AN UNEXPECTED DISCOVERY
Finding the Reception Hall Mosaic at Chedworth

New archaeological excavations have been taking place at Chedworth Roman Villa, Gloucestershire, and this August we made an unexpected discovery: a large area of mosaic which had not previously been recorded.

Chedworth lies at the head of a narrow valley with clear views out across the River Coln. The villa was built next to a spring. From small beginnings the house developed into a mansion surrounding an upper and lower courtyard, terraced into an east-facing slope. The principal rooms lie within the west and north ranges of the upper courtyard.

The villa was gradually extended and embellished. By the late 4th century the wealthy owners lived in a highly fashionable and desirable home set within a designed landscape. However, their children and grandchildren fell on hard times as a result of the general failure of the British economy. The villa gradually declined, and eventually, about 1500 years ago, it was robbed of anything valuable and then abandoned and forgotten.

When the villa was rediscovered in 1864, its remains lay hidden beneath woodland, part of the Stowell Park Estate. The ruins were excavated by James Farrer, the guardian of the owner, the young Lord Eldon. Following their uncovering, the remains were quickly consolidated and displayed; while the best mosaics were protected under wooden sheds, the others were reburied. The finds from the site were placed in a purpose-built museum and a lodge was constructed beside it. Our knowledge of these excavations is limited to a few pages in a journal, and no contemporary drawings or photographs have been found.

In 2012 a new cover building was constructed, thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, and this enabled the mosaics in all the rooms of the west range to be displayed. These included the fine dining room mosaic at its south end and the suite of bathing rooms to the north. This 5 continued on page 2

PORTRAIT FOR WIMPOLE HALL

A half-length portrait of the Hon. Charles Yorke (1722-70), attributed to Thomas Hudson (1701-79), probably from the 1740s, has been purchased at auction at Cheffins, Cambridge, for £5,430 including buyer’s premium (inv. no. 2900098).

The sitter was the second son of the 1st Earl of Hardwicke and grew up at Wimpole Hall. He was Solicitor-General (1756-61) and Attorney-General (1762-63 and 1765-66), but died three days after being appointed Chancellor (like his father before him) in 1770. A later portrait of him, at the time he became Solicitor-General in 1756, is already at Wimpole (inv. no. 207788). Emile de Bruijn

INSIDE

3 Wimpole Caesars
5 David Winfield
6 Conserving the Penelope hanging at Hardwick Hall
7 The Guildhall of Corpus Christi at Lavenham
9 John Bankes’s Travels
11 Acquisitions
12 Conservation of the books in the Library at Sissinghurst
14 Edmund Verney’s wedding suit at Claydon House
16 The horse-driven pug mill at Calke Abbey
17 The discovery of an Elizabethan building at Petworth Park
new building also covered the 35-m-long west range corridor with its central doorway. Roman visitors would have entered here to access the rooms via short flights of stone steps. The cover building project enabled the old tarmac access path to be taken up to reveal the Roman floor of the corridor, a geometric mosaic design consisting of panels of interlocking circles alternating with guilloches in the style of woven mats.

The 2012 grant application proposed a cover building for the north range as well, but this part of the scheme was not funded at that time. The 2014 season was the second in a five-year research programme supported by English Heritage to provide information for the design of a new cover building. This would enable vulnerable areas of Chedworth’s north range bath house and the adjacent principal rooms to be protected and displayed.

Our knowledge of the north range comes from excavations carried out between 1958 and 1965 by the renowned Romanist and archaeologist Sir Ian Richmond, but his work was never fully published. Sir Ian marked the positions of the various walls he found with coloured concrete. No photographs survive of the excavations, and therefore we do not have the evidence on which he based his concrete interpretations.

Our 21st-century working group agreed with the National Trust staff of 1963, who were not pleased with Sir Ian’s concrete and wished it gone. Therefore in 2014 the concrete was broken up and the rectilinear areas defined by it were de-turfed. At this stage we believed that the areas between the walls would contain remains of mortar floors like those we had found in 2013, because there was no record of anything more significant being found here. However, as the grass was being take up, one or two turfs were cut slightly deeper than the rest revealing glimpses of in situ tesserae. We had assumed that as this area had been dug in 1864 and 1963, mosaics would have been recorded here if they existed; the find was a complete surprise.

It transpired that in 1963 only the junctions of suspected walls had been excavated. From these trenches the alignments of walls were projected and linked—in effect joining up the dots. The rectilinear islands between the walls were not examined, which explains why the sections of mosaic we found in 2014 were previously missed.

At first we believed that each small room would have a separate mosaic; but as the patches of surviving mosaic were uncovered, it became clear that they were all part of one large mosaic 18m long and 6.5m wide. This confirmed the theory proposed by Professors Simon Esmonde Cleary and Peter Salway (Chedworth’s specialist advisors) that by the late 4th century this area had become a grand reception hall to receive the honoured guests of the villa owner. Sir Ian Richmond’s walls related to the underlying earlier phase dating to the 2nd and 3rd centuries, when the space was part of the north range bathhouse.

There is enough remaining of the mosaic to reconstruct its original geometric design. Although it had to be covered again at the end of the excavation, the mosaic has been the subject of a laser scan survey; this will enable the mosaic specialist Dr Stephen Cosh to create a drawing of the mosaic as it would have looked when it was first laid in the 4th century.

Martin Papworth, Regional Archaeologist, National Trust
ILLUSTRIOUS FACES RETURNED
Four busts of Roman emperors repatriated to Wimpole Hall

‘There marble busts illustrious faces show;
And in old coins are little heroes seen …’

Soame Jenyns
Written in the Library of the Right Honourable the Earl of Oxford’s Library at Wimpe [sic] (1729)

Some repatriations to our properties seem at first glance desirable but improbable, as the sums involved are too great for the National Trust’s purse. When the objects involved were collected by Edward Harley or the Earls of Hardwicke, the discriminating and wealthy owners of the largest house in Cambridgeshire who put together astonishing collections of important books, pictures, sculpture and furniture (almost entirely dispersed through a series of sales in the 18th and 19th centuries), this is often the case. However, when four busts of Roman emperors formerly at Wimpole came on to the art market in late 2013, through a combination of luck, generosity of funders, and patience we were able to acquire them and bring them back to Wimpole, where they now greet visitors in the entrance hall as they did for almost two hundred and fifty years.

The four busts, depicting Roman emperors—which have been identified and misidentified over time—are 17th-century Italian copies of antique prototypes. In the powerful surge of interest in classical art from the Renaissance onwards, the original portraits of Roman emperors were revisited, copied and emulated many times, in architecture, painting and sculpture, sometimes using engravings and coins as the medium of transmission. Busts of the emperors, often the so-called ‘Twelve Caesars’ (after Suetonius’s biography of the emperors from Julius Caesar to Domitian), were eagerly acquired by aristocratic British owners (early groups survive in situ, for example, at Powis and Houghton). Their collection and display can be interpreted as a highly fashionable, outward statement of power and erudition, linking the owner with Roman ethics and virtues, or simply as an element of a common European intellectual culture where ancient history formed part of daily discourse. In Wimpole’s case, the probable acquirers and later owners of the busts were steeped in the classics—reading, studying, joking about and even publishing works connected with ancient Greece and Rome.

The subject of the busts’ ownership understandably proved a deciding factor in the desirability of their acquisition. An extremely well-documented provenance in the house stretches back to at least c. 1777, when the artist-clergyman the Reverend Thomas Kerrich made a brief but immensely useful list of pictures and sculpture in the house, noting ‘4 Antique Busts—one is Caracalla’ in the Gallery. This implies that they were introduced by the 2nd Earl of Hardwicke, though they may equally have been acquired by Edward Harley, 2nd Earl of Oxford, who had a strong predilection for antiquities (there is every indication that the busts
were thought to be ancient, and indeed one is partly so), but they cannot be identified in the 1742 catalogue with confidence. By 1823 they had been moved to the Entrance Hall, and they appear in an inventory with the position of each one pinpointed. Two further busts were located nearby in the Vestibule. ‘Lucius Verus’, ‘Caracalla’, ‘Trajan’ and ‘Antoninus’ are identified, the other two left nameless. A probate inventory following the 3rd Earl’s death in 1834 mentions all six again, and the group remained at Wimpole, weathering major sales in 1894 and 1938. At some point one of the busts disappeared, and the ‘sixth Caesar’ is a tantalising quarry.

