Over recent decades, conservation has emerged from behind the scenes to play more significant roles on the visitor experience stage. But we are at just the outset of what we could achieve. It is time to be more ambitious and pervasive in the way we use conservation to build more stirring relationships with supporters. Our cause depends on it.

**What is conservation in action?**

Conservation in action is simply anything we do to actively show, share and involve audiences in our conservation work, indoors and out. It can take many forms, from carrying out routine tasks in front of visitors to designing a complete experience around a major project.

Our approach to conservation has evolved significantly. Whereas once places often closed for conservation, now we look for every opportunity to share the process with visitors, and not just for ‘blockbuster’ projects—audiences enjoy opportunities to understand the intricate and routine details of our everyday work. Even when it is impossible to work in front of visitors, increasingly we seek to provide ways to involve them, such as temporary exhibitions and virtual access.

At the same time, other bodies have recognised the value of conservation in action. Cultural heritage examples include the Lunder Centre, Washington DC (https://americanart.si.edu/lunder), where visitors see painting conservators at work; the recently closed Liverpool Conservation Centre; the Ask the Conservator programme by Historic Royal Palaces; and the biennial Keck Award made by the International Institute of Conservation (IIC) (https://www.icconservation.org/about/awards/keck). Public funding, for example by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is increasingly dependent on offering this experience. The sector rewards achievement in this area, as shown by the 2010 ICON Pilgrim Trust Conservation Award for the Hanbury Hall wall painting project due to its accessible scaffold. What is new now is the opportunity for conservation to become the show.

---

**NEW ACQUISITION AT PECKOVER**

A painting entitled *Showery Weather, the Old Bridge, St Ives, Hunt*, by James Doyle Pentrose (1864-1932), oil on canvas, thought to have been exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1930, was purchased by private treaty by the National Trust. The artist was related by marriage to the Peckover family. NT 782508

Emile de Bruijn, Registrar (Collections)
Why is it important?
The National Trust exists to ‘protect special places, forever, for everyone’. Conservation and access sit equally, therefore, at the heart of the Trust’s cause, as our Conservation Principles demonstrate (https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/our-conservation-principles). However, those two purposes can sometimes be in conflict, and it requires careful management to balance them on a case-by-case basis.

It is possible—and it is the Trust’s ambition—for those two purposes to work in harmony. Conservation in action can enhance what we offer to visitors, engaging them on a deeper level by providing experiences that teach, move and inspire. It helps people to value places, to understand why they need protection and the direct role they as supporters play in making that possible. If we want to turn our relationship with visitors from a transactional one focussed on a ‘nice day out’ to one of support for our cause, conservation in action has great potential to achieve this end.

As our recent Communicating our Cause project highlighted, the purpose of protecting ‘special places, forever, for everyone’ is an idea that is bigger than the organisation. The summary report states: ‘for more people to believe and stand up for our cause we need to do more to promote what we do and why we do it, both inside and outside the Trust.’ When we do, visitor feedback proves that deeper engagement is taking place:

It made me realise the National Trust’s remit, the broader role—more than just bricks and mortar. I didn’t realise how much support they needed.

*Cause Pilot Evaluation Report 2016*

Absolute joy. So privileged to see that breath-taking stained glass in the Chapel close up.

*Visitor comment during The Vyne Chapel Glass Restoration Project 2015*

Learning from experience

Conservation in action does present challenges. It requires careful planning and resourcing—designing and delivering engagement opportunities takes additional time (and therefore cost), on average a minimum of an additional 30-40%. An ability to innovate is needed, and to learn from others’ experience. The success of Dyrham’s programme depended a lot on the lessons learnt from Castle Drogo’s project (see below).

It also requires a change in mind set—places will not always be presented as perfect and pristine. This presumption has been changing, ever since we opened the servants’ areas at Erddig, stopped the clock at Calke Abbey, and cultivated Chastleton’s air of romantic decay. Extending this principle to show the work needed to care for properties has evolved from ‘putting the house to bed’ events to conservation being a constant part of the show at Attingham Park (see below), and, from July 2016, through a publicly accessible Conservators Studio at Knole.

Finally, successful conservation in action requires collaboration between all property departments—conservation, marketing, commercial, volunteering and visitor experience—to ensure maximum benefit is realised.

Inspiration through conservation

In 2006 Attingham began a six-year programme of conservation called Attingham Rediscovered, designed to maximise visitor engagement. With a high proportion of local visitors, the team wanted to encourage people to return regularly. The programme became so popular that it was first extended to a ten-year scheme and is now being continued indefinitely. Visitor numbers have continued to grow, and 24% of visitors state that conservation in action is the best part of their visit.

It is important to manage visitors’ expectations by being clear when a place is not in a state of ‘full dress’ and, through ensuring that what they experience is high quality, presenting conservation work as of value to visitors. We can then be bold about the current work, presenting it as a once-in-a-lifetime occasion, such as the

![The Vyne Chapel Stained Glass Restoration Project. A scaffold platform inside meant visitors could see at close quarters the work required to remove, conserve and reinstate the stained glass so that it could be preserved for future generations](image)

![Chastleton House, Oxfordshire](image)

![Repairs on the roof of Castle Drogo](image)
recent works at Castle Drogo, Mount Stewart and Dyrham Park. Each helped visitors understand the inner workings of the places and the National Trust. By using the disruption as an opportunity, we made conservation the main attraction.

To make Castle Drogo watertight the entire collection had to be moved into storage within the house. The team worked with creative partners to transform the resulting empty spaces and storage areas with innovative installations, each highlighting different aspects of the property’s story. At Dyrham, the team designed an atmospheric re-display of several showrooms, accessible collection stores, an exhibition and a rooftop scaffold platform that was accessible to visitors. This variety appealed to all, and many visited on numerous occasions during the project to see progress. Dyrham proved that visitor numbers and enjoyment scores can not only be maintained but also increase when major conservation is under way.

Conservation in action can also enable visitors, volunteers and local communities to do more than watch and learn. Recently Rainham Hall and Sutton House have moved the Trust towards new models of participation, working with local communities as equal partners to decide how each place should be presented and used. Outdoors, Bioblitz events have brought together scientists, enthusiasts and local residents to undertake species records of real scientific value. Programmes such as Bodnant’s Gardener’s Apprentice mean that children can have fun whilst helping with activities like leaf-raking and bulb-planting. Charlotte Stretton, Events and Engagement Officer, says: ‘It helps everyone realise how much work is involved and helps create a sense of belonging. Bodnant Garden turns from a place they visit to a place they have helped create. I’ve had several children already show me where they planted their snowdrops last year.’

Conservation in action is not only of benefit to visitors. It can help the Trust with practicalities, such as achieving the annual conservation programme in the midst of year-round opening and increasing visitor numbers. As the team at Polesden Lacey prepared to open 365 days a year, they devised a schedule that divided their traditional winter clean into three: jobs that could not be done in front of the public (for access or safety reasons), jobs that visitors could get involved with (like brass cleaning and carpet tamping), and those that visitors could observe. Caroline Williams, Senior House Steward, says: ‘The response from visitors has been on the whole hugely positive and the hands-on conservation activities have proved extremely popular. There have been conservation benefits too: our year-round routine means we’re not squeezing everything into a four-month time frame.’

The future—a programmed approach

The rewards of delivering conservation in action can be many and varied. The examples above show that it is nothing new, and the Trust has often been in its vanguard, pushing boundaries and evolving new ideas.

