In 2014, Oxford University’s Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents (CSAD) joined forces with the National Trust to begin a detailed study of the Philae obelisk which stands in the grounds of the Kingston Lacy estate in Dorset. The 6.7m pink granite obelisk is the crowning glory of the extensive Egyptian collection on permanent display in the house and grounds, and a key monument for scholars of ancient texts, being one of the very few surviving stones with inscriptions in both Egyptian hieroglyphs and ancient Greek. By happy coincidence, at the same time as the Oxford team were conducting their own high-tech imaging of the obelisk on earth, the Open University’s Philae Lander was preparing its own extraordinary investigation in the far reaches of space, where it successfully touched down on the comet 67P/Churyumov-Gerasimenko.

Part of the European Space Agency’s robotic spacecraft Rosetta, the Philae Lander was named in honour of this very same obelisk, drawing a parallel between its role in the decipherment of hieroglyphs in the 19th century and the lander’s own work towards unlocking the secrets of the cosmos.

The Obelisk in Egypt
The obelisk was discovered in 1815 on the Nile island of Philae by William John Bankes, heir to the Kingston Lacy estate in Dorset, and brought from Egypt to England under the direction of the flamboyant Italian circus performer and engineer Giovanni Belzoni. The obelisk was originally one of pair set up in the 2nd century BC by the priests of Isis at Philae. The temple complex on Philae dominated the tiny island, and was a popular stop-over for travellers and pilgrims. Tired of absorbing the costs of these visitors, the priests made an appeal for financial relief to their king, Ptolemy VIII (ruled c. 170-116 BC), and his two wives, Cleopatra II (his biological sister) and Cleopatra III (his niece, daughter of Cleopatra II and their mutual brother, Ptolemy VI). On being granted a tax exemption, the priests celebrated their good fortune by inscribing a transcript of their petition in ancient Greek on the base of the obelisk beneath a more traditional honorific inscription in Egyptian hieroglyphs on the shaft.

Oxford CPI project
For the Oxford team, the Philae obelisk represents an exciting challenge, both as a

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**INSIDE**

3 Baron de Rothschild’s Renaissance Museum at Waddeson
6 Arthur Hussey in the Great War
8 The Muses of Seaton Delaval Hall
10 Wimpole Hall’s missing globes
12 Lower Brockhampton rediscovered
13 Chinese wallpaper in National Trust houses
15 Lady Frances Cranfield at Knole
18 Acquisitions
monument and as an ancient text. For the inscription specialists at CSAD working on the Corpus of Ptolemaic Inscriptions (CPI), the obelisk is an important record of Egyptian life under the Ptolemies in the 2nd century BC. The three-year CPI project, headed by Professor Alan Bowman, is creating a corpus of up-to-date editions of more than 550 Greek, bilingual and trilingual inscriptions on stone from Ptolemaic Egypt (323–30 BC), based on material collected and annotated by the late Peter Fraser FBA (1918–2007), who was the leading authority of the 20th century in the field of Hellenistic inscriptions in Egypt.

Egypt is unique among Hellenistic kingdoms in that inscriptions in its own language survived alongside the dominant Greek brought in by the Ptolemies. Just as on the Rosetta Stone, it is the obelisk’s juxtaposition of related texts in different scripts that in the 19th century provided the clue to deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphs. While the two texts on the obelisk are not direct translations, they do contain similar words. In particular, the recognition of the name ‘Cleopatra’ in Greek led to the identification of the equivalent name-cartouche in the hieroglyphs. For the 19th-century scholars working on its decipherment, including Jean-François Champollion, Thomas Young and William John Bankes himself, the Philae texts were an essential piece of the puzzle.

RTI Campaign

On a chilly day in April 2014, a team of text and technology specialists from CSAD met with James Grasby (Curator for South-West Region), Rob Gray (House and Collections Manager) and Andrew McLaughlin (General Manager) in the grounds of Kingston Lacy to plan an ambitious campaign of digital imaging, which would require the construction (and climbing) of a 7m scaffold around the obelisk.

In September 2014, with the four-tiered scaffold in place, preparation for Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) began with a visit from Clivedon Conservation, who cleaned the obelisk’s surface and made small repairs to the restored lower segments. Members of CSAD then returned to begin RTI of all four faces of the obelisk. RTI is a photographic method that captures fine details of surface shape and colour and allows its users to re-light an object from any angle through special viewing software. RTI also enables mathematical enhancement of shape and colour which can reveal surface information that is invisible to the naked eye. For Oxford’s Ben Altshuler, Sarah Norodom and Uxue Rambla Eguilaz, imaging the Philae obelisk was a week-long process, with images taken section by section each morning and late evening. For a team accustomed to imaging smaller objects, the 6.7m obelisk posed all kinds of technical and practical challenges. Its isolated position in the garden meant that a gas generator was needed to provide emergency power for the RTI equipment, and tarpaulins had to be rigged to regulate the light on brighter days. Unfortunately, no solution could be found for the British climate: rain stopped work on more than one occasion. Remarkong on the team spirit that developed between CSAD and National Trust staff, Sarah Norodom said: ‘While I wouldn’t say that RTI of the Philae Obelisk required as much Herculean labour as when it was first transported to Kingston Lacy, it certainly required a comparable amount of unforeseen improvisation.’ The team was especially grateful for the patience and good humour of the Kingston Lacy grounds staff in the face of what, she admitted, were ‘occasionally outlandish requests’.

The Results and the Future

While the scripts on the Kingston Lacy obelisk are in a reasonably good state of preservation, sections of the Greek text have never been legible in modern times. RTI technology has not only created a permanent, accurate record of the obelisk, but also helped the team to make improvements to the existing record of the texts, including sections thought to have been lost. CSAD’s epigraphers (who specialise in reading and interpreting ancient inscriptions) are now working with the RTI results to produce a new translation, filling the gaps created by time and weather and restoring these ancient messages for posterity.

With the excitement surrounding the Philae Lander and the early results of the CSAD project, the pink granite obelisk, which has remained a fixture at Kingston Lacy for 200 years, is now attracting fresh interest. Sarah Norodom was quick to point out the potential of the imaging campaign for bringing together those with different fields of expertise: ‘The Philae obelisk RTI project perfectly encapsulates the trials and tribulations of field RTI, but also its fantastic rewards. We now have a permanent, high-tech and interactive record of the obelisk’s valuable inscriptions. We hope this will encourage scholars and students to use this technology in their study of the ancient world, be it Egyptian or otherwise; we also hope that RTI might also interest those who have previously given little thought to the preservation of cultural heritage, but are avid consumers of new and exciting technologies.’

It is hoped that the results of the RTI campaign, and the first new readings of the Greek and hieroglyphic inscriptions, will be made available to the public in 2015.

Dr Jane Massaglia, Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents, University of Oxford
TREASURES FROM THE SMOKING ROOM
Baron Ferdinand’s ‘Renaissance Museum’ at Waddesdon Manor

In the late 1880s Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild (1839-98) ordered the creation of a ‘New Smoking Room’ in the Bachelors’ Wing at Waddesdon. The room would contain the ‘Renaissance Museum’, Ferdinand’s collection of objects made of precious materials in the manner of princely collections of the 16th and 17th centuries.

The foundation stone of the Renaissance-style château in Buckinghamshire was laid in 1877, but it would be another fourteen years until the building was completed. The Bachelors’ Wing at the east end of the house was the first part to be finished in 1880. Even after the addition of another wing to the west between 1889 and 1891, Baron Ferdinand made alterations to the Bachelors’ Wing and continued to add to his collections until his death.

The first pictures we have of interiors in the Bachelors’ Wing date from 1897, published in Ferdinand’s privately printed Red Book in which he described the acquisition of the estate and the building of the house. By this time the Wing had been extended to provide more bedrooms and the Smoking Room re-modelled to accommodate Ferdinand’s ‘Renaissance Museum’, formerly displayed on the ground floor and later bequeathed to the British Museum.

