It used to be that visitors to historic houses had a clear idea of what they might expect upon walking through the doors—interiors which were relatively unchanging, that aimed to create a sense of the tastes and personalities of the family, and of how life was lived or the collections were displayed in the house at certain moments.

Although this remains true, over the last two decades or so this comfortable familiarity has begun to be challenged in many National Trust properties, and in other historic houses too, as changing exhibitions and other interventions have become more common. These both offer something new and different to audiences, many of whom (in the Trust at least) are repeat visitors, and also create opportunities to showcase research or conservation projects, or objects not permanently on display, not to mention sometimes startling juxtapositions of old and new.

But whilst changing exhibition programmes are an accepted part of life in the museum world, managing temporary displays in the context of historic houses is often more challenging, particularly since they are often not physically set up for such activity. And since in this context the setting is all, it is also vital that exhibitions are relevant, and that they enhance or extend the visitors’ experience, offering a genuine and new insight into an aspect of the property’s life or history, whilst respecting the ‘spirit of place’.

At Waddesdon Manor, which was built by Ferdinand de Rothschild from 1874 to house his collection of 18th-century paintings and decorative arts and to entertain the fashionable world, changing exhibitions and temporary displays were initiated when the house re-opened after the Centenary Restoration in 1994. In that first season, the Dining Room was dressed with a historically accurate recreation of an 18th-century dessert table, followed by an exhibition of the famous artist-designed Twelve silver dinner plates by George Hindmarsh, London, 1740 with shaped borders of tied reeding and engraved with the arms of Robert Child (1739-1783) impaling those of his wife Sarah, née Joddrell (1742-1793), have been purchased from Christopher Hartop with grants from a fund set up by the late the Hon. Simon Sainsbury and from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund.
wine labels commissioned every year by the great Rothschild vineyard Chateau Mouton Rothschild. Indeed, parts of the house were specifically arranged, during the restoration project, to accommodate exhibitions, most of which were drawn from the collections, such as selections from over 2000 drawings which cannot be permanently on display for conservation reasons.

More recently, these exhibition possibilities have been extended by creating a bespoke gallery space at the Stables in the former Coach House, which allows more flexibility in programming and offers more to those who visit the grounds, over half of whom do not come into the Manor. Since then, the number and range of exhibitions has increased. Other spaces in the house are also used for changing displays: for example, in 2012 an upstairs anteroom was transformed into a gallery for an international loan exhibition on Jean-Baptiste-Siméon Chardin, which celebrated a new addition to the collections of his painting *A boy building a house of cards*. 'Taking Time: Chardin’s *Boy building a house of cards* and other paintings’ brought together the three other versions of the same subject for the first time, along with other Chardins from Rothschild collections.

Another aspect, one in which Waddesdon is not alone in the Trust, is the showing of contemporary art, which excites, intrigues and alarms visitors in almost equal measure (the quotation in the title of this piece comes from a contemporary exhibition evaluation). A constant question is one of relevance, since the Rothschild who created Waddesdon had little interest in contemporary art, and certainly did not collect it. The answer for us is that the Manor has always reflected the interests and tastes of the family members associated with it, and the present generation, particularly Lord Rothschild, are active patrons of contemporary art.

The exhibiting of contemporary work at Waddesdon comes about partly through new acquisitions and also through encouraging contemporary artists to respond to the place in site-specific ways, thus transforming the whole property, potentially, into an exhibition. Waddesdon’s first major foray into this realm came with a collaboration in 2012 with the potter and author Edmund de Waal. Working with contemporary artists leads to other interesting dialogues with historic collections. In 2013 we collaborated with the Holburne Museum, Bath and with the Catalan artist Joan Sallas, who has almost single-handedly revived the historic art of decorative linen folding; we recreated the extraordinary sculptures in napery which were used as table decorations, based on 17th-century German documentary sources. The work, displayed in the dining rooms, took visitors through a chronological development, ending in Sallas’s own contemporary creations.

This year, the theme takes the form of a trail by photographer and educator Jan Dunning. In ‘Rascal Shadows’, Dunning has imagined the Manor through the eyes of the children evacuated to Waddesdon in World War II through a series of playful models and photographs of the rooms, culminating in a camera obscura in one of the turrets. The textiles and lace collections are also the starting point for a project, ‘Lace 21’, with a group of lace makers, whose members made an astonishingly eclectic range of pieces inspired by the collections and the architecture of the building. This has been combined with a programme of demonstrations and opportunities for visitors to try their hand at lace making, a collaboration which both shows Waddesdon’s collections in a different light and gives the lace makers an opportunity to showcase their art.

Using interior spaces for changing displays is only a part of the story. As other Trust properties are also demonstrating very successfully, gardens offer huge potential and sometimes a broader and less fragile canvas, although the physical impact of exhibitions on a carefully maintained garden should certainly not be underestimated. At Waddesdon, ‘Art in the Garden’ was a five-year initiative launched in 2000: artists were invited to design two of the carpet beds on the Parterre, one of the showpieces of the garden.
More recently, artists such as Philippa Lawrence have created schemes linking outside and inside, through installations such as ‘Darning the Land: Sewn’, inspired by her observations of the textile collections. In 2012, the year of the Chardin exhibition, we collaborated with Christie’s on a major exhibition of contemporary sculpture, linked to the theme of the house of cards painting. The visitor response to this was mixed—there was much positive comment, often from families, about how refreshing it was to see contemporary art in such a setting, tempered by those for whom it seemed at best irrelevant and at worst distasteful.

Historic properties, both inside and out, are also wonderful settings for more ephemeral displays such as light art. This has proved both interesting and fruitful at Waddesdon. A three-year residency with the British artist Bruce Munro, launched in 2013 during the six-week Christmas season, brought in 50,000 extra visitors to view an exhibition of six site-specific installations forming a trail around the grounds. The logistics for this kind of enterprise can be challenging—managing large numbers of people in the dark is not what most National Trust properties are set up to do—but the visitor response was almost universally positive, and it also succeeded in drawing a new audience: 15% of those surveyed came specifically to see the exhibition.