We aim to support properties in continuing to develop this great work. In the coming months and years, we will offer new guidance, training and resources, with dedicated work streams supporting our constant drive to evolve interpretation and conservation. Alongside recent improvements to back-of-house systems and processes, we hope this will enable a renewed focus and vigour, evolving conservation in action for the future whilst keeping faith with the past.

Key to this will be developing a programmed approach to all our work at both a national and local level, where we plan several years ahead to synchronise visitor engagement and core business to provide a compelling offer to visitors, whilst enabling our teams to work efficiently.

Conservation in action is an activity that delivers widespread benefits, assisting us to realise our strategy by aligning our core work of delivering both exceptional conservation and very enjoyable visitor experiences.

Katy Lithgow, National Trust, Head Conservator
Beth Martin, National Trust, Interpretation Officer
WHERE OUTDOORS AND INDOORS INTERSECT
Forecast Changeable: the Trust’s Position on Climate Change

The impacts of climate change are clear to see at Trust places, whether from increasingly erratic weather events or from long-term changes in temperature and rainfall distribution affecting countryside and buildings, gardens and collections. The risk of permanent damage to landscape and heritage as a result of not planning for a future with a radically different climate is ever increasing. Helen Ghosh, Director-General

The National Trust owns almost 250,000 hectares, or 1.5% of the land in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We manage everything from castles to lighthouses, a semi-detached suburban house to entire villages, protected areas for nature to scheduled monuments, and we are the nation’s biggest farmer. Our mission is to save places of historic interest and natural beauty for the benefit of the nation. It is a cause that is now actively supported by over 4.5 million members and 62,000 volunteers.

The desire to ‘protect’ places of value is usually triggered by a clear and compelling threat. We were established to protect places of historic interest and natural beauty. In the 20th century the threat was perceived to be principally to country houses and the coast. Our landscapes are now facing new threats from climate change¹ that require an innovative response.

Whilst our day-to-day weather in the UK is notoriously changeable, there is a growing body of evidence showing that our long-term weather pattern, or climate, is changing², and these changes are having an impact on the quality of our landscapes (see figure below for the projected changes). As a charity with an environmental focus, we have been seeing and reviewing the impacts of climate change on our properties for many years, primarily at the coast but increasingly at our inland places. We first set out our views on climate change in 1995; we participated in collaborative research (in the cultural heritage world) to understand the threat, such as Engineering Historic Futures and the EU-funded Climate for Culture. Since 1995 our work on climate change has been reported in various ways: A Call for the Wild in 1999, Forecast—Changeable! in 2006, From Source to Sea in 2008³, Energy—Grow Your Own⁴ in 2010 and Shifting Shores⁵ in 2015.

In 2015 we set out to review our work on climate change and its impact on our organisational functions and to update our Forecast Changeable⁶ document.

What impact does climate change have on our landscapes?
We care for a huge variety of landscape features like buildings, gardens, large areas of open countryside, more than 750 miles of coastline, parklands, over 350 historic houses and other heritage assets; all of these are being affected by climate change, some places more strongly than others. Therefore we are well placed to see many of the impacts of climate change that are already occurring in the UK.

Our coast
✦ The chalk cliffs at Birling Gap erode by about 67 cm (about 2 ft) each year. During the storms of 2013/14 seven years’ worth of erosion took
place in just a couple of months.

✦ Formby Point is the fastest eroding stretch of coastline we look after. An average of 4m a year is predicted to be lost to the sea in the next century, but during the 2013/14 storms over 13m was lost.

Our gardens and parks
✦ Gardens are experiencing more extremes in both drought and flood. Changes in design and infrastructure at gardens like Nyman, Hidcote and Powis Castle are required to help manage change.
✦ There is an increase in diseases. For instance, box blight threatens significant gardens like Ickworth, and ash dieback and sudden oak death affect our designed parkland.
✦ A shorter and warmer winter climate has implications for garden activities like grafting.

Our habitats
✦ Owing to decades of habitat loss, the most threatened and vulnerable of the UK’s species are reduced to living in the last remaining fragments of rich habitat.
✦ Loss of habitats to the sea, such as that of the natterjack toad on the Sefton Coast, means working in partnership with others to provide new habitats.

Our houses and collections
✦ A warming climate means the migration of new species to our shores, including 109 new moth species and 390 new fly fauna recorded since 2000.
✦ Storms, including damagingly strong winds, are predicted to become more intense. During storms in 2007 we lost parkland trees that had stood for hundreds of years at sites like Nostell Priory and Hardwick Hall.

Our rivers
✦ Floods in 2007, 2009, 2013/4 and 2015/6 have created significant damage on our land.
✦ Boscastle was famously flooded in 2004 after an intense summer downpour. Such events are predicted to become more likely.
✦ Coughton Court was flooded in 2007 by the River Arrow for only the second time in its 600-year history.

Our finances
✦ We are seeing more claims with a greater distribution across the country resulting from extreme events.
✦ There is an upward trend in the average number of claims made per month, from 3 in 2005, to 7 in 2015. Our average monthly claim value has risen from £25,000 per month in 2005 to £110,000 per month in 2015 (increased by the winter storms of 2013/14).
✦ Our investments and economic models need to take a changing climate into account.

What are we doing?

Our vision is for land and landscape that is: healthy, beautiful, rich in culture and nature, enjoyable—and productive as a result.

Peter Nixon, Director of Land, Landscape and Nature
Our experience of looking after the breadth of places in our charge is making it abundantly clear to us that the impacts of climate change are already increasing, and are a worrying threat to the fragile and venerable places of natural and historic importance that we care for. It will not be possible to preserve our properties, collections and landscapes entirely unchanged.

However, conservation is all about the careful management of change. Whilst we will seek to minimise the impacts arising from climate change, we can also aim to optimise the opportunities. Our strategy document Playing Our Part\(^7\), published in 2015, recognised that climate change now poses the single biggest threat to the places we look after and has committed us to spending around £1bn over the next ten years on the conservation of our houses, gardens and countryside. We recognise that we have to adapt our buildings to become more resilient and work with natural processes to help our landscapes and nature accommodate to a changing climate.

We have recently launched an ambitious plan to nurse the natural environment back to health and reverse the alarming decline in wildlife we have seen over the last few decades.

Simon Pryor, Natural Environment Director

By facing up to this challenge of the 21st century we are not only meeting our responsibility to look after our own places, but also meeting our duty to deliver wider public benefit.

The actions we are committed to are:

- Continuing to drive innovation in adapting and mitigating climate change. We will strive to mitigate against climate change, meeting our energy reduction target of 20% by 2020/21, and managing the carbon stores on our land, especially through the stewardship of our soils.
- Building on the success of our renewable energy investment programme by pursuing new opportunities to use wind, solar, biomass, marine and hydro sources to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.
- Future-proofing our investments, projects and property business plans to make sure they adapt to reflect current projections of climate change.
- Challenging all our central functions to understand the impacts of a changing climate, adapting and changing their management processes accordingly.
- Working on our own land and in partnership with others through our Land, Outdoors and Nature programme to restore a healthy, beautiful natural environment which is more resilient to climate change.