The revised plan for Waddesdon by the French architect Gabriel-Hippolyte Destailleur (1822-93) from December 1874 had included a rectangular ‘salle des curiosités’ which eventually took the form of the round Tower Drawing Room on the ground floor. We have no images of the Tower before 1897, but a brief description of its interior is provided by Eustace Balfour in a letter to his wife from the early 1880s: ‘There was one room like the turrets at Inveraray in shape, only bigger, hung entirely with magnificent Italian needlework, and quite full of old Venetian glass set in silver gilt, and other beautiful pieces of metal and gold plate.’

By the early 1890s Destailleur had retired, and so the alterations to the Bachelors’ Wing were undertaken by his son, Walter-André d’Estailleur. The decorator and restorer Alfred André was employed and Dorothy de Rothschild records that the second and third generations of the firm ‘continued to come to Waddesdon for the National Trust and take these stitches in time which, it is hoped, will preserve old works of art for the enjoyment of many future generations.’ In addition, the Parisian decorating firm Decour was employed by Ferdinand from the early 1880s to supply textiles and furniture for the house. There are payments of between £42 and £3,500 to Decour from 1883 to 1897, and payments to André of between £1,000 and £2,000 from 1889 to 1897, including £1,460 in April 1896 specifically for ‘the museum’.

The Smoking Room was completed by spring 1896 and is the most-photographed interior in the Red Book, as if Ferdinand was making a visual record of his treasures—perhaps this was because by this time he had made the decision that his Renaissance collection would be bequeathed to the British Museum, to be known as the Waddesdon Bequest.

The redisplay of the Waddesdon Bequest at the British Museum, opening in summer 2015, has prompted a re-examination of the Smoking Room furnishings which remain at Waddesdon, including furniture, textile hangings and display plinths, in addition to objects that were not bequeathed, among them Renaissance jewellery, glass and maiolica from France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Although the Bachelors’ Wing is still a distinctive part of the house, its exotic character has been diluted by necessary conservation measures and the practicalities of using the rooms and exhibiting them to increasing numbers of visitors, particularly...
sets of similar hangings made from red velvet and remounted 17th-century embroidery from France, Italy and Spain once lined the corridor, creating a tent-like interior which led guests from the white and gold French 18th-century panelling of the Entresol Room (now the Low White Drawing Room) to the reception rooms of the Renaissance-style Bachelors’ Wing. 

Furniture covered in recycled 16th-century textiles, too fragile to have on permanent display, will also come out of store for the 2015 season to recreate the sensation of entering the Smoक ング Room. The surrounding display cases will contain luxurious textile hangings, glass, and jewellery, but will also show some of the many display plinths used for theatrical effect around the walls of the room, alongside archival material.

The Smoking Room itself has changed over the years as Baron Ferdinand’s sister and heir, Alice, re-populated the room on the departure of the Bequest in 1898. Dorothy de Rothschild remarked that Alice ‘made no attempt to replace what had been there before, but remained faithful to the period of her brother’s collection and the decorative style of that part of the house.’

Following the bequest of Waddesdon to the National Trust in 1957, the Bachelors’ Wing was open one day a week by the early 1960s. Baron Ferdinand’s remaining furnishings and Alice’s additions to the Smoking Room and corridor were gradually supplemented by Dorothy de Rothschild with items from Alice’s Renaissance collection at her Pavilion on the neighbouring Eythrope estate.

In the late 1990s the Smoking Room was refurbished by Lord Jacob Rothschild (b.1936), Chairman of the Rothschild Foundation responsible for the management of Waddesdon on behalf of the National Trust. Under the direction of David Mlinaric, 19th-century armchairs were re-covered in modern red damask so that they can be occasionally used. New display cases meeting current standards for museum security and lighting were installed and filled with the few pieces of Renaissance and Baroque jewellery not included in the Bequest and figures in precious materials by Balthasar Permoser and Johann Melchior Dinglinger, inherited by Ferdinand from his father, Anselm. These pieces are complemented by items acquired by Alice and Baron Edmond de Rothschild (1845-1934) and on loan from Lord Rothschild.

In this year of looking back at the late 19th-century surroundings of Baron Ferdinand’s Renaissance collection and looking forward to the opening of the new Waddesdon Bequest gallery at the British Museum, the contemporary artist Jane Wildgoose will also focus on the idea of bequest and memory in her installation at Waddesdon, Beyond All Price, reflecting upon Ferdinand’s words about the associations, memories and stimulus to the imagination that old objects may evoke.

Rachel Boak, Senior Curator

3 These payments are recorded in Baron Ferdinand’s household and personal account books held in the Windmill Hill Archive at Waddesdon, acc. no. 167.1997.1-7.
6 The damask was woven by Gainsborough Silk Weaving Co. Ltd., ordered 2 August 1996. Windmill Hill Archive, file reference 111/04/00A.
7 For a discussion of these objects, see Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti, ‘Renaissance and Baroque Jewellery’, Apollo, June 1977, pp. 422-427.
8 See Baron Ferdinand Rothschild, ‘Bric-a-Brac’ (1897), re-printed in Apollo, July & August 2007, pp. 54-77.

Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild’s ‘Renaissance Museum’: Treasures from the Smoking Room will be in the drawing rooms on the second floor at Waddesdon Manor from 25 March to 25 October 2015. Jane Wildgoose’s Beyond All Price also opens on 25 March. For more information, see www.waddesdon.org.uk and http://www.janewildgoose.co.uk/current_events.html

Sofa covered in red velvet with coloured silk and metal thread embroidery, with a pair of heraldic lions in the centre of the back, Italian or French (sofa frame English), 1675-1700 (embroidery), c.1680 (frame): Waddesdon, The Rothschild Collection (The National Trust) Bequest of Dorothy de Rothschild, 1988

Cabinet carved with Renaissance-style ornament, mid-to-late 16th century (with 19th-century alterations); oak and walnut with box and iron; 2320 x 1130 x 510mm: Waddesdon, The Rothschild Collection (Rothschild Family Trust)
For those who are not aware of them, let me introduce you to the Building Design Guides: a fantastic collection of case studies sharing best practice and lessons learned from a variety of building projects across the Trust. First established in 2003, this series was designed to help save time and money by drawing attention to aspects of previous building projects that have worked particularly well, as well as those that have not. The Building Design Guides have evolved from their initial conception to their present form. The content is now more sharply focused and provides an easy and convenient way of getting information.

Each Building Design Guide covers the key information about the project in three sections: preparation work, the build itself, and the post-project review.

The first section covers the background to the project, outlining what was needed. How this was going to be addressed is in the project brief, which covers the aims, intentions and objectives of the project. A highly important topic is the design approach. This section summarises the way forward, and takes into account the project brief, adjustments made for stakeholders, and any restrictions imposed by designations or any site-specific issues that had to be overcome, resolved or incorporated.

The second section outlines the construction phase of the project. This describes what was actually built and the construction method employed. This also includes the project team, suppliers and products used and a cost breakdown.

The final section in each Building Design Guide is arguably the most important: the post-project review. Was the project successful in achieving its aims and objectives? It covers the best practices within the project; what worked well and would be recommended or repeated; what lessons were learnt; what went less well, and would be done differently next time; and what alternative course could have been taken.

We have made an extensive collection of Building Design Guides for National Trust staff. These are categorised by the type of project, and colour-coded accordingly. A selection of these is available to the general public via the National Trust website, which can be accessed through this link: http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/article-1356940577731/

There are currently 16 Building Design Guides, covering a range of projects. These include projects on conservation, new builds, adaptive re-use, sustainable technology installations, cottage refurbishments, lighting, fire risk assessments, and external works.

Among the most recent conservation Building Design Guides is one covering the restoration of the New Inn at Stowe, Buckinghamshire. This major repair project, to conserve and secure the future of a Building at Risk which had been in a state of near-collapse, provided new visitor facilities at Stowe. Other recent additions include the repair and conservation of The Vinery, Greenway, Devon. The aim of this project was to return The Vinery to its use as part of the visitor display within the garden, using traditional conservation techniques carried out by the in-house Direct Labour team. Another recent Building Design Guide covers the re-roofing of the Grade I listed Ashdown House, Oxfordshire, and the structural repairs and conservation work on its chalk block elevations.

