



THE ROYAL OAK

Americans in Alliance with the National Trust of
England, Wales and Northern Ireland

FOUNDATION

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Fall 2017



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Dear Members & Friends,

When I joined the Royal Oak Foundation in mid-May I noted that I long admired the work done in supporting the preservation efforts of the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In fact, financial support is at Royal Oak's core. That was reinforced over the past year as the Board of Directors worked with a respected non-profit consultant to develop a strategic plan that included a revised mission statement and a new position dedicated to development (see below). The plan provides a road map for change and growth, building on many of the things that makes Royal Oak a respected resource for its members while becoming a more valued partner to the National Trust.



Organizational growth and change is very exciting. It is business "not" as usual that makes coming to work different every day. At Royal Oak, I see a Board and a staff that has the experience and interest to evaluate what is working well and what could be better, and the willingness and energy to experiment and try new things. My earlier career in museum management and business was often focused on growth and change, so leading Royal Oak through this process will be both comfortable and challenging.

Getting more people deeply involved in what Royal Oak is doing with the National Trust is critical to our success. Membership is where that engagement begins. Recent member surveys tell us that providing support for Royal Oak is among the top reasons why people join and renew. When we then look at the loyalty and longevity of our membership, we can be hopeful that changing the Royal Oak culture to one based on philanthropy is achievable.

In my first 100 days, I have reviewed and read lots of Royal Oak documents. One that particularly

resonated outlined three organizational values: Access, Community and Impact. We have used these values to organize this newsletter. Access to National Trust properties is fundamental to all levels of membership (see page 14), and Access to what is current at Sissinghurst gardens (see page 3 and 4) is information you can use for travel and for gardening at home. Community brings people together with common interests for programs and trips (see pages 9-10) and for creating unique experiences for select groups and patrons (see pages 2 and 13).

Thirdly, we encourage you to read about the Impact that Royal Oak fundraising provides for fellowships, scholarships and the next generation of members (see pages 5-8). Finally, making a significant Impact is what drives us in the last stage of Royal Oak's appeal to "Keep Churchill at Chartwell" (see page 12).

With more than 16,000 Royal Oak members, many of whom travel regularly to National Trust properties, we want to hear about your experiences. The article on Sutton Hoo (see page 11) is from a long-time member. We ask you to consider sharing your National Trust visiting experience with fellow members and us! We welcome the chance to keep building our Royal Oak community.

I look forward to meeting you in the months ahead at our programs and events. Best wishes for a happy fall and a joyous holiday.

Sincerely,

David Nathans
Executive Director & CEO



Introducing Greg Joye

In September, Royal Oak welcomed Greg Joye, its new Director of Development. Greg has 15 years' experience in executive leadership roles in fundraising, programming and events at institutions including New York City Opera, the French Heritage Society, and both the American Friends of the Louvre and Orsay Museums. A native of South Carolina, Greg studied Music at the College of Charleston before pursuing two Masters degrees in History and Arts Management. He has also lived and led cultural tours in Sussex and London.



Introducing Christina de Gersdorff

In June, Royal Oak welcomed Christina de Gersdorff as Program Coordinator. Christina most recently worked at Christie's as a specialist in the Impressionist & Modern and American Art departments and has experience in development at The Trustees of the Reservation. She holds a B.A. in Art History and German from Union College, and a M.A. in Art History from Hunter College. Christina became a life-long Anglophile during a 2012 road trip from London to Cornwall, stopping at several NT properties along the way.



A view of the celebrated terraced garden at Powis Castle and Garden, Powys, Wales

Royal Oak 2017 House & Garden Tour

by Ian Murray

In early June, I accompanied a select group of Royal Oak members on the **2017 House and Garden Tour to Shropshire and The Welsh Borders** where we spent five days enjoying magnificent gardens and experiencing exclusive visits to a few National Trust properties and some private homes. Our group departed London via luxury coach and we made our way to Weston Park, a 17th-century country house located near Shropshire that sits on more than 1,000 acres of park landscaped by the renowned 18th-century landscape architect, Capability Brown. Weston Park served as the groups' home base and it was an accommodating and comfortable one, indeed.

We were fortunate to have as our tour leader, Gareth Williams, who has more than 25 years' experience with historic house research and architecture and is himself a "Shropshire man." His wealth of knowledge about the history of the area and the individual properties, and his engaging attitude made for an informative and enjoyable excursion for everyone.

Each day was fully scheduled with the right mix of home visits and exquisite gardens. The Shropshire countryside, with its grand estates and extensive agricultural lands, can be rainy (there is a reason why it is so green, after all), but the weather fully cooperated and



A view of Woolerton Old Hall Garden, Woolerton

fortunately seemed to only turn poorly when we were touring the interiors of the homes.

Some highlights at the National Trust properties we visited included Attingham's restored picture gallery and Powis Castle's intricate terraced garden. Other memorable visits included Cound Hall with its unique "floating" staircase, and the lovingly-tended Arts & Crafts style garden at Wollerton Old Hall Garden.

A truly stand-out feature of the trip was the opportunity to meet the owners of some private homes that are not generally open to the public. Many of these homes have been in the same family for several generations. The owners were welcoming and gave us behind-the-scenes tours of their properties and regaled us with stories about their families' history and notable items in their homes.

Of course, we required sustenance to keep us going throughout the week and the group enjoyed breakfast, lunch, and dinner of excellent English fare that was often locally sourced and beautifully prepared by the staff at Weston Park. A few of us even braved the kippers for breakfast! 🐟

Watch for information coming later this year about our late May 2018 Garden Tour.