Strangely, it was Elsie Bambridge (the philanthropist daughter of Rudyard Kipling), who spent much time, money and energy searching for and buying items with a Wimpole provenance after she and her husband, Captain George Bambridge, had bought, and taken up residence in, the vast and echoing house, who finally ejected four of the five remaining Caesars. Her architect and friend Sir Albert Richardson came to be their new owner, Mrs Bambridge having ‘thrown out four of these because they were chipped, rather as one might dispose of an old Woolworth’s tea-cup or a cracked jam-jar’, as Simon Houfe recollects in the biography of his grandfather, Sir Albert Richardson: the Professor (Luton, 1980). Richardson carried off the busts in triumph to Avenue House, Ampthill, where they remained until the great sale in 2013, at which the busts were a star item. Mrs Bambridge allowed one bust, recently identified as a young Marcus Aurelius, to stay at Wimpole.

Estimated at close to £1 million for the two pairs, the busts miraculously failed to sell at Christie’s. Following the sale, a rescue attempt came together, fuelled by a large contribution from the Art Fund, and by further substantial amounts from a fund set up by the late Hon. Simon Sainsbury, from a bequest from the late Mr and Mrs Kenneth Levy, and from Central Miscellaneous Chattels. Following rapid and complex negotiations, and generous cooperation from the seller and their agents Christie’s, we were able to secure one pair via Private Treaty Sale, while the other pair were, after due consideration, accepted through the in lieu of tax (AIL) scheme and allocated to Wimpole. All four busts were thus reunited with the fifth at Wimpole in early 2014. We are very grateful to the funders and all the parties concerned for enabling us to react to this singular opportunity.

The busts themselves are of pre-eminent quality. Robustly carved from statuary marble for the heads, and from variegated marbles for the cloaks and cuirasses on the shoulders, each conforms to a known type. The strongest is that of Caracalla, the ‘frowning type’, from the Farnese Caracalla, much admired in Rome (examples were recorded by Aldrovandi in five Roman palaces in the 16th century). The most intriguing is perhaps Trajan, whose head consists of a carefully transplanted ancient Roman hair and upper face onto a recreated lower face, cleverly re-using a damaged ancient head. The emperors’ physical condition was gently improved by the expert attention of Cliveden Conservation. Previously dry, with over-cleaned faces whose patination had been lost, they were toned with lightly-coloured waxes to harmonize with Marcus Aurelius, rather than to recreate the style of 18th-century patination (for which evidence was lacking). Their safety has been given careful consideration, with invisible and non-intrusive adaptations to the plinths so that they are both secure and stable. The carved and painted plinths themselves were designed for the busts by the Cambridge firm of Rattee & Kett in c.1860—one had been relegated to the beer cellar, from which it has now been rescued and reinstated.

The four busts are nationally important pieces, and as such are significant additions to our sculpture collection, as well as key repatriations for the house. They will add another layer to the interpretation of the history of Wimpole, poignantly evoking the classical interests of the family and helping contemporary visitors to appreciate better their original display, which echoed the sentiments and aesthetic tastes of their owners.

David Taylor, Curator of Pictures and Sculpture
David Winfield, the National Trust’s first Surveyor of Conservation, has died at the age of 83. He enjoyed a rich and varied career in conservation, in which his work for the Trust was just one element.

Appointed in 1981, he built up the Conservation Service at the National Trust, setting up the Cliveden conservation workshop for stone and plaster. He appointed freelance conservators as external advisers on maintenance and remedial treatment of metal, leather, stained glass, wall paintings and other media. In 1984 he wrote the foreword to the National Trust’s Manual of Housekeeping, a practical guide to the care of historic buildings and their contents. He proactively supported the Trust’s loan of 190 items to the Treasure Houses of Britain exhibition at the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1985-86.

He was approached by the National Trust when he was working on the conservation of the ceiling paintings in the Jesus Chapel at Canterbury Cathedral. This was his final work on medieval art after more than 20 years spent on the cleaning and conserving of Byzantine wall paintings in the Eastern Mediterranean. He had learned his trade on the 13th-century paintings in the church of Sopočani in Serbia, before moving to Turkey to work on the magnificent paintings at Hagia Sophia in Trebizond (1956-62). Then, after two years cleaning the rock-cut church of Eski Gümü in central Turkey, he was taken on by Dumbarton Oaks, the formidable research centre for Byzantine studies that is part of Harvard University. His main work for them was on Cyprus, where he was involved in cleaning some of the most famous Byzantine churches of the 12th century, including Asinou and Lagoudhéra. During this work he had built his own lime pit to slake lime, and this encouraged him to champion the use of lime instead of cement at the National Trust. He was alert to new technologies from other areas as well: he took over the use of buffered sodium silicate for the raising of protective alkalinity in concrete from the repair of motorway bridges and applied it to the concrete statuary at Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland. He also advocated the use of radar and ultra-sonic investigation for the diagnosis of corroding metal in historic buildings. He commissioned a government-funded survey of energy-saving measures for historic heating systems, a precursor to the Trust’s development of ‘conservation heating’.

Before becoming a conservator, David had read History at Merton College, Oxford, and he maintained his academic interests throughout his life. He was the author of many articles and books on Byzantine art, and he was especially interested in the making of paintings. In one study, his research allows us to follow the painter through from the plaster that he laid on the wall to the system of proportions that he used to lay out figures, and to his build-up of paint layers. He spotted the shortcuts the artist took, and the times he changed his mind: the cracks in the plaster he hurriedly smeared over, leaving the evidence of thumb prints; the incised lines that marked out the preliminary drawing which he subtly modified in the final painting; and the errors he painted over until a satisfactory result was achieved.

David’s work in the 1960s and 1970s was in remote locations, often far from any village, and he was always joined by June, who undertook much of the work and research alongside him. Their three children were initially brought up in the Troodos mountains in Cyprus, with only the church bell to call for help in case of emergency. It was perhaps this love of remoteness and simplicity that led them to buy a farm on the Isle of Mull after David left the National Trust in 1989.

David described his philosophy in the 1991 edition of the Manual of Housekeeping: As the now retired Surveyor of Conservation for the National Trust, I can say that one lesson learned from my years with the National Trust is that long-term preservation is not a natural activity. As human beings our thoughts tend to stay within the life-cycle of birth, maturity, decline and death. We do not want to think beyond our own lifetimes, and much of the present popular interest in the conservation of our heritage is in fact concerned with the present-day enjoyment of it rather than the restrictions demanded by long-term preservation. An additional problem is that modern life and modern products are concerned with speed and ease of use, whereas good conservation demands slow and patient work and it is always labour intensive. The Bible itself takes a gloomy view of conservation as, for example, Matthew vi, 19: ‘Lay up not for yourselves treasures upon earth, Where moth and dust doth corrupt, And where thieves break through and steal ….’ These are some of the reasons why conservation measures need to be continually thought about rather than treated as actions that can be completed and then forgotten about.

He was a warm and supportive colleague who will be fondly remembered.

Antony Eastmond, AG Leventis Reader in the History of Byzantine Art, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London
CONSERVING THE PENELOPE HANGING

Patience rewarded and perseverance crowned at Hardwick Hall

The textile collection at Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire is justly renowned. Amongst the finest and most important objects in this collection are the set of four embroidered hangings made for Bess of Hardwick, the Countess of Shrewsbury, in the 1570s. The hangings are appliquéd and embroidered using velvet, cloth of gold and figured silk, the material partly cut out of medieval cope 'acquired' by two of Bess’s husbands following the Dissolution of the Monasteries. All the hangings in the set have ‘virtuous’ women as their subject matter, and at Hardwick they were originally hung in the private withdrawing chamber of the Countess; their importance can be seen from the fact that they were among the objects Bess brought with her from Chatsworth when she had to move to Hardwick in the 1580s. Over time their status declined as their physical condition deteriorated, and in the early 20th century Evelyn, Duchess of Devonshire took the brave decision to protect them in purpose-made cases that effectively created a ‘new’ screen at the rear of the Great Hall at Hardwick. One of these hangings, depicting Penelope, has just been re-displayed after a two-year conservation project.