A new Building Design Guide soon to join the external collection is the restoration of the Orangery at Peckover House and Garden, Cambridgeshire. Following a structural inspection of the Orangery, the building was considered to be dangerous and closed to the public. A conservation project was therefore needed to reinstate the glasshouse to ensure that it was safe, fit for purpose (in particular to protect the orange trees) and more faithful to its historic design. This Building Design Guide will be available on the website shortly.

The Building Design Guides are an invaluable source of information on what has been done in previous Trust undertakings. Both the internal and external collection will continue to grow over the coming years as we share information on future National Trust projects.
Sharing a tale from the ‘Hidden Collection’ at Scotney Castle

Scotney Castle in Kent has long been celebrated for its picturesque garden. Designed by William Sawrey Gilpin, it incorporates the ruined Old Castle at Scotney and is best viewed from the ‘new’ house designed by Anthony Salvin in the mid-19th century. The National Trust took ownership of the house in 2006 and since then both staff and volunteers have been investigating the attics, cupboards and drawers and listing their findings. They contain a large and eclectic collection which continues to surprise eight years later. Our discoveries range from period costume, children’s toys, natural history specimens, and archaeological finds to over 6,000 photographs—and still counting! The insights gained from uncovering and researching the collection are fascinating. This winter we have focused on sharing the First World War experiences of Arthur Hussey (1863-1923), the son of the former owner and builder of the Victorian mansion house, Edward Hussey III (1807-94).

In the winter of 2011 a group of volunteers who were itemising the collection in the Scotney attics came across a black metal box. When it was opened a whole new picture of one of the more elusive members of the Hussey family unfolded before us. It took over a year to research the contents of the box. These included 11 handwritten diaries capturing events on the Western Front during the First World War, as well as 164 letters from the same era, the original manuscript for the book The Fifth Division in the Great War (written by Arthur Hussey and Major D. S. Ingram), photographs from the battlefields, and numerous maps and battle plans. Empty medal boxes were also found, prompting staff to begin the search to locate the medals. They were eventually discovered in a cupboard in the Drawing Room, alongside their miniatures versions.

Encountering Arthur Hussey

Until this discovery, Brigadier General Arthur Hussey had not played a key part in any of the stories that we tell at Scotney. He was one of six children born to the builder of the ‘new’ house, and a small photograph of him in his military uniform was on display in the Study. The discovery of his diaries and letters provided us with the opportunity to explore Arthur’s life. His war diaries date from 9 October 1914 to 31 July 1919, providing over 1,740 days of continuous war journal entries. A team of eight dedicated volunteers spent more than 1,200 hours painstakingly transcribing these, together with his letters. On first reading the diaries seemed to be extremely matter-of-fact and unemotional—this could be the result of Arthur’s experience as a career soldier. However, there are episodes where emotion breaks through as Arthur voices his horror at some of the acts of war that he witnesses and indicates how unsettled those around him were by what they were experiencing. For example, on Monday 3 May 1915 Arthur mentions the use of gas, and states quite frankly that ‘we seem to be reverting to savagery.’

In order to gain a broader picture of the man—rather than simply that of the soldier—the team at Scotney began to search the wider collection for references to Arthur, and found them in many surprising forms. Hunting trophies, school reports, letters to his family from childhood, and many wonderful works of art created both at Scotney and on travels abroad were all examined. In addition, whilst many of Arthur’s letters to his sister Gertrude provided us with the opportunity to explore Arthur’s life. His war diaries date from 9 October 1914 to 31 July 1919, providing over 1,740 days of continuous war journal entries. A team of eight dedicated volunteers spent more than 1,200 hours painstakingly transcribing these, together with his letters. On first reading the diaries seemed to be extremely matter-of-fact and unemotional—this could be the result of Arthur’s experience as a career soldier. However, there are episodes where emotion breaks through as Arthur voices his horror at some of the acts of war that he witnesses and indicates how unsettled those around him were by what they were experiencing. For example, on Monday 3 May 1915 Arthur mentions the use of gas, and states quite frankly that ‘we seem to be reverting to savagery.’

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The team also focused on finding other items from the collection that were linked to the First World War so as to understand better what it was like at Scotney while Arthur was away fighting. Original, vibrant recruitment posters, Fortnum & Mason provision and equipment catalogues, ration books, and stereoscopic images from the Front all form part of the collection. All of these objects helped to flesh out the story that we were developing, and also provided an opportunity to collaborate with outside organisations. For example, Fortnum & Mason and the London Stereoscopic Society provided interpretation for us in relation to discoveries in the collection linked to their organisations.

The Exhibition

We now had the material that we needed. How best could we tell Arthur’s story? A project team was created of representatives from all of the departments at Scotney to work up an exhibition plan.
This ensured that everyone was aware of what was happening, and allowed the team to share suggestions as to how other departments could get involved. For example, the Tearoom produced ‘Trench Cake’, and the shop reproduced for sale some of the items discovered in the collection. The house team ran three volunteer training days for those volunteers who wanted to be involved with interpreting the exhibition. We also secured the services of a design company, who inspired the team with their vision and provided additional ideas for engagement with visitors.

We discussed how we could exhibit the items that we had found, and from this a Heritage Lottery Fund bid was put together with £8,500 being awarded to the project. We could now develop the narrative that we wanted to tell. The main aim of the exhibition was to convey the story of Arthur’s First World War experiences, as well as to give visitors an insight into him as a person. However, we also wanted to showcase the different parts of the ‘hidden collection’ and the opportunities they provided for further research and exploration. Each winter we hope to work on a project to tempt and interest our visitors by presenting something new from the collection.

We decided to incorporate the exhibition within the show rooms so that those visitors who had not visited Scotney before could continue to see the house and fully experience the place Arthur called home. We used many of the existing surfaces to display interpretation about the collection as creatively as possible. For example, a tablecloth was printed with interpretation about the diary extracts and laid on the dining table. A box with its contents was also made so that visitors could focus on the objects that interested them the most and experience reading the diaries, letters and maps first-hand—these were reproduced to look just like the originals. The team was keen to give our visitors the same feelings of discovery that they had experienced when first looking through the black box.

Each ground floor room was themed to portray a different aspect of the exhibition. The Hall showed the diverse range of objects housed—and currently ‘hidden’—at Scotney; the Study portrayed Arthur as a member of the Hussey family; and the Library was used to exhibit the original black box alongside the replica, with seating so that visitors could take their time to absorb the information at their own pace. The Dining Room was then used to provide an overview of the diaries along with key themes ranging from recreation at the Front to the harrowing use of gas. The Butler’s Pantry became a small ‘cinema’ room where stereoscopic images were shown on a screen as excerpts from the diaries were read aloud. One of the most moving rooms turned out to be the Small Dining Room. Here the team worked with the local history society to tell the stories of local men who lost their lives on the Western Front. We left cards in this space for visitors to write their own family stories. Some have been remarkable, others have been incredibly moving, and all our visitors have been fascinated to be able to share these experiences.

Visitor Reaction

The reaction to the exhibition has been extraordinary. Visitors, staff and volunteers have all enjoyed learning something new about Scotney and seeing objects that are usually kept in the stores. We are finding an increase in repeat visits—people come back to spend more time reading diary entries. The emotional impact score on our visitor experience survey has increased, which we believe is owing to the story-telling aspect of this exhibition. We have also found that the time spent in the house has increased a great deal—our record visit length has now increased to 4¼ hours!

Arthur continues to surprise us. A week before the exhibition opened we discovered a photograph album which belonged to Arthur containing many interesting images, including some of his early military training.

We have also recently discovered his Boer War medals and another 40 letters home written during the First World War. We are yet to transcribe these, but we can already see that they provide yet more first-hand interesting tales from the Front. We are looking at new ways in which to engage visitors with our discoveries as they occur—and are excited by what we have yet to uncover.

