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National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual 2019

The new-format National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual was published at the end of August. The 2019 edition explores our heritage connections with mainland Europe in a series of articles and features that reflect the remarkable breadth of the National Trust’s collections. It brings together in-depth articles by leading specialists with shorter features, including a high-profile interview, highlights of recent loans and acquisitions, an exhibition diary and a new curator profile feature.

The articles in this edition include Tarnya Cooper on how European artists and artisans took early modern Britain by storm; Oonagh Kennedy on the link between William Waldorf Astor’s European fantasies and his collecting; Peter Kidd on a little-known group of illuminated manuscripts at Coughton Court; Christopher Rowell on what a recent revelation in Portugal might tell us about an 18th-century clock in Kent; and John Chu and Lucy Porten on an Italian Seicento painting in an 18th-century collection.

To order a copy, visit: shop.nationaltrust.org.uk.

Fragment of rare glass fish discovered at Chedworth

Part of an 1,800-year-old glass fish has been discovered at the National Trust’s Chedworth Roman Villa in Gloucestershire (www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chedworth). It has taken glass experts two years to identify the exceptionally rare fragment, which was imported from the Black Sea and may have been used to hold exotic perfume.

The Chedworth fragment was found by Peter Moore (pictured), an archaeologist and Masters student at the University of York. Peter said: ‘When it appeared, the first wipe of the surface showed the colour and it quickly became apparent it was something special. Excavating anything at Chedworth and knowing that you are the first person to gaze upon it for at least 1,800 years is a feeling that never tires’.

Under Northern Skies

Wordsworth House and Garden, Cumbria
16 September – 3 November 2019
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wordsworth-house-and-garden

‘Under Northern Skies’ is a collaboration with young curators from local communities. Inspired by Coleridge’s Rime of the Ancient Mariner, and working in partnership with Carlisle’s Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery and Manchester Museums, they will use displays and installations to highlight environmental concerns.

Admission to the exhibition is free with entry to the house and garden.
Treasures of Osterley – Rise of a Banking Family

Osterley Park and House, Middlesex
4 November 2019–23 February 2020
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/osterley-park-and-house

A painting of the early Christian martyr Saint Agatha, by Italian artist Carlo Dolci (1616–87), has been acquired by the National Trust for Osterley Park thanks to a grant from the Art Fund and other generous donations.

The return of Saint Agatha to Osterley has provided the opportunity to stage a winter exhibition, ‘Treasures of Osterley – Rise of a Banking Family’. The exhibition will explore the rise of the Child family who acquired the painting, showcasing the art and design they commissioned and collected from around the globe. It will also be accompanied by an online exhibition on the National Trust Collections website, www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk.

The painting was purchased by art lover Sir Robert Child at the beginning of the 18th century and became part of a great picture collection at Osterley, where it was recorded in a 1782 inventory. It was later sold along with other family heirlooms in the 1930s.

Saint Agatha is a dramatic depiction of Agatha of Sicily, a Christian martyr, who suffered dreadful torture at the hands of the Romans. It is an example of the work of the Baroque master Carlo Dolci, a leading figure of 17th-century Florentine art, whose passionate depictions of holy figures aimed to inspire reverence and empathy for the divine.

Fringe, Frog & Tassel

Publication: 14 November 2019

Co-published by the National Trust and Philip Wilson Publishers, Annabel Westman’s book traces the history of trimmings in Britain and Ireland from 1320 to 1970, examining the design and use of tassels, fringe, braid, gimp and cord and their dependence on French fashion. The importance of the ‘laceman’, the maker of these trimmings, is also examined in its economic and social contexts, together with the relationship to the upholsterer and interior decorator in the creation of a fashionable room.

See page 36 for further details. To order a copy (RRP £50), visit: shop.nationaltrust.org.uk.

Rossetti, Pre- the Pre-Raphaelites

Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton
4 March–24 December 2019
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wightwick-manor-and-gardens

Wightwick was once home to the Mander family, who were passionate collectors of Pre-Raphaelite art in the mid-20th century.

Now, thanks to a gift accepted in lieu of inheritance tax, 52 drawings from Rossetti’s early career have been acquired by the National Trust. Around 20 of them, dating from 1844–48, will be on display for the first time in an exhibition that explores the young Rossetti, his literary influences and his developing style.
Rediscovering Clumber

New archaeological insights into a lost country house

Rachael Hall
Consultancy Manager and Archaeologist
Hardwick Consultancy Office

The hot, dry days of summer 2018 provided an extraordinary opportunity for archaeologists, with many new archaeological sites discovered and previously known sites reappearing in a ghostly form across the British Isles. The prolonged dry period caused ‘parch marks’ to appear, a phenomenon most commonly caused by buried stone or brick structures such as walls or paved areas. The buried structures inhibit the growth of the overlying crop or grass, especially during long dry spells, because the thinner soil holds less moisture than the deeper surrounding soil. Due to the lack of moisture held in the soil, the vegetation becomes stressed and the visible result on the ground surface is an area of weak vegetation growth that looks parched. Through the parching the remains of buried structures such as lost buildings, roads and yards begin to reappear. Parch marks are most clearly seen from the air.

In early June 2018, one of the first sites to reappear as a ghostly shadow of its once grand self was Clumber House, Nottinghamshire. The parch marks (Fig. 3) were so clear and distinctive that they could easily be seen at ground level and the floor plan of the house, which was demolished in 1938, was clearly visible once more.

Although other archaeological sites were being revealed across the British Isles, the reappearance of Clumber House after being hidden for 80 years particularly caught the imagination of visitors and the press. It was perhaps the tangible way in which the parch marks presented themselves, making it possible for visitors not only to clearly see and stand among the remains, but to walk once more the corridors of Clumber House. The story of a lost grand house, once among the finest in the country, is quick to capture the imagination.

Clumber’s troubled history

Clumber House was designed by the architect Stephen Wright (d. 1780) and built between 1686 and 1778 for Thomas Pelham-Holles, second Duke of Newcastle. Wright extended a hunting lodge on the site by adding square wings to each of the corners of the lodge to accommodate spacious new apartments. The south front of the house, which overlooks Clumber Lake, was ornamented by an Ionic colonnade and the arms of the Dukes of Newcastle. Various alterations and additions were made during the early 19th century, further embellishing this very fine house.

Then, on 28 March 1879, a devastating fire broke out that destroyed the central...
core of the building and resulted in the loss of many fine works of art. The fourth Duke of Newcastle was a renowned collector and had acquired works by or attributed to, among others, Rubens, Gainsborough, Hogarth, Reynolds, Van Dyck, Poussin, Rembrandt, Titian and Holbein.

The trustees of the seventh Duke, who was only 15 years old at the time of the fire, decided to rebuild the house, despite the family fortunes having been significantly reduced by the sixth Duke's extravagant lifestyle. The architect Charles Barry Jnr (1823–1900), son of Sir Charles Barry (1795–1860), designed and rebuilt the central core of the house. The lost rooms were replaced with a large entrance hall with balustraded galleries and niches to display the ducal collection of statuary.

Clumber House was beset by further bad luck when another fire broke out in 1912, destroying the upper storey of the north wing. The wing was rebuilt, although some of the fire damage remained. In 1938 the decision was taken to demolish Clumber House because the family was struggling to afford the taxes and upkeep of the property. The paintings, statuary and furniture and the contents of the library were sold and the property was stripped out and demolished. Little evidence of the once grand house remained other than the Duke’s Study, which was left standing. The Clumber Estate, encompassing some 3,800 acres, was acquired by the National Trust in 1946.

Serendipitously, during the winter of 2017 plans had been put in place for some small-scale archaeological excavation of the house. Contrary to popular belief in some quarters, our excavations at Clumber during summer 2018 were not a result of the parch marks; it was in fact a remarkable case of good fortune that the appearance of the parch marks coincided with the planned excavations.

The archaeological investigations were planned as part of the ‘Lost Treasures of Clumber’ programming. In addition, the excavations would provide an opportunity to help us understand the extent to which the remains of the demolished house survived, helping to inform planning work for the ‘Clumber Revitalised’ project. This ambitious ten-year project aims to restore, in a relevant and meaningful way, elements of Clumber’s former splendour, to enhance the natural conservation of the site and to improve visitor experience within this much-loved and well-visited parkland.

Earlier excavations

Previous investigations of the house included some small-scale excavation undertaken by a Manpower Services Commission team led by Stephen Pierpoint in 1978–79. This earlier excavation was undertaken to determine the footprint of the house. Unfortunately, the excavation archive and full site report (assuming that one was completed) have been lost. However, a summary of the work does survive. It describes the exploration of the outer walls of the house, an area of the Grand Hall and investigations that revealed lost garden paths. Following the excavation, the outer walls of the house were traced with flagstones, which visitors can still see today.

During 2010, a resistivity geophysical survey of the house was completed. The results confirmed the presence of extensive buried remains but could not define what form they took due to the level of disturbance/rubble.

In 2016 the installation of an upgraded sewerage system led to the floor of the Duke’s Prayer Room being revealed, along with a rubble-filled brick-vaulted cellar.

The 2018 excavation

The July 2018 excavation was supervised by Trent & Peak Archaeology, working with a
team of 30 volunteers from Clumber. Two areas were selected for investigation: first the Kitchen and Butler's Corridor, and second the Yellow Drawing Room and Grand Hall. This approach would provide an opportunity to study life at Clumber for both family and staff, the ‘upstairs’ and ‘downstairs’ aspects of the property.

The excavations took place during the hottest week of the summer and after months without rain, which made digging conditions arduous at times. However, this did not dampen the spirits of the excavation team or of visitors to the site, which remained open to the public throughout the investigations. Many people returned daily, keen to watch the investigations unfold and to share their own special stories of Clumber.