Following a successful grant application to the Wolfson Foundation, conservation work on Penelope began in 2012 at the National Trust’s Textile Conservation Studio in Norfolk. The painstaking work took over 18 months to complete; but even as conservation work continued through 2013, our thoughts turned to the way the hanging would be re-displayed. It quickly became clear during the conservation process that parts of the hanging had been folded back to fit into its 20th-century case. In effect Penelope ‘grew’ in the conservation studio, ruling out a return to Hardwick’s Great Hall. A new case and a new position for the hanging had to be found; this prompted a realisation that eventually a new home would be needed for all the hangings in the set. After much debate we took the radical decision to remove an introductory exhibition in the Butler’s Pantry, adjacent to the Great Hall, and create a new exhibition space just for Penelope and, in time, her three companion pieces.

The limited funding for the display element of the project came from the property. As a result Ksnya Marko, the National Trust textile advisor, approached a local Norfolk firm of metal workers, Hangman, rather than a traditional case manufacturer. Hangman had the advantage of being relatively local to the Textile Studio, and could therefore make frequent visits to discuss the case with staff and become acquainted with the object itself. The case itself proved to be relatively straightforward to design and build. Unfortunately the same could not be said for the front of the case. The original idea—to use non-reflective glass—became problematic given the sheer scale of the embroidery (it is over two metres high and nearly four metres across) and the narrow access to the Butler’s Pantry display room. After discussions with the V&A Museum the team chose a type of acrylic called Tru Vue Optium Museum Acrylic for the front of the case. This has the advantage of being light and non-reflective, and it has proved an ideal solution in this context.

While conservation and case design work continued the house team worked to provide a display context for Penelope; taking the object out of its ‘house’ setting and placing it in a ‘museum’ environment provided a freedom to explore different lighting and interpretation.

After a tendering process we commissioned the design company Begin With Ideas (bwa) to develop the interpretation, and TM Lighting to provide the specialist lighting. With the lighting focussing attention on the object there would be little ambient light for traditional text-based interpretation; bwa used a twofold approach—iPad technology for information about Penelope on a central plinth, and a leaflet providing more detailed information for people to take away with them. Choral music draws visitors into the darkened space, past vestments on loan from Clumber Park Chapel with some introductory text. This introduction provides the context for visitors to discover the unusual history of the hangings and, we hope, to gain an insight into the richness and colour of the original piece. The LED lighting illuminates Penelope from the top down, emphasising the three-dimensional nature of some of the detailed work on the hanging; the careful colour rendition of the lights brings out the vestigial colours on the original textile.

This project, over two years in the planning and execution, has seen one of the finest textile pieces in the country conserved and re-displayed in a manner that draws attention to its unusual history and emphasises the wealth and status of its creator, Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury. Conservation work has now begun on Lucretia, the second of the set of four hangings, which will be displayed alongside Penelope once conservation work is complete. Eventually this space will house all four conserved hangings. Then the early 20th-century cases can be removed, once again revealing the original dimensions of the Elizabethan Great Hall.

Nigel Wright, House and Collections Manager, Hardwick Hall
LAVERNHAM: PRISONERS AND PAUPERS
The Guildhall of Corpus Christi in the 17th and 18th centuries

The Guildhall of Corpus Christi, Lavenham, Suffolk, dominates the south side of the town’s market place. It was built c.1529 as the meeting place of one of the town’s five guilds—an elite merchants’ guild known as the Guild of Corpus Christi. At this time Lavenham was the fourteenth wealthiest town in England, and many of Lavenham’s cloth merchants had enormous personal fortunes. Much of this wealth was lavished on building projects, and the town was comprehensively re-built in a sophisticated and opulent style. The Guildhall and the two adjoining buildings were taken on by the National Trust in 1931.

The Guildhall is one of many well preserved timber-framed buildings in Lavenham, and it is for this reason that Lavenham is a popular tourist destination with a reputation for being a must-see ‘chocolate box’ town. New research conducted as part of a project to redisplay the museum rooms in the Guildhall (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Biffa) has challenged this image.

The Guildhall as a bridewell

After guilds were abolished in 1547 the Guildhall ceased to be used as a private meeting place for the guild and became town property. The broadcloth industry had gone into decline, and the fortunes of the town would never be restored. It is not known for certain what became of the Guildhall in the immediate aftermath of the Reformation, but by 1651 part of the building had become a bridewell (a prison or reform school, derived from St Bride’s Well in London, near which such a building stood). In the early 17th century it had been recognised that there was a need for some sort of carefully regulated institution to compel the poor to work. It was in this context that rural bridewells or ‘houses of correction’ were established as places for the punishment and reform of the labouring poor who had been convicted of petty offences. Bridewells were used in particular for punishing those whose behaviour threatened to increase the burden of poor relief borne by the parish.

Punishment was usually meted out through hard labour or other suitable employment. This was intended to compel the miscreants to work, and to stop their criminal tendencies. By 1630 a network of bridewells had been established across the country. As was the case at Lavenham, they were generally located in pre-existing buildings which had been adapted for the purpose. Quarter Sessions reports relating to Lavenham illustrate how using the old Guildhall had its complications. In 1670 it was deemed to be out of repair and ‘wanting sheets, blankets and other necessities for lodgings’. A committee was established to oversee this work, and a new ‘keeper of the house of correction’, Henry Chinery, was appointed in 1672. The poor state of repair remained a constant theme in the Quarter Sessions reports throughout the 17th century, with costs escalating from £25 in 1670 to £40 in 1688.

During the 18th century the purpose of bridewells changed. Justices of the Peace could order immediate punishment for those accused of minor offences. Bridewells came to be used to administer a short, sharp shock to those who were convicted. The records relating to Lavenham’s bridewell in this period illustrate this vividly. The Quarter Sessions reports from 1750 to 1786 include calendars of prisoners, crimes and punishments. All of the crimes are petty offences, such as being ‘idle and disorderly’, ‘stealing a scythe’, ‘wandering and begging’, and bringing children to Lavenham when they had smallpox. The punishments vary considerably, but those convicted of theft were consistently given the severest treatment. In 1750 Sam Triett was found guilty of stealing a shirt, and was ordered to be ‘publicly whipped on the next market day in Lavenham upon carts from the Bridewell to the church and back again between the hours of 12 and one’.

The most extraordinary individual that research has revealed is Ann Baker. Ann was one of the earliest residents of a large workhouse that had been erected in Semer (seven miles from Lavenham) in 1780. In July 1793 she ran away and was committed to Lavenham bridewell for three months’ hard labour. She was only 11 or 12 years old. Two years later, Ann ran away from the workhouse again. The Quarter Sessions report for January 1785 states that she was ‘committed for running away from Cosford House of Industry and is ordered, being deemed an incorrigible rogue, to stand committed for the space of six calendar months at the expiration of which time to be privately whipped in the presence of one female’.

Ann’s incarceration in Lavenham’s bridewell came shortly after it had been visited by the prison reformer John Howard in preparation for his 1784 work *The State of the Prisons*. Howard had been horrified by the conditions he had encountered. The bridewell was still in a poor state of repair, and prisoners had been able to escape through the walls—a fact confirmed by numerous entries in the Quarter Sessions relating to repairs and new locks. Howard reported that the inmates had no water or straw, and were kept inside as the courtyard was not secure. There was no proper separation of male and female prisoners, and the keeper had recently been given thumbscrews to prevent the inmates escaping.