The 2014 crop of exhibitions at Waddesdon may seem eclectic, but all have a connection to the place and its history, including themes inspired by the collections and exhibitions involving objects on loan from elsewhere, and in some cases drawing in outside expertise in the form of guest curators. One of these is ‘Fame and Friendship: Pope, Roubiliac and the portrait bust in 18th-century Britain’, a collaboration with the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, which will unite eight marble portraits of the poet Alexander Pope by the pre-eminent sculptor Louis François Roubiliac. The exhibition will explore how celebrity and friendships were celebrated through sculpture and the central role of repetition in 18th-century sculptural practice. The links to the permanent collections of sculpture, including pieces on loan from the private collection, are clear.

The links to Waddesdon’s collections are perhaps less obvious in an exhibition centred on a 3rd-century Roman mosaic from Lod in Israel, a collaboration with the Israel Antiquities Authority. Waddesdon is not rich in classical antiquities, but the exhibition does highlight the Rothschild family’s connection to Israel and in particular their role in archaeological exploration in the region. Other exhibitions focus on the 18th-century French books in the collection, highlighting the beautiful illustrated examples published for court festivities, celebrations and spectacles, many marking royal births, marriages, deaths and coronations, whilst ‘Waddesdon at War’ is part of the national commemoration this year of the 100th anniversary of the Great War, looking at how the house and family were affected by the conflict.

A significant factor in initiating an exhibition programme is cost, which can be considerable, particularly if bringing in pieces loaned from abroad or large, heavy pieces of sculpture. Insurance can be a major element, and we have been very grateful at Waddesdon for the support of the Government Indemnity Scheme which has made our recent major exhibitions possible. Exhibitions are also greedy of staff time and resources.

All these costs need to be balanced against the benefits. Waddesdon’s programme, underwritten by the Rothschild Foundation, is intended to raise profile, showcase research, and enhance enjoyment and footfall, particularly that of repeat visitors, rather than to be seen as a commercial activity. From visitor evaluations carried out to date, exhibitions do appear to have an impact on numbers—visitors to the house during the Chardin exhibition, for example, increased by 10%. A lively exhibitions programme also increases press and publicity exposure and opportunities for digital and social media activity. The model is different to that in most museums and galleries, where exhibitions are ticketed and are an important part of the income stream. The pros and cons of charging in the context of a membership organisation like the Trust can be debated; but overall the experience at Waddesdon suggests that curating a temporary exhibition programme can illuminate historic collections in a unique way and play a valuable part in bringing a historic house and collection to life.

Pippa Shirley, Head of Collections, Waddesdon Manor

For details of this year’s exhibitions visit www.waddesdon.org.uk
EASTERN IMAGES IN WESTERN INTERIORS
Chinese wallpaper in the historic houses of the National Trust

The geographical spread of the National Trust’s collections is both a curse and a blessing: a curse because it makes it more difficult to look after and study them, in comparison with a conventional museum; and a blessing because the historical context of individual houses helps to explain the significance of individual objects. The cultural microcosm of a country house embeds works of fine art in the social, economic, political and intellectual traditions of a certain family network, but it also deepens the experience of items of decorative art by providing evidence of why objects were acquired and how they were appreciated.

Chinese wallpapers provide a clear demonstration of these problems and opportunities. The Chinese wallpapers in the care of the National Trust have not previously been investigated as a group, partly because they are spread across the country, partly because they are ‘hidden in plain sight’ as decorative fixtures, and partly because, as hybrid ‘Chinese export’ objects, they are more challenging to categorise and evaluate.

Andrew Bush, the National Trust’s paper conservation adviser, had told me that reports had been written on many of these Chinese wallpapers on the occasions when they had received conservation treatment. About a year and a half ago I suggested to him that we might produce a small illustrated catalogue of these wallpapers, bringing together the information in these reports together with some analysis of their appearance, details about which rooms they hung in, and when and by whom they had been introduced. This would not only define and document the National Trust’s holdings in this area, but might also help to clarify some historical and stylistic trends—especially since the number of substantial publications dealing with Chinese wallpapers is limited.1

We were soon joined as co-author by Dr Helen Clifford, who is currently connected to the East India Company at Home research project sponsored by University College London and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. With our respective specialisms we could therefore attempt a multi-disciplinary analysis of Chinese wallpaper. It also quickly became apparent that other conservators, curators and academics were interested in and knowledgeable about aspects of this subject, and this led to the formation of an informal international study group.

This research network has enabled us to compare the National Trust’s Chinese wallpapers with similar examples owned by other individuals and institutions elsewhere in Europe and the United States. By using the limited number of wallpapers with securely documented dates as a guide, we found that early Chinese wallpapers, from around 1750, were partly printed and partly-hand painted, whereas from the 1760s onwards they tended to be completely hand-painted—a slightly counter-intuitive finding for which we as yet do not know the reason. We discovered evidence of near-identical wallpapers in different houses, and even in different countries, attesting to the highly developed and widespread trade in these luxury items—although once again we do not as yet have much real evidence as to exactly how this trade operated and developed.

It also became obvious that the earlier wallpapers are more ‘painterly’, that is to say closer in appearance to traditional Chinese paintings and prints, whereas the later examples, especially the 19th-century ones, show more evidence of stylisation and seem more like design products than works of art. Members of the study group with expertise in Chinese art showed us how wallpaper fits into the larger context of Chinese art history, as an offshoot of the work of the ‘professional’ painters, a category of artists who supplied pictures for social, religious and ritual occasions. Although these wallpapers were specifically made for export and were to a certain extent tailored to the western customers’ tastes, they largely deployed the same style and iconography as ‘Chinese’ art and design.

In view of the fact that the European buyers of these wallpapers had a very limited understanding of Chinese symbolism, we also tried to analyse what their significance would have been in the context of the British country house. We found that they were overwhelmingly hung in bedrooms, dressing rooms and drawing rooms2, that is to say the spaces that tended to have a feminine identity and a social function. This is relevant to the emerging research into the role that the idea of ‘China’ played in the development of feminine taste and identity in Britain in the 17th and 18th centuries.3

We hope that the catalogue will be a starting point for further research. The discussions among the members of the study group continue to throw up new ideas, questions and information. Our next aim is to organise a conference in order to aggregate the available expertise and bring more of it into the public domain.

