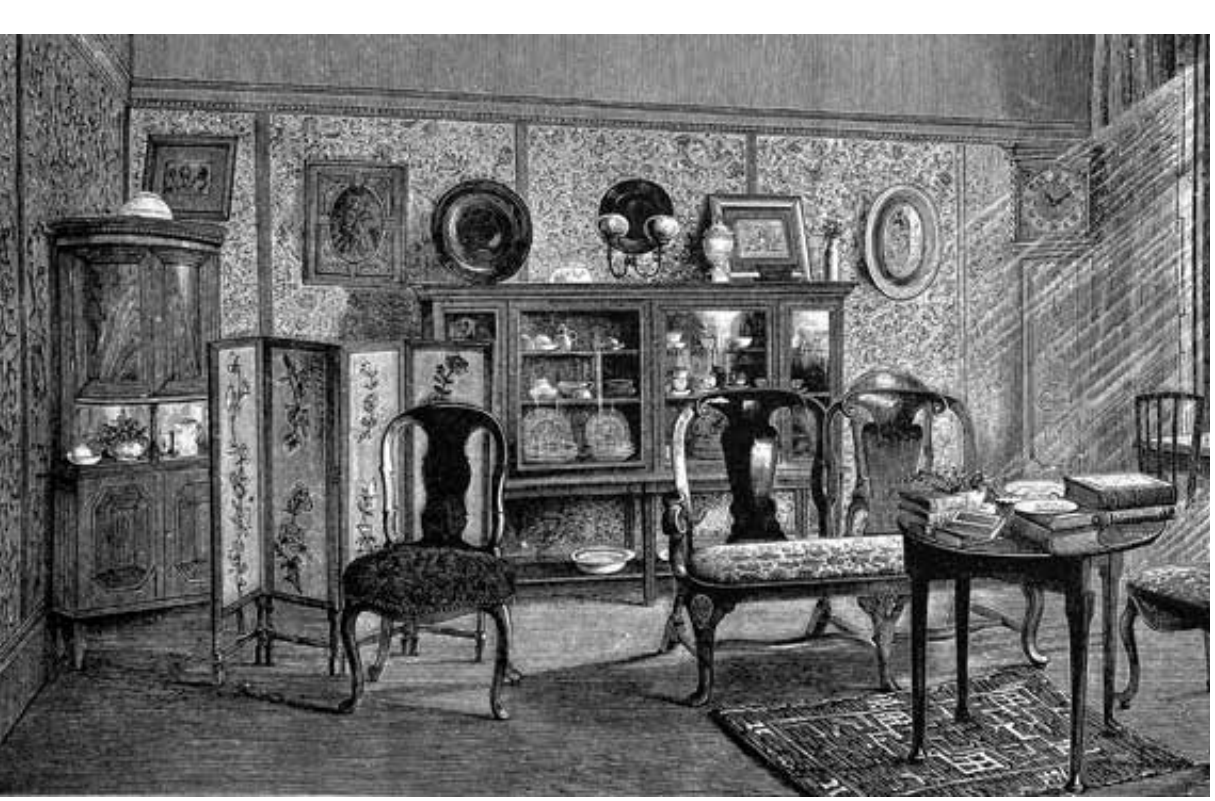

Fig. 3 'View of Drawing-Room' from *Suggestions for House Decoration*, 1876, facing page 62

Fig. 4 Corner cupboard, *c.*1875, A&R Garrett, walnut, mirror glass, brass escutcheons, 158 x 87.5 x 62.5cm (NT 1213990) • Photo: National Trust/ Caroline Ikin

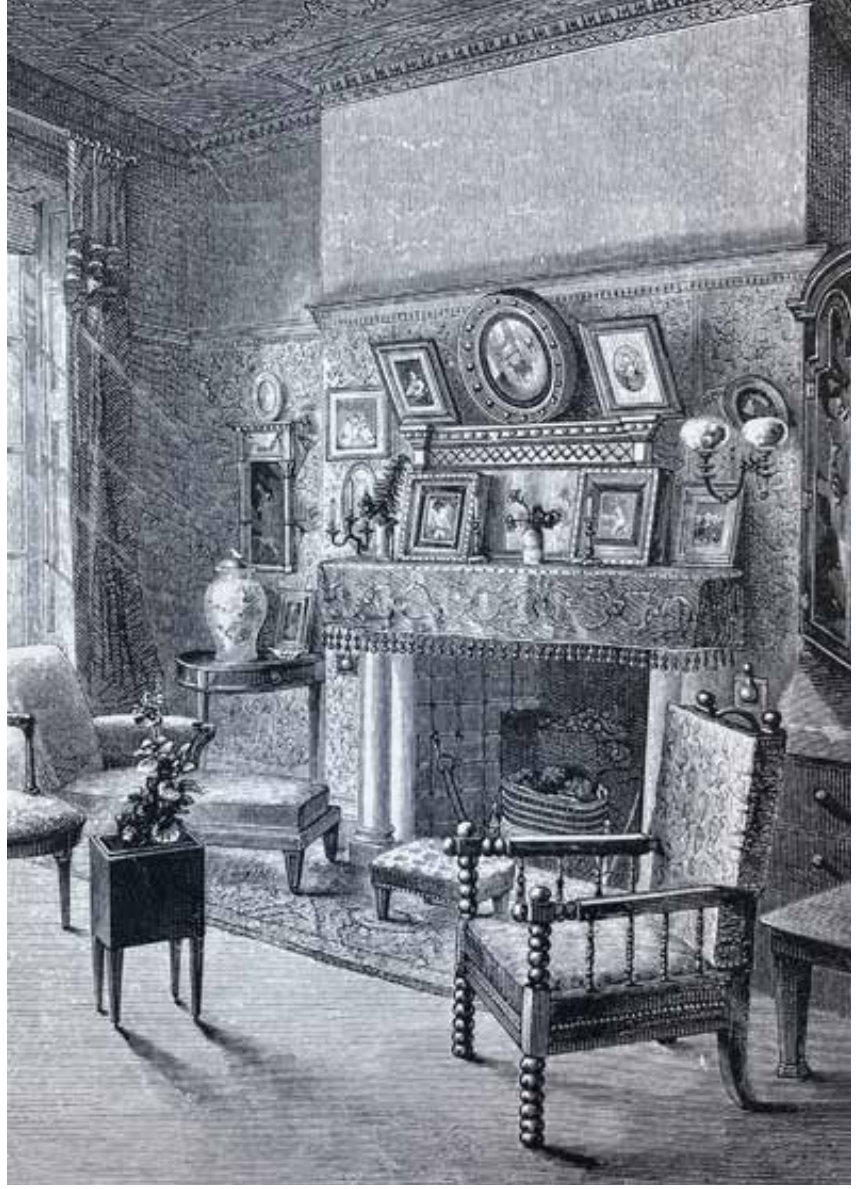

Fig. 5 'Drawing-Room Chimney-Piece' from *Suggestions for House Decoration*, 1876, facing page 61

wallpaper manufacturers and cabinet-makers were employed to execute their designs. They operated a decorative empire, working primarily from their home at 2 Gower Street and a warehouse in nearby Morwell Street, but selling their vision of the Victorian dream-home to customers across Britain. The cousins employed an assistant decorator and were able to offer training to other women through apprenticeships. They focussed on private commissions and undertook work for a variety of clients acquired through their familial, personal and political networks, including Hubert and Maude Parry, Lord Kelvin, Catherine Buckton, Ada Wellesley and Lady Dorothy Nevill. The cousins were regarded as experts in their field and were household names whose comings and goings were reported in the gossip columns of the popular press. Although no financial records of their business survive, it was clearly successful and ran for around 30 years.