Evidently none of these things deterred Ann Baker from running away from the workhouse; in October 1785 she did so again, and was ‘adjudged an incorrigible rogue’ and ‘ordered to be transported
for seven years'. At the age of approximately 17 Ann boarded the Neptune, the most notorious of the ships in the second fleet bound for Australia, as one of 78 female and 147 male convicts. She survived her 160-day voyage; 158 others did not.

Lavenham’s bridewell closed when a new County Bridewell was established at Bury St. Edmunds in 1787.

The Guildhall as a workhouse

Bridewells were sometimes closely allied with workhouses, and this was the case at Lavenham. Two separate sources state that the building immediately adjacent to the Guildhall became a workhouse in 1655, and functioned alongside the bridewell. This workhouse operated under the old Poor Law during a time when each parish was obliged to relieve the aged and helpless, to bring up unprotected children ‘in the habits of industry’, and to provide work for those who were capable of working but who could not find work. The operation of workhouses was entirely voluntary at this time. The attitude to poverty was that it was inevitable, that the poor were victims of their own situation, and that it was a Christian duty to provide relief.

Details of Lavenham’s workhouse in the 17th century are scant, but there is a wealth of material from the 18th century, principally from the account books kept by the Overseers of the Poor for the period 1749-55. The workhouse was set up to ‘employ poor children and others of this parish, in spinning hemp, flax or yarn’. The accounts reveal that there were usually between 30 and 40 people in the workhouse, and they detail the goods and services that were provided to the occupants, including tobacco, yarn, beer, dishes, spoons, shoes and shirts. The accounts tell of Widow Snell, a Lavenham resident who had herself once received poor relief and who carried out a caring role within the workhouse. In particular she administered medicines, and there are a series of entries in the account books which relate to her cures for ringworm: ‘To ye Wid Snell for curing two heads’, ‘Paid ye widow Snell for 3 children of Scald heads’. Her preferred cure involved cutting the patient’s hair, smearing pork lard on the affected scalp, covering the head in dressings, and after a period of time removing the dressings and ‘pulling’ the hair.

Details of the food prepared for the workhouse occupants are also evident from the Overseers’ accounts. Cheese is purchased regularly, and it is possible to calculate that each person was allowed just under ¾ lb of cheese per week. Further purchases indicate that beer was brewed and bread was baked on the premises. ‘There is a regular purchase of ‘a faggott’ for 3d for the purpose of ‘fireing the oven’. Expenditure on ‘needles and yarn’, ‘spindles’, and ‘starch and bluing’ is presumably related to the spinning and other activities that the people in the workhouse carried out. There are also occasional references in the accounts which hint at the caring role the workhouse could provide. For July 1752 there are three entries relating to a Robert White: ‘1½ quarter of Brandy for White’, ‘Beer for setting up with him’, and ‘Candle’, which may suggest that White was unwell and that brandy had been administered as pain relief and someone had sat with him during the night.

In 1780 a large House of Industry was built at Semer, but the workhouse at Lavenham seems to have continued in some form until the 1830s. In 1829 Rebecca Ribbons, daughter of the local postmaster, wrote a poem about it. The first stanza reads:

‘Behold! Assembled round yon crowded door,
For weekly pay, the needy parish poor;
See wrinkled widows winding off their yarn,
And smiling orphans strive their mite to earn;
A rich endowment is provided there,
The young to stimulate, the old to cheer;
No cruel lashes are endur’d by day,
No pallets comfortless their toils repay;
But kind and many are the varied ways,
Which calm the paupers’ dilatory days.’

The Guildhall’s use as a bridewell and workhouse are a reminder of the hardship faced by the people of Lavenham following the decline of the cloth industry that had defined and supported their town. Were it not for this decline in fortunes a great many of the timber-framed buildings might have been altered and Georgianised. In effect, the decline of the town may have helped to preserve it.

Anna Forrest, Curator, East of England

With thanks to Anne McGee and Luke Potter, who contributed greatly to the research project, and to colleagues from Lavenham Guildhall and the Lavenham Museum and Exhibition Trust.
My interest in John Bankes (1626-56) was sparked originally by the question: what is the book in the portrait? The portrait I was looking at was that of John Bankes and his tutor Sir Maurice Williams (1599/1601-1658), which hangs in a semi-darkened upper corridor at Kingston Lacy. The book is depicted open at its engraved title-page; we initially thought that the book would remain unidentified, as nothing like it had appeared during the cataloguing project at Kingston Lacy. A few months later, in a serendipitous moment working in the Study at Belton House, something very similar turned up on the shelves: an edition of Galileo’s *Dialogus de systemate mundi*.

Though the Belton copy’s engraved title-page differed in some of the artistic details, and seemed to be in a smaller format than the one in the portrait, we now had at least an idea of what the book at Kingston Lacy could be. After looking at several other copies, the most likely candidates for the book in the portrait were either the 1635 Strasbourg or the 1641 Lyons quarto editions of Galileo’s work.

Our finding out what the book in the portrait could be started to raise questions about the content of the Kingston Lacy library as it is today, and as it would have been in the 17th century. If the book in the portrait was not just there as set dressing, had it ever been at Kingston Lacy, and if so, who bought it, and when? If it had been in the house, what had happened to it? We had previously believed that the 17th-century library contents were intact, even though the room had been altered.

Over time it became clear that about half of the 17th-century library contents remained at Kingston Lacy. This included a couple of books from the library of Sir John Bankes (1589-1644), as well as many other volumes bought before Sir Roger Pratt built Kingston Hall (as it was called then) for Sir Ralph Bankes (1631-77). The *Catalogus Librorum* begun by Sir Ralph Bankes around 1675, and continued by his daughter-in-law Margaret after 1691, is basically a list by shelf of the books at Kingston Lacy at the end of the 17th century. Amongst those volumes were several signed by either John Bankes or his younger brother Ralph. In some cases, where a volume was originally signed ‘J Bankes’, Ralph has neatly overlain the ‘J’ with his ‘R’, though this has not been done systematically.

One of the books on the Library shelves that strikes the eye is a fat vellum-bound volume, which has now been boxed and given the spine title ‘John Bankes’s Travel MSS’ (see photograph, below). The title is a little misleading, but it is worth looking at this volume for what it may be able to tell us about a young Royalist abroad in the 1640s, a time when there is little other surviving documentary evidence for the Bankes family.

When I first came across this odd little volume much was being written about the Grand Tour in the 18th century. The implication then was that there was very little tourism before the 1750s, but that after that time it increased exponentially. In the intervening years more research about the patterns of continental tourism going back to the beginning of the 16th century was done.

So few of these early accounts survive intact that there is not as yet a definitive pattern for a tourist itinerary of the sort that we meet in the 18th century. The partial accounts and letters which do survive indicate that continental travel was undertaken for a variety of reasons. Generally it seems to have been considered educational at one level or another, not yet reaching the purely cultural format of the 18th-century tour. Nobler families like the Howards and Cecils, with their private tutors and introductions from family and friends, were able to visit foreign courts and to stay with aristocrats on their tours. These were the potential public servants and diplomats of the future. At the other end of the scale we have Robert Bargrave, who travelled to gain the experience and training for a career as a merchant in the Levant Company. John Bankes is probably somewhere in between, an example of the educated gentry rather than the nobility, destined for a profession when circumstances allowed.
Given the paucity of archival material about the Bankes family, we can only give a little definite background to John's movements in the 1640s as a means of adding context to his travels. John went up to Oriel College in Royalist Oxford in July 1643. Here, as we have seen, he was painted whilst still a student with his tutor Sir Maurice Williams, who also arrived at Oriel in 1643. As far as we know Bankes did not take a degree in Oxford; he may well have been there as part of the royal entourage with his father, who was Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, and died in service at the end of 1644. At some time soon after, presumably after his father's death, young John went abroad: we know this because in her account book his mother, Dame Mary, has entries relating to payment for the receipt of letters from France and Italy from mid-February 1645 to the end of March 1648. These entries in her accounts tie in with some of the dates in Mr John Bankes's Observations on his Travels.