Chloe Tapping, House and Collections Manager, Scotney Castle
THE MUSES OF SEATON DELAVAL HALL
A challenging programme of conservation for these fragile statues

The present Seaton Delaval Hall, Northumberland, was built in the first quarter of the 18th century; Admiral Sir Ralph Delaval had won glory and fortune by freeing western slaves being held by the Emperor of Fez and Morocco, amongst other diplomatic successes. In a letter to his brother he writes: ‘I intend to persuade Sir John Vanbrugh to see Seaton if possible, and to give me a plan of a house or to alter the old one, which he is most excellent at’. The result was Sir John Vanbrugh’s last building, considered by some as the finest example of his work.

The Admiral died before its completion, as did Vanbrugh, and the project was passed to his nephew Captain Francis Delaval, who completed the building. At an early stage an extra wing was added to accommodate the growing Delaval family. This wing was destroyed in the disastrous fire of 1822; the ruins of the wing were still standing in the 1850s and were captured in an early photograph. With the destruction of this wing the house was happily returned to its original design and layout.

The fire was so fierce that it could be seen far out to sea, and so intense that roof lead ran like water down the walls, glass melted in the windows, and parts of the roof together with floors and ceilings came crashing down. For forty years the house stood semi-roofless and burnt out. Then the eminent Newcastle architect John Dobson (1787-1865) was commissioned to consolidate and re-roof the building. At an early stage an extra wing was added to accommodate the growing Delaval family. This wing was destroyed in the disastrous fire of 1822; the ruins of the wing were still standing in the 1850s and were captured in an early photograph. With the destruction of this wing the house was happily returned to its original design and layout.

The Marble Hall stands in the centre of the main block, double-height and with a balcony at the south end. It would have had a vaulted ceiling—fragments of the supporting timbers survive in places. Dominating the space are the six Muses, standing in arched recesses on the east and west walls, over life-size and looking into the hall below. They represent the six arts: Architecture, Astronomy, Music, Painting, Geography and, appropriately, Sculpture.

Originally clad in robes and drapery and holding the attributes of their arts, they now reveal details of their unusual construction. Iron bars were bent into shape and hammered into the joints of the stonework behind them. Around these armatures the sculptors shaped their outlines from mortar and terracotta roof tiles, plastered these rough forms, and modelled them into human bodies, finally dressing them with cloth soaked in wet plaster. This, nailed to the bodies, was then swiftly and skillfully moulded into beautiful folds and drapery. Fine gypsum plaster was used to give them a marble-like appearance. They would have looked wonderful, with a linseed oil varnish reducing the paleness of the plaster and warming the colour. All the figures stand on bases with a brick core; these are plastered and decorated with acanthus leaves and other classical motifs.

These amazing sculptures have survived the fire, the collapse of the roof, standing open to the weather for 40 years, and being used for target practice by the army during both world wars. Even after the roof was replaced they were still not safe—the building has remained in effect a roofed ruin—and this has meant that their iron armatures have continued to corrode and weaken. As rust took its toll, the resulting expansion split and cracked the figures’ limbs. Ankles and necks carrying the weight of bodies and heads had open cracks and losses.

In 2009 the Trust took the property on, following the largest public consultation that it has ever held, and convinced by the local pride and love for the building. The Muses were very fragile, with the real threat of collapse hanging over them. Emergency first aid was administered by the Trust’s Adviser on Plaster and Stone Conservation, Trevor Proudfoot, in 2010. Cracked limbs and heads were bandaged and supported with thin foam and wire. The debris of decades was removed from behind and inside their forms and their surfaces brushed and vacuumed.

Following several years of emergency work to the building, we were in the position to put together a large project that would stabilise the Central Hall, carry out essential work to windows and stonework, and conserve the Muses. All this vital work was made possible through the very generous support of the SITA Trust, the Barbara Whatmore Foundation and 12 other donors.

The issues facing the Muses were largely the same for all the figures. These included cracks and losses, delaminating plaster, rusting iron armatures, lost elements, decaying drapery, loss of surface, and evidence of moisture affecting the plaster and iron. Their bases also were suffering from delaminating plaster, lost elements, and many cracks. To establish a methodology for their treatment, Trevor Proudfoot and a freelance Plaster Conservator, Graciela Ainsworth, spent a week on site working on one of the figures from a high scaffold. As part of this work, X-ray images were taken by a local vet; these made it possible to see the iron armatures and assess their condition.

After all the figures had been photographed, and where possible X-rays taken, the statues were surface-cleaned with soft brushes and a vacuum cleaner; detached pieces were removed, cleaned and re-attached, using different methods according to the size of the pieces. Large and heavy pieces were supported with threaded...
stainless steel or inset nylon rods. Areas of plaster that had deteriorated significantly were consolidated with CaloSil E25. Open vulnerable areas were filled with PLM-S lime-based mortar if the areas were large, or PLM-A grout for smaller areas. The final treatment was to tone down the colour of the repaired areas.

The iron armatures presented different challenges from those normally met by plaster conservators. In collaboration with Dr Dave Farrell of RTL, a Manchester-based company specialising in the protection of architectural iron, a system of cathodic protection was designed. This introduces a small electrical current through the iron work, and an anode of titanium is fixed to the back of the figures. The system makes use of the high moisture content of the plaster: whilst this moisture causes the corrosion, it also gives us a way to halt its progress. Dave Farrell tested the iron armatures and discovered that they do not form a circuit, but rather are separate pieces—this was confirmed by the X-ray images. For the system to work it was therefore necessary to fix fine wires to the individual pieces and so create a circuit. This meant that the iron work had to be traced and located; where necessary the plaster was drilled through to reach the metal, and once exposed a wire was connected to it. To prevent further corrosion of the iron where it goes into the masonry, anode strips were sunk into mortar joints. All the wires were set into joints where possible, and if they were exposed they were painted to disguise them. This cathodic protection system is wired into control boxes, one for each side of the room, set in recesses with green LEDs just visible, thus ensuring that staff can monitor their functioning.

This use of cathodic protection for internal sculptures is possibly unique; its viability is made possible by the unusual circumstances in the Central Hall. Since the room is roofed but un-heated, the moisture content of the masonry and plaster is high. Maintenance of the system is essential, and is now part of the property management plan; following a first inspection in 2018 it will be checked every five years thereafter. This will also afford an ideal opportunity to visually inspect the figures for any further cracking, and carry out any light surface cleaning.

Following this vital conservation project—three months of dedicated work by Graciela Ainsworth and her team—the six plaster Muses continue to stand where they have stood since being so skilfully made, and are now stable; the threat of collapse has been removed. Their beautiful drapery is now firmly supported where previously it was falling off in pieces. Open cracks are filled, and the iron armatures at the core of the statues are no longer decaying. The work carried out has been pure conservation with no replacement of losses. However, the appearance of the Muses has been improved through the filling of the many cracks, re-attaching pieces that had fallen off, and further surface cleaning. The opportunity to get close to these figures was wonderful. It allowed us to see how they were made and to appreciate their great artistry: the graceful curve of a hand, the naturalistic folds of drapery, and the elegance of a hair style.

John Wynn Griffiths, Conservator, North-East region

**Bibliography**

Martin Green, *The Delavals: A Family History* (Newcastle 2009)  
Every now and again, in the search for an answer to one puzzle, you will be led into unexpected directions. This has often been the case when thinking about the library at Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire. The room as it stands today has been altered several times since its original completion in around 1730 by James Gibbs for Edward, Lord Harley. Philip Yorke, then Baron Hardwicke, bought Wimpole from Harley in 1740 and set about altering the house, which included significant changes to the Gibbs library. Later generations of Yorkes were to make more minor alterations to the Library, and to the Ante Library, now known as the Book Room. The room as we see it today is essentially as it was when Wimpole was left to the National Trust by Mrs Elsie Bambridge in 1976.