They were also by no means alone. The Garretts were part of a growing network of women in the late 19th century who forged new roles in interior decoration. Scholarship on the history of 19th-century interior decoration

Fig. 6 Armchair (one of a pair), *c*.1875, A&R Garrett, mahogany, velvet, brass feet, 87.5 x 61 x 61cm (NT 1213991) • Photo: National Trust Images/ Andreas von Einsiedel

Fig. 7 Daybed, *c*.1875, A&R Garrett, mahogany, velvet, brass feet, 95 x 124.5cm (NT 1214057) • Photo: National Trust Images/Andreas von Einsiedel

Fig. 8 Sofa, *c*.1875, A&R Garrett, oak, burr oak, Utrecht velvet, brass feet, 73.5 x 228.5cm (NT 1213939) • Photo: National Trust/ Caroline Ikin

in Britain has traditionally been dominated by the study of male designers and makers and of firms run by men. That there were at least 19 firms run by women operating in the latter years of the century has, until recently, been ignored. These women, despite being barred by their gender from the education and opportunity afforded to their male peers, elbowed their way into the marketplace and operated businesses on a considerable scale. Charlotte Robinson (1859–1901), who ran a retail operation with premises in both Manchester and London, worked for the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway Company, Manchester Town Hall and – most impressively – the Cunard Steamship Company. Caroline Crommelin (1854–1910) specialised in decorating with antiques and built a considerable following among the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. Why then, are the Garretts and their peers so little remembered?

One reason is the lack of a tangible record of their work. It is unusual for records of small businesses to survive, and particularly the records of businesses run by childless women. Designer May Morris (1862–1938) dedicated much of her life to promoting the legacy of her father. She was the editor of the 24-volume *Collected Works of William Morris* and co-curated the Victoria and Albert Museum's 1934 'Morris Centenary Exhibition'. May Morris's work ensured that William Morris is regarded as a significant cultural figure of the period and is well represented in United Kingdom and international archives and museum collections. In contrast, the Garretts, Robinson and Crommelin had no children who could ensure their legacies were preserved. Their archival footprint is minimal. Compounding this issue, interior decoration itself is ephemeral and often does not survive. As fashions, families and fortunes evolve, interiors also change: people paint over wallpaper, replace stained upholstery and update tired furniture. The survival of the Garretts' work for the Beale family is a remarkable exception that can be used to reveal vital clues about their stylistic output and working methods.

The Beales were among the Garretts' first clients. James Beale moved to London in 1865 to establish a branch of the family firm of solicitors, primarily to serve its clients at the Midland Railway. In 1870 he married Margaret Field and they lived at 41 Gordon Square, a short walk from the house in Gower Street where the Garretts were living from 1875. It was in 1875 that the Beales moved, with their growing family, to a larger detached house in the artistic enclave of Holland Park in Kensington. The date is carved beside the entwined initials of James and Margaret Beale on a cabinet commissioned from the Garretts, which passed through the Beale family before entering the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in 2017 (acc. no. W.14-2017). The furniture now at Standen is likely to have been bought at the same time to furnish the new house and would have been one of the first major commissions for the firm of A&R Garrett. In addition to the furniture, the Garretts may have supplied decoration and architectural fittings, but no substantial evidence has yet been found of the Beales' interiors at 32 Holland Park. However, a set of curtains matching the upholstered furniture was also brought from London to Standen, suggesting a more comprehensive interior decoration service may have been provided.

With no surviving bills or other documentation, the attribution of the furniture at Standen has been made largely on the evidence of illustrations in the Garretts' book *Suggestions for House Decoration*. The corner cupboard with a mirrored shelf depicted in the 'View of Drawing-Room' (Fig. 3) matches the piece now displayed in the Morning Room at Standen (Fig. 4), while the 'Drawing-Room

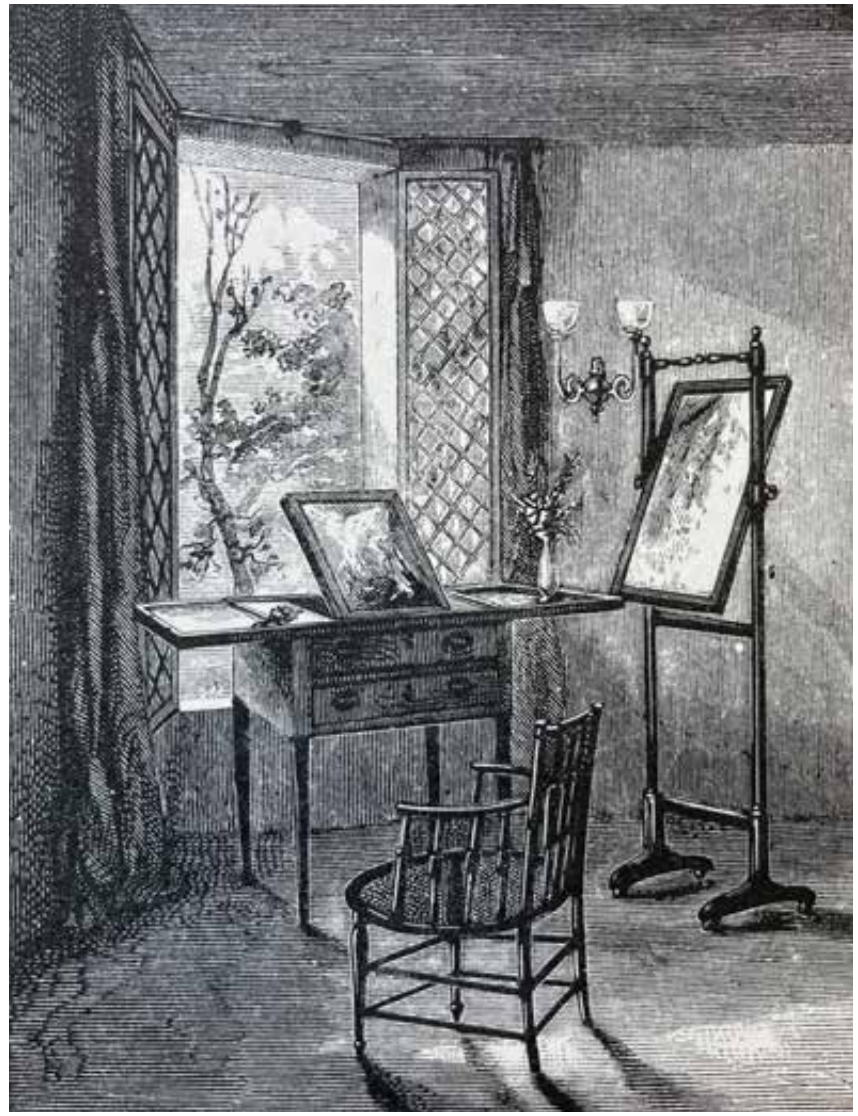

Fig. 9 'Dressing-Table and Glass' from *Suggestions for House Decoration*, 1876, facing page 72

