FASCINATING FURNITURE
Cataloguing treasures from the National Trust collection

The Furniture Research Project is in full swing, thanks to the generous support of the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art and the Royal Oak Foundation. Christopher Rowell, the National Trust’s Curator of Furniture, and Philip Claris, Head of Collections Management, have teamed up with three newly appointed specialist Furniture Cataloguers to start a major research project: Wolf Burchard (formerly Royal Collection Trust, now Mellon/Royal Oak Furniture Research Curator), and Camille Mestdagh and Megan Wheeler (both formerly auction house furniture and works of art specialists). The project will update approximately 57,000 online records, and will shed light on some of the Trust’s extremely significant and yet little-understood pieces of furniture.

One of the Trust’s major distinctions is its world-renowned collection of British, Irish, Continental and Oriental furniture — yet only a small proportion of this major resource has received the scholarly attention it deserves. Thanks to the Trust’s brand new website (https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/), looking up works of art online has become very straightforward. Visitors to Trust properties can now easily explore the entire furniture collections (http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/) on their tablets and smartphones, or on their computers at home. Short and concise entries summarise the history and explain the significance of an object, and how it found its way into a property — this makes the website a fascinating and extremely useful resource both for specialists and the general public. Moreover, it enables cross references between different Trust houses and their collections.

To ensure that the online information is correct the Furniture Research Team is updating the records for every piece of furniture in every Trust property. In many cases this means writing a completely new entry, identifying the materials and country of origin of a piece, suggesting its date of production, and clarifying its provenance. To get started, the three team members have each chosen a house where the furniture collection is relatively well researched: Ham House, Hardwick Hall and Knole.

Camille Mestdagh is working on Ham House, Richmond, which is a remarkably complete 17th-century survival. Two major publications have explored its outstanding furniture collection: Peter Thornton and Maurice Tomlin’s important 1980 volume of *Furniture History*, and the monumental *Ham House*, edited by Christopher Rowell and published in 2013 for the National Trust and the Paul Mellon Centre by Yale University Press. Until now, very little of the abundant information on Ham House and its furniture collection has found its way into the Trust’s online database. One fascinating aspect of the cataloguing process is that it affords the cataloguer a complete overview of the collection and allows for links between individual pieces to be highlighted. The famous ivory cabinet (NT 1139080.1), for instance, one of the most extraordinary pieces at Ham (above), is now fully...
catalogued. It was probably made in The Hague between 1650 and 1660, and was first recorded at Ham in 1677. The exceptional ivory cabinet is a rare precursor, as it encloses a pristine interior fully fitted with drawers—most Dutch two-door large cabinets on stands, characteristic of the late 17th century, normally have shelves inside. Intriguingly, another Dutch cabinet at Ham, veneered in black ebony rather than white ivory, has a very similarly fitted interior (NT 1139780). Another outstanding piece that has been re-catalogued was made for the 4th Earl of Dysart in 1730: a lacquer table by George Nix (NT 1139748), the top of which was cut by Nix from the top of a very fine Japanese cabinet (NT 1140084.1), also at Ham. This lacquer cabinet would have been regarded as extremely precious at the time and was raised on a gilt-wood stand in c.1675, but the top was of course difficult to see, and was made more visible by being converted into a table.

The collection of lacquer furniture at Ham is extremely important and will deserve further scholarly attention over the years to come. In 1677 a pair of very fine Japanese cabinets was recorded in the Green Closet (above; NT 1139896 and 1139897). These so-called nambari cabinets, with lacquer inlaid with mother-of-pearl, are exceptionally rare and early examples of imported luxury goods that became very fashionable throughout Europe in the last quarter of the century. The two Japanese cabinets, and the one mentioned above, are the best of their types at Ham. Indeed, the house’s collection of lacquered furniture and objects reflects perfectly the 17th-century fascination for lacquer and its decorative appeal. Ham House’s Coromandel lacquer screens, cabinets, and tables and numerous japanned pieces made in England—including the japanned chairs bearing the Duchess of Lauderdale’s cipher—are remarkable surviving examples of this fad. English japanned furniture is still a fairly obscure subject. It is hoped that the study of Ham’s collection will help shed light on this Asian lacquer furniture and its European imitations, which reflect a worldwide commercial network.

Megan Wheeler has concentrated on Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, which houses some of the most celebrated pieces of 16th-century furniture in England: the Parisian ‘sea-dog’ table (NT 1127744), the ‘Aeglentyne’ table (NT 1127774) and the ‘Du Cerceau’ cabinet (NT 1127743) traditionally attributed to the circle of the Dijon architect and designer, Hugues Sambin (c.1520-1601), but which probably emanated from the workshop of a Parisian supplier to the French court. These and other outstanding pieces of furniture are thought to have been in the house since at least 1601 and, as such, have rightly been the subject of thorough research. Simon Swynfen Jervis and Christopher Rowell’s forthcoming chapter on the furniture at Hardwick (to be published in David Ashhead and David Taylor (eds), Hardwick Hall: A Great Old Castle of Romance, Yale University Press 2016), however, has permitted a more thorough look at lesser-known pieces, and as a result many are now being considered and examined for the first time.

Thus it is that a potentially important X-frame chair (below; NT 1127424) has now been discovered in the attics of the house. Kept in store because of its somewhat dilapidated condition—the chair lacks upholstery and top covers and shows signs of repairs and replacements—it may in fact once have stood in one of Hardwick’s principal rooms, and might even have been used by Bess of Hardwick herself. The chair is of the same type as the celebrated 17th-century X-frame chairs of state at Knole.
designed to fold, the two parts of the frame swivelling around the joint where they meet. The development of the X-frame chair in England is not completely understood, in part because so few examples survive, but generally speaking, later examples appear to have been made with fixed, unfolding frames. In addition, the Hardwick chair may have been originally designed to have parts of its frame exposed, as its legs and arms are decorated with white and red flowers and arabesque foliage against a green ground. One of the chairs at Knole (NT 129419) is similarly decorated, and so it is possible that these comparable chairs are of a similar date. The paint on the Hardwick example is currently being analysed to determine whether or not it is coeval with the chair, or a later embellishment added when other repairs—like the alterations to the frame—were undertaken. Whatever the results, the frame appears to be of an early date and continuing research will, we hope, elucidate its history.

Wolf Burchard chose to update the online records of Knole, which contains the most significant assemblage of royal furniture outside the Royal Collection: state beds that belonged to James II, tables commissioned by Louis XIV, and numerous chairs that came from Whitehall Palace and Hampton Court. In fact, it includes the sole 17th-century upholstered royal furniture to survive. Knole is a Mecca for textile historians, not only thanks to the famous ‘Knole Sofa’ (NT 129442), but because of its wide array of upholstered furniture, the history of which is extremely complicated. Many chairs, stools and sofas have been restored or re-covered over the centuries using old textiles, making it extremely difficult to detect what is original to a piece and what is a later addition.

Wolf is also undertaking broader research on a variety of international pieces in view of Christopher Rowell’s forthcoming book, Furniture in National Trust Houses (YUP 2019). A commode at Basildon Park from around 1800, for instance (NT 266678), of which the place of production was very unclear, was thought to have been decorated with panels in vernis Martin, a French type of imitation lacquer. It has now transpired that the panels are likely to have been produced by the German Stobwasser lacquer manufactory, established in Berlin since the 1770s. The same manufactory supplied lacquer panels for several commodes of the same size and shape to the Prussian royal palaces in Berlin, which no longer survive.

Another intriguing set of Continental furniture is on display at Mount Stewart: a set of 22 neo-Classical giltwood chairs said to have been used in Vienna by the members of the 1814/15 Congress (left; NT 1220560, 1-22). The chairs appear to be very similar to a set of chairs supplied for the Audience Chamber of Empress Carolina Augusta, fourth wife of Emperor Francis I of Austria (who was also Francis II, Holy Roman Emperor), in 1816. Further archival research may shed light on the manufacture of the chairs at Mount Stewart. The Imperial chair-maker Gregor Nutzinger and upholsterer Michael Remele are likely to have produced the chairs for the Empress, and in the event those used for the Congress. Originally covered in malachite or emerald green, the chairs were re-covered in the 1930s. Each chair now features the arms of one of the congress members (on the back) paired with the arms of the country which he represented (on the seat). A mistake seems to have occurred with the arms of Prince Hardenberg, which have been matched up with those of Austria rather Prussia. By tradition, the needlework is said to have been carried out by nuns in Nantes—Wolf will write to various convents to find out if any archival documents relating to this particular commission survive.

