



THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

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



The National Trust Celebrates 125 Years
Saving Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal
Climate Change Is Felt Across Britain

SPRING 2020



The monastic ruins at Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden, North Yorkshire.

Dear Members & Friends,

This year marks a momentous occasion for the National Trust as they celebrate their 125th anniversary. I wonder if Octavia Hill, Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley, the three founders, could have envisioned what the Trust has become today. With nearly six million members, 500 historic properties, 780 miles of coastline and 250,000 hectares of land, the Trust is one of the largest charities in the UK, and growing.

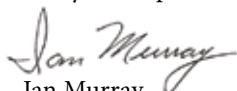
This year the Trust has announced three new initiatives to be realized over the next ten years. The first is to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and reduce their impact on climate change. Climate change not only affects natural landscapes but can have extreme effects on the houses, gardens and objects we all love. The second is to increase woodlands by planting more trees on National Trust land, 20 million more to be precise; and the third is the establishment of natural corridors that connect cities to parkland to wild open space. This is not to say that the Trust is abandoning its magnificent houses and gardens, they are still spending £2.5 million per week on restoration and conservation.

As we look ahead to 2020 and beyond we need to consider how we can have the greatest impact on helping the Trust preserve and protect historic places and spaces. Last year we successfully reached our objective of raising \$250,000 for the library at Blickling Hall thanks to all our generous donors. Those funds will help with cataloging the collection and mitigating the environmental threats that so easily attack paper and wood products.

This year we will support efforts to preserve Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, a superb 18th-century water garden. This will include conserving essential garden elements, and enhancing existing water features. You can read more about the threats facing this World Heritage site in the article about Fountains Abbey on pages 4-5.

Our spring programs will commence in March and continue through early May with an exciting lineup of acclaimed speakers who will lecture on topics as diverse as *The Country House Party*, *English Gardens*, and *Dining in the Gilded Age*. For those of you who do not live near a city in which we have lectures, you will soon be able to see behind-the-scenes video interviews with our speakers on our website.

All of this would not be possible without the support you give the Royal Oak Foundation, whether it be for special appeals, annual fund, membership or program attendance. Every bit helps and we truly appreciate it,


Ian Murray
Executive Director



THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

20 West 44th Street, Suite 606
New York, New York 10036-6603
212.480.2889 | www.royal-oak.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman

Lynne L. Rickabaugh

Vice Chairman

Renee Nichols Tucei

Treasurer

Susan Ollila

Secretary

Prof. Sir David Cannadine

Directors

Cheryl Beall

Michael A. Boyd

Michael J. Brown

Susan Chapman

Constance M. Cincotta

Robert C. Daum

Tracey A. Dedrick

Anne Blackwell Ervin

Pamela K. Hull

Linda A. Kelly

Hilary McGrady

Eric J. Nilson

Timothy Parker

Elise Meslow Ryan

Robert Sackville-West, Lord Sackville

Laura Trevelyan

STAFF

Ian Murray | Executive Director
imurray@royal-oak.org

Rob Weinstein
Director of Finance & Administration
rweinstein@royal-oak.org

Winifred E. Cyrus
Director of Member Services
wcyrus@royal-oak.org

Jan Lizza | Member Services Associate
jlizza@royal-oak.org

Jennie L. McCahey | Program Director
jmccahey@royal-oak.org

Christina de Gersdorff | Program Coordinator
cdegersdorff@royal-oak.org

Kayla Smith
Program & Development Associate
ksmith@royal-oak.org

Branwynne Kennedy
Development & Communications Associate
bkennedy@royal-oak.org

Jessie Walker | Foundation Volunteer

June Price | Newsletter Designer

The Royal Oak Newsletter is published biannually and distributed to active members and contributors. ©ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Royal Oak Supports the National Trust



Goal Reached for Blickling's Library

We are pleased to announce that Royal Oak achieved its fundraising goal of \$250,000 to help secure Blickling's library, one of Britain's most significant book collections. The money raised will be used to protect irreplaceable treasures in the collection from threatening conditions and to make thousands of annual visitors more aware of the richness of one of Britain's most remarkable libraries.

We will share with you updates on the conservation work as they become available. Check our website for more details at www.Royal-Oak.org/Blickling



Work Continues at Stowe

In 2019, Royal Oak made a grant of over \$250,000 to help the National Trust complete a major, five-year restoration of Stowe's magnificent landscapes, monuments, temples and follies.

We are delighted to share and update on the work. Of the 27 statues in the Grecian Valley that were lost from the site in the estate sales in 1848, 13 have been reinstated. Those include the Gothic Cross, Hercules and Antaeus, Samson and the Philistine, the Wrestlers, the

Circle of the Dancing Fawn, the Gladiator, Grecian and Marquess Urns, and the Temple of Friendship. New landscaping around the statues and monuments in Grecian Valley, Elysian Fields and Hawkwell Field ensures unity and presentation appropriate to the 18th century.