Chimney-Piece' illustration (Fig. 5) shows the daybed (Fig. 7, reversed in the engraving) and a footstool in the Standen collection. The distinctive tapered legs on these pieces are characteristic of the Garrett style, and the roundel motif on the daybed is replicated on a pair of armchairs (Fig. 6) and footstools, and again on a sofa (Fig. 8). A bookcase, cabinet, dressing table and wardrobe at Standen are also attributed to the Garretts and the Beales may have acquired other items. An entry of February 1914 in Margaret Beale's handwritten inventory, the 'Hollybush Furnishing Book', lists among items in the Drawing Room at Standen a 'square oak table made by Miss Garrett for 32 H. Park'.[3] This table is yet to be identified. An ebonised chair at Standen that closely resembles the chair in the 'Dressing-Table and Glass' illustration from *Suggestions for House Decoration* (Fig. 9) entered the collection in 1980 but there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that similar chairs from the house were dispersed when Standen was bequeathed to the Trust in 1972.[4]

The Garretts' furniture draws on historic design, displaying a dainty 'Queen Anne'

Fig. 10 A print of 1872 depicting Rhoda Garrett (standing) and fellow suffragists during a meeting at the Hanover Square Rooms, London • Photo: Gado Images/ Alamy Stock Photo

style combined with the angular form of 17th-century furniture, and was intended for townhouses. The advice given in *Suggestions for House Decoration* was aimed particularly at residents of London houses, and the Garretts envisaged their furniture gracing the interiors of elegant yet unpretentious Georgian terraces. They expressed disdain towards newly built houses in areas such as Kensington, bemoaning 'the stucco and the graining, the frills and the furbelows, the frantic attempts of the builder to make everything appear to be what it is not'.[5] Whether the Beales recognised their own home in this caustic description is unrecorded but, nevertheless, the furniture would undoubtedly have been more in keeping with Holland Park than in Philip Webb's carefully conceived interiors at Standen. Although sharing the principles of honest construction and quality of material inherited from Ruskin, Webb and the Garretts had markedly different ideas on the overall effect of a decorative scheme. Bringing their London furniture to Standen nearly 50 years after purchasing it and finding a place for it in their country home suggests that the Beales held the Garrett cousins in high regard, and their connection certainly went further than interior design services.

In 1888, James Beale was listed as one of the founding directors of the Ladies' Residential Chambers Ltd, a company established by Agnes Garrett and others to provide accommodation for single middle-class women to allow them independence while maintaining respectability. Like her sisters, Agnes strove to promote opportunities for women to find fulfilling work and achieve independence; James Beale's close involvement with the company suggests he too supported the campaign for women's rights. Furthermore, in 1895 Beale's sister-in-law Marie Phipson Beale was appointed as a director and his wife Margaret Beale owned shares in the company.

The Beales' daughters were to benefit from their parents' progressive attitude and were given freedom to pursue their own interests: Maggie Beale (1872–1947) attended the Slade School of Art and later founded training schools for girls with learning difficulties, while Helen Beale (1885–1972) was involved in running the local hospital and with the Red Cross and the Girl Guide movement, and later managed the dairy farm at Standen. The familial links with the Garretts go further to include James and Margaret Beale's nephew, the architect Horace Field (1861–1948), who worked with Elizabeth Garrett Anderson on her New Hospital for Women, which had been decorated by Agnes Garrett. The Beales were clearly part of an artistic and socially progressive circle: their patronage of A&R Garrett gives a glimpse of their tastes and values as well as a window onto the London life they lived in parallel with their comfortable domesticity at Standen. Just as the Beales' daughters benefited from their parents' liberal outlook, future aspiring women designers were to benefit from the Garretts' example. The Garrett cousins' pioneering careers paved the way for their better-remembered 20th-century successors, including Syrie Maugham, Elsie de Wolfe and Dorothy Draper. As women active in a male-dominated industry, they were trailblazers and role models, pioneering a profession and achieving success at a time when women were ready to contribute but were excluded from many avenues of employment.

Notes

1. Letter from Elizabeth Garrett Anderson to her mother, 1861, HA436/1/2/3/2, Suffolk Record Office.

2. Millicent Vince, 'Agnes Garrett: Pioneer of Women House Decorators', *The Woman's Leader*, 11 September 1925, p.259 [italics in original].

3. Standen archive.

4. Letter from Arthur Grogan to Martin Drury, 10 November 1980, National Trust archive.

5. Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, *Suggestions for House Decoration*, London, 1877, p.24.

A Tiger's Tale

Conserving a panoramic wallpaper at Attingham Park

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Collections and House Manager, Attingham Park

Sarah Kay
Cultural Heritage Curator, Midlands and East of England

Melangell Penrhys
Conservator, Midlands and East of England

Among the less well-known treasures in the collection at Attingham Park in Shropshire is an important and exquisitely beautiful French hand-blocked panoramic wallpaper scheme known as *The Tiger Hunt* (NT 608084).[1] This printing was made *c.*1850 to an 1818 design depicting scenes of colonial India attributed to the Velay factory of Paris, a contemporary of larger manufacturers such as Dufour.

It was introduced to Attingham by Thomas Noel-Hill, 8th Lord Berwick (1877–1947), who had acquired it in the early 20th century during his work as honorary attaché to the British Embassy in Paris. Fragile, rare and of international cultural significance, there are very few examples of this wallpaper remaining, and fewer still in publicly accessible collections.[2] Lord Berwick continued to espouse the continental influences on Attingham's furnishing and decoration introduced by his Regency forebears, ensuring that it could '… remain a good example of Eighteenth Century architecture with such contents in the principal reception rooms as a nobleman's house of that period would have had'.[3]

Fig. 1 A tiger is cornered by a team of archers mounted on an elephant (NT 608084) • Photo: National Trust/Paul Claes

He acquired several objects in the French Empire style while working for the British Embassy in Paris and on later trips following his marriage, including a pair of armchairs in 1909 (NT 608192), two dressing-tables in 1919 (NT 608123 and 608125), a bed and an alabaster light fitting in 1927 (NT 609453). His wife, Lady Berwick, Teresa Noel-Hill (née Hulton, 1890–1972), remarked to a relative in 1922: 'Tom is forever trying to buy antiques; I just follow to stop him!'[4]

There is much more to this wallpaper than meets the eye, however, and a new exhibition scheduled to run from 2024 will explore its complex history in compelling detail. In the meantime, a conservation project generously funded by the Wolfson Foundation and the National Trust's Remedial Conservation Fund will combine all the panels – mounted, unmounted and assorted off-cuts – to create a new viewing experience.

Imaginary vistas

Panoramic wallpaper was developed in France in the late 18th century and manufacturers such as Zuber and Dufour rose to prominence after they presented their novel designs at the French Industrial Exposition in 1806. The panoramas allowed viewers to broaden their horizons from the comfort of their own homes, creating idealised windows into faraway 'exotic' lands, epic military battles and scenes from classical mythology. They remained fashionable until the mid-19th century and underwent a revival in the 1920s, when country house owners like Thomas Noel-Hill purchased them as antiques.

The unique manufacturing method and use of contemporary artistic sources for the design of *The Tiger Hunt* (and similar examples) showcase the unparalleled innovation happening in French factories in the years following the French Revolution. Wallpaper factories commissioned their panoramic designs from artists, who often used existing prints and engravings as trusted sources for the (ostensibly) accurate representation of local buildings, plants, wildlife and indeed people. The design was then broken down into hundreds of smaller elements and transferred onto individual carved wooden blocks. The most colourful designs and those with detailed toning and shading required the largest number of blocks and were therefore the most costly to produce.

