THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

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

Actors & Eccentrics at Home

Extreme Rococo: Chelsea Porcelain

The Decline and Fall of the British Pub

FALL 2020

Pink Japanese anemone growing in the borders at Alfriston, a Clergy House, East Sussex. A rare 14th-century Wealden hall-house set in a traditional garden.

Dear Members & Friends,

The last six months have certainly changed our expectations for 2020. In early spring we reported about the Trust's new initiatives to be achieved over the next 10 years, and we were all looking forward to traveling to the U.K. for the 125th anniversary celebration of the National Trust. That has all gone by the wayside now and there is no doubt that the Covid crisis has had a tremendous impact on the Trust's future plans and finances. The Royal Oak Foundation also had to cancel all in-person programming, events and travel, and to work remotely from our homes.

But it has not been all gloom and doom. The crisis forced us to implement changes that were already in the planning stages. It was always our desire to offer online programming to give members who do not live in lecture cities the same benefits as those who do. The programming staff quickly pivoted to replace in-person lectures with virtual digital programming, both live and recorded. Now, all Royal Oak members can enjoy the best of British art, architecture and history; and the ability to watch lectures at your leisure is yet another benefit that was not previously available. Even when life returns to normal, we will continue digital lectures so that any Royal Oak member can enjoy our programs regardless of where they live.

Despite all that has happened we remain passionate about our mission to help the National Trust thrive. We are well on our way to raising $250,000 to protect and restore Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal Water Garden. It is under threat from severe flooding and we are working with the Trust to mitigate future floods and to restore the reflecting pools and water features that have earned this unique site World Heritage status.

Though we cannot travel, you can enjoy some of the diverse properties and objects under the Trust's care. In this edition of the newsletter you will learn about British pubs (of which the Trust owns over 35), Chelsea porcelain, and all the intricate trimmings needed to decorate the extensive furniture owned by the National Trust.

Throughout this crisis our Royal Oak members have continued to support our appeals and programs and I am truly proud to be part of an organization that commands such loyalty from its members. I want to thank you for continuing your membership and I look forward to the day when we can gather again in person.

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

The Royal Oak Newsletter is published biannually and distributed to active members and contributors.

Cover Photo: Alfriston Clergy House is a 14th-century Wealden hall-house in East Sussex. It was the first building acquired by the National Trust.

Photo: ©National Trust Images/Marianne Majerus

Royal Oak News

Winifred E. Cyrus Retires

Longtime employee, Winifred E. Cyrus, Director of Member Services retired this past summer. Winnie first came to Royal Oak in July 1986 and served 34 continuous years with us. When she joined, the organization was working out of a cramped space on the third floor of a narrow brownstone on East 72nd Street. There were 2 full-time and 2 part-time employees, and Royal Oak had just purchased its first computer—a mini-mainframe! Since those days long ago, there have been 4 office relocations and the Foundation has grown to a staff of 9 with over 14,000 members across all 50 states.

Winnie handled member services and was responsible for the daily operations of the New York office. She was an essential liaison to the National Trust. The Foundation's institutional knowledge and the working history of both Royal Oak and the National Trust resides with Winnie, who was the longest serving staff member. We all wish her well in her retirement.

Churchill at Chartwell

Over the course of 3 years, Royal Oak members and supporters raised over $1.5 million to help preserve Churchill's legacy at Chartwell, his much-loved home in the countryside in Kent.

The National Trust has acquired items previously on long-term loan including personal mementoes and gifts from around the world, and undertaken research to give a deeper understanding of Churchill's life at Chartwell before and after World War II. New interactive displays share the results of the research, telling the story of the Churchill family and their guests.

Chartwell is the only place in the world where objects, many of international significance, that belonged to Churchill can be seen in their original domestic setting. The collection of items owned by Churchill and now acquired by the National Trust includes his collection of inscribed books, medallions, gifts and awards that he received from around the world, along with personal and poignant mementoes. **Read more at Royal-Oak.org/Chartwell**

Churchill's secretary's office at Chartwell.

Photo: ©National Trust Images. Bottom Kate York. Top Chris Lacey.

Blickling Conservation

In 2019, Royal Oak members and supporters raised over $250,000 for conservation work at the historically important library at Blickling in Norfolk in East Anglia. The following is an update we received from the conservation team.

The first phase of the project has been completed as planned. This phase involved improving the environmental conditions by securing the exterior of the building in order to minimize the ingress of moisture. The work included repairs to lead roofs and cast-iron downpipes, and repointing masonry with a lime mortar to match the original specification. Internally, the contractor has completed work to stabilize the ornate plaster ceilings within the northeast turret which have suffered from death watch beetle damage.

View across the Parterre garden at Blickling with topiary towards the East Front.

All floorboards and associated floor structures impacted by death watch beetle in the northeast turret's upper levels have been removed, conserved, and repaired or replaced by a conservation joiner. Within the northeast turret, the area has been sealed to reduce air leakage; this is supplemented by the installation of a dehumidifier which enables more effective control over the internal environment of this space.

The focus of the project then shifted to the library's interior and the conservation and cataloging of the collection. Some of the digitization has been completed and a small element has gone live online. This work was done in partnership with the University of East Anglia. You can view a short video of the project at this link: **http://discoverhistoricbooks.unlockingthearchive.co.uk/**

Board Members Update

The annual meeting of the Board of Directors was postponed from May to September due to Covid, therefore all change in Directors did not happen until the September meeting. Three Board members are stepping down: Tracey Dedrick, Pamela Hull and Eric Nilson. We want to thank them for their long support of Royal Oak and their service on the Board.

Two new directors joined the Board. Susan Samuelson, who is a Professor of Business Law at the Boston University School of Management, and has previously served on the Board; Lauren Brisky, Retired, Vice-Chancellor for Administration and Chief Financial Officer, Vanderbilt University. We welcome them and look forward to working with them in the coming year.

The True Heart of England

With changing consumer habits and a fresh economic catastrophe unfolding, the British Pub struggles to survive

By Ian Cox

Many of us would probably agree with Dr. Johnson and Samuel Pepys who considered the tavern or pub to be the true heart of England. Pubs have been cornerstones of communities in cities, towns, and villages all over Britain, although in recent times, even before the Coronavirus pandemic, alarm bells were sounding about their future.

