



National Trust Arts, Buildings & Collections Bulletin

SPRING 2021

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In the Round

Unexpected discoveries at A la Ronde

Piecing together the Past

A 5th-century mosaic at Chedworth

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Photo: National Trust Images/Chris Lacey

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ABC Briefing

News, events and publications



Gustave Moreau: The Fables

Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire
16 June–17 October 2021
waddesdon.org.uk

Gustave Moreau (1826–98) is one of the most influential artists associated with the French Symbolist movement, and this exhibition reveals some of his most extraordinary works.

In collaboration with the Rothschild family and Musée National Gustave Moreau, Paris, the exhibition will display 34 watercolours, on loan from a private collection, which were created by Moreau between 1879 and 1885. They were part of a series commissioned by the art collector Antony Roux to illustrate the 17th-century *Fables* of Jean de La Fontaine.

The watercolours were exhibited to great acclaim in the 1880s in Paris and London, where critics compared the artist to Burne-Jones. Moreau painted 64 works for the series, which subsequently entered a Rothschild collection, but many were lost during the Nazi era. The surviving works have not been exhibited since 1906.

On display alongside the watercolours are preparatory drawings, including animal studies made from life in the Jardin des Plantes. Prints after Moreau's *Fables* by Félix Bracquemond demonstrate the translation of the jewel-like colours into velvety monochrome in some of the most innovative etchings of the age.



September 2021
Hardback
RRP £10
224pp
c.150 illustrations
978-0-70-780460-6
To order a copy, visit:
shop.nationaltrust.org.uk

This engaging new book by John Chu and David Taylor aims to introduce the National Trust's vast collection of paintings through a selection of 100 important examples from the 14th to the 20th centuries.

The paintings displayed in properties now cared for by the National Trust across England, Wales and Northern Ireland amount to one of the finest collections of historic fine art in the world. Indeed, many National Trust houses should perhaps be considered miniature 'National Galleries' for their counties as they display works by some of the most renowned European artists, including Titian, El Greco, Holbein, Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, Velázquez, Gainsborough, Reynolds, Canaletto, Hogarth, Stubbs, Angelica Kauffman, Edward Burne-Jones, Max Ernst, Vanessa Bell, Barbara Hepworth and Stanley Spencer, to name but a few.

Selected by National Trust curators from over 13,000 works, the paintings showcased in this book are arranged chronologically, each accompanied by an illuminating caption. The book includes a glossary of terms and a gazetteer of featured National Trust properties.



Photos: Waddesdon – Private collection



Lacock Abbey – The Watercolour Project

When the Lacock Abbey collection came into the ownership of the National Trust at the end of 2009, its full extent was unknown. The property team have been steadily cataloguing its 20,000 items ever since. The collection was found to include over 1,000 watercolours, painted largely by the wife and children of William Henry Fox Talbot (1800–77), the Victorian polymath, pioneer of photography and former owner of Lacock. Although the colour of many of the paintings is still exceptional, having been kept in original portfolios, many are sadly in urgent need of conservation. Thanks to a partnership with Watercolour World they are now available to view online (www.watercolourworld.org).

Famously, William Henry Fox Talbot created the earliest surviving photographic negative at Lacock in 1835. It is less well known that his discoveries were driven in part by his struggle to match the artistic abilities of his family. In 1833, while visiting Lake Como in Italy, Talbot found himself in the frustrating position of being the only one in the group unable to sketch the scenery faithfully. In *The Pencil of Nature* (1844), he notes that it was while experimenting with artists' tools such as the camera lucida that the idea occurred to him '... how charming it would be if it were possible to cause these natural images to imprint themselves durably, and remain fixed upon the paper'.



The glimmer of gold at Oxburgh Hall

An archaeologist working alone through lockdown in the attic rooms of Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk during 2020 uncovered a huge haul of rare items entombed under the floorboards. According to National Trust curator Anna Forest, 'When the boards came up, we could see a wave pattern in the debris, which showed it had been undisturbed for centuries. The peak of each wave of dust, debris and objects was highest under the crack between the boards'.

The discoveries were made during a £6m project to re-roof the moated manor house and range from book fragments to Elizabethan textiles. One of the most important finds was a fragment of 15th-century illuminated manuscript (left),

Cutting a dash

Specialist cleaning of a tiny 5cm-high figure found by archaeologists at Wimpole in Cambridgeshire has revealed remarkable detail, including a tiny hairstyle and moustache, possibly indicative of contemporary fashion trends. The copper alloy human figurine was made in the 1st century AD and may represent an unknown Celtic deity. Only discovered in 2018, the figure holds an open-ended metal neck ring, known as a torc, and may originally have served as the handle of a spatula, perhaps used to mix medicines or wax to make writing tablets.

The object features in a new book from Cultural Heritage Publishing, *125 Treasures From the Collections of the National Trust* (March 2021, see page 34 for details).



spotted by one of the builders in the rubble of the eaves. Despite centuries among the debris, the glimmer of gold leaf and the bright blue of the illuminated initials were still vibrant. The text has been identified as part of the Latin Vulgate Psalm 39 and the parchment fragment may have been part of a Book of Hours. The use of blue and gold for the minor initials, rather than the more standard blue and red, shows this would have been a relatively expensive book to produce. 'We can't help but wonder if it belonged to Sir Edmund Bedingfeld, the builder of Oxburgh Hall', Anna said. Research into the finds is continuing to identify more of the fragments recovered and their place in Oxburgh's history.



1. Tarn Hows with the Langdale Pikes in the background (tarns are small mountain lakes, typically formed by glacial action)
Photo: National Trust Images/Joe Cornish

Ephemeral and Profound

The changing face of Tarn Hows

Harvey Wilkinson
Cultural Heritage Curator

Tarn Hows is a famous but ambiguous artefact within the cultural landscape of the Lake District. The Tarns, plurally, as they are still called (there were originally three), are among the most well-known and visited sights in the Lakes, although their fame arrived later than most other key locations – they rose to prominence towards the end of the 19th century. As the writer Grevel Lindop suggests, the Tarns have graced more calendars than Marilyn Monroe.¹ Indeed, the photographic celebrity of Tarn Hows seems to fix it in the public consciousness, unchangeable and still.

In a sense, however, the 100-year sleep of Tarn Hows is about to end, and the Tarns are, at the time of writing, being clear-felled of the now-diseased conifers that have been a defining feature of the landscape since its origin. Bogged down in the steep terrain, the forestry tractors have paused for the moment, and instead of the silence that falls over the Tarns in winter, chainsaws echo each other in the diminishing amphitheatre of trees. The arrival of larch disease, a feature of our changing climate, has forced us to question the future of this landscape, and recall a narrative that takes us back to

the origins of the conservation of the Lake District and of the National Trust itself.

The scale of change at the Tarns is also causing us to question the nature of significance, not only that of authorship and pedigree, intention or aesthetic merit, but also the more accidental, socially construed significance of a Lakeland beauty spot. The Tarns are a generator of ephemera on a grand scale: postcards, chocolate-box lids, tea-sets and coasters. Sometimes, too, one comes across the small piles of human ash that denote a place of private significance – an individual claim to a most public object. Indeed, it is the relationship between public and private, or private property and national property, that is a constituent of the Lake District's universal value as a World Heritage Site.

The development of the Tarns

Formerly three small tarns surrounded by open crags and peat moss, Tarn Hows took its 18th-century place-identity from a farm just to the south. Prior to this, it was in an area known as Yewdale and later the Tarns were incorporated into the villa-estate called Waterhead.

In 1772 this estate was acquired through marriage by George Knott (1743–84), a Cumbrian who had built his fortune in East India Company service.² After his death the estate eventually passed to his son Michael (1774–1834) in 1806. Michael Knott developed the estate, building a substantial villa in the Gothic style.³ However, by 1836 the estate, heavily mortgaged by Knott, was sold by his surviving family to James Garth Marshall (1802–73), son of the wealthy flax-mill owner John Marshall (1765–1845). While Monk Coniston, as it became known under the Marshalls, had been improved by Knott,⁴ James Garth Marshall had



2. Logging horses working on earlier phases of conservation at the Tarns, maintaining a finer balance between tree species; the larch-disease felling calls for a more industrial approach
Photo: National Trust Images/Leila Todhunter

substantially greater agency. His father was the owner of the huge Temple Works flax mill in Leeds, who, with the guidance of William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and his sister Dorothy (1771–1855), began to establish a collection of villa-estates in the Lakes both for himself and for the next generation of his family. This portfolio, extending from Ullswater to Buttermere and from Derwentwater to Coniston, was rivalled only by the older, baronial landholdings, and lent the often modest ambitions of the villa-owning classes in the Lake District a completely different scale and ambition.

By chance, John Marshall's immense wealth had fallen under the influence of the Wordsworths through a long-standing friendship between Dorothy and Marshall's wife, Jane Pollard, dating back to their schooldays in Halifax. Marshall's visit to Dove Cottage in 1800, in the Wordsworths' first year in Grasmere, seems extraordinary: the respectable mill-owner visiting what was a crude and impossibly cramped setting for people of the Wordsworths' class, members of the long-established genteel yeomanry of Cumberland. The Wordsworths had little money and the contrast with Marshall must have been stark. Similarly, the oddness of the Wordsworths' lack of convention in lifestyle was still highly novel, anticipating the hut- and-cottage-dwelling provincialism of later generations of avant-gardists. However, divergent as their backgrounds and opinions were, John Marshall and the Wordsworths were aligned enough in their attitudes to landscape to walk out over the fells as friends to survey the mountain scenery.⁵ In 1813 John Marshall established, with the Wordsworths' guidance, his own villa and estate, Hallsteads, on Ullswater and, in 1824, Patterdale Hall, also on Ullswater, which became home to his eldest son, William. Later, William Wordsworth guided

Marshall's hand in the acquisition of the former Greenwich Hospital estates on the shores of Derwentwater, preserving them unified in single ownership and protected from the threat of piecemeal development.⁶ The ensuing landscape is preserved today in the famous views down the valley, largely in National Trust care.

During these years William Wordsworth began to build an agency in the Lake District that came not from wealth, but from an insider's knowledge and influence, as well as through the publication of his influential guide to the Lakes in 1810.⁷ We see through the Wordsworth relationship with Marshall part of a strategic conservation of landscape, through the only means possible, beginning nearly 100 years before the National Trust.⁸ A significant part of the Marshall estates went on to form the core of the Trust's early landholdings by later acquisition, some through the administration of Trust founder Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley (1851–1920) and benefactor Beatrix Potter (1866–1943).

Monk Coniston was therefore part of this lineage and James Garth Marshall, following an established pattern, consolidated the estate with further holdings. His most significant act was the damming of the three small tarns into one, thus providing the focal point of a new landscape and at the same time, with a typically mid-19th-century marriage of amenity and industrial utility, ensuring a water supply for his sawmill in the valley below. The new tarn was flooded in 1864–6, bringing the water body into close relation to its steeper banks to the east, and the craggy slopes of Tom Heights to the west. From the vantage point of the steep south and east banks the new islands appeared and, beyond, a grand mountain vista of Langdale and Wetherlam, with a gulf between, falling away in aerial perspective from the margins of this isolated plateau.

Marshall then began to plant around his tarn. Beech, sycamore, and cherry were arranged in contrasting clumps and, around the islands and shoreline, willow and alder. The rocky outcrops of this once-barren topography were accentuated by stands of beech and Scots pine. Critically, in order to develop this planting to its fullest character, Marshall interspersed much of the composition with a predominantly larch nurse crop, a methodology used by his father. However, the next generation of the family saw their flax industry decline and eventually collapse in 1886. The resulting landscape, which framed Marshall's tarn under the ownership of his son Victor, became one of larches peppered with spruce and Douglas fir, the nurse crop remaining un-felled as the wider family estate contracted and broke up. It is in this, perhaps accidental, form that Tarn Hows began its rise to fame. By 1930 Tarn Hows had become the property of Mrs Heelis (Beatrix Potter), who ultimately passed the estate on to the National Trust.⁹ The Tarns were therefore never finished, but were nonetheless one of the grandest pieces of 19th-century landscape design in the Lake District.

The strength of Marshall's composition, transforming an anonymous basin of marshy ground into a new object that stood in a beautiful relationship to its mountainous surroundings, meant that it became a popular part of the Lake District tourist itinerary, reachable from the hubs of Ambleside, Coniston and the railhead of Windermere. The major guidebooks such as Baedeker, and Ward, Lock & Co.'s *Pictorial and Descriptive Guide to the Lakes* included references to it and to the striking sense of remoteness it engendered despite being so close to the amenities of town. A clue to the Tarn's



success as a landscape lies in Beatrix Potter's judgement that, although not to her taste, Tarn Hows possessed a 'theatrical' character.¹⁰ This was an astute summary of its compact, proscenium form; the flat stage of the water flanked by projecting wings in the form of pine and larch-clad promontories, and a distant backcloth of mountains. The term 'theatrical' also hints at the sense of artificial other-worldliness that prevails, especially when the shallow tarn ices over and snow covers the distant peaks. Tarn Hows appears on these occasions to be somewhere else and something else than it actually is, and in that sense it is not alone in the Lake District. Comparisons to the Alps, and the great lakes of Italy¹¹

3. Skaters on the frozen Tarn Hows captured by the photographer Joseph Hardman (1893–1972), who recorded Cumbrian life from the 1930s to the 1960s
Photo: Reproduced by courtesy of the Lakeland Museum, Lakeland Arts Trust



4. Tarn Hows in autumn
Photo: National Trust Images/Joe Cornish

are common in the historic reception of the wider landscape, even before the Napoleonic wars restricted continental travel and the Lakes played understudy to the alpine leg of the Grand Tour.