Compared with more widely manufactured repeat-pattern wallpaper, this was an incredibly expensive and time-consuming process, reflected in the price – which would rise exponentially with the addition of extras such as borders, friezes, columns and caryatids to frame the client's new interior views. Attingham's *Tiger Hunt* wallpaper features depictions of architecture sourced from *Oriental Scenery*, a well-known book of

Fig. 2 Thomas Daniell RA, *The Taje Mahel at Agra* (1796) • Photo: © Royal Academy of Arts, London; photographer: Prudence Cuming Associates Limited

Fig. 3 The main gateway to the Taj Mahal provides the architectural focal point for this scene; the pair of Hindu temples in the background (top left) are also sourced from *Oriental Scenery* • Photo: National Trust/Paul Claes

Fig. 4 Lady Berwick left strict instructions to National Trust custodians to keep the bathroom well ventilated to protect her wallpaper • Photo: National Trust

144 hand-coloured aquatints published by artist Thomas Daniell RA (1749–1840), who journeyed around India with his nephew William in the 1780s and 90s. They stayed with East India Company officials during their travels and dedicated several volumes to men connected with the Company.[5]

The unknown designer's choice of subject matter was shrewdly selected, idealised and exoticised to appeal to 19th-century bourgeois European tastes. The modern viewer can detect clear colonial overtones, including scenes where a tiger is chased down by a 'nabob' and his archers, mounted in a howdah on the back of an elephant.[6] The tops of ancient Hindu temples populate the imaginary skyline and East India Company trading vessels sail along the distant horizon, laden with cargo.

French manufacturers saw the commercial opportunity in creating a sense of romantic mystery around India as colonial territories and trade interests continued to be expanded. The Western colonial gaze is epitomised in the depiction of a trio of female temple dancers performing for a British officer and his companions at the gateway to the Taj Mahal. The scene is described in the original 1818 promotional brochure for this wallpaper:

Fig. 5 In the years after Lady Berwick's death in 1972, the wallpaper was remounted and briefly split between the East Ante Room (left) and the adjacent passageway; by the mid-1980s both panels had been moved to the passageway, possibly to make space for more of Lady Berwick's picture collection • Photo: National Trust

'… *bayadères*, or Indian dancers; these women are highly respected in this country, the dances are very voluptuous and even lascivious. In the foreground on the left, an English family is viewing with astonishment a dance by several of these women'.[7]

In fact, the same motif of three dancers in very similar costume can be seen in Dufour's wallpaper *Sauvages de la mer pacifique* (1804), which depicts imaginary scenes from the ill-fated South Pacific voyage of Captain Cook. On a visit to Attingham in 1943 to discuss its future with Thomas and Teresa Noel-Hill, James Lees-Milne, then Secretary of the National Trust's Country Houses Committee, noted that 'in my bathroom the walls were papered with Captain Cook scenery just like the upstairs bedroom at Laxton [Hall, Northamptonshire]'.[8] This offhand remark, made over a century after both wallpapers were designed, is perhaps indicative of the same European notions of 'Oriental' interchangeability perpetuated by the wallpaper designers themselves. In spite of their apparent interest in achieving a degree of authenticity in the rendering of local detail, the designers chose to represent women from cultures many thousands of miles apart in near-identical costumes and poses.

On the trail of The Tiger Hunt

Thomas Noel-Hill's Parisian connections and zeal for antique-collecting may explain how Attingham's remarkable wallpaper came to be acquired. However, we may never be certain of its provenance. Some of the panels are still rolled, never having been mounted. Tantalisingly, this means that the manufacturer's stamps and handwritten inscriptions can be seen. The rolled panels have recently been examined by conservators and were found to be in almost pristine condition, colour-wise, albeit with small losses in some areas of pigment, exposing the paper ground. We are investigating some creative options for displaying these rolled panels, as mounting them onto a rigid surface may require irreversible treatment.

Although six sections of the original 25-panel design are missing, there are also duplicate panels in the collection with different colourways. The different versions may have been produced years apart, perhaps even by different manufacturers. Their variety supports the theory that the panels may have been bought as a 'job lot' at auction, perhaps following a factory closure or château sale. One can imagine the excitement of unfurling the rolls one-by-one and trying to piece the scenes together to form a continuous vista.

Lady Berwick's bathroom on the first floor at Attingham was just the right size to hang the slightly shortened panorama, and by 1926 *The Tiger Hunt* had been installed. After Lady Berwick's death in 1972 the panels were removed and relocated by the National Trust so that they could be seen by visitors while the upstairs rooms were tenanted.

From 1975 until their recent removal, two large sections of the panorama were adhered onto plywood boards with simple gilt frames and displayed opposite one another in a ground-floor passageway. Further panels were kept in store and suffered water damage in 1982 when a pipe burst, later undergoing conservation as a student project in the Paper Conservation Department at Camberwell School of Art.[9]

Location, location, location

In the 1970s the panels were hung like pictures so that they could easily be moved in the future should a more suitable location be found (an aspiration that the current project can finally meet).[10] This is important because their location on the visitor route led to pigment losses and abrasion issues, especially in the wearing away of some of the figures' faces through repeated touching.

The narrow passageway also prevented the wallpaper from being seen from a distance, as originally intended. Panoramic wallpapers were not designed to fade into the background or be walked past on the way to somewhere else; their unique selling point was that they created an immersive 360-degree visual experience, allowing homeowners and their guests to place themselves at the centre of an imaginary world as the scenes unfolded around them.

> The process of taking the panels down involved weeks of planning and investigation

Furthermore, the passageway location reduced the opportunity for effective interpretation of the wallpaper. It is one of the most intriguing objects in Attingham's collection, with a complex and multi-layered history. It deserves to be exhibited in a more appropriate space that allows sufficient pause for thought.

Fig. 6 Art handlers and conservators carried out extensive investigations and drew up detailed plans before removing the panels from the wall • Photo: National Trust/ Helen Rowse

The proposed location for the exhibition is a large first-floor room that is not currently open to visitors but has been used for temporary exhibitions in the past. Expert examination of the panels and conservation work will be carried out in this space, in full view of visitors. Academic research and an artistic collaboration will also form part of the wider project.

Crucially, the panorama is incomplete, and the 'gaps' provide compelling opportunities to work with audiences and community partners to creatively respond to the content, stories, histories and issues evident in the panels, for example via digital or mixed-media artwork. A full set of panels for reference is held at the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester and was exhibited as part of the gallery's 'Bodies of Colour' show in 2018–19.

A painstaking task

The complex process of taking the panels down from the passageway involved many weeks of planning and investigation. Minimising the risk of damage to the original 19th-century paint surface was paramount. The 14 wallpaper panels are distributed across five large plywood mounts, which are fixed to the wall with thick steel screws hidden behind the gilt frames. The joins between the plywood boards had been filled in with a plaster-like substance and then

Fig. 7 Detail of *The Tiger Hunt* • Photo: National Trust/Paul Claes

touched in with paint. This 1970s infill had to be carefully removed with a scalpel to separate the boards and remove them safely from the wall.

The panels were scanned with a metal detector to map the locations of the hidden screws and mirror plates that attach the boards together on the reverse. A removal method was developed in collaboration with conservators and art handlers, and the removal of one trial board was successfully followed by the remaining four. The panels are currently housed on a large, purpose-built A-frame in Attingham's Picture Gallery to facilitate easy inspection. They will be moved up to the first floor for conservation and re-mounting in 2023.

The journey continues

The objective now is twofold. One strand will focus on the delivery and development of an exceptional conservation project that highlights the National Trust's work to look after this rare and significant set of wallpaper panels. At the same time, the second will seek to investigate the full history behind the wallpaper's design, manufacture and previous uses, while inviting new and under-represented voices to respond to and create interpretations.

We hope the exhibition will encourage visitors to feed back on their experience to us. The wallpaper project team will continue the pioneering conservation and engagement work started by the Attingham Re-discovered Project, sharing the resulting debates, dilemmas and decision-making processes with visitors to ensure that they are part of this extraordinary journey too.