The renovated Picture Gallery at Attingham Park, Shropshire

Sissinghurst Renewed: Revitalizing Vita Sackville-West's Garden

by Jennie L. McCahey



The Moat Walk at Sissinghurst Castle Garden

This fall, The Royal Oak Foundation is delighted to welcome National Trust's Sissinghurst Castle Gardens Head Gardener Troy Scott Smith to lecture about the iconic Kent garden to Royal Oak audiences in New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago.

Troy began his gardening career in 1987, creating gardens in both the United Kingdom and France, and joined the National Trust in 1990. Apart from one year as the Curator for The Royal Horticultural Society, he has been caring for Trust gardens ever since.

The Sissinghurst gardens was created by writers Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson beginning in the 1930s, and is now owned by the National Trust. It is held dear in the hearts of millions of garden aficionados and is considered the quintessential model of a romantic 20th-century English country garden. It is one of the top five most popular sites visited by Royal Oak members.



Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicholson at Sissinghurst Castle Garden



The Lime Walk in April at Sissinghurst Castle Garden

Troy explains that he had his first encounter with Sissinghurst more than 25 years ago when he worked for five years at the property as a gardener. He wrote in *The English Garden* magazine, "However, I had no thought then, that one day I would return, and be responsible for the garden!" Instead, he went to work for the National Trust at Bodnant Garden in North Wales where he led a £3.4 restoration over seven years.

When he arrived back at Sissinghurst as Head Gardener in April 2013, Troy says, "along with the immense privilege of gardening within these six acres, I was also immediately aware of the responsibility and huge challenge that goes with it."

Once a Saxon pig farm during the 16th century, the land and Tudor buildings were then

used as a prison in the 18th century, a poor house in the early 19th century, and by 1855, the estate was transformed into a Victorian farm. After Vita and Harold purchased Sissinghurst in 1930, they spent 30 years turning it into a refuge dedicated to their vision of natural beauty.

Troy has the seemingly daunting task of conserving this world-renowned garden in the manner of these noteworthy creators, long after their deaths. He admits, that before starting, he studied the distinctiveness of Sissinghurst as well as Vita and Harold's characters; not only their gardening style, but their philosophy, taste, motives, interests, constraints and ideas.

When Vita first had laid eyes on the empty plot, she wrote: "It caught instantly at my heart

WINTER GARDENS

Many English gardens are designed to delight even in the colder months. Below is a sampling:

Anglesey Abbey, Garden and Lode Mill, Cambridgeshire

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/anglesey-abbey-gardens-and-lode-mill/features/winter-garden

Dunham Massey, Cheshire

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/dunham-massey-is-the-stamford-military-hospital/features/the-winter-garden-at-dunham-massey

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden, North Yorkshire

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/fountains-abbey-and-studley-royal-water-garden

Mottisfont, Hampshire

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mottisfont/features/the-winter-garden-at-mottisfont

Polesden Lacey, Surrey

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/polesden-lacey/features/graham-stewart-thomas-winter-garden-at-polesden-lacey

Stowe, Buckinghamshire

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stowe/features/the-garden-at-stowe



Oxford Bridge at Stowe, Buckinghamshire

and my imagination. I fell in love; love at first sight..." Indeed for Vita, gardening was about romance, emotion and intimacy—all qualities that Troy wants to highlight for visitors.

Vita designed the garden with, as she described, a strict "formality of design, with the maximum informality in planting." Troy explains that Vita and Harold intended the garden as a place for their own pleasure and enjoyment and softened architectural elements such as borders, hedges, and walls with exuberant plantings. "They liked colorful carpets of small plants in lavish abundance." This abundance was part of Vita's distinctive planting philosophy. "Cram, cram, cram, every chink and cranny," she wrote on May 15, 1955, "My liking for gardens to be lavish is an inherent part of my garden philosophy. I like generosity wherever I find it. I hate to see things scrimp and scrubby."

Experimentation and renewal were part of the life of their garden—Vita and Harold experimented with shapes, colors, and textures while seasonally rejuvenating



The Rose Garden in May at Sissinghurst Castle Garden

Sissinghurst gardens with new varieties and fresh ideas.

Though many of their innovative details and plantings remain half a century after their deaths, design changes, as well as visitors numbering in the hundreds of thousands, have led to an overall tone and look that has changed the garden from the original.

Troy declares that his mission at Sissinghurst is to "understand what we've got and reassess what we do, gardening in a way that seeks to recapture the distinctive qualities of Vita and Harold's Sissinghurst; a more reflective, romantic, slower, deeper place than much of what the modern Sissinghurst has become."

By abandoning modern rigid plantings, Troy wants Sissinghurst to again be an emotional experience. He intends to create "a garden of

timeless quality, where flower borders bloom in unorthodox exuberance and roses tumble from the walls in lavish swags. Past, present and future should all equally co-exist."

In his lectures, Troy will talk to Royal Oak audiences about his work at Sissinghurst and illustrate his implementation of this relaxed approach to pruning and training—allowing for the looser, more natural look Vita so enjoyed. He will also illustrate how he and the other seven gardeners are revitalizing Vita and Harold's plan so "that the original style and spirit of the garden will be maintained, refined, enriched and enhanced." As he explains, "it is only with deep absorption and close affinity with the place that the true Sissinghurst will emerge from under the duvet." 🌹

GARDEN LIKE VITA & HAROLD

1. Plan a strict, formal design for your garden, but fill those areas with a variety of plants and flowers in a loose planting scheme.
2. Soften walls and fences with climbing plants such as clematis, roses, wisteria and fig.
3. Create a carpet of color by filling the space with masses of small plantings.
4. Don't skimp on flowers. Although flowers do get bigger and spread out as they grow, more is better.
5. Do experiment with color, shape and texture. Container gardens are a great place to try out new ideas.