The excavation trench located over the Kitchen and Butler’s Pantry revealed a substantial kitchen wall, built in stone and more than a metre wide, as well as a small section of the Pantry wall. There were no remains of the floor surfaces, presumably because the flooring had been salvaged prior to demolition, or perhaps because it was destroyed when the ceilings of the underlying cellars were broken through during the demolition, backfilling these voids with rubble. The excavations revealed the top portion of the barrel-vaulted cellars. Within the top layers of the rubbly backfill of the cellars, evidence of previous decoration was revealed, perhaps of the Kitchen, with fragments of light-green plasterwork retrieved from throughout the rubbly fill. Occasional fragments of earthenware ceramic and glass from wine or beer bottles were also retrieved from the demolition debris.

One item which particularly caught the imagination of the project team and visitors to the excavation was a late 19th- or early 20th-century Tucker Telac light switch. Made of porcelain and Bakelite with a copper switch mechanism and wooden mount, it provided a glimpse into the early deployment of a relatively new technology at Clumber House. Electricity at the time was only affordable for the wealthy and it was not until after the First World War that it was introduced into homes on a larger scale. The electricity at Clumber would have been produced from the generator house, remnants of which still survive. The light switch is a familiar and everyday object today, but to the residents and staff of Clumber House it would have represented cutting-edge technology.

The excavation trench located to explore the ‘upstairs’ element of Clumber House targeted the Yellow Drawing Room and the Grand Hall. It revealed the internal partition wall between the Small Dining Room and the Yellow Drawing Room, as well as the southern corridor and the base of one of the columns of the 1880s Grand Hall (built following the 1879 fire). Remnants of mosaic flooring along with fragments of fleur-de-lis decorative plasterwork were recovered from the demolition rubble that backfilled the foundations of the rooms. The archaeological artefacts, the fragments of colourful mosaic flooring and the elaborate decorative plaster attest to the highly decorative nature of these rooms, and confirm the evidence provided by photographic and written descriptions of these state rooms.
Remains of the barrel-vaulted cellar ceilings were also identified in this trench, suggesting that a cellar level extended beneath the entire footprint of the house. Following the excavations, a plan dated to 1859 was discovered which conclusively confirmed that the cellars extended beneath the entire house. Unfortunately, within the confines of the 2018 excavations it was not possible to fully excavate any of the exposed cellars.

Following on from the excavations, and as part of the research for the ‘Clumber Revitalised’ project, which includes looking at how Clumber House might be re-interpreted, a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey was commissioned. GPR is a geophysical survey method that uses radar pulses to image below ground, detecting sub-surface structures. The great advantage of GPR over the more traditional geophysical techniques (resistivity and magnetometry) deployed in archaeological investigations, is that it penetrates to a greater depth and allows the data to be ‘sliced’, enabling archaeological remains to be mapped at different depth intervals.

The GPR survey proved to be an extremely effectively technique in mapping the belowground remains of the house and the formal gardens that were immediately adjacent to it. The survey mapped the remains of the house to a depth of 2.5 metres below the current ground surface. It confirmed that substantial elements of the cellar level survive in a remarkably intact state, despite the 1938 demolition of the site. The GPR dataset, the details of the barrel vaulting and what may be a ventilation system can be seen. Although many of the cellars appear to be filled with rubble, there are incidences of voids. It is also possible to detect internal divisions within the basement level. It has been confirmed that the basement level extended westwards beyond the western façade of the house.

The GPR survey also detected elements of the ground-floor layout. The remains again survive to such an extent that they can confidently be matched up with the historic plans of the house. The GPR survey has been able to confirm that the majority of the 1880s rebuilding following the fire took place within the central and western portions of the house, with a difference in building materials detected.

Traces of the formal gardens also show up very well in the data, with both the eastern and southern parterres being clearly discernible. In addition, walls, flower-bed edges, drains and paths are clearly visible. The layout recorded through the GPR survey largely reflects what is depicted within the historic mapping and photographic archive for the gardens.

The recent investigations of Clumber House have helped to reinvigorate the story of this once grand country house and will help to inform the future presentation of the site. Watch this space for details.

Acknowledgements: Ellen Ryan, Chapel and Collections Custodian, Clumber; Tracy Penrose-Gould, Project Manager, Clumber Revitalised; Ros Buck, Midlands Assistant Archaeologist; Trent and Peak Archaeology; Magnitude Surveys; and all the volunteers and staff from Clumber who took part in the investigations.
Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire, is considered one of the finest Classical Revival houses of its period in the country and one of the greatest works of Robert Adam (1728–92). Adam was also instrumental in the design of the park and gardens, including the ‘pleasure grounds’, a type of ornamental garden which was then popular. The park layout still closely follows Adam’s scheme.1

In the pleasure grounds, the Grade II listed Hermitage (Fig. 1) is the only surviving built feature or ‘incident’ along the narrative journey of the Long Walk. These stopping places, or designed viewing points, provided opportunities to rest, reflect and appreciate the landscape. The Hermitage was ‘deliberately positioned in an evergreen grove to invoke the spirit of contemplation and melancholia’.2 In the 18th century, the ornamental hermitage within the country estate was in its heyday.

Although the phenomenon may seem obscure today, the hermitage was then revered as an ideal of solitary retirement and ‘pleasing melancholy’.3 In the pursuit of authenticity, some owners even hired hermits to inhabit their ornamental hermitages, requiring them to conduct suitably austere and contemplative lives.4

Cycles of ruin and repair
Built in c. 1764, Kedleston’s Hermitage is a cylindrical structure (just 3.7m in diameter) of sandstone and carved gypsum blocks, set around an interior brick drum. The structure has undergone several cycles of dilapidation and restoration during its history. The first recorded restoration programme was carried out in 1820, at a time when the structure was known as the Summerhouse, and it was restored again around a century later in 1925. The Hermitage was a ruin once again when the estate was donated to the National Trust in 1987. Architectural inspections were carried out in the mid-1980s and early 1990s and an archaeological record of the surviving structure was undertaken in 1995. After this, the ruinous building was covered by a corrugated metal structure to protect it from the elements.

By 2014 badger activity and the adjacent plane tree, a highly significant part of the setting, had undermined the surviving structure to such an extent that it was taking partial support from the scaffold around it. Nick Cox Architects Ltd was engaged to oversee the necessary research and technical appraisals, and to gain the permissions needed to enable the restoration of the Hermitage.
2. Record laser scan prior to works (October 2015)

Photo: ARCHeritage

The decision to restore the building, rather than conserve it as found, was based on the ‘Spirit of Place’ statement for the estate, which concludes that its greatest value is in its completeness as an 18th-century estate: ‘To visit Kedleston is to experience what an 18th-century visitor would have experienced’.5

Restoration based on research

The protective corrugated sheeting was temporarily removed in the summer of 2014 to facilitate further inspection and survey work. This stage of the project included laser scanning (Fig. 2); a topographical survey; stone, mortar and paint analysis; archaeological and structural investigations. This helped the project team to gather as much information as possible about the structure’s condition and existing materials to inform the proposals. Extensive archive and historical research was undertaken by the National Trust, and the project was also developed in the context of the landscape, with ecological, arboricultural research and input from other specialist consultants.

Subsequent decisions on the restoration of the Hermitage were based on this thorough research stage, which was invaluable. It was concluded that the best approach was to recreate each missing element using the materials and techniques recorded in its earliest archival or archaeological reference, thus ensuring that no aspect of the restoration was conjectural. This proposal was based on various sources of information. For example, the internal finishes were informed by both the estate records and the 1995 archaeological report, which showed that the Hermitage had been plastered internally both in its first construction and at the time of its last restoration. The roof ‘setting out’ was derived from a surviving section of oak wall plate held in National Trust storage on the estate; this was measured and extrapolated to provide the wall plate circumference, number of rafters and rafter spacing.

Other details were determined from archival evidence, which showed that the building had a paved floor and a thatched roof at the time of its initial construction, and that it had been re-thatched in ‘watering straw’ in 1814. The original floor level and wall plate position were discernible after careful archaeological excavation and close study of the remaining building elements on site.

Finally, a 1798 reference to the supply of ‘crown glass’ confirmed the glazing type for the windows, although finding

In context: hermitages and designed landscapes

Although hermitages have their origins in early Christianity as secluded places where religious men could escape worldly temptations, they took on a new meaning in the first half of the 18th century in Britain. For wealthy Georgians, a hermitage was part of a portfolio of fashionable, ornamental features and follies that could be drawn upon to populate their recently modelled landscape gardens. Inspired by scenes from classical Arcadia, this new form of garden was a place to display taste, knowledge and even political allegiances. It involved the merging of countryside and garden ingeniously achieved by the ‘ha-ha’, a sunken ditch, giving the impression that the garden seamlessly extended into the natural landscape beyond.

Circuit walks and carriage rides around these vast gardens were designed to provoke changes in mood through clever planting. A tunnel of bosky, dark evergreens might give way to brighter, dappled sunlight cast by deciduous trees. Buildings were an important component, strategically placed in the landscape to evoke different emotions. Classical temples, fake ruins and shell-encrusted grottoes were used to instil wonder or surprise. In contrast, most hermitages were designed for melancholic reflection or contemplation.

As with other 18th-century garden buildings, clients could choose from a range of styles. Some hermitages were rustic, constructed from timber or rough stone. Others were more fancifully Gothick in construction and sometimes macabre, incorporating animal bones to create patterns in walls and floors. In the spirit of melancholia, garden owners occasionally even advertised for resident hermits for their hermitages – unsurprisingly, with mixed results.