So how should we proceed with Tarn Hows? We can re-assess the virtues of James Garth Marshall's intended scheme but should be wary in our assumptions about intentionality. The passive action of not removing the conifer crop may have had an aesthetic basis and we know that Victor Marshall augmented his father's planting with Douglas fir. Now the larch are going, it is also evident that Marshall's

planting scheme barely survives on the ground, the remaining Scots pine providing one strong element of continuity.

To understand the significance of a popular beauty spot, however intended or accidental, is similarly difficult. The idea of axiomatic beauty – arrived at with the aid of popular media, is a central feature of Kitsch, and the term is not used here in a negative sense. This brings us back to Lindop's analogy of Marilyn Monroe. The great theorists of Kitsch, from Walter Benjamin to Thomas Kulka,¹² agree that instant and effortless recognisability plays its part as well. In this way, I would argue, the Tarns diverge from our common reading of landscape. The Tarns are not apprehended creatively in pictorial terms, *as if* they were a picture, but instead present themselves *as* a picture, pre-formed, instantly recognisable, and requiring no work to read. The larch were possibly key to this countenance and recognisability, but are vanishing, leaving a more natural but perhaps more generic Lakeland tarn in their stead.

Sadder is the potential loss of another tree from our palette. William Gilpin is an originator of the way we value our mountain landscapes, and his treatise on forest scenery of 1780 includes the larch among elm and ash, the latter now also fading from the Lake District. Gilpin compared the imported larch, still quite new to Britain, to its kindred in the Alps, relating the spindly non-native English tree to its giant, irregular and noble alpine cousin, which could, he wrote, become 'fully picturesque' in form. In a later edition¹³ Gilpin's editor, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, was at pains to point out that, of course, Gilpin could not have seen the tree reach maturity in our mountains, something which we have now had the privilege to witness. The remaining isolated old larch of the Lakes may still endure, once the denser plantings like Tarn Hows have been felled and the main

source of infection has gone, but perhaps not for long. Beaten into terrific shapes by the ravages of time and weather, a few may remain, clinging to rocky slopes and dropping their needles in fiery orange every autumn.

Notes

1. Grevel Lindop, *A Literary Guide to the Lake District*, 3rd Edition, Ammanford, 2015, pp.316–17.
2. Katherine Julie Saville-Smith, *Cumbria's Encounter with the East Indies c.1680–1828: Cumbrian Gentry and Middling Provincial Families Seeking Success*, PhD thesis, Lancaster, 2016, p.122.
3. Details of the Monk Coniston Estate are taken from the survey written by Adam Menuge for the National Trust in 2007.
4. Thomas West, *A Guide to the Lakes in Cumberland, Westmoreland and Lancashire*, 1820 edition.
5. Juliet Barker, *Wordsworth: A Life*, London, 2001, p.262.
6. Steven Denman, *Materialising Cultural Value in the English Lakes, 1735–1845: A Study of the Responses of New Landowners to Representations of Place and People*, PhD Thesis, Lancaster, 2011, p.263.
7. The first (1810) iteration of Wordsworth's *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes* was an anonymous text in a collection of engravings published by the Rev. Joseph Wilkinson. Later editions helped to define the place we now call the Lake District.
8. *Ibid.*, pp.287–8.
9. Mrs Heelis (Beatrix Potter) offered the Monk Coniston Estate to the National Trust in 1930, following its purchase from the Marshall family in 1929 for £4,000. Her offer was in two lots, the first offered at cost and the rest, including Tarn Hows, promised upon her death. Potter ensured that the financially diminished James Marshall was still able to use the boathouse for fishing.
10. Beatrix Heelis, letter to Samuel Hamer (NT Secretary), 28 October 1929.
11. William Cockin, editor of the second edition of Thomas West's famous *Guide to the Lakes* (1775), stated his ambition for Windermere in a footnote to p.63: 'It might then become a rival to the celebrated lake of Geneva ... having a city at one end and being surrounded with palaces'.
12. Thomas Kulka, *Kitsch and Art*, University Park, Pennsylvania, 1996, p.29.
13. William Gilpin, ed. Thomas Dick Lauder, *Remarks on Forest Scenery and other Woodland Views*, Edinburgh, 1834, p.76.

Hidden Depths

Evidence of lost decorative schemes at A la Ronde

James Parry

Archaeologist, Devon and Cornwall

James Wallace

Building Surveyor

Barbara Wood

Cultural Heritage Curator

A la Ronde (Fig. 1) is a small, architecturally unusual property on the edge of Exmouth in Devon. It was built in the last years of the 18th century for cousins Jane (1750–1811) and Mary Parminter (1767–1849), soon after their return to England following several grand tours of Europe.

The 16-sided house sits at the centre of a small estate, a cottage community that originally included a church, manse, almshouses and schoolroom, orchards, gardener's cottage and kitchen garden. The cousins' intention was for their home to remain in the ownership of unmarried female descendants, a wish that was largely fulfilled. With the assistance of a grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the National Trust purchased the house and its immediate surroundings from the last resident member of the family, Ursula Tudor-Perkins, in 1991. The church remains in use and continues to manage the charity established by Mary in 1813, which now provides prevention and relief of poverty for elderly people.¹

The interiors of the house are as unusual and appealing as the exterior. The original

design of wedge-shaped rooms with intervening lobby compartments set around a central octagon remains clearly visible despite significant changes made in the 19th century by Rev. Oswald Reichel (1840–1923), a nephew of Jane Parminter and the property's only male owner. These included the removal of internal walls to create larger rooms, the addition of a first floor with dormer windows in what had been the roof space, the introduction of a new staircase, the creation of an entrance hall and the insertion of several new rectangular sash windows.

Of notable significance are the remaining elements of the decorated interiors. The house is perhaps best known for its Shell Gallery (Fig. 2), an extraordinary structure set high within the roof space above the octagon, as well as other surviving elements of decoration thought to have been created by the cousins. At ground-floor level this includes feather-frieze (Fig. 3) and shell-work, both genteel pastimes considered acceptable for women of the period.

In the Shell Gallery the decoration is far more extensive and is reminiscent



1. A la Ronde

Photo: National Trust Images/John Hammond



2. The Shell Gallery

Photo: National Trust Images/David Garner

3. Detail of the feather frieze in the Drawing Room: the pattern is formed from hand-cut poultry and game-bird feathers fixed in place with isinglass

Photo: National Trust Images/David Garner



of the garden grottoes that were a feature of contemporary 18th-century pleasure grounds. In fact, Mary's will refers to a 'shellery' and other features of the gardens, suggesting that these interiors were part of a much more extensive 'experience' and a design that encompassed all elements of the estate. The gallery decoration includes not only shells but also pieces of bone, ceramics, mirrorwork, glass, moss, medallions and painted elements. The combination of an architectural design featuring arched windows on all sides with the decorative use of sand, mica, gravel, glass and mirrorwork across the surfaces demonstrates a considered and creative use of light. The reflective surfaces would have sparkled in sunshine or candlelight, creating different moods according to the weather and the time of day.

However, intriguing questions about the interior remain unanswered. It is thought that a more extensive scheme of decoration may have existed, only remnants of which survive. The major alterations undertaken by Reichel may have resulted in significant loss, although some elements, probably including the upper gallery and stairs, were carefully protected. Other components, possibly including some of the feather friezes, may have been temporarily removed and later reinstated. The current National Trust team is particularly keen to learn more about the original presentation of the octagon – the atrium-like central ground-floor space – and the Shell Gallery above it. It is difficult to understand how the decorated Shell Gallery, set above the original lofts, would have been used. The access stairs, which are also highly decorated, are restrictive (Fig. 5). While there are seats in the gallery, the walkway is narrow and it is not known whether the current balustrade is an original feature or a later intervention.

Paint analysis of the walls on the ground floor was carried out as part of a redecoration project prior to opening by the National Trust in 1991. It revealed a scheme that is often interpreted as representing seaweed or an underwater scene. This was reinstated around the eight-sided central focus of the house as part of the preparations for opening to the public. The design of the coving above the walls but below the decorated gallery raised other questions. Hidden by textiles that were installed in 1991, the original function of these concave surfaces was unclear, but they could perhaps be interpreted as signifying billowing waves. Might the now plain coving and flat ceiling once have been elements of a scheme intended to visually immerse the visitor from floor to ceiling, as well as offering more intimate and individual experiences as part of a journey from ground floor to gallery? The remaining grotto stairs hint at just such an atmospheric intention.

Surveying A la Ronde

The main building is small and physical movement is constrained in the narrow passageways. Because of its extremely fragile nature and the confined space, the Shell Gallery can now only be viewed from the ground floor or via a virtual tour online.² For the same reasons, the grotto stairs can only be viewed from the first floor landing and are therefore only partially visible. There has been significant loss of decoration in the past – water ingress has been a persistent problem in recent years and roof repairs were needed. Determining the correct repair method and the appropriate level of conservation intervention to the gallery required detailed consultation with both National Trust internal advisors and external specialists.

Over several years at A la Ronde, detailed information about the property and its wider setting in the historic landscape has been gathered in a Conservation Management Plan and a Setting Study. Alongside these, an ongoing programme of survey work has produced specific assessments for the key materials that comprise the Shell Gallery. Together, these sources have informed a plan of work that addresses the property's complex conservation needs. The project, 'Conserving the Past, Creating the Future', forms the basis for strands of work that include building repair and conservation. We are also exploring the opportunities for new research with both university partners and the property volunteer research team.

Unfortunately, there is almost no remaining family or historical archive related to A la Ronde because the original papers were destroyed in the bombing of Exeter during the Second World War. A fragment of Jane Parminter's travel journal, Mary's extensive will and the various writings produced by Oswald Reichel are the remaining core documents. Consequently, there are no original plans relating to the construction or design of the house or the structure of the Shell Gallery. The need for roof repairs therefore presented a very rare opportunity to investigate the structure of the roof and the Shell Gallery both externally and internally.

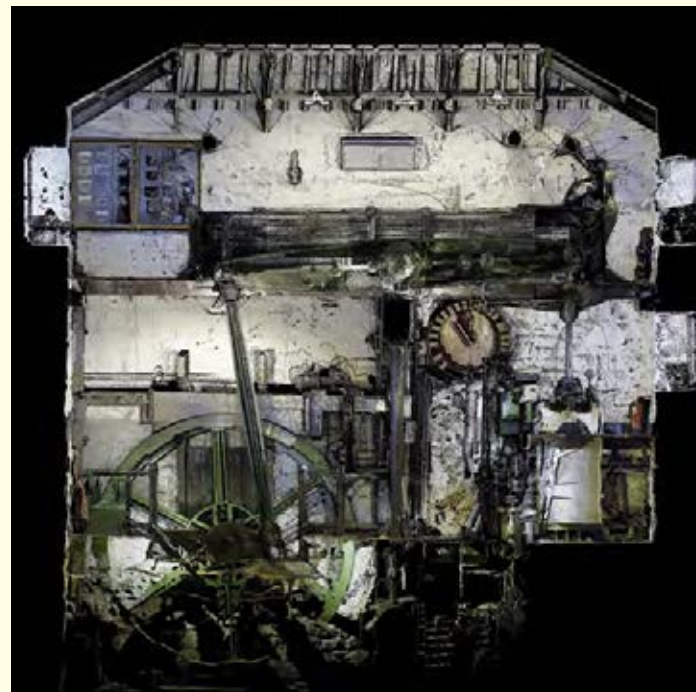
Work began in 2019 with the erection of a complex 16-sided scaffold (Fig. 6), which allowed the project teams and surveyors to expose and examine a number of structural and architectural features. This included a chance to look closely at the lozenge-shaped false windows painted on the external brickwork of the gallery, which are partly concealed by the existing glazing. It also allowed access to view the

Laser scanning and the heritage sector

Until relatively recently, the standard approach to recording buildings and landscapes was to use an Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM) such as a Total Station. Increasingly, however, EDM technology has been replaced by laser scanning. Broadly, this technique can be split into three categories: aerial laser scanning (often referred to as LiDAR, from 'Light Detection and Ranging'), which is acquired from aircraft or drones and is generally used to survey large landscapes; terrestrial laser scanning (discussed here); and hand-held laser scanning, which is principally used to scan objects and paintings.

A terrestrial laser scan is produced by a tripod-mounted scanner. The scanner lens spins at high speed, firing a low-energy reflecting laser beam that bounces off surfaces to create a dome of points. The laser scanner records over 1 million points per second with a typical density of 1–3mm. The façade of a simple cottage, for example, would comprise around 20 million points, which are collectively referred to as a point-cloud. Each point has an x, y and z coordinate, enabling very accurate measurements and three-dimensional models to be produced. During the scanning process the machine can also produce high-definition images that are referenced to the point-cloud, ensuring that they are also fully scalable.