Royal Oak Fellowships: Making an Impact on Conservation Education and Landscape History and Gardening

Raising awareness and funds to support the National Trust's preservation efforts is at the core of Royal Oak's mission. The Foundation recognizes that perpetuating the of architects, curators, conservationists, preservationists and historians is a crucial step to safeguarding historically significant treasures and keeping them open to the public.

Royal Oak offers a variety of educational and career advancement programs which give American students and young professionals special access to the National Trust in different ways. In this article, and in the ones on pages 7 and 8, is a review of Royal Oak's educational programs and initiatives, and how they benefit our participants, the National Trust and the preservation of British culture.

Royal Oak Fellowships

Royal Oak has established two programs – the Nigel Seeley Fellowship and the Damaris Horan Fellowship – to give access to deserving American students and young professionals in the fields of conservation and landscape history and gardening, respectively. These biennial fellowships are designed to directly benefit the National Trust sites at which our Royal Oak fellows work, while giving them the opportunity to learn from skilled specialists.

The Nigel Seeley Fellowship

The Nigel Seeley Fellowship was established in 2016 in partnership with the National Trust and generously endowed by Royal Oak patron Katherine Singley of Decatur, Georgia. It was founded in honor of Dr. Nigel Seeley, the National Trust's Head of Conservation from 1989 to 2002 under whom Katherine studied. Dr. Seeley was a British conservation scientist who also held the positions of Head of Department of Archaeological Conservation and Materials Science at the Institute of Archaeology at London University (1974-1989); Surveyor of Conservation at the National Trust (1989-99), and was an Honorary Research Fellow at University College London (1992-2003).

The Fellowship was created to provide training and educational opportunities at a National Trust property for individuals with a professional interest in the preservation of historic interiors, finishes, and collections. It is awarded to professionals who have careers in the fields of conservation, heritage craftsmanship, collection management, environmental engineering, lighting, and even pest management.

The Nigel Seeley fellowship is the newest fellowship program at Royal Oak, and was awarded last year to Allison Jackson, a freelance gilding conservator. Our spring

2017 newsletter featured an article by Allison where she recounts her experience at an eight-week conservation project she worked on at Knole House, Kent. Her project focused on assessing the condition of a set of 17th-century gilded and upholstered furniture in the Ballroom and then developing a treatment plan for them. We are proud to announce that Allison has been selected as one of five speakers to speak at this year's fall New England Conservation Society meeting where she will present her experience as the 2016 Royal Oak Nigel Seeley Fellow.

The Damaris Horan Fellowship

Royal Oak's Damaris Horan Fellowship provides talented Americans with a serious interest in landscape history and gardening a chance to experience the National Trust first-hand. Royal Oak is grateful to the National Trust for offering this educational opportunity and to The Mudge Foundation for making this biennial fellowship possible through its generous support. The fellowship is named in honor of the former Royal Oak Executive Director who served the Foundation from 1987 to 2003.

From 2005 to 2015, our Royal Oak Damaris Horan Fellows have worked on a variety of projects located at different National



Aerial view of the sunset over Dinefwr Castle, Wales

Trust properties. Upon completion of their fellowships, our participants shared positive feedback with Royal Oak about both the significance of their work during their fellowships and the impact their Horan Fellowship experience has had on their professional lives. We share some of those experiences here.

Justin Kegley – 2015 Horan Fellow

During his fellowship, Justin used cutting-edge drone photography to document Lancelot “Capability” Brown landscapes protected by the National Trust. The footage was used in 2016 in conjunction with the 300th anniversary celebration of Brown’s birth. Justin is not only an experienced filmmaker, but has also worked as a landscaper; and these overlapping areas of expertise informed his fellowship engagement. Justin explains, “Both disciplines have helped me to think in terms of three-dimensional space being reduced to two-dimensional images: how do I convey that sense of three-dimensional space in a two-dimensional visual medium? That [was the] challenge of this video project. Only a few months ago, I never would have anticipated such an opportunity for cultural exchange and technological creativity. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your interest and support!” The aerial photograph shown

here was taken by Justin and one can see an excerpt of his film on Royal Oak’s website at www.royal-oak.org/support/scholarships. Justin is now a filmmaker and editor in New York.

Phyllis Odessey – 2011 Horan Fellow

Phyllis worked on sustainable gardening techniques and traditional methods of maintenance employed both at Nymans in West Sussex, England, and at Hidcote in Gloucestershire, England. She also worked with Nymans’ Assistant Head Gardener, Philip Holmes, on a database and research project. Phyllis wrote, “The cliché, ‘It was a life-changing experience,’ is not an exaggeration. The Horan Fellowship changed the course of my career [and] widened my contacts in the horticultural world. At Nymans, Ed Ikin, Head Gardener,

arranged many side trips. One of these trips was to visit Professor James Hitchmough, Head of Landscape Department at the University of Sheffield. After meeting James, I knew I wanted to work with him in a more intensive way. The following year, I received a Professional Development Scholarship from Chanticleer Garden in Pennsylvania. I then went to Sheffield and worked with James. This was a direct result of being a recipient of the Horan Fellowship.” Phyllis now has a garden design studio located in Marlboro, Vermont and New York City.