It has to be said that this is not a manuscript diary, nor is it a travel account. It is John Bankes's copy of the *Voyage de Monsieur le Prince de Conde en Italie* (Lyons, 1635), which has been bound in plain vellum, but interleaved with slightly larger sheets of blank paper to enable note-making. The notes on the interleaves are not extensive, but are amplified by his having underlined various places or sights in pencil, perhaps as an intended route plan or aide memoire; he also wrote several sheets of dated notes, which are bound in before the text. In addition, someone has very carefully retained some scraps of paper which appear to be hurriedly scribbled notes which complement the neater ones which have been bound in. Some of the scraps have been crumpled up as if to be thrown away at some point in their life—we may be thankful that they were rescued.

I spread out large modern maps on the floor at home while I studied copies of the notes to see if it all made sense. The six leaves of notes bound in at the beginning of the volume take John Bankes from Lyon on 31 October 1646 to his arrival at Genoa on 17 November. Given that Dame Mary had been paying for letters from France for about 18 months by this time, and that John's French seems quite fluent, we can assume that he may have been staying somewhere in France, possibly in order to improve his language skills, before travelling further afield. John's notes detail the part of his journey before he reached Italy; they complement the printed text, which begins with an arrival in Italy via Susa and Turin. John makes little note of Lyon, which is surprising for such a major town, but perhaps his notes were a continuation of others he had made elsewhere on his journey to Lyon. On leaving Lyon, John travelled down the Rhône, passing through Vienne and 'Condy' (Condrieu) towards the south, each place dealt with in a few lines, before he arrived at Pont-Saint-Esprit on 2 November. This location is worthy of a full half-page of notes, especially the bridge with its '32 arcads petits & grands & de la eu Avignon'. He reached Avignon the following day, but moved on swiftly for Aix-en-Provence where his party needed to take post horses for the overland route to Marseilles. From Marseilles they followed the south coast of France eastwards via Toulon, Cannes, Nice, Monaco, Menton, San Remo and Savona to Genoa. As before, his notes on each town vary in length quite considerably. Cannes is dismissed in a few lines, but Nice, Monaco and Menton receive almost a page each. Some of his notes are perhaps frivolous details about the bread and wine and the costs of travelling, rather than the erudite thoughts of a cultural tourist, but it is quite fascinating to read how he reacted to each new location.

At Genoa the longer leaves of notes that have been bound in end at the start of the sixth leaf, so we have to turn to the loose leaves and underlinings in the text for clues about where John Bankes went next. Looking at a set of loose leaves which have been bound together, we may have a hint that John Bankes had been in the process of writing up his travels on the bound-in leaves: the loose leaves have had the first leaf torn away, then the text of the book are an aide memoire of the sites he visited within each town or city. Without additional evidence, we are unlikely to know for sure.

As far as his travels in Italy are concerned, this was not the end of the road for John Bankes. Though the evidence for where he went next is limited, we know that he signed the visitors' book...
at the University of Padua in 1647. This brings us neatly back to where we started, the book in the painting: Galileo's discoveries were made in Padua. In addition, his tutor Sir Maurice Williams had studied in Padua in the years almost immediately after Galileo's discoveries were originally published. What we can say for certain is that John's travels continued for a little while longer. His copy of Matthieu's Histoire de Louys XI (Paris, 1620) is inscribed 'Jean Bankes Paris 1647 preceding his brother Ralph inscribed his copy of Malherbe's Le Secretaire de la Cour (Rouen, 1648), so the two brothers may have met during their respective travels. John, however, was fairly soon back in England: he inscribed his copy of Tobias Venner's Via recta ad vitam longam 'Bath August 28th 1649'.

John Banke's rough notes (1)

John Banke's rough notes (2)

Notes
1 Title on the handwritten label pasted to the front cover of John Bankes's interleaved and annotated copy of Voyage de Monsieur le Prince de Condé … (Lyons, 1635).
2 Belton has the octavo, London, 1663 edition (ESTC R14895; Wing G168).
3 See for example Michael G. Brennan’s edited traveler’s diaries and letters for The Hakluyt Society.
5 Shadwell, Registrum Orielense, p. 250. Williams is described as ‘Physician to the King’.
6 Dorset Record Office, D/BKL 8 c/64, f. 119r and 78v.
7 He calls it ‘Genes’, but given the coastal route he takes, it is unlikely to be Gennes, nr. Saumur.

ACQUISITIONS

BELTON HOUSE
A copy of Ferrare du Tor’s Rome Exactly Describ’d, London, 1644, with a provenance from Belton House, was purchased from Christopher Edwards, Wallington, Oxfordshire, for £450.

CANONS ASHBY
A copy of Eikon Basilike (‘royal portrait’), the Portraiture of His Sacred Majesty in His Solitudes and Sufferings, 1648, with a provenance from Canons Ashby, was donated to the house. This was the spiritual autobiography of King Charles I and was widely reprinted and read following his execution in 1649.

TREDEGAR HOUSE
A full-length portrait of Sir William Morgan (1560-1653) of Tredgar in military costume after the antique, in the style of Sir Peter Lely (1618-80), has been purchased by private treaty for £7,000, partly funded from gifts and bequests (inv. no. 1553762). The portrait was sold from the house in the mid-20th century.

WALLINGTON
A group of ceramics, a painting and a bust with a provenance from Wallington have been donated to the property.

Emile de Bruijn, Registrar (Collections & Grants)
BEYOND THE GARDEN AT SISSINGHURST
Conserving the library of Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson

The garden created by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson at Sissinghurst Castle, Kent is amongst the most iconic and celebrated in the world. Of lesser renown is the extraordinary collection of books which these two writers amassed over a lifetime together. Sissinghurst is home to around 11,000 books, making it the fourth largest book collection in the National Trust and one of the most significant in situ 20th-century libraries in the country. The collection stretches across three buildings, and contains the personal libraries of both Vita and Harold, providing an intimate portrait of the couple’s values and interests. Their book collection, which houses a remarkable amount of archival material, lies at the heart of Sissinghurst’s story.

In a property famed for its garden it is often forgotten that both its creators were successful and prolific writers who regarded garden as a private passion and escape. Vita and Harold’s contribution to 20th-century writing is considerable: between them they wrote about 80 works of fiction, poetry, and a wide range of non-fiction including biography, travel and gardening. As writers, readers, reviewers, diarists and commentators they began a tradition continued by their children and grandchildren today.

It is often said that Vita longed to write poetry from an early age, and above all wanted to be remembered as an important poet. In 1927 her poem The Land won the Hawthornden Prize, and over the course of her life she had many poems, biographies and novels published. The Edwardians (1930) and All Passion Spent (1931) are perhaps her best-known novels. In the same year that Vita was made a Companion of Honour for her services to Literature (1947) she began writing a weekly column in The Observer called ‘In your Garden’, which is still celebrated to this day. Her husband, Harold Nicolson, was a diplomat, author, diarist and politician. In 1933 he was appointed Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, having written the official biography of George V the previous year. Both Vita and Harold added to, and drew from, their book collection through their writing. Harold’s personal library is housed in a cottage in the garden, while Vita’s is in Sissinghurst’s Elizabethan Tower. The Long Library demonstrates their shared tastes in literature.

Although they were never serious book collectors, for Vita and Harold reading and reviewing books was part of their everyday lives. Their books cover an enormous range of subjects which are very much representative of the tastes and interests of their owners. Numerous volumes are devoted to fiction and other literature, biography, travel, history, art, architecture and religion. Both reviewed books regularly for publications such as The Spectator, The Observer and The Times Literary Supplement, and many review copies can be found on the shelves at Sissinghurst. Being part of a literary circle, they were often given books as gifts, sometimes by the authors themselves, and the books are littered with annotations by their owners and the provenance inscriptions of family, friends and a wide range of interesting cultural figures. Harold typically created his own pencil manuscript index of references at the back of the books he reviewed, whilst Vita’s distinctive voice can often be heard through her annotations in the margins of a book she was reading. They would even sometimes leave amusing notes for each other in books, such as a joking exchange in a copy of Home and Garden by Gertrude Jekyll (1910).