Emile de Bruijn, Registrar (Collections and Grants)

2 We found that about 40 per cent of the Chinese wallpapers in the houses of the National Trust were hung in bedrooms, about 35 per cent in dressing rooms, and about 25 per cent in drawing rooms.
3 One recent study that specifically deals with the role of chinoiserie in the emergence of the concept of taste in Britain and of British feminine identity is Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins, A Taste for China: English Subjectivity and the Prehistory of Orientalism, New York, Oxford University Press, 2013.
A RICH VEIN OF RESEARCH MATERIAL
A surprising collection of historic wallpapers at Oxburgh Hall

A remarkable collection of 126 wallpapers spanning the mid 18th to mid 20th centuries can be found in the unexpected setting of a medieval manor house on the edge of the Fens in East Anglia. Oxburgh Hall is a Grade I listed early Tudor house in south west Norfolk and has been the family seat of the prominent Catholic Bedingfeld family for over 500 years. It has been owned and managed by the National Trust since 1952.

For many years the wallpapers, in rolls and smaller samples, have lain overlooked in boxes in the attics. However, a National Trust project to learn more about the papers is now revealing more about the building’s history and about the lives of the family who lived there.

For my Master of Studies in Building History at the University of Cambridge in 2012-13, I undertook archival research to investigate the origins of Oxburgh’s wallpapers in order to add to our knowledge of the building and social history of this romantic medieval house. I was fortunate to join a project team already established under the guidance of Anna Forrest, Curator at the National Trust East of England office, involving Teresa Squires, General Manager and Elizabeth Cooper, House Manager at Oxburgh Hall, and employing the expertise of the wallpaper conservator Allyson McDermott, whose technical and historical analysis of the wallpapers provided important contextual insight. I also drew heavily on the English Heritage Report on Oxburgh Hall, written by Adam Menuge in 2006.

‘Enchanting architectural pageantry’

Oxburgh Hall was completed in 1482 for Sir Edmund Bedingfeld. In 1487 Henry VII is believed to have stayed in its majestic gatehouse, which has been described as ‘one of England’s most enchanting pieces of architectural pageantry’ (fig. 1).

In the late 18th century, the 4th Baronet, Sir Richard Bedingfeld, employed the architect John Tasker to remodel Oxburgh Hall in the classical style.

Only sixty years later the 6th Baronet, Henry Bedingfeld, instructed the Gothic Revival architect John Chessell Buckler to undo that work and restore Oxburgh’s medieval character. The re-Gothicisation of Oxburgh Hall began in 1830 and continued under the 7th Baronet up to the 1860s.

By the mid 20th century the cost of maintaining Oxburgh Hall became onerous and it was put up for sale. A property developer acquired the estate, but the redoubtable Sybil, Lady Bedingfeld enlisted friends and family to help buy it back. In 1952 Oxburgh Hall was given to the National Trust, under an agreement allowing the Bedingfeld family to remain in residence.

A cornucopia of periods, patterns and styles

There is a wide range of wallpapers at Oxburgh Hall, including many Gothic Revival and late 19th-century examples—the illustrations show wallpapers from the Small Dining Room (fig. 2), the Bedingfeld’s Dining Room (fig. 3) and the North Bedroom (fig. 4).

The earliest sample in the archive is a chintz paper, originally used in the Drawing Room and likely to have been supplied by the wallpaper manufacturer Thomas Bromwich in 1775 (fig. 5).

In contrast, among the later wallpapers is a light and airy 20th-century design of birds, birdcages, flowers and leaves in pastel colours on pink ground, made c.1950 by Paul Dumas of Paris (fig. 6).
Cowtan & Sons, suppliers to Oxburgh Hall

The London decorating firm Cowtan & Sons was one of the most prolific suppliers of wallpapers to royalty, aristocracy and many of the grandest estates and families of the UK, as well as wealthy overseas customers. Cowtan’s wallpaper order books dating from 1824-1938 are now held at the Victoria & Albert Museum.

Six wallpapers were supplied by Cowtan to Oxburgh Hall in five separate orders from 1831 to 1905. The earliest is for a wallpaper of trompe l’oeil plasterwork design on a red ground; this remains in situ in the corridor between the North Bedroom and the Boudoir (figs. 7 and 8). Analysis of layers of paper in the Boudoir has revealed that this paper was used there too. It is interesting that the Oxburgh paper is the same design as a wallpaper that was found in a grace-and-favour apartment at Hampton Court Palace.

The second Cowtan order for Oxburgh, dated 1838, shows a flock foliate design against a red ground that has not yet been found at the Hall. The third Cowtan order shows two wallpapers, a flock with a fleur-de-lys and lozenge pattern in an earth brown colour which was intended for the Library, and a design with a crown against an embossed buff ground for the Staircase and Hall (fig. 9). A sample of the paper specified for the Library is held in the Oxburgh archive (fig. 10), and the Boudoir is now decorated in a 20th-century copy of this wallpaper in a dark brown.

The fourth Cowtan order is for a trellis design with shamrock, daisies and thistles in light brown on a dark brown ground. It includes the initials ‘S&C’, likely to be Scott, Cuthbertson & Co of Chelsea, who printed wallpaper for Crace and Pugin at the Houses of Parliament.

The final Cowtan order for Oxburgh Hall is for a square-paned design of pale grey leaves and petals against a red ground (fig. 11). The same paper was discovered by Allyson McDermott in 2013 beneath a 20th-century damask and above at least one wood-grain paper in the West Cloister Corridor at Oxburgh Hall (fig. 12).

The orders for Oxburgh Hall in Cowtan’s books provide new information about the origins of some of the wallpapers. My research also considered whether there is evidence of the influence of the architect, designer and critic A.W.N. Pugin in the designs of wallpapers at Oxburgh. His favoured motifs reflect medieval heraldry and symbolism, such as the fleur-de-lys and the Tudor rose, and recur in his designs for wallpapers, tiles and textiles.