The landscape design includes 14 lakes and ponds that recreate the 18th-century illusion of the natural rivers the Thames and the Great Ouse. Over the centuries, the illusion of these bodies of water being

linked was lost, however, this is also on its way to being repaired. You can read about all these conservation efforts and much more on our website at www.Royal-Oak.org/Stowe

Furniture Project Opens Doors Onto the Past

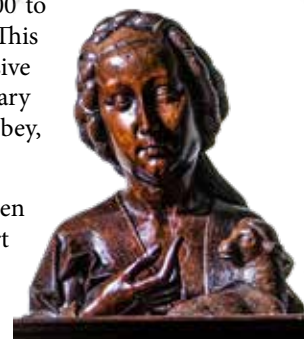
Generously supported by the Royal Oak Foundation and the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, the project aimed to improve understanding and appreciation of the Trust's collection of approximately 50,000 pieces of furniture. New cataloging and research has already been published and will result in two major outcomes: a book, *Furniture in National Trust Houses* by Christopher Rowell, and enhanced entries on National Trust Collections (www.nationaltrustcollections.org) for every single piece of furniture in Trust properties. Read more about the project at www.Royal-Oak.org/Furniture



St. Agnes Is Rediscovered at Anglesey Abbey

In 2019, Royal Oak made a grant of \$20,000 to the Trust's sculpture cataloging initiative. This painstaking work is already yielding impressive results. Recently, a rare 15th-century reliquary thought to be lost was found at Anglesey Abbey, a National Trust property.

The bust of the martyr St. Agnes has been identified as the work of Nicolaus Gerhaert von Leyden or his workshop, arguably the most important 15th-century sculptor in northern Europe. Only 20 of his works are believed to have survived and this sculpture is the only work by Gerhaert in a UK public collection. Jeremy Warren of the Trust said, "We suspect there are a lot of discoveries, great and small, to be made in the Trust's sculpture collections." To follow along, visit www.Royal-Oak.org/Sculpture. 📖



2019 Grants

Stowe Landscape Garden:
\$252,500

Batmans: Rudyard Kipling's
home: \$25,000

Lake District \$88,500

Wellington Monument: \$20,000

Snowhill Manor: \$50,000

Mapping NT Sculptures: \$20,000

Fountains Abbey and Its Mirrors of the Sky

One of England's most sublime landscapes is under threat from a changing climate and environmental damage

Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal is one of the most magnificent and beautifully designed landscapes ever created. In 1986 it was one of the first places in the UK to become a World Heritage Site because of the harmonious whole of buildings, gardens, and landscapes ... which represents over 800 years of human ambition, design and achievement.

An Abbey is Established

The property, situated in the Skell Valley in North Yorkshire, is a striking and distinctive cultural and physical landscape. It is an ancient place where the River Skell has run down from the moorlands through the steep winding valley since time immemorial. In 1132, when the Archbishop of York granted the lands to a group of 13 monks to establish an Abbey, it was described in the Old Chronicles as “an, inhospitable valley thickset with thorns lying between the slopes of mountains among rocks jutting out both sides of the River Skell. Fit rather to the lair of wild beasts than the home of human beings.”

However the valley provided everything the monks needed to develop a thriving community, including shelter from the elements and the building materials to construct the abbey. They manipulated the course of the river so that they could harness its power for grinding grain into flour, which provided bread to fuel the abbey's ever-growing population. Over time this once inhospitable landscape became one of the largest, richest and most influential Cistercian abbeys in Britain.

This world came to an end when Henry VIII ordered the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s. The deed of surrender was signed in November 1539, ending 400 years of worship at the Abbey. London merchant, Richard Gresham bought the estate and removed the roofs and stripped its assets. And so the ruins of the old Abbey fell into a deep sleep with wooden doors barring the entrances for two hundred years.



A misty, winter view of a statue of Galen in front of the Temple of Piety at Studley Royal Water Garden.

Mirrors of the Sky

While things were still and quiet on the old abbey lands, a prosperous family was on the rise next door at Studley Royal. The Aislalie family inherited the estate in the late 1600s and the next three generations of the Aislalie family would plan and design the Georgian water garden on the estate.

They tamed the River Skell to create mirror-like moon ponds and crashing cascades, ingeniously channeling the winding waters to flow through their garden. In 1767, William Aislalie achieved what his father and grandfather were not able to—he buys Fountains Abbey and the two estates become one.

Over the next century, the estate would pass from family to family coming into the ownership of the Marquess of Ripon in the early 20th century and then ultimately, the Vyners, close friends of the Royal family.

The National Trust took ownership in 1983 and opened it up to far wider audiences with around 600,000 visitors coming each year to enjoy this awe-inspiring landscape.

Under Water and Under Threat

Today, this magnificent place is under threat. The River Skell has been the lifeblood of the abbey over the centuries and is fundamental

to the design of the Studley Royal water gardens. However, this close relationship is now threatening the very existence of the World Heritage Site, with Historic England designating it at high risk of flooding.

Significant floods in 2000, 2007, and 2012 caused great damage to the abbey and the water garden. The most significant of these floods, in 2007, caused lasting damage to the abbey, and unfortunately such flooding is no longer considered a one-off event.

Problems are compounded by a fatal flaw in the Aislalie landscape design. The water garden is directly connected to the River Skell with the result that the ponds, canals and lakes have become clogged with sediment that runs off the fields upstream, preventing them from being beautiful 'mirrors to the sky' as intended.

Flooding has been exacerbated by climate change and the unintentional effects of agricultural practices, meaning flooding events are now a regular occurrence.

The Plan to Save the Estate

The Trust has joined forces with the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, local farmers and landowners to save Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal and restore the

health of the river. The Trust will work with these partners to implement a natural flood management program including planting ten hectares of woodland and creating ponds and meadows. Work will be done to slow the water flow, reducing the risk of flooding and soil run-off so that the Studley Royal water garden doesn't fill with silt.

The National Trust will record and conserve surviving relicts of the Chinese Garden including the plinth of William Aislalie's Ting, the Roman Monument, the gate piers and the walls to the Chinese Wood.

