At the beginning of February the National Trust embarked upon a new collaboration with Oxford University in a bid to enhance visitor experience at Trust properties and sites in London and the south-east of England.

Over two years a digital knowledge bank of historical information will be crowdsourced from researchers at the university for use by staff and visitors both onsite and online. The resource, ‘Trusted Source’, will feature pithy, accessible, and engaging articles written by Oxford academics that draw out connections between collections, places, properties and people, thereby encouraging visitors to gain a deeper understanding of both the Trust’s rich and varied portfolio and Britain’s wider cultural heritage. In addition to featuring on a public-facing educational resource, ‘Trusted Source’ articles will be used internally by staff to enhance existing interpretation on the Trust’s website, room guides and guidebooks, and during staff and volunteer training.

As a key advocate for the project, the Trust’s Director General, Dame Helen Ghosh, states:

‘We want to tell the stories of the collections and properties in our care in an engaging, accurate and inspiring way. Using the latest academic research, Trusted Source will help us enhance the experience we give our members and visitors, uncover new information and deepen our understanding of the heritage in our care. As well as enriching our interpretation at

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COTEHELE WATERCOLOURS

A pair of unfinished watercolours by William James Müller (1812–45), depicting King Charles’s Room and the Old Dining Room at Cotehele, watercolour and bodycolour over pencil, one heightened with gum Arabic, 544 x 741 mm and 485 x 665 mm, were purchased at auction at Sotheby’s, London, for £5,000 including buyer’s premium, with the help of a donation from Nicola Gentle. The pictures were probably painted during Muller’s two-month tour of the south-west of England in 1844. NT 2900173 & NT 2900174.

Emile de Bruijn, Registrar (Collections)
properties, the resources created during this important collaborative partnership will be freely available online for everyone to explore.

The project has been commissioned as a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), an Innovate UK scheme devised to encourage businesses to innovate and grow. It does this by linking them with a university and a graduate to work on a specific project. Each KTP is a three-way partnership between a business, an academic institution and a graduate; the academic institution employs the recently-qualified graduate who works at the company. The graduate, known as the 'associate', brings new skills and knowledge to the business. Usually awarded to the science and industry sectors, this is one of the few heritage-based KTPs funded in the initiative's 40-year history, and the first awarded to both the Humanities Faculty at Oxford and the National Trust. The 'Trusted Source' KTP project team includes Alice Purkiss (Associate), Charles Pugh (Curator & Consultancy Manager, National Trust) and Dr Oliver Cox (Knowledge Exchange Fellow, University of Oxford), and is supported by a wider network of academics and specialists at both institutions.

To begin the process of creating ‘Trusted Source’, the first call-out for researchers was devised by the project team to support the current Landscape Programme at Stowe Gardens in Buckinghamshire, an initiative comprising 54 tasks taking place over five years to return the gardens to their former glory. Highlights of the programme include the return of missing statues, monuments and paths, and the opening of parts of the gardens not currently accessible to the public. In support of this, Trusted Source involvement sought to assist in unravelling the puzzling circumstances surrounding Stowe's Gothic Cross, a Coade stone monument placed in the landscape in the early 19th century and later destroyed, it is believed, by a falling tree.

In March, university researchers and National Trust staff attended a workshop at St John’s College, Oxford at which Trusted Source was introduced and opportunities for academic research on the Gothic Cross detailed. A presentation on the history of the landscape at Stowe by the Trust’s National Gardens Specialist, Richard Wheeler, was followed by an open discussion on the Gothic Cross including the circumstances of its commission, its production, and the plethora of possible meanings it brought to the landscape. Not only did the workshop introduce Trusted Source at Oxford and begin the process for commissioning articles, it also enabled researchers at the university to network with Trust staff and form research partnerships that, it is hoped, will expand beyond the scope of the ‘Trusted Source’ project alone to support both the Trust’s research strategy and to provide valuable resources and contacts for academics.

Over the coming months the Trusted Source project team will continue to foster strong bonds between these two leading organisations. It will commission interesting and accessible articles which support a whole host of Trust properties, places, and projects, from stately homes, working farms and natural landscapes, to Trust-wide programming themes. Articles will be commissioned through a variety of means, including events and workshops based upon specific projects, such as the Stowe example, and by embedding ‘Trusted Source’ into doctoral training for scholars at Oxford.

The project’s legacy beyond the two years of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership is highly significant and a central consideration of the ‘Trusted Source’ team. By formalising a clear methodology for sharing knowledge between these two leading organisations, it is hoped that a blueprint for collaboration will be established that can be adopted by other academic institutions and heritage organisations internationally, thereby encouraging further stories about places to be told and enriched through research.

To find out more and read featured ‘Trusted Source’ articles visit https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ktp.

Alice Purkiss, Knowledge Transfer Partnership Associate,
University of Oxford and National Trust
A LITTLE KNOWN COLLECTION

The task of inspecting and cataloguing National Trust bells

‘I’m one of the Trust’s Bells Advisers, and I’m getting in touch to enquire about any bells you have.’

Contact with properties usually begins much like this. I go on to explain that my role is to inspect and catalogue bells at Trust properties to update the Collections Management System (CMS) and National Trust Collections online, and to advise on condition and conservation.

Responses vary enormously, from ‘When do you want to come?’ to ‘There are no bells here.’ While genuine nil returns are helpful, we are always careful to probe—for instance, ‘So if there’s no bell, what does the clock strike on then?; or ‘I’ve been told that you have a bell, so are you sure there really isn’t one?; or ‘Might there be any disused bells in storage somewhere?’; or ‘Is there nothing in the roof space or tucked away out of sight behind a parapet?’

Having established what exists, I occasionally have to explain that some bells fall outside the remit. House bells, servants’ bells, handbells and ornamental bells generally come under the metalwork conservators. Clock bells are always of interest, but these overlap with horology, and advice is sometimes provided by the Clocks Adviser. Even where there are bells of interest, inspection is not always easy since they often hang in inaccessible places. Examination may have to be undertaken when temporary scaffolding is in place or when there is a cherry picker on site.

In short, the bounds of the Bells Advisers’ responsibilities are not easy to define. Broadly speaking, we have an interest in any bells in turrets or that are mounted externally—and, especially, any that were cast by specialist bell-founders. The role was originally created for the late Christopher Dalton, a well-known photographer and distinguished writer on bells, who made an extensive study of the Trust’s bells in the twenty or so years before his death in 2007. Since then I have looked after the southern half of the country while George Dawson, based near Nottingham, deals with the north.

The result of these investigations is that we now have a pretty good idea of what bells exist across the length and breadth of the Trust’s territory. Descriptions are now available for many of them on CMS. Needless to say, we are extremely keen to learn of any that may have been overlooked. What becomes clear, though, is that bells which seem unimportant in a local context—especially when viewed alongside some of the major treasures at individual properties—become more significant as part of a Trust-wide collection.

The collection is certainly varied. It includes one historic ring of eight, made up of bells cast in 1669, 1717 and 1831, in the church at Staunton Harold, Leicestershire. These have been rung for the annual candle-lit carol service on a couple of occasions in recent years but the frame and fittings require further attention to keep them safely in use. The chapel at St Michael’s Mount, Cornwall has a six-bell chime (mainly 19th century, but including one dated 1640 and a 15th-century bell cast in London). There are several significant clock bells, the most notable being the five-bell Westminster chimes at Charlecote, Warwickshire (1824) and Cliveden, Buckinghamshire (1862) and a three-bell set at Clumber, Nottinghamshire (1806). For the most part bells are singles, although some properties have more than one housed in separate buildings (e.g. Powis Castle, Wales, and Lyme Park and Quarry Bank Mill, both in Cheshire).

Of special interest, perhaps, are the bells demonstrably cast for the properties in which they hang. The clock bell at Chirk, near Wrexham in Wales, was made for the castle, and the bell dated 1680 at Dudmaston, Shropshire bears the name of ‘I WOLRYHE DE DVMASTON’. One at Baddesley Clinton, Warwickshire was made for Edward Ferrers in 1714, and the bell at Blickling, Norfolk was cast for Sir John Hubbert, 1628. The stables bell at Lyme, Cheshire inscribed ‘CAST AT LYME MARCH 1747 PETER LEGH ESR’ would seem to have been cast both at and for the property.