Betsy Anderson – 2007 Horan Fellow

Betsy worked with the National Trust’s Plant Conservation Programme (PCP) at Knightshayes in Devon, England. Her role was to support the work of the PCP and raise awareness about the Trust’s plant collection through a series of articles written about significant plants in National Trust gardens. This involved travel to various gardens throughout England and Northern Ireland, as well as archival research and interviews conducted with current and former head gardeners and plant collectors. In her summation of her experience, Betsy wrote, “The Horan Fellowship had an immeasurable impact on my life and career, in particular for the ways it deepened and widened my views of preservation and conservation. During my time with the National Trust, I was especially impressed by the organization’s ability to breathe life into sites of cultural heritage. As a landscape historian, future landscape architect, and intern with the National Park Service, I draw on this awareness daily. I am currently completing a master’s thesis that illustrates the vital necessity of ensuring that our historic sites evolve with their ecological, social, economic, and cultural contexts.” Betsy is now a Landscape Architect at the National Parks Service in Washington State. 🌿

Applications for The Nigel Seeley Fellowship will soon be open. For more information on the project, application process and deadlines, please contact the Royal Oak Foundation at (212) 480-2889, ext.212 or gjoye@royal-oak.org



Royal Oak Scholars Have an Illuminating Experience

by Leslie Fitzpatrick

Thanks to the generosity of The Royal Oak Foundation, four scholars—Zara Anishanslin of the University of Delaware, Courtney Harris of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Gina Guzzon Lewis of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and I—were able to attend the Attingham Summer School as 2017 Royal Oak Foundation Scholars. We joined a group of 44 museum and historic house curators, decorative arts specialists, university professors, designers, and conservators hailing from five continents on an intensive and utterly enlightening 18-day program of lectures and visits to country houses in Northamptonshire, West Sussex, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Gloucestershire, and Oxfordshire.

For many years, enthusiastic graduates of the Attingham Summer School, which has promoted a close study of English country houses since 1952, have described the program as transformational, relating that there is life “BA” and “AA”—before Attingham and after Attingham. During my time working as the Assistant Research Curator on the Art Institute of Chicago’s (AIC) 2015 exhibition *Ireland: Crossroads of Art and Design, 1690-1840*—which focused on Irish country houses, patrons, and collectors—the exhibition’s curator, Christopher Monkhouse (Att ’66), often referenced Attingham for its pertinence to the exhibition, from the artistic pursuits of women in the country house to the acquisition of sculpture and Old Master paintings on Grand Tours. My experience working on *Ireland*—and meeting the many Attingham alumni who visited the exhibition—only strengthened my desire to attend this venerable and beloved course.

While the study of country house architecture and collections provided endless opportunities to make connections with one’s own field of study, it was the time spent touring houses and attending lectures with a group of like-minded professionals and the camaraderie that ensued that made the program truly special. To visit Woburn

Abbey and have an impromptu talk by fellow student Christine Riding, Head of Arts and Curator of the Queen’s House of the Royal Museums Greenwich, in front of one of the three remaining *Armada Portraits* of Elizabeth I was a dream. Other sublime moments were provided by classmates Jacqui Ansell of Christie’s Education, who shared with us her extensive knowledge of the history of dress; a real-time demonstration of decorative lime and gypsum plasterwork from independent curator Jenny Saunt; and a spontaneous and moving aria sung by André Tavares, Professor at the Federal University of São Paulo, in the Blenheim Palace chapel.

Talks and tours by outside specialists were also illuminating. A superb lecture on architect Robert Adam by Adriano Aymonino the evening before our visit to Kedleston Hall deepened our understanding of Adam’s work during the visit, and a lecture by historian Adam Bowett on the importation of exotic woods into England between 1600 and 1900 explained the origin of the materials in objects so many of us work with daily.

Other moments during the course stand out as particularly meaningful. Given the AIC’s strong holdings of English Arts and Crafts textiles and decorative arts, visits to the Philip Webb-designed and National Trust’s Standen House and Garden in West Sussex and Kelmscott Manor, William Morris’s Gloucestershire home, will allow me to better understand and contextualize the objects in our collection. Similarly, the AIC is one of the few museums in the United States to have an example of the work of the 17th century woodcarver Grinling Gibbons; seeing his work at Petworth House and Park and at Chatsworth was important to my understanding of his oeuvre. As this AIC work—an overmantel from Cassiobury Park, Hertfordshire—has not been on view since the 1970s, we have just undertaken an analysis of the needs for its future display. The timing of my visits could not



Royal Oak Scholars (from left to right) Leslie Fitzpatrick, Zara Anishanslin, Gina Guzzon Lewis, and Courtney Harris in front of the National Trust’s Hardwick

have been more perfect. One of the most captivating discussions may have been at Firle Place, in which Sara Medlam, furniture historian and Curator Emeritus of the V&A, Dame Rosalind Savill, Sèvres specialist and former director of the Wallace Collection, and Deborah Gage, independent scholar, “walked us through” their collaborative (and ongoing) investigations into the history of the Pansanger Cabinets, which are now firmly attributed to Thomas Chippendale. The importance of consulting colleagues across disciplines to solve longstanding art historical mysteries was not lost on anyone.

Finally, the gardens that we saw cannot be overlooked. National Trust’s Nymans Gardens’ collection of plants of the world and forward-thinking collection management strategy, as well as a much-appreciated warm welcome from Stewart Grimshaw at the magnificent National Trust’s Woolbeding Gardens, were especially memorable.

I cannot overstate the impact that the Attingham Summer School course has made on my ability to understand and interpret the objects with which I work. I speak for all The Royal Oak Foundation Scholars in offering my most heartfelt thanks to the Foundation for the opportunity to participate in this singular program. 🌿

Leslie Fitzpatrick is an Assistant Curator of European Decorative Arts at The Art Institute of Chicago.

Royal Oak Scholars make an impact across many disciplines and at institutions countrywide. Here is a partial list of jobs that they have held or currently hold, and in parentheses, the year they became a Scholar.