Notes

1. Odile Nouvel-Kammerer (ed.), *French Scenic Wallpaper 1795–1865*, Paris, 2000 (English edition), p.307. The design is also known variously as *Vues de l'Inde* or *La Grande Chasse au Tigre dans L'Inde*.

2. Examples of *The Tiger Hunt* can be seen at Blenheim Palace and the Whitworth Gallery in Manchester.

3. The Will of the Right Honourable Thomas Henry, 8th Baron Berwick, 16 September 1942.

4. Anthony Hogg, *The Hulton Diaries 1832–1928: A Gradely Lancashire Chronicle*, Chichester, 1989, p.298.

5. Thomas Daniell, *Oriental Scenery. Twenty Four Views In Hindoostan Drawn And Engraved By Thomas Daniell, And With Permission Respectfully Dedicated To The Honourable Court Of Directors Of The East India Company*, [1st series], London, 1795[–7], plates II and XVIII.

6. 'Nabob' is an Anglo-Indian word from the Hindustani *nawab*, meaning an important and powerful ruler. As the British East India Company grew more infamous, 'nabob' began to be used colloquially to refer to conspicuously wealthy men who had amassed their fortunes unscrupulously overseas.

7. Op. cit., note 1, p.307, translated from the French by Josephine Bacon.

8. James Lees-Milne, *Ancestral Voices*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1975, p.206.

9. Now University of the Arts London, Camberwell College of Art.

10. Letter from Merlin Waterson to the Right Hon. The Countess of Bradford, Weston Park, 14 April 1975. Confirmed in further handover notes between Historic Buildings Representatives, *c.*1981–7.

Nymans and the Jewish Country House

John Hilary
Messel family representative, Nymans

The West Sussex estate of Nymans is one of the six National Trust properties participating in the Jewish Country Houses project. The comparison with other Jewish family homes has been revealing, throwing up new connections and offering a deeper understanding of what it has meant for Jews to own such properties from the Victorian era onwards. Yet for the Messel family, the acquisition of Nymans (Fig. 1) formed part of a deliberate process of integration into British society that took them away from their Jewish roots. The development of the garden as a centre of horticultural excellence offered the immigrant family a passport into Sussex society, while the reconstruction of the house in the 1920s was the material expression of a new identity that was determinedly English and not Jewish. This raises a central paradox: if Nymans represents the negation of the Messel family's Jewishness, what place does it have in the story of the Jewish country house?

Ludwig Messel (1847–1915) (Fig. 2), who bought the Nymans estate in 1890, was indisputably Jewish. His paternal grandfather was one of the first Jews to be granted citizenship of Darmstadt, capital of the Grand Duchy of Hesse, while his maternal great-grandfather served as cantor in the city's synagogue for over 40 years.[1] Yet Ludwig himself was brought up in a secularised environment where ambitious Jews increasingly defined themselves in terms of their socio-cultural aspirations rather than their religious accomplishments. Unlike earlier generations of boys taught in separate Jewish schools, Ludwig and his brothers were educated in the New Humanist philosophy that blossomed in 19th-century Germany, with its emphasis on *Bildung*, the cultivation of intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual sensibilities. While they were born into one of the leading Jewish families of Darmstadt, the young Messels considered themselves heirs to the universal heritage of the Enlightenment.

On his arrival in London in 1865, Ludwig Messel gravitated towards an environment in which many of his initial friends and business partners were also of Jewish origin. Yet within six years he had married Annie Cussans (1846–1920), a British woman from a Christian background, and all his children would be baptised into the Church of England, breaking with the Messel family's religious affiliation within a single generation. This was in keeping with a trend seen in other German-Jewish immigrants of the period, who were regularly criticised by British Jews for failing to join local synagogues or other communal bodies.[2] Ludwig Messel did retain important links to

Fig. 1 The west front and dovecote at Nymans • Photo: National Trust Images/James Dobson

Fig. 2 Ludwig Messel • Photo: National Trust/ Nymans Archive

Fig. 3 The ruins at Nymans • Photo: National Trust Images/Gary Cosham

Fig. 4 The ambiguous Star of David in the wall at Nymans • Photo: John Hilary

his ethnic roots, however, becoming an early member of the Anglo-Jewish Association and supporting Jewish charities throughout his lifetime. He was also proud of his German heritage, ensuring that his children could speak the language and keeping the family surname unchanged at a time when many of his German contemporaries were anglicising or discarding theirs. Integration into mainstream British society was his overarching objective, however, reflected in his decision to send both of his sons to Eton and Oxford, and to marry each of his three eldest daughters into solid English (and Christian) families.

Buying the rural estate of Nymans was a decisive step on this journey of assimilation. The Messels had made their London home in the cosmopolitan district of Tyburnia, with its colourful melange of European cultures and its strong Jewish presence.[3] Setting up a second home in what was a remote part of the West Sussex countryside meant entering a traditional English community where Ludwig's pronounced German accent branded him an alien presence the moment he opened his mouth. The Messel children, however, born and raised in England, were soon making a name for themselves in Sussex society, performing at village concerts in aid of charity and fulfilling other functions expected of the landed gentry, including running their own Sunday School classes. Before long, Ludwig himself was being referred to as the local squire.[4]

The wholesale reconstruction of the house at Nymans set the seal on this new identity. The First World War was a tragic time for the Messel family, their personal losses exacerbated by the stigma attached to anyone of German origin living in Britain. Although both Ludwig's sons enlisted in the British army, his own German background made him an object of resentment in the local community, and he died a broken man. After the war, Leonard Messel (1872–1953) and his wife Maud (1875–1960) decided to transform the Germanic villa that had taken shape under Ludwig's stewardship into the Old English manor house whose ruins form a key feature of the Nymans visitor experience today (Fig. 3). The choice of style represented a conscious determination to put the dark days of the war behind them and to appropriate a historic English identity far removed from the Messel family's German-Jewish roots. Leonard and Maud filled the new house with their extensive collection of antique English furniture, armour and tapestries so that the overall effect was of a family seat embellished with the accretions of centuries past.

A close reading of the fabric of Nymans has enhanced our understanding of this dynamic. As part of his ethnic transformation, Leonard had already obtained a heraldic coat of arms for the Messel family from the College of Arms, and versions of the escutcheon can be seen around the walls of the property together with other motifs. Embedded in the masonry alongside stone reliefs of the Sussex martlets and the English rose is a Star of David – proof, surely, that the younger generation of the Messel family still treasured their Jewish heritage (Fig. 4). Yet the reconstruction of Nymans coincided with Leonard Messel's most active

The Jewish Country Houses Project

Jewish Country Houses is a four-year research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and launched in October 2019. Led by Professor Abigail Green at the University of Oxford, the project aims to forge close partnerships between universities (including Oxford, Durham and Cardiff) and the museum and heritage sectors. The project studies the houses (of differing scales) built, adapted or owned by Jews and those of Jewish origin, the architecture, associated art collections and gardens. Placing these homes within their wider political, social and cultural contexts, the project looks at the networks of collectors, dealers and taste-makers associated with these houses, the business dynasties, the role of the owners and estates and the connections between them, to establish their importance as sites of British, European and Jewish history, memory and heritage culture.