In the past few decades, the number of pubs in Britain has been declining at an astonishing rate. The British Beer and Pub Association has been monitoring the situation. Between 2000 and 2017, 12,450 pubs closed permanently, a percentage decline of 20%. Though evidence collected before the Coronavirus pandemic began was suggesting a slowing down in the rate of closure in the last few years. Recent figures published by The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) reveal that 378 pubs closed between July and December 2019, or 14 a week—still a worrying set of figures!

The reasons for such closures are many and interrelated. Drink/drive legislation, the banning of smoking in pubs in 2007, the banking crash of 2008 and increased taxation on alcohol have all been cited as important, but other factors such as cheap supermarket alcohol, a preference for home drinking in front of the television and the changing behavior of young people have also been found to be significant. Pubs reliant solely on alcohol and beverage sales have fared worst while the ones that have thrived best are those serving good quality, value-for-money food.

Against this background of stunning decline, some organizations have endeavored to save local pubs as an intrinsic part of British heritage, including the National Trust.

The National Trust now has custodianship of over 35 historic pubs in the UK: 9 in London and the southeast, 13 in the southwest, 2 in the Midlands, 2 in the east of England, 8 in the north, 4 in Wales and 2 in Northern Ireland.

Most of these historic properties, which vary greatly in age, architectural style, and character came to the Trust as part of deals involving the wider acquisition of land the buildings are on, but the organization has always been sensitive to the historical significance of the pubs when deciding on acquisition and how care for them. Nearly all of them are tenanted and only one, The Sticklebarn Tavern, in Great Langdale, Cumbria, is operated directly by the Trust.

The George Inn, at 77 Borough High Street on the south bank of the Thames in Southwark, is a favorite of many. The George is a rare survival of a galleried London traveller's inn dating from the late medieval period and is shown on a 1543 map of Southwark. Galleried inns like this one—and this is now the only survival of its type—provided not only access to the upstairs accommodation, but vantage points for customers of the inn to watch activities taking place in the courtyard below. It's known that in the late 16th century it was a courtyard venue for Elizabethan theatrical productions.

The façade seen today is a 1677 rebuild of the original façade destroyed in a Southwark fire. In the 19th century, the inn was frequented by Charles Dickens and is mentioned in his book, *Little Dorrit*. Sadly, only the south side of what was once a three-sided inn survives as two of the sides were demolished in the late 19th century to make way for railway warehouses. The National Trust has owned what was left of the original historic structure for a number of years, and after restoring it, leased it out to a tenant running it as a functioning pub. In recent times, it's become popular with visitors to the nearby Borough Market and, being close to London Bridge railway station, city workers too.

Another urban pub owned by the Trust sits on one of Belfast's busy streets. Originally called The Railway Tavern, it was renamed The Crown in 1885 when a new owner, Patrick Flanagan, decided to give

The Crown Bar on Great Victoria Street in Belfast.

it a makeover. Using Italian artisan craftsmen who frequented the pub and who were working on nearby Belfast churches, Flanagan turned the old pub into a flashy, elaborately decorated, gas-lit pub of the well-known and established "gin palace" type. Hallmark decorations, including majolica tiles and embellishments inside and out, are complemented inside by sparkling stained glass, other decorative enrichments and an arrangement of carved wooden compartments which reflected customers' preference for some privacy. All has survived through to the present day. In 1978, the National Trust acquired the pub and initially spent £400,000 pounds restoring it, followed by another half million-pounds on a historically sensitive refurbishment in 2007. Now a Grade A-listed structure, the pub still functions in a traditional way serving food and drink to city workers and tourists alike.

The Fleece Inn at Bretforton.

The Fleece Inn at Bretforton in the Vale of Evesham is a good example of a country pub owned by the National Trust. It's been a pub since 1848 but the building itself is of considerable architectural interest being a thatched, half-timbered property built in the early 15th century as a long house, a type of farm property designed to house both people and animals. Owned by members of the Byrd family for many generations, it was bequeathed to the National Trust by Lola Taplin, a direct descendant of the first owner. Lola had run the pub on her own for the last 30 years of her life until she died aged 77.

These three examples of pubs owned by the National Trust from its portfolio of pub properties illustrate the diversity to be found in the group. The fact that they are all continuing to serve a variety of communities in the present day is testament to the Trust's policy of conserving a particular aspect of Britain's heritage but at the same time helping to ensure they thrive as viable businesses.

The pandemic has proved to be another worrying time for pubs. The government lockdown has meant all of them have been closed for a number of months and it's only in recent weeks that they have started to reopen again, with strict social distancing and hygiene measures in place to protect customers from infection. Emma McClarkin, Chief Executive of the British Beer and Pub Association has said the pandemic has been financially devastating for the sector. She's also warned that pubs are now facing the double whammy of reduced customer numbers due to not just government restrictions but changes in customer behavior as well.

Many traditional pubs in Britain feature stained and frosted glass. These are examples from The Crown Pub in Belfast.

The rate of future closures could well see an upswing again due to the pandemic and the scale of this is at present difficult to estimate. Ms. McClarkin is particularly worried about the future saying, "a fatal blow for many pubs would be a secondary closure" due to a second spike in the pandemic later in the year.

Given these circumstances, the National Trust's initiative to protect, care for, and enhance Britain's pub heritage, albeit in a small way, must be seen as a positive in what is a bleak landscape. They may only be looking after a relatively small number of pubs, but by providing positive models and setting out examples of good practice a lot can be learned from what they do. The fact that the number of independent pubs, free of brewery influence, has been increasing in recent years is another positive which might hopefully ensure Britain's pub heritage survives the present pandemic.

Ian Cox is a decorative arts historian. His previous posts include several at Christie's including Director of the Christie's Decorative Arts Programme at the University of Glasgow; Director of Studies for Christie's Education in London; and Director of Decorative Arts Summer School for Christie's in New York. He was also Co-Director of the Victorian Society of America London Summer School. He has published widely in the history of the decorative arts, particularly on furniture and ceramics.

Fancy a Pint?

The National Trust owns over 35 characterful and historic pubs and inns

Discover the quirks and stories of these ancient watering holes as you enjoy a refreshing drink or a bite to eat. Find pubs to visit:
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/pubs-and-inns

Chelsea porcelain figures of muses and Apollo, c.1765 displayed in a cabinet in the Long Gallery at Upton House.