At Spa Gill Wood, they will work to reveal the surviving listed well-head and enhance the presentation of the spa pool. Research will be conducted on the remains of the cottage in the wood used by 19th-century visitors when taking in the spa waters, as well as the historic carriage drives, bridges and planting designs set out by William Aislalie in the 18th century.

The Skell Valley project will run from 2021 to 2024 and will cost approximately £2.5 million. We hope you will join us in saving this historical and special site by supporting these initiatives. 🌱



How You Can Help

Royal Oak has pledged to raise \$250,000 to help safeguard the future of this special place.

We hope you will join us in supporting Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal by making a donation today.

To learn more about the project and how you can make a donation, visit, www.Royal-Oak.org/Fountains

Woodlands on the South Downs, West Sussex.

The National Trust Celebrates 125 Years

To mark this momentous occasion, the Trust announces ambitious plans to counteract climate change

By Hilary McGrady, Director-General of the National Trust

Thomas Hardy wrote my all-time favorite book, *The Return of the Native*. It opens with a vivid description of the fictional Egdon Heath in Wessex: as a “heathy, furzy, briary wilderness”. An “untameable” landscape, where “civilization is the enemy”. To this day I love no landscape more than wild untameable moorlands. Hardy saw man’s determination to shape the landscape and the march of the industrial revolution as the great threat of his time. But in truth, our land has long been subject to the hand of man. The land around Dorchester, which gave Hardy the inspiration for Egdon Heath, has been tamed by its inhabitants since the first Neolithic settlers arrived. The evidence is there in Max Gate, the home Hardy built for himself and which he and his wife bequeathed to the National Trust in 1940. Under the grounds of Max Gate lies a Neolithic ditch called Flagstones which is engraved with prehistoric designs.

Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley—the brilliant triumvirate who founded the National Trust—all believed in the profound effects of access to nature, to beauty and to history. They left us a challenge: to protect and care for places of historic interest and natural beauty for the benefit of the nation forever.

In the beginning, the National Trust focused on securing common land and beautiful landscapes in response to industrialization. The next chapter opened roughly at the end of the World War II when a country house was being demolished every five days. The third chapter, from the 60s through to the 90s, was about the threat to the coastline of over-development from industry and the growth of the seaside economy. The Trust responded with Enterprise Neptune, our fundraising campaign that ensured that 750 miles of our coastline is now cared for and accessible to the nation. Having focused on places for all this time, chapter four was almost entirely given over to people, giving them more access to the places in our care through visiting, walking, swimming, learning or simply enjoying.



Throughout each of these chapters, the Trust has taken into its care, places that in many ways define our history, both natural and cultural: Runnymede, where Magna Carta was sealed and the story of our democracy was born; Lindisfarne, the birthplace of modern Christianity; Isaac Newton’s home; Quarry Bank Mill, a masterpiece of the industrial revolution; the Beatles’ Houses that tell the story of four working-class lads who changed the face of postwar Britain; Glastonbury Tor and the prehistoric landscape of Stonehenge, as well as iconic natural heritage sites such as the Giant’s Causeway, Snowdonia and the White Cliffs of Dover.

So in 2020, it is time for us to ask—what does the nation need from us now? What chapter will we write together? The threat of the climate crisis and the catastrophic decline in our natural environment demand action.

But to restore nature and arrest climate change we will need to start with people.

We will need to connect more people with nature if we are to inspire them to want to care for it. Throughout 2020, we have a huge list of things planned for people to do—from tree planting, river and beach cleaning, to dancing in the great outdoors.

However, if we want this chapter to be about a long-term commitment to addressing the loss of nature and tackling climate change, we will need to go much further.

The ultimate purpose of the Trust, Europe’s largest conservation charity, is to leave behind a world that is fit for our children and grandchildren.

You can read more about the three major initiatives the National Trust will undertake on the following page.

By 2030, We Will....

Achieve net zero carbon emissions

Not only do we have an ambition to reach net zero we have a clear plan of how we are going to get there, in ten years. Through people and through places, many, many hands will help us. At the heart of our plan are people like Kait. She's been a ranger with us in the Peak District for nearly ten years. Every week, in all weathers, she takes a team of willing volunteers onto the moors to plant thousands of tiny sphagnum moss plugs. These little plugs store water, bind the bog and capture carbon, locking it underground.

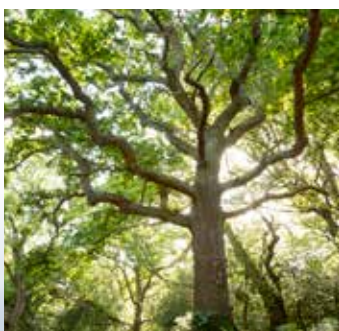


Their efforts mean that about 13 million tons of carbon safely stored underground in the Peak District. That's a year's worth of carbon emissions from Sheffield. This is what many human hands can do together.

We will work with thousands more like Kait and volunteers young and old to restore our uplands and hold more carbon. Our plan also involves building on our decision last year to disinvest from fossil fuel companies, by reducing our own energy use further.

We will do this by continuing to switch to renewable energy sources, reducing emissions from our farmed and let estate and managing our supply chain to tighter carbon targets

Plant 20 million trees

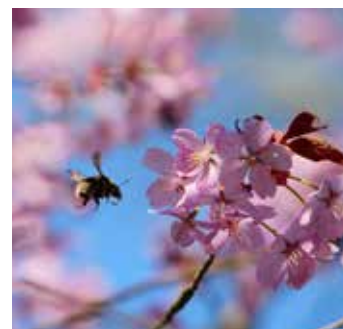


The National Trust, on behalf of the entire nation, is a significant landowner. Of the 250,000 hectares of land we own, approximately 10% is woodland. We will increase that 10% to 17% over the next decade. That means planting and establishing 20 million trees in 10 years.