As to age, several properties have bells of medieval date. The oldest bells in Trust ownership are probably those at Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk (c.1400), Cotehele, Cornwall (possibly 1411) and the Columb John Chapel at Killerton, Devon (15th century). These are all inscribed and undated, but their properties suggest these early dates. Medieval bells from recognisable founders exist at St Michael’s Mount, Cornwall (Henry Jordan of London, mid-17th century), the hour bell at Ketleston, Derbyshire (Nottingham, 15th century), Calke Church, Derbyshire (Thomas Newcombe of Leicester c.1525), and Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (Heathcote of Chesterfield c.1525-35). Mention should also be made of a 15th-century French bell at Arlington Court,
Devon. Knole Park, Kent has a fine clock bell cast in 1540 by Jan ter Stegte of Kampen in the Netherlands.

From around 1600 the work of many of the major London bell-founders is represented. Bells from the famous Whitechapel foundry in London predominate, one of the earliest being the hour bell by William Carter at Kingston Lacy, Dorset dated 1610. Wallington, Northumberland has one by Lester & Pack dated 1759. Mears bells of the 19th century are numerous and include those at Staunton Harold, Charlecote and Cliveden already noted above. Warners of London supplied bells for Greenway House, Devon (1832 and 1834), Cragside, Northumberland (1864), Powis (1869), Dunster Castle, Somerset (1870), Knightshayes, Devon (1870), and St Michael's Mount (1906) among others, and Gillett & Johnston of Croydon cast the Chapel bell at Castle Drogo, Devon (1927). Bells from the lesser-known London founders include one at Osterley Park, West London inscribed ‘THOS SWAIN MADE ME TWO YEARS AFTER J753’. Thomas Swain worked at Longford nearby. The clock bell dated 1768 at Avebury Manor, Wiltshire is probably by Thomas Janaway of Chelsea.

The Loughborough foundry, still trading, dates back to 1540-05. Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester advertised that he cast ‘Bells for Gentlemens Seats’, so it is hardly surprising that many Trust houses have Rudhall bells. They include Farnborough Hall, Warwickshire (1728), Hanbury Hall, Worcestershire (1756), Croft Castle, Herefordshire (1766), Berrington Hall, Herefordshire (1784), Attingham, Shropshire (1788), Brockhampton, Herefordshire (1821) and Newark Park, Gloucestershire (1831).

Other provincial founders whose work has been encountered include Robert Orrell of Wigan (at Chirk, 1609), John Pennington of Bodmin (St Michael’s Mount, 1640), Richard Keene of Woodstock (Bearstall, Buckinghamshire, 1661), Clibury of Wellington (Powis, 1672), John Martin of Worcester (Brockhampton, 1693), William Eldridge of Chertsey (Clandon, Surrey, 1702), Matthew Bagley of Moorfields (Brownsea, Dorset, 1706), John Eyre of Kettering (Belton, Lincolnshire, 1711), Thomas Gardiner of Norwich (Felbrigg, Norfolk, clock bell, 1756), John Pennington & Co of Exeter (Saltram, Devon, 1765), Robert Wells of Aldbourne (Kingston Lacy c.1770), Thomas Castelman Bibbie of Cullompton (Killerton Stables, 1782), George Hedderly of Nottingham (Calke Riding School, 1786), Woborough Hale & Co of Bristol (Cotehele, 1829), William Jefferyes of Bristol (Tynemouth roof turret, 1832), William Pannell & Son of Cullompton (Killerton chapel, 1845), William Blews of Birmingham (Farnborough, 1849) and S. B. Gosling of London (Lavenham Guildhall, Suffolk, 1896).

Worthy noting are a few examples of bells not in their original homes. Wimpole, Cambridgeshire has a Bagley bell of 1695 from Northamptonshire, probably installed second-hand when John Briant of Hertford provided a new clock in 1824. A bell dating to 1844 at Upton House, Warwickshire was brought from Faulkbourne Hall in Essex in 1898. Baron Ash evidently acquired the Rudhall bell of 1793 at a sale with many other items at Packwood. The chapel bell at Tynemouth, cast by Thomas Eyre of Kettering as a clock bell for Boston ‘Stump’ in Lincolnshire in 1759, was purchased second-hand by William Gibbs from Mears & Stainbank of Whitechapel in 1874.

As this overview shows, the collection may be distributed across the Trust’s estates, but as a whole it is rich in interesting and rare examples of the bell-founder’s craft.

When it comes to conservation there are a number of aspects to be addressed. First, since access for maintenance is often difficult, it makes sense to ensure that bells are attended to when scaffolding is put up for repairs to inaccessible parts of buildings. Second, where bells are in use—visitors are encouraged and allowed to ring them at some properties—then it is vital that they are safely maintained and protected against accidental damage. Third, there are basic preventative steps to be followed to ensure that clock bells—which become worn at the point where the hammer strikes—do not become damaged through use.

Common to all of these is the requirement that bells be securely and safely hung, with particular attention to the methods of suspension and also activation (clappers and hammers). Specialist skills are required here, and it is generally inadvisable to entrust bell repairs to general firms—perhaps following standard like-for-like conservation principles—without first seeking input from the bells’ advisers.

Please get in touch if your property may have a bell or bells we do not know about, and also if repair work might allow access to a bell that has not been examined for a while or if you need specialist input when developing plans for conservation work.

Chris Pickford, Bells Adviser (South)
With input from George Dawson, Bells Adviser (North)

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Avebury Manor, Wiltshire. Improved clock hammer and check-spring designed and fitted by Peter Watkinson
The collecting of illusionistic paintings in the 17th century

In June 1748 the 4th Earl of Dysart acquired several lots from the Earl of Cholmondely’s auction. One of these was a depiction of the interior of Antwerp Cathedral by Pieter Neefs II (1620-1675) (NT 2900322). It seems likely that the earl bought the painting with an exact hanging location in mind. Making several alterations to the 17th-century picture hang in the Green Closet, he made this architectural scene its most prominent painting and new centrepiece. In April 2015 the painting was auctioned at Christies, London and was bought back by the Trust. It is now back in the position believed to have been chosen by the 4th Earl. The painting undoubtedly works as a centrepiece: the viewer’s gaze is drawn down the central aisle of the cathedral which recedes to a vanishing point beyond the rood screen. The orthogonal lines setting up the perspective within this image seem to extend beyond the frame and subsume the surrounding arrangement of cabinet paintings and miniatures.

It is unlikely that the painting’s subject matter had any particular personal resonance for the 4th Earl, neither as a Catholic place of worship nor as a Grand Tour souvenir (stopping in Amsterdam, he progressed on to The Hague and then Frankfurt). What seems to have been motivating his purchase was a desire to emulate the spirit of 17th-century collecting. Adding the Neefs and the customary portrait miniatures of his immediate family to the small picture closet, the Earl also moved other 17th-century paintings to the room from elsewhere in the house.1

By acquiring a painting of the Netherlandish genre of architectural painting, or ‘perspectives’ as they were usually termed, the 4th Earl was replicating a particular collecting habit of Charles I which was shared by the Earl’s great-great-grandfather, William Murray. Charles I owned at least a dozen such paintings by Steenwyck and four by Houckgeest.2 At Ham, in a 1683 picture list, there were no less than six paintings described as ‘perspectives’, four of which were attributed to Steenwyck.3 The term ‘perspective’ indicates what the 17th-century viewer appreciated in these architectural paintings, and the sense of magic that a successful rendition of illusionistic depth gave to the contemporary viewer. A small oval perspective by ‘Stanewick’ in the Green Closet was one of those listed in 1683, and can still be seen in situ in a 1920 Country Life photograph. This particular painting was especially illustrative of the nature of Ham’s collection: Steenwyck the younger, unlike the other Netherlandish architectural painters, had moved to London, which allowed him to supply directly the niche demand for this genre amongst British collectors. He also found employment painting architectural backgrounds to court portraits by other fellow Dutch artists. Furthermore Steenwyck was a friend of Edward Norgate, with whom Murray had dealings whilst helping to supply pictures for the Queen’s Cabinet at Greenwich.4 The predominance of Steenwyck’s perspectives at Ham may suggest that Murray became directly acquainted with the artist.