Extreme Rococo

Late Chelsea porcelain in the National Trust

By Patricia Ferguson

From kings to more mundane collectors, porcelain has inspired a passion bordering on mania around the world for centuries. The search for the secret to "white gold" brought royals into league with ruffian alchemists in the frenzy to create for themselves this mysterious material. Once this secret of China was unearthed, literally in some ways, in Germany in the early 18th century, and the trade secrets smuggled by spies via old familiar trade routes, manufactories began popping up throughout Europe. One of these was the Chelsea factory in England.

Porcelain teapot, Chelsea, c. 1760 at Upton House.

The Chelsea factory was the most celebrated of 18th-century English porcelain manufacturers and the aristocratic owners of Britain's country houses were among its chief consumers. There are almost 500 examples in the collection of the National Trust, from an early, almost experimental Japanese Kakiemon-style beaker (c. 1748-50) at Greenway in Devon, the holiday home of crime author and collector Agatha Christie, to the 36-piece dessert service (c. 1758-60) painted with figs, damsons, and plums at Killerton House, also in Devon, the seat of the Acland family and probably acquired by Sir Thomas Acland, 7th Bt., a prominent Westcountry stag-hunter, in addition to a set of flower-strewn vases and silver-shaped bough-pots acquired by the banker Henry Hoare of Stourhead in Wiltshire in 1759.

Collections of Chelsea figures and groups formed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were also donated to the Trust by Mrs. Millicent Salting at Fenton House in Hampstead; Robert S. Watney at Hanbury Hall in Worcestershire; and Marcus Samuel, owner of Shell, later 1st Viscount Bearsted of Upton House in Warwickshire.

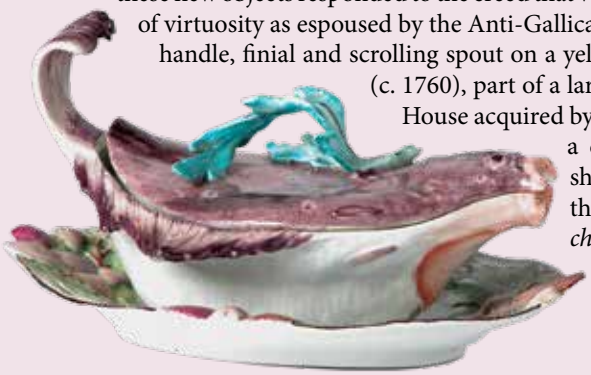
The factory was founded around 1743-45 by a former silversmith born in Liège, Nicholas Sprimont, working with the Huguenot Charles Gouyn, a toyman, jeweller and goldsmith, who later set up on his own in St. James's producing small figural scent bottles and other *bibelots* or "toys". While originally inspired by Chinese and Japanese luxury wares, Sprimont was soon in competition with imports from Germany made at the Meissen factory and also increasingly from France manufactured at the Vincennes, later Sèvres, factory. At the time it was illegal to import wares from the Continent for resale, so much was smuggled into England. A chronology for the factory based on various production marks divides itself into periods; incised triangle (1743-49), raised anchor (1749-52), red anchor (1752-56) and gold anchor (1756-69), the last, a richly decorated flamboyant style, lavishly painted with gold.

The Chelsea factory embraced the excessively Rococo style, a late phase of the Baroque, involving asymmetry, the use of natural motifs and exuberant scrollwork. An early design source was a recent diplomatic gift from Augustus III, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, of Meissen tablewares and figures to Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, British Ambassador in Dresden, available for study in London in 1751. From this, Sprimont learnt an important aspect of the dessert table, an element of surprise. Small sauce tureens and stands in the form of vegetables, fruit, game or fish became *de rigueur* on aristocratic tables, such as those in the form of plaice at Erddig in Wales, which have been in the collection since at least 1789, when they were recorded in an inventory as "2 Stands and two Carp Sauce Boats 6 pieces in all", which included their ladles. Similar *trompe l'oeil* shapes were laid out on the dessert tables at Florence Court in Northern Ireland in the 18th century.

Porcelain vase from a garniture, Chelsea, c. 1762-4 at Upton House.

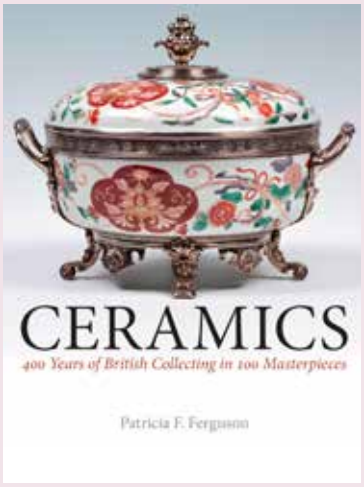
Between 1759 and 1764, as a British victory in the Seven Years War was increasingly assured, the Chelsea manufactory produced ever more capricious vases and teawares in an extreme form of Rococo, a style associated with the enemy in France, also known as the "Anti-Gallican spirit." The patriotic Anti-Gallican Society, founded in 1745, aimed to improve Britain's economic competitiveness through enhanced design skills eliminating the aristocratic preference for French luxuries. The term appeared in 1758 in the dedication plate for an equally eccentric set of inexecutable "modern" designs for woodworkers by the London carver Thomas Johnson. Sprimont's new forms gave sculptural form to these design prints in the "modern" or "French" taste, sharing features found in similarly bizarre and unrealizable furniture designs by John Linnell, in his *A New Book of Ornament Useful for Silver-Smith's,* London.

With embargoes on trade, Sprimont was starved for the latest fashions from Europe. Yet rather than simply second-guessing their direction, as has been suggested by previous scholars, and being ignorant of the emergence of the Antique taste or Neoclassical style, these new objects responded to the creed that variety was evidence of virtuosity as espoused by the Anti-Gallicans. The reticulated handle, finial and scrolling spout on a yellow-ground teapot (c. 1760), part of a large tea set at Upton House acquired by Lord Bearsted, are a case in point. The shaped reserves on the set resembling *chantourné* or the painted panels or framed decorative over door panels in puce monochrome with delightful children in mock Chinese costumes at play inspired by drawings of François Boucher, circulated through engravings such as *Le Concert chinois* (c. 1745), or secondary sources such as painted fans or snuff-boxes. The playfulness of chinoiseries captured yet another element of the fashionable French *style rocaille* and provides more evidence that despite the war with France, English consumers of luxury, demanded their foreign frippery.



Sauce-tureen in the form of plaice, porcelain Chelsea, c. 1755-6. Erddig, Wales.