It is perhaps to Mrs Bambridge that we owe the start of the puzzle sequence that eventually brought us round to Lord Hardwicke and his globes. For a number of years, some of the longer-serving room stewards at Wimpole have been telling visitors to the house that the carpet in the Library was found by Mrs Bambridge in the basement when she moved into the house in the late 1930s. It supposedly ended up in the Library as it was the room which was the nearest physical match in terms of size. As the room is currently presented, the carpet is rolled up at the edges, which only serves to underline this opinion. Curiously, though, the colour guidebook does state that ‘the shell, palm fronds and garlands of flowers on a chocolate ground perfectly complement the ceiling plasterwork and the restrained colour scheme of the room as a whole’.

When the volunteers and house staff were questioned about the story of Mrs Bambridge and the carpet, no one seemed to know the source of this information.

Having been told that there were no useful pre-National Trust photographs of Wimpole, the most obvious next source was the pages of Country Life. One of the 1927 articles on Wimpole included a photograph of the Library, taken towards the northern bay window inserted by the 1st Earl of Hardwicke c. 1754. Yes, the carpet was in place, and the edges seemed to be tucked under the bookcase plinths. The picture also contained at least two large chests, which are no longer there, but not the pulpit library steps designed by Henry Keene for the 1st Earl as part of his 1750s alterations to the room. To double check that this was the case, the Country Life picture library kindly provided a
The classic view of the Library from the Book Room towards the 1750s north-facing bay window, as published by 'Country Life' in 1927

digital copy of the image. When it arrived it was accompanied by a second, unpublished, photograph which the picture researcher thought might be of interest. This shows the Library from a more unusual angle, facing towards the doorway to the Book Room at the south end of the room. There are the pulpits library steps, but also beyond them a rather large pair of globes, probably 18th-century. This was both exciting and tantalising at the same time. There are no 18th-century inventories for the contents of Wimpole Hall, and Mrs Bambridge’s purchases are only slowly being investigated. Sales from the property during the 1930s have been largely unresearched.

Given the width of the bookcase shelves at the end of the room, the globes must have been at least 24 inches in size. That would make them quite unusual—globes this big are relatively rarer than smaller pairs of globes. The pair currently at Wimpole are 21-inch globes of 1799 and 1815 by John and William Cary, on quite different tripod-style stands, presumably purchased as replacements by Mrs Bambridge in the 1940s or 50s.

Serendipity and pure luck then helped to solve this little puzzle. I attended a mapping course which had a session on the history of globes; the reading list contained Elly Dekker’s wonderful work Making of globes, followed by a chronological catalogue of the museum’s holdings. The globes which were at Wimpole until at least 1927 appear in chapter 9, ‘Uncommonly handsome globes’, a section reserved for the highest quality specimens in the museum’s collection. Unfortunately they are not currently on display, but one gets the sense that they were items of the highest quality from the catalogue descriptions. Both retain their original leather covers, being somewhat similar to another pair of globes (made by John Senex, fl. 1690-1740) bought for the 4th Earl of Dysart’s library at Ham House. The smoothness of their movement, rather than the usual creaks and groans found with larger globes, suggests that they have been well kept over the centuries. If they were bought by the 1st Earl of Hardwicke when re-decoration his library in the 1750s, it may be that they remained at Wimpole for most of their life.

The pair’s provenance is that they were presented to the National Maritime Museum by Sir James Caird; purchased through W.H. Robinson from Viscount Clifden of Wimpole Hall on 7 December 1939; formerly the property of the Earl of Hardwicke (1690-1764). Dating of the globes varies between c. 1730 and c. 1740, depending upon the extent of the catalogue’s reliance upon the epoch of 1740 on the celestial globe. The terrestrial globe has had the track of Lord Anson’s circumnavigation of 1740-44 added by hand, which gives us another link to the Earls of Hardwicke: George Anson was the 1st Earl’s son-in-law after his 1748 marriage to the Earl’s daughter Elizabeth Yorke (1725-60). Viscount Clifden came into possession of Wimpole Hall in 1894, in his capacity as Chairman of the Agar-Robartes Bank, to whom ‘Champagne Charlie’, 5th Earl of Hardwicke (1836-97), owed the bulk of his debts of around £300,000. Viscount Clifden sold the globes on during a time when the newly opened National Maritime Museum had benefactors who were willing to fund purchases, and also gave their own collections to the museum. Sir James Caird (1864-1954) was one such benefactor; he worked closely with the NMM’s first director, Sir Geoffrey Callender (1875-1946), and Frank Maggs to increase the collection. Through a rather odd sequence of events, this magnificent pair of globes has ended up with another national institution where they will be looked after in perpetuity.

Yvonne Lewis, Assistant Libraries Curator

1 Elly Dekker, Globes at Greenwich: a catalogue of the globes and armillary spheres in the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich. (Oxford: Oxford University Press and the National Maritime Museum, 1999), p. 120.
2 All of the known plans can be found in David Ashhead, Wimpole: architectural drawings and topographical views. (Swindon, The National Trust, 2007).
5 Re-folding of the carpet during winter 2013/14 made marks of wear visible along the underneath of the carpet edges which correspond to the positions of the bookcase plinths if you allow for the carpet currently being not quite exactly centred on the fireplace at present.
6 http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/206667
7 Confirmed as such in e-mails by Peter Barber, Map Librarian, British Library.
8 London Rare Books Summer School holds two weeks of themed courses every summer under the auspices of the University of London.
9 Elly Dekker, op. cit. pp. 120-4 (figs. 97-98) and pp. 491-5. See also the NMM website - Celestial globe: http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/19826.html; Terrestrial globe: http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/19825.html.
10 The Robinsons were also involved in selling books from Lanhydrock House, Cornwall, Lord Clifden’s family home, in the 1930s.
13 David Souden, op. cit., pp. 19-44.
14 Elly Dekker, op. cit., p. 16.
LOWER BROCKHAMPTON REDISCOVERED

After a six-month project carried out by the project curator, Robin Hill, Lower Brockhampton House in Herefordshire opened its doors on the weekend of 19 July with a new presentation encouraging visitors to re-explore the history of this building and the stories of its various occupants.

The new presentation takes visitors on a journey from medieval times, when Lower Brockhampton House was built by the Domulton family in the 14th century, to the 20th century—one room is shown as the family sitting-room of the farmer tenant who was living here in 1952.

As part of this new display, three rooms have been given a complete makeover and opened to the public for the first time. These are the kitchen and the cellar, set in 1910, and the 1952 sitting-room. Robin Hill needed to collect many objects to recreate scenes of everyday life for each period. In the 1952 sitting-room, for instance, newspapers of the day tell us about the king’s death and arrangements for his funeral. Other objects, such as a sewing-machine, a 1950s Hoover, an Etronic valve radio set, a typing machine, books, and vintage toys allow us to imagine the family working or relaxing here.

The 1861 room is displayed as the humble bedroom of a wagoner working on the estate and living with his family in the house; several families of farmworkers lived here after the Barneby family left to live in their new home.

The objects set the scene. They bring different periods of history back to life, allowing visitors to empathise with the former occupants of the house. Visitors are invited to take a seat and read books from the shelves, or open drawers, or play games from past times, just as the families who lived here would have done years ago. Some of these objects were transferred from other properties; one example is the oak dresser, a key feature of the new kitchen, which came from Mottisfont.

Other objects kindly donated by members of the public include an 18th-century longcase clock, a Georgian mahogany bedside table, a Hoover model 119 vacuum cleaner, items dating from the First World War, an Etronic valve radio set, an antique wash tub and wash board, a 1940s china tea set, seven volumes of The Children’s Treasure House, various lace items, antique toys, and a Victorian mixing bowl.

For Robin Hill this is not the end but the beginning of acquiring ‘new’ objects for display at Lower Brockhampton House. Visitors and supporters are invited to add to the collection. Donated objects gain a new lease of life in their new setting, and they also add an important value to our displays through their authenticity. While reproduced artefacts can sometimes seem fake, period objects have the capacity to take us back in time and bring places and the past to life in an authentic, vivid way.