Jacq Barber, Assistant Editor, Curatorial Content Online
a contemporary source of this glass proved most challenging. The ‘crown’ technique has its origins in Medieval Europe and crown glass was produced in England until around the mid-19th century. Only one company in the UK continues to produce glass in this way. However, its craftspeople are now so skilled and the process so refined to suit modern demand that new pieces were considered to lack the imperfections that would have been seen in their 18th-century counterpart. Fortunately, after much searching, a suitable stock of crown glass off-cuts was found in the workshop of a specialist glazier and previous crown glass manufacturer in Birmingham’s Jewellery Quarter. This glass now adorns the Hermitage’s new leaded windows (Fig. 3).

Thorough consideration was given to the most appropriate approach to consolidating the existing structure, while addressing the future structural risks posed by the adjacent plane tree and retaining the historic external appearance. All elements of the two years of research and interpretation were combined to produce holistic proposals for the restoration of the building, which were approved by the local authority in early 2016. Work commenced on site in early summer 2016 and over the next 12 months the structure was carefully repaired and restored by a team of highly skilled craftspeople. During the site works, the building’s cylindrical shell was consolidated with lime mortar, mixed to match the existing colour and ingredients, and incorporating minimal stainless-steel ties to reinforce the cylinder (Fig. 5). The recreated oak roof structure (Fig. 4) was also strengthened with additional ceiling joists to provide lateral restraint to the wall tops.

Tree roots that had penetrated the building at low level were protected and bridged, and a new stone floor with a limecrete structure was inserted, laid over a honeycomb polystyrene heave-board to leave adequate space for future root growth while preventing disruption by burrowing wildlife. By autumn 2016 the Hermitage was ready for the internal stone floor finish, internal lime plaster walls and ceiling finish, and the water straw thatch (Fig. 6), which were completed using traditional materials and techniques.

Restoration work was completed in June 2017 and the Trust continues to work to restore Adam’s wider landscape and planting schemes so that the Hermitage can once again sit in pleasing melancholy and be visited by all.

As the construction work progressed it was photographed, filmed and logged by the Trust. For more information please see: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kedleston-hall/projects/room-for-gloom-restoring-kedleston-hermitage.

Notes
Acknowledgements: Project Team – National Trust, Nick Cox Architects Ltd (Conservation Architects), Danielle Westerhof (Historian and Researcher), Symbiosis Consulting Ltd (Arboricultural), Wright Consulting Engineers (Structural Engineer), Archaeological Research Services Ltd (Archaeological Services), Midland Conservation Limited (Contractor), Keith Quantrill (Thatching Consultant), RJ Evans (Master Thatcher), EMEC Ecology (Ecologist). Research/Surveys – Greenhatch Group of Derby (Topographical Survey), ARCHeritage (Measured Building Survey), British Geological Society (Stone Analysis), Sandburg LLP (Mortar Analysis), Karen Morrissey, Paint Researcher (Paint Analysis).
4. Ibid.
Exhibitions Standen House and Garden, Sussex

Morris & Co. Inspired by Nature

Alice Strickland Curator for Standen

I must have unmistakable suggestions of gardens and fields, and strange trees, boughs and tendrils, or I can’t do with your pattern.

The ‘Morris & Co. Inspired by Nature’ programme celebrates Standen’s extensive collection of Morris & Co. patterns and reveals the inspiration behind their design and creation.

William Morris (1834–96), the creative force behind Morris & Co., possessed a deep understanding and love of nature. As a child growing up in the Essex countryside, he learned to name many plants, flowers and birds. Morris’s love of nature was one of his ruling passions and it became a powerful source of inspiration and a well-spring for his work. In his designs he often chose to use field and hedgerow plants such as honeysuckle and jasmine, with the curving branches of oak and willow, and acanthus leaves.

Morris & Co. designed a wide range of products for the home, including wallpapers, textiles, ceramics, furniture and stained glass. Today the firm is best known for its repeat patterns, inspired by the joys of the British countryside. Thrushes feast on plump berries in Strawberry Thief and wild roses clamber through the wooden lattice in Trellis.

Furnishing a home

Standen is a creative masterpiece, the result of a collaboration between Philip Webb (1831–1915), Morris & Co. and the Beale family. The home of James Samuel Beale (1840–1912) and his wife, Margaret Beale (née Field, 1847–1936), Standen was designed by Philip Webb, one of the leading architects of the Arts and Crafts Movement and a founding partner of Morris & Co.

Morris & Co. was involved from the start in the principal fitting-out of Standen’s interior, although the decorative schemes reflect Margaret Beale’s taste. Morris & Co.’s products laid the foundations for Margaret’s decoration, undoubtedly encouraged by Philip Webb’s connections to the firm.

In the rooms at Standen, visitors can see Morris & Co. patterns used just as they were intended, to furnish a home. Most of the curtains, upholstery, cushions, embroidered hangings and other soft furnishings on display are made from printed and woven textiles produced to Morris & Co.’s designs and are original to the house. Several rooms retain some original wallpaper, hung either during the original decoration of the house in 1894 or during documented cycles of repair and renewal.

During the programme, visitors will find printed guides highlighting key Morris & Co. patterns on display in each room.

The ‘Inspiration and Creation’ exhibition

The exhibition, which lies at the heart of the programme, is on display in the Servants’ Hall. It highlights the inspiration behind Morris & Co. designs, the creation of their products and how they were retailed.

William Morris hoped his patterns would ‘bring nature into the home, clothing our daily and domestic walls with ornament that reminds us of the outward face of the earth, of the innocent love of animals’.

Objects on display include Philip Webb’s drawings The Hare and The Fox (both 1886), on loan from Wightwick Manor (NT) in the West Midlands, and the design for Daffodil (c. 1891) by John Henry Dearle (1860–1932), on loan from the William Morris Gallery.
Wallpaper blocks for Larkspur and Poppy are on loan from Morris & Co.’s archive and highlight the process behind the creation of its products.

Morris & Co. showroom: creating a home
In collaboration with Morris & Co., which still produces the designs today, Standen has recreated the feel of a historic showroom. Visitors can get a taste for how customers like the Beale family would have selected and purchased Morris & Co. wallpapers, fabrics and embroideries for their homes.

Morris & Co. in the garden
Large or small, the garden should look both orderly and rich ... it should in fact look like part of a house ... and should be divided and made to look like so many flower-closes in a meadow, or a wood, or amidst the pavement.  

There is much to see in the garden at Standen that fits the ideals, inspirations and designs of William Morris and his firm. When the house was originally designed by Philip Webb, the same plants grew on the outside walls as were depicted in the Morris & Co. patterns on the inside. Around the garden we have 52 plants that William Morris wrote about. He was particularly keen on native plants and those with simple flowers. As part of the programme, 20 key varieties are highlighted, each displaying a label bearing a quotation from William Morris about that particular species.

'Morris & Co. Inspired by Nature' extends from the house across the garden and wider estate. The programme of events includes talks, craft workshops and family events, as well as the chance to see plants such as pomegranate, rose and honeysuckle in the conservatory and garden, reflecting those in Morris and Co.’s patterns. The programme runs until 10 November 2019. For opening times and admission please see: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/standen.

Notes
2. Ibid.
Myth and Regeneration

The many lives of Cliveden’s Endymion sarcophagus

Marie-Lou Fabréga-Dubert
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Among a collection of Roman sarcophagi in the garden at Cliveden, Buckinghamshire, stands a particularly striking example with a sculpted front panel based on the Greek myth of Selene and Endymion (Fig. 1). Amid a multitude of figures, the shepherd Endymion lies sleeping at the right of the panel. Selene, the goddess of the moon who has fallen in love with the shepherd, is shown dismounting from her chariot. Led by a ‘genius’ (a guardian spirit) she moves towards Endymion to admire his beauty. On the left, an old shepherd sits with his head resting on his left hand. Above Endymion, Hypnos pours dreams from his horn, keeping the shepherd in an eternal sleep.

The sarcophagus first appears in art historical literature at the end of the 19th century. Carl Robert, the author of the exhaustive multi-volume study of antique sarcophagi, Die Antiken Sarkophag-reliefs, lists the Cliveden Endymion panel in a volume devoted to myths, published in 1897. The same volume includes an 1886 line drawing that reproduces the panel’s relief. Furthermore, by referencing an earlier drawing, ‘Topham Etonianus Bm.1/6/1–2’, Robert reveals an important part of the history of the Endymion sarcophagus. ‘Topham Etonianus’ refers to the Eton-educated politician, patron and collector Richard Topham (1671–1730). Topham assembled a collection of drawings of antiquities that is exceptional in its size and topographical organisation, placed after his death by his executors in the new...
The artist, Carlo Calderi (1680–?), is identified by the Topham inscription. Calderi used two sheets of paper, which must be placed side-by-side to see the full panel as it presents itself. Every detail of the relief is captured as it was at the beginning of the 18th century when it was part of the decor of the villa. Also referring to Topham’s notes on the back of the drawings, Robert’s bibliography cites Montelatici’s *Villa Borghese fuori di Porta Pinciana*, which was published in 1700. The latter work includes a description of the relief that clearly accords with the one now at Cliveden: ‘The Moon, having descended from the chariot, and accompanied by a cupid and other figures, moves towards Endymion, who is asleep.’ These lines appear in Montelatici’s account of the exterior decor of the villa’s eastern (or rear) façade (Fig. 3), where the relief was inserted at the attic level on the left-hand side. Topham mistakenly connects Calderi’s drawings to a relief on the main façade: confusing the panel depicted with another one, also showing the myth of Selene and Endymion. Montelatici points out that in the relief on the main façade, the shepherd on the left wears a Phrygian cap, which is not present in the Cliveden relief, which must therefore be from the rear façade of the villa.