Multiple scans are needed to record the outside of a building in order for the lasers to reflect off every surface, with each scan taking 1.5–5 minutes, depending on the equipment used and the level of detail specified. This means that highly accurate surveys of buildings can be taken quickly both inside and out. Because a laser scan only records surfaces that are in its line



4. Cross-section through the Levant Engine House (NT) in Pendeen, Cornwall
Photo: National Trust Images/
Bill Stebbing

of sight, while areas such as roof-tops are difficult to access, it can be supplemented with photogrammetry, a technique that uses drones to produce high-resolution photographs. These images are then processed through software to produce point-clouds that can be added to the laser-scan data.

The resulting point-cloud can be interrogated and used in a multitude of ways to produce, among other things, 'slices' through buildings, CAD (Computer-Aided Design) drawings of elevations, or augmented and virtual interpretive products.

The National Trust is applying this technology across its portfolio. Examples in the South West range from whole mansion houses and associated landscapes such as St Michael's Mount, through smaller, more intricate properties such as Bradley Manor in South Devon, to small buildings and ruins,

including a growing number of engine houses in West Cornwall (Fig. 4), and collections items such as the Tamar sailing barge Shamrock (NT 348277) at Cotehele, Cornwall.

The surveys are primarily being used to provide metrically accurate records of buildings before any changes occur, creating a detailed and versatile conservation record. The three-dimensional digital resource is often then used to inform and illustrate building design, repairs and management. Line drawings can be produced from the point-cloud to support these applications. The survey data is also increasingly being used for interpretation and engagement. As well as providing remote access to places visitors can't see in person, it can also supply a digital 'skeleton' onto which augmented visuals can be grafted, illustrating how a building or landscape may have looked at a particular moment in its history.

rear of the coving that forms part of the central octagon. Laser surveys were also commissioned to record the structure inside and out.

The survey brief

A roof inspection in summer 2018 identified the immediate cause of the roof leak but it also revealed the need for significant work to replace the upper Shell Gallery roof, the gantry walkway and the glazing that surrounds the gallery. In order to specify these works, design the scaffold and seek the necessary permissions, accurate plans were essential. This was especially true because A la Ronde's unconventional, 16-sided construction has proved a challenge when it comes to acquiring accurate plans and previous versions have sometimes lacked important detail.

Bill Stebbing from digital survey specialists Scan to Plan was commissioned to undertake terrestrial and aerial scanning (by drone) to plot the external elevations and topographic survey of the site. The results were drawn up to provide a plan and elevation of the site and to form the basis of detailed design documents that could be submitted to the planning authorities and issued to contractors.

Access to the void above the ceiling of the Shell Gallery had previously been impossible, with no hatch or other means of access. As well as being a gap in our knowledge about the building, this also proved a challenge when planning the works. It was therefore arranged that Scan to Plan would return to record this void after the roof had been removed. In order to plot the ceiling structure they also scanned the Shell Gallery (Fig. 7), which was made possible and affordable following access to a new colour scanner that vastly reduced the time required to complete this work.



Unexpected discoveries

The ceiling of the octagon was included in the internal scanning process. To the naked eye this surface has a central decorative ceiling rose with the surrounding area appearing flat. The extreme accuracy of the laser mapping, however, produced unexpected results, potentially revealing two previous schemes of decoration across the ceiling (Figs 8a and 8b).

The laser scan of the ceiling showed that its surface varies in height by up to 25mm. It also identified odd striations, which form a distinct pattern. This was potentially evidence of a lost decorative scheme, tying in with earlier paint analysis that had suggested the possible presence of a stencilled scheme.



One scan appears to reveal a geometric pattern, while the second shows a central star extending across the ceiling. Both suggest that there are indeed missing elements of a wider coordinated scheme, intended to immerse the viewer. Although designed to be experienced from different vantage points, the primary view would have been directly upwards from the ground floor. From that perspective, the glittering decoration of the gallery perhaps served to represent a cluster of rock pools, glimpsed from the position of the seabed, while the ceiling provided a view of the night sky seen through the surface of the sea from below.

Work to understand and research the lost schemes continues, most recently with

5. The narrow and highly decorated grotto stairs
Photo: National Trust Images/John Hammond

6. A la Ronde encased in a bird's nest of scaffolding
Photo: National Trust Images



further paint sampling to establish whether any of the original materials can be retrieved.

Shedding new light

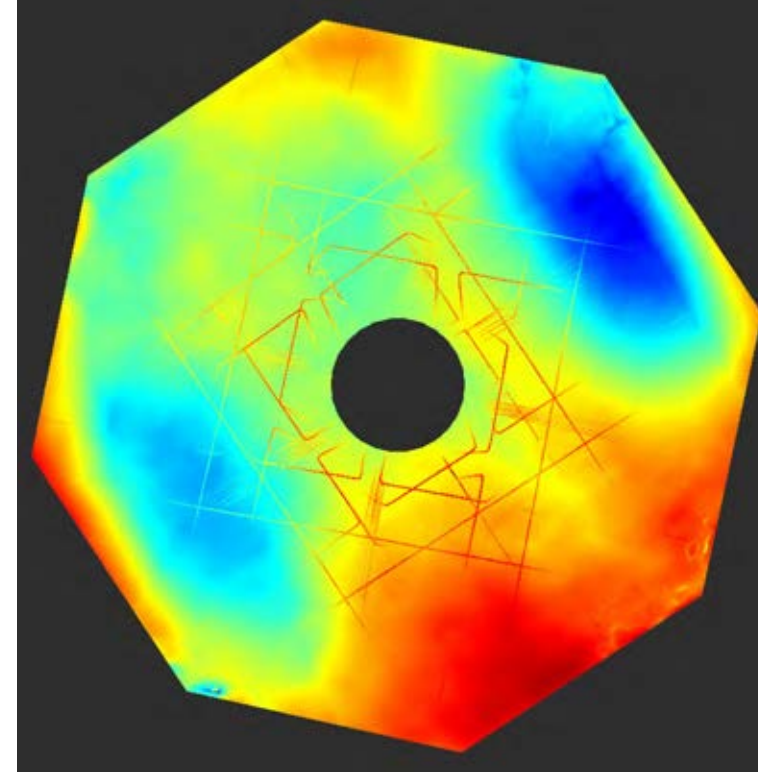
An unconventional idea has arisen from the need to install a temporary floor at height in the octagon to provide access for specialist conservators. Using this temporary surface as a projection screen presents an opportunity to explore ideas about how the octagon may once have looked without leaving a permanent trace.

We have worked with lighting designer Mark Sutton Vane to re-imagine the space and stimulate discussion with visitors and research colleagues about the validity of these ideas. The marine theme described above has also been identified in discussions with other researchers in this field³ and

is evident in the design of grottoes in other contexts, such as the 17th-century shell grotto at Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire (Grade I listed). The first approach has therefore been to provide the impression of gently moving water across the underside of the temporary floor. We hope to undertake further experimentation and research. Any new developments will be reported in future editions of *Arts, Buildings & Collections Bulletin*.

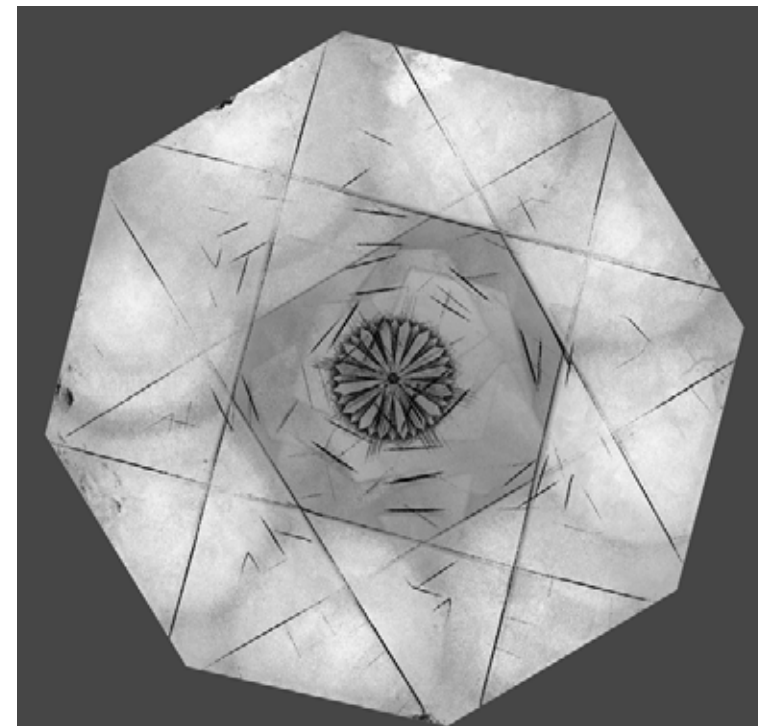
Notes

1. The Mary Parminster Charity. Please see www.maryparminster.org.uk for further information.
2. The tour can be accessed at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/a-la-ronde/features/a-la-ronde-virtual-tours.
3. Professor Daniel Maudlin, University of Plymouth, pers. comm., 2019.



7. (above) Laser scan images of the Shell Gallery
Photo: National Trust Images/
Bill Stebbing

8a. and 8b. Two scans of the octagon ceiling reveal patterns largely invisible to the naked eye
Photo: National Trust Images/
Bill Stebbing



Illustrating the Owner

Bookplates at Berrington Hall

Nicola Thwaite

Assistant National Curator (Books)

'A bookplate is to the book what a collar is to the dog.'¹ The use of printed bookplates to mark ownership of books really took off in Britain from the late 17th century. Bookplates often featured coats of arms, crests or mottos as a clear means of identification and were most commonly printed from engraved or etched copper plates, although also from wood blocks. A few were designed or engraved by well-known names, such as Bewick or Beardsley, but many were produced by anonymous or little-known craftsmen.

Stylistic changes in bookplates mirrored changing fashions elsewhere;² the use of family arms gradually declined and by the late 19th century pictorial bookplates dominated, allowing a more individual expression of the owner's interests or personality in the latest artistic style.

National Trust libraries are rich in bookplates hidden inside the books, as well as unused family bookplates and several engravers' plates. Comparison of variations

in family bookplates can help us to establish not just who owned a particular book, but the time period in which they may have acquired it. Bookplates held include those of Dames Alice and Dorothy Brownlowe (dated 1698) – two of the earliest-known women's bookplates – at Belton House, Lincolnshire, as well as more familiar names such as Rudyard Kipling, Vita Sackville-West, and Benjamin Disraeli.³

By the 1880s, aficionados had begun collecting bookplates as desirable items in their own right, perhaps for their art and design, heraldry, or association with famous owners. The National Trust holds very few such 'curated' collections of bookplates, but a recent discovery at Berrington Hall⁴ in Herefordshire has added an album of 17 pictorial bookplates from the turn of the 20th century, probably put together by Vivienne, Lady Cawley (1878–1978) from her relatives and friends. This selection showcases bookplates from an intriguing group of 12, all signed by the as-yet-unidentified artist 'NE'.



Vivienne Lee married Robert Cawley (1877–1954) in 1912. Robert inherited Berrington from his father, Frederick, Baron Cawley (1850–1937), a wealthy cotton finisher and MP for Prestwich until 1918. Victorian mourning fashions had made Frederick's patent for black dye hugely profitable, which helped to fund his purchase of the Berrington estate in 1901. Lady Cawley continued to live at Berrington after it passed to the National Trust following her husband's death. Here she browses the shelves in full-skirted dress and mob cap; NE has signed the spines of books next to her head.

All photos: National Trust/Tim Pye



A spider's web lightens the studious tone of the NE bookplate of Harold Cawley (1878–1915), Robert's brother and Best Man. Harold studied law at Oxford and became MP for Heywood in 1910, hence the pile of parliamentary reports by his chair.

Harold was one of three Cawley brothers who died in the First World War: John killed by a shell at Mons in 1914; Harold at Gallipoli in 1915; and Oswald (MP for Prestwich) in France in 1918.



Several of NE's plates include views through windows, including this cheering landscape for Giulia Strakosch (1880?–1961), an American light soprano who performed on both sides of the Atlantic. Father Max and uncle Maurice Strakosch were well-known impresarios in Europe and America. Maurice married Amalia Patti, sister of renowned soprano Adelina Patti, whose tours the brothers managed.

In 1910, Giulia married Vivienne's brother, Kenneth Lee (1879–1967), MP and Chairman of Tootal Broadhurst Lee, the cotton manufacturer founded by his grandfather and great-uncle. They split their time between Cheadle, Knightsbridge and their country home, Lukyns, in Ewhurst, Surrey. Knighted in 1934, Kenneth became Baronet Lee of Lukyns in 1941.