As part of this work, Jewish Country Houses is working closely with a number of sites and partners including the V&A, Strawberry Hill, the Musée Nissim de Camondo (France), Villas Montesca and Stiassni (in Italy and the Czech Republic respectively), the European Association for the Preservation and Promotion of Jewish Culture and Heritage, and the National Trust. The collaboration with the Trust is centred around six core properties: Hughenden Manor and Waddesdon in Buckinghamshire, Mottisfont in Hampshire, Upton House in Warwickshire, Monk's House and Nymans in Sussex. At these sites, the research being undertaken will lead to new understanding and new interpretation, including publications, workshops, exhibitions and podcasts, and participation in the European Days of Jewish Culture, as well as representation at the five associated conferences that run during the project. The legacy of this work will ensure that the broader histories of these sites and others are more fully understood and told long after the project's conclusion.

period as a Freemason, and the hexagram is an important symbol in the Masonic tradition as well as in Judaism. Rather than looking back to the Messel family past, the Star of David may well be further evidence of Leonard's integration into the institutions of the British establishment. Indeed, every tantalising trace of Jewish identity at Nymans seems to yield an alternative explanation: a broken brick bearing the six-pointed star recently discovered in the kitchen block turns out to have been a product of the manufacturers P & S Wood of West Bromwich, who simply used the hexagram with a 'W' in the middle as their maker's mark.[5]

On a material level, the redevelopment of Nymans embodied the articulation of a new English identity that supplanted the Messel family's German-Jewish background. It is hard to see, then, how Nymans can justify its place alongside the other National Trust properties selected to tell the story of the 'Jewish' country house. Yet exploration of the theme of Jewishness shows that there is no single story to tell here. Rather, each property offers its own variations that draw out elements of the Jewish presence, sometimes in the most indirect ways.

First and foremost, the history of the Messel family at Nymans reopens the sensitive debate over Jewish assimilation.[6] Much of the antisemitic discourse prevalent when the Messels bought Nymans held Jews to be essentially different from non-Jews, so that any effort to fashion an identity beyond Jewishness was doomed to failure.[7] Prominent Anglo-Jewish writers such as Lucien Wolf and Cecil Roth fought back against this prejudice,

Fig. 5 Leonard Messel as High Sheriff of Sussex in 1936 • Photo: National Trust/Nymans Archive

ridiculing individuals such as Hilaire Belloc who tried to maintain that Jews could never integrate fully into British society.[8] Yet the same claim was taken up by the more strident Jewish nationalists, who condemned the assimilationist tendencies of wealthy German Jews as illusory and self-defeating, so that families such as the Messels found themselves assailed on all sides.[9]

In the face of such criticism, the Nymans story exemplifies the successful integration of a German-Jewish family into British society. In 1936, Leonard Messel was appointed High Sheriff of Sussex in recognition of his long-standing service to the local community; on his death 17 years later he was hailed by the *Mid-Sussex Times* as 'a fine old English gentleman', with no mention of his status as a second-generation immigrant (Fig. 5).[10] His children Anne and Oliver Messel were celebrated members of the Bright Young Things who lit up the London scene between the wars, Anne

Fig. 6 Princess Margaret and Tony Armstrong-Jones with the Queen Mother and their first child, David, in 1961 • Photo: PA Images

Fig. 7 *Stolpersteine* in memory of the Bruck family, Kiel • Photo: Wikimedia

joining the ranks of the nobility as the Countess of Rosse on her second marriage, Oliver rising to become the leading stage designer of the mid-20th century. Tony Armstrong-Jones, Anne's son from her first marriage, propelled the Messels into the innermost sanctum of the royal family when he married the Queen's sister, Princess Margaret, in 1960. Their son David, now Second Earl of Snowdon, was born fifth in line to the throne (Fig. 6).

Alongside the Messels' remarkable social integration, an infinitely more sombre story reminds us of the shadow cast by the Holocaust on even the most assimilated families. All but one of Ludwig Messel's siblings migrated to England as he did, but his younger brother Alfred remained in Germany and rose to become one of the leading architects of the Wilhelmine era. Like many professional Jews in Berlin, Alfred was baptised in adulthood and his three children were brought up in the Christian faith. Yet the Nuremberg race laws introduced by the Nazis in 1935 were designed to deny those of Jewish heritage the right to define their own identity, so that Alfred's surviving daughter Irene and her family were categorised as 'full Jews' and exposed to increasing persecution.

Irene had already visited Nymans as a child and came over again in April 1936 to plan her family's escape from Germany. With her English cousins acting as sponsors, she and her husband Wolfgang Bruck-Messel eventually arrived in Britain with their two children just four months before the outbreak of the Second World War. Wolfgang's sister and parents remained in Germany, however, and suffered ever greater terrors until they were driven to commit suicide together in July 1942 (Fig. 7). The story of the extended family has been included in a new resource pack for teaching the history of the Holocaust through the lens of the Jewish country house, and the National Trust has offered free access to Nymans for teachers engaged in the seminars run by the Holocaust Educational Trust.

The Jewish Country Houses project shows that one should not always expect direct answers to the research questions asked of heritage properties. Probing the history of Nymans confirms that the Messel family saw ownership of a rural estate as a vehicle for articulating a new identity beyond Jewishness. Yet participation in the project has uncovered fresh stories that lay beneath the surface, as well as deepening our understanding of those stories we already knew. Other properties have yielded equally intriguing and unexpected discoveries. The Jewishness of the Jewish country house is not a predetermined outcome but the ongoing exploration of a rich and fascinating theme.

Notes

1. For the family history, see John Hilary, *From Refugees to Royalty: The Remarkable Story of the Messel Family of Nymans*, London, 2021.

2. Todd Endelman, 'German Jews in Victorian England: A Study in Drift and Defection', in Jonathan Frankel and Steven Zipperstein (eds), *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Cambridge, 1992, pp.57–87.

3. Vivian Lipman, 'The Rise of Jewish Suburbia', *Transactions of the Jewish Historical Society of England*, vol. 21, 1962, pp.78–103.

4. *Mid-Sussex Times*, 6 August 1901.

5. Information supplied by Michael Hammett of the British Brick Society, October 2021. I am most grateful to National Trust curator Caroline Ikin for passing this on.

6. For an overview, see Todd Endelman, *Leaving the Jewish Fold: Conversion and Radical Assimilation in Modern Jewish History*, Princeton, 2015.

7. For the British context, see Bryan Cheyette, *Constructions of the Jew in English Literature and Society: Racial Representations, 1875–1945*, Cambridge, 1993; Deborah Cohen, 'Who Was Who? Race and Jews in Turn-of-the-Century Britain', *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 41, 2002, pp.460–83.

8. Lucien Wolf, '*The Jews*, by Hilaire Belloc', *Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs*, vol. 1, 1922, pp.159–61; Cecil Roth, 'Are the Jews Unassimilable?' *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 3, 1941, pp.3–14.

9. Michael Marrus, 'European Jewry and the Politics of Assimilation: Assessment and Reassessment', *Journal of Modern History*, vol. 49, 1977, pp.89–109.

10. *Mid-Sussex Times*, 11 February 1953.

Acquisitions

Selected highlights, 2021–2

The National Trust is delighted to have made significant additions to its collections during the 2021–2 financial year. They include items that have been generously donated by family members associated with places that are cared for by the National Trust and items that have become available for purchase. We are grateful to the ongoing support of our donors, members and supporters in helping us to secure these important items for the nation.