Thus, at this point in its history, in 1700, the Cliveden relief belonged to the decor library at Eton. This unique ensemble, commissioned between c. 1716 and 1730, includes 3,000 drawings, watercolours and prints depicting the sculptural decoration of Roman villas, palaces, squares and churches. The collection is organised into 31 volumes: the first three record the antiques of the Villa Borghese in Rome, according to Topham’s own notes on the reverse of each drawing. The first of these three albums, Bm.1, includes the drawings mentioned by Robert (Fig. 2) which, as he clearly indicates, reproduce the front panel of the Endymion sarcophagus at Cliveden. This pinpoints the origin of the Cliveden sarcophagus as the Villa Borghese.

2. Carlo Calderi’s two drawings placed side-by-side, Eton College Library, Topham albums, Bm.1:6/1-2. Sanguine and black chalk on laid paper, 38.8 x 49.3cm (left) and 39 x 49.6cm (right), annotated in brown ink on the reverse by the collector: ‘Calderi/Villa Borghese, facciata principale, Luna ed’Endimione o Venere ed’Anchiso’ Reproduced by permission and with the generosity of the Provost and Fellows of Eton College.
of the villa built outside Rome’s walls for Cardinal Scipione Borghese (1577–1633) at the beginning of the 17th century to exhibit his collection of antiquities and paintings. Acquired (alongside many other Roman remains) by excavating historic sites, the sarcophagus may have been cut down in order to insert just the front panel into the villa’s façade, an approach which was then common practice. Sometimes the smaller sides were also kept to be used elsewhere in the decor. Unfortunately, in the case of the Cliveden sarcophagus, there is no trace of the side panels, which may simply have been too fragmented when they were excavated.

The historic riddle
The Borghese collection, established by Scipione and displayed both on the façades and inside the villa, was substantially reorganised by Prince Marcantonio IV Borghese (1730–1800). This great patron of the arts, no doubt impressed by the refurbishment work of the Museo Pio Clementino and the construction of the Villa Albani, clearly wanted a villa worthy of his prestige. He entrusted to the architect Asprucci the task of redecorating it entirely in the new Neo-classical taste, redeploying the collection, which he had significantly extended. He died, however, in 1800, and his sons Camillo (1775–1832), Prince Borghese, and Francesco, Prince Aldobrandini (1776–1839), joined the French revolutionary army, which had occupied Rome in 1798. Camillo married Pauline Bonaparte, sister of the Emperor Napoleon, and made a career in the army. In 1807, he agreed to sell the collection to his brother-in-law, who wanted to donate it to the Musée Napoléon in Paris. Here, it was the Roman antiquarian Ennio Quirico Visconti (1751–1818), Keeper of Antiquities, who prepared the acquisition. Visconti knew the collection well: Prince Marcantonio had commissioned a sumptuous publication from him documenting the most prestigious sculptures. Moreover, Visconti had guided Luigi Lamberti in the production of a 1796 publication, a simpler work with line drawings of the interior decor of the villa, also commissioned by Marcantonio. Before fleeing Rome, he had even advised Asprucci on the redisplay of the works of art in the rooms of the Villa Borghese.

France thus acquired the whole collection of antiques, the sculptures decorating the rooms of the villa as well as those constituting the exterior decor. However, there were no images of the exterior decor – Montelatici’s publication provided only a description of it. The commissioner appointed by the French Government to take over the collection, Pierre-Adrien Pâris (1745–1819), was tasked with remedying this. Unfortunately, only one of the resulting drawings has survived. However, thanks to Montelatici’s text and the written manuscript description of Pâris, the inventory compiled by the commissioner when the sculptures were packed into crates and, finally, the identification of the sculptures which are kept in the Louvre, the present author has been able to propose a reconstruction of the decor as it appeared on the façades of the Villa Borghese in 1807. The surprising news is that the Cliveden sarcophagus doesn’t figure in it. At the time of the acquisition of the collection...
by the Emperor Napoleon, the Cliveden relief was no longer on the rear façade of the villa, where Montelatici had described it in 1700 and where Calderi’s drawings had recorded it in 1716–30.

Few archive documents survive relating to the works undertaken by Marcantonio IV. The relevant documents in the Secret Archives of the Vatican, which include the Borghese holdings, essentially record payments made to craftsmen for the completion of commissioned works. As a result, it is not possible to reconstruct a chronology of the works carried out on the building. However, the descriptions left by Montelatici, Lamberti and Pâris indicate that sculptures were definitely moved during Marcantonio’s works. The rear façade of the villa seems to have been particularly affected. Even in the absence of archive documents, it seems certain that these changes were concurrent with works to enclose the loggia, where water leaks were damaging paintings by Giovanni Lanfranco (1582–1647). These works resulted in the removal and relocation of the great sculpted reliefs. In the central section of the façade, the four reliefs of the Labours of Hercules were directly affected. Today they are kept in the Galleria Borghese, where the sarcophagus they came from has been reconstructed, albeit with a lid that does not belong to it. The Endymion relief was also removed, along with one depicting the fall of Phaeton, which we know only from
Montelatici's description, as it has since been lost without trace. The two reliefs of Apollo and the muses, like those of the Labours of Hercules, were also relocated to the Galleria. However, a relief of the head of Bacchus, which was placed above the door of the façade, was re-sited in the new interior layout of the villa in Room VI. It was thus acquired by France, unlike the other reliefs that had been removed from the exterior. All that remained in situ was a great historical relief from the Forum of Trajan in Rome, which France also acquired and which is today in the Louvre.

The question that follows is: what happened to the other reliefs after they were removed from the façades of the villa? We know that after the decor of the villa of Marcantonio had been acquired by France, Camillo instructed his administrator, Evasio Gozzani, to form a new collection. Starting with what had not been sold (in particular the antiques exhibited in the gardens of the villa or kept at the family's other properties), and with the acquisition of pieces brought to light in new excavations conducted in Rome at the beginning of the 19th century, a new collection was constituted. The reliefs which had been removed from the villa's rear façade – those depicting the Labours of Hercules, brought together to form a sarcophagus, as well as those of Apollo and the muses – have survived to the present day as part of this collection. But where were they in 1807 if France had not acquired them? Where too was the Endymion panel? Robert, in his footnote, mentions two other locations of the relief after its removal from the villa's east façade. He indicates that it was initially set in the porch of the private garden, and that it was later moved to the Lake Garden.

A new figure appears in the story of that collection in the person of the Florentine antiquarian dealer and collector Stefano Bordini (1836–1922). His archives, kept in Florence, indicate a wide and diverse network of clients. He operated principally in England and Germany but also, from 1910, in America, where he sold to both museums and private collectors, including Isabella Stewart Gardner (1840–1924), founder of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

Through his colleague in Rome, Giuseppe Giacomini, Bordini was able to keep abreast of the city's antiquities market. In 1891 Bordini was therefore in a position to buy whatever interested him in the grounds of the Villa Borghese and in the cellars of the villa, which were used to store fragments, damaged sculptures and perhaps some of the antique reliefs that had been removed from the villa's facades. Bordini knew about the contents of the store room and helped himself to any fragments that were needed to restore damaged works. The accounts show a total of ten days' work, but the statements provided by the marble mason yield little information regarding the pieces concerned. The Endymion panel is never mentioned, although the accounts do refer to a large relief which was removed from the cellar of the villa. While it is tempting to speculate that this is the Endymion panel, it is more likely that, as Robert wrote, it was then in the Lake Garden. During the course of the following two years, the Borghese family continued to sell off the collection, with the exception of the pieces that had been relocated in the villa by Camillo and Gozzani. From 28 March to 9 April 1892, works of art and furniture from the Palazzo Borghese, the family's property within the city walls, were sold. In the same year, busts, heads, statues and reliefs were sold to Giacomini, according to a list found in the Bordini archives. Lastly, from 13 to 24 March 1893 the great sale of the Pavillon de l’Horloge took place (Fig. 4). Lot 611 in the catalogue is none other than the Endymion panel, described in detail and accompanied by a photograph (Fig. 5).

Bordini's copy of the sale catalogue is kept in the Florentine archives; the dealer has marked some lots. We do not know whether Bordini attended the sale himself, or whether he commissioned his friend Giacomini to bid on his behalf. No evidence survives, either, to prove that Bordini acquired the relief at the sale, but it seems highly likely.

The Endymion sarcophagus at Cliveden

Following his posting in Rome as US Ambassador to Italy in 1882–85, William Waldorf Astor (1848–1919), first Viscount Astor, decided to settle in England. In 1893 he purchased Cliveden, which had undoubtedly been inspired by Italian villas and the Roman Villa Albani in particular. Astor began a programme of restoration work in 1895: the building had been marred by earlier unsympathetic interventions and Astor wanted to revive something of its original Italian spirit. During his stay in Rome he had developed an interest in Antiquity and acquired contacts in the city's art market.

Now settled in England but retaining his Roman connections, Astor began to develop his collection of classical sculptures. He purchased the front of the Endymion sarcophagus in 1893. Seven other Roman sarcophagi, the oldest one dating from 100 BC, would join it in the entrance court. In 1896 he acquired the Borghese Balustrade, also from Scipione’s villa.

Astor wrote that some of the Roman sarcophagi he had brought to Cliveden were beautifully crafted, although he did not mention the Endymion sarcophagus by name. When the relief arrived at Cliveden at the very end of the 19th century, Astor decided to reconstruct a sarcophagus by adding to the sculpted front panel replacements for the three missing faces (Fig. 6). As we have seen, Scipione had cut down the original sarcophagus in the 17th century in order to integrate the Endymion relief into his villa. The restoration undertaken by Lord Astor, repaired as far as was possible at the time, this earlier mutilation. Times change, tastes evolve. Cardinal Scipione, like many of his 17th-century contemporaries, drew from that mine of antique riches offered by excavating the lost treasures of a prodigal Rome in order to assert his own prestige, mutilating or adding to them according to his requirements, with little concern for their original construction.