Simon Pryor, Natural Environment Director

Dr Mark Roberts, National Specialist, Water

Katy Lithgow, National Trust, Head Conservator

Lizzy Carlyle, National Trust, Head of Environmental Practices

4. https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/our-energy-targets

1. This satellite image, taken on 16 February 2014, shows how soil is washed off our fields and out into the sea.
2. View of the storm-damaged cliffs and beach at Birling Gap, East Sussex, pictured here in February 2014, with demolition work seen taking place on vulnerable cliff-top buildings.
3. Stormy skies over West Wycombe Park, Buckinghamshire.
THE DECEMBER FLOODS IN CUMBRIA
Highlighting some dilemmas of conservation on a landscape scale

Immediately after the floods of December 2015 a visit was arranged with a member of Historic England's planning team to view flood damage to Trust buildings in the Lake District. This had the aim of offering longer-term solutions, acknowledging that floods such as this could be more than a once-in-a-generation experience. What became clear during the visit was the difficulty of describing the scale of the event and drawing a line around its impacts. This does not imply that these impacts have all been on a grand scale, although some have been, but rather that a myriad of micro- and macro-impacts combine to affect change as a whole. Buildings and scheduled monuments have been damaged, ancient walls and barns pushed over, and hillsides scarred, all tangible features of the landscape. But at the same time a cultural shift has taken place. These floods could be seen as not only a physical watershed for this precariously balanced landscape, but also a significant moment in the perception of the region as it approaches World Heritage Site status in 2017. The visit from Historic England showed that the limited and objective exercise of viewing damage was set within a more qualitative, but profound change in the context of the objects we were observing. The more limited idea of damage itself was subordinated to the perhaps larger idea of change.

In December I was astonished by the sight of the river Eden in Carlisle encompassing the field of view. A definition of the sublime as 'the feeling of being thunderstruck' is valid here; my experience was neither negative nor positive, but a filling up of the gap between subject and object. The Eden's massive main bridge was submerged almost above its arches, and the road terminated immediately beyond it in a continuation of the same river. The Eden had burst its confines and changed itself into a broad delta, flooding neighbourhoods and factories and submerging the west coast main line like a toy railway. The new flood defences were, as in other Cumbrian towns, barely a hindrance to its progress. Waters falling on the hardened and grazed-down eastern Lake District had rapidly filled the Eden Valley and ultimately had flooded the city many miles downstream.

There followed a surprising reaction: something of a challenge on Cumbrian social media to the idea of the Lake District National Park itself, or at least the perceived separateness of the park from the county to which it belongs. Similarly, a little flurry of Romantic nationalism occurred in the form of flags which have appeared in public places, a revival of the post-war county flag of Cumberland. These are fleeting details, but significant; a subtle local re-understanding of the Lake District as a mountainous part of Cumbria, rather than some separate entity, an item of administration and designation.

This distinction is relevant for our consideration of the Lake District as a 'cultural landscape' in this moment of critical attention. Since the 1990s and UNESCO's adoption of the category in 1994 debate has swirled around the idea of cultural landscape. Like the words in Wittgenstein's 'language game', cultural landscape is a term that is both useful and elusive, its breadth and definitional weakness excluding it for some from serious debate or rendering it simply an administrative term—blunt but perhaps true. The Carlisle flood highlights an aspect of this debate: the issue of where and for whom the cultural landscape exists. It also highlights the cultural and physical reach of places like the Lake District. Despite administrative and definitional boundaries such as National Park or World Heritage Site, the Lake District can extend outwards and grip its surroundings with water, but at the same time it dwells in the minds of many around the world. For some this is a distant connection, never visited, but experienced instead through literature or some other means. Edward Relph's term 'vicarious insideness' sums up this condition of experience, as one of several forms of 'insideness' and 'outsideness' which could characterise our sense of place. Relph suggests that experiences of landscape and place may not be easily divided into authentic or inauthentic, near or distant, local or not local.

We can also see in some of the responses to the flood (including the National Trust's) the way in which the Lake District has, sometimes also vicariously, assumed a historic role in our modern idea of crisis and solution to crisis. The World Heritage Site nomination rightly dwells on the idea of continuity and tradition, albeit with the caveat of steady change. However, the outstanding value of the Lake District could also include the opposite.
The floods in the Lake District have highlighted some central questions of conservation on a landscape scale. It has also highlighted a key point in the Trust’s strategy: helping look after the places where people live, and what that means for the Lake District, which has made a considerable impact on other peoples’ lives in the Eden Valley in recent months. There are places where people live, and places where people dwell, and for many in Manchester, Carlisle and elsewhere, the Lake District is a dwelling place of a kind. For De Quincey, those old county boundaries mentioned earlier made a difference. Growing up in Manchester and longing to be a ‘Laker’, his status as a Lancashire lad gave him at least some notional and longed for ‘insideness’, his county, like Carlisle’s Cumberland, including both the city and a piece of Lakeland:

As Lancashire happened to be my own county, I had from childhood, on the strength of this mere legal fiction, cherished a mystic privilege, slender as a filament of air, some fraction of Denizenship of the fairy little domain of the English Lakes.4

Something that De Quincey suggests in these lines is a sense of scale, and again what is special in the character of such a little place. At the moment for some it stands for a bigger, wider outdoor-thing called nature, overgrazed, damaged, and crucially unable to hold back the flow of water from mountain to city.

Harvey Wilkinson, National Trust, Curator, Lake District

---

3 Relph, E., 1976, Place and Placelessness (London, Pion) p.46
4 Mason, D. (ed.), The Collected Writings of Thomas De Quincey, 16 vols (Edinburgh 1862-71) vol. 4, pp. 73-5

---

THE NATIONAL TRUST AND STORM DAMAGE IN CUMBRIA

Wordsworth House is the Trust property most badly affected by December’s floods, enduring a near repeat of events in 2009. Like the previous flood the house was filled up at ground floor basement level from all sides with water and fine silt, leaving a potential sewerage hazard behind.

One important difference this time has been the wider impacts on road infrastructure, including the destruction of the central Kirkstone Pass road which continues to hold back visitors from the northern Lake District, and which during the flood rendered the property team fairly isolated from assistance. Another issue has been the relentless rain over much of the winter, which has caused hitherto unseen problems with mould in other properties in the Lakes. This does not seem, however, to have slowed down the very successful recovery of Wordsworth house led by the energetic Zoe Gilbert and her team.

The assessment of the storm damage is still continuing. Rectified photographic surveys (some already in place and others applied since the storm) have provided a reassuring record of threatened structures such as packhorse bridges, allowing a baseline for subsequent rebuilding.

One such structure, part of a group of Gothic Revival boat-houses at Fell Foot in Windermere, in a precarious state already, flags up how reassuring this kind of inexpensive survey is. The knowledge that we had this kind of detailed data took a lot of the worry out of our potential to rebuild it meaningfully should we be faced with a pile of rubble after the storm. It did survive, however.

There has of course, been a proliferation of extra work; a whole range of larger and smaller project-size jobs appeared without warning in an already full calendar of projects. An example is the design and build of a new boathouse for Derwent Island House, the existing one having been destroyed, and because of its modern shed-like nature not a candidate for like-for-like replacement. The lack of available contractors due to increased demand in the area is also an issue.

Harvey Wilkinson, National Trust, Curator, Lake District
CONSERVATION – AN ENDURING THEME
Gaining understanding of Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal

In these crowded islands, most that we see is a direct or indirect product of human activity, often many layers of successive activities. Archaeological investigation identifies and disentangles those layers, revealing the compound stories concealed virtually everywhere. Nowhere is this put to better use than on National Trust properties, benefiting as they do from an unusual concentration of historical research endeavour.

And nowhere is this truer than at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, now with over 30 continuous years of archaeological investigation by the Trust. Some of this has enhanced historical facts such as the monastic exploitation of the landscape. Other strands of research have dismantled and completely rebuilt stories that we thought we had grasped—not least the long and complex evolution of the Studley Royal designed landscape (which proved remarkably poorly understood for a monument of international significance, now a World Heritage Site). And then there are the fascinating and important stories that we did not even suspect existed, or were too much in plain view for their interest to be recognised. These range from small (for instance, Fountains hosted the UK’s third earliest cycle race, run in 1868, on velocipedes) to large—the mapping of 300 years of social evolution through the examination of changes in the property’s visitors and how their visits were serviced.