The National Trust’s catalogue for Oxburgh uses the phrases ‘made by J.D. Crace to a design by Pugin,’ ‘Crace after Pugin,’ and ‘possibly produced by Crace after Pugin’ for number of wallpaper samples. Indeed, there are several examples of wallpapers at Oxburgh Hall that have elements of Pugin’s decorative style in their design. Oxburgh Hall’s red flock Saloon wallpaper is an almost identical design to a watercolour sketch for a wallpa-
per design by Pugin in the Victoria & Albert Museum (fig. 13). A wallpaper sample in the Oxburgh Hall archive with a design of fleur-de-lys, Tudor roses, crowns and trellis on an ultramarine blue ground (fig. 14) is remarkably similar to a Pugin wallpaper sample held at the Victoria & Albert Museum. The National Trust describes the Oxburgh sample as ‘possibly produced by Crace, after Pugin. c.1850.’

**Future exploration**

The wallpapers of Oxburgh Hall provide a rich vein of material for research that has already shone light on many different aspects of the building’s history and the Bedingfeld family’s experience of living there.

For the National Trust, this is the start of a voyage of discovery. An exhibition entitled ‘Oxburgh’s Wallpapers—Peeling back the layers of time’ opened at Oxburgh Hall in February and continues until November 2014. Further work will allow the exhibition to be renewed annually, encouraging people to revisit. A digital display is planned to give visitors further access to the history of the wallpapers. More widely across the Trust, public interest in the decorative arts has encouraged the use of wallpaper designs, including some from Oxburgh, on a range of new products that will soon go on sale in Trust shops and at other retailers.

At Oxburgh, there remains much to investigate, such as the 14 layers of wallpaper found in the Marian Hangings Room and the Chinese paper found in a suite of rooms above the Saloon, while the Hall’s extensive leather wall hangings would merit a separate study in their own right.

Inspired by studying the wallpapers found in this medieval manor house, I have now embarked on a PhD in Architecture at the University of Cambridge, researching the significance and impact of Cowtan & Sons, including the firm’s contribution to the growth of the business and craft of wallpaper design, manufacture and installation in the UK, Ireland, Europe, USA and the former British Empire.

With thanks to Frances Rankine, Curator of Prints, and colleagues at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London
REWARDING STUDIES AT OSTERLEY PARK
Insights into architectural *papier maché* manufacturing techniques

A close look at re-discovered fragments of *papier maché* fillets has revealed secrets relating to their manufacture. Documented 18th-century architectural *papier maché* schemes are perhaps not particularly rare survivors in historic houses, and there are, no doubt, many more examples obscured under thick paint that we are unaware of. But it is often because of these overlying layers of paint that there is seldom the opportunity to study the material itself, its composition and make-up. Workshop recipes and techniques were written down in the 18th century, but nothing compares with taking a close look at surviving examples and comparing our observations with the descriptions in those contemporary sources. Fragments of decorative fillets from the Breakfast Room at Osterley Park have given us the opportunity for such a comparison (Fig. 1).

Sir Thomas Gresham's Tudor mansion was transformed by Robert Adam from 1761, and research is currently being undertaken to give a greater understanding of this re-fitting. It seems likely that the *papier maché* fillets in the Breakfast Room just pre-date Adam’s work. Whilst the finer details of workshop practices would no doubt have been trade secrets, close examination of the fragments has allowed us to compare the manufacture of the fillets with the processes described in Robert Dossie’s *The Handmaid to the Arts*, 1764, paraphrased below:

*Paper is reduced to pulp by boiling and beating, which is mixed with gum/adhesive and cast in moulds of plaster or wood. For work with a modelled surface, plaster is preferable to wood.*

The Breakfast Room fillets are 45mm wide and up to 7mm deep; it is not known whether they were cast from plaster or wooden moulds.

*Any kind of paper can be used, for very coarse purposes brown paper, for the most nice writing paper is best, it is of little difference whether clean, foul, written, printed or blank. The gum or adhesive to give texture may be gum-arabic, glue or isinglass, but for common purposes gum Arabic or glue are used, isinglass being too dear, and indeed gum-arabic has an advantage over all of not shrinking so much in drying.*

Preparation: Take paper, boil in water, stir till pasty and even. Pour off the water, beat it in a mortar until perfectly soft and yielding. Meanwhile prepare a strong gum water by dissolving gum Arabic in water. Press the greatest part of water out of the pulp, add the gum water to produce the consistency of a thick fluid, boil slowly till they form a paste, use a thinner consistency for more modelled work. The *papier maché* will then be ready for the moulds, which should be very well greased, otherwise mould and cast will be damaged.

Fig. 2 shows a cross section at the narrowest part of the moulding; the main area of paper fibres, with its many voids, is the *papier maché*. There are two distinctly different tones of fibre, perhaps representing two applications of pulp, along with what appears to be a top dressing of adhesive.

Where a cast is of ‘considerable extension’ and the reverse side is blank, as for bas reliefs, and of ‘other ornaments of that nature’, it is useful to lay ‘slips of whole strong paper over the *papier maché*; such paper being first well moistened with gum water, or strong...
size, which is rather better in this case. This reduces the cost, but more importantly it increases strength, particularly during drying; the applied paper should, however, be very strong, and where possible 'laid on several times doubled'.

Up to three layers of thin paper were applied as sheets over the Breakfast Room fillets; Fig. 3 shows where the moist sheets have been moulded in towards the underlying layers of pulp. Examination of three other designs of papier maché fillet at Osterley Park and one from Kedleston Hall show that there are often voids between the pulp layers and the paper sheet additions. Adhesion between these two layers was often not great. This is demonstrated by many areas where the blue paint of the initial decorative scheme in the Breakfast Room has penetrated between these layers from the cut edge. One of the final stages of production was to trim the outer edges of the moulding, and in the case of the fillet illustrated, to cut the pierced areas once dried and out of the mould. Signs of slight 'overcutting' can be seen in Fig. 1. The fragile fillets for the Breakfast Room have fixing holes for pins at intervals of approximately 55mm.

