



BESS OF HARDWICK'S PRECIOUS HANGINGS PAINSTAKINGLY RESTORED

The Trust's Programme of Conservation Work on the Gideon Tapestries

'FOREVER, for everyone': this is the byword for all the National Trust's conservation decisions.

The fascinating story of the conservation of the Gideon tapestries of Hardwick Hall (six of the thirteen have been treated) exemplifies the care and thoroughness which the Trust seeks to bring to all of its conservation projects. The conservation of these tapestries has been designated a priority of national importance by the Trust, and a fund-raising programme is under way for the restoration of the remaining tapestries.

Hardwick Hall, 'more glass than wall', is an outstanding example of Elizabethan architecture, and a treasure house of Elizabethan tapestry and embroidery. The Gideon tapestries (depicting vivid scenes from the biblical story of Gideon) are



possibly the finest complete set in the world today, still hanging in the house for which they were purchased. They had been made in 1578, probably at Oudenarde in Belgium, and were bought second hand by Bess of Hardwick in 1592. Filled with vibrant colour, tumultuous battles and dramatic scenes, they would have impressed and dazzled the 16th-century visitor.

The Trust's conservators found the tapestries were faded by sunlight and marred by the dirt and damage of centuries; the original colours could only be seen on the reverse. Structurally they were weak, with broken warps, loss of silk and wool weft, many small holes, and gaping slits. There was even an area on one lower border whose staining and damage was probably caused by dogs' urine.

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A CHORUS OF VOICES FROM THE PAST – THE NATIONAL TRUST SOUND ARCHIVE

In the 1960s, the National Trust began recording the histories of both itself and of the houses, estates, sites, staff and families that it has worked with. The result is an important, little known and ever growing archive of wonderful conversations, programmes and audio guides that relate to every aspect of its work and corporate identity.

Now, thanks to a partnership with the National Sound Archive, public access will be possible through the British Library to all these recordings; with the help of volunteers the entire archive is being catalogued on their system with access via their internet site.

PRESTIGIOUS AWARD WON BY THE TRUST'S EDWARD CHAMBRE HARDMAN COLLECTION

The prestigious 2006 Europa Nostra award for works of art has been won by the Trust for the Edward Chambré Hardman Collection in Liverpool. It was given for the outstanding conservation and presentation of the lifetime's work (over 142,000 images) of this respected landscape and portrait photographer, and of his former studio and home, 59 Rodney Street.

In November the property won an Interpret Britain award. The collection offers a unique insight into Liverpool and its people in the mid 20th century.

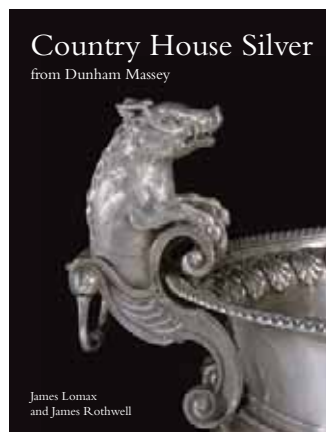
THE TYNTESFIELD VISION ASSURED AFTER THE TRUST'S SUCCESSFUL HLF APPLICATION

THE announcement in July that Tyntesfield had been successful in its £20 million Heritage Lottery Fund application was a huge relief to all the staff at the property and to others who had worked on the project over the last four years.

The Conservation Management Plan, the Public Benefit Plan and the Business Plan can now all be carried out, with the funding going towards both an extensive capital works programme and an endowment which secures the property's future. The vision of giving access to the conservation process brings benefits on various levels: the work of the National Trust is openly interpreted to visitors, whose understanding of the Trust's work deepens; at the same time, skills are passed on to the next generation of craftspeople, and staff develop methods of community engagement. The project also looked at different methods of procurement to ensure training within contracts for apprentices. The whole process is a challenge, particularly to ways of working, but the response so far has been hugely encouraging and inspiring.

COUNTRY HOUSE SILVER

THE Dunham Massey plate is justly famous for being perhaps the most complete collection of silver commissioned by a single patron to survive in the house for which it was intended. It is also of a consistently high standard, being by the best Huguenot goldsmiths of the first half of the 18th century; also, being so well recorded and surviving in such quantity, it allows the use and disposition of silver in the country house to be fully understood. 'Country House Silver from Dunham Massey', by James Lomax and James Rothwell, groups the silver by original function or location within the house; the range and quality of pieces in this collection are examined in detail for the first time in this lavishly illustrated catalogue.



