



THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

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



In Search of Lost Roses at Mottisfont Abbey

An American Spy Abroad: The Story of Virginia Hall

The National Trust on the Silver Screen

Raising Funds for Blickling's Historic Library

SPRING 2019



The Blickling Estate, Norfolk.

Dear Members & Friends,

As we begin our planning for 2019, we would be remiss by not taking a moment to thank you for your continued support. Last year we celebrated the 45th anniversary of The Royal Oak Foundation. For those of you who were able to attend our gala event at the Metropolitan Club in October, we hope you had a wonderful time. We are especially appreciative of those who supported our National Trust annual appeal benefitting Stowe landscape gardens, enabling us to commit \$250,000 to the final phase of an ambitious five-year restoration project. Through the generosity of two anonymous donors, our grant will be tripled by their matching gifts.

As we enter the new year, we are excited to announce that our 2019 National Trust annual appeal will support a major effort to protect a most historic and remarkable library at Blickling Hall in Norfolk. We have a fundraising goal of \$250,000 for this important project. Any amount of support is welcomed; we thank you in advance for your generosity. For more information on how to contribute, please contact Greg Joye at gjoye@royal-oak.org OR: You can contribute in several ways—through our website www.royal-oak.org/Blickling or in response to a mailing that you'll receive in the coming weeks.

This edition of our newsletter includes several articles of interest, particularly if you plan to travel to the U.K. in the near future. The remarkable National Collection of old roses at Mottisfont, a historical priory, garden and country estate in Hampshire, is highlighted on page 6.

This issue also includes an intriguing interview with acclaimed biographer Sonia Purnell, who tells the story of Virginia Hall, one of the greatest spies in American history. Sonia is one of a number of distinguished authors and historians who will be giving lectures for Royal Oak in our spring programs series. Information on upcoming programs as well as membership can be found in the back of this issue.

We hope you enjoy this issue of the newsletter. We will shortly begin working on an updated strategic plan for the organization, and would welcome any feedback regarding lectures, programs, events and member benefits that you may have. Please feel free to reach out to me directly or Ian Murray Interim Executive Director.

As always, we thank you for your support.

Warm regards,

Lynne Rickabaugh
Board Chair



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Royal Oak Fellowship News

Damaris Horan Prize Fellow Report

Over the last five years the National Trust has experienced tremendous growth across their properties and most gardens are now opening year round. Many gardeners report new challenges in maintaining a standard of horticultural excellence and a positive visitor experience during peak times, all while ensuring that the historic nature of the property is not compromised.

In order to understand the experience of the gardens during this period of growth, 81 National Trust garden properties with high visitation were surveyed. Victoria Stewart, our last Royal Oak Horan Prize Fellow, gathered information from both garden and visitor experience staff on the issues these gardens face due to such high visitation and how they cope with them. She found that the majority said that the gardens themselves did not experience a great deal of overcrowding but that facilities at the gardens often did. Many gardens have had to increase their levels of turf maintenance, while others have had to move or change their plantings in order to make them more resilient. Such visitation does cause wear and tear issues such as compaction and erosion issues. This is most often seen on the lawns, however paths and garden beds see a significant amount of wear and tear due to footfall. With regard to infrastructure, there have been many changes to paths, from the addition of hard paths to the conversion of grass paths to gravel.

Nigel Seeley Fellowship Begins

In early December 2018, Meredith Menache began as the Royal Oak Seeley Fellow at Knole Conservation Studio. She worked closely with Heather Porter who is a specialist in upholstery. The project is focused on conservation of the upholstery in The Spangled Bedroom at Knole House.

Established by Katherine Singley of Decatur, Georgia, the fellowship will provide training and educational opportunities for individuals with a professional interest in the preservation of historic interiors, finishes, and collections. It is named for the National Trust's Head of Conservation, Dr. Nigel Seeley (1989-2002), under whom Katherine studied.



Heather Porter, specialist in upholstery, and ROF Seeley Fellow Meredith Menache at the Knole Conservation Studio. Detail of upholstery restoration work.

Call for Applications for the 2019 Damaris Horan Prize Fellowship

The Royal Oak Foundation is pleased to announce the 2019 Damaris Horan Prize Fellowship, a residential fellowship with the National Trust of England, Wales & Northern Ireland focused on using plants grown and cultivated without the use of peat. The Horan Fellow will develop solutions to the conservation challenge of peat-free plant supply, while benefitting from a valuable development and learning opportunity.

Established by The Mudge Foundation and named for Royal Oak's Executive Director from 1987 to 2003, the Horan Prize provides training and educational opportunities for individuals with a professional interest in the history, management and conservation of historic landscapes and gardens. The Horan Prize Fellowship provides unique opportunities to learn from the National Trust's extensive resources and expertise.

Since 1999 the National Trust has followed a policy of not using peat in its horticultural activities and of acquiring only plants

grown using peat-free growing media. The basis for this position is to directly reduce the unrenewable extraction of peat and to provide an exemplar of, and promotion for, peat-free horticulture. Peat is industrially extracted from peat bogs causing irreversible damage to one of the most vulnerable nature conservation habitats and historic environments. Healthy peat bogs are crucial carbon 'sinks'; locking away atmospheric carbon as peat. Extracting peat and damaging peatlands releases locked-up carbon which then contributes to rising atmospheric CO2 levels which in turn speeds up climate change.