The furniture research project is going ahead rapidly: in the first two months more than 1200 records and entries have been updated. Further funding will be required to continue this work. In October, Lisa White, former Chairman of the National Trust’s Arts Panel, went on a lecture tour in the States where she found great enthusiasm for the project. And in November, Christopher and Wolf created awareness by advertising the project amongst their peers at the Furniture History Society and, most recently, publishing an article in Country Life, discussing the British taste for Louis XIV furniture using several National Trust examples (11 November 2015, pp. 82-5). In the New Year, Camille, Megan and Wolf will start the cataloguing of their next houses, Petworth House, Sizergh Castle and Uppark.

Wolf Burchard, Camille Mestdagh and Megan Wheeler, The Furniture Research Team

For more information, visit: https://www.royal-oak.
CONSERVING THE FAMILY BOOK
A new, accessible virtual presentation of Erddig history

Erdig, near Wrexham, is a 17th-century house widely regarded as one of Britain’s finest stately homes. From the 18th to the 20th centuries it was the home of the Yorke family, and in 1973 it was given to the National Trust. The family had amassed a rich collection of archives; indeed, the cataloguer of the collection commented that ‘the Yorkes seem almost never to have thrown anything away’.

From his family archives Philip Yorke II (1849-1922) selected the most interesting items and arranged them roughly in chronological order in a large volume, adding notes on family events and alterations to the house. In the front of the book he described his purpose in creating such a collection:

The Letters & Papers of this collection have belonged to those who have dwelt in This House in successive ages. The events here in recorded may interest those Members of the same family who are now taking the places of The Departed in the same ancient Home.

The Letters illustrate the characters of their Writers [The customs and Manners of Past times] make us intimately acquainted with them teach us to know and love and revere their Friends To feel interest in their concerns and Sympathy in their Sorrows and Joys.

The Erddig Family Book, as it is known, is therefore the jewel of the Erddig Collection, offering a very attractive portrait of a gentry family over the centuries, a portrait with wide appeal and of national significance. It is a large volume with two purpose-made clasps, a boss on the front and numerous items pasted inside. The

It would appear that Philip Yorke was quite happy to show the volume to friends and guests as well as members of the family. The Hertfordshire local historian Reginald L. Hine describes (in an essay published in Relics of an Un-common Attorney, ed. Richenda Scott, 1951) a visit to Erddig when he was permitted to read the letters in what he describes as ‘the manuscript family book’.

The Erddig archive collection, including this remarkable volume (ref. D/E/1542), is housed at the Flintshire Record Office (FRO). FRO staff had long felt that the Family Book would warrant a major conservation project. It had the potential to be very popular, but the way it was constructed meant that it could not be used without risk of further damage both to the book and to the items within; we were therefore reluctant to publicise its existence. Many documents had been folded (some many times over) in order to fit, and repeated unfolding and refolding had crumpled and weakened them. Others had been precariously attached using paper hinges, so that turning the pages risked the weight of the item ripping the page to which it was attached. We were conscious that the book had a lot of potential—but also that in its precarious physical state we could not allow it to fulfil that potential.

A grant programme run jointly by the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust and CyMAL (the Welsh Government body for museums, archives and libraries, now known as MALD) gave us the opportunity to resolve this dilemma.

In preparation for submitting a grant application Mark Allen, FRO’s conservator, assembled a group of experienced archive conservators to assess the volume and come up with a conservation plan that would make individual items accessible whilst preserving the integrity of the volume and the intention of its creator. After much discussion the plan agreed on was to use a minimum intervention approach and to complete just the conservation work necessary to enable the digitisation of the book and its contents without risk of further damage. Digital images of individual items would thus be readily accessible, with the potential for an infinite range of uses at Erddig itself to enhance the experience of visitors to the house, as well as in the search-room at FRO. At the same time, the book itself would remain much as Philip Yorke created it.
The favoured treatment was to repair individual documents in situ where possible and, if not possible, to remove, repair and reattach them in their original position. Work on each item would be undertaken individually according to its preservation needs and to enable digitisation. Treatment of the underlying support pages of the volume and possibly the sewing structure was to be carried out where necessary. All items, if removed, would be replaced in as near as possible their original positions by means of guards made of Japanese paper using wheat starch paste as an adhesive.

Damage to the items stuck into the volume had been caused primarily by the method of attachment to the support pages (such as hinges) or the position of the attachment. Damage could be reduced by re-positioning some of the hinges to make viewing the lower items easier and enable safer turning of the pages, thereby reducing further damage. Any self-adhesive tape such as Sellotape would be removed along with any sticky adhesive residue, though staining would be left as evidence of previous repairs. Both support pages and attached items would benefit from surface cleaning. At the end of the project a bespoke box would be made to house the volume.

This was the project as submitted to the joint funding bodies. To our delight we were successful: a grant was awarded enabling us to purchase all the materials required to carry out the project and to pay for the whole volume and its contents to be scanned at the National Library of Wales, as well as to employ a conservator for a period of 12 weeks to carry out the conservation work required under the supervision of Mark Allen.

The project proceeded very largely according to plan. Inevitably, as each item was examined details of damage were discovered that had not previously been apparent. Surface cleaning with a soft brush removed much debris from the gutters including hair, plant materials, threads, glue and fragments of documents. The condition of individual documents varied enormously from robust to very degraded, acidic, fragile or torn. An unsightly animal glue had been used in liberal quantities to attach items to pages. A great many of the documents had tears to the edges and some had missing areas. Each tear was repaired using a 9g tissue hand-coated in a 3g gelatine solution. The adhesive could be re-moistened, so it could be easily applied using just a small amount of water on a fine brush. In-fills were carried out using a light-weight Japanese paper meticulously needled out to fit exactly into the missing area. This gave strength to the item, and the repair was sympathetic to the original paper whilst not attempting to hide the fact that a repair had been made. With so many different types of paper involved, it was important to test them all for acidity and, if necessary and where possible, to apply a calcium carbonate de-acidification solution.

It was found that some items had already been repaired in the 1970s or 1980s to the standards of the time. It was decided not to reverse these treatments and re-repair, but rather to preserve this stage in the history of the life of the book.

Because the book had originally been created and bound with the intention that the pages would be written on rather than used to stick in additional items in scrap-book style, the intrusion of such a quantity of additional items made the book bulk outwards, distorting the cover boards and damaging the shoulder joints.

Where it could be achieved, items were treated in situ or detached, repaired and re-attached as closely as possible to their original positions. However, it was judged unwise to return some items to their original positions in the volume, and these were removed and stored separately. A photographic record shows where they were originally positioned.

Once the conservation work was complete the volume was delivered by hand to the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth where the pages and individual items were scanned in high definition.

It is now possible for the volume to remain relatively undis turbed whilst students can look at digital images of the individual documents. The existence of these digital images also opens up exciting possibilities for bringing the Family Book back home to Erdig in virtual form. Discussions with the National Trust are being held to find a way to make Philip Yorke’s Family Book part of the visitor experience at Erdig.

Claire Harrington, Principal Archivist
POWIS CASTLE: EAST FRONT PROJECT
Repairing and restoring the house’s grand Baroque approach

‘Powis is a pocket battleship among great houses. Its rose-red walls, half as old as Wales, rise in shimmering mediaeval apparition over the fertile slopes of the Severn above Welshpool. Here the Princes of Powys dreamed of glory.’

So Simon Jenkins writes in Wales: Churches, Houses, Castles.

Lofty, elevated and seemingly aloof it may be, but Powis Castle is firmly rooted in its setting. It grows out of the sandstone pillar on which it sits, the focal point of its mediaeval deer park which is segmented by handsome avenues and historic drives to the north and south; it faces the town of Welshpool, borrowing the picturesque crags of the Breidden Hills beyond and sitting boldly on the border between the soft Shropshire landscape and the rugged Cambrian mountains.