The following pages highlight some of these new collections items, which members and visitors will be able to see and enjoy at our properties in the coming months. Opportunities to view them include a special exhibition (August 2022–August 2023) commemorating the life and legacy of Viscount Castlereagh (1769–1822), on the 200th anniversary of his death, at Mount Stewart, County Down. The exhibition features his silver inkstand, which was acquired earlier this year (NT 1658076). Also on display this autumn, at Coughton Court, Warwickshire, is a pair of magnificent Rococo silver tureens (NT 1961499), purchased in 2022 with a contribution from an anonymous donor. The tureens were commissioned by Sir Robert Throckmorton, 4th Bt (1702–91) from one of the most brilliant designers of the 18th century, the German-born Frederick Kandler (d.1778). We are delighted to secure the return of these pieces to Coughton Court after an absence of nearly a century.

An ingenious approach to fundraising

Seal matrix • 1470–1520 • Copper-alloy • 6 x 4cm • Mottisfont, Hampshire • NT 1954778 • Acquired by purchase, 2022

Founded in 1201 by William de Briwere (1145–1226), Mottisfont Priory was a site of Christian worship and pilgrimage until it was dissolved by Henry VIII and converted into a private home. The foundation was never particularly wealthy and was badly affected by the events of the Black Death. In 1353, to help recover its fortunes, it was granted Papal permission to raise funds through the sale of indulgences, which granted the purchaser a remission of one year and 40 days from their time in purgatory.

The matrix (opposite) was discovered by a metal detectorist close to Mottisfont and was probably used to authenticate the sold indulgences. The Latin inscription can be translated as 'Seal of the Official of the Prior of the Priory of Mottisfont'.

While parts of the priory survive within the modern building, this object is the first acquired by the National Trust that relates to the life and operation of the priory. It will be displayed for the first time at Mottisfont in 2023.

www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1954778

All photos: National Trust Images/James Dobson

The 'builder of Blickling'

Portrait of Sir Henry Hobart (1554–1625) • 1616 • Circle of William Larkin (*c.*1585–1619) • Oil on canvas • 110 x 89.6cm • Blickling, Norfolk • NT 357150 • Acquired by purchase, 2022

This is the earliest known portrait of Sir Henry Hobart, the builder of the red-brick Jacobean Hall we see at Blickling today. The portrait is dated 1616, the same year that he acquired the medieval manor at Blickling.

A successful lawyer, he was knighted in 1603 at the Coronation of James I, later becoming Attorney General and Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas. He had been buying land at Blickling for many years before he was able to buy the hall, so this portrait marks a turning point in his ambitions. It has an excellent provenance, which can be traced from Hobart's nephew, Sir Heneage Finch, to the present day.

The portrait is one of three works identified by the Yale Center for British Art as belonging to the same hand, currently identified as a 'Follower of Larkin'. This artist has captured Hobart's flesh tones, hair and the rich textiles in the picture in a softer style than Larkin's. The painting is a particularly human and engaging image – literally capturing its subject 'warts and all' – and the format encourages a sense of direct connection. The painterly treatment of the flesh and fabric also encourages the eye to linger, revealing the sitter's distinguishing facial features and veined hands.

The painting will be displayed at Blickling from autumn 2022.

www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/357150

Myddelton family portraits return to Chirk

Two portraits of the Myddelton family have been acquired for display at Chirk Castle. The portraits, which were both previously at Chirk, will return through the generosity of Lady Aird, who donated them to the Trust in 2021.

The Lady Margaret Myddelton (1910–2003) • 1931 • Glyn Philpot (1884–1937) • Oil on canvas • 111.5 x 92.5cm (framed) • Chirk Castle, Wrexham • NT 1171840 • Acquired by gift from Lady Aird in 2021

This stunning portrait (opposite) of Lady Margaret, mother of the donor, is understood to have been commissioned by her step-father, John Jacob Astor, 1st Baron Astor (1886–1971), to mark her 21st birthday. It was commissioned from a leading 20th-century society portraitist, Glyn Philpot, and is an excellent example of his work.

Lady Margaret was instrumental in the negotiations that enabled Chirk Castle to be acquired by the Trust. The portrait was formerly hung in the family's private quarters at Chirk and when it returns, following conservation assessment, it will be on public display for the first time in 2023.

Portrait of Robert Myddelton Biddulph (1761–1814) • *c.*1810 • Attributed to Sir William Beechey (1753–1839) • Oil on canvas • 95.2 x 82cm (framed) • Chirk Castle, Wrexham • NT 1171839 • Acquired by gift from Lady Aird in 2021

On display at Chirk Castle until 2004, the portrait (not illustrated) will now return to public display in 2023 alongside other family portraits illustrating the family's long history of patronising portrait painters. The painting is attributed to Sir William Beechey, official portrait painter to several members of the royal family, and includes a view of Chirk Castle in the background. The sitter added Myddelton to his name when he married his wife Charlotte in 1801. She inherited Chirk Castle in 1796 after her brother died without children.

www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1171840 • www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1171839

Symbol of service

Silver Treasury Inkstand for Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh, later 2nd Marquess of Londonderry (1769–1822) • 1805 • Henry Nutting • 8 x 30 x 19.7cm • Mount Stewart, County Down • NT 1658076 • Acquired by purchase, 2022

Viscount Castlereagh (1769–1822) was one of Britain's best-known statesmen and this inkstand symbolises his service to the country. It was an official grant from the Crown on his being appointed Secretary of State for War and the Colonies in 1805, at the peak of the Napoleonic Wars. Castlereagh would have used it throughout his subsequent ministerial career as Foreign Secretary and Leader of the House of Commons, in his office at 12 Downing Street and at his home in St James's Square, where it remained until his widow Emily's death in 1829.

The inkstand was in many ways the tool of his trade: letters to the crowned heads of Europe and their ambassadors, draft treaties, speeches and confidential memoranda would have been written from it. It would have travelled with him across Europe to Paris and Vienna after the defeat of Napoleon and would have been seen by anyone visiting him on official business, including Admiral Nelson on his departure for the Battle of Trafalgar, and Arthur Wellesley (later Duke of Wellington), whom Castlereagh appointed to lead the Allied campaign against the French in Portugal and Spain. As well as the customary royal arms, Castlereagh had the inkstand personalised with his own coat of arms as a viscount, and with a distinctive reed-and-ribbon border to match his silver dinner service, much of which can also be seen at Mount Stewart.

www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1658076

www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/1954682

Striking watercolour

Portrait of Maud Russell (1891–1982) • 1918 • Ambrose McEvoy (1877–1927) • Watercolour • 71.1 x 54.6cm (framed) • Mottisfont, Hampshire • NT 1954682 • Acquired by gift from Emily Russell in 2021

Maud Russell (née Nelke), who donated Mottisfont Abbey to the Trust in 1957, was a major collector and patron of 20th-century art. She sat for artists including John Singer Sargent, Sir William Nicholson and Henri Matisse. The Trust's collections previously lacked a finished portrait of her, a situation which has been rectified by the donation of this striking watercolour, painted by the well-regarded artist Ambrose McEvoy and generously given to the National Trust by Emily Russell, the sitter's granddaughter, in 2021.

It will be displayed in 2023 alongside William Orpen's portrait of her husband Gilbert Russell (acquired by the National Trust in 2011), allowing us to tell the story of the impact she made at Mottisfont through her patronage of the arts. It is also the Trust's first acquisition of a work by McEvoy, a popular society artist in the early 20th century who is especially noted for his portrayals of women.

Meet the Curator

Ella Kilgallon
Property Curator, Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire

For me, curation is all about unlocking relevance. It's what led me to become a curator and it's what I continue to find exciting about the role.