The 4th Earl’s collecting habits, which Christopher Rowell (the Trust’s Furniture Curator) calls ‘nothing short of curatorial’,5 were reflected in and aided by his extraordinary book collection. Amongst the books sold from this collection was Jean Dubreuil’s La Perspective Practique (nécessaire à tous Peintres, Graveurs, … et autres se servans du Dessin), Paris, 1642. Several such handbooks on perspective were compiled during the 17th century and were popular amongst artists striving to achieve a three-dimensional illusion on a flat canvas. To the Netherlandish artists, including Neefs, Hans Vredeman de Vries’s well-known book Perspective would have been more familiar, but both books still had currency many years later when Turner used illustrations from both in his lectures as Professor of Perspective at the Royal Academy.6 As a model for the hanging arrangement of his paintings it is tempting to think the 4th Earl was aware of Samuel Quiccheber’s book Inscriptions vel Tituli Theatri, a treatise on the arrangement of objects within the Kunstkammer. Rationalising a taxonomy for displaying items within such closets, Quiccheber puts all objects relating to God at the top of the display hierarchy, a model which was followed by the 4th Earl’s placement of the Neefs painting.

Within the Trust’s collections are several such ‘perspectives’, including other church portraits by Neefs (the elder and the younger) and Steenwyck. At Ham, although only the Neefs survives today, one can trace the initial wave of fashion that this genre enjoyed and its subsequent 18th-century revival by the 4th Earl of Dysart.

Victoria Bradley, Previous House and Collections Manager

1. A West India landskip by Fran: Post and two paintings by Cornelis Sâlifeven are examples of paintings recorded in other rooms in 1683 which appear in in the Green Closet in later inventories; one of the Sâlifeven paintings with a new frame was purchased by the 4th Earl.
5. For a full account of the Earl’s collecting activities see Christopher Rowell, ‘Lionel Tollemache, 4th Earl of Dysart, as a Collector and Patron’ in ibid., pp. 275-97.
6. See Tate D17045 amongst others.
FOUND IN A TEA CHEST AT KNOLE
Anne Sackville-West’s collection of books

In 2014 staff at Knole, Kent, were clearing a hay loft as part of their major project ‘Knole Uncovered’ when, to their great excitement, they discovered nine unopened tea chests. These chests were found to contain 782 books (656 titles) dating from 1815 to the mid-20th century, many with provenance details. By far the majority of the books with provenance (241) belonged to Anne Sackville-West, née Meredith, second wife of Charles, 4th Baron Sackville. Anne died in 1961, after which date the books were presumably packed away. This article focuses on her collection.

Since their discovery, all the books have now been catalogued and details of provenance and other copy-specific information carefully noted in the MARC cataloguing record. Because the books are still in private ownership, the records cannot be accessed through COPAC as most Trust libraries can, but staff can find full bibliographical and copy-specific details by searching the MARC section of CMS.

I had already catalogued books from Knole’s Outer Wicket Tower and was pleased to be offered the opportunity to work on the new discovery, especially Anne’s books. During the years I have worked in Trust libraries, it has often seemed to me that women’s and children’s reading has been overlooked. This was common in much early book-history work, which concentrated instead on the finely-bound and expensive books of rich and powerful men, overlooking the cultural significance of the reading habits revealed through books of lesser monetary value. This collection provided an opportunity to redress the balance slightly. So, who was Anne?

Anne was an American actress who appeared in a number of Broadway and off-Broadway productions before she married Charles in 1924 (her second marriage). Her interest in the New York stage continued throughout her life, and this makes the discovery particularly interesting, since the books form a coherent collection of pre-war drama, most of which are unique within the National Trust libraries. We know the titles today from film adaptations from the Golden Age of American cinema, such as George Kaufmann’s The Man Who Came to Dinner, Joseph Kesselring’s Arsenic and Old Lace, Clifford Odets’s The Country Girl, and John Van Druten’s I Am a Camera, based on the Berlin stories of Christopher Isherwood, and later adapted by Kander and Ebb as the musical Cabaret. Other playwrights represented include Maxwell Anderson, S.N. Behrman, Moss Hart, Robert E. Sherwood and the young Arthur Miller. Anne was interested in acting techniques (she owned Stanislavsky’s An Actor Prepares and Lee Simonson’s The Stage Is Set) and kept up with all types of contemporary theatre and its reception, acquiring The Theatre of the Moment: a Journalistic Commentary by George Jean Nathan.

Biographies of actors feature. Otis Skinner (1858-1942) sent Anne his memoirs Footlights and Spotlights, while his daughter Cornelia (1899-1975) wrote her a letter, dated 2 October 1944, which was found within her book Our Hearts were Young and Gay. She writes of the book being filmed by Paramount, adding that she was playing in The Searching Wind by Lilian Hellman: ‘It is one of those serious and “significant” dramas and, to tell you the truth, I’m heartily sick of it ...’ She ends by referring to the war: ‘I have often thought of you during these trying times and [am] wondering how you and Charles have been weathering the strain. Alden and I have talked often of our wonderful visit to Knole in those happy days that seem so long ago. Let’s hope it will all be over as soon as possible and that we can have a visit again.’ William S. Hart (1864-1946), a silent screen star, known particularly for his roles in Westerns, sent Anne two volumes of his memoirs My Life East and West (1929) and —And all points West (1940), writing ‘To Lady Ann Sackville In remembrance of The Virginian. William S. Hart 1941’. Hart had played the lead role in The Virginian on stage in 1907. Known as Two-Gun Bill, he was a colourful character, and a friend of Wyatt Earp: he and Tom Mix were pall-bearers at Earp’s funeral. How many National Trust properties can claim such a connection with the Wild West?

Booksellers’ tickets reveal that many of these books were bought at...
the Holliday bookshop, New York. This was something of a New York institution between 1921 and 1979; it was owned by Terence and Elsa Holliday until 1951, when they sold it to Robert T. Vanderbilt. Terence had begun his career working for Brentano’s (whose ticket also appears in several of Anne’s books). From the early days the shop imported English books and promoted the work of young British and American writers, as well as selling a wide range of contemporary drama. Thirty-seven of Anne’s books were sent to her by her friend Jack Warner (Andrew Jackson Warner), music and drama critic for the Rochester Times-Union between 1918 and 1961, sometimes with a short note indicating that he was always looking for new plays that she might enjoy: he writes ‘This seems to be the only new play publication. Love from Jack’ inside Lillian Hellman’s The Autumn Garden.

In Elliot Paul’s novel The Last Time I saw Paris, he wrote ‘The reviews of this book have been very wonderful and people who have loved Paris weep and laugh over it.’ Referring to Anne’s correspondence about a work by John Steinbeck, he adds: ‘You were right about The moon is down. It was intended to be a play, but Mr. Holliday says the play version reads even less well.’ Nor did he forget Anne’s husband, to whom he sent a copy of Richard Allick’s The Scholar Adventurers.

Warner gave Anne several plays by John Van Druten. ‘This play ran for ages’, he notes inside I remember Mama. Van Druten was another friend of Anne’s, and one of several successful London playwrights of the pre-war period who sent her their work; others included Compton Mackenzie and Cecil Robersts. Van Druten stayed with the Sackvilles: ‘I cannot thank you enough for the week-end, which I shall always regard as an enchanting experience and a very great privilege ... I am sending you one of my plays for your personal library.’ This was The Distaff Side.

Studying an owner’s library reveals not only their reading habits but their life and interests. Through Anne’s books we see her life develop. She wrote her address in several of the early books, from which we can tell that in 1911 she was studying for her degree at Columbia University before moving to a series of New York apartments. Among these early acquisitions are her first husband Stephen Bigelow’s copy of Dante’s Divine Comedy; two French language courses; Emerson’s Essays; the works of Herrick and Coleridge; translations of Balzac and Ibsen; Goss’s study of Ibsen; Shakespeare; Wilde; Arthur Schnitzler; and The Moscow Art Theatre series of Russian plays. Some of the plays have pencil markings (for example, three by Maurice Donnay), perhaps indicating that she was rehearsing them for performance. Generally, there are few pencil notes to be found among Anne’s books, but her copy of Giraudoux’s The Madwoman of Chaillot has a clear mark on the dust jacket highlighting an extract from a review: ‘Giraudoux’s idea is that the rich and wicked, the parasites of society, are destroying the world.’ Anne also marked references to Vita Sackville-West in Violet Trefusis’s memoir Don’t Look Round and a few sections of Dina Wells Hood’s Working for the Windsors.