The fellow will investigate and report on the barriers and opportunities for peat-free plant supplies to National Trust Gardens. Applications are welcome from graduates with Bachelor's or Master's degrees in landscape design, horticulture, history, art history or environmental studies.

For more information contact the Royal Oak office:
bkennedy@royal-oak.org | 212.480.2889 ext. 203 | visit www.royal-oak.org/scholarships



The South Front at Blickling Hall, Norfolk.

Blickling's Historic Books

One of Britain's iconic libraries is in need of urgent restoration

One of England's greatest and most treasured estates, Blickling is remarkable for its history and impressive architecture which has constantly evolved during its thousand-year history. The Norfolk estate has had an array of illustrious owners through the centuries, one of whom is associated with the acquisition of an extraordinary and historic library.

A Legacy through Ownership

Blickling has a deep history which can almost be read as a story of England itself. It was the site of a manor house owned by Harold Godwinson, the future King Harold of England. Upon his death and defeat at the Battle of Hastings, William the Conqueror (or William I), gave the manor house to his chaplain. Thus began a colorful lineage of the historical figures with whom the estate would be associated.

The Blickling Hall that we know today has its architectural roots in the Elizabethan

and Tudor eras. In 1620, it then saw a major conversion to the Jacobean style under the new ownership of an ambitious London lawyer, Sir Henry Hobart. In recognition for Sir Henry's financial assistance to the king's military campaigns in Ireland, James I granted him one of the first ever-created hereditary titles of baronet.

Sir Henry was certainly attracted to Blickling because of its association with the Boleyn family, having previously been owned by Thomas, the father of Anne. The Hobarts would claim that Anne Boleyn had been born there, though that fact has been difficult to substantiate over the centuries. They also were very proud of another previous owner, Sir John Fastolfe, who was said to be the inspiration behind Shakespeare's comic character Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

In 1620, Sir Henry hired the acclaimed architect Robert Lyminge with whom

he spent a fortune on his vision. Today, Blickling stands as an exemplar of Jacobean style, like Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, Lyminge's other renowned project. Despite his hopes Blickling and his new title would solidify his dynastic ambitions Sir Henry only visited the house once before his death. It would be his descendants who would fortify Blickling's legacy.

Blickling's last private owner had an important American connection and also played a pivotal role in the evolution of the National Trust. By the early 20th century, Blickling had passed from the Hobart family into the Kerr family, whose head is the Marquess of Lothian. A brilliant politician, Philip Henry Kerr, 11th Marquess of Lothian, played an instrumental role in the world politics of the 1930s and served as British Ambassador to the U.S. from 1939 until his death in 1940. He proved highly successful in winning America's support for the British war effort.



The Library at Blickling is one of national historic importance.

Kerr was also a critical driving force behind the National Trust Act of 1937 and paved the way for the fate not only of his own estate but that of hundreds of others in Britain. He used his position in the House of Lords to argue in favor of amendments to the Trust so that individuals could bequest country houses and estates to the Trust while allowing their descendants to avoid paying death duties. Known as the "Country Houses Scheme," this led to a huge expansion of country houses being obtained by the National Trust. Upon his death, Kerr bequeathed Blickling Hall to the National Trust.

The Library

Blickling's library is one of the country's foremost private book collections. It is also the largest and most important National Trust's library, making the collection one of exceptional national and international significance. In 1742, Sir John Hobart, the first Earl of Buckingham, inherited the collection of more than 12,500 volumes, including some very rare and precious early manuscripts.

The components that make up the present library have their own individual aesthetic

and cultural significance: the spines of the vellum-bound books; the Jacobean Long Gallery ceiling with its allegorical symbols of morality; and the pseudo medieval 19th-century decoration by the eminent architects Pollen and Woodward depicting great figures in civilization; and the redecoration in the 1930s.

The collection contained many historic manuscripts including a 15th-century edition of Suetonius's *The Twelve Caesars*. The oldest book is a handwritten manuscript from the 1100s containing the dialogues of Pope Gregory the Great. Written at a time when English was being superseded by French after the Norman Conquest, it is most notable for a paragraph containing the Apostles' Creed in a mix of Old and early English.

Blickling's Library Appeal

The National Trust has launched an ambitious new project to secure the long-term future of one of England's most significant book collections and to make it better known to the public. Royal Oak is excited to help the Trust rescue these irreplaceable treasures from threatening conditions and make thousands of annual visitors more aware of the richness of one of Britain's most remarkable libraries.

Project: Restoration, Cataloging and Education Initiatives

Today, urgent work is needed to address serious damage both to its structure and to the books due to environmental crises including water leaks, mold and pests like the deathwatch beetle. Urgent structural work includes repairs to rainwater goods, window glazed leaded lights, and the roofs of the bay windows to prevent water ingress. Additional repairs to external defects in the brickwork, stonework and roofs are crucial. Efforts to protect the collection itself include insulating the book presses and creating

Royal Oak is excited to launch our 2019 appeal to raise \$250,000 for Blickling's Library



Our generous patrons like you make such important projects possible. We invite you to join in our efforts by giving your support to help save this most historic building and library.

Please contribute to the Trust's efforts to rescue these valuable treasures from the current conditions which threaten them so that this amazing collection can live for future generations.

