THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

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

Cultivating a Wild Garden

The Remarkable Mrs. Coade

The Country Retreat of a Merchant Prince

FALL 2022

Speke Hall is a rare Tudor timber-framed manor house in a most unusual setting on the banks of the River Mersey in Liverpool.

Dear Members & Friends,

I hope you have had the opportunity to travel to the United Kingdom this year and, if not, that you will do so in the fall. Autumn is a wonderful time to see Britain after the summer crowds have dispersed and the weather turns cooler. Our appeal for Sheffield Park is in progress and there is no better time to appreciate this beautiful parkland than in early fall when the trees turn into an explosion of colors as the leaves turn to vibrant yellows, reds, and oranges.

If you do venture south from London to Sheffield, you may want to stop at Chartwell. There you can visit the uniform room that features many of Churchill's official clothing, as well as some items from his daily wardrobe. His choice of clothes was a very conscious decision that helped him shape his image. You can learn more about Churchill and his wardrobe in this issue of the newsletter.

Royal Oak resumed our series of Garden Tours for Heritage Circle members after a two-year hiatus. From May 30 to June 3. Members traveled to Dorset where we visited public and private gardens, some of which are rarely open to the public. This October we will host the second in our three-part series exploring the influence of Italy on English architecture, when we travel to Rome for a week to visit collections not open to the public and visit world-famous museums privately. This benefit is open to all Heritage Circle members and is well worth considering an upgrade to your membership.

To round out the fall, we will host our annual gala at a private club in New York City on October 6. Our honoree will be Dame Karen Pierce, British Ambassador to the United States, who will receive the Timeless Award for her contributions to British foreign policy and Anglo-American relations. There will also be an auction of unique and priceless experiences which will be available for bidding even if you cannot attend the event. Tickets are now available through our website or by calling the office.

Finally, you may have noticed a different look to our website. We have spent considerable time upgrading many features behind-the-scenes, notably a members' only area. This will require establishing a new password, but it will give you access to content that is only available to Royal Oak members.

Thank you for you continued support of Royal Oak and the National Trust.

Ian Murray
Executive Director

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Cover Photo: The West front of Beningbrough Hall showing the formal flower beds and the conservatory lit by a warm afternoon light.

A new urban sky park on Manchester's Castlefield Viaduct is springing into life with thousands of plants being added to the derelict structure.

A Letter from René Olivieri, Chairman of the National Trust

To become the chair of the National Trust is a huge honor, perhaps especially so for someone born and raised six thousand miles away on the west coast of the United States. But who wouldn't be thrilled to be involved with an organization dedicated to *Beauty, Nature History, For Everyone, For Ever?*

I find the story of the National Trust—how it came into being, how it has evolved, and all that it has accomplished to date—incredibly inspiring, but I am all too aware of how much remains to be done to preserve our precious nature and heritage. Our mission has never been more critical.

A few months into my role, I visited Stourhead in Wiltshire for a wonderful gathering of the Trust's historic families. On my tour of the gardens there I was moved by the many acts of generosity and long-term thinking on display. Generations of owners had planted trees and cut paths knowing they would never be able to enjoy the full splendor of those views themselves. By the same token, many of the amazing buildings I've been able to visit took centuries to complete or indeed may never be 'finished'.

This perspective gets to the heart of what I believe the National Trust is about. The Trust has a central role to play in what the political philosopher Edmund Burke called *'a partnership between generations.'* We have a duty of care toward past, present, and future generations. Our work must always be informed by that long-term vision: we must keep asking ourselves what we should be doing today that will benefit future generations.

And if there ever were a time in history where that view is needed to protect our precious heritage—both natural and built—it is right now.

The immediate threats are of course habitat degradation and climate change. The implications of these trends for people, building, and nature are far-reaching. Yet there may be grounds for optimism. A growing body of scientific research combined with our own extensive experience on the ground are informing and improving our responses to these threats. And new technologies are also set to transform the cultural and heritage sectors. We have the opportunity to bring nature, beauty and history to people in new ways, connecting with new communities of interest worldwide

Back on *terra firma,* the pandemic reminded us of the importance of our connection to nature and greenspace—this has always been central to the Trust's mission, but new projects such as the transformation of the Victorian Castlefield Viaduct in Manchester into an urban park have captured the public imagination. Surveys show that people care more about access to green spaces, about gardens, and about what we are doing to nature than ever before. Our membership total, which we expect to reach six million very shortly, is just one indication among many of the growing support for our cause.

So there is much to do to right now to ensure everyone, now and in the future, can enjoy the benefits heritage and nature provide. I am confident however that the National Trust is up to the challenge. Working in partnership with others and drawing on the generous support of friends, we will succeed.