I studied history at the University of Nottingham and Kings College London and went on to do a PhD specialising in late medieval Italy at Queen Mary University of London. It was during my doctoral studies that I had my first taste of curating, as part of a public engagement project I initiated. The project brought together academic researchers and artists to find new ways to engage the public with complex historic subjects. The result was a display of artistic response pieces, in media ranging from lino print to film, each created after a series of conversations between the participants. Even today, I consistently return to this project and the lessons it taught me about the value of collaboration and the power of the material to unlock meaning for people.

After finishing my PhD I worked at the V&A in London, first as a cataloguer and then as a curator. I helped care for an extraordinary collection of around 80,000 design drawings and models, ranging from 18th-century hand-coloured silk designs by Anna Maria Garthwaite to sketches for Eileen Gray's 1930s 'S-bend' chair. Design drawings, especially the messy ones, offer an intimate encounter with the past,

Fig. 1 Ella consults one of the many architectural drawings held at Kedleston, *Design of the West End of the Dining Room* by Robert Adam (1728–92) (NT 109448) • Photo: National Trust/Katherine Harris

and working with these objects I developed a fascination with the process of design and production. It was this passion that led me to my current role as property curator for Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire. Quite unusually, Kedleston has a collection of some 400 design drawings for the building (Fig. 1), along with an archive that details its construction. With such a complementary collection, Kedleston is uniquely placed to tell the story of the designers and makers responsible for the building, its interiors, and even its furniture.

As Kedleston is one of the Trust's 28 Treasure Houses (an internal programme focussed on our most significant properties), I am currently writing the foundational interpretation for the property. This will see the introduction of room panels and object highlights across the Hall. The project is also about reviewing the current narrative and questioning what stories and voices we prioritise. As one of many people who care deeply about how Kedleston is presented, I started this project by asking the wider staff and volunteer team for their thoughts: how would they describe Kedleston Hall? What object best captures its story? Armed with these responses and numerous conversations with regional and property colleagues, I am now in the research and writing stage. Writing interpretation is about creating intrigue and finding relevance in just 200 carefully chosen words, but I love the challenge it poses.

Alongside the core narrative, there are other hidden stories at Kedleston that urgently need to be uncovered. As well as being an 18th-century show-palace, Kedleston is home to a large collection of objects from across Asia.

Fig. 2 One of a pair of silver anklets (NT 107651) from Baroda, Gujarat, which will form part of Anisha Parmar's 2023 display • Photo: National Trust/Mike Kennedy

Collected by Lord Curzon (1859–1925), Viceroy of India between 1899 and 1905, the collection forms its own museum on the ground floor. Totalling 1,200 pieces, the objects range from tourist souvenirs to diplomatic gifts, and originate from places as diverse as Japan and Afghanistan. My approach to understanding the collection's relevance(s) is to work collaboratively, to trial different approaches to display and interpretation, and to platform diverse voices.

We are currently collaborating with a local jewellery designer and maker, Anisha Parmar, to co-curate a display of adornment pieces. Anisha's designs are inspired by what she describes as her 'hybrid identity' and by research into inherited gold within the South Asian community. A display opening in February 2023 will showcase Anisha's work juxtaposed with adornment pieces from the museum collection (Fig. 2). Working collaboratively has already made me think differently about the jewellery pieces at Kedleston. For Anisha, adornment is a form of empowerment and a way to connect with her heritage. Each piece holds a personal, often intimate story and through the display I hope we will unlock some of those narratives and give new life to the collection.

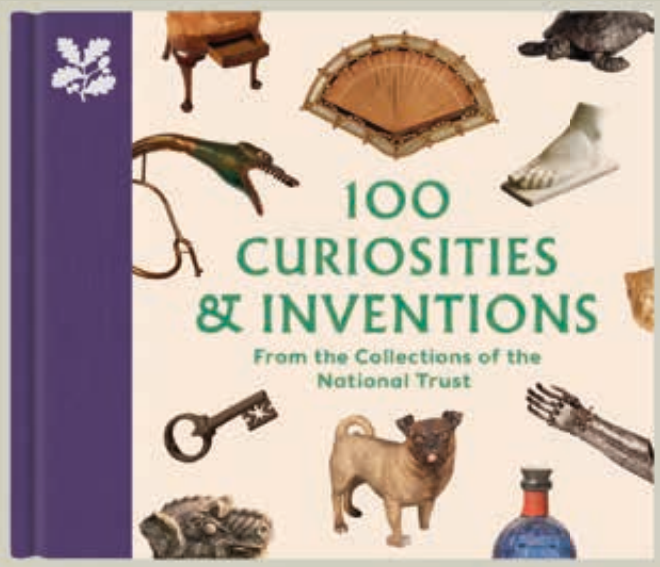
The display is one of a series of co-produced projects we are trialling at Kedleston while we work towards a re-presentation of the Asian collection. Through genuine collaboration we hope to understand the collection in new and meaningful ways while creating a sense of shared ownership. It's an approach that I hope will become the norm at all our places as we respond to the ever-changing nature of relevance.

National Trust Cultural Heritage Publishing

In addition to the *Cultural Heritage Magazine*, the National Trust's Cultural Heritage Publishing (CHP) programme publishes research-based books on our collections, properties, gardens and other cultural assets. Supported by the Levy Fund, many CHP publications are produced with partners, including Yale University Press and Bloomsbury.

100 Curiosities & Inventions

From the Collections of the National Trust



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The author Helen Wyld spent four years researching the Trust's collection. She is now Senior Curator of Historic Textiles at National Museums Scotland.

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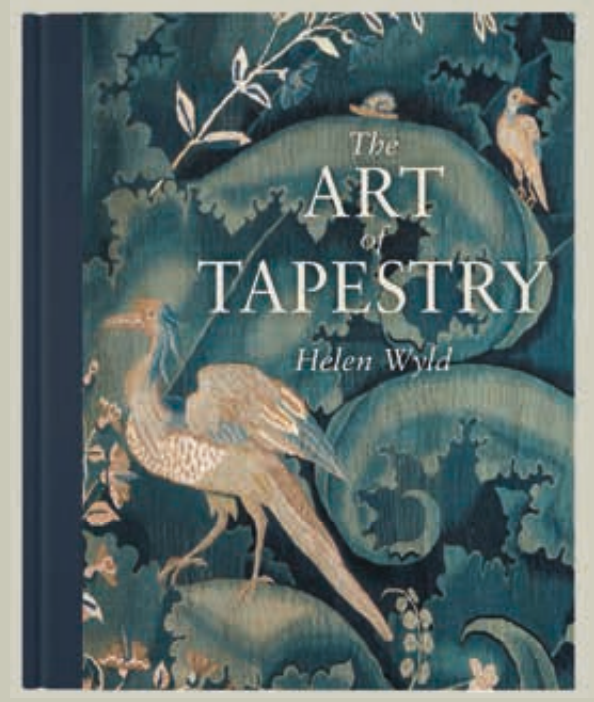

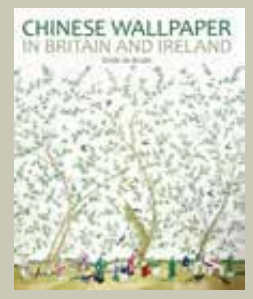

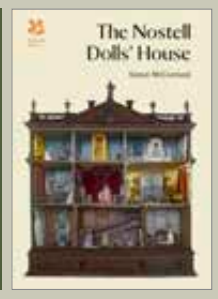

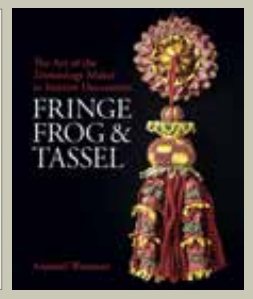

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