The recurring theme here is the discovery that the Trust is not the first to conserve Fountains and Studley; there are many echoes of our intentions from past generations. The exceptional history of visitor access, a key part of the estate’s story, illustrates the accepted truism that ‘Conservation equals the sum of Preservation and Access’. It is perhaps most difficult to ascribe the intent to conserve to the monastic community, although it perceived itself as integral to the natural landscape. It actually wrought extraordinary changes, doing much to form the landscape we see today, building structures and running agricultural or industrial activities on unprecedented scales. However, even these driven entrepreneurs (for the glory of God) imbued elements of their landscapes with meaning worth preserving. Every Cistercian house sought to draw parallels between its foundation and the privations experienced by those who created the mother house at Citeaux, built ‘far from the concourse of men’, beset by wild animals. The first monks at Fountains lived under the shelter of a great elm tree while they built their first timber church: this—located at the east end of the East Green of the monastic precinct—was conserved throughout the abbey’s 400-year life, and on into the early 19th century. By then, however, popular telling of the tale had migrated the monks’ first habitation to seven mighty yew trees elsewhere in the precinct, which were certainly there well before the monks arrived in 1132. Their survival—often in places inconvenient to the abbey’s infrastructure—is another interesting illustration of conservation-mindedness.

By the late 17th century, the owners of Studley Royal had become the significant players in the landscape (Fountains remained a separate estate until 1767). In 1693 Studley was inherited by John Aislabie, later the Chancellor of the Exchequer scape-goated for the South Sea Bubble, and the first guiding genius of the property’s great designed landscape. He can no longer quite be seen as its originator, as we now know that the designed landscape originated as a medieval park created in c.1343; it was retained and elaborated in Tudor times before being subject to grander designs by John’s father, George, in the early 1670s. But John brought new energy and especially vision when he began his defining and greatly influential new garden in 1718. Again, there was much change in the landscape, but also conservation. From the outset the garden, as one of its defining innovative characteristics, drew very heavily on existing native trees in the valley, especially its yews. Interestingly, John’s work preserved and added to the existing park rather than remaking it, an approach that would be returned to again.

Most significantly, perhaps, John’s thinking embraced a profound appreciation of historical remains. The park he inherited pointed the way, its main vista taking distant Ripon Minster (Ripon Cathedral today) as its focal object. One of John’s very first projects was the incorporation of How Hill, a similar focus point, for a new axis line through his intended gardens in the Skell valley. Although the hill was crowned by the remains of a medieval chapel, these were too insubstantial for his purposes. So they were augmented by a new two-storey prospect tower, commanding views over the whole Studley estate and for up to 30 miles beyond (including historical landmarks such as Ripon, York and Beverley Minsters). Although the tower incorporated some fragments of recovered medieval stonework, enormous care and trouble was taken to site and build it preserving the existing medieval remains (these do not survive today as surface features).
The likely architect of the tower was Sir John Vanbrugh, who certainly knew John Aislabie and sought his support to preserve the Tudor Holbein Gate in Whitehall. It may well have been through this connection that John evolved his sensitivity to ancient buildings; Vanbrugh’s realisation of their value—beginning with Rosamund’s Bower at Blenheim in 1709—is well documented.

In this context, much has been made of John’s interest in the remains of Fountains Abbey itself. In fact, this may well have been overstated, at least in terms of anything that was actually achieved on the ground. Huby’s Tower was used as yet another focal object, this time for a new avenue across the park; the view was opened up by the (very early) use of ha-has in the park and by garden walls. The main view of the abbey from the east, however, fell outside Aislabie ownership until after 1730, and even after its acquisition John made very little use of it.

That step was to be taken by his son, William, who inherited the estate in 1742. William’s role at Studley has been vastly understated, dismissed as merely his completion of his father’s intentions. In fact, over four decades William would enlarge the garden by a factor of six and incorporate entirely new landscapes, Hackfall, Kirkby Fleetham and Laver Banks, all joined together in one vast aesthetic experience.

William too was preservationist, and perhaps Studley’s greatest significance arises from that. Instead of sweeping away his father’s and grandfather’s work (as was too often the contemporary fashion), William added more and more land to the historic core, and landscaped it, embracing every new emerging garden fashion. As a result Studley uniquely preserves reflections of every key garden fashion of between c.1710 and 1800, all on a single site.

Incorporating Fountains into the designed landscape was one such expansion. William’s incorporation of the ruins also reflected another—pioneering—aspect of conservation. Although vilified by his contemporaries, mainly devotees of the Picturesque, which wanted its ruins terrifying and inaccessible, William went down a very different path. In the first project of its type, he excavated for remains that could be restored, before levelling and landscaping the ruins, removing the products of two centuries of relative neglect. Some masonry—the lay brothers’ cloister and late subdivisions in the cellarium—was demolished, and a ‘gazebo’ erected in the chancel. The purpose of all of this was to preserve, reveal and display the architectural glories of the site to its best advantage, ignoring contemporary taste. Where William led, others would follow, though it would take more than a century for them to do so. Today we take this type of presentation of ruins for granted.

William’s successors trod largely in his conservation footsteps, though perhaps not by choice: his will contained clauses restricting how they could manage the property. The gardens were altered remarkably little after 1781, aside from access improvements for hugely increased numbers of visitors after the railway arrived in Ripon in 1848—there was also a ‘tidy up’ in the 1870s. Further campaigns of conservation of the abbey continued throughout the 20th century, while interest dwindled in other parts of the site (in no small part because of the attraction of a quick visit to the abbey alone by owners of new-fangled motor cars). Restoration of Fountains Hall in the 1920s modernised the building, but also, rather intelligently, embraced and celebrated its surviving modern features—much in Lutyens’s spirit at Lindisfarne Castle, or Walter Brierley’s at Nunnington Hall. The gardens, out of favour, continued to falter, and might have been lost completely had not the West Riding County Council and subsequently the Trust stepped into the breach, just in the nick of time.

An enormous amount has been achieved in the past 30 years in terms of understanding the site and restoring its faded glories. But much more remains to be done. Some we know about, but much, no doubt, yet awaits discovery.

Mark Newman, National Trust, Archaeological Consultant

One of a remarkable series of Frith photographs capturing the restoration works of early 1874, when ancient ivies were stripped from the ruins to allow repairs.
LOOKING AFTER OUR COASTLINE
How Cornwall has benefitted from 50 years of Enterprise Neptune

In 2015 the National Trust celebrated 50 years of Enterprise Neptune, its highly successful campaign launched in 1965 to raise awareness of our precious coastline and the funds to look after it. Since its launch, the campaign has raised over £65 million to acquire and look after our coastline for ever, for everyone.

Cornwall has benefited greatly from bequests made to the Neptune campaign over the last 50 years. The National Trust now owns many significant landmarks around the coastline, representing Cornwall’s rich variety of buildings, industrial sites, and archaeological remains.

In 2015, the National Trust’s ‘year of the coast’, we celebrated with specially commissioned Gribbin ale, beach cleaning parties and, as always, a diverse programme of conservation; here are some of the notable projects of the last 12 months.

The lost souls of the Royal Anne

Over the past 800 years an estimated 6,000 ships have been wrecked off the coast of Cornwall, more than on any other comparable stretch of coastline of the British Isles.