Your generosity will provide funding for:

- urgent structural restoration and repairs
- engaging the public in the Long Gallery where the librarian will be working in situ, and interacting with the visitors to explain the process and why this project is so important
- cataloging the collections
- digitization of important elements of the collection
- new cases to display the rescued books

Learn how you can support this project at www.Royal-Oak.org/Blickling



A page from the Suetonius manuscript, kept at Blickling Hall.

appropriate environmental controls that will provide a thermal buffer and prevent menacing micro-climate conditions behind the structure.

Another important objective is making the public more aware of this extraordinary collection. Much research and extensive cataloging of the collections is also being planned. Visitors in the Long Gallery will be able to experience the cataloging work in progress. The librarian will engage visitors by explaining the process and why it is so important to undertake this work. 📖



The Rose Garden in June at Mottisfont Abbey, Hampshire.

In Search of Lost Roses

The National Collection at Mottisfont is a must-see for any rosarian

By Mottisfont Staff

The rose has been one of the most coveted flowers in history and even explorers and crusaders couldn't help but carry back to England specimens they found throughout the world. However, in the 19th century, many of the ancient varieties like gallicas, albas and damasks fell out of favor as the rose market focused more and more on tea rose varieties after the first Hybrid Tea Rose, "La France" was introduced in 1867. (Like much in the world of roses, this is a point of debate and there is not absolute consensus on when to date the transition from old roses, but this is an oft-cited turning point.)

Rose enthusiasts were attracted to the new roses that had longer blooming seasons and

a greater variety of colors. In comparison, the old roses usually only bloomed once and were more limited of color—usually in the pink to mauve palette. However, the old roses had much more diverse and powerful perfumes. Of course, this is what made them so attractive historically. In the 20th century, a few gardeners and horticulturalists began to turn back to these ephemeral, yet potent flowers.

And that brings us to the rose garden at Mottisfont. The National Trust hired Graham Stuart Thomas, one of the most important figures in 20th-century British horticulture, as gardens advisor after the National Trust acquired its first garden in 1948. Born in 1909, Thomas's affair with



Graham Stuart Thomas holding his namesake rose, Rosa "Graham Thomas".

Photos: (top) © National Trust Images/Clive Nichols (bottom) © David Austin Roses

flowers and horticulture began when he was a child and received a fuchsia as a gift from his godfather. After studying at Cambridge University Botanic Garden, Thomas worked at various nurseries throughout England. One of his mentors in the early years was Gertrude Jekyll.

Alongside other great rosarians of the past century like David Austin, who died a few months ago, Graham Stuart Thomas was a pioneer in researching and rescuing old roses. Thomas wrote three foundational books on roses in the 1950s and 60s: *Old Shrub Roses*, published in 1955; *Shrub Roses of Today*, published in 1962; and *Climbing Roses Old and New*, published in 1965. Sixteen more books on various horticultural topics would follow in the decades to come.

While Thomas traveled the country working on various gardens for the National Trust, his true masterpiece was at Mottisfont Abbey in Hampshire. It was there, beginning in the 1970s, that Thomas established his collection of old roses, which he planted along with modern varieties. Many of the varieties which found home and haven there are familiar today, but 40 years ago they were considered to be rare and precious beauties.

Any great rose lover would be remiss to not visit Mottisfont during the blooming season. Her walled gardens are filled with heavenly fragrance and color from thousands of roses in early summer. The National Trust property is home to Britain's National Collection of ancestral species and 19th-century rose cultivars which reach their peak in June. Visitors from all over the world flock to see this unique display.

'The incredible vigor of the old roses never cease to amaze as they once again bud up to promise yet another glorious display of scent and color,' says head gardener Jonny Norton.

Visitors to the walled gardens can discover varieties such as *Souvenir de la Malmaison*, a sumptuous pale pink bourbon rose inspired by the Empress Josephine's famous garden. Visitors will also of course see *Rosa Gallica Officinalis*, a light crimson and deeply scented shrub, which is believed to have been brought to England from Persia by the Crusaders. There are other hybrids so ancient that they are prehistoric. And some varieties are so rare that it's possible Mottisfont has the only stock in existence.

After you visit Mottisfont, you may well be inclined to start your own collection of old roses. Rose rustlers often go looking in abandoned lots, homesteads, or even cemeteries. Neglect is usually a good sign because it means that the old roses planted there in the earlier days of this country have been left alone to bloom quietly without human intervention. There are some rules to rose rustling, namely, never take the whole plant! Leave some for the next person in search of a lost rose. 🌹

To learn more about the types of roses you will see at Mottisfont, visit our website at www.royal-oak.org/LostRoses

From Jonny Norton Head Gardener at Mottisfont

Facts and Figures

- The first rose to flower is usually *Rosa Primula* (right) in late April. It's a wild yellow rose with flowers the size of a large buttercup with a curious incense scent.
- Rose pruning begins in December and takes almost three months to complete. There are nearly 2500 roses to prune in both the central and north rose gardens.
- Approximately 3.5 million rose flowers during rose season.
- Our strangest rose is *Rosa Gallica Viridiflora*. The small doubled flowers are completely green.



Some Favorite Roses



Rose 'William Lobb' 1855 A shrub rose that behaves like a climber. It works well against a wall or against a short old fruit tree as in the gardens at Mottisfont. It produces a profusion of crimson-purple flowers in June and July.



Rosa gallica versicolour (Rose Mundi) prior to 1581 This is a very old rose steeped in history. Botticelli depicted this rose in his work, 'Virgin Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child'. A truly magnificent rose for any garden.