This was the seat of the mediaeval principedom of Powys before Wales was united under the rule of Llywelyn, Prince of Gwynedd, and later subjected to the Tudors’ Act of Union. During the mediaeval period, Powis enjoyed a suitably battle-torn existence, including being burned down in 1274 in a battle between Llywelyn, Prince of Gwynedd, and its builder, Gruffudd. However, it was largely rebuilt by Owain ap Gruffudd from 1277 onwards. On the death of Owain’s son, ownership was passed down the female line, and eventually in 1421 became split—the castle was occupied by the Greys and the Tiptofts, the families of two sisters. The unusual arrangement of two major entrances—and sometime description of Powis as two castles—is likely to derive from this time.

In 1587 Powis was sold to Edward Herbert (?-1593), second son of the first Earl of Pembroke, whose wife was a Catholic, and whose children were also raised in the faith. This saw the start of a turbulent period for Powis; it included the creation of William Herbert as Lord Powis by Charles I, but it culminated in the capture of the castle by Parliamentary forces on 22 October 1644. Powis was finally returned to the family on the restoration of Charles II.

The second half of the 17th century saw Powis become a rich treasure house, but to the accompaniment of further political anguish: in 1651, Percy Herbert, son of Lord Powis, was convicted of treason by Cromwell and imprisoned. He was released five years later and inherited Powis. Percy’s son, William, who inherited on his father’s death in 1667, was principally responsible for the refined Baroque palace that Powis was to become. It is this 17th-century flourishing of Powis as the power statement of a major ‘mover and shaker’ in the Stuart court that will be celebrated in the East Front project.

The East Front

Today, Powis Castle is a sumptuously furnished Baroque palace on a bijou scale. Later 18th- and early 20th-century alterations overlie the 17th-century glory, but this is still the principal visible character of the castle, and it is to 1668-70 and the flowering height of this period in its history that we turn in considering the importance of the great East Front approach to this former fortress.

Beyond its obvious defensive characteristics, Powis Castle is a jewel box of a house, with its thick sandstone walls carved out to create elegant state apartments, in tune with the fashion of the 17th century, to demonstrate the status of its owner, William Herbert, 3rd Lord Powis, created Earl in 1674, soon to be created Marquess (1687) and Duke of Powis, K.G. (1688) by James II after his abdication.

Never in its history was the house a more cohesive assembly of house, collection and garden setting. The tumbling terraces, ornamented with white marbled lead statuary, form the lower layers of a celebratory cake topped off with the house, its entire skyline finished with fine stone balustrading, giving the impression of a lace edge.

The earliest known plan showing Powis Castle within its garden and park is that of 1629 by Humphry Bleaze. The map clearly shows the castle with its west courtyard complete with gabled range, and an east courtyard—or bailey—with a pair of towers on either side of a formal entrance, reached via a long avenue stretching across the park towards the town of Welshpool. This mediaeval plan provides the structure on which the developments of the 1660s were built (the architect or designer is unknown).

By 1684, Thomas Dineley’s notes and perspectives, captured during the 1684 Progress of Henry Somerset, Duke of Beaufort (1629-
The Project

Whilst the project will bring a completely new aspect to the visitor experience, enabling the 17th-century Powis to be properly interpreted, and the stunning views from the High Terrace and the portico to be appreciated, the practical benefit in terms of building repair will be substantial. The works will include the underpinning of the High Terrace, which is currently at risk of collapse, and repairs to and re-pointing of the stonework. The steps themselves have been analysed stone by stone, and where repair is possible, this will be carried out. All the stones will be re-bedded, as they have slumped considerably, and some are so badly broken that replacement will be necessary. The parapet wall has a pointed coping, which was put in place by the architect G F Bodley in about 1920; this will be retained, rather than attempting to return the entire area to a purely 17th-century appearance. Modern day health and safety concerns have also had an influence on decisions, and large lead planters, complete with clipped yews, will be introduced at strategic points to act as a psychological barrier to the long drop down to the Old Bowling Green. However, the South Terraces have unguarded, substantial and precipitous drops which set a precedent within the garden, and visitors are encouraged to be aware of the risks. A simple iron handrail will be attached to the High Terrace wall to aid access up the Great East Steps. This will not be visibly intrusive, and it will be in the shade owing to the northern aspect.

The Old Bowling Green (already referred to as such in 1771) will become an area which can be used for events and for visitors to relax and play and have picnics. The views from here and from the High Terrace are outstanding, taking in the Severn Plain and the craggy eminence of the Breidden Hills, and visually linking the castle to Welshpool—the eye is drawn along historical avenues and lines of sight, which are being softly reclaimed by the landscape.

Visitors will enter the house via the Great East Steps and the Inner Courtyard, which will bring an important additional conservation benefit. At present, visitors approach through the West Courtyard via a small lobby directly into the Grand Staircase Hall, bringing dust and grit with them, as well as moisture on wet days. Access from the east will reduce the quantity of dust and grit; the Inner Courtyard will provide a buffer, and the environment in the Grand Staircase Hall, the State Dining Room and the Smoking Room will be improved.

The East Front has been derelict and in a poor state of repair since the mid-20th century and inaccessible to the public. A fundraising campaign has now generated the funds needed (approaching £500,000) to carry out the structural repairs and to restore the grand approach, and thereby complete the Baroque story of Powis. The magnificent south terraces have long been celebrated, but the re-opening of the East Front entrance will draw together the internal and external elements of one of the most significant phases in the history of Powis Castle.

Elizabeth Green, Curator, North Wales

I am indebted to Chris Gallagher for his detailed historical report on the East Front.
‘IN SOME MEASURE THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND’
Unlocking the archives of the Bankes family of Kingston Lacy

The Bankes material has been described as ‘a world class archive showing Dorset’s links with Europe and the Middle East’ by Dr. Philip Mansel, an authority on Europe and the Levant in the 19th century. Professor Henry French of Exeter University has described the archive as ‘exceptionally complete ... of international significance’. For anyone who loves history but also good stories, the Bankes archive contains both in spadefuls. The documents in this archive encapsulate the story of a family who sprang from modest enough beginnings in Cumbria in the 16th century and through ability, diligence and loyalty to the Crown rose to become a wealthy and successful family of standing in Dorset—and occasionally on the national stage too.

The Bankes archive was deposited at the Dorset History Centre in the early 1980s, when the substantial Dorset estates of Kingston Lacy and Corfe Castle on the Isle of Purbeck were bequeathed to the National Trust by their last owner, Ralph Bankes. Fortunately for us, successive generations of the family remained proud of the Bankes pedigree and achievements and were careful keepers of records. The archive contains a wealth of detailed records from their estates—some dating back to as early as the 14th century—and also numerous personal papers. The archive has been sorted but never fully catalogued, which means that much of this important resource has never been readily available to researchers. Now, with the aid of grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other generous donors, the Dorset History Centre, working in partnership with the National Trust and the Priest’s House Museum in Wimborne Minster, is able to catalogue the archive systematically and make it accessible to a wide range of people through an ambitious programme of events and activities.

The Bankes family had its share of strong personalities and lively stories. The family’s Dorset history began in 1635 when Sir John Bankes, Attorney-General and Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, purchased the ancient royal castle of Corfe on the Isle of Purbeck and then, a year later, the Kingston Lacy estate. For both properties, the old estate documents were passed on with the sales. These included wonderful estate maps for the Isle of Purbeck drawn by the surveyor Ralph Treswell in 1583/86.

The archive contains letters, speeches and other documents dating from Sir John Bankes’s years in high office. He was a staunch royalist and until he fell ill and died in 1644 he supported King Charles I during the Civil War. Anticipating the war his wife, Lady Mary, took their family to Corfe Castle for safety. She stoutly defended the castle against two sieges by Parliamentary troops before being forced to agree a truce and give up the castle. It was plundered and then reduced to ruins by the Parliamentarians. Detailed records for the Civil War years appear to be more limited, but Lady Mary's account book for 1646 still survives.

This was by no means the end of the story; the slighting of Corfe Castle ultimately led to a whole new chapter in the history of the Bankes family. In 1663, having restored the family fortunes and been knighted in recognition of the family's loyalty to the king, Lady Mary's eldest surviving son Ralph commissioned the gentleman architect Roger Pratt to design a fine new family seat in Palladian style on the Kingston Lacy estate. The archive contains beautiful architectural drawings of that first, elegant mansion, Kingston Hall.