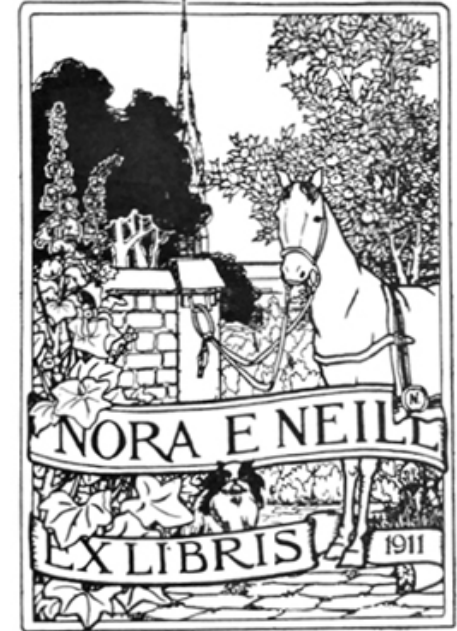
A mountain garden drawn by NE for Ethel Neill Bancroft (1875–1962), daughter of Maria Neill and James Bancroft – Vivienne's uncle – of Broughton near Salford. Ethel was with her cousin at Berrington Hall when a government register was taken in September 1939; perhaps she gave Vivienne copies of her family's various bookplates.



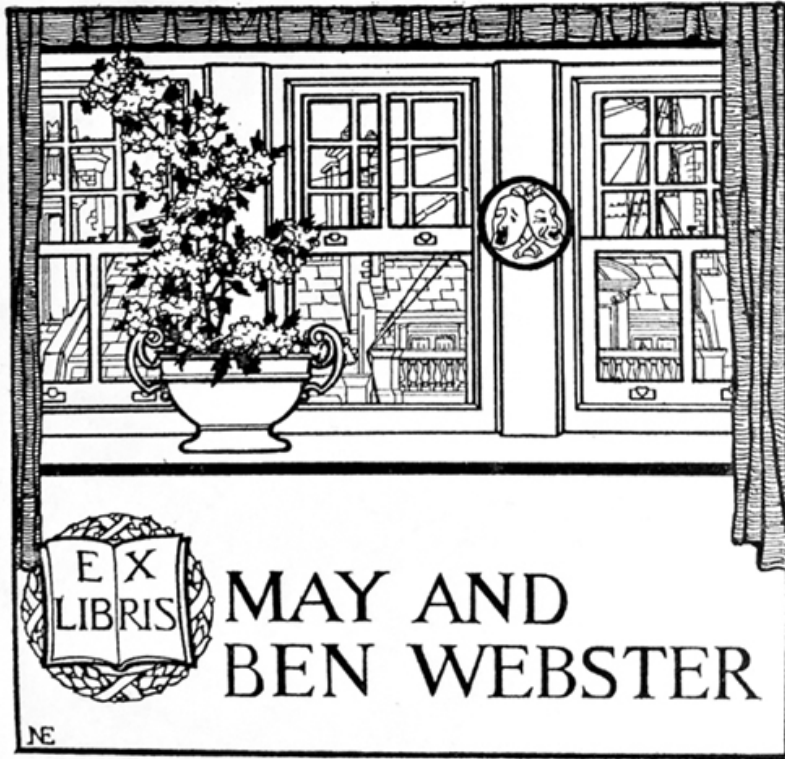
The NE bookplate of Ethel's father, James Bancroft (1838–1926), was perhaps intended to evoke the countries he traded with as a metal merchant and agent. His father, James Bancroft (d.1888) of Broughton Old Hall – Vivienne's maternal grandfather – was a self-made man who practised as an arbitrator and became director of several railway companies.



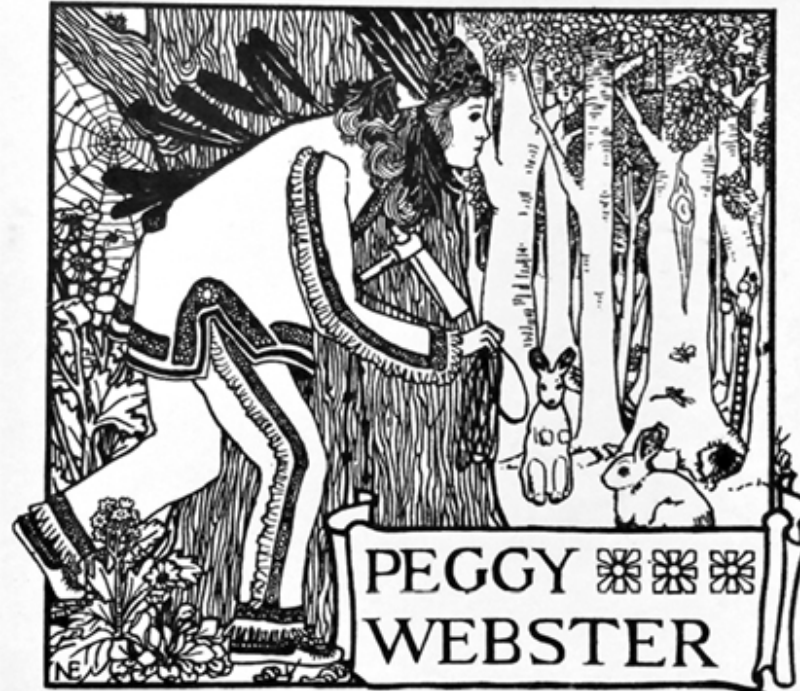
Frederica Annie de Montmorency (1874–1952) married William Henry Neill, uncle of Ethel Neill Bancroft, in 1902. The couple lived in Rutland, where William had served as High Sheriff in 1901, and it's likely that the furnishings in this NE bookplate depict The Grange, their home in Wing. The conceit of 'her book' woven into the hunting tapestry is an unusual touch; the shamrocks on her dress honour Frederica's Irish birthplace: Broughhillstown House, Baltinglass.



Nora Eveline Neill (1886–1927), daughter of solicitor Archibald Neill, was a cousin of Ethel Neill Bancroft. Nora lived with her parents in Broughton and at Hallaton in Leicestershire, not far from her uncle in Wing. Nora was a keen follower of hounds, so the horse is probably a favourite mount, standing patiently next to her rather grumpy-looking dog. Her initials raise the intriguing possibility that Nora is the unknown NE, but this bookplate is not signed in the same way (although perhaps with an 'N' on the horse's blanket).



Dame May Whitty (1865–1948) and husband Ben Webster (1864–1947) were successful stage and film actors. Twice Oscar-nominated, Dame May played the title role in Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes* (1938). Their NE bookplate probably shows the view from their Covent Garden flat, where they helped found the actor's union Equity in 1930. NE also produced a charming child's bookplate (above right) for their daughter, Margaret Webster (1905–72), later an actor and director well-known for her Broadway productions of Shakespeare. Berrington library holds a copy of Margaret's family biography⁵ with an inscription by May Whitty and the Webster bookplate.



Notes

1. Edward Gordon Craig, quoted in Brian North Lee, *British Bookplates*, London, 1979, p.7. Best-known as a theatre director and stage designer, Craig also designed bookplates. Some examples of his designs can be seen online at www.edwardgordoncraig.co.uk/media/bookplates.
2. For a good introduction to bookplates and their changing styles, see David Pearson, *Provenance Research in Book History*, Oxford, 2019.
3. Records for National Trust books, including provenance information such as bookplates, can be found at <https://discover.libraryhub.jisc.ac.uk/> using their advanced search.
4. By Tim Pye, National Curator (Books), who has supplied the photographs used here (NT3075809).
5. Margaret Webster, *The Same Only Different: Five Generations of a Great Theatre Family*, London, 1969 (NT3166107).



1. Archaeologist Martin Papworth with the mosaic in Room 28, North Range (south at top of photograph)
Photo: National Trust Images/ Stephen Haywood

Beyond Britannia

A game-changing revelation at Chedworth Roman Villa

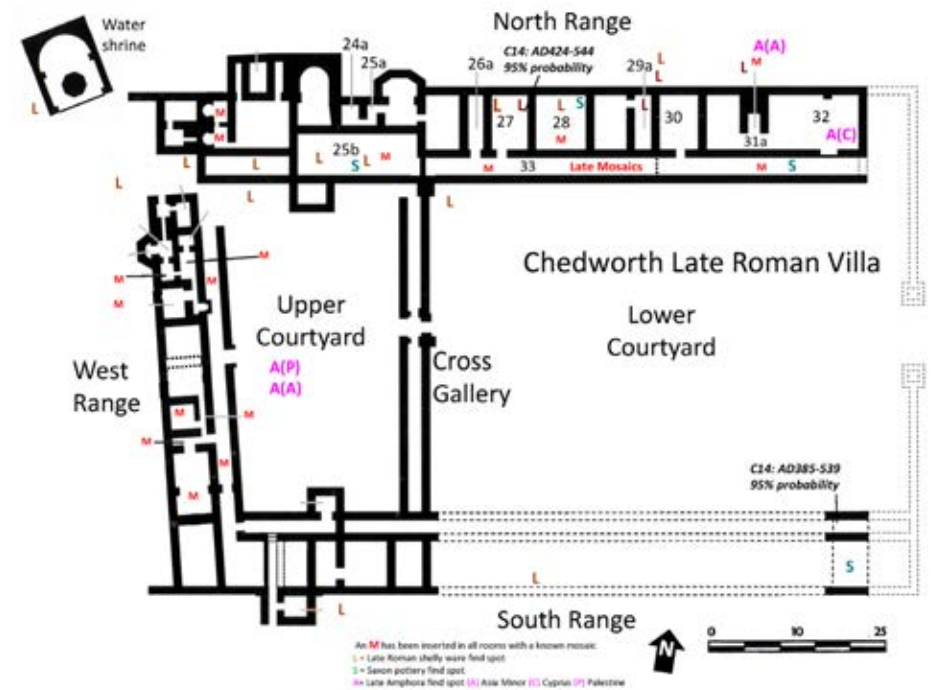
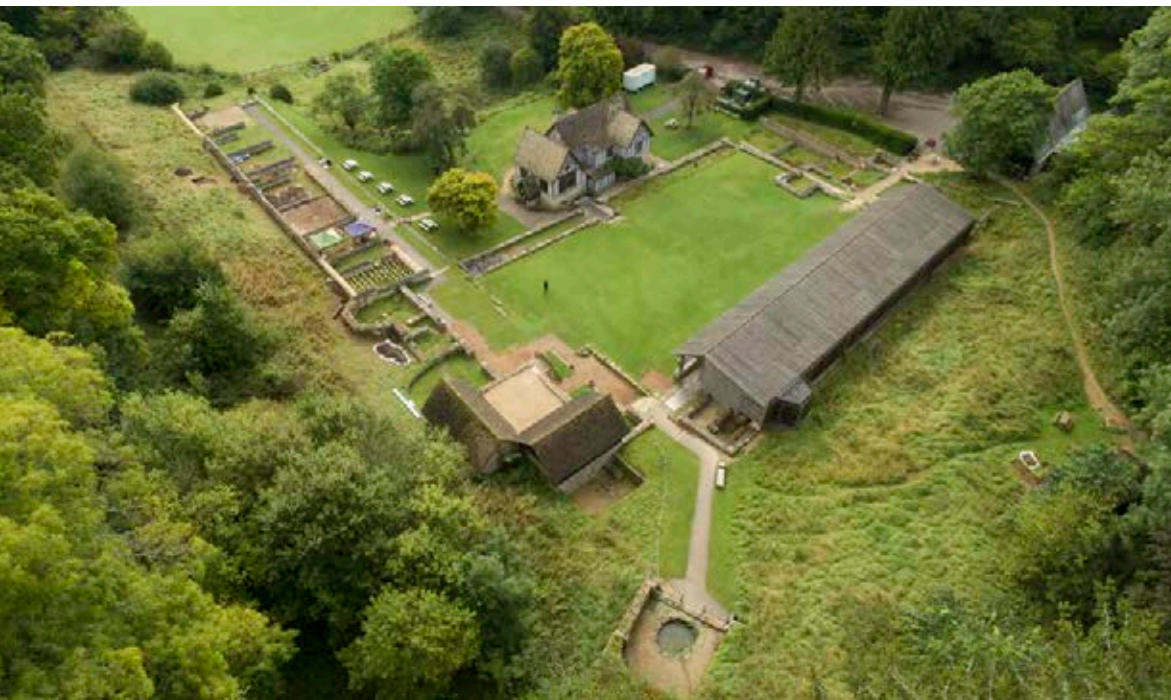
Martin Papworth
Archaeologist, South West

Chedworth in Gloucestershire is one of the largest and finest examples of a Roman villa in Britain. Radiocarbon dating has now revealed that a wealthy family continued to live there in some style well into the 5th century – the first time this has been proved for any of the villas of Britannia. This article provides a short update about recent and ongoing research in this context, rather than a detailed academic study (for which, see the forthcoming Chedworth monograph, discussed below).

Chedworth lies at the head of a coombe with fine views across the Colne Valley. Important visitors would have approached from the east, though a gateway and into

the lower courtyard. From here, steps would lead the visitor to the upper courtyard, where the best apartments of the family were situated.

Chedworth was begun about AD 120, but by AD 370 the villa had developed to become a distinctive place of luxury with three ranges of rooms constructed along the south, west and north sides of the courtyards. The best rooms were located on the sunnier and more prominently positioned west and south sides. Issuing from the hill slope between the West and North Ranges was a spring, and two sets of baths were created on either side of this water source. These included cold-plunge baths, steam-heat and dry-heat baths.