Rose rugosa Blanc Double de Coubert 1892 A very hardy rose that can make an effective hedge or impress as a large specimen shrub. Its white semi double flowers carry a very sweet scent.



Rose Madame Alfred Carrier 1879 This vigorous climbing rose from the Noisette group spreads itself on the south wall in the rose garden. However it will be equally happy against a north wall, making it a popular garden rose today.

Rose Growing Tips

- Let spent blooms develop into hips for a colorful autumn display and provide a food source for your garden birds during the winter months.
- Leave a newly planted rose for a couple of seasons before pruning.
- Encourage new basal growth to develop for new flowers for future summers.
- Mulch around the rose at least 2 inches of well-composted manure.
- Plant climbing roses between 10 to 15 inches away from the wall and leaning towards the wall.
- Re-tie your climbing wall roses each year removing old or deceased stems. Tie new growth low down and move old growth up.



The medieval lighthouse, St. Catherine's Oratory, on the Isle of Wight.

A Sampler of National Trust Lighthouses



South Foreland Lighthouse in St. Margaret's Bay, Dover, Kent.

British lighthouses date back 2000 years to Roman times. Collectively, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, there are well over 100 structures, many still operating as navigational aids, and many are actually privately owned. The 18th century witnessed the greatest expansion of lighthouse building as maritime traffic and international commerce increased dramatically. Trinity House, a private corporation headquartered in London and with a 1514 royal charter granted from Henry VIII, is the official General Lighthouse Authority and maintains 65 lighthouses.

Among the most unique collections at the National Trust is a group of historic lighthouses. Numbering 11 in total—but two are simply sites where lighthouses once stood—all originally had the same mission: to warn sailors and ships away from danger or disaster.

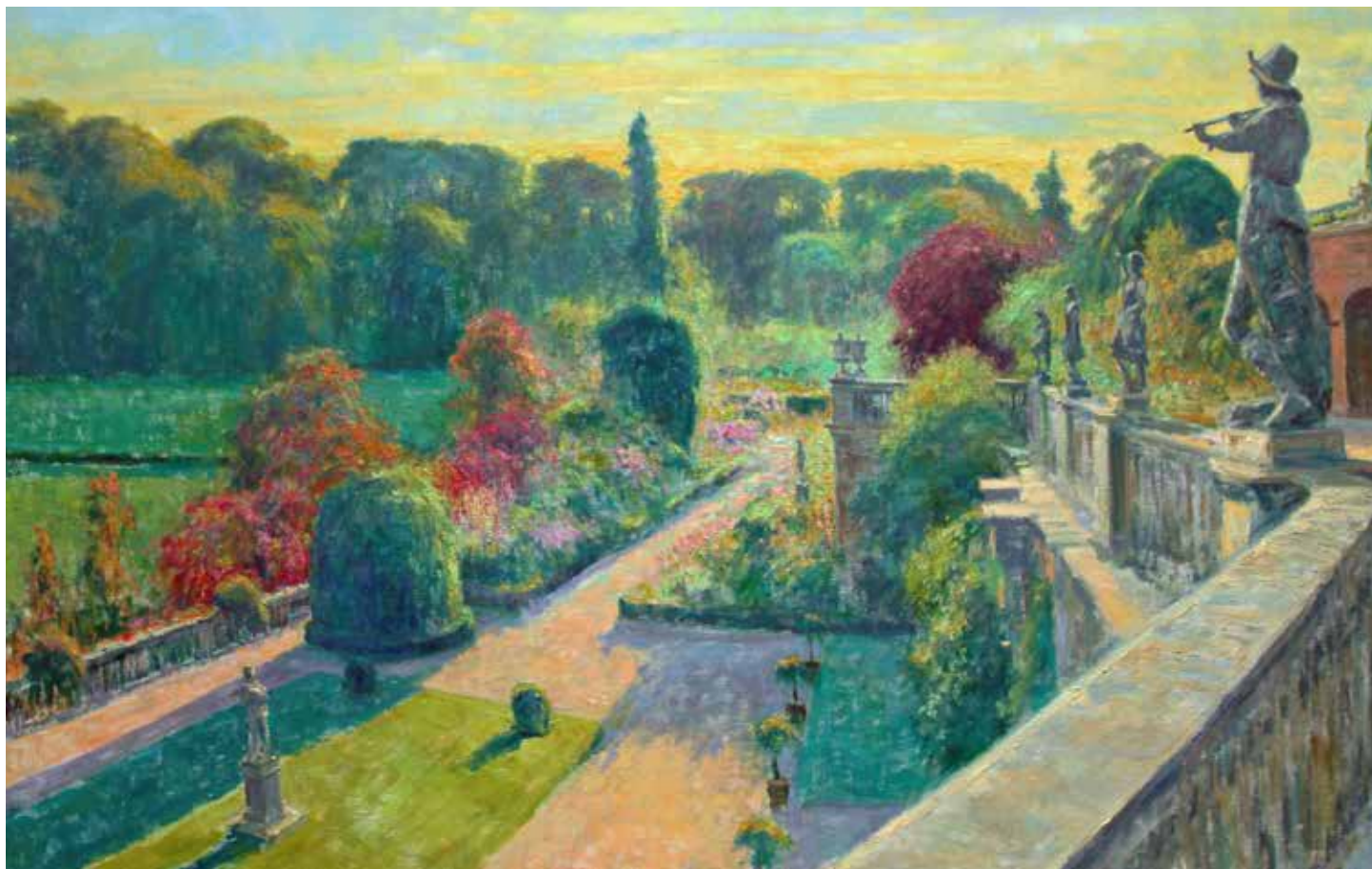
St. Catherine's Oratory Tower, built in the 14th century on the Isle of Wight, doubled as a beacon when originally constructed and is reputed as the finest surviving example of a medieval lighthouse in Britain. Legend claims that Walter de Godeton, Lord of

Chale, responded to a papal order to build it as penance for having abetted local sailors in 'liberating' a cargo of white wine on its way to a French monastery from a ship run aground in Chale Bay. The National Trust today maintains it in partnership with English Heritage.