Many of the fillets at Osterley Park were gilded, but not all of them started out with this finish. In 1772 when Mrs Agneta Yorke visited she noted that the Breakfast Room was 'lemon colour, with blew ornaments'. The blue can be clearly seen in the illustrations, and analysis has shown it to be blue verditer. This copper-based blue was a popular decorators’ paint; however, its green cast tended to increase on exposure, and this may account for the subsequent re-decoration. It is interesting to note that where the paint has remained unexposed (as in the cross section), and where it has seeped between the layers of the papier maché fillet, it appears blue, but where it is exposed on the reverse it appears green. The blue verditer was subsequently covered by a white chalk/gesso layer and a sealant layer; a thin yellow bole or oil layer was then added, over which the gold layer was applied and varnished.\footnote{1 James Finlay: internal report.}

Research in the Breakfast Room is still proceeding, and its progress can be followed on its blog.\footnote{4 http://osterleybreakfastroom.wordpress.com/} The author would be glad to hear of research being undertaken on similar papier maché ornaments.

Andrew Bush, National Trust Paper Conservation Adviser

1 James Finlay: internal report.
2 The well-regarded standard reference for craftsmen and artists of the period.
3 Analysis by Dr Tracey Chaplin of Forensic Art History.
4 http://osterleybreakfastroom.wordpress.com/

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THE PURCHASE OF THE MOUNT STEWART LIBRARY

A hugely important library, dating back two centuries, has been secured at Mount Stewart in County Down. The news comes after the team in Northern Ireland secured almost £100,000 in funding to purchase the important collection from the estate of the late Lady Mairi Bury.

Jon Kerr, General Manager at Mount Stewart, has stated that this is a highly significant collection. ‘The library gives a unique insight into the reading and book-buying habits of a powerful and influential family from the 18th to the 20th century. It is possible through the books to trace the history of this famous house and its owners, including Edith, Marchioness of Londonderry, who created the famous gardens. The library contains thousands of books on a wide range of subjects, including Lady Londonderry’s truly magnificent collection of Irish books and her many books on gardening, architecture, archaeology and mythology, which clearly relate to the creation of the inspirational garden you can see today at Mount Stewart.’

The books will be displayed in their original setting in 2015 when Mount Stewart is to be fully revealed after a £7.1 million conservation project begun by the Trust in 2012, which will secure the legacy of this special building for future generations.

Sean Sawyer, Executive Director of the Royal Oak Foundation, a principal funder of the project, said: ‘The Mount Stewart Library contains a wide range of important books that would not normally be available through public collections in Northern Ireland. This will open up some very important pieces of history to further research and will enable the information to be made public. For this reason, we were very pleased to get involved with this important project and, along with the Breslauer Foundation, to provide significant funding to help secure the legacy of this historic collection at Mount Stewart.’

The funding for the library collection was secured through a range of donations including those made by the Royal Oak Foundation, the BH Breslauer Foundation, Northern Ireland Museums Council, Friends of the National Libraries, Doreen Burns, and Terence and Di Kyle.

Yvonne Lewis, Assistant Libraries Curator
PAINTER IN THE PARK: GEORGE QUINTON

A series of watercolours revealing Ickworth’s ‘in-between’ years

Four early 19th-century watercolours by the little-known artist George Quinton (c.1778-1835) have recently been acquired for Ickworth, Suffolk. Dated 1804, they depict the parkland setting of Ickworth House at a critical point of transition following the death in 1803 of the visionary ‘Earl Bishop’ Frederick Hervey, 4th Earl of Bristol. The Earl Bishop was succeeded by his son Frederick William, 5th Earl and later 1st Marquess of Bristol, whose contribution to the design and setting out of the park and gardens at Ickworth has been recognised as being of ‘primary conservation significance’ (Eburne, A., The Gardens of Ickworth House, Suffolk. Unpub. 2009). These four picturesque views of the park show it at a point in time before the 1st Marquess’s plans had taken shape, and contain valuable evidence for the appearance of the landscape and buildings before his campaign of works.

An account of Quinton’s formative years is given in volume 67 of The Gentleman’s Magazine, dated 1797. He grew up in Wetheringsett, Suffolk, where he worked as a shepherd; ‘the scenes of Nature at once afforded the subjects to employ his genius, and the materials which he had not wealth to purchase. Plants supplied their juices, and surrounding objects glowed in colours from the hands of the shepherd’s boy, which soon received a pencil, a present from a respectable young clergyman’. At the age of 17 he was given a set of engraving tools, with which he produced an engraving of the Magdalene Asylum, after a painting by Thomas Duché. This work won Quinton a prize of one hundred pounds, which he used to pay for proper tuition. For some years he worked as a clerk and draughtsman for the Board of Agriculture before being employed from 1815 to 1833 as secretary to Scottish politician Sir John Sinclair, whose daughters Quinton occasionally taught to paint. The Memoirs of the late Right Honourable John Sinclair (1837) comment on Quinton’s ‘wearisome and mechanical’ instruction and ‘great difficulty in expressing himself’, and give a full description of his many other eccentricities, including his preference for writing to people (even those in the same household) rather than actually talking to them.

It is not known in what capacity Quinton visited Ickworth. Whether he made a visit to this estate in his home county for his own artistic inspiration, or was asked to paint the scenes by a third party, is not clear. At the Suffolk Records Office there are Quinton paintings of three other country houses in the Bury St Edmunds area—Barton Park, Troston Hall, and Bradfield Hall—dated between 1802 and 1814. The unfinished Ickworth House became something of a tourist attraction in the years between the Earl Bishop’s death and the commencement in the 1820s of the 1st Marquess’s building works. Perhaps curiosity was what brought Quinton to Ickworth.