ACQUISITIONS

CHIRK CASTLE

An important group of furniture, ceramics, pictures and other items formerly on loan at Chirk was acquired via the acceptance in lieu system in March 2006. A bound collection of pamphlets relating to Catholic controversies in the reign of Charles II was purchased in March 2006. Four hall chairs attributed to Ince & Mayhew returned to Chirk in May 2006, with financial support from the Royal Oak Foundation.

COLERIDGE COTTAGE

Three pictures relating to the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, including portraits of his brother and of his eldest surviving son, were bought at auction in October 2006.

COTEHELE

A pair of pewter plates with the arms of the Earl of Mount Edgumbe was bought at auction in October 2006.

CROFT CASTLE

An oak chest with the arms of Sir Herbert Croft, 1st Baronet, was bought at auction in August 2006.

FLORENCE COURT

Two books with Enniskillen bookplates were acquired in March and July 2006 with assistance from the Friends of National Libraries and the Northern Ireland Museums Council.

KNOLE

The painting 'The Death of Cleopatra', c1635, by Pierre Mignard, as well as a pair of portraits of George III and Queen Charlotte by the studio of Alan Ramsay, were purchased via private treaty in May 2006.

continued from page 1: The tapestries were vacuumed on both sides to remove loose particulate soiling. Samples of the weft threads were taken from the reverse for dye analysis. Then the tapestries were wet cleaned using the aerosol suction technique; this was extremely successful in removing the ingrained soiling,



giving the tapestries more flexibility and a brighter appearance.

Then they were provided with a full linen support, and attached to the fabric with conservation stitching. Areas of weak or missing weft were couched using cotton in the silk areas or dyed wool yarns in the wool areas. In larger damaged places, patches of wool fabric, dyed to match the missing weft, were inserted behind the tapestries. They were then lined with cotton cambric. Finally, three rows of Velcro were stitched on to help distribute some of the enormous weight of the tapestries as they hang.

To ensure the long-term care and maintenance of the tapestries, a preventive conservation programme monitors and controls agents of deterioration such as insect pests, pollution, light, temperature, humidity, and wear and tear.

While the Trust maintains a high standard of conservation, it continues to provide access. Visitors can see the real objects, and also experience intellectual and virtual access through innovative methods of interpretation. For instance, future exhibitions about the tapestries could include the reweaving of samples using traditional methods and materials so that visitors can see how the tapestries originally appeared before their colours faded. The original appearance could also be reproduced using digital image processing to 'recolour' an image of the tapestry.

At Hardwick Hall, the exhibition 'The Threads of Time' (winner of the Association of Heritage Interpretation Award 2006) shows the effects of light on fabrics over time, a vivid illustration of how the Trust's current programme of care aims at preserving their collections 'forever, for everyone'.

Ksynia Marko

MUSINGS ON MUSEUMS

A fresh impetus for the National Trust in the care and management of its collections

SINCE the scrapping of entry charges to the National Museums in 2001, visitor numbers to the Natural History Museum have risen by 83%, and to the Victoria & Albert Museum by an astonishing 94%. These figures underline that human curiosity about art and nature, æons old, is alive and well, and that museum-going can still compete with the myriad diversions and seductions of modern life. Another age might have characterised these two complementary realms as *artificiosa* and *naturalia*, the works of man and nature, key components that in the second half of the 16th century the Dutch scholar Samuel van Quicchelberg advised should be brought together to create the ideal museum – an inspiring, educational gathering of the curious, the precious and the rare. His paper recommendations are acknowledged as the first ‘virtual museum’.

The holdings of the National Trust might be described as just such a universal museum in which art and nature, whose conjunction elsewhere has been sundered with increasing specialisation, form part of an unbroken continuum; in the British Isles, man-made landscapes are often mistakenly seen as products of nature. That the Trust’s three founders saw these two worlds – which in time were to be staffed either by ‘Boots’ (land agents) or ‘Lillies’ (aesthetes) – as inseparable, is explicit in Canon Rawnsley’s rallying call to establish ‘a great National Gallery of natural pictures’.