These baths, alongside rooms for dining, meeting, relaxing and sleeping, were decorated with painted wall plaster and floored with fine mosaics. This richly decorated accommodation demonstrates the exceptional wealth of the people who once lived here. It is confirmed by two recent exotic finds, a fragment of marble quarried from an island near Athens and a fragment of glass made in the Crimea on the shores of the Black Sea. Each is an artefact type that has never been found in Britain previously.

Chedworth, though particularly grand, was only one of many villas in the countryside surrounding the local provincial capital of *Corinium* (Cirencester). The density of villas demonstrates both the economic significance of this area and, by the late 4th century, the quality of life that the locality offered. One is bound to wonder how this

community declined. What became of this network of leading landowners occupying their Romanised grand houses within their farming estates?

Up to now, the generally accepted narrative has been one of rapid decline. By the early 5th century Britain was no longer part of the Roman Empire. In AD 407 the provincial government had backed a man who called himself Constantine III. He had taken troops to Gaul in a bid to become emperor. Initially he had some success, but Britain rejected him in AD 409 and he was defeated in AD 411. The legitimate emperor, Honorius, had problems of his own and subsequently made no attempt to reoccupy Britannia. It was a messy end to over 350 years of Roman rule.

With no Roman army occupying Britain, coinage to pay the soldiers ceases to be imported from across the channel and nothing seems to have been produced

locally to replace it. Other artefacts fade away from the archaeological record, particularly dateable pottery, that durable common artefact found within debris that provides the evidence to help plot change through time.

It seems that the economy collapsed suddenly, towns became deserted and villas were abandoned. An intricate network of specialist products, markets and crafts fell apart and people returned to subsistence farming to survive. However, recent research and interpretation of archaeological records is indicating that this story is too simplistic and the evidence for the continuation of a Romanised lifestyle can be discerned through a scattering of distinctive finds.

The problem with Chedworth is that it was uncovered quickly following its discovery in 1864, but the details of the excavation were never published. By 1868, a museum had been built beside a lodge in the centre of the villa

2. (Above left) Drone photograph of the site looking south-east from the Nymphaeum built at Chedworth's spring, with the bath houses on either side of it. The North Range is on the left and the West Range on the right

Photo: National Trust/Mike Calnan

3. Plan of the Roman Villa showing the locations of finds of 5th–6th century pottery (imported amphorae, Saxon and late-Roman shelly ware) and the locations of sub-Roman C14 (radiocarbon) samples

Photo: National Trust/Martin Papworth

and the best finds placed there. No stratigraphic record, drawings or photographs survive from this dig and therefore the context of the artefacts has been lost. Evidence of the last occupation of Chedworth was swept away in the excitement of uncovering the decorated floor surfaces. Subsequent excavations have also remained largely unpublished, but this is now being addressed.

Professor Simon Esmonde Cleary, Professor Peter Salway, Dr Jason Wood and Dr Emma Durham have brought together previous information with fresh analysis of the surviving structures and artefacts to create a monograph of all pre-2010 archaeological work. Curator Julie Reynolds has guided the work and *Chedworth Roman Villa: Excavations and Re-Imaginations from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Centuries* will be published by the Roman Society in association with the

National Trust's Cultural Heritage Publishing programme in summer 2022. The work for this volume has highlighted some unusual finds from the villa, demonstrating that wine and olive oil were reaching Chedworth from the east Mediterranean in the 5th and 6th centuries.

These late finds come from areas unexcavated in the 1860s, away from the walls of the villa. One of these was the upper courtyard, where part of a wine amphora from Palestine and another from Asia Minor (Turkey) were found in the garden soil in 2001. At the edge of the dining room (Room 32; see Fig. 3 plan), at the east end of the North Range, three pieces from a corrugated amphora were recovered. This once contained olive oil from Cyprus and *Cicilia*. Among the debris on the north side of the North Range was another fragment of Asia Minor amphora mixed with sherds of late Roman shelly ware.

The kilns making late Roman shelly ware only began production after AD 360 and when this British pottery is found it is a rare indicator of 5th-century occupation. A fragmented but near-complete bowl made from this pottery was found placed in a pit cut through the floor of Room 27 in the North Range in 2000 (for locations of this late pottery around the villa see Fig. 3).

At Chedworth, National Trust archaeologists have recently completed a programme of archaeological research. Between 2010 and 2012 excavations uncovered rooms and mosaics to enable them to be seen under a new protective cover building for the West Range. Once this was completed, from 2013 to 2018, research was carried out in the North Range to understand the dating sequence of the rooms there and to find the extent of the mosaics that still lay beneath the grass. It was hoped that this

4. (Below) Drone photograph plan of Room 28 (north at top), with turfs stacked in Room 29 visible on the right-hand side of the photograph
Photo: National Trust/Mike Calnan

5. Room 27 trench in the south-east corner (looking south east) showing the dressed-block construction of the late 2nd-century south wall in contrast with the rubble footings of the east wall abutting it on the left. Note the valley slope of yellow Cotswold clay and brash bedrock levelled up with deposits of dark soil, which contained 2nd-century and earlier pottery
Photo: National Trust/Martin Papworth



information would enable funding for a North Range cover building so that these mosaics could be seen by visitors. Currently, specialist reports are being brought together before finally writing up and publishing the work, and from the results of this analysis new information about sub-Roman Chedworth can now be linked to the earlier discoveries.

In 2017, a series of trenches was excavated in the North Range, where the information on surviving floor surfaces was insufficient. Trenches were dug in the corners of Rooms 27–30 and the whole of a mosaic in Room 28 was uncovered.

Two trenches were dug in the north-east and south-east corners of Room 27, beside the wall dividing it from Room 28. Once the turf was cut and the topsoil cleaned down to the surviving Roman remains, it could be seen that the floor surface had almost been worn away apart from a thin strip surviving

against the north wall. Here, a remnant of a crushed brick and mortar *opus signinum* floor remained. This was supported on a hardcore of limestone gravel mixed with mortar. Once this was removed, the Cotswold limestone bedrock was seen, but it had been cut to create a foundation trench for the wall dividing rooms 27 and 28. The wall was built in the trench and then the gap between the wall and the trench edge was filled with a dark soil.

The finds recovered from this foundation trench filling were crucial in dating the wall. They consisted of two small fragments of animal bone and a black piece of pottery. Within the soil were also fragments of twig charcoal and these were collected for radiocarbon dating. It was clear that this wall had been inserted between the north and south walls of the North Range as it was not bonded to them and its style of construction was of roughly dressed rubble compared with the neatly coursed limestone blocks the earlier walls were made from. More charcoal was found in the foundation trench for the south wall and this was collected too.

The mosaic in Room 28 proved to be fragmentary, with only about 30 per cent surviving. The central design had been completely worn away and some later industrial function had caused burning in this area. Two hearths were found, one with reused quern fragments as a floor and the other with a limestone kerb surrounding three hypocaust box-flue tiles, laid side by side. Radiocarbon samples were taken from the burnt material within these tiles.

We thought that the south wall would date to the later 2nd century, the wall between 27 and 28 would be later 4th century, and the hearth built within the worn central area of 28 would be sub-Roman in date, somewhere in the 5th–7th century period.

We were right about the south wall: our radiocarbon date of AD 75–219, at 95 per cent probability, was backed up by diagnostic pottery found in the soil that filled the foundation trench and in the layers it was cut through (for the 2nd–4th centuries, the broad date range of radiocarbon results makes pottery evidence more precise than radiocarbon dating). Despite this, we took the samples from the foundation trench fillings anyway and this decision was greatly rewarded. The result from the charcoal sample collected from the dividing wall foundation trench filling came back as AD 424–544 at 95 per cent probability.

This was unexpected: if this wall was built after AD 424, then the mosaic within Room 28 had to be later because its intricate pattern fitted exactly within the area of the room, defined on its west side by this newly dated 5th–6th century wall. The accepted narrative for sub-Roman Gloucestershire does not include the polite refurbishment of buildings and the laying of new mosaic floors. In any case, what about the hearths and evidence of a later workshop that had damaged the middle of Room 28's mosaic? Once again, our date estimate was wrong. The two dates from the hearth made out of reused box-flue tiles dated it to the medieval period. It turned out that this was medieval, built at some time between the 12th and 14th centuries.

The 5th–6th century charcoal date needed to be backed-up and one of the bone fragments was sent for analysis. When, after a period of Covid lockdown, the result finally arrived, it was less precise. However, it confirmed that the wall was built late in the life of the villa with a date ranging from AD 337 to AD 537 at 95 per cent probability. Lastly, the fragment of pottery was examined and identified as late Roman shelly ware, the pottery type that has not been found in deposits pre-dating AD 360.

6. Drone photograph of the east end of the North Range Reception Hall 25b as it was being uncovered (looking south east): the original threshold stone for the doorway into the North Range Gallery can be seen at top left
Photo: National Trust/Mike Calnan



In 2017, we found late-Roman shelly ware filling a drainage gully in Room 29a and in soil packed either side of a limestone drain built along the outside face of the North Range. Other late finds included fragments of Saxon pottery found scattered in various late debris deposits around the villa. This kind of pottery is in use up to the 8th century and is another indicator of the late occupation of the site.

What can we make of this evidence? The fragments of 5th–6th century amphorae from the eastern Mediterranean were traded through the ports of western Britain and although Chedworth has the greatest range of these products, it is not unique among West Country villa sites. There are records of amphorae being found at the Gloucestershire villas of Great Witcombe and Frocester.

Perhaps then, in the light of this new evidence, we can reconsider the relevance of the scant documentary evidence provided by the accounts of St Gildas and St Patrick, which hint at the survival of a high level of Romanised learning and sophistication into the 6th century. The British kingdoms of the West Country seem to have continued until AD 577, if the entry in the late 9th-century *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* can be relied on. For that year, it records the Battle of Deorham (Dyrham), at which three kings were slain and the cities of Gloucester, Cirencester and Bath were captured. That they were mentioned this late in the 6th century suggests that they were still significant places at that time.

However, more research is required and further sealed samples for dating are needed to improve our understanding of Chedworth and sub-Roman Gloucestershire. We hope to take additional samples from around the site to build a stronger case for its late occupation, but until then, the surprising radiocarbon dates from Room 27 currently give the best evidence for a 5th-century mosaic in Britain.

7. The two medieval hearths in Room 28 (looking south west): the hearth in the foreground is made of broken fragments of quern stones edged with tiles; the one in the upper left of the photograph is made from three reused Roman box-flue tiles, laid side by side and edged with limestone kerb stones
Photo: National Trust/Martin Papworth



8. Room 33 in the North Range Gallery (looking east): the late-phase mosaic has a 'hop-scotch' arrangement with square motifs in pairs as positive and negative images of the same pattern followed by a single motif
Photo: National Trust/Martin Papworth





Chinese Pirates in a Norfolk Cabinet

An art-historical discovery at Felbrigg Hall

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Cultural Heritage Curator

Tristan Mostert
Historian, Leiden University

In 2018, an intriguing art historical discovery was made at Felbrigg Hall, the stately Jacobean country house set among north Norfolk's fret-swept coastal landscape. In the magnificent Cabinet Room – the most complete surviving Grand Tour cabinet in England (Fig. 1) – one of the largest paintings in the collection, known historically as *The Siege of Amoy*,¹ was taken off the silk-lined walls for conservation. What was found behind the monumental canvas was telling: a bare patch of wall where no expensive silk damask had gone to waste, confirming that the painting was indeed in the original position recorded for it some 250 years earlier, as shown in a picture hang drawn of the Cabinet Room in 1752 for Felbrigg's then-owner, William Windham II (1717–61) (Fig. 2).

But even more fascinating was that close inspection of this minutely detailed maritime painting revealed a convincing new

identification of the battlescene depicted. Painted by the leading Dutch maritime artist Simon de Vlieger (c.1600–53) in 1650, this canvas – referred to hereafter as *The Bay of Xiamen (Amoy)* – was already believed to depict an episode from the turbulent period of the 1620s and 1630s in the China Seas (Fig. 3).² In 1624, the Dutch East India Company had established an outpost on Taiwan in its attempts to establish regular trade with China. Their efforts met with a marked lack of success, however, with the Dutch soon finding themselves caught up in rivalries between various Chinese maritime factions vying for control of the coastal regions. The exact episode depicted in this painting, however, remained uncertain. Originally, the painting was described in a National Trust catalogue as *The Capture of Formosa*, but in 1960, after contact with the Rotterdam Maritime Museum, this identification was changed to *The Blockade of Amoy* or *The Destruction of a Chinese Fleet by Dutch Ships in July 1633*. This identification, however,

1. The Cabinet Room at Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk
Photo: National Trust Images/Chris Lacey

also proved problematic. The three largest ships in the painting bear the names *Texel*, *Domburch* and *Arnemude*, and Dutch East India Company records indicate that while the *Texel* was indeed the Dutch flagship during the 1633 campaign, the other two ships were not present and, in fact, were no longer in use after 1630. In addition, it is clear that the painting depicts a fully fledged sea battle rather than a blockade, or the destruction of an unprepared and defenceless fleet that is described in the sources.