The coast of the Lizard peninsula, the most southerly point of mainland Britain, is particularly hazardous to shipping, the seaways round it being historically known as ‘the graveyard of ships’. Though the Trust does not manage any significant stretches of our seascape below the high-water mark, the consequences of such wrecks have left a strong legacy of fable and also artefacts washed up on National Trust shores. The dramatic story of the Royal Anne and her crew is one such case.

Galley frigates such as the Royal Anne were fast, manoeuvrable ships, predominantly built to combat the growing threat of piracy both in the Mediterranean and the Caribbean in the first quarter of the 18th century. Twenty-two galley frigates are known to have existed; the Royal Anne was described as ‘a new invention under the direction of the Marquis of Carmarthen … being the finest that was ever built’. Her construction and launch in 1709 and her subsequent service are well documented.

Amongst her other duties she served during the Spanish War of Succession and the first Jacobite Rebellion, as well as undertaking numerous convoy duties in the North Atlantic protecting the valuable Russian Archangel trade. Normally propelled by sail, the Royal Anne also had some 66 oars to better manoeuvre her 511 tons in order to combat effectively the smaller frigates of the pirates; she was equipped with 41 guns.

In February 1721 a new bill for the suppression of piracy was passed in Parliament. The galley Royal Anne was anchored at Spithead on the Solent when her captain, Captain Willis, received orders on 12 September 1721 to sail to Barbados with Lord Belhaven, the new governor, and then to sail on to the Leeward Isles and Jamaica to hunt pirates. He was to be home by the late summer of 1722, sailing back via Carolina and Newfoundland, again hunting pirates.

On a stormy night on 10 November 1721 the Royal Anne struck Stag Rocks off Lizard Point resulting in the loss of the ship and most of her crew of 185 men. Along with 24 ‘other gentlemen’ the principal passenger was Douglas John Hamilton of Biel, 3rd Lord Belhaven and Stenton, who was en route to take up the Governorship of Barbados, apparently to avoid the scandal of having murdered his wife.

Only three sailors survived that fateful night by clinging to the wreckage. Owing to the nature of currents and tides most of the dead were washed up at the foot of what is known as Pistil Meadow, one of the few points of access through the cliffs to the sea around Lizard Point.

The wreck site of the Royal Anne was officially recognised and designated in 1992 (her identity amongst the many other wrecks was confirmed by the discovery of cutlery engraved with the Belhaven family crest). One missing element to the story was the final resting place of her passengers and crew, as the only accounts were written in the 19th century, for instance by Reverend Johns in 1848:

Of all the tales of shipwreck told at the Lizard, the story connected with Pistil Meadow is the saddest and most frequently repeated … Two only of the whole company reached the shore alive, and these two, it is said, being well acquainted with the coast, had ventured to remonstrate with the captain for steering his course so near the dangerous headland. They were rewarded by being put in irons, and in irons they were washed ashore, to bear testimony to their captain’s obstinacy …

Two hundred
dead bodies were subsequently washed on shore and buried in pits, containing from twenty to thirty each, in this meadow.

It was not until 1808 that an Act of Parliament decreed that bodies washed ashore from shipwrecks should be interred in consecrated ground after being afforded the rites of Christian burial. Before this such bodies were buried, if at all, in un-consecrated ground as near as possible to the place of discovery. Pistil Meadow would have been the logical location for burial of the crew of the Royal Anne. Until the 1850s, at least, the location of the pits was revealed by low irregular mounds chequering the surface of the field.

Over the past four years the National Trust, in partnership with a group of other organisations including Bournemouth University and the Maritime Archaeological Sea Trust, has undertaken a number of different types of geophysical surveys of the meadow in order to help determine the truth behind this site's history and to enable our management of it for the future. The results have indicated a range of features, none of which relate to those described in the 19th century. What is most apparent is what appears to be a single linear trench at least 2m wide by 12m long, as well as a number of less clear pit-like features.

It is likely that this trench anomaly is the site of a mass grave; however, this cannot be confirmed without some ground investigation. Partial excavation of the site would enable us to confirm the location of the crew of the Royal Anne and afford the site some legal recognition and protection. It would also provide an extremely rare glimpse of the nature of ships' crews at the time should any human remains survive.

Some people feel uncomfortable about the disturbing of potential burial sites. However, after a number of consultations we are now hoping to undertake some very limited and targeted excavation work in order to assess the true nature and survival of the features recorded by the geophysical survey. This will help inform our approach to research and protection of the site in the future. We will have to wait to see what this reveals.

Net loft, Polperro

Perched in a spectacular position on the north side of Peak Rock in the harbour mouth at Polperro, the picturesque fishing village on the south coast, this modest building appears in many family photographs and old postcards. Built around the turn of the 19th century, it has provided local fishermen with storage for nets, sails and essential equipment within a stones’ throw of the harbour.

The net loft was given to the National Trust in 1927 by a local committee set up to protect the area (also through public subscription it had given Chapel Cliff immediately to the west of Polperro to the National Trust the previous year). The net loft is a Grade II listed two-storey building, rectangular in plan, of stone rubble construction with scall slate roof and timber weatherboarding. External wooden shutters protect the windows. Inside, a central stairway installed by the Trust in the early 1980s is the only feature.

Access is via a scramble across the cliffs at both lower and upper levels, convenient if you are a fisherman wanting to store nets, less easy if you are walking the coast path and want a peek inside. Major structural damage caused by storms in the winter of 2014 rendered the building unusable, ending its useful life after 200 years serving the local community.

During the summer of 2015, with funding from Viridor, the direct labour team based at Lanhydrock were able to repair the rubble walls with new mortar, replace and strengthen the shutters, install a compost loo, and re-tile the roof (and install PV panels on the south-facing roof).

The major challenge faced by the building team was to deliver and erect the scaffolding for this project. Plans to deliver the scaffolding to the net loft from the sea in a flat-bottomed barge were scuppered by bad weather, so each piece of scaffold had to be carried along the cliffs and across the rocks to the site. The scaffolding took three whole weeks to deliver and erect.

On completion of the work, the building is once again weather-proof, and now has enough power for lights and a kettle. With generator back-up, we hope to provide access to the building for walkers and community use.
The Gribbin

The Gribbin headland divides St Austell bay from the approaches to Fowey harbour; its 120 acres of agricultural land and five miles of coastline were acquired in 1967, funded by the then fledgling Neptune campaign and also by a generous gift from Mr Egbert Barnes and the St Austell Brewery Company.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of Enterprise Neptune, the National Trust and the St Austell Brewery Company worked in partnership to create a limited edition Gribbin Ale, brewed in Cornwall and made from English ingredients. For every bottle sold in National Trust shops and local pubs money was donated to the National Trust. A total of £5,000 was raised, which will be used to repair and maintain the South West coast path nearby.

The Gribbin daymark, acquired by the National Trust from Trinity House in 1998, sits atop the headland; it was built by Trinity House in 1832 as a navigation beacon for ships along the south coast. It is a square, tapered tower 25m high with a corbelled parapet, its seaward elevations painted in bold red and white stripes. The entire tower is repainted every ten years or so, and in the summer of 2015 it was given a fresh coat of paint. Funding for this was given by a generous local donor.

St Michael’s Mount causeway

There has been a causeway across Marazion beach to the Mount for hundreds of years. It is the vital link with the mainland that allows families to live on the island relatively easily, and it allows many thousands of visitors to make their way to and from the island. The current causeway was laid in the early 20th century, constructed from granite setts (cobbles) and long granite kerbstones. The causeway is incredibly strong, having withstood decades of storms as well as its submersion in seawater for at least 15 out of every 24 hours.