By 2030, we will have re-purposed 18,000 hectares of our land to woodland—an area one and a half times the size of Manchester.

Create 20 green corridors

Ecosystems depend on unbroken chains and on corridors. Humans also need that continuity, routes and corridors into nature. The appreciation of and access to nature should be available to everyone, for ever. I want people to be able to walk and make the connection from their window box or garden to their local park. From park to farmland and then on out to wild open space beyond the city.



And while we have done so much to care for wonderful places—and of course some of them are big—it is still rare to be able to make the connection from street to mountain, from local park to National Park.

We are now mapping where such corridors might be possible and we will work with the many, many partners out there also keen to achieve the same sort of benefits for nature and people. We are already working with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, one of our most longstanding partners, to look after parks in major cities around the UK. 🐝

*Nature is a treasure that we all hold in common. As Hardy says in **The Return of the Native**, “colours and beauties so far subdued were, at least, the birth right of all”. It has to be there for all of us. That is the mission of the National Trust today.*

A Changing Climate

The National Trust confronts new weather patterns across its lands and properties

By Keith Jones

The National Trust sees climate change as the biggest risk it faces. The places we care for on behalf of the nation have seen weather impacts before; however, the speed of the changes and breadth we see today are on another level.

These range from very small changes such as daffodils coming into bloom months early, to very big changes such as the recent heavy flooding in Lyme Park and Quarry Bank Mill that destroyed footpaths and historic features in the gardens. Coal miners used to take canaries down the mines to signal danger from methane gas. The signs we see today across National Trust properties are our canaries and they are singing loudly.

One of these canaries is Ham House in Richmond on the banks of the Thames near London. The 17th-century house is now enduring temperatures that threaten both the structure and its contents. One day last year, the inside temperature reached nearly 40C, or 122F.

These extreme temperatures not only mean closures to the public but can also mean



Ham House in Richmond on the banks of the River Thames.

costly damage: lead on the roof can buckle and result in leaks; tapestries and paintings may be damaged by changes in humidity.

Wild temperature fluctuations can also damage the gardens and parkland of historic houses.

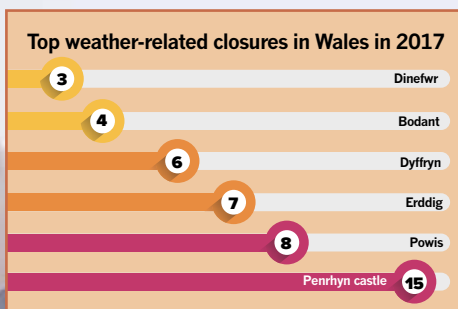
For example, the front parterre at Ham House has been suffering from lack of moisture and was turning yellow in summer thus altering the setting and look for the garden and house. The property team planted hundreds of thousands of Mediterranean bulbs in the garden to take advantage of this new condition. Part of the garden has been altered to take advantage of these hotter conditions and looks stunning in summer. The National Trust is looking more and more at adaptive strategies at its properties. There are no simple answers at this time and the only constant seems to be change.

For well over a decade now, the National Trust has been working at large scale to keep carbon locked in the soil.

They have worked to get the land in good condition and invested heavily in renewable energy at their properties. Some examples include the 600kw Hydro electricity generating system on Mount Snowdon or the Marine Source heat pump at Plas Newydd. All are being developed to generate 50% of our energy needs by 2021. Adaptation or living within this new climate is also working at a pace as can be seen on our 'shifting shores strategy' preempting rather than reacting at the most vulnerable coastal sites.

Climate change is not some time in the future. It is here and now. The National Trust is here forever but the future will be a different place for all of us. 🌿

Keith Jones is a climate change expert at the National Trust.



Devastating Climate Effects Hit Close to Home



LANDSLIDES: The NT owned Brecon Beacons are seeing landslides due to increased rain events, excessive drying out and land management practices. The drinking water of Cardiff and Swansea is seriously affected due to downstream siltation, turning the rivers red.



FIRES: In April 2019, Marsden Moor suffered a serious fire. The fire, likely to have been started by a barbecue, was the sixth on this moorland in 2019 and affected about 3 km² of land. The number of fires on heathland is quickly increasing and this is destroying some of the NT's excellent work: 20 years of habitat restoration effort and investment in the case of Marsden. Moorland fires are a known risk. A drier climate is now making many more of our habitats more prone to fire. Our parklands are likely to be increasingly susceptible to fire after a drought event.



FLOODING: Flooding is becoming more regular. This is not just as a result of more (or more intense) rain but also due to increasingly compacted land no longer absorbing heavy rains, leading to flash flooding. Last month's flooding in Ty Mawr

Wybrnant was flooded for the first time in living memory. On many properties rain water goods, car park surfaces and drains now need to be reassessed and redesigned to be able to cope.



WEATHER-RELATED CLOSURE:

Properties are reporting more wind-related closed days due to safety concerns. Five years of closure data from Carrick-a-Rede is showing a distinct upward trend. At Chirk Castle a PhD student is helping the property to map out changes in health and safety risk levels related to the oak lined drive due to different wind patterns.



HUMIDITY: At Dyrham Park, the Dyrham Triptych, a 16th-century painted panel triptych started to blister in response to the combination of high temperature and low humidity. A panel painting, Joachim Beukelaer, Market Couple, (1533-74), in Osterley's Long Gallery warped during periods of low humidity, although it returned to its usual profile when humidity increased.