The Trust's South Foreland Lighthouse, overlooking the White Cliffs of Dover in Kent, is Victorian and rebuilt from an earlier structure in 1846. The Knott family started working as lighthouse keepers at South Foreland in 1730, and is credited with the longest continuous service of lighthouse keepers in England, ending in 1906. For generations they both lived and worked there. In 1859 George Knott is associated with the first conversion to an electric light. South Foreland Lighthouse also has a connection with Marconi and his first international transmission of radio waves in 1899. It was decommissioned in 1988 and has been managed by the Trust since 1989. Most exciting is the fact that you can rent the keeper's East Cottage, enjoying the same sunrises over the Channel as the Knott's with none of the work! 🏠

For rentals of South Foreland and other properties see www.nationaltrustcottages.co.uk.

Tour the National Trust with Artist Charles Neal



The Terraced Gardens at Powis Castle located in Powys, Wales. Painting by Charles Neal.

This fall you will be able to experience more than 25 National Trust properties in a single visit without the need to fly overseas, but you will need to make your way to New York City.

In October 2019 (exact date still to come), Royal Oak members, friends and interested public, will have the pleasure of visiting National Trust gardens, estates and their historic interiors in an exhibition of contemporary paintings by British contemporary impressionist artist Charles Neal at the Findlay Galleries on Fifth Avenue.

The exhibition is entitled *The Assembly of Time*, and is Neal's third show in support of the National Trust. The Trust's long-running Neptune Coastline campaign and project was the theme of the first two Neal shows, held in 1996 and 2000, at Osterley Park in West London. They, like this New York show, allow for a percentage of the sales to benefit the sponsoring organization. In this 2019 case, Royal Oak benefits on behalf of the National Trust.

Charles Neal is a patron of the National Trust, long recognizing the great importance of its work in providing opportunity for all to experience our shared heritage. For Neal, becoming aware of the Royal Oak, and the fact that for American visitors there is a shared pre-Independence history, was the impetus for this New York exhibition.

Neal's style, developed over decades, is noted as "...a sympathetic blend of realism, inspired impressionism..." With this fundamental perspective, the artist is always evolving his sense of pictorial language based on what his eye and intellect sees. Neal himself has noted: "The experience of the external world is internalized within us and forms part of our personal value, through emotional attachment and association with our own identity and expression of personality: our personal history."

The New York exhibition will include a balance of interior and exterior views, all of which relate to the artist's recognition of the historic relevance and curated ambience. This exhibition is intended to reinvigorate your memories of those gardens, interiors and architectural styles you may have visited or heard about. However, Neal's paintings provide you with a new insight; a new visit.

The Royal Oak Foundation is very appreciative to Findlay Galleries for its support. Findlay can trace its origins to the City Art Rooms in Kansas City, Missouri, in 1870. Royal Oak experienced Findlay's generosity and its 15-year partnership with Charles Neal in spring 2018 at an exhibition that benefited Blenheim Palace. Details on the time and location of *The Assembly of Time* October 2019 show will be available later this spring and can be found on our website. 🎨



The filming of *Mariah Mundi* and *the Midas Box* at St. Michael's Mount, Cornwall.

Ready for Our Close-Up

National Trust properties are frequently featured on film and TV

By Harvey Edgington



Filming for the 2015 BBC adaptation of Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* at Montacute House, Somerset.

Over the past several years, with the rise of Netflix and Amazon, and increasing competition in the television industry, the National Trust has seen a significant increase in filming at their properties. On average, the National Trust is now hosting a major TV drama or a feature film twice a month.

Recently, the National Trust provided the exterior grounds of Gordonstoun School at Woodchester Park for episodes of *The Crown*. In *Killing Eve*, Ashridge proved the perfect place to stage a car chase replete with machine gun, while an empty farmhouse on the same estate became a spy's safe-house in *Little Drummer Girl*. Meanwhile, *Mary Queen of Scots* with Margo Robbie features Hardwick Hall and ITV's lush adaptation of *Vanity Fair* featured Osterley house. Even dinosaurs have been seen wandering around the National Trust—a computer-enhanced *Craigside* was used as a setting in a new *Jurassic World*.

Everyone is of course very excited that the movie version of *Downton* is actually happening. This year they took over Lacock village, hired the real Royal Artillery and marched them down the main street. Most of the residents were happy to serve as flag-waving extras.

There are a couple of shoots I am forbidden to mention—one of which HBO is hoping may replace *Game of Thrones* (which we also hosted) and the other, let us just say, happens in a galaxy far away.