THE TRUST’S FORMAL ENTRY INTO THE MUSEUM FRATERNITY SHOULD SERVE AS A CATALYST FOR FURTHER COLLABORATION

During the last year the National Trust has broadcast the news that it is now an accredited museum authority, and that 149 of its properties with collections will be submitting applications to the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in the hope of becoming accredited museums. This initiative – begun some ten years ago under the aegis of the Museums & Galleries Commission, and continued via its successor body Re:Source – has prompted a variety of responses, the majority of which have been along the lines of ‘at long last’.

But this may appear to be something of a *volte-face*: for decades the Trust has hotly denied that its properties are museums, stressing instead that they are homes. This is a view that Simon Jenkins, with some justification, reminds us of: ‘As soon as I see notice boards, display cases, floor druggets, velvet ropes, and ‘teaching aids’, a gulf opens between me and the spirit of place. A home has become a museum’. But museology is, as it was in the late 19th century, once again a vital force; museums have at last, thank goodness, managed to throw off the notion that they are dry places that celebrate the past and the dead. In classical antiquity the *Musaeum* was a temple dedicated to the muses of the liberal arts who inspired learning and creativity in the quick. Clearly the Trust’s houses were not built as museum repositories but as homes and stages for familial and political congresses – though many contain discrete country-house museums.

The distinction between the museum and historic house has become increasingly blurred in recent years. Museums such as the Fitzwilliam in Cambridge and the Wallace Collection display paintings, furniture and decorative objects together in order to suggest their interrelationship, while curators, conscious of the need to illuminate the processes of patronage and collecting, often work hard to create convincing spatial contexts for their exhibits. Our two models – and their collections, which might be characterised as being ‘in captivity’ or ‘in the wild’ – are more alike than they are dissimilar. As is made explicit in the Attingham Trust Report of 2004, ‘Opening Doors: Learning in the Historic Environment’, they share common educational aims. Both are likely to collect, albeit to different criteria, often seeking funding from the same sources. The Trust must adopt the sector’s best standards, and as far as curatorship and interpretation are concerned, many of these have been forged in museums. The Trust has been a world leader in preventive conservation, and its ideas and standards have flowed outwards, an achievement marked by the publication this year of the revised blockbuster edition of the ‘Manual of Housekeeping’.

The Trust has an arguably patchy record in scholarly research, cataloguing, publication, and exhibition, key activities for any museum. There are understandable reasons for this, not least because the scale and diversity of the Trust’s holdings mean that it does not have the luxury of a single focus – it manages over 600,000 acres of countryside, 600 miles of coastline, and a sizeable proportion of the country’s designated sites and buildings of historic significance (including six World Heritage Sites, over 6,000 listed buildings, 1,200 scheduled ancient monuments, and 8% of registered historic parks and gardens).

The Trust’s new museum status will bring a fresh impetus to the care and management of its collections and a new sense of responsibility for providing intellectual as well as physical access. A new Specialist Publications Group is to identify the priority areas in which catalogues and other academic titles might be produced, while an electronic bibliography, designed to record material already published (books and articles) and unpublished (‘grey literature’) about the Trust’s properties will be built and put on-line. The Trust’s formal entry into the museum fraternity should serve as a catalyst for further collaboration and the exchange of ideas, information and good practice. For the doubters, none of this should mean that the contextual ensembles that visitors derive so much pleasure from when visiting Trust properties will be threatened or dismantled.

David Adshead

The Trust recently gave oral evidence to the Culture, Media and Sport Committee’s new inquiry into the heritage sector – Caring for our Collections. For further information on the National Trust’s new museum status see: ‘Museums: Policy from Practice’ [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-museums-policy_practice.pdf]; and ‘Dogs in the Museum’, Michael Hall’s editorial in the April 2006 edition of *Apollo*. ABC would be interested to have your views.

NEW ZEALAND CHINOISERIE – A STYLISH TWIN FOR STOWE

VISCOUNT Cobham would have been astonished. As the original creator of the landscape gardens at Stowe, Buckinghamshire, during the first half of the 18th century, he certainly intended to set an example. But he surely could not have foreseen that one of the ‘temples’ in his garden would spawn a near-identical twin in New Zealand.