ANIMALS: Research shows that the overwhelming response of species to climate change is not to adapt to new climatic conditions in situ but to move to find

their climatic niche. Habitats and species on and beyond our properties will change. Many upland waders, for example, will move northwards and go to higher elevations than at present. Seabirds are already being affected, as illustrated by puffins on the Farne Islands. They rely on synchronizing their breeding time with sandeel availability, which is becoming more variable and more prone to changing location due to warming seas. Populations on the Farnes are now more prone to crashes as a direct result. For other species, range shifts and habitat change will mean certain loss. For example, montane heath in Snowdonia is likely to be lost entirely, meaning some species will simply vacate north Wales.



CHANGING VEGETATION:

A tree species which flourished in the 18th Century may no longer be viable or might take a huge amount of labor to maintain. Some of those include such iconic species as cedar, oak, and ash.



DISEASE AND ILLNESS:

A changing climate is likely to bring new health concerns and safety guidance, recommendations and requirements to ensure the health and welfare of visitors, staff and volunteers. For example, tick populations have increased by over 400% in the last 10 years in Britain, particularly in the South. Bites from infected ticks can cause the debilitating Lyme disease. There are now 1,000 cases a year in the UK.

Madcap Cottage

Member Spotlight



Royal Oak talks to longtime members, John Loecke and Jason Oliver Nixon, the owners of a British-inspired global lifestyle brand

Q: How did you discover the National Trust and become a member of Royal Oak?

A: John and I are diehard anglophiles and travel to England at least 8 times per year. We are passionate about vintage-inspired design and love visiting amazing old homes and have no fear of renting a car and hightailing it to places that are far off the train lines. Granted, there was that one time in the Cotswolds that we nearly took out a hedge ... After visiting several National Trust properties on a trip to Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, we were told that there is an American arm of the National Trust called the Royal Oak, and “Why,” a lovely lady at the till in tweeds asked, “aren’t you members?” So we signed up pronto when we returned Stateside. And now we use our passes madly when we are back across the pond. We have the sticker on the back of our car.



Madcap Cottage

Q: When you became a member of Royal Oak, you were both still working in the magazine world in New York City, how did you decide to make this career transition?

A: When John and I joined the Royal Oak we were both magazine editors in Manhattan—John was the Home Editor at Parents magazine and I was the Editor-in-Chief of Gotham, Hamptons, and Los Angeles Confidential magazines. We were traveling to England once or twice a year just for fun. Eventually, after almost 25 years in New York City, we decided it was time to move further afield as we had sort of maxed-out our NYC experience and were turning into bitter Seinfeld characters. We started looking for a place that would allow us to spread our wings, and we finally settled on High Point, North Carolina, the so-called “furniture capital of the world”, after considering Los Angeles, Chicago, and my home state of Florida.

Q: What role did your travel experiences in Britain play in your decision?

A: John and I love gracious living rooted in history, and the American South truly captures this spirit. We are passionate about color, whimsy, a sense of irony, and long-standing traditions, and this is something that we find in spades in North Carolina. In New York everyone wears black and you never go to someone’s home for dinner

and it’s all fast, fast, fast. In North Carolina, homes are packed with prints, pattern, and color and folks wear color with carefree abandon, and languid, boozy dinner parties are de rigueur. We also found that North Carolina seemed to have a real affinity for England—so many of our friends here travel to the UK numerous times per year to visit the great country homes and gardens. We can have chat with our next-door neighbor in High Point about Hidcote Manor Gardens, for example, and that was a conversation that we would never have had with our neighbor in Brooklyn. In fact, we barely knew our neighbors in Brooklyn!

Q: How did you choose to live in the High Point area?

A: High Point is a city of makers and creators in the home-design space and also hosts the twice-annual High Point Market which is the “fashion week” for the home-furnishings industry. John and I were looking to take the Madcap Cottage brand to the next level, and we had maxed-out living in New York City after 23 years. High Point seemed to be on the move and a place where we could expand, spread out, and build the omnichannel presence that we craved for the brand. Fast forward five years, and High Point has allowed us just that and we currently have 13 licenses in the home-design and pet-product spaces.



Q: Can you describe your company today?

A: Madcap Cottage is a global lifestyle brand known for its whimsical, sophisticated use of color, prints, and patterns paired with an overarching spirit of accessible, approachable fun. The Madcap brand captures a passion for a life well lived—bolstered by a nod to history while always looking forward—that translates to lifestyle-driven product licenses that range from rugs, lighting, and fabric to wallpaper, tabletop, bedding, children's furniture, and more sold through robust retail channels. The Madcap brand turns to travel, history, antiques, and great homes for inspiration to craft product and homes that are aspirational but always

attainable. We look to UK-based brands such as Paul Smith, Fortnum & Mason, and Cath Kidston as very much like-minded in their spirit and sensibility.

Q: In what way do the National Trust houses and collections inspire you?