Curator of Decorative Arts and Design Carnegie Museum of Art, PA (2008)

Director Rienzi Center for European Decorative Arts Museum of Fine Arts Houston, TX (2004)

Curator The White House, Washington, D.C. (2003)

Senior Vice President Historic Preservation and Collections George Washington’s Mount Vernon, VA (2002)

Associate Curator of Furniture Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, VA (1999)

President The Garden Conservancy Cold Spring, NY (1993)

Director of Interpretation and Estate Historian Winterthur Museum, DE (1992)

Professor of Architecture & Chair Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, School of Design, University of Pennsylvania, PA (1984)

Student/Young Professional Memberships

by Jan Lizza

In 2011, Royal Oak created a new category of membership called Student/Young Professional (SYP). As its name would suggest, this was a digital membership geared towards a younger demographic and priced accordingly. The idea was to provide an affordable introduction to the history and culture of Great Britain through first-hand experience of the vast and varied holdings of the National Trust.

A year later, at the encouragement of Michael Boyd, a Royal Oak Director, the Foundation began to sponsor complimentary SYP memberships for Rhodes, Marshall and Fulbright scholars whose programs of study take place in the UK. The Fulbright scholar program continues today.

In 2013, Robert Daum, another Board member, volunteered to underwrite SYP memberships for college students from Colgate University (his alma mater) who would be taking a semester or year abroad to study in Britain; thus began the membership drive we call the Directors' Initiative. In the intervening years,

other Directors have participated in this program, including Betsy Barbanell, Elizabeth Duggal, Ian Hooper, Katherine Kanaga, Lynne Rickabaugh and Susan Samuelson. They have generously contributed student memberships for undergraduates at Boston University, Columbia, Sarah Lawrence, Tufts and Vassar.

Royal Oak has many loyal members for whom the National Trust and its mission to preserve and protect Britain's natural and built heritage holds great meaning. They return again and again to explore and enjoy the country's historic landmarks, beautiful countryside and coastline, people and culture. A Royal Oak SYP membership gives young scholars and professionals the opportunity to explore amazing properties and to form a connection with the National Trust that they will hopefully continue to cultivate in years to come. 🇬🇧

If you would like to join our Directors' Initiative and underwrite SYP memberships at your alma mater, contact Jan Lizza at 212.480.2889, ext 205 or jlizza@royal-oak.org.

“As a History Major, I understand the importance of being able to learn about and experience the history of other cultures. I am extremely excited to use this membership and was amazed at how many sites are available to Royal Oak members. ...I especially look forward to visiting the White Cliffs of Dover and Chartwell. Once again, thank you for your support during this study abroad experience. I know that I will think of your generosity each time that I visit one of the [National Trust's] historic sites.”

— L. Stauffer, Vassar student who spent her junior year abroad at the London School of Economics and Political Science



Colgate University students with Professor of English, Linck Johnson at the National Trusts' Sandham Memorial Chapel, Hampshire

Fall 2017 Royal Oak Calendar

Since its founding in 1973, Royal Oak has brought some of Britain's most respected scholars to the United States to lecture on a wide range of topics regarding National Trust properties, British history, architecture and design, decorative arts and garden design. This seasons' lectures will deepen members' appreciation of Anglo-American heritage and culture and, we hope, encourage support for the Royal Oak's important work with The National Trust of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. For 25 years, the Drue Heinz Trust has been our lead lecture sponsor.

MEMBER AND PUBLIC LECTURES

OCTOBER

- 12** David Lough
New York, NY | 6:15 p.m.
- 16** David Lough
Philadelphia, PA | 6:30 p.m.
- 17** David Lough
Boston, MA | 6:00 p.m.
- 23** Jeremy Musson
Los Angeles, CA | 7:15 p.m.
- 24** Jeremy Musson
San Francisco, CA | 7:00 p.m.
- 26** Jeremy Musson
New York, NY | 6:15 p.m.
- 30** Jeremy Musson
Philadelphia, PA | 6:30 p.m.
- 30** Robert O'Byrne
Washington, D.C. | 7:00 p.m.
- 31** Robert O'Byrne
New York, NY | 6:15 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- 2** Robert O'Byrne
Philadelphia, PA | 6:30 p.m.
- 6** Michael Day, CVO
New York, NY | 6:15 p.m.
- 7** Thomas Coke, 8th Earl of Leicester
Philadelphia, PA | 6:30 p.m.
- 8** Thomas Coke, 8th Earl of Leicester
New York, NY | 6:15 p.m.
- 9** Thomas Coke, 8th Earl of Leicester
Chicago, IL | 6:30 p.m.
- 14** Curt DiCamillo
Atlanta, GA | 6:30 p.m.
- 15** Laura Cavendish, Countess of Burlington
Boston, MA | 6:00 p.m.
- 20** Laura Cavendish, Countess of Burlington
New York, NY | 6:15 p.m.
- 27** Troy Scott Smith
Philadelphia, PA | 6:30 p.m.
- 28** Troy Scott Smith
Chicago, IL | 6:30 p.m.
- 30** Troy Scott Smith
New York, NY | 6:15 p.m.



The Japanese pagoda in the Water Garden at Cliveden, Buckinghamshire

DECEMBER

- 4** Troy Scott Smith
Boston, MA | 6:00 p.m.
- 4** Curt DiCamillo
Los Angeles, CA | 6:45 p.m.
- 5** Curt DiCamillo
La Jolla, CA | 6:45 p.m.
- 6** Troy Scott Smith
Charleston, SC | 6:30 p.m.
- 7** Curt DiCamillo
San Francisco, CA | 7:00 p.m.