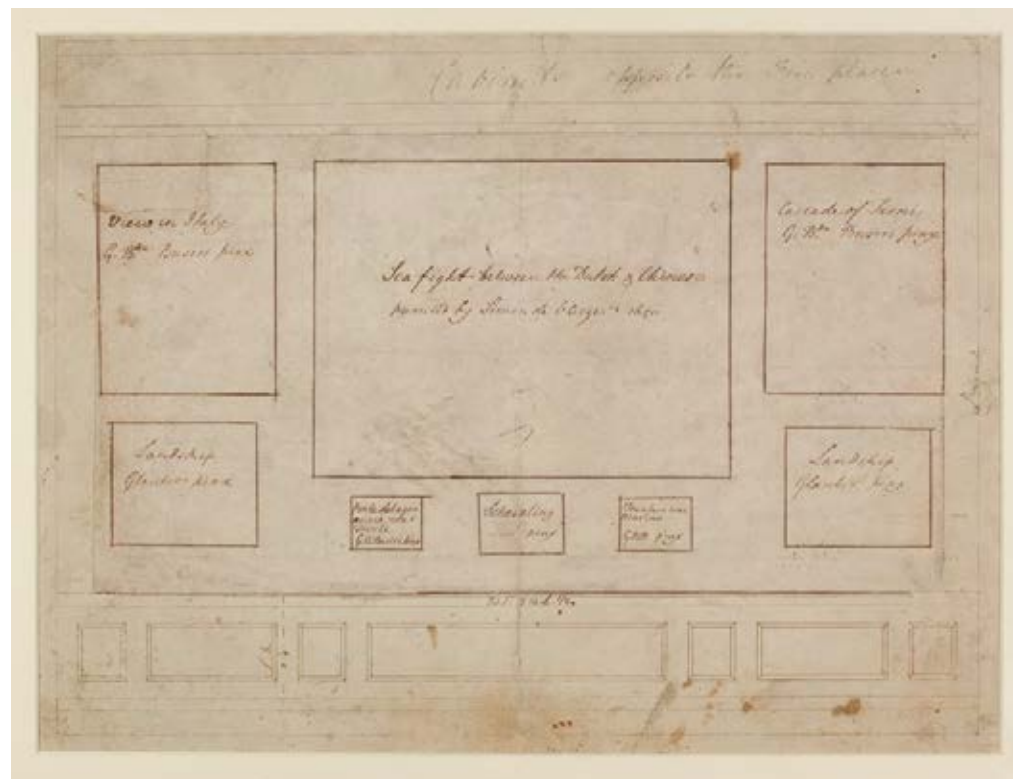
Recently, 17th-century conflicts in the China Seas have become a flourishing field of research.³ This new scrutiny helped to establish the first connection between this painting and a battle in the same bay three years earlier, in February 1630.⁴ At the time, the Dutch were on good terms with Zheng Zhilong (1604–61), a powerful pirate leader who had recently become an admiral in the service of the Chinese Empire, and who was now tasked with combating other factions of smugglers and pirates in the region. One such pirate band, led by a man named Li Kuiqi, became dangerously powerful around Zhilong's home base of Amoy, causing Zhilong to enlist the aid of the Dutch against his rival, promising the Dutch free trade in return.

Thus, in February 1630, Dutch ships made their way to the Bay of Amoy (Fig. 4) to crush Li Kuiqi's fleet, while Zhilong himself commanded a land army. Their forces were bolstered further by a pirate leader named Zhong Bin, who had recently defected from Li Kuiqi's side, bringing the junks under his command to the forces of Zheng Zhilong and the Dutch. The commanders of these three forces coordinated their efforts by letter, planning a classic 'pincer movement'. Two days before the attack, the Dutch were informed that the junks of their allies would be recognisable from their white banners with three black dots.⁵ On 9 February 1630,

they sprung their trap – with great success. 'Li Kuiqi was caught between us, so that we heavily fired into his fleet from the front as Zhong Bin did from behind, while Li Kuiqi's junks didn't fire a single shot,' the triumphant Dutch commander of the battle would note later in his official journal.⁶ Li Kuiqi managed to flee with part of his force, but was captured the next day.

This description of the battle closely matches the scene depicted in the painting at Felbrigg Hall, right down to the three-dotted flags flown by the allied Chinese fleet. Additionally, several landmarks around the Bay of Amoy can be tentatively identified in the painting, including Ji Island with its tower (visible in the background in Fig. 3, beneath the large red flag at centre left), and the rocky Gulangyu Island.⁷ Although the land in the foreground seems to have been painted with some poetic licence, it does provide further tantalising details. On the bottom right-hand side of the painting, somewhat surprisingly, grow pineapples (Fig. 5). It is unclear whether the commissioner of this work wanted it to feature the tropical pineapple, which might have provided a general sense of exoticism but would not have grown wild in southern China, or the fragrant screw pine (*Pandanus*) – which produces a very similar-looking fruit and was also called pineapple by the Dutch at the time. The screw pine would have been remembered by Dutch East India Company officials working in the region.⁸

Similarly intriguing are the Chinese characters that can be seen on the rock in the foreground of the painting (Fig. 6). It appears that these are pseudo-Chinese, with no discernible meaning. Importantly, however, monumental rock calligraphy was, and still is, common in the region, with present-day examples found both in Xiamen proper and on the abundant rock faces of Gulangyu



2. Picture hang for the west wall of the Cabinet Room at Felbrigg Hall by James Paine, c.1752, showing the proposed location for Simon de Vlieger's painting of 1650 (NT 1403424.36)
Photo: National Trust Images/Sue James

3. (Following page) *Dutch East India Company and Chinese Attack on Chinese Pirates in the Bay of Xiamen (Amoy)*, 9 February 1630, signed and dated 'S de Vlieger 1650', oil on canvas, 188 x 264.2cm (NT 1401166)
Photo: National Trust Images





4. Map of the Coast at Xiamen, 1632: The battle would have taken place roughly where the junk is depicted in the image, below point A, which indicates Amoy; I indicates Gulangyu Island, and K indicates Ji Island with its tower
Photo: Collection Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB-75.469

5. and 6. Two enhanced details from the right foreground of *The Bay of Xiamen (Amoy)* showing (L) pineapples and (R) pseudo-Chinese characters on the rock face
Both photos: National Trust Images



Island. A large and monumental inscription dating from the 1620s, now lost, was in fact located at the west coast of Xiamen Bay, where the painting seems to be set (Fig. 7). However, if that is what de Vlieger was specifically trying to depict, the resemblance is not particularly striking. Like the pineapples, this detail is likely a product of de Vlieger's best efforts to add some *couleur locale* to a painting depicting a part of the world he had never visited, and of which little first-hand imagery would have been available in the 1650s.

De Vlieger's painting, however, has not yet revealed all of its secrets. How did it end up on the art market in the mid-18th century, for example? The work must have been a commissioned piece – but by whom is unclear. Undoubtedly, it would have been someone with first-hand knowledge of the battle, or at the very least, with access to the relevant documents in the Dutch East India Company records. This makes Hans Putmans (d.1654), the Dutch governor of Formosa who commanded the fleet during the battle, a likely candidate. Putmans settled in Delft after returning to the Netherlands in 1637 and became part of the well-to-do elite of the city. No definitive proof linking him to the painting has, however, yet come to light. Another possibility is the Dutch East India Company itself. By the 1660s its offices in Amsterdam boasted some 60 individual paintings and wall maps showing the company's various posts and exploits, although it seems unlikely that their chamber in Amsterdam would have been auctioning off artwork in the mid-18th century.

Unfortunately, the painting does not appear to have left a paper trail in company records.⁹

Returning to the story of Felbrigg Hall, another crucial mystery surrounding *The Bay of Xiamen (Amoy)* centres on how it found its way to a sleepy corner of rural Norfolk.

The answer lies with one man: collector, explorer and scholar William Windham II, who inherited the Felbrigg estate in 1749. Described as an impetuous individual with 'an utter abhorrence of restraint',¹⁰ Windham was sent as a young man of 21 on the Grand Tour, that educational and cultural rite of passage deemed necessary for any 18th-century man of substance. Accompanied by his tutor, the noted botanist Benjamin Stillingfleet (1702–71), the two men toured Europe from 1738 to 1742. Their itinerary took them through Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, with Windham eventually reaching Amsterdam in early September 1742.¹¹

But before returning to England weighed down by books, pictures and foreign curios, Windham must have come across the de Vlieger painting he was soon to install in his Cabinet Room at Felbrigg Hall. Although the trail between artist, patron and collector is tantalisingly vague, key archival sources have now shed new light on the likely acquisition of this significant work. In the archives of the Norfolk Record Office resides the fascinating Grand Tour travel diary of William Windham II, covered in brown leather that is richly tooled with gilt embellishments (Fig. 8). Containing a mix of scrawling script in English, French and Dutch, Windham clearly used this pocket diary as an *aide-mémoire* as well as a sketch book. Among fleeting pencil drawings of the places he visited, Windham also recorded lists of bills paid for travel costs, covering items such as 'a bay horse', 'paid shoemaker', and 'tea, coaching and pocket money'.¹²

Beginning with a page entitled 'Dutch Money', his notes from Amsterdam prove most interesting. Windham recorded various names and addresses of merchants working in the city, whom he was clearly visiting himself (with instructions written out such

as, 'ye corner house a fan shop'). Among those mentioned are several noted art dealers, including Jean de Bary (c.1675–1759), a jeweller and print seller, and Petrus (Pieter) Schenk (1693–1775), an engraver and art dealer. Schenk was known for his maritime engravings, making him a likely candidate connecting Windham to de Vlieger's painting. While it is not precisely known how Windham acquired it, the likelihood that he did so through a dealer such as Schenk in Amsterdam is convincing.¹³ Certainly, records prove that the early creation of the Cabinet Room at Felbrigg Hall was designed specifically to display the pictures and objects Windham had amassed during his four-year Grand Tour, suggesting that he must have brought this painting, in addition to other Dutch and Flemish pictures, back with him from abroad.¹⁴

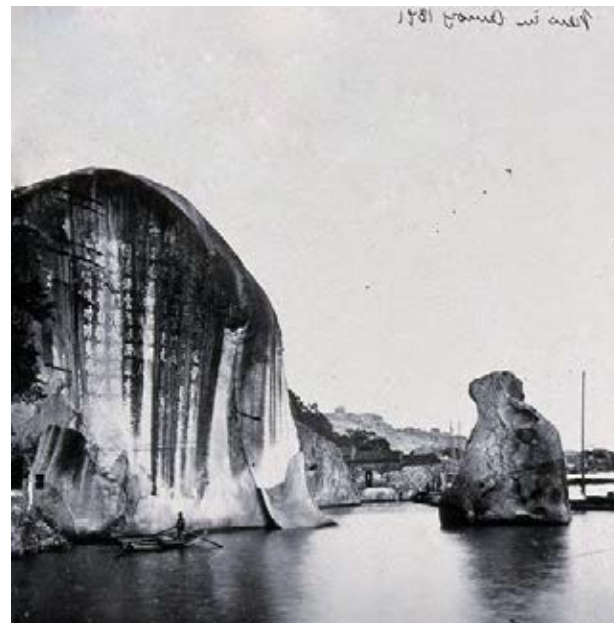
In connecting the trail of clues surrounding this intriguing painting – from the Bay of Amoy in southern China, through Europe to Amsterdam, finally concluding in north Norfolk – the true nature of the global world in the 17th and 18th centuries is revealed. While many of the works now in the care of the National Trust must surely hold similar stories of cross-cultural engagement, it is only by linking these narratives through collaborative research and scholarship that a story of Chinese piracy, the Dutch Golden Age of maritime painting and an English country house collection can be fully brought to light.

Notes

1. Now known as *Dutch East India Company and Chinese Attack on Chinese Pirates in the Bay of Xiamen (Amoy)*, 9 February 1630 by Simon de Vlieger (NT 1401166). This work measures 188 x 264.2cm. See Catherine Nunn, 'Doing Battle in China, Holland, Norfolk and Cambridge: The Treatment of a Large Painting from a Country House Collection, Simon de Vlieger's *Blockade of Amoy* (1650)', Centre for

Cultural Materials Conservation, the University of Melbourne, *AICCM Bulletin*, vol. 32, 2011.