On a more somber note, several National Trust-cared-for beaches were used recently for the marking of the centenary of the end of World War I on Remembrance Sunday. Organized by film director Danny Boyle, sand portraits were created of some of the servicemen and women who never returned. The images were filmed from drones and the footage transmitted nationally. Eventually the tide and time washed the images away.



Filming for the 2015 BBC adaptation of Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* at Barrington Court, Somerset.

One of the biggest changes we have encountered is the use of drones in filming. They offer a much more cost-effective way for film crews to gather aerial footage than hiring a helicopter or a using a crane or scaffolding tower. The drones used in filming can range from the size of a person's hand to the size of a dining room table. Because they have implications for privacy, as well as wildlife protection and safety, the Trust is normally a no-fly zone. We only allow them when being used by a professional film crew already shooting on the ground with us, and even then, not always.

We continue of course to safeguard all of our properties when filming with the help of freelance conservators. The conservators attend shoots on our behalf, paid for by the film company, to make sure the correct protection is in place and artefacts we need to remove are done so safely. This can be challenging. For example on *Wolf Hall*, the director was keen to light our buildings with candles as they would have been during the period depicted.

Digital cameras make this somewhat possible. However, what we discovered was how dark the interiors of that period would have been. The film crew were using brighter modern candles and amplified the light with production reflectors and yet it was still very low light. It certainly made all those Shakespearean characters that lurk in the shadows unseen a bit more credible!

Once a film has been created, our team works with the distribution company to jointly publicize the film. This can involve

articles in the National Trust magazine, social media alerts, web articles and movie maps. We also have done exhibitions. One of the most successful was for *Mr Turner*, which was directed Mike Leigh and featured Timothy Spall as the artist J.M.W. Turner.

Mr Turner was shot at Petworth, where Turner had a studio and where some of his paintings remain to this day. Mike Leigh made a small film for us about his love of Turner, the making of the movie, and we reconstructed the set of Turner's studio so visitors could experience for scenes from the film. The exhibition ran for three months and made the Trust about three times what it made in location fees.

Wolf Hall, released in 2015 and based on Hilary Mantel's award-winning novels about Thomas Cromwell, starring Mark Rylance and Claire Foy, was a major production for the Trust. National Trust properties comprised nearly 40% of the locations and shooting took place over 41 days.

Filming for *Wolf Hall* took place at Montacute, which was used for Greenwich Palace and its gardens the backdrop for archery and the spectacular jousting tournament; Barrington Court as York Palace (which later became Whitehall); as well as Great Chalfield, Lacock, Chastleton, and Horton Court. The latter was used as Cromwell's childhood home in Putney.

Together with other heritage organizations that were used, we produced a movie map for tourists, which you can see at www.royal-oak.org/movieMap. The series was watched by four million viewers and had an impact on all the properties featured. Barrington Court saw an immediate 16% increase in visitors.

National Trust properties are also frequently featured in other television and film productions beyond fictional dramas. On average we have three crews a day on our land and the majority would be factual programming such as documentaries.

One example of a program like this is the series, *Secrets of the National Trust*, hosted by Alan Titchmarsh. He has been given access to areas of the Trust that the public don't normally see as well as visiting our conservation studios. This was a great way to bring the National Trust to more people both in Britain and beyond. 🏰

Harvey Edgington is the head of filming and locations for the National Trust Film Office.

To see more photos of filming locations and the downloadable movie map, please visit, www.royal-oak.org/movies



Filming of *Downton Abbey* on Lacock Village's High Street.

An American Spy Abroad

Royal Oak talks with Author Sonia Purnell about Virginia Hall

Q. Virginia Hall is one of the greatest spies in American history, but her story has never been fully told until now. How did you first learn about Virginia, and what drew you to her as a subject?

A. World War II is a period of history that has always drawn me in, perhaps because my late father fought in the war and so, unusually for someone of my age, I have a direct personal connection. He was always reluctant to speak of what he did—although his heroism is mentioned in books and various accounts—but I knew from my mother and his old comrades that only a tiny part of his story was ever told beyond the small group of soldiers who witnessed it. This seems to be a constant theme with those who really did make a difference, and so when I stumbled across Virginia, I had a feeling that here too, there was more than met the eye. Here was a young American woman who, in a time when women were often relegated to the sidelines, managed to go behind enemy lines in occupied France and help lead the Allied resistance. Virginia was always reticent to speak of her accomplishments, so there was much mystery surrounding her...and my hunch that there was more to her story proved correct a hundredfold.

different codenames that people hadn't really pulled together all the strands of her operations before. There is no shortcut.

Dates and places and people have to be matched up until you have the full picture. This is laborious, but also constantly enticing, as you piece together the jigsaw puzzle. The nature of her work and the chaos of war means that many accounts, memoirs, reports are contradictory in places and, as the author, I had to decide which were most likely to be accurate. Occasionally that was not possible—and I've pointed out those times in the text, along with my belief in what is the most likely truth—but biography and history often involves that process.