The scene entitled Ruins in Ickworth Park (Fig. 1) is dated 13 November 1804. The inclusion of Ickworth Church and the belt of trees encircling the walled garden would locate Quinton in an area to the southwest of the house, near the boundary of the woodland walk known as the ‘Albana’. The exact place from which it was painted is uncertain, as the features in the foreground are not recognisable in today’s landscape. It is possible that Quinton combined two views in order to make a more pleasing composition. The ancient oak trees in the scene are old pollards, and Quinton’s rendering of the gnarled bark and dark wood is useful evidence for this centuries-old woodland management practice at Ickworth. It is tempting to think that Quinton’s humble beginnings as a shepherd drawing inspiration from ‘scenes of Nature’ make his detailed depictions of the landscape all the more reliable. He has introduced several picturesque elements into the scene, including shed fallow deer antlers and a child dragging a branch behind her as she follows her family, who appear to be carrying firewood—perhaps exercising their common right to collect wood in the park. The most intriguing feature is the rubble wall, with a plaque at its base. The only ruin for which we have evidence in the parkland is the old Rectory, which in this location would be at some distance from the church. It is unlikely that Quinton invented this feature for effect, but its identity remains a mystery. The depression in the ground behind the ruin is also difficult to interpret, and could be either a pond or a quarry.

The second view (Fig. 2) was painted from a point a little further south from Ruins in Ickworth Park. It is titled simply Ickworth...
Park, and the most striking feature of this scene is Ickworth's Rotunda, built before the Earl Bishop's death to a design adapted by Francis Sandys from an original proposal by Mario Asprucci the Younger (1764-1804). It stands in splendid isolation on the crest of the hill, its interiors yet to be completed and the two curving wings and East and West Pavilions yet to be built. The foreground of this scene may record some of the newest planting in the park: between 1800 and 1803 various payments were made for contract planting (including evergreens), and in 1804 a sum of £106 9s 3d was expended on 'planting'. However, no contemporary map evidence exists to compare with the painting, and mid-19th-century maps do not show these trees. Perhaps they were simply added by Quinton to improve the composition of the foreground. To the right of the scene stands Ickworth Church which had been 'beautified' in 1778 by the 3rd Earl of Bristol, and its steeple rebuilt. Quinton's view shows that the steeple was a short-lived feature, and had already been removed by 1804—a previously unknown terminus ante quem. If Quinton's painting is reliable, the church had also been rendered by this date. A number of small payments had been made to Capability Brown by the 2nd and 3rd Earls between 1769 and 1776. There is no record of the work these payments relate to, but he may have designed vistas near to the church and walled garden. Quinton's painting potentially provides significant evidence for park planting and design in the 18th century.

Quinton ventured further into the estate to paint a view looking back towards the Rotunda from a point close to the southern boundary of the park (Fig 3). In the foreground of this untitled view is the charming Round House, and its inclusion in the scene provides new evidence for its date and original form. Previously dated to c.1830 and attributed to the 1st Marquess's building campaign, this building is clearly a very early example of a cottage ornée. The term was first used in 1805 by Robert Lugar to refer to a new style of rustic labourer's cottage. These commonly had deep overhanging roofs over a colonnade forming a veranda, with the columns often no more than tree trunks. Ickworth's Round House is now a two-storey building (Fig 4), the shallow roof of which had been thought to be an unusual feature and a conscious departure from the usual pattern book designs for such buildings. However, repair work to the cottage in 2009 revealed possible evidence for the first floor being a later addition, and now Quinton's painting provides proof that it was indeed originally designed as a single-storey building with a conical thatched roof, firmly adhering to the design conventions of a cottage ornée.

Quinton's fourth view (Fig 5) is titled Ickworth Old House. It depicts the façade of Ickworth Lodge, which was the Hervey family's main residence from 1702 to 1828. It was a converted farmhouse, extended by the 1st Earl of Bristol after the original Ickworth Hall (near Ickworth Church) had been allowed to fall into ruin by his troublesome aunt the Hon. Elizabeth Hervey. It was a notoriously inconvenient house. The architect Sir Thomas Robinson, who visited in 1731, described it as ‘a tenant’s old house in the park, so very bad a habitation that I am astonished how so large a family have so long made a shift in it’. Nevertheless, the 1st Marquess and his family had moved in to Ickworth Lodge by September 1803. Quinton's view shows the line of the original drive to the house meandering through an open landscape bordered by trees which have been browsed by cattle or deer. The view is framed by two very large parkland trees which had not been pollarded.

It is known that a fifth view of Ickworth was painted by Quinton in 1805 showing the Walled Garden from the south, but it was not part of the recent acquisition, and was unknown to the vendors. Closer analysis of all of these views and comparison with documentary evidence and today’s landscape will doubtless add to our understanding of this transformational period of Ickworth's history.

Anna Forrest, Curator, East of England
With grateful thanks to Angus Wainwright (East of England Regional Archaeologist), Shirley Jackson, Cyla Higley and family, Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers, Emile de Bruijn, and colleagues at Ickworth.
UNLOCKING A HIDDEN HISTORY AT KNOLE
Repairs and archaeology lead to an exciting programme of interpretation

Knole is regarded as one of the greatest of historic English mansions, set within its magnificent deer park. A bishop's palace, a royal house, and since 1603 the Sackville family home, the original 15th-century house was enlarged and embellished by the first Earl of Dorset, one of Queen Elizabeth I's favourites, and has remained relatively unaltered ever since.

Until recently there had been comparatively little archaeological work undertaken here; most of this had comprised small-scale evaluations and watching briefs during renovation and maintenance work. However, since 2007 our understanding has substantially increased. Building alterations within the Sackville family's south range apartments were the occasion for considerable opening-up work, and this was accompanied by a watching brief by Philip Dixon (in 2007-08), shedding new light on the development of the built structure. The Conservation Management Plan (commissioned from Oxford Archaeology in 2007, and revised in 2013) also incorporated an archaeological assessment of the house with phase plans, descriptions and recommendations for future research.

A major programme of repair work has recently been completed (‘Knole in Flux’: April 2012-January 2014), and the building recording work undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) on the eastern and southern ranges of the complex has greatly enhanced our knowledge of these areas. The removal of the roof tiles and battens meant that the structure of the attic levels across these ranges has now been examined in detail. Additionally, the cement render applied to the east front during the late Victorian period was also removed and replaced, allowing detailed recording to be made of the elevations of the first floor and attic levels. The urgent repair work as part of the ‘Knole in Flux’ project has revealed a number of hitherto unrecorded details which need to be investigated and understood. These include the eastern end of a gabled medieval structure surviving to roof level, immediately to the west of the Chapel; fragments of the early 16th-century decorative facade of the east front, with its unusual ovolo moulded window jambs (Fig 1); the S-shaped medieval wind braces of the Kitchen roof; and the discovery that there are at least twenty different phases of construction within the roofs of the eastern and southern ranges, dating from the 1440s through to the 20th century. Archaeological finds from within the roof spaces included a packet of cigarette papers dating to c.1915, a matchbox with a handwritten date of 1949 inside it, and a copy of an unauthorised biography of Marilyn Monroe!