Octavia Hill and her co-founders had a wonderful vision and ambition when they founded the Trust. I look forward to playing my part in the next stage of our journey together, working to ensure that all the things we hold dearest are there for everyone to enjoy, today and tomorrow.

Coade's Artificial Stone Manufactory in Lambeth c. 1802

The Remarkable Mrs. Eleanor Coade

By Caroline Stanford

Eleanor Coade (1733-1821) is a fascinating and unique figure: a highly successful Georgian businesswomen whose wares had a profound effect on late-Georgian architecture and landscape design. Her architectural and sculptural stoneware is chiefly known for its contribution to the proliferation of the decorative features on buildings that help define Adamesque neoclassical architecture. Yet Coade stone was a medium not a style, and equally adaptable for new fashions like Gothick and Egyptian. Coade's wares transformed the interiors and landscapes of aristocratic great houses and townhouses, and dignified marketplaces and civic buildings across Britain, America and far beyond. They are still all around us today – not surprisingly there are numerous examples in National Trust properties – yet often go unrecognised by most in having been painted or simply because they are so easily mistaken for natural stone.

In the United States, Coade work can be found at the Octagon House in Washington DC, where there are two Coade stone chimney pieces and as well as Ionic capitals. Houses in Boston and Philadelphia are also known to have been supplied by the manufactory. There are sure to be other examples lurking beneath later paint across the eastern seaboard. Coade stone was also used for statuary: for example The Met in New York has an exceptionally fine example of a Coade stone bust of Queen Elizabeth I, probably finished by hand and of exquisite craftsmanship.

My own interest in Eleanor Coade began as a member of the Landmark Trust project team for the restoration of her seaside villa, Belmont in Lyme Regis in Dorset.

Belmont is a pretty house with sea views and Mrs. Coade treated it like a billboard for her wares. Its keystones, cornice frieze and vermiculated quoins are all artificial stone, as crisp today as the day they came out of the kiln, a prime example of how Coade stone could dignify and decorate even quite modest buildings.

Eleanor Coade never married, so "Mistress" or Mrs. was a courtesy title. Her never-married status makes her entrepreneurial success in the patriarchal world of the

The statue of a River God made of Coade stone at the north front of Ham House and Garden, Surrey

Photos: Top ©City of London. Bottom ©National Trust Imagess/Chris Davies. Page 7: Top ©National Trust Images/Layton Thompson. Bottom The Landmark Trust.

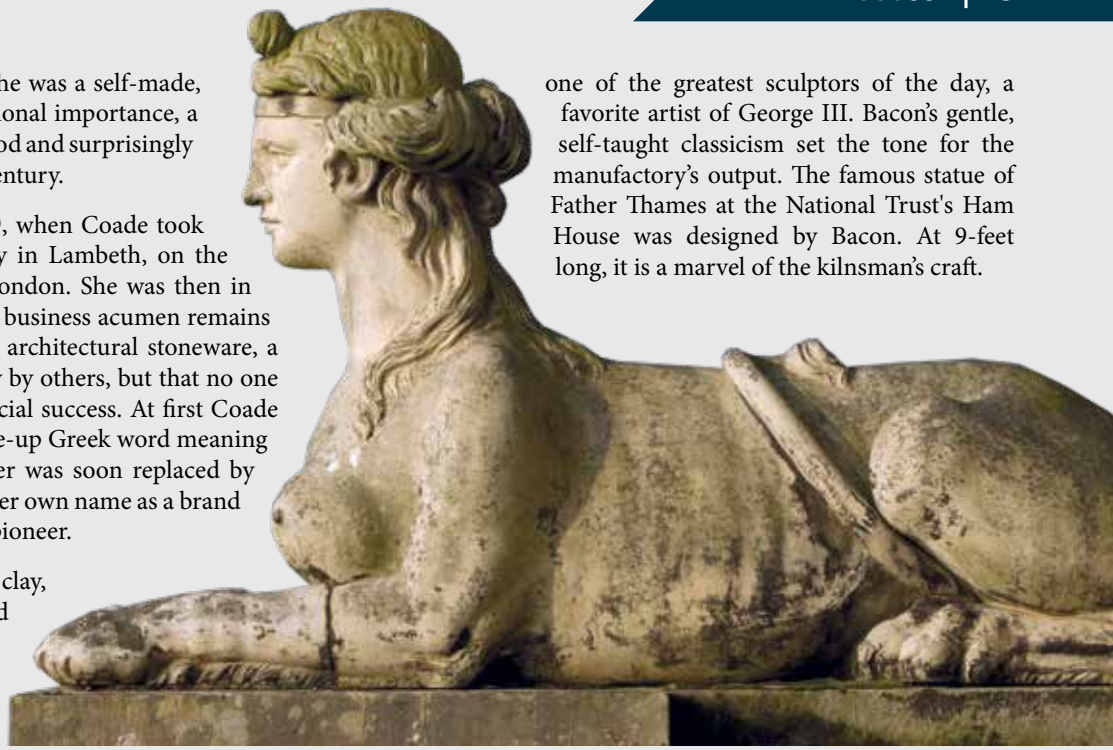
18th century all the more remarkable. She was a self-made, single woman who created a firm of national importance, a statistical aberration in the Georgian period and surprisingly absent from most accounts of the 18th century.