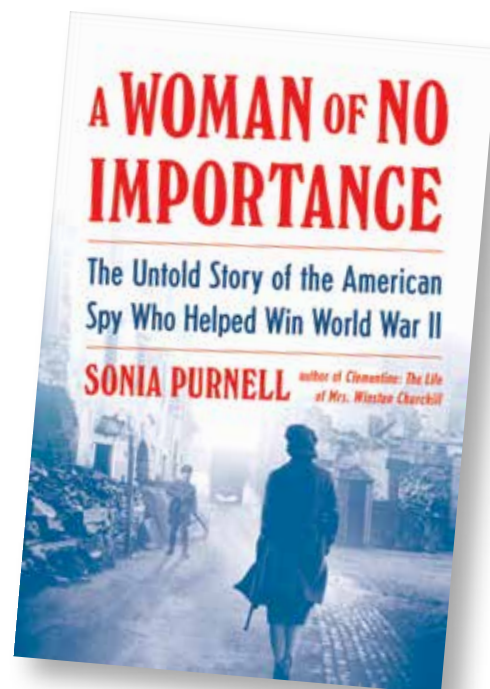
My great good fortune is that one of Virginia's comrades in the Resistance, Pierre Fayol, had done a huge amount of research on her in the decades after the war when people were still alive, memories were fresh, and documents that have since been lost were still available. Without Fayol's incomparable yet bizarrely overlooked collection on a dusty trolley in Lyon—opened to me very kindly by the Resistance museum there—my job would have been even more difficult, perhaps impossible. Virginia's full story might have been lost to us forever.



Virginia Hall's 1938 Estonian driver's license when she worked as a consular clerk at the U.S. Embassy in Tallin, Estonia.

Q. By design, the work of spies is not always documented or shared publicly, for their own safety and for the success of their missions. Can you talk about your research process for the book and how you were able to connect the dots of Virginia's life? Where did you meet challenges, incomplete records, etc.?

A. Tracking Virginia's story required a lot of detective work over three years with barely a day off. Many files, papers, documents have been lost, destroyed, or misfiled. She operated under so many



Result of Virginia Hall's sabotage campaign to blow up the railway bridge at Chamalières on August 2, 1944.



Virginia Hall receiving the Distinguished Service Cross on September 27, 1945.

Q. During World War II, Virginia helped to pioneer a new kind of warfare, dedicated to sabotage, subversion, and guerilla tactics. What did this kind of work look like, and how it was so different from the kind of spycraft that had come before? In what ways did Virginia's tactics have a lasting impact on espionage in general?

A. America had no great spying tradition; indeed in 1929 War Secretary Henry Stimson had summed up the national distaste for espionage with the pronouncement that 'gentlemen do not read each other's mail.' Britain's MI6 was an old hand, but its spies were traditionally posh boys raised on imperial adventure stories, trained to observe and report but not otherwise get involved. They were scarcely a match for the depraved barbarity of the Third Reich and their supporters in Vichy France. One espionage historian has explained the difference: if MI6 saw enemy troops cross a bridge it would keep a safe distance, calculate the numbers, and report back to base. Virginia and the other SOE operatives would have simply blown up the bridge. It was this combination of intelligence, subversion, and missions such as sabotage and ambush that was pioneering and which set the stage for special forces operations for many decades to come.

Initially, though, Virginia's job was to recruit secret cells of disciplined men and women prepared to put their lives on the line to spy, to courier messages and arms, and—only when the right time came—to fight for their lives and their country. In this, as in so much else, she was described by her commanders as 'almost embarrassingly successful.' No one had ever really done this before in a foreign country; she had to make up the rules as she went along. If she got it wrong, though, she would pay with her life.

Q. Your last book, *Clementine*, was also a biography of an important, but often forgotten, heroine of World War II: Clementine Churchill, wife of Winston. Do you see any similarities between Clementine and Virginia?

A. Sheer grit, perfectionism, focus, selflessness, courage and the desperate, all-consuming need to prove their worth, to justify their existence. But also a disdain for the limelight, which is one major reason why their full stories had never before been told. Another reason is that the extraordinary role of certain women in WWII has hitherto not fitted into the traditional narrative of heroism. Women largely shrank back into domestic roles once the fighting had finished and what they had done during those extraordinary years of 1939-1945 was rarely talked about. I aim to change that!

Q. Virginia is an inspiring figure, full of grit, courage, and intelligence. What about Virginia's life and work most inspires you, and what do you think readers today can learn from her?

A. Like Churchill, Virginia never, ever gave up, but even in the toughest conditions imaginable, she never lost her humanity or compassion. I know that in my own life I now often look to her for inspiration when times are hard and I would like to think that others will soon be able to do the same. She sets for us all an example of courage, fortitude, and the understanding that we should all try to play our part to the very best of our abilities. 🐾

Sonia Purnell is a biographer and journalist who has written for The Economist, The Daily Telegraph, and The Sunday Times. To sign up for one of her lectures with Royal Oak, visit our website.



A World War II-Era British Special Operations Executive Spy Radio like the kind Hall would have used

To read more about Virginia Hall visit our blog at www.royal-oak.org/VirginiaHall

Spring 2019 Royal Oak Calendar

The current season of our lecture series includes topics ranging from fashion and the fight for suffrage to spies—both contemporary and Elizabethan; talks on Churchill as son and as painter; gardens of the Arts and Crafts movement and more. Please see below for more details and dates.