During the storms in the winter of 2014 the central section was badly damaged. The foundations had started to fail, and seawater and debris were washing underneath the setts and pushing the kerbstones outwards. As a result, the surface became uneven and difficult to walk on. A planned 20-year maintenance programme was already under way, but in light of the storm damage the decision was taken to complete the work in a single year: by June 2016 the full length of the causeway will have been repaired and strengthened.

The building team worked quickly at each low tide, repairing one nine-metre section at a time. The setts were carefully removed, the foundations dug out, and reinforced concrete laid. Each stone was replaced in the same position with some new stone to fill the gaps. The camber was reinstated to ensure that the water runs off effectively.

Maintenance will still be needed after big winter storms, and staff regularly check that the beach rocks on either side remain in place, as these provide good natural protection for the causeway. If current climate change predictions prove correct, and sea levels rise significantly over the next hundred years, the time that the causeway will be open will correspondingly decrease. In those conditions this project would have been much more difficult, and we have felt a sense of urgency to do this work while we could.

Every year exposure to extreme Cornish weather erodes the coastline and damages its buildings a little bit more. Bequests to Enterprise Neptune continue to make a significant difference to our ability to look after these places, buildings and archaeology, and help us to improve our understanding of Cornwall’s history.

Emma Jones, National Trust, Curator
James Parry, National Trust, Archaeologist, South West region
AN INSPIRING CONSERVATION STORY

Volunteers help secure artefacts at Aberdulais Tinworks

Aberdulais Tinworks and Waterfall is a small industrial heritage site near Neath in South Wales, where water has been used to power many innovative industries from a copper works in 1584 to a Victorian tinplate works. By the time it was given to the National Trust in 1981, nature had reclaimed much of the industrial remains.

Excavation quickly ensued, producing a wealth of written records and finds. However, by 2010 the excavators had long departed; whilst tourists came to the site, little progress had been made with the excavated material apart from one interim report on the site’s history.

The desire to resolve reporting and conservation backlogs had dwindled, except among a small group of volunteers; whilst enthusiastic, they were working separately from the property staff. They were advised on appropriate storage by the regional Trust conservator Clare Stoughton-Harris, but without the expertise of an on-site Trust member of staff, they did not fully understand the importance of conservation-grade storage materials.

Just as one industry of the past gives way to another, it was a cultural change, staffing, that set Aberdulais on the path to having a well-kept collection which now helps enrich the increasingly understood story of this historic site. A new Operations Manager arrived in 2010, and a Ranger (versed more in the conservation of nature than of archaeology or collections) soon followed. With busy core roles and without prior training it was to be a steep learning curve for them. However, it did not need experts to recognise serious conservation issues and a backlog of artefacts that had not received appropriate care, which could have resulted in a pile of unidentified rust and lost stories.

Turning the tide

Although the artefacts had been carefully labelled at the time of the original excavation, the labels had become loose or faded, and some had been lost. The past attempts to care for these items had resulted in neglect owing to a lack of understanding of conservation. Larger items outside were ‘protected’ by a tarpaulin, resulting in a damp atmosphere, and small items were stored in inappropriate plastic boxes, so that these important remains of the machines and structures of industry suffered extensive corrosion. At the same time, carefully selected displays of decorative tins and tin toys (the products the tin plate manufactured here would have been used for) in the Old Stable Exhibition stood untouched, unmonitored and uncatalogued since they had been placed there.

Bringing in the professionals

With the arrival of new National Trust Archaeologist for South Wales, Claudine Gerrard, the priority was to understand the site and to assess the scale of the archive and the finds from those earlier excavations. Commissioning a rapid archive assessment with the local archaeological trust helped identify the scale of the task. Without a Collections staff member to lead the project, this was to be a long task, and we had to draw on support from everywhere possible. Re-invigorating a long-standing relationship with National Museum Wales, we invited the industrial history expert Robert Protheroe-Jones to help pick out, identify and prioritise important indicators of the site’s varied industrial past from the mass of rusty metal.

Led by Trust staff, volunteers worked on a complex post-exavation project to digitise the archive and piece together the puzzle of the excavated remains; further support came from archaeology students from Holland and Lampeter University on short placements and from a student from Bradford University on...
a year’s placement, who began the lengthy task of completing Harris Matrices (which depict the temporal succession of archeological contexts and thus the sequence of deposits and surfaces on an archeological site) and drafting the excavation results.

Team Aberdulais

The regional Trust conservator contributed useful advice, which gave the property hope; but without Collections staff, it was necessary once again to think inventively for a solution. We drew on our contacts at Cardiff University to recruit two skilled volunteers from the Care of Collections course. This mutually beneficial relationship gave us the much-needed resource of their skills—and gave them useful work experience.

Working under the brief of the regional conservator, but supervised in their bi-weekly volunteering by a Ranger with a steep learning curve to climb, the students began with the archaeological items, accessioning, condition reporting, and mechanically cleaning many items. Helped by training on the Collection Management System, they slowly made the first steps to bring these rusty finds to collection standard. Their attention then turned to secure labelling and storage. Spot humidity readings revealed undesirable conditions for the largely metallic collection within the limited space available for storage, so the decision was taken to stabilise the artefacts within micro-environments, banning the cheap plastic boxes in favour of Stewart boxes (airtight storage boxes). The low humidity needed was achieved through the use of silica gel inside each box.

As for the larger industrial artefacts which would not fit in the Stewart boxes, another storage method had to be found. The solution came from the fresh eyes of the students: made-to-measure polyethylene micro-environments which included silica gel to maintain the correct relative humidity, sealed with a heat sealer.

With the larger items, just releasing them from the tarpaulin and getting rid of corrosion by mechanical cleaning transformed them tremendously. Where possible, they were brought inside the exhibition space; this sheltered them from the elements, whilst allowing enough air circulation to reduce relative humidity. Investigations are now under way to find a suitable protective coating for those items that still have to remain outside owing to their size.

Another student soon joined the team to re-associate items with their original finds records, thus restoring provenance to the site. Her passion for preventative conservation led her to produce a report on the environmental conditions at Aberdulais advising on the future care and display of the items.

After the students finished their course the Ranger carried on with the work alone, balancing the other conservation needs of the site. National Trust Housekeeping Study Days would have been a huge commitment, with little opportunity to practice alongside other site commitments. Instead, in consultation with the Trust regional conservator, she chose to undertake local courses provided by Museums Archives and Libraries Wales (CyMAL), now Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD). Gradually their confidence grew, and was increased by task-focused Trust training in order, for example, to continue the development of the Collections Management System.

Having noted the success of the previous student volunteers, the Care of Collections course at Cardiff University found two more students keen to join us at Aberdulais. The team continued the programme of accessioning objects to the Collections Management System and securely labelling the amassed collection of tin toys and other objects, and soon a Preventive Conservation Audit (PCA) prioritised what needed to be done. With the loan of environmental data loggers from the conservator, regular monitoring began; the high relative humidity was tackled, first with a dehumidifier, and then with low-level heating. Next, the implementation of conservation deep cleans improved presentation as well as conservation standards. Currently, the Ranger and volunteers have instigated integrated pest management and developed emergency salvage plans, bringing Aberdulais closer to the National Trust standard. Opportunities for conservation and archaeology students continue at Aberdulais (tasks include monitoring the efficacy of the micro-environments and re-conditioning the silica gel, as well as processing and adding find data into the archaeological excavation report), and it is therefore hoped that future student volunteers will continue to come forward.

Now, proud to share the hard work with visitors, Aberdulais runs Conservation in Action events, and has even developed handling collections to help explain the site and its conservation issues. This is progress indeed: the once rusty artefacts now form a well on the way to achieving Museum Accreditation.