The story of Coade stone began in 1769, when Coade took over a fired artificial stone manufactory in Lambeth, on the south bank of Westminster Bridge in London. She was then in her forties; quite where she acquired her business acumen remains a mystery. The manufactory dealt in an architectural stoneware, a material developed earlier in the century by others, but that no one had yet succeeded in making a commercial success. At first Coade called her material "lythodipyra" (a made-up Greek word meaning twice-fired stone) but this tongue-twister was soon replaced by simply "Coade stone." This adoption of her own name as a brand is another aspect in which Coade was a pioneer.

Coade stone was a mixture of ball clay, grog (that is, finely ground pre-fired terracotta) and small quantities of very finely crushed flint, quartz and soda glass – all well-known and widely available materials. The mixture was fired at around 1100°C. This meant the silicates vitrified during firing, giving the stone its durability and also reliable shrinkage rates. The raw mixture was stiff enough to press into a mould, taking an astonishing level of detail. Once fired, it turned a pale buff colour that closely mimicked natural stone.

As a fired ceramic, Coade stone was both durable and frost proof. It provided a solution to the vulnerability of natural stone to the English climate, both its extremes of temperature and the acid rain in a country dependent on coal for both its warmth and its industry. As Mrs. Coade communicated so successfully in her publicity material, in its "property…of resisting the frost…[it] excells every kind of Stone Sculpture."

Soon after Coade took on the manufactory, she sacked its former proprietor and manager and replaced him with a young porcelain modeler called John Bacon, who was already working in artificial stone. Like her, he was a Dissenter by religion and he would become one of the greatest sculptors of the day, a favorite artist of George III. Bacon's gentle, self-taught classicism set the tone for the manufactory's output. The famous statue of Father Thames at the National Trust's Ham House was designed by Bacon. At 9-feet long, it is a marvel of the kilnsman's craft.



One of a pair of Coade sphinxes guarding the southern portico at Croome Court in Worcestershire.

To produce a piece like this, a clay model was first created by the sculptor, then a plaster mould made in multiple sections. A layer of raw Coade stone composition was then pressed into each piece of mould to a depth of two or three inches. Once this had dried a little, the pieces were de-moulded, reassembled using cast iron rods and external props at first, and then allowed to dry somewhat. Finally, it was fired in a coal-fired kiln over four days and nights, watched over by the kilnsman. The whole process was highly skilled. The use of moulds of course meant that a piece could then be replicated to order from the firm's catalogue.

Coade continued to use sculptors of the highest quality and such was her firm's reputation that just about every great architect of the time ordered from her, often designing the pieces themselves. Robert Adam, James Wyatt and Sir John Soane's influence especially can be seen on the firm's output, which formed key components of many of their buildings and interiors.

By the 1780s, the Coade manufactory had seen off all competitors and achieved complete dominance in the market for the sculptural and decorative embellishment. Mrs Coade ran the manufactory for more than 50 years, until her death, aged 89, on November 18th, 1821.

Eleanor Coade's success lay in positioning and promoting her product so that it became actively preferred to natural stone, for durability, price and execution. Her wares are her legacy: so successful was she in her marketing that both she and her stone remain as compelling today to us as to her contemporaries two hundred years ago.

Caroline Stanford has been in-house Historian for the Landmark Trust since 2001. She has become a leading specialist in Coade stone, and in her own time is researching fired artificial stone for a doctorate at the University of Oxford. www.landmarktrust.org.uk

Belmont in Lyme Regis, a seaside villa owned by Eleanor Coade from 1784 until her death.

The Country Retreat of a Victorian Merchant Prince

By Megan Aldrich

Twenty years ago, the National Trust acquired Tyntesfield in Somerset, a large Victorian country house with a remarkable private chapel, extensive collections, and a surrounding estate set in a verdant, hilly landscape near the port of Bristol. It was offered for sale by descendants of William Gibbs (1790-1875), who had purchased Tyntesfield in 1843 when it was a smaller, 1820s gothic house. Today it is a much-visited National Trust property with a history that exemplifies a new kind of country house owner of the 19th century. Gibbs — designated a "merchant prince" in his own time — had earned his way in the world of trade through working in his father's business, and made his own a fortune. Finding himself prosperous enough to marry in 1839, he purchased Tyntesfield as a country retreat for his new wife, an 18-year-old cousin named Matilda Blanche Crawley-Boevey, whom he had married when in his late 40s, and for their growing family of children. When not in Somerset, the family resided in a splendid house in London.