When Anne married Charles, her horizons expanded. Among many inscriptions, we read in A Streetcar Named Desire: ‘Finished in Belmont Manor Hotel, Bermuda—Jan. 29th [1948],’ while Alexander Woollcott’s Enchanted Isles contains headed notepaper from the Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin. Muriel Draper’s Music at Midnight was read on board the SS Majestic in 1930, and John Mason Brown’s Seeing Things has a Western Union telegram from April 1947 addressed to ‘The Lord and Lady Sackville SS Queen Elizabeth Pier 90 Leaving about 1 pm.’ Even shopping habits are revealed: a note in the memoirs of society shoemaker Salvatore Ferragamo reveals that Anne was fitted for shoes at Ferragamo’s Bond Street shop. Postcards, Christmas cards, invitations and newspaper cuttings are all found in the books. A postcard of Versailles from 1954 reads: ‘Maybe this is larger than Knole but not nearly so nice’.

What, then, is the significance of this relatively small collection of books? Clearly, they expand the range of material within the National Trust’s libraries. They reveal a good deal about the life of their owner through their inscriptions and inserted material. And they show Trust employees and volunteers and the visiting public that relatively modest books can have a fascination of their own. We are now beginning to retrieve such books from attics and cupboards and to study and value them, realising that they contribute greatly to a wider understanding of country house life and the interests of the families who lived there. Cataloguing the Meredith books in depth has enabled us to interpret them as a collection, and thus to make a significant contribution to the Knole Uncovered project.

Felicity Stimpson, freelance librarian and researcher
A BATTLE AGAINST THE WEATHER
Conserving the water-damaged fabric at Lindisfarne Castle

Rising dramatically from Beblowe Crag, Lindisfarne Castle, Northumberland, is visible for miles as you travel north on the A1. With its distinctive profile it stands on the seaward skyline as if growing from the living rock. It is one of a chain of castles defending the coast, with Dunstanburgh and Bamburgh Castles to the south visible from its batteries. If you look back from the Farne Islands towards the mainland, the castles form a line of well-placed sentinels.

Certainly this dramatic silhouette must have intrigued Edward Hudson when he first saw it on a trip to Northumberland in 1901. Together with Peter Anderson Graham, later the editor of Country Life, he had been holidaying in the area. They scaled the walls and explored the abandoned castle. Although cluttered with the debris left by the coastguard when they had decamped, Hudson could see the potential of this old fort. He leased it from the Crown and in 1902 he asked Edwin Lutyens to come to Holy Island to see the building and discuss his plans.

Lutyens took on the task of converting this Tudor fort into a holiday home for Hudson. The scale of the work is hard to appreciate now, as Lutyens’s additions have weathered in and have become less clearly defined. He made some brave interventions, taking out walls and using columns and arches to support the building above. He inserted windows through the stone vaults of the Ship Room and Dining Room, and added rooms to link the various buildings of the fort and make it into a house. With his characteristic eye for detail he designed the clever lead-weighted door latches and the ingenious hinged curtain rails, several shaped like sickle blades where they fit in vaulted window reveals. The doors are good examples of his approach to every element of a house. Made of oak, with moulded edges to the battens behind, shaped and moulded wooden handles, and those lead-weighted latches, they are clearly rooted in the Arts and Crafts movement with its passion for quality of material and workmanship. The palette of materials used by Lutyens is restrained—stone, brick and oak—with great attention to form and detail. Throughout the castle he plays with scale: narrow bedrooms have huge, deep stone lintels over small fireplaces, large pieces of oak furniture loom in rooms, and door lintels are massive and powerful, echoing the ones over the fireplaces.

However, although Lutyens created a wonderful sculptural building, he was not very good at making it weather-proof! The castle, sitting on its rock on the edge of the North Sea, and subject to a lot of weather, has not historically been very good at managing rain. Windows leak in every way possible, around the frames, through the lead cames, and through the stonework. In heavy rain, or indeed when the wind is driving rain against the building, water rapidly forms pools on window sills inside. On some windows the stonework below is stained and green from the regular soaking it receives.

The paint and plaster is bubbling in some areas as salt crystals form behind the surface and gradually create blisters that grow and join until lumps of plaster and paint are pushed off. Much of this damage has been going on for a long time: in one of the lovely Country Life photographs from 1906, which looks down the Long Gallery, it is possible to see that in the back ground the wall to the right is already heavily water-stained. This area is still affected, and is especially prone to salts and blistering plaster. It is at the union between old and new, which is almost certainly a cause.

A contributory factor to all the water flowing into and through the building is perhaps Lutyens’s design. To help form the castle’s stark profile he avoided fitting downspouts and those many other details that help buildings shed rain, such as projecting stone mouldings above windows or indeed window sills. To illustrate some of the problems we face, the gutters from over 60 per cent of the roof drain towards the north side of the castle and into just one downspout, which is almost inaccessible—to clean it out we have to use a steeplejack. A dead pigeon blocking the pipe was the cause of a small flood in the Dining Room last year. The downspout was put up by the Trust in the last major project, when the north side was repaired and harled (harling is roughcast plaster). Although not ideal, it was at least an improvement on the
'spitters'. These are projecting stone spouts that act like gargoyles to throw the water away from the building. Unfortunately they are more picturesque than effective, and water discharged from them is at once blown against the walls and soaks into them.

The extent of the water penetration into the walls was starkly demonstrated during a project meeting at the castle. The wall above the Kitchen windows had been opened up to show that unsuspected by us, the iron lintels had completely rotted, giving us a perfect view of the interior face of the front wall. On a day of heavy rain and wind, when we had a walk around the castle, we were shocked to see water trickling down the inside of the wall above the Kitchen windows. This had, presumably, seeped in through open joints in the stonework above.

So to ensure that we actually understand what the building is doing (where the water is getting in, where it goes, and how it effects the environment inside), and to develop methods of repair that actually help the situation, we have had a year-long trials phase. We carried out extensive surveys and monitoring of the building, together with research into the records. Core samples have been taken from the walls, infra-red photography has been carried out, and paint and plaster analysis done. All this was to avoid repeating some of the well-intentioned but ultimately damaging interventions that have already been made.

The analysis revealed the extent of inappropriate wall finishes used inside the castle, including impermeable alkyd paints, cement skims, and tar-based sealants. Research showed that since at least the 1950s there have been attempts to keep the water out, often by using the latest wonder material. Many of these interventions have made the situation worse by hindering the walls' ability to dry out following rain and preventing the building's ability to buffer the environment inside through walls absorbing or giving off moisture.

As part of the trials phase this year we stripped the plaster boards and the cement skim behind them from two rooms. This was to allow the exterior trials of stone and mortar repairs and the 'sneck harl' to be assessed; within a short time the two rooms felt different, drier and less stale—a subjective judgement certainly, but striking nonetheless. Sneck harl, a phrase new to all of us in the project, is a Scottish term, and describes the surface finish on the outside of the walls. Rather than a fully harled or rendered surface, a sneck harl is like very smeary pointing, leaving a wall almost fully rendered but with some stones shining through. This finish seems to be what Lutyens used; a detailed survey of the Castle by archaeologists has helped clarify which walls are original and which are by Lutyens. What has also become apparent is that Lutyens did not want his interventions to stand out from the older walls. Most of these have remnants of a 19th-century harling, much weathered and degraded, to which the sneck harl on the new walls matches well.

As well as water seeping into the building, the ever-present wind has had its effect on the castle. The results of this wind erosion are striking: holes have been worn in the softer stones, and corners of the building have eroded, with stone turned to dust and blown away. In 1966 the film Cul-de-sac was made by Roman Polanski in and around the castle; scenes shot on the Upper Battery show one corner of the building with stonework largely intact, if a little worn. Now this same corner has lost inches of stone, so that many of the quoins are going to have to be replaced, or have new stones indented in front of them. Of course this kind of work is very costly, so the support of the Wolfson Foundation and the Neptune Fund has been essential.

As the windows are such a key part of the problem, and as with much else at the castle have been subject to unsuccessful interventions, we have tested different repair materials and methods, with two specialists working in the Kitchen to see how they perform. One of these specialists treated the windows at Castle Drogo, another of Lutyens's buildings, during its own huge repair project—Castle Drogo is also prone to leaking windows. We have used a material called burnt sand mastic, a material more common in Scotland than England, to seal the leaded lights into the stonework.

My main part in this project, as Regional Conservator, has been planning the packing and removal of the collections from the castle and their storage. This will be the first time the collections have been removed wholesale from the castle since it was furnished by Lutyens and Hudson. Tide timetables and awkward access have added further complexity to the task. For the trials phase we emptied two rooms; this was a good opportunity to have a practice run for the full removal to come. Every object will have to be carried down flights of steps through the castle and down the ramp, and be loaded into a small van, which will then drive down the main ramp to the removal wagon waiting at the bottom. The other aspect that needs to be considered is the protection of historic features such as floors and of course the lovely Lutyens-designed doors, so I have drawn up detailed specifications for this, learning from the many previous building projects the Trust has carried out.