Chelsea's triumph in extreme Rococo design was their vase production. Between 1759 and 1765, dozens of new shapes were produced, each requiring costly bespoke moulds that were a significant investment for the factory. These vases were typically displayed in sets of three or five above chimneys as "garnitures." The most famous of these is the seven-piece garniture at Upton House composed of four different perfume-pots with pierced details to emit a heady fragrance from the pot-pourri, a mixture of dried fragrant plants, contained within. Each shape ultimately derives from a Vincennes model, first copied by Chelsea about 1758-62. Also after French sources is the voyeuristic subject matter in a lush palette of puce, lilac and pink, the most erotic ever-conceived on English porcelain. The central jar depicts "*Alphée et Aréthuse,*" after Pierre-Charles Trémolières, engraved by Étienne Fessard, published in 1737, and the reverse of peacocks and barnyard fowl are after Melchior de Hondecoeter, much adored by English collectors. The mystery of who commissioned the garniture has never been resolved; however, since the 1850s, it has been a "trophy" of wealthy magnates who considered it the manufactory's *chef d'oeuvre,* until it was finally acquired by Lord Bearsted in 1920 and is now a treasure of the National Trust.



Patricia Ferguson has been Adviser on Ceramics to the National Trust since 2011. She is currently Project Curator, 18th-Century European Ceramics, British Museum, and previously a Consulting Curator at the Victoria & Albert Museum. She has a MA from the School of Oriental and African Studies. Her book Ceramics: 400 Years of British Collecting in 100 Masterpieces *was published by the National Trust with Philip Wilson.*

Miss Ellen Terry as Lady Macbeth, 1906, painting by John Singer Sargent.

Players on a Grand Stage

From political theater of the 16th Century to the avant-garde of the 20th, National Trust houses have often been places of theatricality and performance

By Dr. Sally-Anne Huxtable, Head Curator at the National Trust

Candlelight dancing on crystal. The swish of a velvet curtain or a silk skirt. The glimmer of silver and gilt. The sweep of a majestic staircase. The glow of brilliant marble. The drama of myth woven as tapestry. There is undoubtedly something intrinsically theatrical about a British stately home. Indeed, many of Britain's grandest treasure houses were not domestic spaces in the way we understand our own homes today. These houses, places of spectacle and display, were designed to signify and maintain a family or individual's social or political standing, taste, and power. They were grand stages on which the wealthy, the influential, and the fashionable could perform their roles. Hardwick Hall, designed in the 1590s by Robert Smythson for Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, close friend of Queen Elizabeth I, was one such stage—albeit a political one.

If Bess of Hardwick was a "star" of the 16th century, Dame Ellen Terry was undoubtedly one of the stars of the Nineteenth. Today, her early 16th-century house Smallhythe Place in Kent, is a shrine to theatricality, with a fascinating collection documenting and celebrating Terry's career as the leading lady of Henry Irving's theatrical company at the Lyceum Theatre.

Having briefly married artist G.F. Watts at age 16, after which she lived with the influential Aesthetic Movement and theatre designer, E.W. Godwin for six years, Terry was also closely connected with many artists, writers and celebrities of the day, including J.A.M. Whistler, George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, and the manager of Irving's company, Bram Stoker. The collection includes many of Terry's theatrical costumes including the spectacular beetle-wing dress designed for her performance as Lady Macbeth in 1888 and immortalized in a painting by John Singer Sargent.

Terry saw Smallhythe as a peaceful retreat from her theatrical life and the adulation she garnered as the most celebrated British actor of the age. She resisted her daughter Edith Craig's pleas to turn the 17th-century barn into a theater, but after Terry's death in 1928, Edy created the Barn Theatre and successfully ran it with her partners Christopher Marie St. John and Claire "Tony" Atwood. The Barn is a wonderfully atmospheric rustic theatre which, with actor Joanna Lumley as its patron, still hosts summer theatrical productions, and over the years, many theatrical luminaries including Sybil Thorndike, John Gielgud, Michael Redgrave, Alec Guinness, and Peggy Ashcroft graced its stage.

Amateur theatricals played a part in the lives of many who once inhabited National Trust places. Perhaps the most remarkable of these was "the Dancing Marquess," Henry Cyril Paget, 5th Marquess of Anglesey whose love of theatrics and dressing up, including as

English artist and stage designer, Oliver Messel working on a mask of Queen Elizabeth I in 1933.

Eleanor of Aquitaine, knew no bounds. Paget is notorious today for squandering much of his vast inheritance on jewels, furs and costumes, with a contemporary newspaper remarking that "he bought diamonds as an ordinary man buys cigarettes."

Paget's lavish lifestyle included extravagant theatrical productions in the former chapel at Plas Newydd on the Welsh island of Anglesey. Paget not only converted the chapel into a theater called "The Gaiety" but he fitted it with electrical lighting to enhance his productions. Paget and his acting company toured Britain, but his productions were not a success, and he died in debt at the age of 30. Given that the Marquess's income was around the modern day equivalent of £12 million per annum, this was no inconsiderable feat! For many years, the unconventional Paget was written out of his family history, but today his disregard for convention is celebrated, including in 2018 singer David McAlmont's performance *girl. boy.child* which explored Paget's gender non-conformity.