Additional material inserted into the books adds further interest. Items like letters, photographs and notes give us a vivid sense of their history and use. A copy of Freya Stark’s East is West (1945) contains an illuminating exchange of letters between Harold Nicolson and the author about the Middle East, whilst The Mechanical Triumphs of the Ancient Egyptians by F. M. Barber (1900), bought by Vita whilst on honeymoon in 1913, contains a map and sketch which illustrates her approach to Constantinople.
The Conservation Project

The National Trust took ownership of this extraordinary book collection in 2008, when a condition survey undertaken by the Library Conservation Advisor, Caroline Bendix, noted some damage. Whilst working on the collection in 2012, the Book Cataloguer, Harvey James, discovered that a US first edition of Emily Dickinson had been lost to silverfish, prompting a more in-depth condition survey. In response to the worrying results of the survey, the property commissioned a three-year project, led by Caroline Bendix, to conserve and stabilise over 90 percent of the collection. Over £100,000 is being invested in the care and conservation of the books, with a large proportion of the work being undertaken in front of the public.

The nature of the library at Sissinghurst presents specific conservation challenges. The manner in which a book is sewn can greatly affect its longevity and robustness. The collection gathered by Vita and Harold largely consists of 20th-century case bindings, where the text blocks are sewn onto a flat fabric which is then adhered between the end leaves and the board. This cheap form of binding was developed in the latter half of the 19th century, allowing printed books to be mass produced for a wider audience. Owing to their less elaborate sewing structure and the inferior quality of their materials, they are intrinsically weak and show clear signs of the effect of gravity and high relative humidity. Addressing these issues at Sissinghurst sooner rather than later will ensure that the books can be enjoyed for many years to come.

It is has been predicted that 90 percent of the collection will require book shoes (supporting slipcases) in order to stabilise damaged joints, while other items will require minor repairs to be performed in situ, or will be ‘phase-boxed’ in preparation for studio repair. Whether it is used or not, if a book stands on a shelf, gravity continues to put strain on the spine, causing significant damage. Initially the book becomes convex at the tail of the spine and concave at the head; then the joints split and the boards eventually become detached. Owing to the protruding boards and weak sewing structure of case bindings, gravity can have devastating effects. Caroline Bendix believes that book shoes are the answer to this problem. A book shoe is an enclosure similar to a slipcase, but without a top and with a support for the text block. Each book shoe is made out of brown museum board, and bespoke—made to fit the dimensions of each individual book. The ingenious nature of the design means that while the book is fully supported on the shelf, the book shoe cannot be seen and therefore does not compromise the visual effect of the library.

A team of volunteers is helping the project run smoothly by preparing materials before the arrival of the conservators, cleaning the books and assessing their condition, and cutting and creasing the board for book shoes. Other volunteers have been recruited to talk to visitors about the conservation project, allowing the conservators to concentrate on their work. Book displays that change with the season complement the project, while visual aids (including a popular papier-mâché silverfish!) have been devised to help volunteers interpret the project to a younger audience. The help of volunteers has proved invaluable: not only has their infectious enthusiasm increased our visitors’ enjoyment, it has allowed the conservators to meet their targets.

The project has received an incredibly positive response from visitors, volunteers and staff alike. It has captured the imagination of all involved, and the story of these books is being creatively and successfully told. Indeed, October Book Month 2014 will be complemented by ‘Letterpress Reimagined’, a Heritage Lottery Fund project run at Sissinghurst Castle Garden by Canterbury Christ Church University. One hundred copies of Vita’s poem Sissinghurst will be hand-set, printed and bound in front of the public, culminating in a symposium on 29 October 2014. By setting this project alongside the conservation work we hope not only to celebrate further the library at Sissinghurst and Vita Sackville-West’s reputation as a poet, but also to deepen our understanding of the construction of the printed book.

Ellen Browne, House Steward, Sissinghurst Castle
A HIDDEN HISTORY AT CLAYDON HOUSE

The elaborate 17th-century wedding suit of Edmund Verney

The Claydon wedding suit (part of the collection in Claydon House, Buckinghamshire) came to the National Trust Textile Conservation Studio in March 2013 for full conservation. It is a very rare survival of its type—it is thought to be the only example of a complete suit with petticoat breeches, doublet, cloak, baldrick (sword belt), and gloves of the mid-17th century apart from similar examples found in the Swedish royal collection. It is part of an extraordinary collection of costume worn by various members of the Verney family in the 17th century. The costume was accepted in lieu (AIL) of tax and allocated to the National Trust in 2004. It was noted by the AIL panel that these pieces were of ‘exceptional importance and made up one of the finest collections of its kind in the UK’. Their importance is enhanced by an associated family archive of letters and bills.

The wedding suit was made for Edmund Verney (1636-88) for his marriage to Mary Abell in about 1662. It is made from imported Italian silk lampas, a highly complex type of damask, and the original receipt for its purchase still survives in the family archive. When new, the fabric would have shimmered a pale gold colour. The process of conservation allowed us to analyse the fabric and see for a short time the skill of the 17th-century tailor who made it, using techniques which would in the main be very familiar to his 21st-century Savile Row counterpart. When worn, the suit would have created the image of a man of wealth and fashion; it signified a major turnaround in the family’s fortune which had been lost during the Civil War and returned at the Restoration in 1660, just two years before the wedding.

The suit is trimmed with bunches of coloured silk ribbons in pastel blue, pink, yellow and lilac on the cuffs of the doublet, the gloves, and the waist and side legs of the petticoat breeches. Today only 38 of the original 52 bunches of ribbons on the breeches survive. The leg hems of the petticoat breeches, each of which measure 6½in (160cm) in circumference, are also bound with narrow silk ribbons. The pattern for the breeches was found to be completely symmetrical front and back, with silk side pockets and small chamois leather coin pockets at the right front and left back waist. This arrangement allowed the breeches to be worn either way round.

The silk lampas cloak is almost circular, measuring over 6ft (194cm) in diameter, and is lined with cream silk taffeta. It has a collar and a braided cord and tasselled toggle which fastens the cape at the neck. The fashion was to wear the cloak draped over one arm and over the opposite shoulder, or just hung across one shoulder. The suit was accessorised with brown leather gloves trimmed at the cuff with bunches of ribbons and a baldrick (to hold a dress sword) made of leather covered in the lampas and lined with cream silk taffeta.

The doublet has a high buttoned collar stiffened with buckram and whalebone. The body is stiffened at the centre front with two triangular panels called belly pieces, each made of two layers of reeds set at right angles, probably to help maintain an upright posture. This is supplemented by more boning, particularly on the left side, to maintain the shape of the body. The doublet is short, finishing just below the waist; it would have been worn with a fine white voluminous linen shirt, the sleeves billowing out through the ribbon-like doublet sleeves, with cuffs trimmed with more ribbons. A lace falling band or lace-trimmed linen collar would have been worn at the neck.

Edmund, known as ‘Mun’ by his family, was born with a deformity to the spine, probably scoliosis. It is well documented in letters from his father, written when Edmund was sent abroad during the Civil War. They describe treatment which involved his
wearing a leather-lined metal corset for nearly a year, in the hope that it would help correct the curvature. It is this fact of his life that is manifested in the structure of the doublet. During conservation we were able to glimpse the heavy felted wool padding on the left back of the doublet and on the right shoulder; these, together with the boning on the left side, would have helped to disguise the ‘twist’ in his torso. The most affecting part of the conservation process was in the modification of the mannequin for fitting the doublet for display: the papier-mâché form had to be hammered in on the back and shoulder to accommodate the padding. It was only during this process that we became aware of just how severely Edmund’s body had been affected by his condition.