MEMBER AND PUBLIC LECTURES

MARCH

- 12 Carol Ann Lloyd**
6:30 p.m. | Philadelphia, PA
- 13 Carol Ann Lloyd**
6:15 p.m. | New York, NY
- 18 Carol Ann Lloyd**
12:45 p.m. | Los Angeles, CA
- 20 Carol Ann Lloyd**
7:00 p.m. | San Francisco, CA



Winston Churchill and Jennie Jerome during early years

APRIL

- 1 Judith Tankard**
6:15 p.m. | New York, NY
- 8 Sonia Purnell**
6:30 p.m. | Philadelphia, PA
- 10 Sonia Purnell**
6:15 p.m. | New York, NY
- 11 Sonia Purnell**
6:00 p.m. | Boston, MA
- 12 Sonia Purnell**
6:45 p.m. | Alexandria, VA
- 15 Sonia Purnell**
7:15 p.m. | Los Angeles, CA
- 16 Adrian Tinniswood, OBE**
6:15 p.m. | Chicago, IL
- 17 Adrian Tinniswood, OBE**
6:30 p.m. | Atlanta, GA
- 17 Sonia Purnell**
6:30 p.m. | La Jolla, CA
- 18 Sonia Purnell**
6:30 p.m. | San Francisco, CA
- 22 Adrian Tinniswood, OBE**
6:15 p.m. | New York, NY
- 23 Judith Tankard**
6:30 p.m. | Charleston, SC
- 23 Adrian Tinniswood, OBE**
6:30 p.m. | Philadelphia, PA
- 29 Prof. Sir David Cannadine**
6:15 p.m. | New York, NY



Queen Elizabeth I, by English School

MAY

- 8 Judith Tankard**
6:30 p.m. | Chicago, IL
- 13 Tessa Boase**
6:15 p.m. | New York, NY
- 14 David Lough**
6:30 p.m. | Charleston, SC
- 14 Judith Tankard**
6:30 p.m. | Philadelphia, PA
- 15 David Lough**
6:30 p.m. | Washington, DC
- 16 David Lough**
6:00 p.m. | Boston, MA
- 20 David Lough**
6:30 p.m. | Philadelphia, PA
- 22 David Lough**
6:15 p.m. | New York, NY

TBA Carl Raymond
Atlanta, GA

ROYAL OAK MEMBER TOURS

MARCH

- 22 Alexander Hamilton
Customs House Tour**
11:00 a.m. | New York, NY
- 27 Merchant's House
Museum Tour**
2:00 p.m. | New York, NY

APRIL

- 4 Private Tour: Lotos Club**
10:00 a.m. | New York, NY
- 5 Winterthur Visit and
The Crown Tour**
10:30 a.m. | Winterthur, DE
- 9 Upstairs, Downstairs at the
Mt. Vernon Hotel Museum**
2:00 p.m. | New York, NY
- 26 Venturella Studio Tour**
11:00 a.m. | New York, NY

MAY

- 1 Ford Foundation Gallery Tour**
2:00 p.m. | New York, NY
- 5 AIA Around Manhattan
Architecture Boat Tour**
1:45 p.m. | New York, NY
- 9 Walking Tour:
Murray Hill & Sniffen Court**
3:30 p.m. | New York, NY
- 17 Brooklyn Bridge and
Heights Walking Tour**
10:00 a.m. | New York, NY



Princess Margaret's champagne dress in Season 1 of *The Crown*. Designed by Michele Clapton

For more Lecture and Tour information and to register: royal-oak.org/events or call 212.480.2889 ext. 201.

SPEAKERS & THEIR LECTURES

TESSA BOASE
‘Murderous Millinery’:
Fashion and the Fight for Suffrage

PROF. SIR DAVID CANNADINE
Churchill: The Statesman as Artist

CAROL ANN LLOYD
Ciphers, Secrets, and Spies
in the Elizabethan Age

DAVID LOUGH
‘My Darling Winston’:
The Letters Between Winston
Churchill and His Mother

CARL RAYMOND
From Dickens to Downton:
Victorian and Edwardian Food

SONIA PURNELL
A Woman of No Importance:
The Spy Who Helped Win WWII

JUDITH B. TANKARD
A Sense of Harmony: Gardens
of the Arts & Crafts Movement

ADRIAN TINNISWOOD, OBE
Behind the Throne:
A Domestic History of the
British Royal Household

Entrance to the White Garden at Hidcote, Gloucestershire.

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- Reciprocal free entry to NT for Scotland sites
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- NT annual Handbook and Parking Pass
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- Discounts on travel packages, magazine subscriptions and on select hotels in the U.K.
- Discounted membership to the Royal Over-Seas League clubs

Dual \$125

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- Priority registration for all Royal Oak lectures and programs in the U.S.
- Access to the NT's Special Visits, Tours and Lectures calendar of events



Royal Oak member were given a private tour of the British galleries under construction at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, October 2018.

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(valid for two people)

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- Arts, Buildings & Collections quarterly
- Special recognition in our Annual Report
- Invitation to annual Study Day in the fall
- Access to annual Spring Garden & House Tour

Steward \$2,500 (\$2,230 tax-deductible)

All benefits of BENEFACTOR membership, plus:

- Gift membership to offer a Student/Young Professional
- Additional lecture tickets & friend passes

Guardian \$5,000 (\$4,730 tax-deductible)

All benefits of STEWARD membership, plus:

- Invitation to the Guardian and Patron Dinner the evening before U.K. Study Day
- Invitations to any NT bespoke, invite-only events in the U.K.
- Invitation to a dinner with a Royal Oak lecturer in the U.S. (per availability)

Patron \$10,000 (\$9,730 tax-deductible)

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- VIP personalized tour of NT properties (upon request and 3 months' advance notice)

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The Grey Room, Waddesdon Manor. Painting by Charles Neal.
Photo: ©Charles Neal

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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