Three centuries later, the approach to antiquities had been transformed: they were respected as precious witnesses to the past. Just as the Borghese heirs had reassembled the sarcophagus of the Labours of Hercules to exhibit it in the villa, Lord Astor gave back to the Endymion relief its primary function: to ensure that the deceased, through the power of the object's sculpted mythological symbolism, would know another life after death.
Notes

Acknowledgements: the article text was translated from French by Anne Ceresole and edited by David Boulting and Christopher Rowell.


2. Ibid., table XXIII, no. 80.


4. On the reverse of the drawings Topham recorded the name of the artist, the subject depicted, the location of the antique in the villa, and the relevant reference in Montelatici’s guide.


6. Ibid., p.172: ‘La Luna scesa del carro in compagnia d’un amore e di mol’altre figure, va a trovare Endimione che dorme’.

7. This relief is now in Paris, Musée du Louvre, DAGER, MR 751 (no. usuel Ma 362).


9. Luigi Lamberti, *Sculture del Palazzo della Villa Borghese detta Pinciana*, Rome, 1796. This publication describes the interior decor of the villa after refurbishment and includes a line drawing of each sculpture.

10. Except for the ‘modern’ works, i.e. those sculpted during the Renaissance such as the statues by Bernini.

11. Cf. note 5.


18. Unfortunately, this relief is not illustrated in the Topham albums, but it is described by Montelatici, pp.171–72.


24. Relying, in all likelihood, on E. Gerhard’s *Antike Bildwerke zum erstenmale bekannt gemacht*, Munich, Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1828, XXVIII.

25. Firenze, Archivio Storico Eredità Bardini.


27. Notes by the last Lord Astor, Cliveden archives.

7. Detail of Carlo Calderi’s drawing (see page 15) showing Hypnos and Endymion, Eton College Library, Topham albums, Bm.1.6/1–2

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8. (Following page) The north front of Cliveden: in the foreground is one of the eight Roman sarcophagi purchased by Lord Astor in the late 19th century

Photo: National Trust Images/Andrew Butler
A small panel from the National Trust’s Knightshayes Court in Devon depicting the young Rembrandt (Self-portrait at the age of 22, c. 1628–29, oil on panel, 228 x 184mm), was brought to Simon Gillespie Studio for conservation treatment in 2018. The analysis and conservation of the painting (NT 541107) were filmed as part of the BBC television series Britain’s Lost Masterpieces. The available records labelled the panel ‘after Rembrandt’ but art historian Dr Bendor Grosvenor suspected that it might be a study for a finished picture by Rembrandt himself.

The reattribution of the painting, from ‘after Rembrandt’ to ‘studio of Rembrandt’, is discussed in a recent article by David Taylor, Curator of Pictures and Sculpture at the National Trust, published in the National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual, 2019.¹

This article looks in more detail at the technical analysis and conservation work that preceded the reattribution and helped to make it possible.

Rembrandt and his studio
Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–69) was born in Leiden and lived during the Dutch Golden Age, a period of dynamic political, economic and creative development in the Netherlands (then emerging from Spanish Habsburg rule). Rembrandt trained as an apprentice with the Leiden history painter Jacob van Swanenburgh for three years, and then with Pieter Lastman in Amsterdam for a few months, before opening his own studio in Leiden in 1624–25.

Between 1626 and 1631 he shared this studio with Jan Lievens, an artist of the same age who also trained with Pieter Lastman. During this time, Rembrandt and Lievens used the same models and collaborated on works, and each owned pictures by the other which they would re-work. This caused confusion over the attribution of their pictures even during their lifetimes.

From 1627 Rembrandt began to accept students (including Gerrit Dou, Ferdinand Bol, Govert Flinck and Willem Drost)² who would have copied his paintings as part of their training, compounding the future problems with attribution.

The Knightshayes Rembrandt
Anatomy of an old master

Simon Gillespie, Léonie van der Graaf and Palmyre Manivet
Simon Gillespie Studio

Christine Sitwell
Paintings Conservation Adviser, National Trust

¹ The Knightshayes painting before treatment
² After treatment
³ X-ray image showing the vertical split
All photos by Simon Gillespie Studio unless otherwise stated
Sir John Heathcoat-Amory (1894–1972) and his wife Joyce began to assemble a small collection of Old Master paintings after the Second World War, including the present picture, which was purchased from the well-respected art gallery Agnews in 1948.

When Sir John bought the painting it was believed to be by Rembrandt himself but it was subsequently demoted to being a later copy of a self-portrait by Rembrandt. There are two other known versions: one, in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (Fig. 9), is accepted as the original self-portrait by Rembrandt. The other, at the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister in Kassel, Germany (Fig. 8), was thought to be the original version until 1959, when the Rijksmuseum panel was discovered in a private collection in Glasgow. At this time the Kassel version was reattributed to Rembrandt’s studio (the specific artist has not been identified).

The three versions of Self-portrait at the age of 22 are small, oil on panel, and depict the artist as a young man with unruly curly hair. He is shown in three-quarter view (head and shoulders) with his head turned to his right, looking towards the viewer. The sitter’s right ear and cheek are in the light, as are his hair and part of his neck. His eyes are in the shadows, and it is not immediately obvious that the young man is looking directly at the viewer.

The picture is a very good example of the young artist’s talent at a time when he was developing what would become his signature style of portraiture, conveying the sitter’s personality and emotion with dramatic intensity. At this stage in his artistic development, the chiaroscuro in Rembrandt’s portraits was often exaggerated, cutting faces into two distinct halves. Later, he softened this effect without losing its dramatic impact. By 1626 his small panels were already emerging as the precursors of what Horst Gerson has described as Rembrandt’s ‘first independent style, which asserted itself around 1630’.3

Condition
The panel, a single board of oak, was found to be in good condition, aside from a vertical split in the background on the right side which does not extend the full length of the panel but stops 4–5cm from the top (see Fig. 3). This split had been crudely repaired in the past and a patch of coarse canvas had been thickly glued to the reverse. There appear to have been at least two campaigns of filling and retouching along the split, with the more recent one showing clearly under UV light. On close examination, the older campaign of filling was found to extend up to 2cm either side of the split.

The panel had suffered woodworm infestation in the past, with a number of emergence holes visible on the reverse and verso. However, the infestation was no longer active. In some parts of the painting there were small areas of cracking and tenting of the paint layers, probably caused by damage to the panel beneath.

Technical analysis
Initial assessment suggested that the background was largely covered by a later layer of cool grey paint covering the warmer, lighter original. Under the microscope, the grey layer appeared to be coarser in character than the other paint layers and was characterised by large individual particles of white pigment that stood proud of the paint surface. The grey layer extended over areas of historic damage, including the fill used in the earliest repairs to the split panel. This analysis indicated that the grey layer was later overpaint, applied sometime after the painting was produced. The grey layer also

4. Detail of curls before treatment
5. After treatment
6. Test in the background bottom right showing removal of overpaint from the filled split in the panel
extended over some of the scratched out curls and the edge of the jaw and face. The original layer was visible in some areas of the painting, where it appeared to have a layer of warm glaze or possibly an old varnish layer covering it. In general the paint layers were found to be in good condition, although it was not possible to fully ascertain the condition of the layers under the grey overpaint at this early stage of inspection. There was an overall varnish, which had yellowed slightly with age and appeared dull. Analysis of paint samples confirmed that this grey layer was later. It lay over a translucent film, which was originally thought to be an old varnish. Medium analysis, however, revealed it to be a drying oil. The later grey overpaint also contained barium white (which was only discovered in the 19th century) as well as a drying oil, further confirming that this layer was a later addition.

Paint analysis also revealed that the ground layer is thin and pale (off-white), possibly applied by the panel-maker, and consistent with the ground used on known panels by Rembrandt. Likewise, the thin warm brown imprimatura layer found over the ground across the entire painting is consistent with that on known works by Rembrandt.

The paint layer consists of areas of thin translucent paint with areas of thick opaque impasto. Highlights and compositional details have been picked out with thick mixtures of paint, leaving visible brush marks. The artist has turned his brush around and scratched out the curls of the hair, with varying degrees of pressure, to create highlights. In these areas, the wood of the panel and the various strata of the other layers have been exposed by the scoring action of the brush handle.

Dendrochronology carried out by Dr Peter Klein showed that the panel was made from the same tree as the board used for the version of this self-portrait in the Kassel museum. The earliest felling date was estimated to be 1621. Allowing a minimum of two years for the wood to season, the earliest date for the painting would therefore be 1623.

Conservation treatment
The conservators at Simon Gillespie Studio discussed various aspects of the painting’s condition and possible treatment at several stages with experts from the National Trust. As well as issues of conservation, the fact that the picture is on display as part of a historical collection bequeathed to the National Trust had several implications for how it should be approached. In particular, there were ethical concerns about altering the appearance of a painting which had remained unchanged since its purchase and throughout the lifetime of the individual who bequeathed Knightshayes to the Trust. After careful consideration, it was agreed that the grey overpaint should be removed to reveal the quality of the underlying paint, with its perfectly preserved brushstrokes and original tonality.

In consultation with the National Trust, it was decided to carry out an initial cleaning of the painting to remove the discoloured yellow varnish. After this layer had been removed, it was even more obvious that the grey overpaint in the background was visually unsatisfactory. The decision was taken to carry out tests to ascertain the possibility of removing this layer. An aqueous gel, developed after discussions with and advice from Dr Richard Wolbers, combined with mechanical cleaning under the microscope, was found to produce satisfactory results. Unfortunately, it was not possible to completely remove the yellow drying oil and a very thin layer was left on the painting in those areas from which it could not safely be removed. In places this layer lies in the interstices of the brush strokes. The crude fill of the split was removed, and new fill applied and textured. Overall, a great deal of the well-preserved original paint layer was exposed and the original colour, tone and lighting were
restored, completely transforming the way the sitter sits in space and the sense of light falling upon him. The layer of paint that was revealed in the background is visually consistent with that of the other two versions of this picture.