James Miller's book *Fertile Fortune: The Story of Tyntesfield* (2003) recounts the fascinating background of the Gibbs family; William Gibbs' father was the well-known merchant Anthony Gibbs (1756-1815), who traded with the Spanish colonies of the New World and spent much time in Spain, having founded a renowned firm which bore his name. William was born in Spain, and there are paintings and examples of antique Spanish furniture at Tyntesfield today that reflect his cosmopolitan background. Miller also relates the way in which Gibbs unexpectedly found himself becoming immensely rich after the death of his brother and business partner, George, in 1842, leaving William as sole partner in the family firm. Just at this moment the firm began importing guano, or sun-dried bird droppings, from Peru to Britain for use as fertilizer during the bad harvests of the early 1840s. This trade became such a roaring success that during the 1860s, the *London Times* called William Gibbs the richest commoner in England at a time when wealth was still largely situated with the aristocracy.

After his purchase of Tyntesfield, William Gibbs refurbished and furnished the house during the 1840s and 50s, and from 1854 he was using the advice of the leading decorator

The East Front of Tyntesfield in Somerset.

Photos: ©National Trust Images. Left: Trevor Ray Hart. Rigtht: Steve Stephens. Top: Andreas von Einsiedel.

The oak-panelled library with arch-braced collar beam roof.

and furnisher in London, John Gregory Crace (1809-89), who had operated a house-decorating business with the great Gothic Revival architect and designer, Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-52). In 1865, reflecting his greater degree of wealth and success, Gibbs began to commission extensive alterations and enlargements to the house using the Bristol architect John Norton (1823-1904), who retained the gothic style but added more elaborate features like prominent traceried bay windows that drew upon local, Somerset versions of the gothic style. Norton had been a pupil of Benjamin Ferrey, the close friend and biographer of Augustus Welby Pugin.

Although rooms from the original 1820s house still survive at Tyntesfield, they have been refurbished and encased by the much grander spaces of Norton's 1860s rebuilding. The gothic style had been kept during the 1850s furnishing and decorating schemes introduced by J. G. Crace, who was often called in to update gothic interiors, as at Eastnor Castle in Herefordshire. After the premature death of his fiery partner, Augustus Welby Pugin, Crace continued to draw upon the extensive collection of Pugin's gothic designs for furnishings and decorative art that he kept in his showrooms on Wigmore Street in London. There were furniture-making and upholstery workshops at the back of these premises where some of the exquisitely – and expensively – carved oak furniture like the dining room sideboard or the upholstered deep-buttoned sofas Crace supplied to Gibbs would have been made, as well as the curtains and soft furnishings. Gibbs, in common with other clients, questioned what he considered to be the high costs of Crace's services.

After their marriage, William and Matilda Gibbs became devout High Church Anglicans, a fact reflected by the building in 1873 of a highly decorated private chapel at Tyntesfield directly inspired by La Sainte Chapelle in Paris, the beautiful 13th-century chapel built by Louis IX of France to house the (supposed) Crown of Thorns. The architect entrusted with the Tyntesfield chapel was not Norton, but Arthur Blomfield, the Cambridge-educated son of the Anglican Bishop of London who was deeply involved in Victorian church building. In 1873 Gibbs was also involved as a patron of another extremely significant gothic commission, the bold, red-brick chapel of Keble College, Oxford — the largest chapel at the university — by the leading High Church architect William Butterfield, whose influence can be discerned in Blomfield's work.

While the Victorian gothic character of Tyntesfield is perhaps its outstanding characteristic as the building is experienced today, nonetheless Gibbs' descendants began to remodel some of the gothic interiors during the first years of the twentieth century. The style they chose was the "William and Mary" style of about 1700, then much in fashion, using reproduction furnishings mixed with some antiques from the period. This stylistic evolution can be seen especially in the Drawing Room, as it exists today, but it does not overtake the rich layers of 19th-century gothic design both inside and out. From his purchase of Tyntesfield as an 1820s gothic house, to its 1850s refurbishing by Crace, followed by the 1860s gothic rebuilding of the house by Norton, and especially in his commissioning of a private chapel in the 1870s from Arthur Blomfield alongside his patronage of William Butterfield at the chapel of Keble College, Oxford, William Gibbs demonstrated an evolution away from being a merchant prince to becoming a philanthropist and patron with distinct views of his own, and the confidence to hire some of the best British architects and designers to put those views into practice. Tyntesfield demonstrates that fascinating moment in British history when such an evolution was possible.