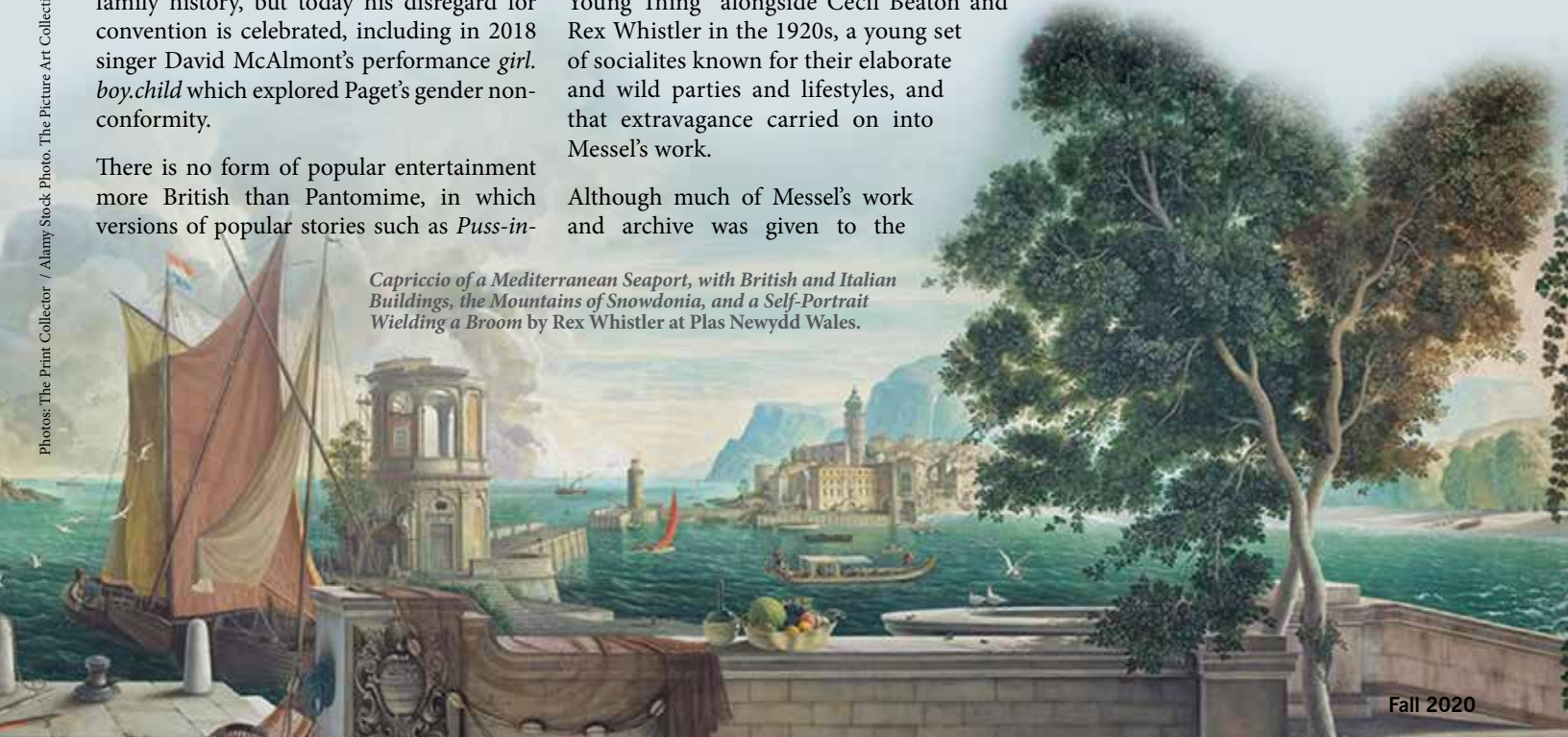
There is no form of popular entertainment more British than Pantomime, in which versions of popular stories such as *Puss-in-Boots, Cinderella,* and *Aladdin* are performed at Christmas with a mixture of slapstick, and popular song to appeal to children, and cross-dressing and bawdy *double entendres* to entertain adults. A wonderful archive, including scripts and photographs documents the six of the Pantos written by Thomas Evelyn Scott-Ellis, 8th Lord Howard de Walden, which were performed by his family and close friends at Chirk Castle in Wales from 1923 to 1931. These included *Puss and Brutes, Jack and the Beanstalk,* and *The Reluctant Dragon*. For Christmas 2019, Chirk created six bespoke Christmas trees designed by the De Walden family Pantos.

Design is of course key to performance, and one of the most celebrated British stage designers of the 20th century, Oliver Messel, spent much of his childhood at Nymans in Sussex. Messel was a "Bright Young Thing" alongside Cecil Beaton and Rex Whistler in the 1920s, a young set of socialites known for their elaborate and wild parties and lifestyles, and that extravagance carried on into Messel's work.

Although much of Messel's work and archive was given to the V & A Museum by his nephew Anthony, Lord Snowden, the former husband of Princess Margaret, a number of Messel's props found their way into the decoration scheme at Nymans, including papier-mâché candelabra and candlesticks designed for operas at Glyndebourne, and part of the painted set for a production of *The Lady's Not For Burning*. This, with the partly ruined aspect of the house after the 1947 fire, gives Nymans its own unique sense of drama.

Whether linked to the theatre, or as a stage of taste and influence, there are many National Trust places that can offer a truly theatrical experience. From the wildly eclectic collections such as astrolabes, reliquaries and historic costumes, including suits of Samurai armour, which architect and designer and amateur dramatist Charles Paget Wade used to create a fantasy life at Snowshill, via Rex Whistler's *trompe-loeil* murals at Mottisfont and Plas Newydd, to the stories played out by gods and monarchs on the walls and ceilings of houses like Hanbury Hall; you will never be short of dramatic experiences when visiting the National Trust!

Dr. Sally-Anne Huxtable is Head Curator at the National Trust. She has previously worked at National Museums Scotland, and as a lecturer in History of Art and Design at Northumbria University. Sally has also undertaken work for Tate Britain, The Courtauld Institute of Art, The Prado, Dallas Museum of Art, The Museo de Arte de Ponce, Puerto Rico and the De Morgan Centre.



Capriccio of a Mediterranean Seaport, with British and Italian Buildings, the Mountains of Snowdonia, and a Self-Portrait Wielding a Broom **by Rex Whistler at Plas Newydd Wales.**

The Fringe, Frog and Tassel-Maker

By Annabel Westman

The fringe, frog and tassel-maker is likewise employed by the Lace-Man … the Work … is chiefly done by Women, upon the Hand, who make a very Handsome Livelihood of it, if they are not initiated into the Mystery of Gin-Drinking.

Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesman,* 1747

This quote vividly brings to life William Hogarth's satirical engraving of Gin Lane, St Giles of 1751 and the merciless poverty that could result from imbibing too much "Mother's ruin," a common problem among the lower classes at this time. Women had been the main producers of trimmings until the mid-16th century, one of the few socially acceptable activities in which they could trade alone, but their status had declined substantially as the authority of medieval guilds crumbled.

Their skills, however, remained very much in demand, as the above description demonstrates, and Robert Campbell listed them in *The London Tradesman* as one of the 11 dependents of the laceman. A small book covering all trades "Practised in the Cities of London and Westminster," other dependants included the Wire-Drawer, Orrice-Weaver (maker of patterned braid) and Bone [bobbin] Lace-Maker.

The laceman was the general term for a trimmings-maker for some 200 years following the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660, when French fashion was all the rage and introduced "new modes and new tastes and set us all agog, and having increased among us a considerable trade, witness the vast multitude of broad and narrow silk weavers, makers of looking glasses, paper, fringes and gilded leather."