2. The information contained in this article is the result of a collaborative effort, with several scholars and curators sharing crucial information. We would particularly like to thank Tonio Andrade, Lisa Voden-Decker, Mischa Frenks and Cheng Wei-Chung for their research and scholarship.
3. This article draws on the following sources: Tonio Andrade, *Lost Colony: The Untold Story of China's First Victory over the West*, Princeton University Press, 2011; and Cheng Wei-Chung, *War, Trade and Piracy in the China Seas, 1622–1683*, Leiden, 2013.
4. See National Trust press release: <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/felbrigg-hall-gardens-and-estate/news/detective-work-identifies-pirates-in-dutch-masterpiece> (19 March 2018).
5. Letters from Zhong Bin and Zheng Zhilong, received on 7 February 1630. See Leonard Blussé et al (eds.), *De Dagregisters van het Kasteel Zeelandia, Taiwan 1629–1662*, I, 1629–1641, The Hague, 1986, A 397.
6. *Dagregister Zeelandia*, I, A 398.
7. These insights, as well as the information about rock calligraphy below, were informed by personal correspondence with Cheng Wei-Chung, March 2018.
8. De Vlieger could, for example, have turned to Commelin, *Begin ende Voortangh* (1646), or to Piso, *Historia Naturalis Brasiliae* (1648), for images of the tropical pineapple.
9. Our search concentrated on the Delft City Archives (Stadsarchief Delft) and the resolutions of the Amsterdam Chamber of the Dutch East India Company, in Nationaal Archief, 1.04.02, inv. nr. 234.
10. J.S. Rowlinson, "'Our Common Room in Geneva" and the Early Exploration of the Alps of Savoy', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 52, no. 2, 1998, p.222.
11. According to William Windham's Grand Tour travel diary, after leaving London he and his tutor visited Rome, Venice, Florence, Naples, Geneva, Zurich, Bern, Baden, Strasburg, Cologne, Frankfurt, Koblenz, Luxembourg, Rotterdam, The Hague and Amsterdam.
12. *Accounts, Notes and Sketches re: Windham's Trip to Switzerland*, Family and Estate Papers of the Ketton-Cremer Family of Felbrigg Hall (WKC 6/31, 401X6), 1742, Norfolk Record Office.
13. Windham was also in direct correspondence with artists during his European travels, including the French miniature painter Jacques-Antoine Arlaud (1668–1743).
14. See R.W. Ketton-Cremer, *Felbrigg: The Story of a House*, London, 1952.



7. Amoy, Fukien Province, China, 1871 (enhanced): Rock calligraphy at the south-west coast of Xiamen Island, photographed by the Scottish adventurer and photographer John Thomson; the calligraphy commemorates the building of a fort 'to combat the foreigners' (i.e. the Dutch) in 1623
Photo: Wellcome Library no. 18963i

8. Grand Tour Travel Diary of William Windham II, 1741–2
Photo: Norfolk Record Office (WKC 6/31, 401X6)





1. Castle Drogo under its vast scaffolding canopy
All photos: National Trust/Tim Cambourne

Castle Drogo

Securing the future of a Lutyens masterpiece

Tim Cambourne
Senior Project Manager

Towering over the Teign Gorge near Chagford in Devon, Castle Drogo is a familiar landmark in the Dartmoor landscape. It was designed for Julius Drewe (1856–1931) by the pre-eminent architect of the period, Sir Edwin Lutyens (1869–1944). Drewe was a self-made millionaire who, with his business partner John Musker, had founded the Home & Colonial Stores, a chain of grocery stores that was so successful that Drewe was able to retire at the age of 33.

Drewe's decision to build a faux-Norman castle on Dartmoor grew out of an exploration of his family's history. Julius and his brother William engaged a professional genealogist, whose findings indicated that one of their ancestors, the Norman baron

Drogo de Teign, had given his name to the parish of Drewsteignton in the 12th century.

Although Lutyens was initially unconvinced by Drewe's grandiose scheme (writing to his wife in 1910: 'I do wish he didn't want a castle – but just a delicious loveable house with plenty of good large rooms in it'),¹ experiencing the weather on the exposed site today suggests that a castle was probably the right thing after all. A country house would doubtless have fared badly in these harsh conditions. Even Lutyens's castle, though, couldn't resist the long, slow siege of the Dartmoor weather.

A troubled history

The original build was protracted: it started in 1911 but wasn't completed until 1930. The

First World War caused works on site to slow down then cease altogether as men left in growing numbers, initially as volunteers and then, from 1916, as conscripts. There was a four-year hiatus in the build before it restarted in 1920.

The family eventually moved in in 1927, but even at that early stage Drewe wrote to Lutyens to express his concerns about leaks through the roof – foreshadowing a long history of problems with water ingress. The family tried various approaches to the castle's problems over the following years. There were several attempts to tackle the roof, regular repointing of sections of the walls and regular resealing of the windows. Unfortunately, none of these efforts achieved more than a period of respite before the leaks reappeared.

The castle was offered to the National Trust in 1973, opening to the public a year later. The water-ingress problems were well known at the time of acquisition, along with the fact that they were intrinsic to the building's design and construction. A major campaign of repairs in the early 1980s was undertaken to deal with the problems. The asphalt roofing was re-laid and the external walls repointed. Once again, however, these repairs didn't cure the long-term underlying issues.

A new approach

Inskip & Jenkins Architects were appointed in 1996 to undertake a quinquennial survey and then to analyse the issues and propose a strategy to tackle them. This was probably the first time a holistic approach had been taken to the various ingress problems. The survey identified the failures in the asphalt tanking and roofing, the inherent detailing issues, the unsuitable cement mortars in the walls, and the failure of the sealants around the windows.

There then followed an extended period of investigations and trials to select suitable materials for the major repairs required. All the trials were undertaken with the close cooperation of the Dartmoor NPA conservation officer and English Heritage/Historic England. Their invaluable input helped the design team to reach a collective decision on the way forward. The first phase of roof repairs was undertaken to the Chapel in 2006–7 and was used as a full-scale trial of the materials and specification, allowing their performance to be monitored over a period of years before deciding whether the same approach could confidently be applied to the bulk of the castle.

A new project started on site in 2013 with the aim of tackling the entire external envelope. It set out to replace the waterproofing across all the roofs with a modern membrane system; repoint all the walls with breathable hydraulic lime mortars; repair all external joinery; and remove, refurbish and reinstate all the windows.

Roofs and rainwater disposal

The first thing to note here is both the size and the complexity of the roofscape. Rather than a single roof, the castle has 28, covering an area about the size of two football pitches. The roofs are at different levels and use a variety of rainwater disposal systems.

Lutyens's design used in situ reinforced concrete slabs for the floors and roof. These were reinforced with steel filler joists at 400–450mm centres. Water ingress was increasingly putting the condition of the steelwork at risk, with serious rusting occurring in some areas.

The original asphalt covering was a very early use of the material and the detailing required wasn't well understood when it was laid. There were upstand kerbs formed against parapets and chimneys and tucked



into a mortar bed to continue through the wall as a damp-proof course. However, thermal movement in the material led to cracking of the asphalt at junctions and interfaces, leading to water ingress. Because the detailing hadn't taken into account the extent of thermal movement in the material, its failure was inevitable.

The repair approach used a membrane system designed for use in green-roof construction. This was used to replace all the asphalt coverings to flat areas and was also designed to create a continuous membrane across the whole roof. Where there were changes in level between roofs, it was therefore necessary to dismantle the granite outer skin of the wall, install the membrane and then rebuild the masonry: a huge undertaking and a major logistical challenge.

The asphalt was removed down to the concrete substrate; the roofs were then repaired as required (usually minor patching

2. The south elevation and the Chapel, where the first phase of roof repairs was undertaken in 2006–7 as a full-scale trial of the materials and specification



3. Paving on the north roof: the re-roofing project presented an opportunity to reinstate the original granite slab finish



4. The North Tower stairs, showing the complex detailing of the membrane and damp-proof course

of the concrete); then the membrane system was applied. Because this was torched on, strict 'hot-work' precautions were put in place to minimise fire risk.

Closed-cell foam insulation was laid on the membrane, designed roof-by-roof to provide the insulation level required to move the dew point above the membrane and prevent interstitial condensation. This had been a particular problem of the original design and occurs when warm, moist air from inside the building reaches the dew point, causing it to condense within the concrete slab. In effect, the new membrane and insulation system acts like a modern breathable waterproof jacket, allowing vapour to pass out without condensing, while preventing water from getting in.

Above the insulation is a drainage board made of high-density polyethylene covered in a micro-fleece and with around 35mm of clean granite chippings laid on top of it. Finally, this is overlaid with granite slabs covering the roof – the joints filled with more chippings – so the surface is free draining.

The roof was originally designed with a granite slab finish, but this had been removed after the Second World War in the belief that it was contributing to the problem of water ingress. The new design allowed us to reinstate the original architectural vision, while the slabs also fulfil the practical purpose of acting as ballast to hold the roof construction and insulation down and provide mechanical protection to the membrane below (Fig. 3).

To enable this work to happen, all the parapet walls and all other masonry above roof level had to be removed and rebuilt. Where chimneys and parapets were rebuilt, a modern polymer damp-proof course was introduced and bonded to the membrane. This material is far better suited to the massive loads imposed by the granite

masonry, which would compress the membrane and impede its performance.

The final area of redesign was the rainwater outlets. These had been designed originally in two ways depending on the location. In the North Wing, the first part of the castle to be built, traditional water chutes threw water from the roofs out through the walls. However, on the South Wing and Central Tower, sections completed after the First World War, a different approach had been used. Here, outlets in the concrete roofs ran into internal cast-iron downpipes running within the external walls in the filled cavity between the outer skins of granite.

It seems likely that the design intention changed as the build progressed. Water being shed from the roofs through the earlier rainwater chutes tended to be blown back against walls and windows, probably leading to ingress. The later internal downpipes were a much more effective solution.

Architecturally, it wasn't desirable to alter the north end of the building, so the chutes were retained, together with the lead downpipes that had been introduced in the 1980s repairs. The more effective internal downpipes were retained but augmented by changing the roof outlets to anti-vortex traps, which increase the volume of water that the downpipes can carry during heavy rainfall. Introducing additional downpipes on the elevations was ruled out because of their visual impact.

Masonry

In order to install the roof membrane, as described above, it was necessary to remove all built structure above roof level. This entailed taking over 3,500 granite blocks, weighing anything up to 1.4 tonnes each, off the building. Every stone was numbered, taken to ground level, stored

and subsequently returned to its original location – in all, this represented around 20 per cent of the castle’s masonry.

Remarkably, considering the water issues, only one stone had to be replaced completely. A relatively small number had to be pinned together before they were replaced, but the vast majority were returned to their original locations without the need for repair. The external granite originally came from nearby Blackenstone Quarry. It is one of the densest Dartmoor granites and one of the few stones hard enough to withstand local conditions.

The problems with the walls were more the result of misguided maintenance than issues with the original design. Generally, the walls are constructed of two skins of granite with vertical asphalt tanking applied to the outer face of the inner leaf. The core is filled with a tightly packed mix of rubble in a mortar matrix. The original bedding and

pointing mix used locally sourced, washed river sand in a lime mortar, gauged with a small amount of early Portland cement to create a hybrid mix. However, the various programmes of repointing work carried out over the course of the 20th century used a modern, Portland-cement-based mix, which was much harder and more brittle than the original. Because this wasn’t breathable, it trapped moisture behind it, which then moved through the wall to the interior.

In the early 1980s campaign of repairs to the walls and roof, nearly all remaining original pointing was raked out and deep-pointed using a cementitious, waterproof mortar. At the time it was believed that the exposure of the site was leading to wind-driven rain penetrating the walls, and that a waterproof barrier was required. While that was an understandable conclusion, the hard mortar and granite masonry were expanding and contracting at different

rates. A shrinkage crack opened up between the top edge of the pointing and the stone course above, allowing water to enter by capillary action, saturating the bedding mortar and being pulled back into the core of the wall.

The solution was to completely repoint the whole building with a hydraulic lime mortar mix. Around 64km of joints were painstakingly raked out, cleaned and repointed. New mortars, matched in appearance to samples of Lutyens’s mortars that had survived on the North Tower, were developed using hydraulic lime as the binder.

The existing cementitious pointing, up to 75mm deep in some areas, had to be removed. It was very hard and dense and needed to be stitch-drilled out (removed by drilling a series of adjacent holes) in some sections, although in general the raking out was done by hand to avoid

the risk of damaging the arris of the granite blocks – a mammoth undertaking.

The walls were also badly stained and discoloured by micro-biological growth and, in several locations, by calcite deposits that had washed out of the wall core. These areas were cleaned using specialist high-pressure steam and light abrasive masonry cleaning systems, developed for the historic environment. The result unifies the building’s appearance. While the stone currently looks very clean, the walls will soon weather. There are no plans to repeat the cleaning process, this being a one-off treatment designed to avoid the patchy appearance that would have resulted from selective cleaning.

Windows

The castle has 913 individual casements, a mixture of fixed leaded lights and opening brass casements with leaded lights fixed into them. They are either bedded directly into the stone surrounds, in the case of fixed lights, or for the brass casements (Fig. 5), mechanically fixed. In both cases the windows were sealed at the perimeter with linseed oil putty, originally tinted to a nut-brown colour intended to blend with the brass frame once the latter had tarnished. Unfortunately, the exposure of the building meant that the putty failed. As might be expected, it gradually hardened and became brittle, allowing water and particularly wind-driven rain to get in around the frames.

In addition, the leaded lights themselves had deteriorated. A century in the Dartmoor weather had taken its toll on the lead and the windows were in poor repair. Over the years many attempts had been made to stop the water ingress, including the application of mastics, tapes and cement mortar, but none of these approaches had solved the issue.



5. The castle’s 913 individual casements are difficult and expensive to access and maintain

The severity of the water ingress was largely dependent on the orientation and condition of each window. Penetration occurred at the junction of the frame and the granite surround, where the putty had failed due to age and exposure. Water also passed between the lead comes (the slender, grooved bars of milled lead that secure the small glass panes or ‘quarries’) and the glazing where the lead comes had started to break down and the glazing cement had failed or was lost.