Megan Aldrich is an architectural and design historian who specializes in the Gothic Revival. She is a part-time tutor in the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education.

Top: The Drawing Room with its barrel-vaulted ceiling. Bottom: Interior of the Chapel with carved stone walls and high-vaulted, carved ceiling.

Designed by Robert Adam, the carpet in the Saloon at Saltram was one of the largest ever made by Thomas Whitty, founder of the Axminster Carpet Factory.

The Art Beneath Our Feet

Emma Slocombe, Senior National Curator (Dress and Textiles)
Ksynia Marko, Formerly NT Textile Conservation Advisor

"Pleasure for the feet as they move silently and softly over beautiful fabric; pleasure for the eye, which enjoys the effects of the colour and design; and pleasure for the mind, which can follow the thoughts and fantasies suggested by pattern, figure and theme." Michele Campana (1969) 'European Carpets' Pub. Paul Hamlyn

Underfoot and at the periphery of our vision, carpets and rugs in historic houses can often go unnoticed amongst the aesthetic cacophony of rich interiors filled with paintings and fine furnishings. Handwoven or machine made, they combine both luxury and practicality. Many are extremely beautiful, featuring repeating geometric patterns or sinuous leaves and flowers in pallets of deep red, green, yellow and blue. Carpets are horizontal works of art that combine the creative biography of their makers with the traditions of their places of making. The National Trust collection contains over 3000 carpets, rugs and mats woven over the last 500 years. It is a period shaped by an increasingly global network of commercial exchange, where carpets woven in South, Central and West Asia, found new and expanding markets across Europe and came to later inspire European manufacturers.

Asian carpet production developed over many centuries, making carpets an important and distinct feature of the Islamic arts, with regionally specific methods of weaving, design and exchange. During the 16th century, carpets from Turkey and Persia were imported into Europe as highly desirable luxury goods and used to furnish the households of a wealthy elite. It was one part of a global trade that connected Europe with Persian, Indian and Ottoman cultures that, despite living vast distances from each other, had well established trade links. In England, the inclusion of Turkish and Persian carpets and rugs in portraits, such as *Henry VIII* by the studio of Hans Holbein the younger (dated to between 1543–1547) at Polesden Lacy, signaled the wealth, status and outlook of the sitter.

The earliest Turkish carpet in the Trust's collection is at Hardwick Hall, and dates from 1550 to 1600. It features alternating blue, eight-pointed star medallions and diamonds decorated with yellow flowers, surrounded by a lattice of leaves and flowers, all set against a bright red ground. It was woven in Ushak in Western Turkey, a center of Ottoman weaving, and may have been purchased by Henry Cavendish (1550–1616) when he travelled to Constantinople, now modern Istanbul, in 1589. One of the first Persian examples is found amongst a group of early 17th-century carpets acquired by Charles Sackville, 6th Earl of Dorset (1643–1706) from Whitehall Palace and now found at Knole. In the center is a large red medallion, surround by concentric borders of blue and yellow filled with sprays of flowers, and at its corners are ships with passengers sailing across fish-filled water.

The unusual nature of the design, only found on nine other complete examples globally, has been interpreted as a possible illustration of the assassination of Bahadur Shah, Sultan of Gujerat (d.1536) on his visit to the Portuguese fleet at Diu and the carpet therefore evidence of a Portuguese colonial commission woven in India. However, based on the construction technique, it is now understood to have been created by weavers in the Khorasan province of northeast Iran.

Surviving early carpets from Europe also date from the 16th century. Although in this period table carpets, like that of the *Judgment of Paris,* 1574, at Hardwick are likely to be of needlework—a knotted-pile technique known as "Turkey work" which created a tough, hardwearing fabric useful for carpets and furniture upholstery. The collections at Knole also include the Trust's oldest English true knotted-pile table carpet, c. 1615. It features a design of scrolling leaves and English flowers around the arms of the Leveson and Curzon families with a floral border that is reminiscent of Persian carpets of the same date.

While carpet production in England was still a small-scale enterprise, France took off as the center of manufacturing in Europe in the 17th century. Waddesdon Manor is home to a large collection of carpets from the royal Savonnerie manufactory, part of the extraordinary collection of French fine and decorative art amassed by Ferdinand and Alice de Rothschild. It includes three Savonnerie from a series of 93 made for the Long Gallery at the Louvre. Commissioned by Louis XIV, the carpet known as no. 20, 1683, features his symbol Apollo, the sun king, in its central medallion surrounded by a garland of roses and brilliant yellow radial borders of riotous leaves and flowers.