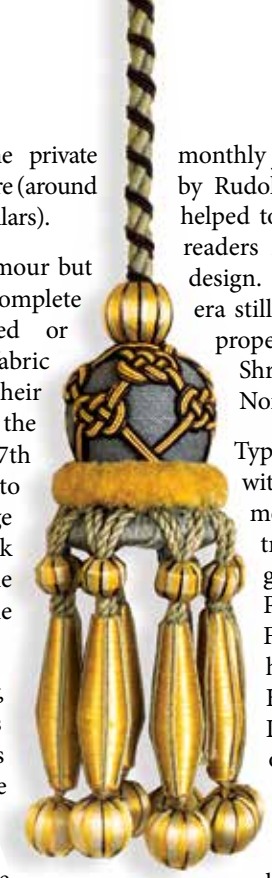
Metal thread and silk-covered vellum and wire decoration were used to create intricate and compact decorative ornaments for grand beds and their matching furnishings, such as found on the bed in the Red Room at Cotehele, Cornwall, now owned by the National Trust. Huge sums could be spent on their purchase, with the silk and silver thread trimmings on the valances of Queen Catherine of Braganza's yellow damask bed at Windsor Castle in 1678 costing £439 11s 6d (the equivalent of over £70,000 today/ over 90,000 US dollars). Some 100 years later, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire spent nearly a tenth of their budget

Detail of the Chinese Bedroom at Belton House in Lincolnshire.

on trimmings in refurnishing the private apartments at Chatsworth, Derbyshire (around £125,000 today/ over 155,000 US dollars).

Trimmings not only provided glamour but also color and proportion to a complete ensemble. They either matched or contrasted with the furnishing fabric to which they were applied, their styles changing with the fashion of the day. The inventories of the later 17th century abound with references to vibrant color schemes—deep orange on blue damask, blue and black on black and scarlet mohair—the differing tones often picking up the colors of embroidered designs.

During much of the 18th century, contrasts tended to be less dominant and trimming designs were more subdued, but with the popularity of polychrome block-printed chintzes from the 1780s attractive color combinations were frequently employed, such as the pink, green and white fringe, gimp and tassels and bows made for a chintz bed at Chatsworth, the delicacy of the latter items requiring their own deal packing case for transport.



Tassel from Castle Coole in County Fermanagh.

The 19th century was another inventive period for trimmings and costs continued to mount as designs became more elaborate. Their use was promoted by a spate of pattern books in circulation in the early years, including two by George Smith and a monthly journal, *The Repository of Arts*, by Rudolph Ackermann, all of which helped to formulate taste among their readers in "chaste" and "appropriate" design. Excellent examples from this era still survive at the National Trust properties of Attingham Park, Shropshire and Castle Coole in Northern Ireland.

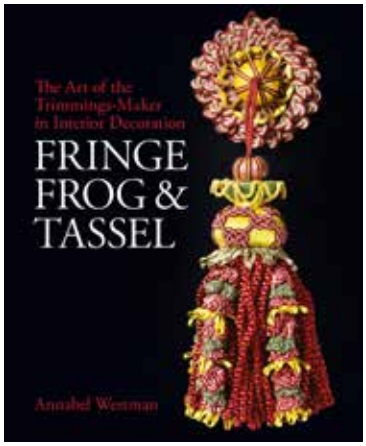
Typical designs were those made with specially-turned wooden molds hung from cord loops or a trellis on fringes and tassels and given exotic names like French, Parisian, Turkish or Persian. From the 1830s, designs became heavier and more complex. Household guides, such as J.C. Loudon's encyclopedic treatise of 1833, published 14 times in the US and UK, gave helpful advice on interior decoration recommending, for example, blue or pink for bedrooms as they "contrast well with the complexion."

Not all agreed, however, with *The Workwoman's Guide* of 1838 considering that blue was rather cold and pink was "apt to fade soon and is perhaps a little too showy." Such a description would be apt for the choice of the pink lining and pink and white drop and gimp valance and curtain decoration on the chintz bed in the Chinese Bedroom at the National Trust property, Belton House, Lincolnshire.

From the 1840s, not all designers were happy with the ever-increasing abundance of trimmings in the interior. A.W.N Pugin was scathing about their indiscriminate use, a sentiment echoed later by Charles L. Eastlake, William Morris, the most energetic of the Reformers, as well as Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman, among others. But it was not until the early 20th century that their excessive application became more restrained in popular taste. Thanks mainly to the growing interest in historicism and connoisseurship, the specialist trimmings industry was kept alive, with firms like Morant & Co (later Lenygon & Co) and White Allom & Co reviving old styles.

The trend developed under the decorative eye of a number of American and English tastemakers, including the influential Nancy Lancaster who played a leading role and used plenty of trimmings in her designs. Old fabrics were re-dyed and silk fringes re-used or reproduced and regarded as the epitome of good design in the furnishing circles of the 1950s. In partnership with John Fowler, the English Country House style was born, with Fowler introducing balance and texture to the interiors often with trimmings, which he saw both as a specialized art form as well as a source of ideas. His work can still be seen in a number of National Trust properties where he was employed until the early 1970s.

Bed furnishings in the Red Room at Cotehele in Cornwall.



Annabel Westman is the Executive Director of The Attingham Trust and a textile historian and consultant. She is the author of Fringe, Frog and Tassel: The Art of the Trimmings-Maker in Interior Decoration, *a lavishly illustrated book that comprehensively covers the trade in Britain and Ireland from 1320-1970. It was published by the National Trust and Philip Wilson in November 2019.*

Why Are Trees So Important?

By John Deakin, Head of Trees and Woodland at the National Trust

The National Trust intends to plant approximately 20 million trees throughout its lands in Britain over the next 10 years. Today only 10% of the 250,000 hectares the Trust owns is comprised of woodlands, with this commitment, woodlands will increase to 17%.

We human beings like to develop technological fixes to our probems. Got an erosion problem? Build a retaining wall. Flooding? Build a floodgate. Too hot? Turn up the air conditioning. Too much C02? Build a coal-fired power plant then remove the C02, seal it in capsules and bury it deep underneath the ocean. But for all our advances in science and technology, there is nothing we can build that comes close to providing all the functions of a tree.