The 18th-century estate records and family documents still await detailed research. These represent a huge and important resource, which is thought likely to shed considerable light on agricultural
economics and changing social trends in Dorset through the course of that century. The archive also contains records for a number of industries on the Bankes estates, including Purbeck stone quarrying and clay extraction, and also black lead (graphite) mining in Cumbria. The first surviving estate maps for Kingston Lacy date from this century. A map of 1742 shows Kingston Hall with formal avenues extending away from the house to north and south, a style of landscape design which was to be swept away in the following century. Another valuable survey undertaken by William Woodward in 1774 recorded the Kingston Lacy estate immediately prior to enclosure.

The late 18th century and first half of the 19th century brought a further cast of distinctive characters into the story. In 1784, Frances Woodley, a noted beauty with a dowry of £6,000, married Henry Bankes II and came to live at Kingston Lacy. Over the next seven years the couple altered the house and its interiors, celebrating the completion of these by holding a ball in December 1791. Frances—an enthusiastic correspondent—described the ball and many other family events in letters to her mother-in-law.

Frances's second son, William John, became the apple of his mother's eye. Described by his friend Lord Byron as the 'father of all mischiefs', he was handsome, clever and a great talker, and also had an insatiable curiosity. In his late twenties he became a great traveller in southern Europe and the Middle East, particularly Egypt, where he developed a scholarly interest in hieroglyphics; he was prominent among the network of aristocratic travellers who contributed to the early study of Egyptology and whose collections formed the basis for much of the material held at the British Museum. The Bankes archive contains his records of ancient Egypt and numerous beautiful sketches and paintings by him and his fellow explorers.

William Bankes was also fascinated by architecture and delighted in beautiful things. Above all, he had a passion for his home at Kingston Lacy. His elder brother died young, and so on the death of his father in 1834 William inherited Kingston Hall and the family's Dorset estates. He remodelled the mansion with the help of the architect Charles Barry, restoring features based on the original design by Pratt but also introducing new elements, with the twin objectives of creating beauty and bringing the house up to modern standards of comfort. After 1841, when William was caught in compromising circumstances with a guardsman in London's Green Park, he was obliged to flee the country. Much of his collecting for and alterations to the house were achieved while he was living in exile in Italy. Numerous letters and drawings from the period between 1835 and 1835 survive, telling the story of this imaginative man and his achievements.

Some forty years later, a final chapter for the Bankes family began when Walter Bankes married Henrietta Jenny Fraser. The couple had three children—two daughters and then a son, Ralph—before Walter died after only seven years of marriage. Henrietta, a woman of strong will, never re-married, instead devoting herself to managing the estate throughout Ralph's minority. She entertained Edward VII at Kingston Lacy in 1905 and Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1907. She initiated and managed improvements to the house and numerous improvements to the estate including new entrances lodges, the construction of a new church, improvements to the estate farms and cottages, and new glasshouses in the kitchen garden. The archive contains numerous drawings and documents relating to these initiatives. The archive also includes the record of an extensive vernacular buildings survey on the estate in the later 20th century.

Few county-held archives can claim to encompass such diverse contents, ranging from exquisite drawings of wall paintings in the temple at Abu Simbel in Egypt to medieval records of land ownership and the detailed household accounts of a landed family. Viola Bankes, sister of Ralph Bankes, the last owner of Kingston Lacy, remarked of the house in her book A Dorset Heritage: ‘upon its stones is written, for those who can read with their hearts, the history of the Bankes family, which in some measure is the history of England’.

Judith Teasedale, Bankes Archive Project & Engagement Officer, Dorset History Centre
EMERGENCY SALVAGE TRAINING

Amidst the floods, and with the terrible fire at Clandon still in mind, the Emergency Planning and Practical Salvage Course in the Midlands was a timely reminder of the Trust’s need to be prepared. This course is held four or five times a year for the staff from historic properties and the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS). It used to be run by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport with English Heritage and the National Trust, and is now organised by Historic England with the National Trust helping to train. Held at Dudley Fire Station, it covers aspects of emergency salvage ranging from drawing up a salvage plan and first aid for damaged objects to the training of recovery and salvage teams, and (crucially) working with the FRS.

The National Trust is an accredited museum authority and leading conservation organisation, so it is essential that its properties have salvage plans for dealing with emergencies if they arise. These could be the small-scale flood caused by an overflowing downspout or the (thankfully much rarer) disaster on the scale of Uppark or Clandon. These salvage plans form part of our properties’ wider Emergency Plans.

The course is attended by house and wider property staff from many heritage organisations such as Historic England, English Heritage, and Historic Royal Palaces. Moreover the FRS, wanting to learn how to handle historic objects and how heritage organisations work and plan for emergencies and salvage, support and attend the course as well.

Over three days the course aims at teaching people how to draw up a salvage plan, handle objects, treat objects after a disaster, work with the FRS, and finally how to develop and train salvage teams. The first day looks at floods, culminating in an exercise in diverting water cascading down the fire station’s training smoke house. Whilst one group is tackling the water pouring down, the other group put on heavy fire crew coats and helmets and breathing apparatus. They then go into the smoke house, now full of smoke, which is very disorientating. This gives a valuable insight into some of the difficulties fire crew would have when in a burning building, and how essential it is to have clear and accurate plans of our properties.

On the second day everyone is taught how to handle objects properly and then how to treat them after a disaster. This training is delivered by National Trust, English Heritage and freelance conservators.

In the afternoon a full exercise is held. Beforehand the attendees have all been given roles: Incident Coordinator; Coordinators for Recovery and Salvage, Communications and Media, and Documentation; Quartermaster; Welfare Officer; and Recovery and Salvage teams. All have been briefed on the nature of the incident and their roles. The smoke house becomes the Dudley Manor Museum for the day, filled with collections. The fire alarm goes off, and two fire appliances roar up, sirens sounding. These have come from neighbouring fire stations; the course is part of their regular training. The FRS then take charge of the scene, meet with the property person on site, and start fighting the fire. When it is safe to do so, they consider salvage and work with the property’s Incident Coordinator to prioritise rescuing the star items.

When the FRS Incident Coordinator says that it is safe to do so, salvage teams start going into the museum with fire crews to salvage the star items. The recovery team separates objects as they arrive at the Recovery Area into wet and dry, and treat them accordingly: Dry objects are documented, checked, and packed for later removal to somewhere safe. Wet objects are treated as the attendees learnt the day before and documented; then they can either go for further treatment off-site, or can be treated at the site and when dry, packed and stored.

This part of the exercise always seems slightly chaotic as objects start arriving in crates and on trolleys, and the documentation team has to work hard to keep up. The space allocated to wet objects, in this case the Engine House at the Fire Station, suddenly fills with objects. One large damp rug takes up a lot of space when it is laid out flat and supported on crates!

The final day is the chance to review what went well the day before, what did not, and what lessons to learn. Various case histories are considered to see how disasters can develop and what can be learnt from them. Training in advance is vital; one of the sessions on this last day looks at training salvage and recovery teams, with a ‘Disaster Game’ as a light-hearted way to encourage people to think about different scenarios.

This training gives property teams the confidence to write a salvage plan, treat objects, and respond in an emergency. The exercise is a key part of this training; it gives property staff an experience, albeit managed, of the difficulties they might meet. The Trust is well equipped to respond to these incidents, and, of course, to offer help and support to other heritage organisations in an emergency.

John Wynn Griffiths, Conservator, North-East region
IN THE LANDS OF THE CZECH CROWN
A Bohemian Odyssey with the Attingham Study Programme

The Attingham Trust’s annual Study Programme is a treat for those curious about the country house. In 2015, the 10-day offering was a breath-taking mind-expansion which, for English participants, explained why the Renaissance was far better in Bohemia and raised the question: what did we think we knew about European art and architecture before we visited the lands of the Czech crown?