During the course of treatment it was possible to examine the painting technique. It was clear that the artist completed the painting in more or less a single campaign with colours being applied wet-in-wet. There was little layering of colours and glazes but painterly effects were achieved within a single paint layer. In places the paint layers were fairly thick and bodied, with visible brushstrokes. In other passages the paint was more fluid and smooth, and in some areas the paint was very thin with the ground layers clearly visible. The red of the lips is achieved with a thick stroke of rich translucent red. The conservation treatment has brought out the rich palette of colours and vigorous original textures of the artist.

Weighing the evidence
At the time of writing, the attribution remains in question. The world’s leading Rembrandt expert, Ernst van de Wetering, having seen photographs of the picture after treatment and the results of the technical analysis, maintains his earlier judgment that the Knightshayes version is a copy. Photographs and technical information were sent to Petria Noble, Head of Paintings Conservation at the Rijksmuseum. When Christine Sitwell, Paintings Conservation Adviser for the Trust, visited the Netherlands in 2018, she took the opportunity to discuss the painting with Noble.

Noble commented that the treatment of the curls in the hair was very methodical and slightly exaggerated in comparison to the thinner, more naturalistic depiction seen in the Rijksmuseum portrait. In Noble’s view, the portrayal of the face in the Knightshayes painting lacks the subtle transition of the Rijksmuseum portrait. She also thought that the development of the final version by working through studies was unusual for a Rembrandt painting, noting that the practice was usually associated with his etchings. However, Noble did feel that it is likely that the Knightshayes portrait was done by a student under Rembrandt’s supervision.

Having compared the technical data on the three panels, Simon Gillespie concluded that there is very strong evidence that the Knightshayes version came from Rembrandt’s studio. Bendor Grosvenor has put forward the view that this picture and the version at Kassel (painted on panels from the same tree) may even be studies by Rembrandt for the final version that hangs in the Rijksmuseum. The opportunity to exhibit all three versions together would be very interesting and it is hoped that this might become a reality.

Notes
3. Ibid.
In spring 2019 Knole, near Sevenoaks, Kent completed a six-year HLF-funded conservation project, ‘Inspired by Knole’ (IbK), which revealed many secrets about its 600-year history. While the ancient fabric of the house has been yielding new information about its material past, an ambitious oral history project has provided important insights into Knole’s social history. The project began in 2011 with a modest HLF grant. House and Collections Manager Helen Fawbert set out to source and record the memories of as many of the people who had worked or lived at Knole since the late 19th century as possible.

Volunteers researched and traced suitable interviewees and recorded their memories using digital audio recorders. Starting with just a few names, the list quickly grew. Former Knole Estate employees including bricklayers, gardeners, cooks and butlers formed the core of the archive. The earliest memories recorded for the project related to Knole in the late 19th century.

The audio-recording project has grown to include the memories of those who visited Knole as children of staff, and then to former National Trust staff who recalled the early years of transition from the Sackville-West family, owners of Knole from 1604, to Trust ownership in 1946. In 2011–13 the project gathered momentum with the opening of the ‘Hidden Histories’ exhibition in the former Knole Estate office. Here, visitors can listen to audio excerpts via room speakers and a rotary-dial telephone while exploring office artefacts from the pre-digital 1960s. A website, www.knolestories.org.uk, was also launched, offering public access to audio excerpts, transcripts and images.

**Evocative glimpses**

The oral history project received a boost in 2013 when a bag of audio cassettes was discovered by Project Curator Emma Slocombe in the Knole archive at the Scotney Hub. Stored on the analogue audio cassettes was a decade’s worth of interviews with Knole Estate staff recorded between 1988 and 1998. Painstaking digitisation of these recordings by volunteers revealed Knole voices from an era of service long gone. Among them was William Hughes (‘Bill’ to his friends), who came to Knole as a 17-year-old from Wales in 1928 (Fig. 2). Hired as Second Footman thanks to his height and good looks, he would serve Lord Sackville for 50 years and rose to become Butler. He recalled:

‘[Lord Sackville] wore anything up to five pairs of shoes a day. Each pair he wore, you cleaned the next day. It was cleaned for the next day and laces taken out for the night and washed, put on a hot water pipe, dried and ironed and put inside the shoes. You never knew what shoes he was going to wear, so you had to get all his shoes ready.’

Among the 18 people recorded on the audio cassettes was Barbara Tate, a name synonymous with 50 years’ loyal service. Starting as Second Housemaid in 1938, she led a team of six, cleaning and preparing the showrooms for opening to the public. Current volunteer room guides who knew her in the 1970s are thrilled today to be able to hear her voice on the Knole Oral History website.

The archive’s oldest living interviewee is 105-year-old Kay Stratford. She was first interviewed in 2011 when she recounted tales she had heard as a child from her mother, Mary Ann Crane (Fig. 6), who was Roast Meat Cook from 1900 to 1902.

‘There were about nine cooks and they all had separate stoves. I think she must have been able to cook meat very well. I suppose they wanted her to cook vegetables as well, so she went to the London College to learn. King Edward VII complimented her on her beef, which he used to like rare. And so my father always had to have rare beef because...’
[when] he said, “Do you think we could have it a bit better cooked?” She said, “But it was good enough for King Edward you know.”

These evocative glimpses of life below stairs encouraged the team to conduct further research and to contact some of the people mentioned in the interviews. This created a network of relatives of indoor and outdoor Knole staff from the early 20th century.

Message in a bottle
Researchers Marcia Barton, Carol Cheeseman, Will Johnson and Angela Prior-Wandesforde discovered families whose links to Knole spanned many generations. For example, at least five generations of the Tyé family of Sevenoaks worked at Knole, starting as agricultural labourers in the 19th century, later becoming painters and decorators. The most recent two generations were employed as plasterers and electricians.

The Doggett family provides another example. In the 1870s, wheelwright James Cox Doggett (Fig. 4) walked from the East End of London to Sevenoaks to look for work. He was not only employed, but went on to marry and have a family of four sons, all of whom were born on the estate. The eldest son was Sidney George Doggett, apprenticed as a carpenter, who then became Knole Estate Foreman, serving for 62 years. Sidney certainly left his mark at Knole: in September 1906 he concealed a hand-written message in a bottle under the floorboards of an attic. It was discovered in April 2017 during enabling works for the IbK Project.

Project Archaeologist Nathalie Cohen shared the discovery on Twitter, with the heart-warming result that three of Sidney’s grandchildren contacted the team and were invited to visit Knole to record their memories. Another member of the extended family, Sidney’s great-nephew Michael, has also been interviewed about his 40 years as plumbing and heating designer to Lord Sackville in the 1960s. Having re-connected with the Knole of her childhood, granddaughter Anne Duggan donated Sidney’s carpentry tools to the Knole Collection.

National Trust Lead Curator for London and the Southeast James Rothwell said, ‘Knole is such a place of fettling, mending, melding and layers that to have the working tools of one who was part of it is rather wonderful.’

The work of recording Knole voices began to intensify in mid-2013, as the IbK Project got under way. Emma Slocombe and Helen Fawbert spearheaded a big push to capture the responses of project staff, Trust contractors and consultants. About 80 architects, stonemasons, historic interiors consultants and conservators of textiles, paintings and furniture have been interviewed over the past five years. These Knole voices now form part of the rich legacy of the £20 million project, the largest of its kind undertaken by the National Trust to date. They include the voice of Robert Sackville-West, seventh Baron Sackville, who explained the background to IbK:
‘We thought, well, Knole is probably at a critical moment now. Everyone knew ... that it needed millions spent on basic repairs, but nobody was going to be particularly interested in spending that money just to prop up something that was offering nothing new. The only way to do this was to go for a bigger project which involved opening up new areas. It’s been a very good creative and constructive process [but it] could not have worked if there had not been quite intense collaboration between the family’s interests and the National Trust. It just couldn’t; nothing would have happened. And Knole would be a poorer, slightly more dismal place if that had happened.’

Treasures restored
The experiences captured by the oral history project are part of Knole’s fascinating social history. But they also extend beyond this, informing our knowledge of the house and collection in sometimes surprising ways.

For example, speaking to the Oral History Team in 2014, silver expert Stan Hollands described the curious experience of re-assembling the King’s Room silver table (Fig. 3) in the winter of 1946. The table had just been returned from safe-keeping in a Welsh mine to a house changed by the war and, with a much reduced staff, adjusting to the new climate of austerity. Many of the details were evidently still crystal clear in his memory:

‘Mr Booth [the Butler] took me to this room. He got two manservants to bring some tatty old cardboard boxes [which] were most evil-smelling. And then he got two maidservants dressed in their black and their pinnies – just like Corner House waitresses – they put green baize over a table and the manservants started to unload the cardboard boxes. And then another big thing was brought in on a trolley ... It looked like a load of old firewood ... I would have liked a drawing or a photograph or some idea of what I was doing [but] I was more or less left to it. And on the floor and on the table, I somehow assembled these things. And I turned away from all that and started to assemble the firewood: I could see it was a ... wooden table that was applied with silver.’

Another of Knole’s treasures is the King’s Bed, the conservation of which took a remarkable 13 years (1974–87) and 200 volunteer needlewomen, supervised by a professional textile conservator. The painstaking work was recalled by Jenny Wright, who volunteered three days a week for the full 13 years.