Hamilton Gardens, in Hamilton City, New Zealand, cover an area of 58 hectares and attract about 600,000 visitors a year. The



complex includes a large number of separate gardens devoted to different types of plants, methods of gardening, landscapes, and national gardening traditions. Hamilton Gardens are also the venue for numerous courses and events.

Recently the team at Hamilton Gardens, under the aegis of Peter Sergel, decided to add a chinoiserie pavilion to their extensive

collection of English Victorian, Italian, Russian, Chinese, and Japanese pavilions. Peter Sergel approached the National Trust with a request for images of the Chinese House at Stowe.

The Chinese House was originally built by Lord Cobham c1738. After his death it was moved to a nearby family seat, Wotton House, where it received its current decorative scheme in the 1820s. The painted motifs combine elements of Chinese export art with European chinoiserie, and are related to the decoration of the Royal Pavilion, Brighton. After a stint in Ireland, the Chinese House was brought back to Stowe and restored by the Trust in the 1990s.

In order to be able to use it for events, the team at Hamilton Gardens decided to change the structure of the Chinese House to a more open, stage-like one. However, the painted decoration has been based directly on the originals at Stowe. The structure of the roof is also more or less identical to the original, copied from drawings made for the restoration and kindly provided by Peter Inskip & Peter Jenkins Architects.

The Chinoiserie Pavilion was constructed by David Bowden with advice from the architect Mark de Lisle. The Green Frog Sign Company was responsible for the painted decoration, and John Taris produced the bronze fish finials. The opening event featured Indonesian jazz, extracts from *Madame Butterfly*, and traditional Japanese drumming, as well as Japanese rock music, all followed by an Asian fusion banquet – a scene beyond Lord Cobham’s wildest imaginings.

Emile de Bruijn

A NEW NATIONAL LIBRARY EMERGES

QUEEN CHRISTINA of Sweden was not good at paying her servants’ wages, and her librarian Isaac Vossius retaliated by taking books from her library; his spoils included a splendid illuminated manuscript of Suetonius, made originally for Borso d’Este (1413–71), Duke of Modena.

In 1707 the yeoman farmer Ben Browne bought books at a farmyard auction in his home village of Troutbeck: they included a book about thieves and (amazingly) a volume of Stoic philosophy. The 2nd Earl of Warrington so disliked the historian Gilbert Burnet that he scribbled ‘tis false from first to last’ into the margin of his copy of Burnet’s 1724 ‘History of My Own Time’.

The Anglo-Catholic clergyman John Bacon Medley (1832–1892) ran a lending library in his employer’s Gothic Revival house near Bristol. Generations

of the Trevelyan family signed and dated books to show when they had read them. The 1st Lord Fairhaven did something rather similar. But in the cash-strapped 1940s he also collected fine bindings and sumptuous colour plate books, spending so lavishly that it was said that dealers rubbed their hands in glee when the kid-gloved oil magnate entered their shops.

What do all of these have in common? In fact, all are books in the care of the National Trust (at Blickling, Townend, Dunham Massey, Tyntesfield, Wallington and Anglesey Abbey), and all are part of one of the largest and least-known collections of early printed books in the country. The Trust never set out to collect rare books. They were acquired almost by accident, and now number almost a quarter of a million books in more than 150 locations.

Libraries have always been the poor relations in historic house museums, but the Trust’s holdings represent what is probably the single largest assembly

of historic libraries in the hands of any organization in the world. Recognising this, we have embarked on a major curatorial programme. Following on from a four-year survey and scoping study, there has been a steady stream of publications and exhibitions, and we have embarked on the creation of an online catalogue. This pioneering project will supersede the existing multiplicity of paper shelf-lists and card catalogues, and will describe not only what each book is, but where it came from, whom it belonged to, and how it was used by generations of owners.

The cataloguing work will be carried out to the same standards applied by the world’s great national libraries. As more and more early texts are digitised, so the importance of historic books in situ in their historic settings is increasing all the time; the Trust’s prototype catalogue is already opening new vistas in the social and intellectual history of Great Britain and Ireland.