Today, the Czech Republic comprises the historic regions of Bohemia, Moravia and Czech Silesia. With twelve UNESCO-listed sites, it has a cultural legacy of international significance, and the largest concentration of great houses and palaces in Europe; its castles, a dramatic feature of the landscape, reflect Bohemia’s power and influence in the Middle Ages. For centuries, Czech lands formed the crossroads for artists from Italy, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, and thus the great buildings were created by a galaxy of architects and craftsmen, many of European significance. The Kingdom of Bohemia was one of the richest and most fabled countries in all Europe before being absorbed into the growing hegemony of the Hapsburg family. Bohemia and Moravia became major centres of European Baroque, resulting in a magnificent flowering of the arts in the building and decoration of monasteries, churches, palaces, pilgrimage sites and extensive gardens.

Each year over 4 million visits are made by Czech nationals to the 100 or so important historic properties in the care of the Czech National Heritage Institute (NPU) and accessible to the Czech population (10 million) and foreign tourists. Our Attingham group included 31 academic and curatorial scholars from 13 countries—America, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Estonia, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK. We were privileged to be led by NPU curators and to visit 12 of their sites, as well as six owned by the government and the church and three in private ownership.

In the Czech Republic, everyone’s destination is Prague—the city offers some of the finest buildings of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, and the cheapest beer. We were welcomed at the British Embassy by the Ambassador and the Czech Minister of Culture, and at the Lobkowicz Palace, where William Lobkowicz, an American, described how, following the passing of Communism, he claimed restitution of his family’s city palace, castle estates and many ancestral possessions.

However, if you fail to venture further than Prague, you miss some of the wonders of Europe. We spent a week travelling through the lush farmland and great pine forests of Bohemia and Moravia, visiting castles and palaces of unrivalled scale, beauty and antiquity. In a rapid succession of astounding discoveries, any pre-conceptions of England’s natural and central role as a leader of invention, taste, and beauty were discomfited and dismantled.

From the astonishing scale of the grotto at Kromeriz (built for the Archbishops of Olomouc) to the craftsmanship of the plasterwork at Bučovice (above), via the wall paintings at Kratochvíle, the rare textiles at Velké Losiny and the beautiful sgraffiti in early rooms at Těšín, it became apparent that here was a Renaissance supreme in itself: it arrived direct from Italy and flourished decades before the first stuttering mutations of classicism were made in England. Here, also, was a baroque imagination to make even Louis XIV stop and frown—at Kroměříž, for example, with its acres of formal garden including two snail mounts, a rabbit mountain and a summer house to rival a small Roman church. Elsewhere, too, there were supreme art nouveau interiors and furnishings that would make even Vienna
turn a deeper shade of green.

England did exert some influence, but later, and not always to the good. In the park at Červený Dvůr (previous page, left), we struggled to identify what prevented our whole-hearted surrender to its pastoral beauty, trying to imagine ourselves at home in the park at Kedleston. Then we spotted the skyline: above the perfect English oaks, its dark silhouette gave the lie, an almost Tyrolean shadow of deep green conifer. At Hluboká (previous page, right), we were assured that inspiration came from its owner’s love of everything English, and Windsor in particular. But surely not everything English—where were proportion and scale, restraint, or taste? Something strangely unleashed had apparently given birth to this epic confection of dazzling ashlar, cast iron verandas, mahogany panelling, deranged ceramics and acres of muffling stamped velvet upholstery.

In the Renaissance and the Baroque, where the influence is decidedly Italian and French, we were on surer ground. Nowhere we visited exhibited the glories of these two periods of Czech national development as well, or as completely, as Český Krumlov, a World Heritage site on a serpentine river. The Bellaria is an exquisite rococo garden house, which was made all the more alluring by a gathering storm growing down the valley towards us—the shadows thrown across the room threatened the extinction of the pretty scenes of 18th-century dalliance painted on the panelling. Then down the terraced gardens, past cascading waterfalls and gravel walks, to a precipice, unseen behind a low wall lined with lime trees. Here, a covered way, lit by candles and decorated in more wedding-cake rococo, launched our party out over the great gorge which divides the castle from its gardens. Along three hundred yards of flimsy corridor, with vertiginous views to left and right, we processed to the strains of Handel (courtesy of an iPhone), with the crashing thunder of the storm as counterpoint, and a masterpiece of 18th-century theatre all around us.

We arrived in the Hall of Masks (above), a brilliant exercise in the Rococo master’s *arte trompe l’oeil* where we, the audience in the centre of the room, could have been the entertainment for the 18th-century ladies and gentlemen *en masquerade* with characters from *Commedia dell’Arte*, painted in feigned theatre boxes and balconies around the walls. But they were paying no attention to us, chatting amongst themselves, ogling each other, and behaving like an 18th-century theatre audience—talking loudly and ignoring the stage. Evidently the theatre musicians had given up, as witnessed by their (painted) instruments hung on (painted) hooks on the balcony.

We were neither so rude nor so rudely served when we were privileged to attend a double bill of 18th-century melodrama and ballet in the private theatre at Český Krumlov, one of very few 18th-century theatres to survive in Europe, and possibly the only one complete with its stage machinery, sets and costumes. The evening performance, by candle-light and with sets and stage machinery in full flight (but replica costumes), was accompanied by a small orchestra in period dress and wigs, as if employed by Prince Schwarzenburg. It was a bewitching experience; ballet and melodrama combined to show off the (literal) fireworks of the theatre designed and built for their performance.

An astonishing feature of Czech country houses is their almost complete interiors. Following Nazi occupation and Communist domination, one might anticipate gaunt empty shells with a few sticks of furniture and the odd portrait. But fate and the efficiency of communist bureaucracy dictated otherwise; thanks to the somewhat un-socialist pride of Communist commissioners of their aristocratic symbols of their national history, most houses are fully furnished and many retain significant historic collections. As each country house, castle and palace was annexed to the state, its contents were inventoried in minute detail, packed, and sent to central storage depots, with highly significant paintings reserved for national museums. After 1989, when historic buildings were no longer required as schools, hospitals, psychiatric units and military training camps, the ‘black books’ recording these inventories proved invaluable to the curators responsible for returning the sequestered collections to their ancestral homes.

A few families have also bravely returned to their properties. Under an act of restitution by the post-Communist government, families able to prove their claim and promising to live on their estates were given back what had been taken from their forbears. At Castolovice, Diana Phipps-Sternberg described her experience of claiming ownership, restoration, and returning to live in her childhood home. As so often, family occupation made the visitor experience both more interesting (the cut flowers were unparalleled in their abundance and beauty) and more idiosyncratic (at 9.30 am, Verdi greeted us over loud-speakers in the courtyard). Perhaps less successful, but earning full marks for family pride and self-confidence, was another restored house where the first room is a museum dedicated to the owner and his family, with photographs, a model railway and a singular hard hat. The rest of the house got better (and better).

This demanding tour (29 hours on a bus, 49.5 miles on foot, 269 flights of stairs) was expertly, energetically and enthusiastically led by Annabel Westman, Director of the Attingham Trust, to whom we owe heartfelt thanks. The programme was supported by four local Attingham alumni—Czech curators at NPU and the National Gallery—whose proficiency in English, deep knowledge of Czech and Central European history, and experience of curating and conserving Czech houses, collections and gardens, made every visit interesting and rewarding.

We have since met Jan Kennaway (Friends of Czech Heritage, former National Trust Director) and Helen Ghosh, Director-General, to discuss reviving links between Czech and National Trust historic properties and their conservation staff, with support from the INTO Secretariat. Our hope is to promote professional development, and learning from good practice, through exchange visits and ‘twinning’ (for instance, Stowe with the Lednice-Valtice estate).

Andrew Barber and Helen Lloyd

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CRONKHILL - A COMPLETE NASH SURVIVAL
Restoring a little taste of Tuscany in Shropshire

Cronkhill is a seminal ‘Picturesque’ Italianate villa by John Nash built in the very early 1800s for the 2nd Lord Berwick on the Attingham estate, Shropshire; it is believed to have been constructed for his agent, Francis Walford. With its distinctive tower and loggia, it resembles a Tuscan country villa-farmhouse and is said to have been inspired by a Claude landscape painting. It is the earliest, most important, most influential and arguably most attractive of the Picturesque movement villas, and has spawned many imitations.