The Brewhouse had previously been investigated by Peter Leach during the installation of the café in the early 1990s; further recording work has been undertaken in this area, and also in the Barn and Hayloft, as part of Oxford Archaeology’s (OA) work at the site. Below-ground investigations in these areas were undertaken by Archaeology South East (ASE) during enabling works. A trench dug across the threshold of the north door to the Barn (for the installation of services for the temporary catering facilities) revealed a small length of wall running beneath the Barn foundations, suggesting the possibility of an earlier structure in this area.

The recording work of the exterior of the building has been complemented by an accurate measured survey of the show rooms, and of the new spaces which will be open to the public as part of the major HLF-funded ‘Inspired by Knole’ project. This has included the recording of the floor plans, elevations and decorated plasterwork ceilings by MOLA’s Geomatics Team. Before the surveyors started to work in the house, they created a ‘control network’ around the outside of the whole complex, meaning that all the survey work undertaken within the house can be related to...
the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The rooms themselves were then surveyed using a total station (electronic theodolite/distance meter), collecting line data which recorded the walls, windows, fireplaces and other details to create a full record of each space. Where available, the results of an earlier laser scan of the rooms were also incorporated. This means that for the first time we have an accurate survey of these parts of the property. The raw data collected from this survey work is shown in Fig 2.

Alongside the survey and recording work undertaken by MOLA, we have also been working with Matthew Champion Associates to record the graffiti in the attic spaces. During the winter of 2012-13 over 250 individual graffiti, mostly dating to the 19th and 20th centuries, were recorded in the Upper Kings Room, the Second Painted Stairs Lobby, the South Barracks and the Retainers Gallery. The graffiti include individual names, dates, information about activities such as snow clearance and installation of services, architectural sketches, portraits (Fig 3), and drawings of birds, flowers and trees. This work has provided a greater understanding of the people who lived and worked at Knole, and complements the oral history project currently under way here. Further graffiti recording is scheduled to take place within the rooms of the Outer Wicket Tower during April 2014.

Most recently, selected areas of panelling and floorboards were opened so that we could better understand the building for the specification of repair and infrastructure works. This recording work, undertaken by MOLA, revealed finds under the floors such as 17th-century textile fragments, a lock of what may be human hair, carpenters’ marks, and inscriptions including witch marks and demon traps dating to c.1603-08, and parts of the building’s structure which have not been recorded before, such as evidence of medieval room partitions in the Cartoon Gallery and Upper King’s Room. This enabling work was completed in March 2014, and further investigation below the floorboards and behind the panelling will take place as part of the ‘Inspired by Knole’ programme from 2016 onwards.

Research work investigating Knole within its wider landscape context has also taken place over the last two years. Alistair Oswald of York University has been undertaking a landscape survey in the Park and Garden, examining features ranging in date from the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. Professor Matthew Johnson of Southampton University (UK)/Northwestern University (USA) is also now examining Knole as part of the wide-ranging ‘Elite Landscapes in Southeastern England’ project, which has already investigated the surroundings of Bodiam Castle, Ightham Mote and Scotney Castle.

In order to disseminate the results of the archaeological work generated as a result of the repair and building project, we are also running a public archaeology programme. This has so far included social media and newsletter updates, regular presentations to staff and volunteers, and a public lecture programme with speakers drawn from organisations we have been working with as described above. There have also been guided scaffold tours during the roof repair work and tours of the new spaces, lectures to local history and archaeology groups in Kent and East Sussex, and archaeology-themed activities as part of Knole’s ‘Family Mondays’. On 22 July there will be an annual Archaeology Day as part of the nationwide Festival of Archaeology organised by the Council for British Archaeology. This year’s event will explore ‘Knole before Knole’ and prehistory within the landscape. Once the educational facilities in the Hayloft have been completed, we will also be developing a programme of day workshops and other events. This year will also see the first intake to the Knole Unwrapped Archaeology programme – a community project which will train volunteers in archaeological methods and techniques so that they will be able to participate actively in both the recording and interpretation of Knole’s wonderful and complex archaeological stories.

Nathalie Cohen, Archaeologist, London and the South East

Fig 2. Raw survey data collected by MOLA

Fig 3. One of the over 250 recorded graffiti
THE VYNE AND A VERONESE ALTERPIECE

An enlightening journey to establish the origins of a painting

When I embarked on the research into the history of a small oil painting—a copy of a Veronese altarpiece—I was mostly interested in discovering how it had come into my family. It was only as the search progressed that I realised that there were other copies of the same painting: in fact, three were mentioned in the 1976 edition of Pignatti’s monograph on Veronese. This was not surprising—the original altarpiece had been painted in 1562 for the Sacristy in the Church of San Zaccaria and was later acknowledged as one of Veronese’s most accomplished early works in Venice. In 1788 the artist, collector and dealer Gavin Hamilton wrote: ‘I was in Venice in 1750 and shall never forget the beautiful painting by Paolo Veronese in San Zaccaria…’

The Grand Tour forms an important introduction to my book: it was the start of the journey of my copy of the Veronese altarpiece from Venice to Hamilton Palace in Scotland. Later it was sold by the Duke of Hamilton in the great sale of 1882 in London, and then through various owners reached my family in Sweden. My book became the story not only of how Italian art reached every part of Europe (and then the United States) during the 18th and 19th centuries, but also how families used their power and money in the collection of art.