The work is going to take a year, with then a further year for the new lime plaster, mortar and damp stonework to dry out; after this we can re-paint rooms and bring the collections back. At the end we will have a building which will be drier and in better condition. Some of the other incidental but important gains should be paint analysis that gives us a definitive list of the original paint colours; the 19th-century water tanks under the Lower Battery becoming part of the rainwater system so that they can be used in an emergency; and moving some of the storage heaters to less visible positions. Most importantly, Lutyens's and Hudson's Castle will continue to stand on Beblowe Crag as though growing from the living rock.

John Wynn Griffiths, Conservator, North Region
A PROLIFIC AND INNOVATIVE IMPROVER
Celebrating the life and times of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown

It is 300 years since the birth of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown, arguably Britain’s most prolific and famous improver of, or in, modern terminology, landscape architect. He oversaw the implementation of a new gardening style, later termed the English landscape movement, changing how the setting of country houses is seen, even today. Despite his popularity and fame, he remains something of an enigma, as he left no published account of his work, design principles or practices. He therefore presents a fascinating subject for study, celebration and occasional derision. Brown’s landscapes are his legacy; about 150 survive today, either as rare set pieces or fragmented examples. The National Trust, as a single owner, conserves the largest number of Brown landscapes; collectively, these capture a unique living chronology of his life and his work.

Early life and education
Records at St Wilfrid’s Church, Kirkharle, Northumberland document the christening of Lancelot Brown, son to William and Ursula Brown, on 30 August 1716. He was one of six children and the second youngest. His family are likely to have lived in comfortable circumstances, as his father was land agent to Sir William Loraine, 2nd Bt. His eldest brother, John, married Sir William’s daughter, Jane, and his second eldest brother, George, married into the Fenwick family, a branch of which owned Wallington, Northumberland. His paternal uncle had sufficient landholdings further north at Elsdon to have voting rights, which is evidence that the Browns could be classed as a ‘county’ family.

Brown’s father died in 1720 when he was four years old, so he would have relied on his older brothers for male influence and guidance; they were already working by the time he went to the village school in Cambo, part of the Wallington estate. It is widely accepted that he attended school until the age of sixteen, which suggests there was sufficient family income to support a full education. After completing his schooling, Brown undertook a Company of Gardeners full scholarship for six years under Sir William’s employ at Kirkharle. This early experience later fuelled the architect Sir William Chamber’s published disdain in 1772 for England as a country ‘where peasants emerge from the melon grounds to commence professors’, a covert rebuke to Brown, who had become a competitor and exposed Chamber’s inefficient working practices at Hampton Court as Comptroller of the King’s Works.

Dorothy Stroud records an account by Sir Lambton Loraine, Sir William’s great-great grandson, of Brown’s work at Kirkharle as having ‘contrived to throw the sweetest charms’ [to what Stroud suggests was ‘hitherto a rough and boggy tract of land to the north of the house’] into a ‘woody theatre of statelest view’, a characteristic description of a process of transformation that would be often repeated later in his career. In 1738, having completed his work at Kirkharle, Brown was commissioned to landscape the grounds at Benwell Tower, Newcastle for Robert Shafto before he left the county in 1739 to head south.

Cultural significance
The next well-documented reference to Brown’s career is his arrival at Stowe on 11 March 1741 aged 24, where he was initially appointed head gardener by Lord Cobham. Cobham had been put out to pasture from his political career by Walpole in 1741, and since then had been creating a landscape that was highly fashionable and politically charged. The author George Clark recounts that six months into Brown’s appointment the estate steward, William Roberts, who would have overseen all the works at Stowe, hanged himself. He was replaced by Thomas Potts, who subsequently ran off with the estate coffers, so at the age of 26 Brown was made steward as well as head gardener. Clark estimates that nine projects were under way in the house and grounds at Stowe during this time; Brown would have overseen them all, most likely under the close scrutiny of Cobham and the architects William Kent and James Gibbs. The two projects that most experts attribute to Brown alone are the Grecian Valley and Lord Cobham’s Column.

Stowe exposed Brown to members of a young and wealthy new political class, shaped by the displaced Cobham, and soon to become the political elite. In 1749 Cobham died childless and his nephew inherited Stowe. Brown had by this time begun to accept his own commissions from the contacts he had made and left Stowe to establish his own practice. Among his early commissions were Croome in 1751 for George, 2nd Earl of Coventry, and Petworth in 1752 for Charles Wyndham, 6th Earl of Egremont (both now in Trust ownership). Both schemes were hugely ambitious, reflecting Brown’s experienced and confident approach. Coventry, who became a life-long friend, erected a memorial casket to Brown at Croome; its inscription records that ‘his inimitable and creative genius formed this garden scene out of a morass’. Today, after 20 years of restoration work undertaken by the National Trust, Croome can be seen as being the closest example of what a Brown landscape in the making might have looked like.

Over the next 30 years, Brown undertook 260 commissions across the country and into Wales. His most prolific decade was the 1760s, including his appointment as Royal Gardener to George III in 1764.

International influence
In the later years of Brown’s career, the English landscape style that he was so successfully implementing in this country began to influence design abroad. Catherine the Great became one of its greatest exponents in Russia: ‘I am presently madly in love with English gardens, with curved lines, gentle slopes, lakes formed from swamps, and archipelagos of solid earth’. She preferred a Brown-style landscape as the setting for the neoclassical architecture of the imperial

Stowe, looking from the Temple of Concord & Victory to Lord Cobham’s Column
palace at Tsarskoye Selo, and commissioned the Scottish architect Charles Cameron to design Pavlovsk Palace, St Petersburg for her son in the Palladian style with an accompanying English landscape.

In the early 19th century Prince Pückler-Muskau of Germany employed John Adey Repton, Humphry Repton’s son, to implement the largest English park in central Europe at his estate in Muskau (during his early career, Repton had been the self-publicised successor and improver to Brown’s work)7. Repton’s inspiration had perhaps come from a visit to Ashridge, a place he described as surpassing royal establishments: ‘Even our sovereigns possess only fragments of what is here found united’8. After a European tour taking in Brown’s work at Claremont, Stowe and Blenheim in 1783-86, the American politician Thomas Jefferson incorporated this style at Monticello, his Virginian home.9

About the potential of their land: ‘His magic wand has raised such landscapes to the Eye—not visionary for they were all there but his Touch has brought them out with the same Effect as a Painter’s Pencil upon canvas’10, the Marchioness wrote. His plan shows the wealth of devices he could adopt to create beauty where a complex and compartmentalised agricultural landscape existed before. At Wimpole water inhabits the middle ground, suggesting a river, and a wooded belt encloses the entire scene. Brown had used this device (to look across water from the house) before at Audley End, and the wooded belt resembles the ones proposed for Ashburnham and at Burton Constable, where Brown’s directions to the agent describe them as being composed of ‘outlier clumps and specimens’11. Both Ashburnham and Burton Constable are in private ownership.

In a sense, the best account of Brown’s design influences are given by the places where he did not work. For example, he undertook little or no work in Gloucestershire, the north west, Devon or Wales. Brown wrote to George Rice, owner of Dinefwr, in February 1776 referring to his visit the previous summer, and describes what he saw as ‘Nature [having] been truly bountiful and Art [having] done no harm’; perhaps this explains why he undertook so few commissions in these places – nature had done the work already.

Brown’s work in Trust ownership alone shows that shortly before his sudden death in 1783 he had no intention of retirement or reducing the extent of its reach. Together with Henry Holland, his son-in-law, Brown was working for Thomas Harley at Berrington, Herefordshire (NT) on a new house, walled garden and its surrounding landscape; also, he had recently commissioned the surveyor John Spyers to examine Woodchester Park, no doubt to look at the possibility of future improvements. At Berrington, in a county so closely associated with the picturesque (and with Brown’s most strident critics Sir Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price), Brown was uncompromising in designing a landscape that is ‘so smooth, so polished, so neat, so unpicturesque’12. There is no doubt that had he lived longer than his 67 years, Brown’s response to criticism of his work would always have been best expressed by the action of a spade rather than that of a pen.