In contrast with the knotted-tufted Savonnerie carpets, those woven at Aubusson utilized the flat weaving techniques associated with tapestry in which the manufactory specialized. The Trust collection includes 25 examples of Aubusson carpets, each featuring the manufacturers trademark designs of garlands and sprays of luxuriant flowers in pastel shades, including an example at Belton, purchased by John Cust, 1st Earl Brownlow (1779–1853) during a visit to the factory in 1839.

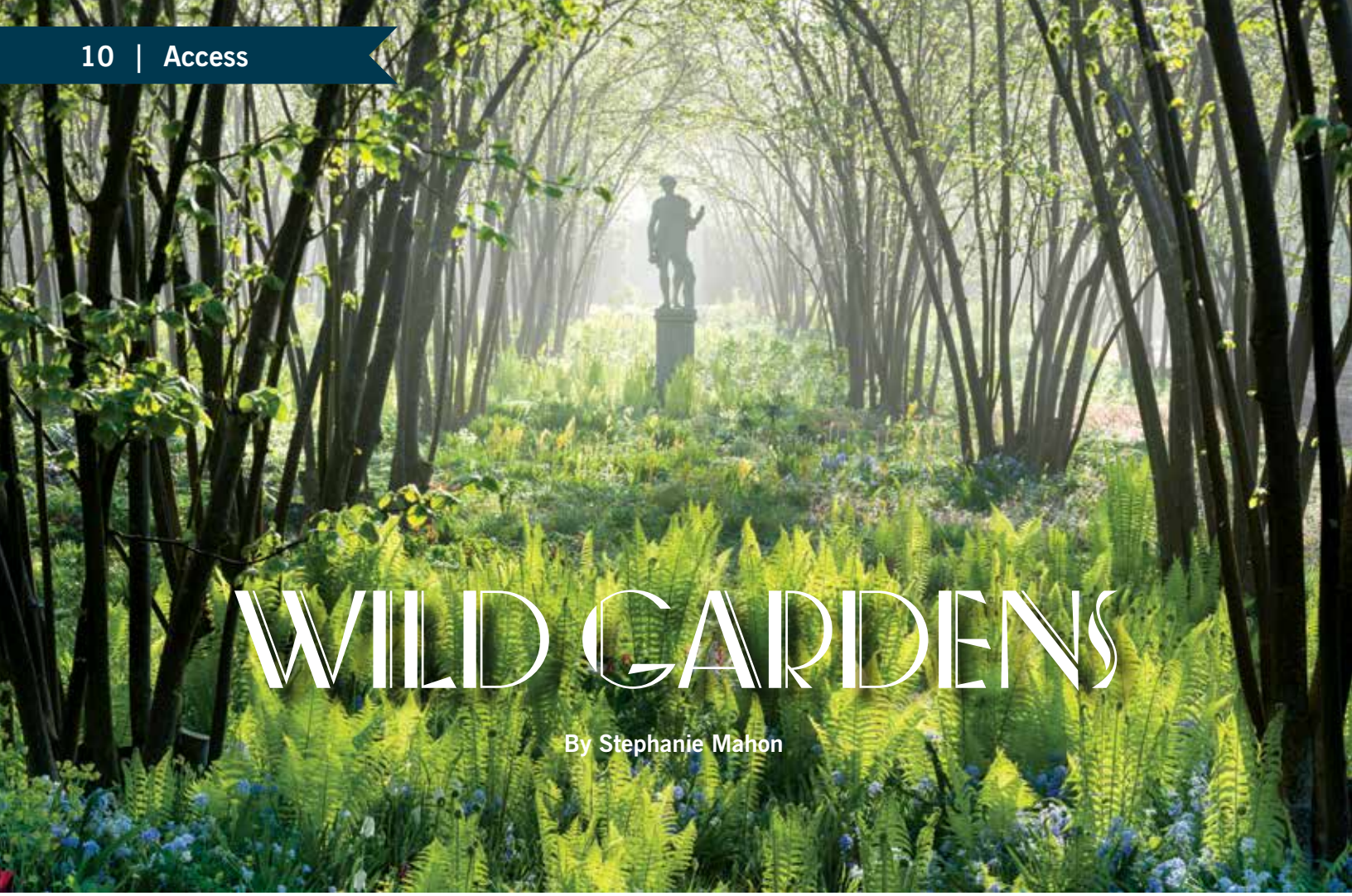
It was not until the mid-18th century that the production of large carpets was explored in England, prompted in part by the settling of weavers from Europe. At Petworth, the collection includes a carpet manufactured by Swiss Huguenot émigré Claude Passavant (d.1766), in 1758. The design of a central arabesque panel of a sunflower within a scrolled border against a field of cube-pattern decorated with scattered flowers is highly reminiscent of fashionable French design. In 1758, Passavant was to share a prize, offered by the Royal Society of Arts to encourage English manufacturing, with another weaving entrepreneur, Thomas Whitty (1713–1792), the founder of the Axminster Carpet Factory. The carpet in the Saloon at Saltram is one of the largest Whitty ever made, measuring 6.02 x 13.35 metres (19.75 x 43.7feet). It was designed by acclaimed architect Robert Adam (1728–92) as part of a complete interior scheme, the central lozenge containing an oval rosette and festoons of flowers echoing the design motifs of the ceiling.