A: John and I have culled so much inspiration from National Trust properties—whether a “moment” that crystallized at Stowe or Stourhead or an antique furnishing that delivered a detail at Montacute House. There is nothing quite like looking at an incredible home or garden from the past to deliver that “Eureka!” moment. We have a fabric in our collection called Hello, Hidcote that is based upon sketches that we painted while in the gardens at Lawrence Johnston's amazing series of room-like gardens. We have lifted chintz inspiration from Chartwell and were wowed by the recent Chippendale exhibitions that celebrated the master cabinet maker's 300th birthday. The Chippendale pieces that so exuberantly populate West Yorkshire's Nostell Priory, for example, have provided heaps of inspiration for our collections—especially furnishings such as the delicious green japanned dressing table, clothes press, and parcel-gilt chairs paired with the State Apartment's incredible bird-festooned Chinoiserie wallpaper. Other pieces that are favorites in the National Trust collections include the endless river-grass carpets that fill the public spaces at force-of-nature Bess of Hardwick's Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire; the “Capriccio

of a Mediterranean Seaport” painting by short-lived muralist Rex Whistler at Plas Newydd that inspired a mural in our High Point home, the House of Bedlam; and Knole's Brown Gallery with its collection of amazing portraits and ersatz chairs covered in eclectic, wonderful textiles. As John and I travel from home to home and garden to garden, we break out our Smythson diaries and paint and sketch and take heaps and heaps of photos that later play such an important role in helping us shape the Madcap Cottage product lines back in the States. They practically had to pry us out of the White Garden at Sissinghurst where John and I were sketching motifs for an upcoming line of bedding and pillows.

Q: Do you have a favorite house? A favorite style or period? A favorite NT object?

A: Our favorite homes and gardens—currently!—in the National Trust panoply include Fenton House and Garden in London for the incredible flowers and landscapes smack in the heart of the city; Claydon Estate for the incredible Chinoiserie detailing; and the breathtaking gardens and follies at Stowe. We love anything Regency or Georgian or Chippendale or Tudor. How's that for a range? One day, we hope to create a budget-minded, small version of the Palladian bridge at Stowe across the stream that runs through our High Point, North Carolina property, the House of Bedlam. 🌿



Nostell Priory in Yorkshire (right) was an influence on the living room at Madcap Cottage (left).

The House Party

From Elizabeth I to Evelyn Waugh, the country house has been where Britain's elite partied privately, away from the prying eyes of the public

by Adrian Tinniswood

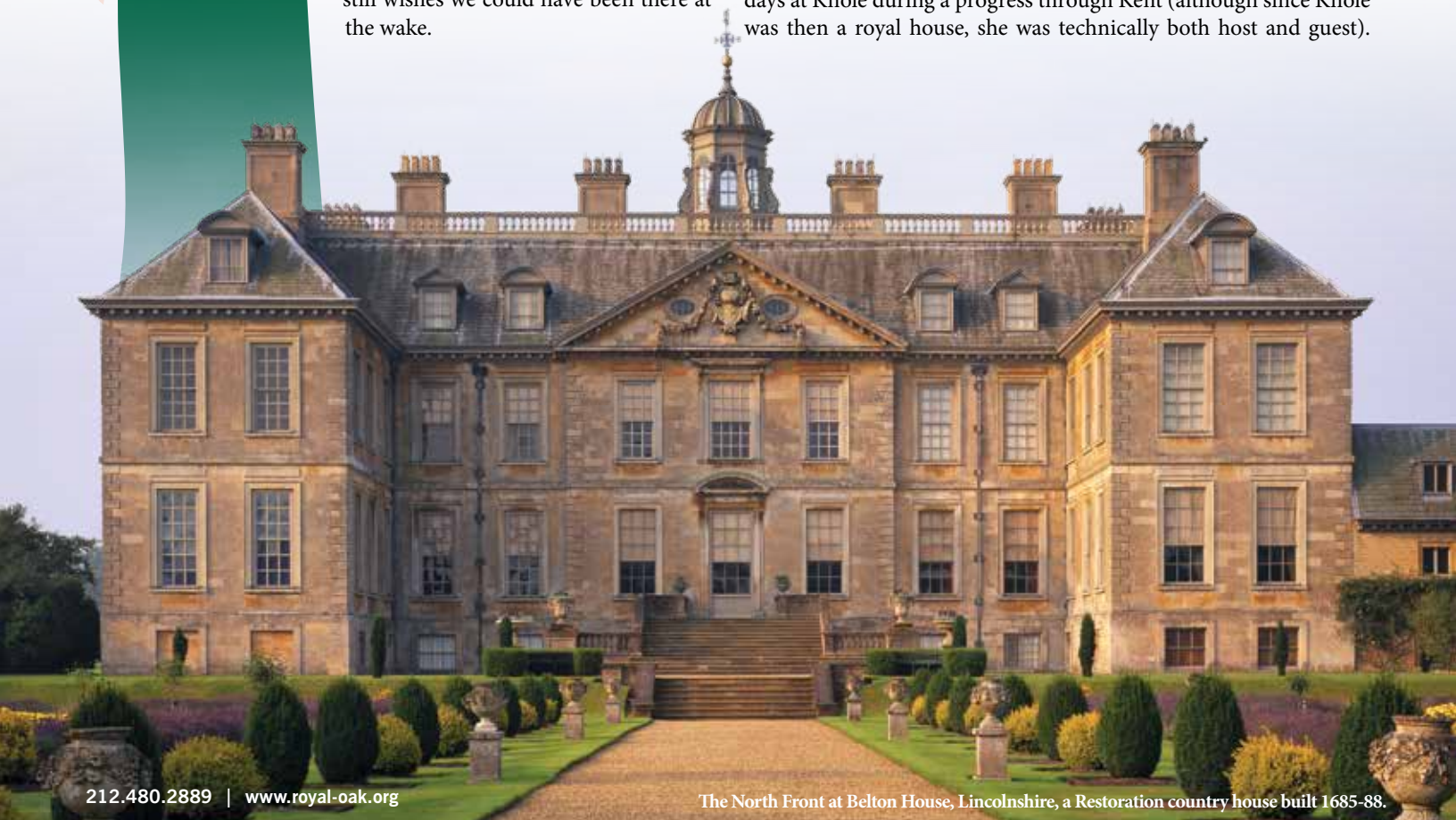


The following is an excerpt of Adrian Tinniswood's book, *The House Party: A Short History of Leisure, Pleasure, and the Country House Weekend*

The country house party occupies a special place in British culture. Whether it involves jazz and cocaine, or sherry and stilted conversation, or even a body in the library and the arrival of Miss Marple, the weekend spent in a moated manor house or a palatial Palladian villa has come to epitomise the privileged lifestyle of a tiny minority in an age which has passed. And while we might celebrate its passing, a little part of us still wishes we could have been there at the wake.