Special thanks to:

**Collection Conservation Student Volunteers**
Susan Sandford, Sara Brown, Johanna Thunberg 2013-14
Katie Halil, Sally Hopkins 2015-present

**Archaeology Placement Volunteers**
Tim Van Tongeren, 3-week placement and continued weekly volunteering, 2015-present
Catriona Price, 10-day placement
Jemma Collier, 2015-present

*Georgina Powell, Ranger, Aberdulais Tinworks and Waterfall*
ACQUISITIONS

COTEHELE
A pair of pewter reeded broad-rim plates with a provenance from Cotehele, by a West Country maker, possibly William Hutchins, c. 1690, struck with the letters ‘M’ and ‘E’ within individual borders (for ‘Mount Edgcumbe’), were purchased at auction at Bonhams, New Bond Street, London, for £2,375 including buyer’s premium, partly funded by gifts and bequests. The plates were probably part of the consignment of pewter sold on behalf of the Trustees of the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe at Sotheby’s in London in 1956. NT 2900173

CROOME COURT
Two picture frames, carved and parcel-gilded, supplied by William Linnell in 1760, were purchased from Patrick Jefferson, London. The frames form part of an original set of eight commissioned to contain a set of royal and family portraits in the Saloon at Croome Court. They were sold from Croome in 1960 and acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, but were deaccessioned again in 1978. These two frames have been reduced in size and regilded, but will now be restored. NT 2900183 and NT 2900184

DUNHAM MASSEY
A Morris motor car, made in about 1935 and originally owned by Roger Grey, 10th Earl of Stamford (1866-1976), was donated to Dunham Massey. NT 2900185

HAM HOUSE
A pair of patinated bronze andirons or firedogs, with a provenance from the North Drawing Room, Ham House, was purchased from Robin Martin Antiques, London. These remarkable objects—with Ionic pilasters and shells, each supporting a draped nymph, the shaped bases flanked by female centaurs and putti, incorporating auricular framed central plaques of a bull in a landscape, after models by Francesco Panelli—date from c.1670-90. NT 2900186

KNOLE
A portrait of Louis-Pierre Quentin de Rich ebourg, Marquis de Champcenetz, fs (1754-1822), by Thomas Gainsborough (1727-88), oil on canvas, c.1780-85, was purchased at auction at Sotheby’s, New York, for £233,000 ($380,000) including buyer’s premium, with contributions from a fund set up by the late Hon. Simon Sainsbury (1930-2006), the National Trust Winchelsea Centre and Association and other gifts and bequests. The portrait appears to have been commissioned by John Frederick Sackville, 3rd Duke of Dorset (1745-99), and hung at Knole until it was sold in 1930. NT 2900174

LACOCK ABBEY
A gelatin silver print of the family coach and footman at Lacock Abbey, produced by the Photographic Heritage Library, after William Henry Fox Talbot, 1840, was purchased at auction at Bloomsbury Auctions, London. NT 2900181

LEITH HILL PLACE
A Broadwood ‘Honeysuckle’ piano, 1903, used by Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958), was given to Leith Hill Place. NT 767994

A group of items related to Ralph Vaughan Williams’s composition Serenade to Music was given to Leith Hill Place, comprising the original 1938 score, a programme of the concert celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Henry Wood Promenade Concerts (‘the Proms’) at which Serenade to Music was premiered and a 7-inch vinyl recording of Serenade to Music. NT 767996 – NT 768000

LYME PARK
A rosewood Grecian harp by Sébastien Erard, model no. 2450, originally purchased by Thomas Leigh (1792-1857) for Lyme in 1829, was given to the property. NT 500496

A chest of drawers with geometric panelling and split-bobbin mouldings, about 1660, formerly on loan to Lyme, was donated. NT 499487

Two oil paintings on canvas, a bust-length portrait of The Hon. Phyllis Elinor Leigh, Mrs Henry Gerard Walter Sandeman (1885-1986), British School, and a three-quarter length portrait of the same sitter by Frederic Whiting (1874-1962), both previously on loan to Lyme, were presented by the lender. NT 499968 and NT 499986

MOUNT STEWART
Two portraits by Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830)—of Lady Catherine Bligh and Lady Charles Stewart (1774-1812) at Saint Cecilia with her Son, Frederick William Robert Stewart, later Viscount Castleraugh and 4th Marquess of Londonderry (1805-1872), oil on canvas, about 1807; and Robert Stewart, 2nd Marquess of Londonderry, KG, GCH, MP (1790-1822), in peer’s robes as worn at the Coronation of King George IV, oil on canvas, 1821—were accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax and allocated to the National Trust for display at Mount Stewart, settling £660,000 in tax. NT 1542326 and NT 1542328

PLAS NEWYDD
A group of 35 paintings, 13 pieces or sets of furniture, two clocks, two busts, three items or pairs of ceramics and two groups of medals were accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax and allocated to the National Trust for display at Plas Newydd. The combined tax settlement value is £1,158,290. Entry record 5475. Below: English School, 16th-century portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, oil on panel. NT 173953

SIZERGH CASTLE
The panelling, stained glass and bed from the Inlaid Chamber at Sizergh were generously transferred to National Trust ownership by the Victoria and Albert Museum, from which they previously on loan. NT 997761, NT 998754 and NT 998755

Emile de Brujin, Registrar (Collections)
Protecting outstanding stained glass for future generations

The Vyne in Hampshire is a former Tudor powerhouse built by Henry VIII’s Lord Chamberlain William Sandys. What remains today is only a fraction of the original courtyard building which was drastically altered by Chaloner Chute when he purchased the estate in 1653. After centuries of change there are few surviving Tudor elements. The splendid Oak Gallery is one; another is the magnificent Chapel, completed by 1525, which was described by Horace Walpole as ‘the most heavenly chapel in all the world.’ Standing in the Chapel gazing up at the early 16th-century stained glass windows, it is easy to see why Walpole felt so moved. The windows at The Vyne, commissioned by Lord Sandys, are the finest examples of Tudor glass in the National Trust’s care, and rival those commissioned by Henry VIII for King’s College, Cambridge.

The windows, with their ‘brilliance of colour and jewel-like clarity’, illuminate the east range of the Chapel, throwing a gentle light across the maiolica tiles and the early 16th-century stalls. The upper registers of the glass show the passion of Christ, the crucifixion and the resurrection, all painstakingly painted by Flemish craftsmen from Antwerp. What makes this glass unique is the presence of three royal figures and their patron saints, showing Sandys’s dedication to the Crown: the young Henry VIII, his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, and his sister Princess Margaret are depicted in the lower lights of the windows.

To preserve these extraordinary pieces, intervention was needed to halt the build-up of condensation which had slowly begun to cause damage to the painted surfaces. Steve Clare and his team at Holy Well Glass were brought in to carry out the project using pioneering methods.

The Conservation Process: initial trials

There was a lengthy period of initial trials and investigations leading to the main conservation campaign for this important glass. Initially a report was prepared which examined the condition of the glass and the painted detail, and identifying previous repairs. The approach decided upon by professional advisers and National Trust staff followed the strict policy of minimum necessary intervention.
cycles of condensation on the Tudor glass when compared to an unprotected test light. Sensors measuring surface temperature, relative humidity and ambient temperature were installed on all four faces of the system. Data loggers relayed data to TCA via telemetric transmitters. This enabled dewpoint phases to be calculated and identified, which was cross-referenced with data from surface wetness sensors. This comprehensive system of environmental monitoring confirmed that the restrained ‘light touch’ approach was possible.