A hand-knotted Morris carpet in the Drawing Room at Standen in West Sussex.

The 19th century saw a resurgence in the popularity of the Persian rug, this time imported on a greater scale to furnish the homes of the middle classes, a reflection of consumer interest in the global. For artist and designer William Morris (I834 – 1896), they represented the highest form of carpet design. In 1882, Morris wrote: "To us pattern designers, Persia has become a holy land, for there in the process of time our art was perfected, and thence above all places it spread to cover for a while the world, east and west." Morris took his influences from historical examples of Persian design and combined them with his own trademark studies of nature to create new patterns. The arts and crafts collection at Standen includes a large hand-knotted carpet decorated with repeating interlaced flowers and tendrils set against a blue ground. Designed by Morris's assistant John Henry Dearle, it was made at Morris & Co.'s Merton Abbey works outside London.

Carpets and rugs today can be read as archaeological artefacts, the wear of which can tell us much about the movements, habits and interior layouts of both the former residents of properties and later use by the National Trust. They evolve as 'working objects', most of which have histories of being manufactured, traded, exported, imported, moved, trodden upon, stored, mended, conserved, cleaned, rolled, unrolled and redisplayed. While the National Trust has carpets of enormous significance, it is also home to a huge number whose history and appeal might be described as minimal, and which have been acquired and used as practical furnishings rather than as objects that are of intrinsic artistic value. Carpets then are objects in use.

The popularity of visiting historic houses has impacted these works of art. Now, in the 21st century, we are presented with three challenges. Firstly, the presentation and interpretation of historic interiors with large and significant carpets where they compete with, or are covered with other objects of merit. Secondly, sharing the stories of carpets and making them accessible while also protecting them from physical damage, and finally, ensuring a future supply of carpets for display that might be regarded as 'sacrificial', thus negating the need for artificial options.



WILD GARDENS

By Stephanie Mahon

Statue of Bacchus in the Nuttery at Sissinghurst Castle Garden in Kent.

At first glance, it might seem strange to put the words 'wild' and 'garden' together. Surely a garden, which is created and cared for by someone, can't be wild? And surely a wild place is one of untamed nature?

If we find the concept of a wild garden challenging, I believe it stems from our complicated relationship with the meaning of the word 'wild'. On the one hand, the wilderness can be a frightening place, the setting for dark fairy tales and horror movies. On the other, it's an innocent place of pristine beauty, where everything thrives in perfect balance. It is, as landscape ethicist Rick Darke puts it, transformed from a place of fear to one where we believe that "the last best things reside."

It's interesting that in both these scenarios, we humans don't seem to naturally belong. This is a worrying thought, for our own well-being and that of the planet. If we believe that wildness can only exist in our absence, then there truly are few wild places left. According to a study in the journal *Nature,* just 23% of the planet's landmass can now be considered 'wilderness' — places that do not have industrial level activity within them. Some ecologists even say we're living in the 'post-wild' era.

It's no surprise, therefore, that we revere landscapes we consider to be natural. But what we consider natural these days probably isn't — much of the countryside we enjoy today has been man-made over thousands of years of farming and forestry, and needs to be managed. So, perhaps we shouldn't equate wilderness and wildness. Just as what we believe to be 'wild' often is not, maybe what we assume is 'not wild', can be.

Because wildness does not only exist out there in some fantasy rural idyll. You can find it all around you, if you look closer. As environmental historian William Cronon says, "Wildness can be found anywhere, from seemingly tame fields to the cracks of a sidewalk." Once you start to notice the wild, you will see it everywhere, and that is the first step to helping the wild survive and thrive, because you have to see it, to save it.

Gardens are actually one of the best and easiest ways that we can make a difference. It's true that most gardens are small, and separated from each other, and other green spaces, by things such as buildings, fences, streets and roads. They cannot compensate for the large areas of countryside and habitat that have already been lost, or be the single solution to all the environmental issues that we face, but they can function as a bridge that connects us back to nature and the wider world. As author Michael Pollan puts it, "the habits of thought they foster can take us a long way in that direction. Gardening tutors us in nature's ways, fostering an ethic of respect for the land."