Isabelle Marty, Collections Management Team
MARVELS OF DECORATIVE DESIGN

Book review: Chinese Wallpaper in National Trust Houses

In 1988, paper conservator Catherine Rickman wrote in a journal article that ‘there is no information to be had in China about the watercolour paintings, albums and lengths of handpainted paper exported in their thousands from the country over the last two centuries. To find out how such artifacts were made we must study the paintings themselves …’. Twenty-five years later this remains largely true, but enormous strides have been made by the National Trust and the cadre of paper conservators in England and other Western European countries through their periodic work on these marvels of decorative design. This in-the-trenches practice has now been documented with the publication of a catalogue, Chinese Wallpaper in National Trust Houses, which gives great detail for each of the 45-odd Chinese wallpapers that beautify the walls of houses now in the care of the Trust. The authors are Emile de Bruijn, Andrew Bush, and Helen Clifford.

Late 17th-century prototypes in country houses included lacquer screens inserted into wall panelling. References to Chinese pictures at Versailles in the late 1660s and at Whitehall Palace in 1693 establish that oriental wallpaper was an influence long before the tax on patterned, painted and printed wallpaper of 1712. This helps to explain the advertisements of tradesmen like George Minnikin (1680) and Edward Butling (1690), who traded in both Chinese wares and English chinoiserie adapted from them. By 1700 Chinese paintings were being substituted for the lacquer screens, as noted in Friederika Wappenschmidt’s Chinesische Tapeten fur Europa (1989). In 1722 the memoirist John Macky related that Wanstead was ‘… finely adorn’d with China paper, the figures of men, women, birds and flowers, the liveliest I ever saw come from that country.’

Chinese Wallpaper begins with a concise essay which creates a framework for the hundreds of details to follow as each assemblage of wallpaper is discussed in turn. Distinctions are made from the beginning between so-called Indian pictures (generally small) and wallpaper proper (generally large panels which came in sets). The authors report that one art authority (John Winter) found that shimmering grounds were not usually present in Chinese fine art pictures. This prompts the authors to speculate that shiny wallpaper grounds sprinkled with mica may have been specially made for the West. The catalogue is strong in technical details like these. The text is so dense that a number of entries note that ‘the paper was trimmed at the top’—in every instance these are the full width panels, which ranged from 44 inches to 48 inches wide. No doubt the trimming was a result of the installers adapting a twelve-foot strip to a ten-foot wall.

This distinction between pictures and wallpaper proper is made throughout the book, and wisely so, because the differences between the two types are still not completely understood. Within this first

Three techniques for producing the imagery on Chinese wallpaper: (left) printed outlines with colour added by hand; (centre) printed outlines with additional details and colour added by hand; (right) entirely hand-painted.
grouping, pictures could be enclosed in borders, as in the Chinese Room at Erdigg, or they could be put up in a collage, as in the Study at Saltram. At least now with this vast amount of detail we have a laboratory to work out some of the problems and solutions that were faced by 18th-century patrons and paperhangers. Did the patrons perceive pictures as art objects in the home, even when they were put up in collages, or enclosed in Greek key designs? Were the larger sheets of wallpaper thought by them to submit more gracefully to the demands of the architectural environment? Or did any of the patrons regret (or complain) that any of these beautiful things needed to be cut? Is the cutting of the top elements a sure indication that the paper was not made for the room, and came in ‘off the peg’, so to speak?

Were the dimensions of the room ever sent to China prior to the making? Could the use of stacks of similar Indian pictures indicate a money-saving or time-saving strategy on the part of the homeowners, or simply a preference?

Although the bulk of the entries consist of the later scenic types, the book makes a strong case for the importance of the rarer and less-celebrated Indian prints: ‘The strong demand for sets of pictures to be used as wall decorations eventually prompted the development of Chinese wallpaper proper’, by which is meant the panoramic type. The Indian prints and pictures (here documented to have dominated the first half of the 18th century) were certainly more difficult to install than the latter. To borrow a phrase from David Pye, the Indian pictures were an exercise in the ‘workmanship of risk’, while the scenic papers represented the ‘workmanship of certainty’. After all, the installer of a set of prints needed to construct a narrative—to make decorative sense out of the India pictures in the context of a particular room. In contrast, the furnishing of a strong narrative was to install than the latter. To borrow a phrase from David Pye, the Indian pictures were an exercise in the ‘workmanship of risk’, while the scenic papers represented the ‘workmanship of certainty’. After all, the installer of a set of prints needed to construct a narrative—to make decorative sense out of the India pictures in the context of a particular room. In contrast, the furnishing of a strong narrative was one of the built-in benefits of the larger sets.

It is helpful to know that ‘drops’ in this text means ‘strips’. It comes as a bit of a surprise that block-printed outlines were used so often by Chinese artisans around the mid-century. It is good that the authors include so many qualifications of the general description ‘hand-painted’ which, although not wrong, has sometimes left a false impression. Far Eastern artisans seem to have turned naturally to stencils and block-printed outlines to speed the work, where possible, just as was done throughout this period in the workshops of English paper stainers, who were busily engaged in supplying chinoiserie, sometimes known as ‘mock India papers’. Not addressed here, perhaps because of space limitations, is the question: How did the chinoiserie products of factories such as Abraham Price’s Blue Paper Warehouse (active c.1735-20) or Dunbar’s differ from their inspiration?

The catalogue scours the history of each installation. Whether it was framed by fillets or turned corners to deny the very archi-

tecture of the room, the Chinese papers owned a power which repetitive Western design could not match. There is much here about the decorative traditions of China as well. In this connection the contributions of Anna Wu to the catalogue cannot be overstated. She brought Chinese books, research and historic sites to the attention of the writing team—to cite one example, the decorative schemes in the restored Juanqinzhai (Studio of Exhausiton from Diligent Service). This curiously-named retirement lodge of an emperor is once again awash in silk hangings painted with trompe l’oeil scenery and offers ‘a high-end, customized parallel to the wallpaper produced for export to the West’.

Although non-Trust properties are not scrutinized, they are not ignored. In addition to the 45 catalogue entries, 125 other installations are included in the fine map of locations coded by era, so that in all 170 Chinese wallpapers are documented. The bibliography is sparkling and includes the most up-to-date books (including Amelia Peck et al., Intervenous Globe: The Worldwide Textile Trade, 1500-1800) as well as an assortment of fairly recent titles.

Catalogue number 29 (a firescreen at Osterley Park of c. 1750) shows the age of the quaint tradition for decorating fireplaces. In retrospect, it is astonishing that most of these installations predate the American Revolution and the founding of the American trade. Yet what could be more ‘early American’ than to display a flower pot in your fireplace all summer? This information is specific to English conditions but no doubt will help Americans understand wallpaper better. That American rooms tended to be squat rather than tall, and that their decorative traditions tended to be democratic rather than aristocratic, helps to explain why Chinese scenic papers in the domestic interior are practically unheard of in America’s early history. The best information about Chinese wallpaper in America remains Carl Crossman’s Decorative Arts of the China Trade (1991), Chapter 15: ‘Decorative Painted Wallpapers to 1850’. We must not forget that many Chinese scenic papers formerly in English country houses were auctioned off to a new home in the US, the most prominent of which may be the former Ashburnham Place wallpaper now at Blair House, the president’s guest house.

Saltram stands out. There are four rooms extant, and signs that even more rooms may have been done up with Chinese wallpaper. Even when little wallpaper remains, as at Osterley Park, the scents of tea and perfume of the exotic East seem to linger in the air. A particular effort is made to untangle and understand the identification of Chinese wallpaper with femininity and sociability. It seems to have been no accident that most of the known locations for Chinese paper were dressing rooms, bedrooms, and drawing rooms. The authors quote a revealing statement by the hostess and original blue-stocking Elizabeth Montagu (1718-1800): ‘I assure you the dressing room is now just the female of the great room, for sweet attractive grace, for winning softness, for le je ne sais quoi it is incomparable’. Those indefinable qualities are still being debated.

Who were the patrons who made this all possible? The homeowners turn out to be various MPs, landed gentry, and (in a later age) heirs to marmalade-manufacturing fortunes: in other words, those who possessed the resources, the patrimony, the tall and large rooms, and the nerve to order such exotic wall treatments.