Sharing the project with our visitors

One element that we felt was essential to the success of the project was the sharing of this conservation work with our visitors. The scaffolding that was installed in the Chapel included a viewing platform to allow visitors to ascend the steps and see the conservation work happening right in front of them. Visitors had the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the lights being removed, and to speak to experts in stained glass conservation. A new volunteer role of Chapel Ambassador was developed, and training was given to the volunteers to enable them to tell the visitors the history of the glass and explain the conservation process. The response to this from our visitors was enthusiastic, and the volunteers’ roles became increasingly important when all the stained glass had been removed.

The whole property embraced the project: there were stained glass-themed products in the shop, talks and teas events, stained glass workshops with a local arts centre, and information leaflets. The exhibition room in the house hosted backlit interpretation boards and blown up images of the glass (supported by Panasonic). A projector screened films showing the progress of the glass conservation, shots of the Chapel before the project, and interviews with volunteers and staff. A modern interpretation of the Henry VIII light created by a volunteer was installed in an illuminated arch in the room. When the light of Henry VIII was completed he was fitted in place of the modern piece allowing visitors to stand nose to nose with him and really take in all of his fine detail. All of these elements produced a diverse and exciting experience for visitors. At the Everything Speaks conference earlier this year the project won the Visitor Experience Award for Conservation and Presentation.

It has been a lengthy process to preserve these windows, but the results achieved have been worth the effort. The improvement in colour clarity due to the cleaning is apparent, and the process of deterioration has been halted. We can now be sure that this extraordinary glass is protected for future generations to enjoy.

Kathryn Allen-Kinross, House and Collections Manager, The Vyne Portfolio

Steve Clare, ARC FMGP, Holy Well Glass

1 Walpole’s letter to Horace Mann, July 16, 1755
2 Maurice Howard, The Vyne: a Tudor House Revealed, The National Trust 2003
CURZONA’S PASTIMES
The writings of Mary Assheton, Lady Curzon (1695-1776)

Mary Curzon, one of three co-heirs of the Lancashire baronet Ralph Assheton (d. 1716), is currently mainly known for her creation of Ireton Garden, an area on the north side of Kedleston Park, Derbyshire obtained by an exchange of land by John, 3rd Bt, in 1721. She had married the London barrister Nathaniel Curzon (1676-1758) in the same year that her father died.

Sadly, Ireton Garden no longer survives, although some landforms are still just about visible. The first dated reference to the garden is from a poem published in November 1743 in the Gentleman’s Magazine. In it the author makes fun of ‘Curzona’ in her wainscoted summer house: ‘The crab, that form’d this dear alcove / Shall be my fav’rite tree’. This prompted other poems describing the virtues of the garden and its creator.

We can tell from these descriptions that Mary was a keen gardener, but what is less well known is that she was also a prolific writer. The poem which sparked a prickly reply in the Gentleman’s Magazine for January 1744 refers to her as a poetess, identified by the barely veiled nom-de-plume ‘Curzona’. The original author of the initial poem, moreover, published another verse in the same issue, this time inspired by the grotto at Ireton, again referring to Mary as ‘Curzona’. Whether she used this name herself we do not yet know.

However, we do have examples of her poetry and prose. In the Muniment Room at Kedleston is a hardbound folio manuscript containing several verses, which range from lyrical descriptions of her own garden and the old house at Kedleston to slightly more pedestrian versifications detailing a day’s activities. The manuscript also contains verses to her children, Nathaniel and Assheton, which show her to be a devoted mother extremely proud of their achievements, and a poem written in response to one composed by her eldest son (undated). In a long poem to a friend she describes Nathaniel (the future 1st Baron Scarsdale) as ‘sure, his own mother’s son’ for attending a ‘meckanical lecture’.

We also get the occasional glimpse of what books she may have read or what subjects held her interest. Numerous pages in her manuscript are devoted to poetic renditions of the Old and New Testament. Some of her writings show her literary interests, such as a poem written upon reading Alexander Pope’s Essay on Man and reflections on Fielding’s Tom Jones or Sidney’s Arcadia. Moreover, she appears separately from her son Nathaniel in the list of subscribers to Robert Adam’s Ruins of the Palace of the Emperor Diocletian at Spalatro (1764) as ‘Lady Curzon’. A Bible (1769) recently acquired for Kedleston may also have belonged to her. But she also appears to have read Milton’s Paradise Lost, Countess d’Aulnoy’s The Lady’s travels into Spain (1774), and possibly John Stevens’ History of Persia (1715), although this may have been owned by her mother-in-law, Sarah Penn. She owned a copy of Thomas Hayward’s The Quintessence of English Poetry (1740), which was kept in the Library at Kedleston from 1765 onwards. Although we do not know for certain whether the old mansion had a dedicated room for books, it is likely there was a book collection of sorts, perhaps in one of the private areas for which we do not have descriptions. Moreover, it is also likely that not all of Mary’s book collection ended up in the library of the new mansion. From the end of 1758, when her husband died, she would have lived elsewhere. Who is to say that her books did not accompany her to her new home? Other volumes may have ended up in the Robert Adam-designed bookcase in Lady Caroline’s private rooms in Kedleston’s East Wing.

When the book collection in the Library at Kedleston was catalogued a few years ago, the cataloguer James Fishwick found a small quarto without a title page that could not be identified. It is inscribed ‘Caroline Curzon June the 28th 1756’ and is bound in
First page of 'Chronological Collections'. Note the signature at the bottom, which suggests that the intention may have been to add a preliminary gathering with a title page

full mottled calf with gilt tooling around the board edges. Its spine title is *Chronological Collections* and it contains a potted history of the ancient world from the Creation onwards (see above). It was my interest in female readership at Kedleston which led to the chance discovery of another copy in the Special Collections at the University of Leicester. This did not only identify the author of the work but also the source text on which it was based.

The Leicester copy is listed in the library catalogue as 'An abstract of Mr. Jackson's *Chronology by Lady Curzon*' and is bound uniformly with the Kedleston copy. The work referred to is John Jackson's *Chronological Antiquities or, the antiquities and chronology of the most ancient kingdoms, from the creation of the world, for the space of five thousand years*, published in three volumes in 1752 (ESTC T1366688); in his dedication the author explains how he has reconciled the various narratives of ancient history using the Hebrew Old Testament as a basis. It is listed in the 1765 catalogue of the Library at Kedleston, but it was unfortunately sold at auction on 28 June 1888 as part of a major sale of books from the family’s collection.

The Leicester copy of the abstract is undated, but is inscribed on the front flyleaf:

The gift of Lady Curzon, widow of Sir Nathaniel Curzon, who abridged Mr. Jackson’s chronology for the use of her sons. Twenty copies only were printed.

Although this copy carries a William Salt Library duplicates stamp, it is not known how it came either to William Salt (d.1865), a Staffordshire book collector, or to Leicester Special Collections. The Kedleston collection seems to have held two copies up until the 19th century, with one copy possibly sold around the same time as the major 1880s sales.

It may seem peculiar that Mary felt the need to abridge for her grown-up sons a rather old-fashioned and occasionally mistaken chronology by a controversial figure whose work was criticised in a pamphlet by John Kennedy, rector of Bradley in Derbyshire, in the year following the publication of *Chronological Antiquities* (ESTC T136664). However, it seems to fit with her desire to support her sons’ rising status in society, while at the same time it provided her with a platform to display her own learning amongst a small circle of relatives and friends.

Mary Curzon is beginning to emerge as an influential figure in her son’s re-design of Kedleston, making her mark not only on the interior decoration of the mansion but possibly also in the grounds surrounding it—something we are beginning to see now that we are exploring the options for restoring the Pleasure Grounds at Kedleston.

Dr Danielle Westerhof