Robert Adam-designed Entrance Hall at Osterley House and Park, Middlesex



Dowager Duchess of Devonshire and her granddaughter Stella Tennant at Chatsworth House, 2006

ROYAL OAK MEMBER TOURS

OCTOBER

6	10:30 a.m.	The New York Yacht Club <i>Private Tour</i>	New York, NY
13	11:00 a.m.	New York's Downton Abbey <i>Walking Tour</i>	New York, NY
18	10:30 a.m.	Simon Parkes Art Conservation <i>Behind the Scenes</i>	New York, NY
19	1:00 p.m.	Simon Parkes Art Conservation <i>Behind the Scenes</i>	New York, NY
27	1:00 p.m.	Titanic New York Walking Tour	New York, NY

NOVEMBER

1	1:45 p.m.	East Meets West <i>An Afternoon Tea Tour</i>	New York, NY
7	6:30 p.m.	The Renee & Chaim Gross Foundation Private Tour	New York, NY
9	6:00 p.m.	John Lockwood Kipling <i>Exhibition Tour</i>	New York, NY
17	11:00 a.m.	Victorian Christmas <i>Walking Tour</i>	New York, NY

DECEMBER

1	5:30 p.m.	Celebrating the Season	New York, NY
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New York's Downton Abbey: The Harry F. Sinclair House

LECTURES & SPEAKERS

No More Champagne:
Churchill and His Money
DAVID LOUGH

Robert Adam: Country House Design,
Decoration, & the Art of Elegance
JEREMY MUSSON

Romantic English Country Homes
ROBERT O'BYRNE

Re-Presenting History:
Challenges and Changes at Historic
Royal Palaces and the National Trust
MICHAEL DAY, CVO

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for Over 400 Years
**THOMAS COKE,
8TH EARL OF LEICESTER**

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A Springtime Holiday at Sutton Hoo

by Michelle Arnot

For a view of the bluebells that herald English spring, last March my husband and I made a beeline for a holiday at National Trust's Sutton Hoo, the archaeologically significant Anglo-Saxon burial grounds that is tucked between Ipswich and the North Sea. What an honor to find ourselves in residence at the 'hoo' (hilltop) with King Redwald, the 7th century king of East Anglia.

Due to the generosity of the Pretty family, the 526-acre Sutton Hoo and Tranmer House, their Edwardian era home, were endowed to the National Trust in 1998. Our well-appointed three bedroom flat in Tranmer House overlooked the River Deben, which has ferried travellers to and fro for centuries.

How romantic to learn from a volunteer guide that Frank Pretty, who hailed from Ipswich, proposed to our erstwhile hostess, Edith Dempster, on her 18th birthday. Due to Mr. Dempster's disdain for Frank's family's corset-making and drapery business, he withheld his consent. Undeterred, faithful Frank continued to propose to Edith each year on her August 1st birthday. Finally, the two tied the knot when she turned 43 — one year after she buried her father and inherited a large fortune. The wedding took place at the height of the Roaring Twenties.

Soon after settling at Sutton Hoo, we were told, Edith gave birth to her son, Robert. Sadly, the couple's happiness was short-lived: Frank succumbed to cancer in 1934. Desperate to communicate with her husband in the afterworld, Edith brought in a local spiritualist. "I see Vikings on the mounds," the spiritualist told her, gazing out the bay window at the hillocks that mark the property. Locals were well apprised of the Viking royal burial mounds on the property bursting with valuables that accompanied the dead to Valhalla. Since the 16th century, grave robbers had looted them all, or so it was believed. Based on the spiritualist's vision, Mrs. Pretty recruited Basil Brown of the Ipswich Museum to excavate the property. On the eve of World War II he uncovered a treasure that would change the course of history.

Grave robbers knew how to dig through the middle of a burial mound to strike underground paydirt. What they didn't know was that over



Tranmer House at National Trust's Sutton Hoo, Suffolk

time the most important mound had shifted. They had missed the largest treasure uncovered to date — believed to be the grave of King Redwald himself who reigned in the 7th century and played a key role in introducing Christianity to England. After unearthing three mounds, Brown was gobsmacked by the yield of Mound 1: an intact 90-foot long wooden ship from the era of Beowulf, brimming with a rich assemblage of 'grave goods.' These artifacts are on display at the British Museum in London — including a ceremonial iron helmet with tinned bronze relief panels — which has become the symbol of Sutton Hoo. With the expert assistance of Cambridge trained archaeologist Peggy Piggott, the excavation offered fresh research to medieval historians. Fortunately, in 2011, amateur photographer Mercie Lack, snapped hundreds of photos of the site, which have found their way to the Visitor Centre.

While Mrs. Pretty sponsored the initial effort, Basil Brown insisted on bringing in the Department of British Antiquities due to the importance of the discovery. In recognition of her contribution to the nation, Prime Minister Churchill offered Mrs. Pretty the honour of CBE, which she politely declined. "She did not seek the limelight," one volunteer told us. "If word reached her that the village was in need in any way, it would be seen to discreetly. She didn't want a fuss."

After her death in 1942, Sutton Hoo housed the Land Army Girls, who raised crops and carved their initials in the woodwork surrounding the fireplace. It was a desperate time in England, and the National Trust has left blackout curtains on one window as a reminder. In the 1980s, other burial mounds were unearthed and, as recently as this year, new developments have been reported based on the results of the 1939 excavation.

After seven days without a drop of rain, my husband and I strolled the property one misty evening. After viewing the bluebells, we had followed the footpath along the River Deben to nearby Woodbridge, visited the local pub en route, and met up with local friends as well as a cousin who is a fellow at Jesus College, Cambridge. Suddenly a shadow emerged from behind a mound. A Viking warrior? No, a four-legged sentry: a Sutton Hoo tomcat, greeted us warmly while on his evening patrol. 🐾



Sunset over the mound at National Trust's Sutton Hoo, Suffolk

Michelle Arnot is journalist and Royal Oak member.