Trees are the heroes of nature; so it's a tragedy that the UK is one of the least wooded areas of Europe. We have just 12% woodland cover compared to around 37% cover in the rest of Europe. Native woodland covers just 4% of our landmass.

Trees have a key role to play in restoring nature: they help regenerate soils and encourage the return of diverse flora and fauna. But there's even more to trees than that bit of simple miracle working.

Autumnal trees in sunlight in the woodland of Ashridge Estate.

ANCIENT TREES AT THE TRUST

The National Trust cares for some of the UK's most important trees. Hundreds of our volunteers and staff have spent years identifying these trees at places we look after and **we've recorded over 30,000 so far.** Some of the most special trees of British history are cared for by the Trust. Here are four examples.

NEWTON'S APPLE TREE
The Apple tree that inspired the great scientist, Isaac Newton in formulating the laws of gravity, is at Woolsthorpe Manor near Grantham in Lincolnshire.

TOLPUDDLE MARTYR TREE
The 320-year-old Sycamore tree in Dorset where the Tolpuddle Martyrs met has become a symbolic birthplace of the Trade Unions movement.

OLDEST IRISH YEW
The original Irish Yew, which has produced every other Irish Yew in the world, is located at Crom in County Fermanagh in Northern Ireland.

ANCKERWYKE TREE
The 2,500-year-old Anckerwycke Yew near Runnymede witnessed the events around the sealing of the Magna Carta in 1215.

16 Reasons to Plant Trees

1. Prevent soil erosion

Trees are the mortar of nature. Their roots hold soil together and prevent erosion and landslips.

2. Increase nutrients in the soil

An over-abundance of short root vegetation causes nutrients to wash out of the soil. This is a particular problem in places where you get a lot of rain and results in the soil becoming acidic and less productive. Trees have deep roots that can bring up nutrients from deep down in the soil. In addition, their decomposing leaves become a free source of nutrient-rich compost.

3. Help prevent flooding

Tree canopies slow down the rate at which rainwater reaches the ground while tree roots act as channels to suck rainwater deeper underground, which is then released slowly. This means the water doesn't run straight off surfaces and into watercourses or downstream. Trees can also stop soil particles washing into rivers and producing sediment build-up, which can cause flooding downstream.

4. Bolster fish and fisheries

Deciduous trees on river banks can help salmon and other fish by reducing siltation, casting shade and supplying leaves for nutrients.

5. Store C02

Roughly 50% of the dry weight of a tree is carbon. If we want to reduce atmospheric C02 we should be cutting emissions from fossil fuels, stopping the destruction of old growth forests and planting as many trees as we possibly can.

6. Give us oxygen

We've all heard the expression, "the Amazon is the lungs of our planet." Trees breathe out, we breathe in, we breathe out, trees breathe in...beautiful.

7. Provide timber for building materials...

How far would the Vikings have gotten without trees to build boats? Or civilization in general without timber for buildings and furniture? Unfortunately, in the UK, it took us a while to understand the whole limited supply thing. Once our forests were gone we looked abroad for timber sources. The UK currently imports around 70% of its entire wood-based products. Germany on the other hand has a rich tradition of silviculture going back hundreds of years with forests covering a third of the country.

8. ...and non-timber forest products

Shrubs and understorey plants such as blaeberries, hazel and willow grow best in woodland. Meanwhile, many species of fungi, such as truffles, only grow in symbiosis with specific trees.

9. Clean the air

Trees absorb air pollution in cities. Unfortunately, urban trees have a much shorter lifespan than their rural cousins.

10. Soften the forces of nature

Trees provide shade from sun, and shelter from wind and rain. In urban areas, they cut down on the urban heat island effect and reduce the need for air conditioning. This will also help reduce carbon emissions which is known as a positive feedback mechanism.

11. Surround us with beauty and life

Imagine bright yellow maples and red rowans in autumn. Cherry blossoms in spring, old gnarled oaks and the red bark of a stately Scot's pine reflecting in the evening sun.

Or the sound of the wind whispering through branches carrying the smell of honeysuckle.

12. Provide food

Lemons, oranges, olives, apples, mangoes, chocolate, pears, coconuts, cherries, maple syrup, almonds, hazelnuts, papayas, walnuts….just a tiny slice of what's on offer from a tree buffet.

13. Provide medicine

A lot of medicines come from trees, either directly or in their derivative form. One every day example is aspirin (salicylic acid) from willow bark (salix spp.)

14. Increase biodiversity

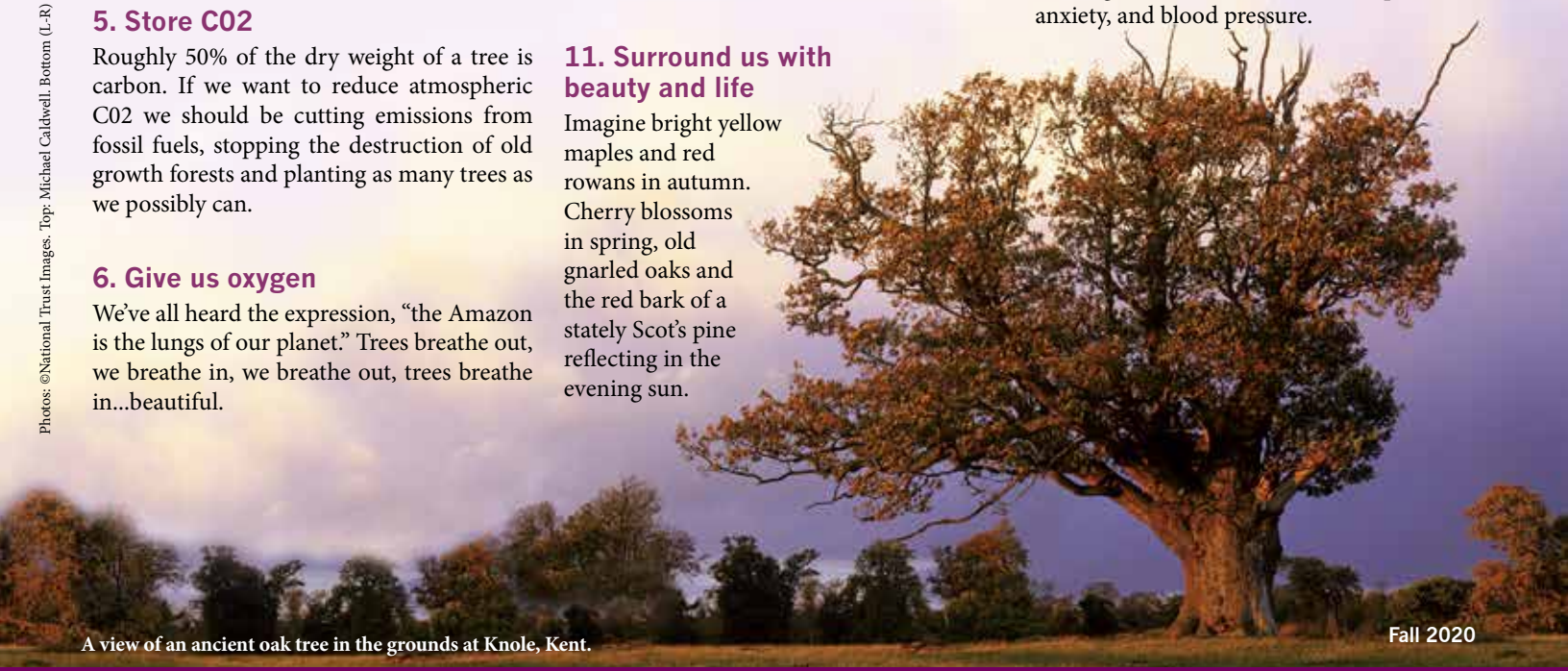
Trees provide food, habitat and shelter for birds and countless other organisms as well as fungi, lichen and micro-organisms. In general, the older the tree and the older the forest, the greater the biodiversity there will be.