It is Grade I listed and incorporates an earlier timber-framed farmhouse on the site (see left in the 1920s photo below) which formed Cronkhill’s service wing. It commands a prominent position overlooking the Severn flood plain facing towards the Roman site of Wroxeter and the Wrekin, and acts as an eye-catcher for Attingham Hall. It also comprises model farm buildings, stables, and a coach house, the latter possibly associated with Nash.

It is a wonderful, magical building, more fantasy than reality. With its grouping of round, square and rectangular geometric shapes, featuring a prominent tower with a conical roof and an eye-catching loggia, and deep, overhanging eaves, it exemplifies the liberating nature of the Picturesque, which helped to free architectural composition from the ‘tyranny’ of classical symmetry. However, there are now very real problems with its fabric. In the past, cyclical repairs to the villa and farmhouse wing were not carried out as frequently as they should have been, and the work that was undertaken was not necessarily sympathetic to the building’s design and original construction materials. Some areas of the original render have failed and are cracking, flaking and de-laminating. Previous repairs were carried out using modern cementitious products, which are impervious and prevent the building from breathing, resulting in damp being trapped in the fabric. In addition, probably in an attempt to harmonise the resulting hotch-potch of surfaces, the exterior of the building was re-decorated in 1994 with a plastic-based, impervious masonry paint. As well as causing further physical damage through lack of breathability, the paint’s colour, a stark grey-white, was unsuitable aesthetically. Nash’s original design intention was a stone Tuscan villa-farmhouse set in an idealised Italian landscape; the grey-white is completely at odds with this.

One of the leading champions of the Picturesque, Sir Uvedale Price, included a section on ‘Objections to buildings being made too white’ in his Essay on the Picturesque (1796), saying that a whitened building ‘stares you impudently in the face’ and ‘is like the eternal grin of a fool’. He preferred ‘the tint of a beautiful stone’, which is the illusion that Nash was trying to achieve.

He did this by using a stone-coloured limewash over the whole of the brick and rendered exterior to match the local Grinshill stone, as shown in the watercolour design for Cronkhill exhibited...
Photographs from the 1920s and 1950s (albeit in black and white) indicate that this tradition of limewash continued and survived well into the 20th century, which would have given the building a subtly textured appearance, in contrast to the ‘perfect plasticity’ of the current masonry paint.

The current project therefore sets out to restore not only the physical but also the aesthetic aspects of Cronkhill. So whilst it includes repairs and improvements to the rainwater goods and sash windows, the main area of work is associated with the external surface fabric and colour.

On the earlier timber-framed section of the building, limewash was used directly on the existing brick, but on the main villa, Nash experimented with a new type of render called Roman Cement, variations of which were all the rage in the early 1800s. This was part of Nash’s aesthetic intent and his experimental, pioneering approach to architectural effects. The layer of render would have helped disguise the brick, and it was ‘lined-out’ (by drawing a nail across the render while still soft) to make it look like individual blocks of stone (above). It would have then been painted with a tinted wash to achieve the desired ‘stone’ colour.

Over time, some of Nash’s Roman Cement has failed, partly due to badly over-lapping ‘day-joints’ (indicating how far the plasterers got at the end of day’s work) and partly to bad drip detailing on overhanging parts of the structure, meaning that rainwater tracked back and got in behind the render, forcing it away from the surface of the building. The white patches (top right) are previous hard cement repairs. But getting these off can cause more damage than leaving them on.

The resulting mixture of types and condition of substrate was revealed when we removed the grey-white masonry paint, which had been masking the problem areas. It was removed by using a jet of high pressure water at high temperature using a system called Therma-Tech invented by Jamie Fairchild of Restorative Techniques (below).

Removing the modern paint was like taking off the building’s plastic raincoat, leaving it quite naked underneath. This meant that we could see all its imperfections, or what might be described as ‘duff detailing’: places where the architect (or client) seems to have changed his mind, where the craftsmen were probably struggling with the new materials, and where they were having to compromise to make the design work in reality. For example, there was clearly a problem where the circular tower meets the rectangular loggia, where a section of the wall was packed with rubble to bring it forwards (overleaf).

They also had difficulty in getting the correct plane on the wall directly above the loggia arches. This had to be packed to bring it forwards, using broken tiles and pieces of slate. The effect, now temporarily revealed, looks like crazy paving (overleaf). Any loose areas will be stabilised and then covered up again.

Above the entrance lobby the builders got the shape of the arched opening wrong and had to pack it with timber formers (overleaf). These are now in bad condition from water ingress and will be replaced with new ones.

The new render that we will be applying to the brick is a product called Prompt, invented by the Frenchman Louis Vicat in 1842. It is a variation on Roman Cement, being a natural, clay-rich limestone cement. It has inherent flexibility and breathability, as opposed to Portland Cement, which is produced by firing at a much higher temperature, so that it is vitrified and becomes much harder and therefore less flexible and breathable. In order to improve Prompt’s natural characteristics still further, we will be...
using a 50-50 mix of it with hydraulic lime for the first coat and then a slightly weaker mix of Prompt for the second coat.

The render will be lined-out to mimic stone blocks, on the same lines as originally (they have all been mapped) using the traditional tool of a bent nail (bottom right). Finally, an appropriate, breathable, stone-coloured paint will be applied, for which trials are being carried out to see which type of paint looks and performs best. We will start to apply the new stone colour on the exterior during April and May 2016 and the end of the project is scheduled for mid-June 2016.

As with his work at Attingham itself, Nash was pioneering and inventive, but it seems his search for visual effect was often flawed when it came to the practical details. Removing the outer ‘skin’ of Cronkhill is giving us insight into the thought processes and methods of those who originally designed and built this important Picturesque villa.

Sarah Kay, Project Curator

Project Manager: Rachael Freemantle (NT)
Project Architect: Tim Ratcliffe Associates of Oswestry
Building Contractor: Croft Building & Conservation Ltd of Cannock
Lodge Park is one of the two parks at Sherborne in Gloucestershire and is a significant element in the National Trust’s Sherborne estate. It is famous for its mile-long Paddock Course, laid out c.1620-30 by John ‘Crump’ Dutton (1594-1656/57) for the kingly sport of deer coursing, where pairs of greyhounds would course (chase) a deer along the length of the Course, with large wagers laid on which of the two hounds would first cause the deer to ‘turn’ from its headlong flight. The progress of the chase was observed from a Lodge and banqueting house (above) built towards the southern end of the Paddock Course, while the deer themselves were sourced from an adjacent park.

Deer coursing went out of fashion towards the end of the 17th century, but the Paddock Course has survived, albeit later subdivided for agricultural purposes during the early 19th century. The nearby deer park also remained, and was greatly extended in the first quarter of the 18th century by Sir John Dutton (1683/84-1742/43); he also made substantial alterations to the interior of the Lodge to designs by William Kent of c.1725.

Also in 1725, the soon-to-be Royal Gardener Charles Bridgeman (d.1738), who had previously worked at Blenheim in Oxfordshire and was then closely involved in the gardens at Stowe in Buckinghamshire, visited Sir John Dutton at Sherborne, and drew up proposals for the landscaping of the newly-expanded Lodge Park. Bridgeman’s surviving plan for the park also incorporates a survey of the then existing layout of the earlier park and shows a number of trapezoidal, hexagonal and octagonal tree clumps, as well as many parish and field boundary trees, most of which have now been lost. The plan also shows the construction lines for Bridgeman’s proposed new parkland layout and includes amendments to the design, as well as being ‘pricked through’ with a pin at key locations, most likely to facilitate the preparation of a final version for Sir John Dutton. As far as we are aware, the Lodge Park plan is the only surviving copy of one of Bridgeman’s working drawings, and as such it is important and significant in understanding his working methods.

Bridgeman’s landscaping style lay firmly within what was described by the landscape designer and commentator Stephen Switzer (1682-1745) as the ‘grand manner’, with impressive avenues of trees defining extensive vistas, while deer roamed within huge enclosures bounded by blocks and belts of woodland. At Lodge Park, the existing central axis of the Lodge related principally to the Paddock Course, with the adjacent deer park seemingly treated merely as an adjunct to it. In drafting his revolutionary design for the park, Bridgeman brilliantly re-oriented the central visual axis of the park itself (see plan, left), planting what came to be called the ‘Great Avenue’ to define and emphasise this new orientation, while disguising it from the Lodge by the simple expedient of surrounding the west side of the building with a distinctive trapezoidal plantation of beech trees. This was separated from the park by a ha-ha, or walled ditch, which Bridgeman was credited with inventing; within it was a walk, also backed by beech trees, allowing views across the park. The central alignment of this walk was at right angles to the main western axis and itself defined a pair of secondary avenues to north and south, with a projecting ‘bastion’ or viewing point at the focal point of this grand arrangement.