The suit, recorded by the ALL panel as being in good condition, was in fact suffering from many years of being loved a little too much. Photographs from the 1930s show it pinned out flat on fabric-covered boards. Long periods of display had taken a severe toll on the suit through handling, gravity and long exposure to the environment. The ribbons had faded and split, and some bunches and individual ribbons had been removed. The silk lampas had degraded, having turned to dust in some areas, and had faded from pale gold to white and beige. Adhesive treatments applied to the silk lampas and taffeta in the 1970s and 1980s were themselves failing.

Five conservators, a conservation assistant, a professional costume mounter and two student interns worked on the treatment and presentation of the suit. The aim of the treatment was to make it safe whilst retaining as much of the original construction as possible. This policy restricted the amount of supporting treatment that could be carried out, with the consequence that future periods of display will have to be tightly controlled.

Most of the previous treatments were reversed and a new adhesive treatment was applied to the fragile and splitting ribbons and the lining of the cloak and baldrick. The silk lampas was given a purpose-dyed silk support, where access was available, and laid couching and dyed conservation net were used to secure weak and degraded areas. Extensive couching was required on the breeches, which had suffered to the point where the ribbon-bound hems were falling away.

There are various thoughts on why the suit survived. The fashion for petticoat breeches lasted only a short time, as Charles II popularised the fashion for wearing fitted breeches with long waistcoats and coats, a more elegant and masculine look than the feminine beribboned petticoat breeches. However, its survival was also probably due to the fact that Edmund was known to have put on a substantial amount of weight within a few years of marrying, so that the suit no longer fitted.

The suit is a very special survival, one of the major treasures of the National Trust, and coveted by national museum collections. It was documented by Janet Arnold, the renowned costume historian, for her ‘Patterns of Fashion’ series, but she died in 1998 before its publication. The School of Historical Dress have inherited her archive and Jenny Tiramani (Principal, and a leading stage and costume designer), Susan North (Curator at the V&A) and Claire Thornton (theatre costume designer) visited the Textile Conservation studio to compare Janet Arnold’s notes with the original in preparation for publication in the near future.

The suit was mounted for display at Claydon in February 2014 for one season. It is just one in a series of extraordinary pieces of costume given in lieu by the Verney family, and conserved for display as a requirement of the ALL panel. The first piece of the Claydon costume collection to come to the Textile Conservation Studio was a dressing gown, c.1610, of purple damask with a grey silk shag lining decorated with gold and silk braids and with matching slippers and cap. It is reputed to have belonged to Sir Francis Verney (1584-1615) who, it is thought, sold his English estates and became a pirate in the Mediterranean. This was followed in turn by a cream satin doublet trimmed with silver lace, c.1635; a pair of stays and a stomacher, possibly for an expectant woman, c.1660; and finally a woman’s cream taffeta bodice with paneled puffed sleeves made for Mary Abell—the boned foundation of the bodice has ‘M. Abell’ inscribed in ink on each panel. It was possibly the bodice to her wedding dress, the dress she wore for her marriage to Edmund Verney in about 1662, the owner of the wedding suit. This suit is undoubtedly rare and precious; but it is the story hidden in its rich structure that makes it unique.

Reference

Rosamund Weatherall ACR, Senior Textile Conservator, The National Trust Textile Conservation Studio
HIDDEN BEHIND A DENSE UNDERGROWTH OF IVY AND WILD FLOWERS ARE THE RELICS OF THE ONCE THRIVING INDUSTRIES AT CALKE ABBEY, DERBYSHIRE.

OVER THE LAST SIX YEARS A PROGRAMME OF CONSERVATION WORK HAS BEEN UNDER WAY TO CONSERVE THE LIMEYARDS AND BRICKYARDS AT CALKE ABBEY. THE WORK SO FAR HAS MAINLY COMPRISED THE STABILISATION OF STRUCTURES WITHIN THE LIMEYARDS, INCLUDING THE KILNS, POWDER HOUSES AND TRAMWAY BRIDGES. COUPLED WITH THIS HAS BEEN A DRIVE TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND INTERPRETATION, ENABLING US TO TELL THE STORY OF CALKE’S ONCE RICH AND STATE-OF-THE-ART INDUSTRIAL PAST.

THIS YEAR THE CONSERVATION WORK HAS CONCENTRATED ON THE BRICKYARD WHICH LIES IMMEDIATELY TO THE NORTH OF TICKNALL VILLAGE, ON THE NORTHERN PERIPHERY OF THE NATIONAL TRUST’S LAND HOLDING AT CALKE. THE MID TO LATE 19TH-CENTURY BRICKYARD, WHICH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE CONTINUED IN USE INTO THE 1940S, INCLUDED AN OPEN-SIDED DYEING SHED, A SCOTCH KILN AND A PUG MILL; IT IS THE PUG MILL WHICH HAS BEEN THE FOCUS OF THE 2014 WORKS.

THE HORSE-DRIVEN PUG MILL WAS USED FOR GRINDING AND TEMPERING THE CLAY, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN DUG OUT IN LATE AUTUMN AND LEFT TO WEATHER AND BREAK DOWN (KNOWN AS TEMPERING) OVER THE WINTER. IN THE SPRING, STONES AND OTHER INCLUSIONS WERE REMOVED AND A SMOOTH BRICK-MAKING CLAY CREATED THROUGH TWO GIANT REVOLVING ROLLERS ON THE PUG MILL.

AS WELL AS THE PAIR OF ROLLERS, THE MILL HAS A CAST IRON CAPSTAN THAT IS CONTAINED WITHIN A BRICK-LINED PIT CAPPED WITH STONE BLOCKS. THIS VERTICAL SHAFT SUPPORTS A HORIZONTAL BEARING, WHICH IN TURN IS SUPPORTED BY FOUR UPRIGHT ARMS, CRUCIFORM IN PLAN, ATTACHED AT THE BOTTOM TO A CAST IRON BASE PLATE. AT THE BOTTOM OF THE DRIVE SHAFT IS A HORIZONTAL BEVELLED DRIVE WHEEL, THE TEETH OF WHICH ENGAGE A SECOND VERTICAL BEVELLED COG. THIS SECOND COG OR PINION IS ATTACHED TO A HORIZONTAL DRIVE SHAFT WHICH RUNS UNDERGROUND FOR A DISTANCE OF 6.6M AND CONNECTS THE CAPSTAN WITH THE TWO ROLLERS.

AT AN INTERMEDIATE STAGE THE DRIVE SHAFT RUNS THROUGH A SUPPORTING BEARING WHICH IS VISIBLE FROM THE BRICK-LINED INSPECTION PIT.

THE CAST IRON ROLLERS ARE POSITIONED IN FRONT OF THE CAPSTAN WITHIN AN OPEN-FRONTED BRICK-LINED PIT, AND ARE SUPPORTED ON TWO WOODEN BEAMS, 1.8M ABOVE THE BRICK FLOOR OF THE PIT AND ELEVATED TO THE LEVEL OF THE DRIVESHAFT. THE ROLLER NEAREST THE BRICK KILN IS DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO THE DRIVESHAFT, WHICH ALSO CARRIES A TOOTHED SPUR WHEEL THAT ENGAGES WITH A SECOND VERTICAL SPUR ATTACHED TO THE SPINDLE OF THE SECOND ROLLER. THE BEARINGS FOR THESE TWO ROLLERS ARE HELD WITHIN CAST IRON FRAMES ATTACHED TO THE WOODEN SUPPORTING BEAMS. ABOVE THE ROLLERS (NOW LOST) WOULD HAVE BEEN AN IRON HOPPER INTO WHICH THE CLAY WAS FED BEFORE FALLING TO THE FLOOR THROUGH THE ROLLERS. THE CAPSTAN WOULD HAVE BEEN DRIVEN BY A HORSE VIA A WOODEN POLE HELD BY A BRACKET ON THE VERTICAL DRIVESHAFT.


THE CONSERVATION WORK WAS LED BY DAVE WATTS, THE AREA CLERK OF WORKS FOR DERBYSHIRE. DAVE MADE GREAT USE OF THE TECHNICAL SKILLS AND EXPERTISE OF THE IN-HOUSE NATIONAL TRUST DERBYSHIRE BUILDING TEAM TO CONSERVE THE PUG MILL.