‘You didn’t want somebody who was an embroiderer, you wanted somebody who liked stitching. You didn’t want them to create their own pattern, they had to follow the weave of the original fabric ... You sat at the frame, and had one hand above, and one hand below, and you just stitched, through and back, and through and back. It wasn’t glamorous.

The gold and silver threads, on the whole, were there. But it was the weave that kept them, made the pattern on them, that had disintegrated – and that was done with a silk thread back when it was made in the 1680s. We had to replace the weave with a polyester thread [to secure] the gold and silver threads – sometimes they were still caught down by the initial weave and sometimes the thread had disappeared.’

Some of the information gleaned by the oral history project has practical applications for the conservation work that is at the heart of the IbK Project. Interviewing a former estate woodworker, for example, helped to
inform conservators about historic repairs to the gilded wooden sconces in the Ballroom. Similarly, recent conservation activities have also been captured for posterity, including the work of Natural History Conservator Simon Moore to stabilise a mounted red deer head which was deteriorating. The tale of how he rescued the now-reinstated ‘Big Jeff’ from creeping baldness is also helping room and tour guides to engage with visitors young and old.

Interviews with modern conservators also reveal a powerful personal dimension to their interactions with the objects they look after – something one would never learn from formal conservation reports. During her four-and-a-half years’ work, Lead Conservator on the Spangled Bed Rosamund Weatherall recalled making a striking discovery about how the bed (Fig. 5) was re-configured:

‘Because you’re working on it for so long, you do become curious, especially with something like this where the textiles have been re-used. When you’re looking at the head curtains – and then looking at the valences – then you start putting two and two together. And you realise the curtain borders have come from the bottom of the valences. That’s why the fringes start half-way up the valences – because they’ve nicked a bit to embellish the curtains and make them look a bit more fancy.’

Volunteer voices
The way volunteering has evolved at Knole is also captured in the archive. In 1956 there were just five guides, each paid ten shillings for a morning tour of the showrooms. There are now more than 500 volunteers in a wide range of roles. One recurrent theme runs clearly through the memories recorded: everyone who has been a part of Knole Estate or National Trust Knole, has developed a deep and lasting connection with the property.

The oral history project has grown and been maintained by volunteers. Since 2011, the team has had a core of six volunteers, whose work includes genealogical research, interviewing and transcribing, website and audio editing, archiving and documentation. The team logged a total of 780 volunteering hours in 2017 alone. Since 2016, annual tranches from the archive have been submitted to the British Library’s National Sound Archive as part of an agreement between the two organisations.

A lasting link to the past
At over 240 interviews and counting, Knole has the largest oral history archive in the Trust. ‘Inspired by Knole’ ended in June 2019 but the Knole voices in the archive continue to add new dimensions to Knole’s layers of history, accessible for generations to come.

Notes
2. Ibid., interview with Kay Stratford (abridged), 8 August 2011.
3. Ibid., interview with Robert Sackville-West, 14 June 2017.
4. Ibid., interview with Stan Hollands, 5 August 2014.
5. Ibid., interview with Jenny Wright, 18 March 2013.

Photo: National Trust Images/Knole

6. Mary Ann Crane (second from left) was Roast Meat Cook at Knole, 1900–02
Dorothy Edith Johnston (1880–1962) was a traveller, photographer and philanthropist who gave much of her estate, including her house and its library, to the National Trust. Now largely unknown, Dorothy’s life and legacy deserve a higher profile, particularly in the light of recent efforts by the Trust to highlight the sometimes overlooked roles played by women in the past.

Dorothy was the youngest of three daughters. Her father, William, was a curate in Battle, Sussex and then vicar of St Martin’s Church in Acrise, Kent. Following William’s untimely death in 1885, Dorothy’s mother Bertha and the girls moved first to Brighton and then to Wimbledon, where Dorothy attended Levana School. Dorothy’s income came from a great-uncle who had died unmarried, leaving his great-nieces an inheritance that enabled Dorothy and her sister Mary to live active and fulfilling lives as single women. Mary went on to become a distinguished geologist, while the third sister, Bertha, was the only one to marry.

As soon as Dorothy came of age in 1901 she began to travel widely, reaching such far-flung destinations as India, Russia, Syria and South America. These travels must have contributed to the decision to admit Dorothy and her sister Mary as Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society in 1913; they were among the first women to be granted entry. Dorothy documented one of her Indian trips in an illustrated two-part talk which is still held by the Royal Geographical Society library. The fact that she wrote this account in such detail and in such a lively and informative way suggests that she may have recorded other travels in accounts which have since been lost.

Her wartime diary, now in the National Trust archives, is another example of her compelling writing style. She kept this diary throughout the Second World War and it documents the profound effect of the war on the small Kent village of Appledore with the Battle of Britain raging overhead, German airmen parachuting from their stricken aircraft into nearby fields, and bombs regularly falling in the area.¹

In the mid-1930s Dorothy made her first donation to the National Trust: a three-mile section of the Royal Military Canal in Kent (Fig. 2), which was constructed during the Napoleonic Wars to defend against a possible invasion. Concerned that it was at risk from development, she had purchased the stretch between Appledore and Warehorne from the War Office, which was then selling off the

¹ Dorothy Johnston as a young woman
Photo: National Trust/Kent Archives
This early act of conservation received national acclaim. She moved to Appledore from London in 1936 and by 1938 had bought Hallhouse Farm, which served as a billet for up to ten soldiers at a time during the Second World War. Hallhouse Farm is a 15th-century yeoman's dwelling with outhouses and seven acres of land attached. After the war Dorothy presented it to the Trust on the understanding that she could continue to live in it during her lifetime. During these years she pursued her interest in Kent history and customs, lecturing on the subject locally. When the distinguished local historian Dr Frederick Cock died, his family gave Dorothy his papers, which helped her in this work.

In 1960 she relinquished Hallhouse and moved into a flat in Folkestone which she found more manageable. Dorothy Johnston died in March 1962. The house was let to a series of tenants, including former National Trust Director General Sir John Winnifrith, who used Johnston's papers and books to write his own history of the village (Appledore, Kent: A Short History, privately published in 1973).

Along with Hallhouse Farm, Dorothy also donated her collection of books to the Trust. Some of them date from her childhood while others were bought later in life to add to her local history collection. Unusually, many of the books contain vivid evidence of how her former owner read and engaged with them: Dorothy annotated her books and inserted relevant postcards, notes, newspaper cuttings and her own photographs into the volumes.

Not all of Dorothy's books remain at Hallhouse today, but fortunately she compiled lists which have provided an opportunity to study her reading not only on the basis of the books that remain but of a much larger collection. The lists, frequently written on scraps of paper or the reverse of letters, record where the books were shelved and often provide editions and dates. The lists also reveal that she had a catholic taste in reading, with titles ranging from guide books, history, religion and gardening to literature and popular novels. Some of the books were evidently acquired as background reading for her travels, others to build up her comprehensive collection relating to the study of Kent. She intended the latter to be used by future researchers, drawing up detailed instructions for how this might be managed and promoted, and leaving money for this purpose.

Correspondence in the National Trust archives reveals that Johnston’s books presented something of a problem for the Trust, which planned to let Hallhouse to tenants, and they were culled by a rare books expert, Cecil Clarabut, in the 1970s. Although more than 600 books and pamphlets remain in her old home, around 100, including five albums of Dorothy’s photographs, were moved to
Polesden Lacey to fill empty shelves, while others were undoubtedly lost at this point. Dorothy’s lists, in effect a virtual library, present us with the opportunity to study a library as it once was in its entirety. While the National Trust’s library cataloguing project has provided the basis for much valuable research, in some ways it has only scratched the surface. When many properties were first handed over to the Trust, the emphasis of research into book history was very different to the work being done today and there was no permanent librarian on the staff. The focus was often on presenting gentlemen’s libraries: scholarly, expensively-bound volumes with impeccable provenance.

It was argued that there was no reason to display the more contemporary, cheaper editions read by the entire household, including the servants and children. Some were discarded, others stored in attics or outhouses where occasionally they come to light and can at last be treated with the interest they deserve. But a visitor to a National Trust library might well imagine that the books displayed there represent all that the family read or owned, and that at some point, perhaps in the mid-19th century, they mysteriously stopped buying books. There is a danger that, in concentrating on elite collections and not fully recognising the value of the well-read paperback and other inexpensive editions, we compromise our understanding of the intellectual history of the donor families. And while the books we see displayed have acquired the significance and respectability of age, most were originally bought new and bound in a way that was quite normal for the period.

The significance of Dorothy’s library is that it is the library of a middle-class woman of the first half of the 20th century. Dorothy was relatively well-off, but her books were often cheap editions, a sign that she read for pleasure rather than to impress visitors with rows of uniformly-bound volumes. This counted against her, however, when her books were being ‘weeded’ after her death.

A call for wider recognition
Johnston’s life may be little known, but it is well-documented in archives and record offices (albeit with some tantalising gaps). It is surprising that it has not been more fully recognised by the National Trust, given the generosity of her donations to the Trust, her efforts to conserve the Royal Military Canal, and her contribution to the study of Kent and its history.

When she donated her extensive collection of books about Kent, along with the rest of her library, to the National Trust, it was with the express intention that it be made available to future researchers. Her contribution to preserving a small part of Kent deserves wider recognition.

Notes
1. Dorothy’s wartime experiences and her diary are discussed in more detail in Felicity Stimpson, ‘Dorothy Johnston of Appledore: Her wartime experiences and gifts to the National Trust’, Archaeologia Cantiana, June 2019.
3. Recent cataloguing projects of this kind have included the books of Anne Meredith, wife of the fourth Lord Sackville, an American actress whose books included Broadway plays.
4. The Johnston family papers are in the London Metropolitan Archives, ACC/1292. Johnston warrants her own file in the Royal Geographical Society library. Kent History and Library Centre file U3213 contains National Trust deposits relating to Appledore and Dorothy Johnston. The Trust’s own archives contain correspondence between Dorothy Johnston and the Trust and correspondence relating to her estate.
Acquisitions
Selected highlights, 2017–18

The National Trust endeavours to acquire objects with connections to its properties. It benefits from gifts and bequests and occasionally purchases works of art at auction or by private treaty. The Trust is also a major beneficiary of the Acceptance in Lieu Scheme, through which it is allocated objects that have been accepted by the Government in lieu of tax.