The solution was to remove every light, carefully numbering them for location, and dismantling them in the workshop (including numbering the quarries to be refitted later), scrapping any lead comes that were no longer fit for purpose. The brass frames were blast-cleaned with an aluminium oxide grit to remove dirt and corrosion.

The lights were then rebuilt with refurbished ironmongery, new lead comes, and with the original glass reinstated, before being refitted in their original openings. The sealant used was a silicone mastic specially manufactured in the nut-brown colour to match the original. It will have several advantages: it has a ‘through-colour’, so there is no decorative coating to degrade; it is composed of a flexible material that won’t perish like linseed oil putty; and it has a much-increased lifespan. The latter is especially important because the windows are so difficult and expensive to access and maintain. It will be interesting to see, over time, how the mastic performs on the south- and west-facing windows, which are scoured by the weather, in comparison to the east side, which is much less exposed.

Survival assured

The project has been long and fraught with difficulty. The sheer exposure of the site was probably underestimated at the outset and the more extreme weather events we now

6. The kitchen lantern (lower right) and exposed dumb waiter: the complex construction of the outer granite skin of the walls is clearly evident

seem to experience – particularly violent winter storms – combined to delay progress. Further complicating the project, the main contractor for the Phase 2 works to the South Wing and Central Tower unfortunately went into receivership, leaving not only a gap in the programme, but also a range of complex issues to unpick and complete. Then, in the final year of the project, the Covid pandemic hit, causing a further delay of several months.

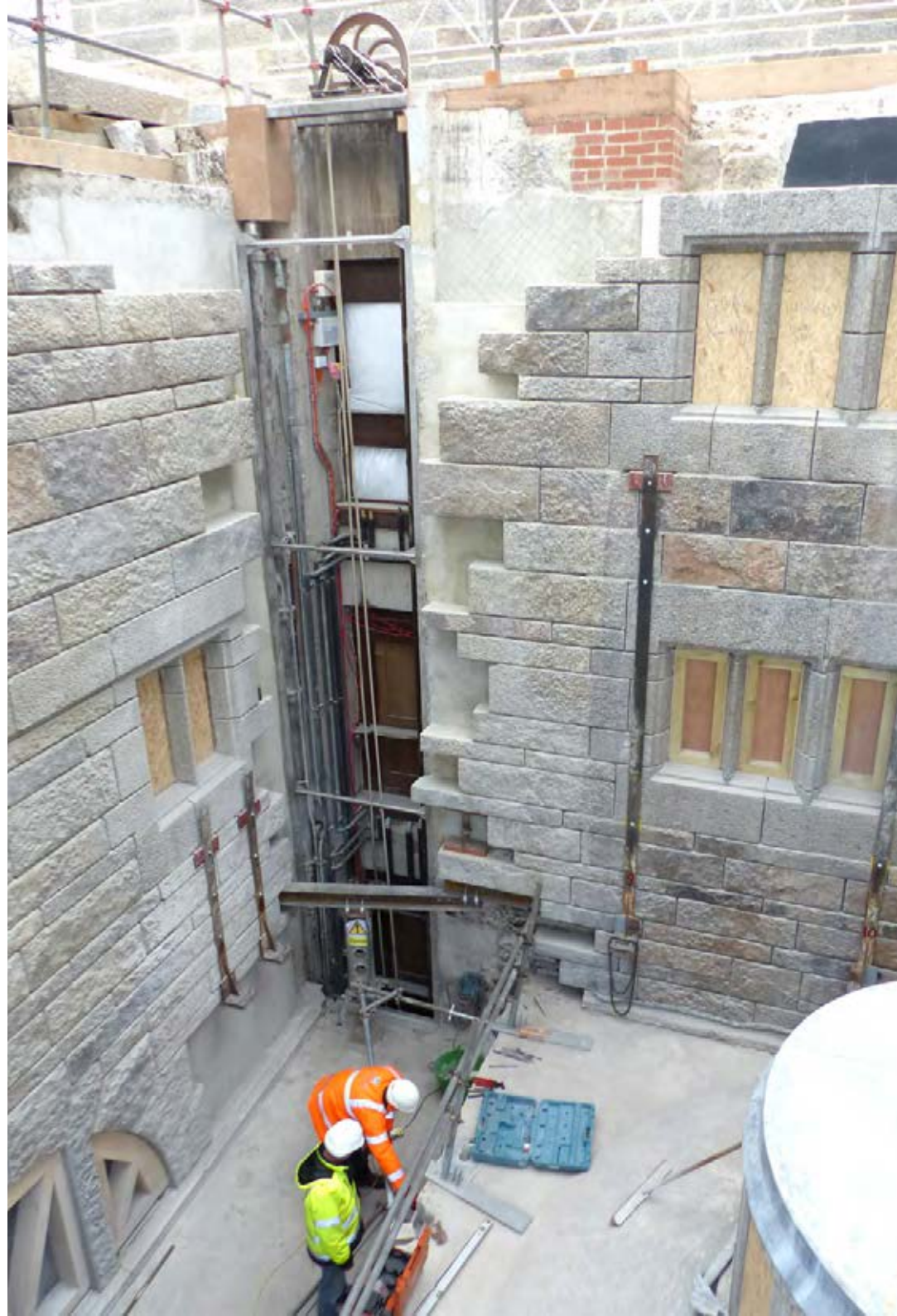
The project was completed in March 2021 at a total cost of £16m. Ongoing works will be required to the building because of its construction and location, but with the completed repairs Castle Drogo is far better protected and its survival is finally assured.

Despite the scale of the project, which required large enclosed scaffolds and massive disruption to the interior, the castle remained open throughout. Ultimately, the project presented an opportunity to share the castle’s history in a new way. A scaffold viewing platform was installed above the level of the roof so visitors could climb a scaffold stair and see the work in progress. Volunteers manned the platform to explain the work and answer questions. It proved highly successful and many visitors returned regularly to track the project’s progress.

This project was made possible by the generous support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Interreg, DCMS, the Historic Houses Foundation and the Wolfson Foundation, together with many individual donors and the Castle Drogo Fundraising Committee.

Notes

1. Quoted in Robert Brown, ‘Drewe [formerly Drew], Julius Charles (1856–1931)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition [accessed 12 March 2021].



Re-presenting Castle Drogo's magnificent interiors

Ben Dale

Collections & House Manager,
Dartmoor Portfolio

As the building project entered its final phases, staff at the property were able to begin putting into practice their plans for the re-presentation of the interior. The Project Team sought expert input from subject advisors and curators as well as drawing on advice from the Architectural Panel. The aim was to use the opportunity of re-display to emphasise the powerful Lutyens architecture and to engage visitors with the stories of Drogo and the Drewe family through the property's largely associated collection. This includes a bespoke collection of Lutyens-designed furniture and fittings. Photographs published in *Country Life* magazine in the 1920s showing the entertaining spaces, as well as mid-20th-century images of the more intimate rooms, were used for reference, together with family recollections.

With the emphasis on architecture, the first challenge was to ensure that interior spaces were presented to a high standard through repair and painting of finishes damaged by years of water ingress (see main article above). After paint analysis, a shade of white was selected that was close to the original. In the Drawing Room, the only space with colour-painted panelling, the paint was colour-matched, and damaged areas, typically around window seats that were still in use, were restored. Replica seat

cushions were made to allow visitors to sit down, while also retaining an original on display. The two large Venetian chandeliers (Fig. 1) were removed piece by piece, washed and conserved by removing discoloured historic glue repairs and re-attaching the pieces with clear, conservation-grade adhesive. To improve light levels in the Dining Room, the paintings were fitted with picture lights, re-introducing a historic scheme removed many years previously due to failed wiring behind the panelling.

The Library, which is the second room on the visitor route, was re-presented to introduce the property and building project early on in the castle visit. Original sofas and chairs were relocated and replaced with similar versions that visitors can use while they watch an introductory film. In time, and as funds allow, it is hoped that this can be shown in a separate building so that visitors can view it before they enter the castle, earlier in the wider-property experience.

In the intimate family rooms, the co-curation group of staff and volunteers had planned to introduce the stories of different family members through representative objects, many of them typically overlooked. The need to incorporate social distancing, however, has meant distributing these items along the visitor route instead, accompanied by short interpretive descriptions.

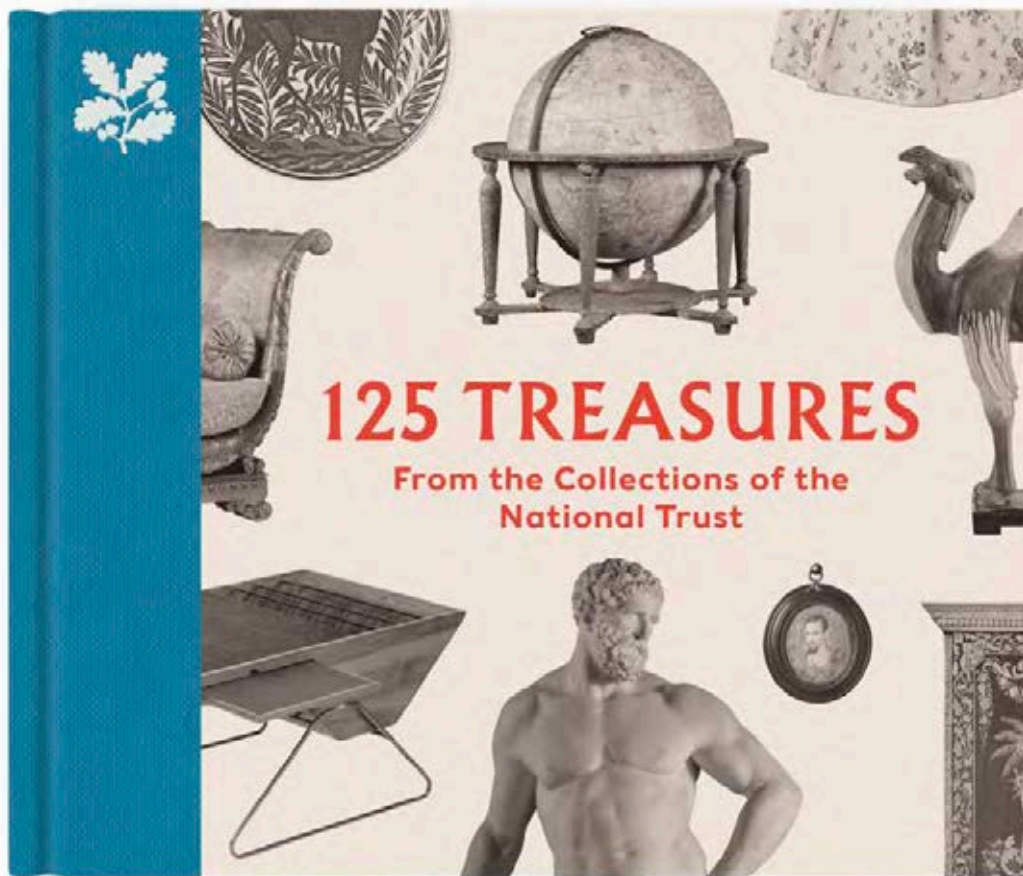


1. One of a pair of Venetian chandeliers (NT 900774) in the Drawing Room, which have been cleaned and repaired
Photo: National Trust/
Ben Dale

In the Bedroom, we have taken the opportunity to engage with a question of authenticity: almost all of the objects depicted in a mid-20th-century image of the room remain in the collection, with the notable exception of a four-poster bed. Visitors are being asked to share their views on how to fill this empty space: by introducing a similar bed, by using a less-impressive but associated bed from the collection that is currently in store, by using the space to engage differently with property stories, or by using it for something else. Visitors' feedback over the course of this year will inform the outcome and a video

'monolith' in the space of the missing bed is being used to elicit their responses.

One large project that was researched but not implemented in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic was the replacement of the castle's numerous staircase carpets, many of which are displaying signs of wear. This remains a future ambition as finances recover, but careful repositioning of existing carpet has improved the worst-affected areas. The team is looking forward to the arrival in June 2021 of a replica woven carpet for the Entrance Hall, based on the original in the *Country Life* images and replacing a modern introduction with a different design and colour scheme.



125 Treasures

From the Collections of the National Trust

Tarnya Cooper

This beautifully illustrated book brings together a selection of 125 highlights from the collections of the National Trust – one of the largest and most significant holdings of fine-art and heritage objects in the world.

Filled with a wealth of new photography, this engaging publication introduces the National Trust’s vast collections – a treasure chest of history. Progressing chronologically from Roman sculpture to 20th-century design, the book focuses on museum-quality objects as well as important examples of decorative arts, furniture, textiles and items with fascinating stories behind them. Ranging from Cardinal Wolsey’s purse to Rodin’s bust of George Bernard Shaw, the entries are accompanied by illuminating extended captions.

With a foreword by Hilary McGrady, Director-General of the National Trust, and an introduction by Tarnya Cooper, the Trust’s Curation and Conservation Director, the book is based on research carried out by curators and specialist researchers from across the organisation. The book concludes with a timeline of key moments in the Trust’s history and a list of properties housing important collections items.



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