It is interesting to note that the centre of this bastion viewpoint marked the meeting point of three adjacent parishes: Aldsworth, Sherborne and Farmington. Vistas cut through the Great Avenue and centred on the viewpoint were aligned on Northleach Church some two miles to the north west, and on Barnsley Church over...
eight miles to the south west. Recent 'viewshed analysis' within a GIS (Geographic Information System) has confirmed that both of these views are indeed possible. In this way, Bridgeman further rooted his new design within the wider landscape.

At the western end of the Great Avenue, a pair of serpentine walks similarly extended to north and south, each with a circular viewpoint overlooking the adjacent valley of the river Leach, within which a grand serpentine canal was proposed. It is possible that the form of this canal was suggested by that of the river valley itself (see plan above); had it been implemented, it would have been the first of its kind in England, predating Bridgeman's design for the Serpentine in London by several years. Sadly, it appears that it was not constructed, and a pre-existing canal of traditional form was instead retained.

The west of the park was dominated visually by a central stepped 'theatre' of trees, which was skilfully designed to appear as the extension of the Great Avenue when seen from the bastion viewpoint to the east. To north and south of the central theatre, a series of woodland blocks defined six large 'paddocks' within which were scattered groups of trees, providing sheltered and secure grazing areas for deer and other stock.

Bridgeman employed these landscape devices at a number of other properties—the stepped theatre, for example, he used in differing forms at Stowe, Kedleston, Eastbury, Amesbury and Holkham, while the wooded paddocks for deer management appear also in his designs for Eastbury.

As has been stated above, it would seem that Bridgeman's grand serpentine canal for Lodge Park was not implemented, notwithstanding Sir John Dutton's explicit instruction in his will of 1742 that the design be completed after his death. But what of Bridgeman's other proposed landscape features? Sir John Dutton's accounts for the period 1723-42 record extensive planting and other works at Lodge Park, although the detail of many of the plantings have hitherto been unclear. Historical map evidence has also been somewhat inconclusive, although the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 25-inch plan (1882/83) shows remnants of the serpentine walks and some elements of the stepped theatre planting to the west. Post-war aerial photographs similarly record tantalising glimpses of surviving 'lumps and bumps' from earlier features, while enough of the central Great Avenue planting was visible as field archaeology in c.1994/95 to allow the reinstatement of a part of its central feature.

Two recent developments at Lodge Park, however, have at last confirmed that the majority of Bridgeman's landscape proposals for the park were indeed carried out. The first of these is a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) commissioned by the property in 2015, which has entailed a detailed assessment and correlation of all available sources of evidence, including maps, accounts, and other archives, as well as a detailed survey and mapping of all surviving trees on site. The tree survey has shown, for example, that the bulk of Bridgeman's proposed tree plantings, largely of beech, in the west of the park still survive, hidden away inside later forestry plantations and notwithstanding the management of these areas as arable for the best part of two centuries. In the east of the park, a number of ancient ash and oak trees shown on Bridgeman's plan, but which predate his design, have also been identified. A gazetteer of the site's archaeology has similarly catalogued the remnants of earlier features, such as a complex water management system in the central river valley.

Most telling of all, however, has been a recent LiDAR scan of the park\(^2\), commissioned by the property in support of the CMP. This depicts in minute detail the remnants not only of features predating any enclosure of these areas, such as the Neolithic long barrow and the early parish and other field boundaries, but also of lost features within the park, including the trapezoidal, hexagonal and octagonal plantings from the early park referred to above. It similarly shows the planting pits and/or mounds surviving from lost trees in the central Great Avenue, the two side-avenues at its eastern end, and the pair of serpentine walks to the west. The lines of the two diagonal vistas described above are also clearly visible where they cut through the central avenue, with a corresponding break in the southern serpentine walk at precisely the point proposed by Bridgeman to allow the south-western vista to continue.

Interestingly, the LiDAR scan also confirms where Bridgeman's proposals were modified. A key example is the proposed woodland, terrace walk and ha-ha to the west of the Lodge, with the central bastion viewpoint projecting into the adjacent park from the terrace walk. Whereas the woodland, ha-ha and terrace walk were constructed largely as planned (overleaf), the central bastion was greatly reduced in size, with only a projecting rectangular viewing terrace actually implemented. This would nonetheless still have allowed key views into the surrounding parkland, providing the all-important visual connection between the Lodge and the new parkland design, even though both were effectively screened from each other.

The initial stages of the Lodge Park CMP have been principally about understanding and analysing the remains of the designed landscape as well as the many other significant aspects of the site. Large areas of the western park, for example, have been ploughed, and this has destroyed all traces of earlier developments; but field evidence for Bridgeman's design (in the form of surviving trees) is good. These and other areas of the park are also of increasing...
value and interest for their grassland and other habitats and species, with a number of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority Species identified at the property. The next stages will involve balancing those significances and agreeing the priorities for future management and restoration of this rare and highly significant parkland landscape.

Chris Gallagher, Project Team Leader
Wendy Stott, CMP Project Manager
Jonny Loose, General Manager of the Sherborne Estate

Notes
1 Lodge Park, including the Paddock Course, is Grade I on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, now a part of the National Heritage List.
2 Legg, L.G.W. (ed.), A Relation of a Short Survey of 36 Counties, observed in a seven week journey begun on 11 August 1654 by a Captain, a Lieutenant and an Ancient (1904).
3 Bodleian Library, Oxford, Gough Mss.a4.fol.68r. The plan has long been recognised as Bridgeman’s work but was previously misidentified as relating to Eastbury, Dorset. It was finally recognised in 1995 by David Jacques as being of Lodge Park, which led to the park being raised in 1999 from Grade II to Grade I on the Register of Parks and Gardens.
4 The underlying survey was drawn north-to-south, while Bridgeman’s own proposals for the park were drawn east-to-west, which is how the landscape design is intended to be viewed.
5 Bridgeman was paid £70 in 1729 by Sir John Dutton ‘for his Journeys to Shireborn and making a plan for my New Park.’ (Gloucester County Record Office, D678 148). It is likely that this referred to the final version (now lost) rather than the surviving survey and sketch plan.
6 Willis, Peter, Charles Bridgeman and the English Landscape Garden (2002), pp.19-23.
8 LiDAR (Light Detection And Ranging): detailed laser mapping of ground relief from an aeroplane, including that beneath woodland.
Sir Brinsley Ford (1908-1999) was fortunate enough to inherit a sizable art collection which included an important group of paintings and drawings by the British 18th-century artist Richard Wilson. However, it was the expansion of this legacy that became his lifelong abiding passion. His inheritance grew into a connoisseur’s collection of British and Continental works of art which hung in his house at Wyndham Place. With a natural generosity, he took great pleasure in receiving a constant flow of visitors to view his paintings, drawings and sculpture. He was enthusiastic about sharing not only his collection but also his profound understanding of British and European art. He was a convivial host to students, scholars and museum professionals alike, such as Lindsay Stainton, the former Assistant Keeper, Department of Prints and Drawings, British Museum (above, centre).

In the course of a lifetime of collecting art and accumulating knowledge, he became one of the foremost authorities on the Grand Tour. This was reflected in his collection and in his scholarship. He had made an exhaustive study of the British in Italy in the 18th century, collating material from published and unpublished sources. Over many decades he compiled an unrivalled archive on this cultural phenomenon. This rich resource reached its fulfilment in the publication of *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701-1800*, edited by John Ingamells in 1997. The archive had been transferred to the Paul Mellon Centre that same year. In the following year, Sir Brinsley published the catalogue of his collection with the Walpole Society. The collection had been augmented over the years with works by the artists of the Grand Tour such as Louis-Gabriel Blanchet, Pompeo Batoni, Giovanni Battista Busiri, Domenico Tiepolo and Raphael Mengs.