The golden age of the house party began during Queen Victoria's reign, when her son and his cronies were enthusiastically drinking, gambling and fornicating their way through country houses all over Britain. It ended half a century later, when drinking, gambling and fornicating had to take second place to fighting fascism. And it comes as no surprise that the period coincided with a relaxation of social convention which allowed the new rich and figures from the arts to mix more freely in traditional landed society than ever before, challenging the old formalities. Nor should we ignore the fact that this golden age peaked in the years between the world wars, when the fusion of two lost generations—the one which had washed away its innocence in the blood of Flanders field and could never forget the sights it had seen, and the other whose guilt at being too young to fight left it eager to forget the sights it hadn't seen—turned the country house weekend into a game played by Bright Young Things and those who were less bright, perhaps, less young, but ultimately more enduring.

The country house has always attracted visitors. Queen Elizabeth I dropped in at Sir Thomas Lucy's Charlecote in the summer of 1572 during a tour of Warwickshire, and the following year she spent five days at Knole during a progress through Kent (although since Knole was then a royal house, she was technically both host and guest).



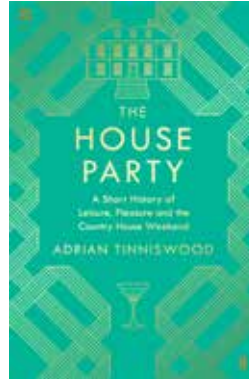


In 1576 she spent a couple of days with Sir Thomas Gresham at Osterley in Middlesex, where she famously remarked that his new courtyard 'would appear more handsome if divided by a wall in the middle'. Gresham summoned workmen from London and overnight they made the Queen's wish come true, leading the court wits to comment on some family problems that Gresham was having, saying it was easier to divide a house than it was to unite it.

More than a century later William of Orange visited Sir John Brownlow at Belton, his new house near Grantham. Brownlow showed the King such a good time, and left him with such a horrible hangover, that William couldn't face the feast that was provided for him when he arrived at Lincoln the next day. George III and Queen Charlotte made a brief visit to the 1st Earl of Mount Edgumbe at Cotehele in Cornwall in August 1789, whilst staying at Saltram over the border in Devon. 'A large hall full of old armour and swords,' Charlotte wrote in her diary.

Unwary guests who spent a night at Seaton Delaval in the 18th century found themselves falling victim to some rather trying practical jokes. Their hosts, the Delavals, fitted out their magnificent Northumberland mansion with a range of elaborate devices, all designed to embarrass, confuse and humiliate. For example, having retired for the night, a visitor might be in the middle of undressing when mechanical hoists raised their bedroom walls like theatrical scenery, exposing them to view and, presumably, to ridicule. Or they could be wakened abruptly from dreamless sleep as their bed was lowered into a bath of cold water by a system of ropes and pulleys operated by a Delaval lurking next door. A guest who had drunk too much might be put to bed in the dark; when they eventually roused themselves the next morning, they would be astonished to discover they were lying on the ceiling of their bedroom: the room's furnishings were inverted, with chairs and tables stuck to the ceiling and a chandelier standing up in the middle of the floor.

Friends, neighbors, relations, even passing celebrities might arrive at one's country house, sometimes with little or no notice. Mary Elizabeth Lucy and her husband George were still in bed at Charlecote one morning in January 1828 when they heard the ringing of their front door bell, and a maid came to tell them that Sir Walter Scott and his daughter were downstairs. 'Don't I remember our hurry to get dressed,' Mary Elizabeth recalled, 'when we heard who it was that had arrived and were waiting for permission to see the house.'



Scott only stayed for a couple of hours, in spite of being pressed to stay longer. But in a slightly later age when the rail network was still in its infancy and roads were impassable in bad weather, an extended visit was the norm. Typical of the early house party was the occasion in the 1850s when Mary Elizabeth Lucy, now widowed, and her daughter Carry had 'a charming expedition' to Eywood in Herefordshire, where they were the guests of Lord and Lady Langdale for a fortnight. There was a large party, including a Count Teleki, a Hungarian fortune-hunter who was courting Lady Langdale's daughter and who subsequently married her, only to

leave her three days after the wedding, announcing as he went that he already had a wife and family in Hungary. In fact it was quite a cosmopolitan group, with an unnamed Polish nobleman, a virtuoso violinist named Remery, and Mary Elizabeth's Welsh harp-teacher Mr Thomas among the guests. The Langdales were good hosts: there were carriages and horses to drive or ride, picnics, a flower show, dancing, 'and two harps upon which Mr Thomas and I played duets'.

One tends to assume that mid-Victorian house parties were sedate affairs. Not this one. In the course of a long walk through a meadow, the group came to a ditch, which they all managed to negotiate except for a Miss Bickersteth, who declared she couldn't possibly jump it. Count Teleki promptly lay down at full length across the ditch and invited her to use him as a bridge, which she did, 'and we all screamed with laughing'. After dinner Monsieur Remery stood at the top of the stairs and played his 'wild wizard-like music', while the rest of the men showed off by leaping over chairs.