Mark Purcell

ORGANISATIONAL MEMORY – THE TRUST’S CORNERSTONE



FEW things at the National Trust are ever truly lost; more often, they are simply misplaced. The Trust has grown organically rather than systematically; it is for this reason that we perhaps experience this misplacement most frequently when we consider the Trust’s records and archives. The National Trust is in a unique position in regard to its records and archives, for it is these documents, that many organisations would happily destroy, that contain the Trust’s own history, and form the cornerstone of the understanding of how the Trust makes decisions and of the direction in which it progresses. The records also include archival material that pre-dates the Trust’s guardianship, and more often than not this material completes the picture.

Until recently the co-ordination of individual archives and the management of records have often been administered both centrally and at regional level. This cannot (nor in many cases should not) be changed overnight. Yet let us remember that the Beatrix Potter letters, and the Ferguson’s Gang minute book, misplaced for over three years, were found fortuitously days away from being reduced to ashes; instances like these mean that action has to be taken.

... A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE TRUST’S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE OF DEEPENING THE UNDERSTANDING OF OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE

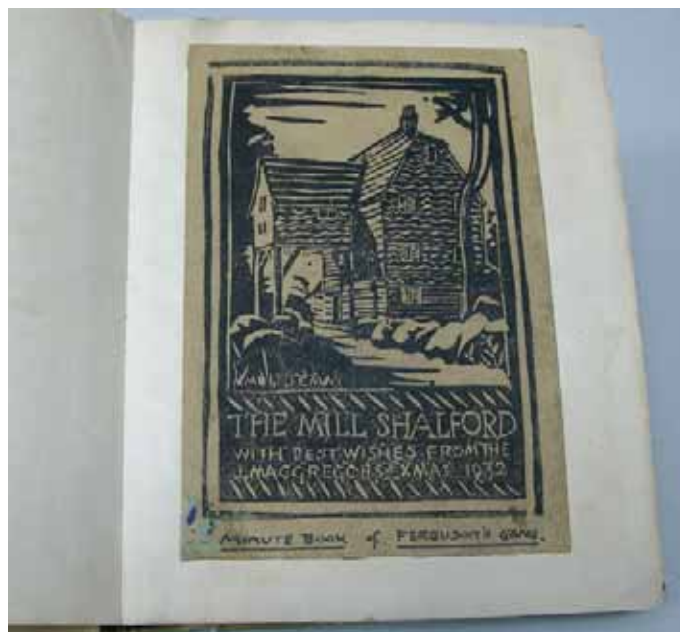
One of the key initiatives to secure a lasting history of and for the Trust is the Organisational Memory. This long-term and wide-ranging project, precipitated by the move to Heelis, aims for the first time at collecting together in one place complete collections of documents and publications crucial to the Trust’s history and expertise. The long-term aim once collections are secured is to make this material more widely available, and in doing so to make a significant contribution to the Trust’s strategic objective of deepening the understanding of our cultural heritage.

To date, the collecting phase has concentrated on publications created by the Trust; instances are the annual report, the magazine, and the guidebooks (of which we now have just over seven thousand copies – we aim at securing three of each edition). Other categories with significant or complete collections include National Trust Views, regional newsletters, handbooks, subject papers, Community, Learning and Volunteering publications,

and promotional material. Partial collections have also begun of photographs, films and video tapes, a centenary archive, and general ephemera, which includes everything from early membership cards to car stickers and volunteer badges.

Once these collections form a significant holding, they are catalogued; for now this is being made available through the Trust’s intranet. We expect next year to make a significant deposit in the newly opening Trowbridge Record Office of any duplicate material we obtain. This, we hope, will allow a much wider and growing research community to have access to it; for the same reason, the listings will also be posted on the internet.

Future developments also include the creation of a Trust bibliography, which will aim at listing all articles by or about the Trust; wherever possible we shall obtain a copy of each article.



The Ferguson’s Gang Minute Book. Shalford Mill, a large timber-framed mill on the River Tillingbourne in Surrey, was given to the National Trust in 1932 by a group of anonymous benefactors called Ferguson’s Gang.

Although the project has been a great success, and is already beginning to shape into a significant collection, there is always room for material on subjects not yet represented, and we would very much like to hear about this from you. To inform us about any documentary material on the Trust, or to ask any questions you may have about the Organisational Memory, please contact Iain Shaw, Records Manager, at The National Trust, Heelis, Swindon.