For practical reasons, the following pages are confined to dealing with acquisitions during the course of 2017–18. When a new acquisition joins the National Trust’s collections it must be appraised, catalogued, photographed and, if necessary, cleaned and conserved. While this creates a delay between the acquisition of a piece or a collection and our ability to report it effectively, future editions of the Arts, Buildings and Collections Bulletin will continue to update readers on recent acquisitions.

Further details of some of the objects and works of art introduced here can be found in the latest edition of our sister publication, National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual 2019 (see page 3). The Annual also features a scholarly article on the Carlo Dolci acquisition discussed below.

2018

One of the most significant acquisitions of 2018 was Saint Agatha (NT 2900293), a devotional painting by Carlo Dolci (1616–87) of c. 1665–70 that has been acquired for Osterley Park, Middlesex. Saint Agatha was purchased at the Christie’s Old Masters Evening Sale in July 2018 thanks to a grant from the Art Fund, support from private donors, Trust members and visitors to Osterley Park, and from a fund set up by the late Simon Sainsbury to support acquisitions for the historic houses of the National Trust.

Since its acquisition, the painting has undergone two phases of conservation treatment. It will feature in the forthcoming exhibition at the property, ‘Treasures of Osterley – Rise of a Banking Family’ (see page 4).

Also acquired by the Trust in 2018 was another striking and internationally important painting, this one of much more recent date: A Game of Bowls by John Singer Sargent (1856–1925) painted in 1889 (Fig. 1). Depicting Ightham Mote in Kent, it was acquired for the property following a successful campaign to raise funds to purchase it for the nation. The large-scale painting captures an important moment in the history of this 14th-century moated manor house. It shows the house in 1889 with its American tenant at the time, Mary Lincoln ‘Queen’ Palmer, and Palmer’s daughter, Elsie, enjoying a game of bowls on the North Lawn. Singer Sargent’s youngest sister Violet is among the players.

1. A Game of Bowls, 1889, John Singer Sargent (1856–1925) (NT 826023): previously on loan to the National Trust as part of Ightham Mote’s 2018 John Singer Sargent exhibition, the painting was purchased with funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the Art Fund and funds raised thanks to the generosity of visitors to and supporters of Ightham Mote

   Photo: National Trust Images/Ightham Mote

2. America, 1671, John Ogilby (1600–76), 674pp. with 57 maps and engravings (NT 3231298): this atlas by the renowned cartographer John Ogilby was purchased for Belton House, Lincolnshire at Arader Galleries, Philadelphia, USA in November 2018, with contributions from the Mr and Mrs Kenneth Levy bequest and from the Libraria Fund

   Photo: (detail of engraving) National Trust Images/Robert Thrift
Painted only a few years later, *The Breakfast Table* (NT 2900207) by Sir George Clausen, RA (1852–1944), 1891–92, also draws on French influences (Fig. 3). Less experimental than Singer Sargent’s *A Game of Bowls*, Clausen’s Impressionist-influenced painting was bequeathed to the National Trust in 2018 by Jane K. Smith, the artist’s granddaughter. It is on display at Standen House and Garden, West Sussex.

Elsewhere in the collections, 2018 saw the purchase of John Ogilby’s atlas *America* (1671) for Belton House in Lincolnshire (Fig. 2). John Ogilby is one of the most significant cartographers in English history. His pioneering road atlas of Great Britain, published in 1675, set the standard for later atlases and was pivotal in standardising the English mile. *America* may have been at Belton House from the time of its publication and was certainly there by 1754, when it is recorded in an inventory. The atlas contains the bookplate of John Brownlow, first Viscount Tyrconnel (1690–1754) and the 19th-century Belton House bookplate. It was probably sold from Belton either in c. 1924 or in 1980.

Our final 2018 highlight is a pair of Boulle display cabinets associated with the English novelist, critic and art collector William Beckford (1760–1844). The cabinets, which have been allocated to Charlecote Park, Warwickshire, are raised on tables with spirally turned legs, each headed with the Latimer cross, a heraldic emblem favoured by Beckford (see Fig. 4). Once described as ‘England’s wealthiest son’, he was forced to sell his collection in the legendary Fonthill Abbey sale of 1822. The owner of Charlecote, George Hammond Lucy (d. 1845), was one of the most enthusiastic buyers at the sale, acquiring exotic furniture, ceramics and metalwork for Charlecote, including this pair of cabinets.
A collection of 34 oil paintings and a set of six watercolours were accepted in lieu of inheritance tax by the Government and allocated to the National Trust for display at Penrhyn Castle, Wales. The oil paintings include landscapes, historical and religious scenes, and portraits from the 16th–18th centuries. The watercolours depict Jamaican landscapes, possibly scenes of the estate owned by Richard Pennant, first Baron Penrhyn (1739–1808). The early Pennant family fortune derived from Jamaican sugar and slave plantations. A highlight of the collection is *The Conversion of Saint Hubert of 1660* by the Dutch Golden Age artist Philips Wouwerman (1619–88) (Fig. 6). An unusual subject for the artist, who is known for his landscapes with horses and riders, the painting is thought to have been painted as a gift for a Catholic priest of Haarlem, Cornelis Catsz. It shows a scene from the life of St Hubert who, as a young man leading a dissolute life, was converted by the apparition of a speaking crucifix between the antlers of a stag at bay: ‘Why are you pursuing me? I am Jesus, whom you honour without being aware of it’.

The Fox Talbot Museum at Lacock in Wiltshire, meanwhile, acquired a collection comprising hundreds of cameras, optical devices and toys from the 18th century to the late 1980s, as well as nearly 3,500 photographic images ranging from the earliest processes through to the beginning of the 20th century. The Fenton Collection was assembled by James Fenton in the second half of the 20th century and acquired by the Museum of the Moving Image, which closed in 1999. The collection went into storage at that point, but with the support of the British Film Institute, Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England, it now has a secure future at the Fox Talbot Museum, Wiltshire.

4. One of a pair of Boulle display cabinets on stands, maker unknown, c. 1815–20, turned ebonised wood, ebony veneer, tortoiseshell and pewter marquetry, verde antico and black marble tops (NT 533018): the cabinets were accepted in lieu of inheritance tax and allocated to the National Trust for Charlecote Park, Warwickshire with additional funding provided by the Miss G. E. Ashton bequest, the late Hon. Simon Sainsbury, a grant from the Art Fund, and other gifts and bequests

Photo: National Trust Images/John Hammond

5. Sandringham Folding Rolffilm Camera, 1905, metal body with red leather bellows and brass fittings (NT 1524404), part of the Fenton Collection: thanks to a £36,100 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund and support from Art Council England’s Preservation of Industrial and Scientific Materials fund and the British Film Institute, the collection has found a new home at the Fox Talbot Museum, Wiltshire

Photo: National Trust Images/Clive James and Rod Stowell
the Fox Talbot Museum. Situated in the grounds of Lacock Abbey, the museum celebrates the achievement of William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–77). Talbot captured the world’s first photographic negative at the abbey in 1835 and invented the calotype process, paving the way for modern photography.

Other highlights of 2017 included the acquisition of three portraits (NT 529238–529240) with a connection to Quebec House, Kent, the childhood home of General James Wolfe (1727–59). Two of the portraits are by Benjamin West (1760–1820) and are posthumous portrayals of Wolfe and of his friend General George Warde (1725–1803) as boys. The other portrait is of Wolfe’s mother, Henrietta Wolfe, née Thompson (1703–64), and is attributed to George Knapton (1698–1778). The three paintings were purchased by private treaty.

Finally, a portrait of Lord Henry Paget (1922–2013) by Rex Whistler (1905–44) was purchased at auction in June 2017 for Plas Newydd, Anglesey (NT 2900223). The portrait shows Henry at the age of 14, depicting him as a young scholar surrounded by books, in a manner evocative of Italian Renaissance portraiture. Henry probably sat for Whistler while the artist was staying at Plas Newydd, painting his great Dining Room mural for the sixth Marquess. Henry succeeded his father as the seventh Marquess and gave Plas Newydd to the National Trust in 1976. The property holds one of the largest and most significant collections of Whistler’s work, yet until this acquisition, lacked a portrait of its donor.

For further details of these and many other recent acquisitions, please see: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/our-latest-acquisitions.
The Art of the Trimmings-Maker in Interior Decoration

FRINGE, FROG & TASSEL

Annabel Westman

This book, the first of its kind, traces the history of trimmings in Britain and Ireland from 1320 to 1970, examining the design and use of tassels, fringe, braid, gimp and cord and their dependence on French fashion.

Often overlooked as mere details of a furnished interior, trimmings were once seen as vital and costly elements in the decoration of a room. They were used not only on curtains and beds but also on wall hangings, upholstered seat furniture and cushions, providing a visual feast with their colour and intricate detail.

This lavishly illustrated book links surviving items in historic houses and museums to written evidence, paintings, drawings and other primary sources to provide a framework for dating pieces of uncertain provenance. The importance of the ‘laceman’, the maker of these trimmings, is also examined in its economic and social contexts, together with the relationship to the upholsterer and interior decorator in the creation of a fashionable room.

Annabel Westman FSA is an independent textile historian and consultant. She specialises in the reinstallation of historic interiors for heritage bodies, private houses and museums.

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