Teleki and the Polish baron challenged the others to balance on the top banister rail of the main staircase, and Mr Thomas, his manhood impugned by these foreign upstarts, immediately declared he could do it. He couldn't. In fact he fell on Mary Elizabeth's head, 'and knocked me down flat on my knees, most fortunately for him as had he fallen on the marble floor in all probability he would have been killed'.

Everyone (except Mary Elizabeth and Mr Thomas, presumably) laughed so loud and so long 'that the hall rang again with their peals of excitement'. ❀

Adrian Tinniswood is the bestselling author of 15 books of social and architectural history and was awarded an OBE for services to heritage. He will be speaking to Royal Oak members in Spring 2020 about his latest book.



Queen Elizabeth I in procession with her courtiers, c1600-1603. Artist: Sarah, Countess of Essex.



The Met's British Galleries Reimagined

A highlight of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 150th anniversary in 2020 will be the opening of the Museum's newly installed

Annie Laurie Aitken

and Josephine

Mercy Heathcote

Galleries—11,000

square feet devoted to

British decorative arts,

design, and sculpture

created between 1500

and 1900.



Staffordshire
teapot ca. 1755

During this period, Britain transformed itself from an isolated island nation into a dominant world power. Global trade stimulated wealth, created a cultural and economic elite beyond the aristocracy, broadened local tastes, and introduced new markets to resourceful British makers. Artists, manufacturers, and retailers—men and women—responded vigorously to these opportunities, developing new materials and technologies, adapting European and Asian styles, and taking bold, imaginative risks.



Designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones and
John Henry Dearle ca. 1894



Designed by Augustus Pugin,
made by Holland & Sons ca. 1859

The reimagined suite of 10 galleries, including three remarkable 18th-century interiors, will provide a fresh perspective on the period, focusing on its bold, entrepreneurial spirit and complex history. The new narrative will offer a chronological exploration of the intense commercial drive among artists, manufacturers, and retailers that shaped British design over the course of 400 years. During these years,

global trade and the growth of the British Empire fueled innovation, industry, and exploitation. Works on view will illuminate the emergence of a new middle class—ready consumers for luxury goods—which inspired an age of exceptional creativity and invention during a time of harsh colonialism. 🇬🇧



Designed
by Matthew
Boulton ca. 1772

GALLERY TOUR: Renovated Galleries for British Decorative Arts and Design at the Met

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 Fifth Avenue, Great Hall, Groups Desk, New York City on Friday, March 27, 10:00 a.m. – approx. 11:00 a.m.

Join Royal Oak as Associate Curator Wolf Burchard guides us through the newly revealed renovation to see some of the almost 700 works of art on display, including a wide array of furniture, ceramics, silver, tapestries, and other textiles from the Tudor, Stuart, Georgian, and Victorian eras.

CHARGE: \$55 members only.
Free to Heritage Circle members



THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

LEGACY GIVING

Our members generously contribute to the Royal Oak Foundation in multiple ways; through gifts to our annual appeals, membership at the Supporter or Heritage Circle level, and through general donations. But another way to support Royal Oak, and provide a lasting legacy, is through a planned gift in your will.

Planned gifts can be designated to a specific cause or giving without restriction. They may be in any amount and can be a cash bequest, appreciated assets such as stock, or life insurance. All legacy gifts are allocated 100% to non-operating income meaning they are used to directly benefit the National Trust and not for general operations.

As National Trust properties and objects come under increasing pressure due to climate conditions, increased visitation and general aging, your gift will ensure that future generations of Royal Oak visitors will be able to enjoy the same houses, gardens and natural landscapes just as you have.

Some members have already made provision for the Royal Oak Foundation in their estate planning through

our Legacy Circle. They have shown their commitment to protecting the places they love with a lasting gift.

Others have remembered us in their wills often without our knowledge. In just the last few years we have received legacy gifts ranging from \$5,000 to over \$500,000, many coming from members who we were unaware had left us a bequest. These gifts are incredibly important to allow us to continue to support the National Trust and ensure that we have a long-lasting and meaningful impact on its work.

This year the National Trust turns 125 years old. For the last 47 of those years, the Royal Oak Foundation has helped preserve and protect those special places of natural beauty and important historical significance thanks to the generosity of our members and friends. In order to continue this work we need your help. In this milestone year please consider being a part of our rich history by remembering the Foundation in your will and joining our Legacy Circle.

For further information about planned giving or to notify us of a planned gift, please contact Ian Murray, Executive Director at 212-480-2889, ext. 202, or imurray@royal-oak.org. You can also visit the Legacy Circle page on our website under "support us". 🌱

The Royal Oak Legacy Circle

The Legacy Circle recognizes those who wish to create a legacy by remembering Royal Oak and the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland in their estate plans. Legacy Circle members are recognized in our print and digital publications for their generosity.





Heathland at Dunwich Heath, Suffolk

Photo: ©National Trust Images/ Justin Minns

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.



The Royal Oak Foundation
20 West 44th Street, Suite 606
New York, New York 10036-6603
212.480.2889; 800.913.6565
www.royal-oak.org



The Royal Oak Foundation is an American not-for-profit charity 501(c)3 incorporated in the State of New York. Royal Oak's latest annual report may be obtained, upon request, from Royal Oak or from the Office of the Attorney General, Charities Bureau, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.