Iain Shaw

SCIENCE AND HERITAGE – BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP

SINCE C P SNOW coined the phrase ‘the two cultures’, science and the humanities have often been regarded as uneasy bedfellows. However, the place of science in our cultural heritage was put in the spotlight in 2006 when the House of Lords Science and Technology Select Committee undertook an inquiry into science and heritage. Their report issues a stark warning: the UK’s cultural heritage is under threat – the knowledge and experience needed to preserve the physical artefacts which make up much of that heritage are being lost. Unless government takes the issue seriously, there is a real danger that Britain’s reputation as a leader in the science underpinning conservation will be lost, and we will face the possibility of irreversible losses from among our treasured works of art, rare books and historic buildings.

What does this mean for the National Trust? Our conservation work is about revealing and sharing the significance of places and ensuring that their special qualities are protected, enhanced, understood and enjoyed by present and future generations. Science helps to explain that significance, and it is crucial for understanding the causes and cure of deterioration. Unlike some museums and galleries, the National Trust does not employ conservation scientists; but many of our conservation staff have scientific training, either at degree level, or as part of their conservation training. Expertise that is not available in-house, for example in chemical analysis, engineering, or archaeological research, is found through partnerships with universities or from consultants. But this practice depends on this expertise being available, and this is precisely the concern of the Select Committee.

The Select Committee report recommends that the AHRC (Arts and Humanities Research Council) takes responsibility for scientific research in the field of cultural heritage. Furthermore, it recommends that DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport) appoints a scientific adviser. An interim appointment has been made, and the search for a permanent adviser is already under way.

National Trust properties have always been at the cutting edge of science and technology. Sir Isaac Newton’s birthplace, Woolsthorpe Manor, celebrates his achievements in the Interactive Science Discovery Centre, opened in 2000. Cragside was the first house to be lit by hydro-electricity, the innovation of the Victorian engineer and inventor Lord Armstrong. And Castle Drogo, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens in the 1920s, was powered by hydro-electricity from two turbines on the nearby River Teign. There is much that the Trust can do to enhance public understanding of science. We can remain at the scientific cutting edge by continuing research in partnership with universities and other heritage organisations - projects already undertaken studied the impact of climate change on historic buildings and the effect of dust on collections. We can take up the challenge issued by the House of Lords that ‘all the key players – DCMS, the national museums and galleries, English Heritage, the National Trust, and many others – need to come together to ensure that our descendants don’t miss out on their cultural heritage’; in doing this we can help to bridge the gap between the two cultures.

Sarah Staniforth, Historic Properties Director

OBJECT IN FOCUS

A TABLE OVERTURNED

RECENT RESEARCH in the archive of the Cambridgeshire firm Rattee & Kett, now on deposit in the Cambridge County Record Office, has unearthed a design for this powerfully architectural sideboard table, which currently stands in the gallery at Wimpole, Cambridgeshire. The table is remarkably similar to a family of mid 18th-century tables with carved aprons depicting the mask of Hercules draped in the pelt of the Nemean lion. This group includes a pair made for Ditchley House, Oxfordshire, now part of the collection at Temple Newsam; a pair at Shugborough Hall, Staffordshire; and one from Hamilton Palace, Lanarkshire, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. A pencil drawing by Matthias Lock in the Victoria & Albert Museum depicts a remarkably similar neo-Palladian composition. The Wimpole

table was included in the 1985 Treasure Houses of Britain exhibition, and was described in the catalogue as dating from c1742–45, and perhaps carved by Matthias Lock or Sefferin Alken under the direction of the architect Henry Flitcroft. The newly-discovered design, however, is dated 1860, and reveals the table to have been en-suite with a pair of side-tables and a monstrous buffet – acquired at auction in 1999 – made for Wimpole’s Victorian dining-room. Rather than diminishing its interest, this discovery identifies the table as a remarkably high-quality example of 19th-century George II revival furniture. It is



hoped that it and its siblings will return to the recently restored dining-room. The fruits of other research into Wimpole’s design history will be available in a forthcoming catalogue to be published by the National Trust and the Cambridge Records Society: ‘Wimpole: Architectural Drawings and Topographical Views’.

David Adshead