Sir Brinsley was a tireless promoter of collections with public access. When he took over the chairmanship of the National Art Collections Fund he pledged to ‘do anything, go anywhere, lecture when called upon, anything to raise the membership’. The National Trust benefited from his appointment, since he amended the charter of the Fund to extend the system of grants to include the Trust. This enabled contributions for works of art to be available not only to museums and galleries, but also to the houses to which they historically belonged.

Sir Brinsley was a good friend to the National Trust, and served as a member of its Arts Panel over many years. Along with St John Gore and Michael Jaffé, he advised on the picture hang at Kingston Lacy; this was captured by Alec Cobbe in a painting, now in the Kingston Lacy Collection (page 21). Eventually, Sir Brinsley was appointed Honorary Adviser on Pictures in succession to Anthony Blunt. Sir Brinsley’s open-handedness extended to his contributing to many public exhibitions, including his loan of 30 works of art to the *France in the 18th Century* exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1968. It is very fitting that the public can continue to enjoy a portion of his collection; this has been loaned by his son, Augustine Ford, to the National Trust and is on display at Basildon Park, Berkshire.
Basildon and the Ford Collection

Basildon Park is an appropriate setting for the paintings, drawings, sculpture and furniture which Augustine inherited from his father. It is the former home of Lord and Lady Iliffe, who had also collected works of art from the 18th century in the post-war period. Like Sir Brinsley, the Iliffes took great pleasure in collecting. They had an infectious enthusiasm for finding and placing works of art in and around their home. Basildon Park itself was a great discovery for the couple. On seeing the uninhabited house in 1918, Lady Iliffe remarked: ‘Gosh, what a wonderful, lovely 18th-century house. Why is it that nobody wants to live there?’ Luckily for Basildon, the Iliffes did choose to live there; it was their home from 1952 until Lady Iliffe’s death in 2007. In that time, they conserved the interiors and filled the rooms with furniture, textiles and Old Master paintings to enhance and celebrate John Carr’s Palladian mansion.

The evident parallels between the Iliffes’ and Sir Brinsley’s collections were a persuasive argument to display the Ford loan at Basildon Park. Both collections were formed by private individuals for domestic interiors in the 20th century. Works of art from the 18th century feature heavily in each. Both at Wyndham Place and at Basildon the pictures were integrated with the furniture and decorative arts in a harmonious assembly. Pictures were hung in groups, sometimes several pictures high in a columnar style around a central pendant. More often than not, the space between dado and cornice was filled with symmetrical arrangements of paintings (previous page, bottom).

However, there are some differences. It seems that the Iliffes collected works of art that they felt harmonised with the house—Lady Iliffe said: ‘Pictures were the main problem, and gradually we found ourselves exchanging early pictures, such as small French canvasses, for larger Italian ones; they seemed to suit the house and this explains why the Italian school of the 17th and 18th centuries dominates.’ Sir Brinsley, on the other hand, collected the schools of art which ignited his passions most, from his early days of collecting modern British paintings and sculpture to his later and judicious acquisitions of Italian and French pictures and decorative arts of the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Collector

Sir Brinsley collected with the eye of a connoisseur, and documented his collecting with the commitment of the most able cataloguer. His meticulous handwritten catalogue entries are an invaluable resource. They document in great detail key information on his collection. For example, his entry for the watercolour and gouache An Architectural Capriccio by Charles-Louis Clerisseau includes a subject description, media, dimensions and references. It also tells where and when the work was purchased (‘Colnaghi, 28 July 1958’) and the price, £70 (left). Similar details are provided for all his collection, and these became an invaluable source for the entries in the Walpole Society Catalogue. Sir Brinsley’s ability to record and document with great accuracy was matched by his creative skills in designing the hang of pictures at Wyndham Place. His innate talent was enhanced by his visits to the interiors which inspired him, most notably the Cabinet Room at Felbrigg Hall in Norfolk, which he visited for the first time in 1953 and returned to often. Sir Brinsley was enchanted by the hang, which had remained ‘unchanged since William Windham’s day’. The Felbrigg hang (below) has the same columnar symmetry which characterised Sir Brinsley’s own picture hang. The paintings in the Cabinet Room, designed for William Windham’s Grand Tour pictures, must have captivated Sir Brinsley, in particular the set of paintings of Rome by Giovanni Battista Busiri (1698-1757). These may have influenced his acquisition of no less than ten paintings by the same artist. These came from the 1958 Christie’s sale of works of art from Westport House, the home of the 9th Marquis of Sligo. Sir Brinsley bought three pictures directly from the sale. The dealers Agnew’s and Colnaghi acquired the rest. Sir Brinsley subsequently purchased the other seven from the dealers to re-unite the set, with a reasonable margin on each painting going to each of the dealers. His commitment to the value of maintaining the integrity of the group is to be commended as the mark of a great collector.

Enjoying the Ford Collection at Basildon Park

Throughout his life, Sir Brinsley wore his scholarship and his many talents lightly—perhaps this is to be expected from the former secretary of the Society of Dilettanti. In his short history of the Society he included in the introduction the five toasts made by the members on each of the five annual dinners: Viva la Virtu, Esto Praeclara, Esto Perpetua, Grecian Taste and Roman Spirit, Seria Ludo, and Absent Members. Of those five toasts, Seria Ludo (serious matters in a light-hearted way) describes best the mood in which the Trust took on the loan and hung the pictures at Basildon. It was a wonderful experience of productive collaboration between the house team (led by Lauren Papworth, our House and Collections Manager), Consultancy, the Arts Panel and our Specialist Advisors. Sir Brinsley was proud of his descent from Sheridan the playwright and Richard Ford, the author of A Handbook for Travellers in Spain (1845). Gervase Jackson-Stops recalled that Sir Brinsley was once heard to say in his usual modest way: ‘While regretting that I have not inherited the wit of the former, or the scholarship of the latter, I hope that I have inherited their sense of fun.’ We have tried to catch something of that spirit of fun in
hanging and sharing the Collection.

The hang at Basildon sometimes quotes directly from the historical arrangements at Wyndham Place; for instance, *The Feast of Flora* by J G Platzer (1704-61) hangs between two drawings by Domenico Tiepolo (1727-1804), alongside decorative art designs, which was the arrangement in the Drawing Room at Wyndham Place.

We also retained the pyramidal vertical hang of the Busiri views of Rome, just as they had been displayed in Lady Ford’s Sitting Room. Originally, they had been arranged around a Giovanni Paolo Panini *capriccio*, which was not included in the loan. However, we replicated Sir Brinsley’s design and hung the pictures on the piers on either side of a window and substituted the Panini with a view of the Basildon parkland.

Two factors have influenced our departure from the historical hang. Firstly, there is the difference in scale between the interiors at Basildon and at Wyndham Place. Secondly, we have been loaned only a portion of the collection, and so have brought together a number of works of art which never used to be displayed together. We have used the conventions of Sir Brinsley’s hang designs to create something which we hope does justice to the chief characteristics of the Ford Collection and to Sir Brinsley himself.

Oonagh Kennedy, Curator


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**ACQUISITIONS**

**CHIRK CASTLE**

A copy of John Donne, *XXVI Sermons*, London, 1661, folio, was purchased at auction at Sotheby’s, New York, in the sale of the collection of the banker and bibliophile Robert S. Pirie. The book has a near-contemporary signature of Thomas Middelton on the title page, and a later armorial bookplate of R.E. Myddelton. NT 2900173 (near right)

**CLUMBER PARK**

A portrait of King Charles I by the school of Sir Anthony van Dyck, oil on canvas, 1118 x 864 mm, was bequeathed to the National Trust. NT 2900171 (below left)

**IGHTHAM MOTE**

A letter by John Singer Sargent written at Ightham Mote was purchased at auction at Swann Galleries, New York. NT 2900169 (above right)

**QUEBEC HOUSE**

A painting *en brunaille* depicting the death of Wolfe, oil on canvas, 858 x 1093 mm, after Benjamin West, was purchased at auction at Christie’s, King Street, London. West’s painting depicting Major-General James Wolfe being mortally wounded during the Battle of Quebec in 1759 was hugely popular and was reproduced in many different media. NT 2900168 (below right)

*Emile de Bruijn, Registrar (Collections)*