**Mark Lamey, Capability Brown Tercentenary Project Manager**

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2 Preece, Chris (pers. comm.) in a lecture entitled Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown and the 42 Wheelbarrows (a reference to the supplies list in a contract between Brown and 2nd Earl of Egremont at Petworth that includes 42 wheelbarrows).
6 Empress and the Gardener (2016). Exhibition, Historic Royal Palaces, Hampton Court.
GODOLPHIN PORTRAITS

My interest and curiosity were aroused several years ago by a note in the ‘Notes for Guides’ at Godolphin House, Cornwall, compiled by Rachel Hunt and distributed by the National Trust in 2008.

‘John Schofield [the former owner of Godolphin] has a letter from a servant of Sir Francis Godolphin III addressed to Sir Francis’s steward. It states that Mrs Boscawen (a daughter of Francis and his wife Dorothy) has asked if she can have her ‘master’s’ portrait, and that the letter was to go to her. This probably refers to one of a group of five portraits commissioned by Francis. The artist was Cornelius Johnson, and the group comprised Francis (who commissioned the portraits); Dorothy (his wife); Sydney (his brother, a poet); Penelope (his sister); and William (his brother).’

Francis, Sidney, Penelope and William were the children of William Godolphin (1567–1613) and his wife Thomasin Sidney (c.1574–1612), who married in 1604. The Mrs Boscawen mentioned in the letter was Jael Godolphin (1647–1730), daughter of Francis Godolphin III (1605–67); she married Edward Boscawen (1628–85) in 1661. (Francis III married Dorothy Berkeley around 1635 and they had sixteen children, thirteen of whom were living and are named in Dorothy’s will dated November 1668). Jael was buried in St Mary Abbots Parish Church, Kensington, where there is a plaque to her memory, which includes the words: ‘She was adorned with rare faculties of the mind, singular acuteness, sagacity and judgement, with a generous heart.’

Cornelius Johnson, real name Cornelis Janssens van Ceulen (1593-1661), was a Dutch portrait painter active in England from about 1618 to 1641, when he moved to Middelburg in the Netherlands following the outbreak of the Civil War; between 1646 and 1652 he lived in Amsterdam, before settling in Utrecht, where he was buried. Johnson’s portraits, in every size from the miniature to the full-length group portrait, are distinguished for their sensitive rendering of the sitter’s likeness and their delicate and deft technique.

I have not seen the letter from Sir Francis’s servant, but I have been able to track down two of the portraits.

The first is a portrait (oil on canvas) of Sir Francis Godolphin III (1605–67), painted in 1633 by Cornelius Johnson, in the Paul Mellon Collection at the Yale Center for British Art at Yale University (accession no. 81973.1.28). It is signed and dated ‘CJ Fecit / 1633’. Paul Mellon (1907–99) was one of the greatest art collectors and philanthropists of the 20th century; in 1966 he gave the building, works of art and endowment that established the Yale Center for British Art. The sensitivity of this portrait, and the fine rendering of detail, such as the lace collar, is typical of Johnson’s work. The second is a portrait on canvas (30 x 24½ inches) listed as ‘Lady Dorothy Godolphin, by Cornelius Johnson, c.1638’ in The Walpole Society journal, 1921 (vol. 10, p.3). A print from the original painting appears as plate 64 in an article by A. J. Finberg that gives a chronological listing of works by Johnson. The portrait of Dorothy was in the collection of Charles Sedelmeyer (1831–1925), an Austrian art dealer, collector and publisher active in Paris from 1866, with premises at 6 Rue de la Rochefoucauld. However, the National Portrait Gallery has no further record of the portrait. The Sedelmeyer Collection was dispersed after his death in 1925 and the whereabouts of the portrait is currently unknown.

In 1757, Francis, 2nd Earl of Godolphin, made a payment to James Bonus ‘for cleaning 91 pictures, & framing several others, including 2 by Cornelius Johnson, 1 fruit piece by Michaelangelo & a landscape by Edema’ (Northamptonshire Record Office, FIMC/678). On 6 June 1803 Christie’s held an auction of ‘the capital and well-known collection of Italian, French, Spanish, Flemish & Dutch pictures, purchased by the late Francis Earl of Godolphin, distinguished for his great knowledge and taste for the fine arts’. This shows that two Godolphin portraits by Johnson were extant in the 18th century and were probably dispersed when the collection was sold off in the early 19th century.

So what of the other three Godolphins said to be part of the Johnson commission? Sidney Godolphin (1610–43), member of a Royalist force pursuing the Parliamentary army, was riding through Chagford, Devon, on 8 February 1643 when a chance shot ‘from an undiscerned and undiscerning hand’ caused him to fall dead from his horse. I can find no record of a painting of Sidney Godolphin by Johnson. Penelope Godolphin (1607–69) married Charles Berkeley, 2nd Viscount Fitzhardinge (1599-1668) in 1627 and lived in Bruton, Somerset, where she is buried. No information is forthcoming about William other than he died ‘d.s.p.’ (without having children): F. G. Marsh says he ‘commanded the regiment of foot raised for the King by Sir Francis, his eldest brother’, but this is a confusion with Colonel William Godolphin (1605–65), of Spargor, who was a cousin of Francis III, not a brother.

In conclusion, if there was indeed a commission for Johnson to paint five Godolphin portraits, I believe that only two were ever executed, of which one definitely still exists; there is a possibility that others may be among the numerous portraits of ‘unknown ladies and gentlemen’ attributed to this artist. But that is work yet to be done.

Tony Clifford, Volunteer
A NEW, FLEXIBLE INDOOR SPACE
The conservation of the 18th-century Cider House at Godolphin

The Cider House is the oldest agricultural building at Godolphin, Cornwall; it was reopened to members of the public in February 2015 following extensive and meticulous conservation work. It is a Grade-II Listed Building that was purpose-built in the 18th century as a cider house. The survival of this building is significant, as it is a relatively rare early example of a cider house in Cornwall.

The site of the Cider House has had four phases of construction, including a possible earlier building. The present building was purpose-built as a cider house containing an apple loft on the first floor and space for the mill and press on the lower floor. In the mid-1970s the Cider House was cleared and converted for use as an experimental pottery by Peter Schofield, who grew up at Godolphin. He and his friend Mike Dodd, a fellow potter, constructed a kiln using recycled firebricks, with gas lamps for lighting, and water brought to the site by tractor. They mixed china clay dug from Godolphin Hill with mica from St Just, and they made utility ware in the style of the Bernard Leach pottery. Pieces from this pottery are now collector’s items.

Before being conserved as part of the wider Godolphin Project in 2015, the building was unstable: telegraph poles were being used to hold up the north gable end, and the scandle slate roof was failing. After a particularly bad winter in 2009 which saw snow in Cornwall, scaffolding with a temporary roof was erected to protect the fragile building while money was raised for its conservation. The historic building remained hidden from view for six years before funds were found to conserve it.

A local art teacher, Miss Margery Hall, generously left a legacy of £100,000 to fund a project within Cornwall. The executors decided to donate the money to Godolphin owing to her various links with the estate. This enabled the restoration to take place.

Local stonemasons and carpenters with specialist skills were involved in the restoration project. Their knowledge of traditional building methods allowed much of what exists today to be as close to the original building as possible. Some original Douglas-Fir beams were conserved, and the stones on the north gable end were numbered to ensure that they were returned to exactly the same position in the wall on rebuilding.

Traditional carpentry joints such as the hook-weave scarf joint have been employed in the joists supporting the first floor. Carpenters’ marks on early truss timbers have been retained, and so have the 19th-century iron bolts in the joists which are thought to have secured the cider press.

All of the timber in the roof was found to be
The work on the Cider House has followed the operating principles that guide all the conservation work here at Godolphin: the use of buildings and places is not the driver for alteration to the fabric. We aim at enabling spaces to retain flexibility, allowing their use to change over time, but ensuring the integrity of place and materials. Our work across all areas of the estate, including the work on the Cider House, also takes account of the conservation principles outlined by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).

We are mixing old technologies with new: motion-sensitive cameras have been placed on the north gable end of the building which are active at night and have captured bats visiting the bat boxes. The building has been furnished, guided by SPAB principles. The furnishings include benches constructed from Douglas fir on the ground floor for use by visiting school groups as well as picnickers sheltering from the rain; grey stacking light chairs upstairs for volunteer meetings and special interest talks; and a screen used as part of an exhibition on granite and also for sharing footage of the local wildlife. The internal furniture has all been kindly funded by Friends of Godolphin, a local supporter group.