15. Increase resilience

Greater biodiversity increases resilience to pests, diseases, and non-native species as well as climate change.

16. Make us happy and healthy

There have been numerous studies which suggest what most of us instinctively feel: walking in a woodland reduces depression, anxiety, and blood pressure.



A view of an ancient oak tree in the grounds at Knole, Kent.

Letter from Hilary McGrady

Director-General of the National Trust

In January we marked our 125th anniversary, but rather than embarking upon a year of celebration as planned, by March I found myself in the unimaginable position of announcing the complete closure of our cherished places. As a consequence, and with little more than 24 hours' notice, our teams worked tirelessly to close down the places in our care. We kept in place skeleton teams who carried on doing the essential tasks that would keep our properties safe until we were able to reopen.

Happily, as I write several months on, I am pleased to say that many of our places have opened their doors once more, albeit to fewer visitors for the time being. Through the difficult weeks in between I received countless messages from members of the public, telling me how important our places continued to be during lockdown. The historic gardens, houses, and landscapes in our care are now providing a place for families and friends to reconnect with each other, and with nature, for the first time after weeks of lockdown.

I keep these messages in mind as we now face a new set of challenges. We knew from the outset that closing our places for a sustained period would have a devastating impact on our income. We have been diligent in accessing government grants and loans as they have become available and have put many staff on furlough to protect our charitable funds. We have also stopped all but essential projects and drastically reduced our spending. However, the reality is the pandemic has impacted almost every aspect of our income and we estimate that our total losses will be up to £200 million this year alone.

Towards the end of July, we launched a consultation with our staff that proposes significant changes in the way that we do things at the Trust. These changes are designed to help us withstand the crisis and changed economic conditions and, ultimately, to ensure we can continue to deliver our charitable purpose. We have been careful to ensure that our conservation and care for our houses and collections, gardens, nature and countryside remain central to our work.

Some recent press coverage has caused anxiety by suggesting that we are stepping back from our built heritage. I want to stress that this is not the case. We have been working hard to fulfill the nation's need for access to green space but this does not in any way replace our commitment to built heritage. Our commitment to the country house and to arts and heritage remains steadfast. You may have seen in our recently released Annual Report that in 2019/20 our spending on property conservation projects reached record levels at £169 million, £20 million higher than the previous year. Major projects included the £6m project to re-roof Oxburgh Hall, the restoration of one of our earliest tapestries at Montacute House, and the acquisition of an early painting of Saint Agatha for Osterley Park and House.

What we want to do is move away from a one-size-fits-all model and focus on the diversity of our places, to provide a range of offers for different audiences, interests and needs. This is about recognizing that we have almost six million members and over 26 million visits a year, and not everyone wants the same type of visit. There is no intention to create "theme parks" or to "dumb down"—there can be a place for everyone, from the young family on a day out to those who want to enjoy the architecture, artwork, or landscapes of our houses.

Among our plans, we want to introduce new Property Curator roles at some of our most significant houses, to help us share the stories of collections and people in fresh ways. This will help us more fully explore the quality and meanings of objects, and the stories of the people who made, commissioned, owned, and cared for them.

Despite the challenges we face, we will continue to welcome the enthusiasts, the specialists, and the experienced, making it easy for them to access, explore, and enjoy the remarkable places in our care.

Like the Director-Generals before me, it is my responsibility to ensure that the National Trust is here for generations to come. Our purpose remains clear: to provide benefit to our nations and to bring people closer to nature, beauty, and history. As you know well, that was the vision of our founders 125 years ago and it remains undiminished today. To achieve it we need now to adapt to the changing world around us.

I have watched with interest as both the National Trust and the Royal Oak Foundation have adapted to that new context. The realities of this crisis are harsh and will be felt for many years to come but I have been heartened by seeing the way people have come together, the growing appreciation for the nature, beauty and history around us and the wonderful messages of support I have received.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support. Thanks to your generosity we know that special places like Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire, and Blickling Hall's library in Norfolk, will be cared for, for generations to come. I look forward to being able to welcome you back very soon.

Until then, I hope that you keep safe and well.

Hilary

Photo: ©National Trust Images

Octavia Hill had a vision of a better world where everyone could have access to places of beauty.

She founded the National Trust 125 years ago with Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley.

Within two years, the fledgling organization acquired the landscape of Dinas Oleu in Wales and purchased the 14th-century Alfriston Clergy House in East Sussex, on our cover this month, for £10. Hill described Alfriston as "tiny but beautiful."

Today, that vision is more important than ever.

Help to ensure that the vision of Octavia Hill survives into the future.

Become a member of the Royal Oak 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."

Large Black and Tamworth pigs at Home Farm on Wimpole Estate in Cambridgeshire. Wimpole Estate was donated to the National Trust in 1976 by Elsie Bambridge, the only surviving child of Rudyard Kipling. Photo: ©National Trust Images/Catherine Hayburn

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