THE METAL BOLTS, PLATES AND TIE BARS WERE TAKEN TO GREG BUDWORTH OF B&J BLACKSMITHS, BASED AT THE NEIGHBOURING ESTATE OF STAUNTON HAROLD. GREG, WHO WORKS EXTENSIVELY WITH THE CALKE ESTATE, EXPERTLY REPLICATED THE ORIGINAL FITTINGS. THE OAK FOR THE SUPPORT BEAMS WAS SOURCED FROM AHERSTONE LTD, WITH THE CHAMFERING OF THE ORIGINAL OAK BEAMS REPLICATED BY THE NATIONAL TRUST’S JOINER, RAY STEVENS.


ONCE THE ROLLERS HAD BEEN SECURED, IAN BURKITT (BRICKLAYER FOR THE NATIONAL TRUST’S SOUTH DERBYSHIRE TEAM) WAS ABLE TO UNDERTAKE THE REPAIRS TO THE BRICK-LINED PIT, REVEALING INTERESTING DETAILS OF ITS CONSTRUCTION. BEING A BRICKLAYER BY TRADE, IAN COULD IDENTIFY THE SMALL MISTAKES AND RECTIFICATIONS THAT WERE MADE DURING THE ORIGINAL CONSTRUCTION; BETWEEN US, DESPITE THE SUBSEQUENT MOVEMENT OF THE STRUCTURE OVER TIME, WE COULD SEE THAT THE ORIGINAL BUILDER HAD GOTTEN HIS LEVEL VERY SLIGHTLY OUT ON ONE SIDE OF THE STRUCTURE, AND ALSO HOW HE HAD TRIED TO FIX THIS. WE WERE ALSO ABLE TO IDENTIFY CLEARLY THE VARIOUS REPAIRS THAT HAD BEEN UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THE STABILITY OF THE STRUCTURE DURING ITS LIFETIME.

NOW SECURED AND IN A GOOD CONDITION, THE PUG MILL IS BOTH A TESTAMENT TO THE INDUSTRIAL PAST OF CALKE ABBEY AND ALSO TO THE SKILLS AND EXPERTISE OF THE NATIONAL TRUST’S SOUTH DERBYSHIRE BUILDING TEAM. THIS WORK COULD NOT HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED WITHOUT THEIR SKILLS—WE THANK THEM ALL FOR THEIR HARD WORK AND DEDICATION TO THE PROJECT.

RACHEL HALL, ARCHAEOLOGIST MIDLANDS (EAST)
Over the last two years the Petworth Park Archaeology Project—part of a Monument Trust-funded restoration scheme—has been working to unravel the historical development of the 280 hectare Petworth Park. A team of over a hundred volunteers has helped to undertake documentary research, field survey, geophysical surveys and geophysical surveys. These have revealed a complex sequence of expansion and identified a number of significant archaeological features preserved beneath a landscape crafted by Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown, ranging from magnificent 18th-century stables and the remains of the early manor house to medieval settlement sites which were demolished to make way for the designed landscape.

While documentary sources provide a valuable insight into the workings of the landscape from the 17th century onwards, the origins and early development of the parkland have largely remained the subject of conjecture. Recent excavations, however, are beginning to shed light on this poorly understood period of the Park’s history.

In 2013 a small evaluation trench, investigating a spread of Tudor pottery dug out by burrowing rabbits on Lawn Hill to the northwest of the house, identified substantial stone rubble foundations and fragmentary remains of brick revetting, as well as objects such as a spear, a bronze cavalry spur and a medieval token, all indicative of occupation on the site during the 16th century. It had previously been believed that the only occupation site within the Park lay around the footprint of the current mansion—certainly a building has been present on that site since the 14th century—but clearly the finds on Lawn Hill indicated otherwise.

In order to investigate this possibility a nine-day large-scale excavation was undertaken as part of the 2014 Festival of Archaeology with the assistance of up to twenty volunteers each day—they received training in archaeological excavation, recording and finds processing. The event was open to the public, and included daily guided tours of the site, video blogs and updates through social media, and a series of talks from archaeological specialists in areas such as remote sensing, geoarchaeology and zooarchaeology. Over 200 children from local schools visited the site, getting hands-on experience with excavation, finds washing and soil sieving, as well as following an archaeological trail through the parkland.

The excavations confirmed the results of the 2013 investigations, revealing the footprint of a substantial building, perhaps up to 20m², occupying a prominent position at the top of a steep slope with panoramic views over the parkland and beyond towards the Low Weald. The building had brick floors, still preserved in situ, and was divided into a number of rooms; the low walls would have supported a timber-framed structure with a clay peg tile roof. Fragments of wall plaster hint at the finish of the building, while the presence of lead window cames suggests glazed windows. A hammered silver coin dating to 1565 and a token in support of Mary Queen of Scots provide strong dating evidence for this building: it is likely to have stood during the Elizabethan period at some time from 1550 to 1600. The nature of the building materials and the artefacts—including fragments of glass drinking vessels—all point to a site of some status.

In the final days of the excavation it became clear that this structure had been erected over the footprint of an even earlier building.

From top left, clockwise: Volunteers excavate the Elizabethan building (in situ brick floor in foreground); recording archaeological features; work in the on-site finds tent; extensive views from the site; and the mysterious tower shown on a map of 1610.
Its substantial stone foundations indicate that it was at least one story of stone, most likely with timber stories above this. It has been suggested that in the aftermath of the Norman invasion some form of defensive structure might have been built at Petworth. The site on Lawn Hill—known to have been the historic core of the parkland—would have afforded strategic views over the town of Petworth and the major east-west and north-south roads, as well as a large stretch of the navigable River Rother. The excavations offered a tantalising glimpse into what may be the very earliest origins of the Park, but further excavation will be needed to confirm this.

The Elizabethan building presents a series of possible interpretations. It seems to have stood for only a relatively short time before being systematically taken down; the shallow soils covering the site attest to the removal of almost all organic material—this was not a building which decayed and collapsed over time. It could relate to a banqueting house known to have been built by Henry VIII during his ownership of the Park, or perhaps to the visit made by Edward VI in 1552—perhaps the building was thrown up to accommodate his retinue.

Or perhaps the building was erected for the Earl of Northumberland. The Earls of Northumberland (one of the most powerful and wealthy families in medieval England) had owned the Park through much of the medieval period. In 1576 the family was compelled to leave their vast northern estates and come south to live at Petworth—a result of their Catholic leanings and involvement in the Northern Rebellion of 1569 against Elizabeth I. The building on Lawn Hill might have been temporary accommodation for the Earl, a renovation of an existing but outdated stone building while the main manor house was modernised—at a cost, we know, of nearly £7,000 over the next five years.

Another intriguing possibility is that the building was part of an attempt to curry favour with Elizabeth I. The 9th Earl of Northumberland was keen to repair the family’s relationship with the monarch, who appears to have been planning to visit in the 1580s. It was not uncommon for a grand banqueting house or hunting lodge to be built in advance of such a visit in an attempt to impress, but Elizabeth then delivered a deliberate and damning snub to the Earl in by-passing Petworth on her tour. With no use for the building, which might by then have served only as a bitter reminder to the Earl, he perhaps had it taken down and the materials recycled elsewhere on the estate. A mysterious tower, shown on a map of 1610, may be the last glimpse of this forgotten building—by 1625 it had disappeared.

As is so often the case, the excavations have raised more questions than they have answered. Documentary sources will need to be re-assessed, and further excavations undertaken. But in discovering two phases of previously unknown occupation, the work has prompted important discussions about the origins and early history of the Park and has placed it in the wider context of a particularly tumultuous period of religion, politics and power in English history.

Tom Dommett, Regional Archaeologist, National Trust

Artefacts from the excavations. From bottom left: a medieval French ‘jeton’ or token; a hammered silver coin dated to 1565; a token bearing the inscription ‘God Save the Queen’, showing support for Queen Mary; and a 16th-century bowl and flagon, as left when they were broken over 400 years ago.