Robert Kelly, Wallpaper Consultant
The life of Lady Frances Cranfield, Countess of Dorset (c.1623-87) is one that spans the most turbulent years of the 17th century. Married twice, firstly to Richard Sackville, 5th Earl of Dorset (1622-77) in 1637, with whom she had thirteen children, and secondly to Henry Powle, Master of the Rolls (1630-92) in 1679, she spent much of her adult life at Knole in Sevenoaks, Kent, often alone. Her surviving papers include correspondence and bills and indicate that her life was marked by marital strife and financial worries, whilst her direct material legacy at Knole includes a set of silver furniture of the utmost rarity.

Frances was the daughter of Lionel Cranfield, 1st Earl of Middlesex (1573-1643) and his second wife Anne Brett (c.1600-69/70). Her father had made his fortune trading in textiles in London and he enjoyed considerable success at court, becoming Lord Treasurer to James I (1566-1625) in 1621 and being created Earl of Middlesex the following year. Middlesex established his London seat at Chelsea House, which he purchased in 1620. Accounts indicate that he remodelled and furnished this house in lavish style, commissioning furniture for his state apartments that included a bed and seat furniture of crimson satin embroidered with gold and silver for the lying-in of Lady Cranfield in anticipation of the birth of her first child, Frances’s brother James, in 1621. It is likely that this set of furniture was also used for Frances’s birth.

However, Middlesex’s fall from power in 1624 was precipitous, a ruin that had been ‘thirsted after by all sorts of people’. He was impeached by Parliament and removed from public office, charged with profiteering, and fined £50,000 by the House of Lords. Chelsea House was surrendered to the Crown and he removed its opulent contents to Copt Hall, his country seat in Essex where Frances grew up. Archival evidence suggests that the Knole Spangled Bed, c. 1620, which is upholstered in red silk embroidered with cloth of silver and embellished with spangles and gold and silver trimming, relates to the Chelsea House state furniture (it was re-configured in the 18th century when it was re-assembled).

Despite his disgrace, Middlesex planned to make a good marriage for Frances. He provided an education that would enable her to take a place in fashionable society. Frances’s governess was French, and she wrote stylized letters addressing her father ‘Monseigneur et père’. Frances’s portrait by Sir Anthony Van Dyck (1599-1641) now hangs in the Ballroom at Knole. It is likely to be that listed in a bill from the picture-frame maker George Geldorp (d.1665) submitted to Middlesex, c.1636, as ‘£6: pour une bordure fort Riche pour le Portrait de Madame ffransis Coppie’. Painted before her marriage when she was about fourteen, it shows a fashionably dressed girl at the threshold of womanhood in a loose white satin gown, her hair adorned with pearls. It is hard to meet her adolescent gaze without thinking of the challenges that were to come.

Beyond life at court, Middlesex maintained his close friendships, including that with Edward Sackville, 4th Earl of Dorset (1589-1652) to whom, despite his own sales of furnishings and plate, he would lend various items. For example, in 1638 the Earl of Dorset asked to borrow ‘what silver dishes you can for our meal on Monday dinner. I will return them to you on Tuesday again’. The same year Frances married the 4th Earl’s son and heir, Richard Sackville, Lord Buckhurst (1622-77) and she presented a silver flagon with a London date letter of 1638 to St. Nicholas Church, Sevenoaks, inscribed ‘F. Cranfield, Countess of Dorset, her gift to ye Church of 7 Oaks’ and engraved with her armorial bearings of Sackville impaling Cranfield.

The marriage settlement agreed by the Earl of Middlesex and Earl of Dorset in 1640 was a generous one, the terms of which both men found hard to fulfil owing to their personal debts. The final payment on Frances’s portion of £10,000 was eventually honoured by her brother, Lionel Cranfield, 3rd Earl of Middlesex (1625-74), in 1651. Family finances were further complicated by the onset of the English Civil War. The 4th Earl of Dorset fought with Charles I and as a result his estates were sequestrated by Parliamentary order in 1643. His failure to pay a £5,000 contribution to Parliament led to the seizure and sale of his goods at Knole in 1645. While Frances lived at Copt Hall with her young family, her husband attempted to manage his...
father's affairs from Kent. The inventory of the Knole sale that dispersed the early 17th-century collections of Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset (1536-1608), record Lord Buckhurst's relatively modest purchases of family paintings, his father's bed and touchingly 'A Childes Cheyer and a small Cushion of Crimson velvett' that had possibly belonged to him.4

When the 5th Earl succeeded his father in 1652 the Knole estate had been returned to the Sackvilles, but was heavily mortgaged and administered by creditors. In 1657 he described himself pitifully as 'one of the poorest Earls in England'.5 It is possible that it is this legacy that prompted the Earl to record his financial transactions in a series of pocket-books from 1652 onwards. They record how he managed his relationships with associates, tradesmen and servants with a formality that he extended to his family; Frances provided him with receipts, for example 'Received in full for olaye mony the some of fifteen sheling. I say by me F. Dorset'.6

Letters between Frances and her husband suggest that he was often abroad, perhaps to escape his creditors, leaving her to manage the family estates alone; she refers to 'my malincoly and solitary condition for want of your company' when writing to Dorset in Paris (undated). The considerable concern and sense of abandonment she felt in this position is expressed in a letter c.1656-7 written to her husband in France, where she explains 'Mr Cornwills informs me … several busniss will be then (ut)early lost if you do not speedily repare heather and asure my selfe as will never altogether forgete me and your pote babies your son richard has had smallpox and now he is almost well I will let you know it…'.7 Knole was finally settled upon the Earl of Dorset and his heirs following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, although further losses to Sackville property and income were incurred when Dorset House was lost in the Great Fire of London of 1666.8

Despite the tension in their relationship and the 5th Earl's absences abroad, the Dorsets had thirteen children between 1638 and 1662, the Earl referring to his wife as 'my fat Mr's amongst his friends.'9 However, most of the children were lost in infancy and only five survived into adulthood. The parental anguish of this continual cycle of birth and loss is conveyed in the design of a monument commissioned by the newly widowed Frances in 1677 from the sculptor Caius Gabriel Cibber (1667-1706) over his first marriage to Mary Bagot, Countess of Falmouth (d.1679) and his inheritance of Copth Hall and the Cranfield estates from her brother Lionel, 3rd Earl of Middlesex, who changed his will in favour of his nephew despite a long-standing agreement whereby his sister was beneficiary. Frances wrote to her husband on hearing from a third party that 'your reason for your traveling is that I leade you a very unquiet life at home'. In September 1673 the Earl of Dorset drew up 'particulars of what my wife is to be allowed if she live asunder from me, for herself and my daughter Frances' and includes household expenses, clothes and servants and transport that total £773 10s 10d per annum.10

The following July, Frances signed an agreement with her husband prompted by the dismissal of a servant at her request and promises 'that I will never molest disquiet or disturb him again in this or in any other thing as namely in medling with any business of his, whether he will, or no, or without his permission and consent'.11 Despite this, Frances continued to manage her husband's affairs in his absence. Although there was a gradual improvement in their circumstances resulting from the reversion of estates on the death of Lady Anne Clifford (1674/75) and agreements for new property built on the site of Dorset House recorded in the 1675 Feet of Fines, she continued to worry about reconciling the family finances.12 She writes to him in Paris in May 1677: 'My Dearest … When all this half years rent comes together it will not pay what you have left me to pay—there is a great arears upon Knoll which I must presently pay', and she requests that the Earl 'will consider it in all things and spare it in horse flech when you come home …'.13 Whether the couple Thomas reclining on a plinth with his grief-stricken parents on their knees at each end. The rest of the Sackville children are carved in bas-relief on the plinth, six sons on the north side and six daughters on the south side. The seven who carry skulls are a tragic and macabre indication of child mortality.