Since being opened, the Cider House has evolved into a flexible indoor space for multipurpose use for day visitors as well as for evening events. This has been helped by the use of specialist insulation under the new roof along with the energy-efficient electric radiators in the building. We have held children’s workshops, flower displays, art exhibitions and conservation installations. It was also important to preserve the space as it was initially, so that visitors can appreciate the sensitivity of the conservation work that has taken place here.

The work on this important building is part of a larger programme of conservation at Godolphin. Our current work is focused on the walls of the 16th-century King’s Garden; then our attention will turn to the conservation of the Grade-II Listed 19th-century shippons (cow houses) behind Godolphin House.

Claire North, Visitor Services and Enterprises Manager, National Trust, Godolphin
CAST IRON EVIDENCE AT ATTINGHAM?
Innovative but flawed: John Nash’s experimental Picture Gallery

Between 1805 and 1807 the 2nd Lord Berwick (1770-1832) made alterations to the heart of Attingham Hall, Shropshire in order to house his Grand Tour collections. To do this he employed the eminent Regency architect John Nash (1752-1835), later of Brighton Pavilion and Regent’s Street fame. Nash swept away George Steuart’s original entrance hall and grand staircase and built in its place Attingham’s Picture Gallery with its innovative use of cast iron, and the theatrical drum staircase. The Picture Gallery is an iconic ground-breaking piece of architectural design. Nash’s clever solution provided top-lighting in an entirely internal space at the heart of the mansion. Supported on his structure of metal and glass, the central bed of the ceiling appears to float above the space. All the internal, high-level decorative elements were gilded so that the overall effect would have shimmered spectacularly.

Nash’s solution for the Gallery’s lighting was unique in terms of technique and materials: the roof structure was a very early example of the use of cast iron, in the form of curved ‘ribs’ supporting continuous glazing. The curvature ensured that the light fell over a wide area, so that the lower pictures were better lit than they would have been by the more customary lantern-style top-lighting. It was also innovative because Nash was using iron in a domestic interior, rather than an engineering or industrial context. However, it was risky—early structural uses of iron were very much experimental, with many failures as well as successes. Nash’s decision to use cast and wrought iron in the design for the Gallery and Staircase was characteristically experimental and brave.

Sourcing the ironwork
By 1805 Nash had already had some success in using iron both for bridges and in buildings, but he had also had some spectacular failures. Amongst these were the bridge at Stanford-on-Teme, Worcestershire, which collapsed without warning in 1795, and Corsham Court in Wiltshire, where his lack of understanding of the materials contributed to serious structural problems and the eventual demolition of the north wing (completed 1805).2 As well as design faults, the poor quality of the cast iron probably contributed significantly to the failure of these structures, so a good ironwork contractor was going to be very important for the roof over Attingham’s new Picture Gallery.

Longstanding received wisdom has it that the cast iron for the structure was produced by the Coalbrookdale Company.3 This theory was for many years seemingly supported by the contents of a letter of 1805 from John Nash to the second Lord Berwick, which states: ‘I shall go on Monday to Coalbrookdale to order the iron frame for … over the new Gallery—which will occupy me the greater part of Tuesday—I shall then go to Birmingham to order the metal skylight and reach London Thursday morning.’

Beyond this single letter in the Attingham papers held by Shropshire Archives, documentary evidence for the involvement of the Coalbrookdale Company in the scheme is scant. There is currently a single known letter of relevance (from John Tranter of the Coalbrookdale Co. to Edmund Darby) in the Coalbrookdale Collection held at Shropshire Archives4, which does demonstrate at least that the company had provided iron to Lord Berwick and to Nash in the period c.1805-06, including ‘cast iron arches’. It is, however, not specific enough to provide a direct link to the Picture Gallery scheme.

Whilst there is a lack of firm evidence for the Coalbrookdale Company’s involvement in the scheme, there is, however, a compelling case to be made from more substantial evidence within the Attingham papers that suggests a potential alternative source for iron used in the Picture Gallery structure and/or the wider scheme of alterations to the house. (It is important to remember that Nash’s letter to the Coalbrookdale Company was seemingly written prior to any orders for iron being placed; a subsequent change of plan or overruling from the client therefore cannot be ruled out).

There are a number of accounts dating from the first decade of the 19th century from another local ironmaster, William Hazledine, among which are sizeable accounts dating from 1805 and 1806, which appear very likely to correspond with Nash’s alterations to the house.
Evidence for Hazledine’s involvement

Up to now William Hazledine (1763-1840) of Shrewsbury has been a little-known figure, but recent research has demonstrated that he was an ironmaster of considerable importance. He provided ironwork for five world ‘firsts’, two of which were completed before 1806. These two are Ditherington Flax Mill, Shrewsbury (the first fully iron-framed building in the world, completed 1797), and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct (then the longest and highest aqueduct in the world, completed 1805). Much of Hazledine’s most important work was done to designs by his great friend Thomas Telford. Another friend and business partner of Hazledine was John Simpson (1755-1815), who was the building contractor for the Attingham Picture Gallery.

Indeed, there was quite a network of innovative craftsmen and suppliers in the Shrewsbury area around 1800—and Attingham played a part in bringing them together. Nash obviously depended on extensive local skills, and he was particularly fortunate to have Hazledine and Simpson on the doorstep. This patronage of local, highly-skilled craftsmen mirrored that of Nash’s client, the 2nd Lord Berwick, who commissioned the cabinet-maker and gilder Thomas Donaldson for huge quantities of furniture and gilded decorations at Attingham, and Jonathon Perry, supplier of curtains and carpets, both of whom had premises in Shrewsbury.

Hazledine had easy access to Attingham, having a foundry (for the production of cast iron) at Coleham, Shrewsbury, and a forge (for the production of wrought iron) at Upton Magna (1km away). Large iron components could easily be shipped to the property via the River Severn (from Coleham) or the River Tern (from Upton).

In addition, the new Shrewsbury Canal, nearly one mile of which ran through the estate, had just been finished (it opened in 1797) and gave a direct link to Berwick Wharf on the Attingham estate, and on to Shrewsbury.

There are repeated payments to Hazledine for ‘Pieces of Casting for Skylight’, as well as ribs and trusses. None of the documents refers explicitly to these castings being produced for the Picture Gallery roof, but Hazledine’s involvement in the Gallery project is confirmed by the appearance of his name and fees in a list of ‘Country Bills’ for the Gallery (from which list the Coalbrookdale Company is notably absent). Although William Hazledine headed his bills as work on the ‘skylight’, considering the extent of the work, this must be the continuous glazing around the Picture Gallery roof, rather than the circular skylight above the stairs, which he also made (see below). This is supported by a bill from Mr Farnall, a blacksmith, headed ‘Iron Work to New Picture Gallery’. This details items supplied ‘to Mr Hazledine’s men’, and the dates that these items were supplied tally with the dates that Hazledine’s men were on site.

Erecting the iron roof

In the second week of March 1806, the first 53 cast-iron ‘bars’ (sections) for the roof were delivered to the site. Two of Hazledine’s men (Richard Parkes and James Nugent) started work fabricating the roof on Monday 10 March. Some of their equipment, such as bolts and cramps, was supplied to them by the on-site blacksmith Mr Farnall. They appear to have run into problems with the fabrication, as there is a note dated 29 March for a payment to alter the patterns. A further 26 cast-iron bars (presumably to the new pattern) were delivered on 28 March. A further two bars followed on 8 April and the final 32 on 25 April. There were also a number of deliveries of wrought iron bars. In the last week of April, Francis Plowden and John Humphreys joined the other two workers, and the four of them were employed until 2 July.

This means that over a 16½ week period about 320 man-days of work were needed for the construction of the roof. On 11 June they took delivery of a ‘round cast skylight frame’, presumably the skylight for the top of the stairs. During the week ending Saturday 21 June, the four men were joined by Benjamin Cox and Richard Griffiths when they worked together to put up this skylight, which took just 1½ days. Quite how the fabrication was done without modern lifting gear and in the confined, double-height space is impossible now to say, but probably some of the men on Hazledine’s team had fabricated Ditherington Flax Mill and Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and so had considerable experience in this type of work. Hazledine’s total bill was £345 15s 6d, though a later document that summarised how much all the tradesmen were paid for the Picture Gallery indicated that he was finally paid £479 5s 6d.