I should not have been surprised when I found another copy of ‘my’ painting by chance. I was searching through the wonderful new resource launched by the Public Catalogue Foundation and promoted through the BBC as ‘Your Paintings—a photographic database of all paintings in public collections in the UK’. This is not something which has been achieved overnight; it represents the culmination of years of work by dedicated volunteers, in many cases, who have photographed every painting in every museum and other publicly accessible collections. As I scrolled through the Veroneses, what should I find but a copy of Madonna Enthroned with Saints by Veronese? This was at a National Trust property, The Vyne in Hampshire.

The National Trust has already added most of its collection of paintings to this database and proved most helpful when I visited The Vyne in May last year. The team from the paintings department happened to be at the house, and took down the painting. We examined it carefully in another room, and I was startled by its brightness—and difference! It had the same colour scheme and familiar figures as my copy, of course, but it was larger and quite clearly by a different hand. Even as an art history novice I could see that. In addition, it appeared to have been extended to the left by about an inch. Maybe this was done to fit a particular frame, we speculated. But there was little information about the painting on the inventories made when The Vyne and its collection were gifted to the National Trust in 1936.

At The Vyne the painting hangs in the drawing room, and there are other reminders of the Grand Tour throughout the house. There are copies of Renaissance paintings outside the Chapel, and among the family portraits I saw one by Rosalba Carrera, a favourite painter of 18th-century Grand Tour travellers. In one small room I spotted a display cabinet of rare Venetian glass. The caption confirmed that Sir John Chute had been in Venice in 1741 and had ordered these fine plates of latteino glass (opaque milky-white glass) engraved with Venetian scenes on the glass-making island of Murano.

The Vyne had once belonged to the Sandys family, but by the mid-18th century it was acquired by the Chutes. I found a history of the family online, written in 1888 by a descendant, Chaloner Chute, which included many letters between Horace Walpole, the great collector and enthusiastic letter writer, and John Chute. They had met on their travels and joined forces in the 1740s in Italy, spending time in Florence where John Chute had lived for several years. He was something of an amateur architect, and later became involved with Walpole in the decoration of his famous villa, Strawberry Hill (now restored and open to the public—Chute’s name appears in the library and in the little museum). They were clearly close friends; most tellingly, in one of the letters from Walpole to Chute, after Chute had inherited The Vyne from his father in 1754, Walpole provided advice, particularly in regard to the acquisition of more ‘catholic’ pictures for the Tudor Chapel. Chaloner Chute’s book also included an inventory of 1888 which referred to several ‘sacred pictures’ in the antechapel, and The Last Supper by Ferretti presented to John Chute by Walpole. Did he also obtain the copy of the Veronese altarpiece at this time? Or did John Chute bring it back from Venice or Florence?

Or could he have found it in Rome? It occurred to me much later that the Chute copy with the additional space to the left could in fact be a copy of the much larger copy of the Altarpiece which was in the Cardinal Pio collection, one of the founding collections of the Musei Capitolini in Rome, where it still is today.

This copy was mentioned by Pignatti, and I had seen it in the Musei Capitoline online gallery. With some persistence I had obtained a copy of the catalogue entry (in Italian) from the museum, which revealed that it was painted in 1666 by Giovanni Bonati for the Cardinal Francesco Pio. The artist Bonati was retained by the Cardinal; he sent Bonati to Venice so that he could improve his
techniques by learning from the great Venetians. This copy was large, 310 cm x 188 cm, almost the size of the original. Initially it seemed that Bonati could have made a smaller copy at the same time and sold it in Venice—this could be my painting, or the Chute copy. After all, he must have spent several days, if not weeks, in the Sacristy of the San Zaccaria Church on his large copy for the Cardinal. However, it was clear that my copy and the Chute copy were by different artists. But there was something else which did not occur to me until I was finishing my book.

I put the copies I had identified into a table, comparing the measurements. The Bonati copy had the wider strip to the left which was not in the original, changing the proportions of the work slightly. The Chute copy had the same ratio, and could therefore have been painted in Rome from the Bonati painting rather than the original. That would explain its squarer shape, whereas my copy, much smaller, followed the proportions of the original altarpiece.

Both Chute and Walpole had visited Rome as well as Venice and Florence. So the interesting possibility is that the Chute copy at The Vyne could have been painted by a Rome-based artist.

Ylva French

Sources
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www.bbc.co.uk/yourpaintings Public Catalogue Foundation
Chaloner Chute. A History of The Vyne, 1888 (online)
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The original Veronese Altarpiece from San Zaccaria is in the Veronese exhibition now at the National Gallery until 15 June 2014, and then travels to Verona.

Finding Veronese: Memoir of a Painting
Ylva French
Published as an e-book on Amazon.
To see the photographs visit www.ylvafrench.co.uk

ACQUISITIONS

ICKWORTH
Four silver ragout spoons by Elias Cachart, London, 1751 and 1754, Hanoverian pattern, engraved with an earl’s coronet and the Hervey crest for George William Hervey, 2nd Earl of Bristol (1721-1773), have been purchased at auction at Christie’s, New York with funds from the property and from gifts and bequests. Inv. no. 853248.

A view of the Rotunda and Ickworth church, by George Quinton, c.1804

A set of four watercolours depicting views of the park at Ickworth, by George Quinton, c.1804, has been purchased by private treaty with funds raised locally.

STANDEN
An Arts & Crafts door curtain with a provenance from Standen has been purchased at auction at Rosebery’s, West Norwood, partly funded from gifts and bequests.

A view of the Rotunda and Ickworth church, by George Quinton, c.1804

QUARRY BANK MILL
An early 19th-century album with poems, quotations, drawings and watercolours by members of the Greg family of Quarry Bank Mill has been purchased from James Cummins Bookseller, New York, with funds from bequests.

TŶ MAWR
A copy of Y Beibl Cyssegr Lan: Sef Yr Hen Destament, A'R Newydd, London, Christopher Barker, 1588, was purchased from Coleg Harlech with funds from gifts and bequests, donations from the Dyffryn Clwyd and Meirionnydd National Trust Associations and local gifts. This was the first complete Bible in the Welsh language, translated by William Morgan (1545-1604), Bishop of Llandaff and St. Asaph, who was born at Tŷ Mawr.

Emile de Bruijn, Registrar (Collections & Grants)