By the 1670s, letters and agreements exchanged between Frances and Richard catalogue their marital breakdown. The Earl was again spending his time travelling abroad, prompted in part by disagreement between Frances and her son Charles, Lord Buckhurst (1638-1706) over his first marriage to Mary Bagot, Countess of Falmouth (d.1679) and his inheritance of Copth Hall and the Cranfield estates from her brother Lionel, 3rd Earl of Middlesex, who changed his will in favour of his nephew despite a long-standing agreement whereby his sister was beneficiary. Frances wrote to her husband on hearing from a third party that 'your reason for your traveling is that I leade you a very unquiet life at home'. In September 1673 the Earl of Dorset drew up 'particulars of what my wife is to be allowed if she live asunder from me, for herself and my daughter Frances' and includes household expenses, clothes and servants and transport that total £773 10s 10d per annum.10

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were reconciled before the Earl's death at Knole three months later is unknown, but he bequeathed all his goods and chattels at Knole to his 'dear wife Frances, Countess of Dorset', which together with an annual income from her jointure estates of £2,825 10s 1½d finally provided her with some financial security and independence.

In June 1679 Frances married Henry Powle of Williamstrop, Gloucester (1630–92), Master of the Rolls. The marriage coincided with the commission of an opulent set of silver furniture, now in the collections at Knole, that included a silver looking glass, stands and table with the date letter for 1680–81 for which Frances paid the cabinetmaker Gerret Jenson (active 1680, d.1715) £407 5s od in June 1680.20 All four pieces are covered in scrolling acanthus ornament combined with flowers and fruit, and each bears the cipher FCD for Frances, Countess of Dorset, under an earl's coronet.21 The 1682 Knole inventory does not list the silver furniture, suggesting that it was located at Long Acre, Frances and Henry's London house.22 However, the inventory does provide a detailed picture of their furnishings and plate at Knole that included 'my Lords Libary of Bookes' in 'Master Powles Closet' and a large collection of 'My ladyds Cheyney in her Chamber'. The 'Roome going into the drawing Roome' was hung with 'Five Pieces of Rich Tapestry hangings w.th Gould wrought in it w.th the History of Nebuchadnezzar'. A set of Nebuchadnezzar tapestries by Thomas Poyntz (fl. London c.1660, d. after 1688) hang today in the King's Room at Knole; if they are the same set, they are likely to have been almost new at the time of the inventory and therefore purchased by Frances.

Lady Frances Cranfield, Countess of Dorset, died on 20 April 1687. In the terms of her will 'I give unto my husband Henry Powel esq all the furniture and household goods of or in the house wherein we now live in Long Acre', while 'plate at Long Acre and Knoll' was left to her son Charles, 6th Earl of Dorset.23 An inventory taken at Knole on 17 May 1687 includes 'Things from London yt were lockd up in ye pantry' and includes 'Removed to ye. preserving roome. I box of plate & a basin & Ewer', indicating that the terms of her will were enacted quickly. Further, the main entry for goods stored in the Preserving Room includes '1 Silver Table & a Stand, 1 looking glass' amongst numerous trunks, deal boxes and packing cases, suggesting that they had also recently been moved and stored.24

Frances's greatest material legacy comes as the result of her first marriage to the Earl of Dorset that eventually united the Cranfield and Sackville estates through their inheritance by her son Charles, 6th Earl of Dorset. His moving of the collections of his maternal grandfather, together with an extensive collection of royal furniture acquired as a perquisite of his office as Lord Chamberlain, to Knole in 1700–1 following the sale of Copt Hall is well documented in a series of receipts of 'Goods Carried to Knowle'.25 They list numerous tapestries, carpets and upholstered furniture, together with 157 pictures that included the portrait of Frances and those of her immediate family. The chattels are first recorded at Knole in an inventory of 1706 taken after the death of the 6th Earl. Frances's arrangement and furnishing of rooms recorded in 1682 was changed first by the 6th Earl and in turn by his son Lionel, 7th Earl and 1st Duke of Dorset (1687–1765) by 1730. In furnishing the King's Bedchamber, the most important of the state rooms at Knole, the 1st Duke displayed France's silver furniture and tapestries alongside a luxurious 'Bed Brocaded with Gold and silver' that had been commissioned for the marriage of James, Duke of York (and future James II) in 1673.26 Extraordinarily, this arrangement survives in the King's Room at Knole today.

Knole is currently undergoing a five-year conservation and access project supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund. This has prompted new research on the history of presentation at Knole and a reappraisal of the Sackville family archives at the Kent History and Library Centre. I would like to thank Vivienne Grogan and Joan Britton for their ongoing research and transcription work.

Emma Slocombe, Curator, Knole

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5. Ibid.
11. Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre (henceforth KHLC), U/269 C2/2/1 (62)
15. R. Sackville quoted in Ibid., p. 76.
17. Ibid., pp. 415–416.
18. Ibid., p. 418.
19. Ibid.
20. KHLC, U/269 A185/2.
22. KHLC, U/269 T/7/1, ‘An Inventory of certaine plate Jewells goods householdtraffe and Estatte … in the year of our Lord 1682’.
24. KHLC, U/269 E87/2.
25. KHLC, (number unknown), ‘An Inventory of Goods at Knole, taken in Nov. 1730’.

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ACQUISITIONS

CLEVEDON COURT
A painting of Clevedon Court by Sir Cedric Morris (1889-1982), oil on board, was purchased at auction at Reeman Dansie, Colchester, for £3,712 including buyer’s premium.

DUNHAM MASSEY
A pair of silver snuffers (or wick-trimming scissors), with the mark of Simon Plantin, London, 1731, and originally part of the spectacular silver collection of George Booth, 2nd Earl of Warrington (1675-1758), was purchased at auction at Christie’s in London for £4,000 including buyer’s premium. At the same auction a snuffer pan (or tray), with the mark of Peter Archambo, London, 1738, and with the same provenance, was purchased for £10,000 including buyer’s premium.

DYRHAM PARK
A copy of the book A Lover’s Miscellany by Giles Jacob, 1719, was purchased from C.R. Johnson Rare Book Collections, Altrincham, for £1,600, supported by a donation made by Barcan Woodward solicitors from a discretionary trust fund controlled by them, and by a donation from Lisa White. The book contains a poem on Dyrham Park.

GAWTHORPE HALL
A version of a portrait of Robert Shuttleworth (1784-1818) by Sir Henry Raeburn (1756-1823) was left to Gawthorpe Hall by the late Michael Worthington. This version had descended in the family of Robert Shuttleworth’s wife, Janet Marjoribanks (d. 1853), Shuttleworth was known as ‘the people’s magistrate’ for his enlightened approach as a magistrate at Preston. Inv. no. 422030.

NYMANS
A wing armchair and a bench, both probably early 20th-century and with a provenance from Nymans were purchased at auction at Wotton Auction Rooms, Wotton-under-Edge, for £816 including buyer’s premium. Inv. nos. 2900099 and 2900100.

PETWORTH
A painting by John Glover (1767-1849), A Lake Landscape with a Shepherd and with Cattle and Goats in the Foreground, oil on canvas, was purchased at auction at Christie’s, King Street, London, for £12,300 including buyer’s premium, supported by a fund set up by the late Hon. Simon Sainsbury and by various gifts and bequests. The painting was originally acquired for Petworth by the 3rd Earl of Egremont (1751-1837), and it contradicts the claim by painter John Constable that the Earl was not interested in landscape painting.

STANDEN
A door curtain in William Morris’s ‘Honeysuckle’ pattern, made in about 1894 and with a provenance from Standen, was purchased at auction at Rosebery’s, London, for £992 including buyer’s premium, partly funded from gifts and bequests. Inv. no. 2900096.

RED HOUSE
Ten objects associated with the architect and designer Philip Webb (1831-1915) and his close associate George Jack (1855-1931), which had been accepted by HM Government in lieu of inheritance tax in 2013, have now been permanently allocated to Red House. They reflect the importance of Webb’s role as designer of Red House and some of its furnishings. The tax settlement value is £34,150.

THE VYNE
A large silver salver by John Carter II, dated 1717-97 and engraved with the arms of Chute and the ‘Committee of taste’ around Horace Walpole (1717-97) which is part of the cycle of pictures created specifically for Sandham Memorial Chapel.

Emile de Bruijn, Registrar (Collections & Grants)