The subsequent story

The small panes of glass in the Gallery top-lighting turned out to be a fundamental design flaw: work had to be done to repair...
damage caused by leaks less than a year after the Gallery was complete. This proved to be a continuous problem, and a glazed cover was installed by the Trust in 1974 around the perimeter of Nash's roof. This, however, was only ever partially successful. Another weakness of Nash's design is that his lead rainwater downpipes are internal, buried in the north wall of the Picture Gallery, because of the Gallery's position at the heart of the house. It was an ingenious idea, but high-risk for the future; these pipes have not failed yet, but are obviously hopelessly positioned for any maintenance.

For these reasons, and the fact that the 200-year-old lead on a curved cast iron structure that is a continuation of the curved cast iron 'ribs' above the skylight. Despite appearances to the contrary, the roof of the Gallery is effectively an 'arched' structure, not a flat 'beam' structure as reports in 1978 had suggested. The curved cast iron 'arches' taper to a remarkably slender profile at the centre of the roof, compared to the deeper section that is visible above the skylight. Computer modelling by a structural engineer found this to be a very efficient and elegant design, which enables the structure to be concealed within a relatively thin overall roof thickness. Whether this part of the design was Nash's own or whether he had advice from Hazledine is not known. Either way, even though elements of Nash's innovative design were arguably flawed, Hazledine's ironwork was still serviceable after 200 years, entirely normal for this great ironmaster.

Sarah Kay, Project Curator
Emma Nock, Curator, South West Region
Andrew Pattison, Local Historian

Nash also frequently used structural iron within his country-house designs elsewhere, and appears to have used some iron within the structure of the tower at Cronkhill on the Attingham Estate, which would just have pre-dated the Picture Gallery (a simple iron beam was observed by the tenant at first floor level when floorboards were lifted).

http://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Stanford_Bridge; http://www.cornsham-court.co.uk/Court%20history/Commentary.html (both accessed March 2016)


Shropshire Archives (SA) 112/4/6(D)/173 (letter marked ‘Nash abt alterations at Attingham’, undated, but other material in the letter indicates that it was written during the early planning stages of Nash’s alterations).

SA 245/22.

Andrew Pattison, William Hazledine, Shropshire Ironmaster and Millwright, University of Birmingham, M.Phil, 2012, http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/3358/ See, for example, SA 112/6/256/506.

For a full account of Donaldson's commissions for Attingham see Christopher Rowell, Furniture, Carving and Gilding at Attingham Park by Thomas Donaldson of Shrewsbury, Apollo, NT Historic Houses & Collections 2016, pp.12-20.

A farther local link between these craftsmen was the Carline family (John II and III, father and son), described as builder, mason and sculptor. It was probably John Carline II who was mentioned in Thomas Donaldson’s 1811 account for console tables in the Picture Gallery with Chimeras supports and marble slabs: ‘Mr Carlinse Bill for setting the Mosaic Top = £50 0 0’, SA 112/6/53/6.

SA 112/6/256/390.

SA 112/6/256/291.

SA 112/6/256/290.

SA 112/6/256/390.

SA 112/6/256/291; interestingly, Hazledine accepted timber (both standing and cordwood for charcoal) in part payment from this. This came from Sutton Wood, near Madeley, then owned by the Attingham Estate (SA 112/6/Box 53/315). In addition to being an ironmaster, Hazledine did mill design and construction and general building work, and had interests in limekilns and coalmines, and was also in the timber trade. ‘Bartering’ in this way would have saved time and money for both parties.

A bill from Joseph Alcock for £42 in October 1807 was for repaying the damage done by the rain in the four Scagliola Columns and four Pilasters in imitation of Porphyry in the Gallery. SA 112/6/45/189.

This has been written up in ABC October 2012, pp.1-3 and Roofing Today, 49, (Oct-Nov 2013), p.8.


It is possible that Hazledine did some of the detailed design – he certainly did at Pontcysyllte. On the other hand when questioned by the Select Committee about his work at Buckingham Palace at the end of his career, Nash himself insisted: ‘No founder ever furnished me with a design for any casting I ever used’, adding that ‘the Architect ought to be the most competent judge of the form of the castings he requires and their application and strength’ (quoted in Sutherland, The Age of Cast Iron 1780-1870, Ashgate 1997).

See, for example, Conwy Bridge.
A CLOSER LOOK AT FRANCIS DRAKE
The newly identified charismatic portrait at Buckland Abbey

Visitors to Buckland Abbey in Devon in 2016 will come face-to-face with a newly identified portrait of Francis Drake. The charismatic three-quarter length portrait is being shown alongside other 16th-century portraits in the Drake Chamber. It is wholly appropriate that this painting should make its first public appearance at Buckland Abbey, the home bought by Drake in 1580 and owned by his descendants until 1946.

Buckland Abbey was established as a Cistercian monastery in 1278, founded by Amicia, Countess of Devon. In 1341, following its seizure by the crown during the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Henry VIII sold Buckland Abbey to Sir Richard Grenville, who set about converting the abbey church into a comfortable house. His son Roger Grenville drowned in 1545 when the Mary Rose, the ship he was commanding, capsized and sank off Portsmouth. Buckland was passed to Roger’s son, Richard Grenville, who completed the conversion of the abbey, including the extant Great Hall of 1576.

Born in Tavistock in 1540, Drake bought Buckland Abbey from his cousin and fellow naval commander Richard Grenville in 1580 on his triumphant return from circumnavigating the globe.

The National Trust acquired Buckland Abbey in 1949, and has worked in partnership with Plymouth Museum and Art Gallery since the 1950s to present the life and relics of Sir Francis Drake here. The portrait is on loan to the National Trust with thanks to a private US collector courtesy of Haldane Fine Art.

Physical analysis of the painting and an examination of the iconography and physiognomy of the sitter have led art specialist Angus Haldane to declare this previously unidentified sitter to be Francis Drake. It is likely to have been painted in the 1570s, before his departure on his world voyage in 1577.

During the early 1570s Drake was employed in numerous voyages to Africa and the Americas as a privateer with his cousin John Hawkins, transporting slaves and attacking Spanish ports and ships. He returned to England and Elizabeth I with great riches looted from the Spaniards. His wealth and social standing were on the rise, and a portrait would have been a suitable way to proclaim and enhance his status.

This glamorous portrait captures Drake’s likeness early in his career, and overtly demonstrates his aspiration for his future. It is a tantalising possibility that this portrait originally formed a series of ‘heroes’ of the Elizabethan court. Certainly, if one visits Blickling Hall, there is a portrait of Sir Philip Sidney, Drake’s contemporary, wearing almost identical armour in a portrait of almost the same size, probably by the same hand.

Most 16th-century English portraits were painted on wood; this painting is unusual in that it is executed on canvas. The artist is unknown. The painting is attributed to the Anglo-Dutch School, as the use of canvas suggests an emigre Netherlandish artist working in England or an English artist working on the Continent.

The lack of a coat of arms in this portrait supports the likelihood that it was painted before Drake’s circumnavigation of the globe of 1577-80. In 1581, in recognition of his magnificent achievement, Drake was knighted on the deck of the Golden Hind in the presence of Elizabeth I. He was granted a coat of arms later the same year.

However, in this painting the sitter is relying upon his armour and its iconography to portray his standing as a naval or military commander. The armour is 16th-century ‘tournament’ armour, Italian in style, and the handkerchief on the sitter’s left arm represents a ‘favour’ awarded by ladies at a tournament. The heraldic devices on his armour (from top to bottom: a horse flanked by a targe shield, a Saracen brandishing a scimitar, a dolphin flanked by a bay leaf, a trophy of arms, and a Spanish morion helmet) and the baton of command he holds demonstrate his martial strength.

The most compelling argument for this sitter to be identified as Drake is found in his facial features. The present portrait is close to other contemporary portraits of the sitter, showing us his recognisable tightly curled brown hair, lighter facial hair and light-coloured eyes. Drake’s most distinctive facial features were two warts, one on the left side of his nose and one on the bridge of his nose. The famous Gheeraerts portrait in the National Maritime Museum clearly shows these two warts, as do other period engravings. In this image, the only known portrait of Drake’s right-hand side, a wart is visible on the bridge of his nose.

Hung close by in the Treasures Gallery at Buckland Abbey is a later portrait of Drake, painted by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (1561-1635) in the 1590s which again depicts the wart on the bridge of his nose. This is a later image of Drake: a globe, symbolic of his voyage around the world, is included, as we see in several portraits after 1580.

We invite visitors to view this newly identified portrait of Drake at Buckland Abbey until February 2017.

Emma Jones, Curator, South West region