Help Us Keep Churchill at Chartwell

by Greg Joye



HRH The Prince of Wales with Warren Reintzel from the Van Hess Foundation and Royal Oak Board Chair Lynne Rickabaugh at the June 2017 reception at Chartwell honoring appeal patrons



HRH The Prince of Wales with Nicola Briggs, National Trust Regional Director for London and the South East (center) and Royal Oak Patrons, Richard "Dick" Karp and Dr. Sarah Roberts

In September 2016, Royal Oak embarked upon its largest and most ambitious appeal in its history: pledging to raise \$2 million to help the National Trust "Keep Churchill at Chartwell." Royal Oak's pledge is part of the National Trust's overall £7.1 million (which translates to over \$9 million) appeal that will purchase important personal objects once belonging to Sir Winston and keep them there in his beloved home. Educational initiatives involving these objects will also be created. These items include Churchill's Nobel Prize in Literature, his own paintings and memorabilia.

We are pleased to announce that one year later, we have secured nearly \$1.6 million toward our target.

Chartwell was the much-loved Churchill family home and the Prime Minister lived there from 1922 until death in 1965. It was the place from which Sir Winston drew solace and inspiration. Today, Chartwell

offers an intimate look into the private domestic life of one of the world's greatest, yet enigmatic, public figures through these special personal objects. By keeping Chartwell a living place, the National Trust has enabled visitors and scholars alike to truly get to know Churchill 'the man.'

Royal Oak is grateful for the several major gifts that we received from generous Board members and from several patrons; donations from private foundations and other sources; and for the generous responses to our special spring mailing.

We need your assistance to reach our \$2 million appeal goal. Please help us secure the remaining \$400,000 by December 31st. Your pledge will ensure that some of the most precious personal items of the great wartime Prime Minister can remain in his home for future generations to study and enjoy. 🍷

Celebrate Winston Churchill with The Late Hour Cigar

The Royal Oak Foundation has partnered with Davidoff of Geneva to celebrate the man and his home: Winston Churchill and Chartwell.

This fall, Davidoff introduced a new cigar to their Winston Churchill collection called *The Late Hour*. Any visitor to Chartwell will notice some rooms with ashtrays animated with cigars—representing the fact that Churchill found those rooms ideal for smoking and late night contemplation.



The Late Hour cigars are intended to be enjoyed at the end of an evening, when there is time for reflection and creative thinking.

If you enjoy smoking a good cigar, or know someone who does, considering purchasing a Winston Churchill's Chartwell commemorative box of *The Late Hour*. We appreciate that Davidoff of Geneva will donate a portion of the proceeds to benefit The Royal Oak Foundation's appeal for Chartwell.

For more information or to order, go to www.davidoffgeneva.com/Royal-Oak.



Study Day participants enjoy visiting a courtyard at Knole



Enjoying the garden at Chevening

Heritage Circle Study Day 2017

Royal Oak's Heritage Circle was launched in 2006 for individuals who wish to provide leadership support for the Foundation on an annual basis. The Heritage Circle offers our highest level of benefits, including access to unique, "behind-the-scenes" tours of historic properties.

One of the most prized of these privileges is the annual Study Day in the UK. On September 8th, twenty-three members traveled through Kent visiting Chevening, and National Trust properties Knole and Chartwell.

The evening before Study Day, Heritage Circle members at the Patron and Guardian levels were invited to the Travellers Club for a private reception and dinner in the Castlereagh room. The most special part of the evening was the presentation given by Alexander "Sandy" Nairne, historian and curator and former director of the National Portrait Gallery, who spoke on "Protecting Places and Picturing People: Our Changing National Heritage."

For our Study Day, we were fortunate to have the leadership of acclaimed lecturer, author and architectural historian John Martin Robinson. The morning began with a private tour of Chevening House given by Estate Director Colonel Mathewson. Chevening's history dates back 800 years, but the house one sees today was the creation of

seven generations of the Stanhope family. The house and estate were bought in 1717 by General James Stanhope who was a confidant, and later Chief Minister of King George. A year later, the General was created the 1st Earl of Stanhope. The house would serve as the home of the Stanhope family for 250 years. The 3,000-acre estate was given to the nation in 1967. From 1974 to 1980, Chevening served as the residence of HRH The Prince of Wales. Chevening now serves as a seat of a cabinet minister who is chosen by the serving Prime Minister. It is currently used by the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson.

Royal Oak Board member Lord Sackville welcomed our group for a visit of Knole House, his ancestral home and current residence. First a medieval palace, in 1566, during the reign of Elizabeth I, it came into the possession of her cousin Thomas Sackville, whose descendants became the Earls and Dukes of Dorset. Barons Sackville have lived there since 1603. A mix of Elizabethan and late Stuart styles, it is one of England's largest houses with a history spanning more than 600 years. Lord and Lady Sackville graciously hosted the group for lunch in the Colonnade room.

The day concluded at Chartwell House, the home of Sir Winston Churchill for forty years from 1922 until his death in 1965 and the place from which he drew inspiration



The painting studio at Chartwell featuring some of Winston Churchill's artwork

at the end of his life. The rooms remain much as he lived in them with pictures, books and personal mementoes evoking the extraordinary breadth of his career: statesman, writer, painter and family man. (Please see an update on Royal Oak's current \$2 million Chartwell appeal on page 12.)

The 2017 Study Day proved an educational and enjoyable experience for all. We encourage your participation in the Heritage Circle which enables you to partake in the array of attractive opportunities and benefits as described on page 14. 🍷

To enroll in the Heritage Circle, or for more information, please contact the ROF office at (212) 480-2889 and speak with David Nathans, Executive Director & CEO (ext.202; dnathans@royal-oak.org) or Greg Joye, Director of Development (ext. 212, gjoye@royal-oak.org) or visit our website at www.royal-oak.org/join/memberbenefits/.



THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

Americans in Alliance with the National Trust of
England, Wales and Northern Ireland

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

BASIC ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS (fully tax-deductible)

Individual \$65 (\$80 as of Jan 1, 2018)

- Free entry for one at National Trust sites open to the public in England, Wales & Northern Ireland, and National Trust for Scotland sites.
- National Trust Magazine (3 issues per year) and Royal Oak Newsletter (2 issues per year).
- National Trust Handbook of sites in England, Wales & Northern Ireland.
- Priority and reduced-price admission to US programs, including lectures and day tours planned specially for Royal Oak members.
- Annual National Trust parking pass.

Dual \$95 (\$125 as of Jan 1, 2018)

All the benefits of Individual membership, plus:

- Second membership card for additional person living at the same address.

Family \$115 (\$150 as of Jan 1, 2018)

All the benefits of Individual membership, plus:

- Two membership cards for two adults living at the same address. Membership cards also cover their children or grandchildren under the age of 21.

Student/Young Professional (SYP) \$35 (\$40 as of Jan 1, 2018)

Ages 13-29; date of birth and email required upon purchase. All the benefits of Individual membership, with the following adjustments:

- Access to all publications in electronic format ONLY (includes National Trust Handbook, National Trust Magazine (3 issues per year), Royal Oak Newsletter (2 issues per year), and Royal Oak program brochure). Publications accessible on the Royal Oak website.
- 30% discount on member's admission price at Royal Oak lectures for member and one guest (limited SYP seats; early registration recommended).

SUPPORTING ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS (fully tax-deductible)

Conservator \$150 (\$200 as of Jan 1, 2018)

Art & Design \$250 | Sponsor \$500

All the benefits of Dual membership, plus:

- Each membership card admits TWO persons to National Trust sites.

- Special Supporting-level members-only day tours & programs in the US.
- Priority registration for all Royal Oak lectures and programs in the US.
- Invitation to join exclusive National Trust "behind-the-scenes" tours in the UK.

HERITAGE CIRCLE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIPS (valid for two people)

Patron \$10,000 (\$9,550 tax-deductible)

All the benefits of Guardian membership, plus:

- Admission for two to three Drue Heinz Lectures each program season, advanced registration and invitation for dinner with a Royal Oak lecturer (limited availability).
- VIP personalized curatorial tours of National Trust properties on request (3 months advance notice necessary).

Guardian \$5,000 (\$4,550 tax-deductible)

All the benefits of Steward membership, plus:

- Admission for two to two Drue Heinz Lectures each program season, advanced registration, and invitation for dinner with a Royal Oak lecturer (limited availability).
- Invitation to the Guardian and Patron Dinner in conjunction with the annual Heritage Circle UK Study Day.
- Invitation to the National Trust's calendar of bespoke, invite-only events in the UK.

Steward \$2,500 (\$2,425 tax-deductible)

All the benefits of Benefactor membership, plus:

- Complimentary Student/Young Professional gift membership.
- Admission for two to two Drue Heinz Lectures each program season and advanced registration for all lectures (limited availability).

Benefactor \$1,000 (\$925 tax-deductible)

All the benefits of Supporting membership, plus:

- Complimentary admission for two to one Drue Heinz Lecture each season and advanced registration for all lectures (limited availability).
- Access to the National Trust's Special Visits, Tours and Lectures calendar of events.
- Invitation to the annual Heritage Circle UK Study Day.
- Annual gift book and a complimentary copy of Apollo magazine's "National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual".
- Special access to the National Trust's Arts, Buildings & Collections Bulletin.
- Special recognition in Royal Oak's Annual Report.

Join Royal Oak today and become part of a community that both supports and enjoys the shared cultural heritage between Britain and the United States. Visit www.royal-oak.org for more information about The Royal Oak Foundation and membership levels or call Jan Lizza at 212.480.2889, ext. 205.

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MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASE & BENEFITS

Royal Oak's ambition is to increase its support of conservation, preservation and educational projects of the National Trust. These initiatives can only grow with the generous commitment of our members. Members will continue to enjoy privileged access to more than 500 National Trust sites and over 100 National Trust for Scotland properties, as well as free parking at the National Trust's administered parking lots*. You will continue to receive your three *National Trust* magazines and preferred rates to ROF programs. A recently added benefit is a 50% discount to 12 National Trust London Heritage Partners.

As part of Royal Oak's development plan, annual dues will increase for some membership levels effective January 2018. These additional funds will enable us to support the needs of the National Trust and to better serve you, our members. The new membership rates will be: Student and Young Professional \$40; Individual \$80; Dual \$125; Family \$150; and Conservator \$200. (Please note that we have not increased our dues for basic level membership since 2012, and for Conservator since 1992.)

We appreciate your personal investment in our work. It expresses your dedication to protecting beloved places for you and future generations to be inspired by, learn from, and enjoy. We believe membership remains a great value. Thank you again for your past and continued support.

***Parking at National Trust Sites 2018:** Please be assured that the parking pass will be distributed in the 2018 handbook and honored at the properties. We are working closely with the Trust to ensure that you will enjoy all of your parking benefits.



The Saloon at Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire. Its domed rotunda was borrowed by Robert Adam from the Pantheon in Rome.

Photo courtesy of ©National Trust/Nadia Mackenzie.

The Royal Oak Foundation seeks to raise awareness and advance the work of the National Trust of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland by inspiring support from the United States for the Trust's efforts to preserve and protect historic places and spaces – for ever, for everyone.



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