Gardeners of every type of plot can embrace those habits of thought, from those with historic or modern gardens (see panel for some ideas), large spaces to tiny backyards, in the country or the city. Any gardener can make a difference by just thinking a little about how they garden and what easy steps might make their garden more wild and wildlife-friendly, as well as sustainable and resilient.

How You Too Can Re-Wild Your Own Garden

The very first step is to stop using chemicals such as pesticides and herbicides. You'll have to find alternative methods to prevent and treat pests and diseases, and it often means putting up with some imperfections such as brown or holey leaves. A wild gardener is willing to embrace a looser, fuller style, and let things be what they will, and although this relaxed approach can, at first, be difficult for neat and tidy gardeners to adopt, the rewards are manifold.

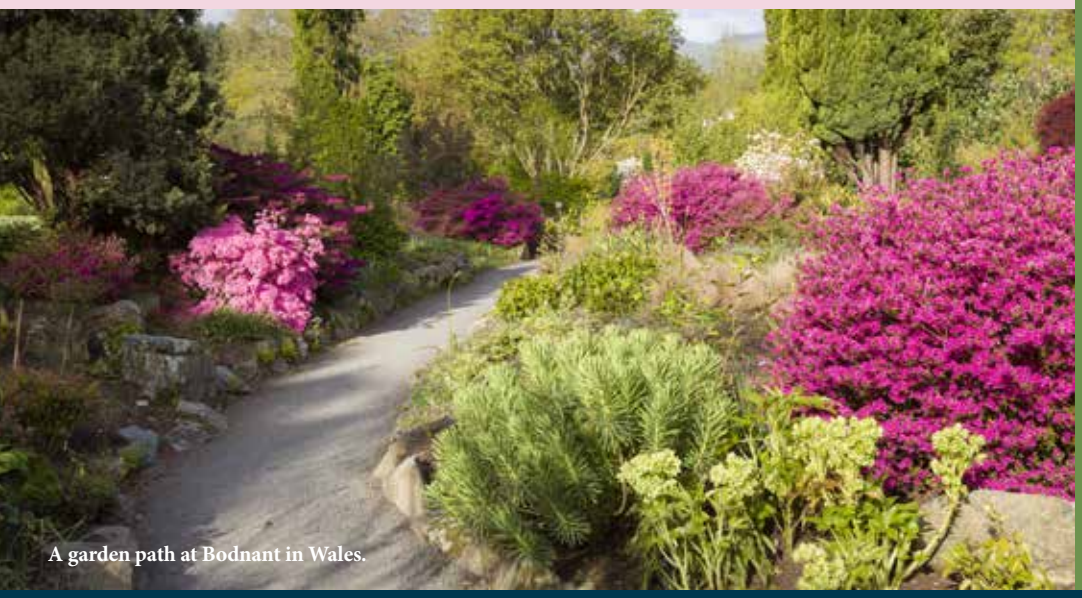
Adding water is the single best way to provide for wildlife, whether it's a full-size pond or just a small bird bath. Also try to reduce or keep to a minimum the amount of paving in your garden – many garden designers cite a minimum of 60% planting to 40% hardscape, and the preference is now moving towards a 70:30 split. The same goes for solid structures such as walls and fences. Use hedges instead where possible, or opt for climbing plants to green up boundaries in smaller gardens.

If you have the space, plant a tree, or some shrubs – woody plants, which contribute the most to biodiversity. Pick those with blossom and berries if you can, such as crab apples. When it comes to border and container flowers, single blooms are better for pollinating insects. Leave the seedheads of your herbaceous perennials and grasses up over winter if you can bear to, to help feed the birds and provide cover for many important bugs and small mammals. Consider mowing the lawn less to enable weeds and wildflowers, which can be valuable pollinator plants, to grow. If your neighbours look askance at your 'messy' front yard, many gardeners in the UK mow a frame around the outside and set out a blue heart sign to indicate it is intentional and meant for wildlife.

You could also talk to your neighbors about connecting up your spaces using planting to help make wildlife corridors for all the non-human inhabitants of your area. Hedgehog 'doors' – little gaps in fences – are popular in Britain. Look out for what wildlife visits your own garden and think about what local wildlife might want to, and then you can incorporate the elements and plants that they use or eat to encourage them in.

Finally, extend this philosophy out to think about the whole world as your garden, and take a sustainable approach in your wider gardening practice: reduce or preferably eliminate your use of peat-based growing mediums and shop-bought fertilizers, instead composting garden waste to make your own; harvest rainwater to reduce reliance on mains water; and choose plants that suit the conditions you naturally have and don't need lots of resources to grow. Think of it as future proofing, making your plot wildlife-friendly, planet-friendly, resilient to threats like climate change and lower maintenance to boot.

Find out more in Stephanie Mahon's new book, Wild Gardens: Inspired by Nature *(National Trust Books), on sale now.*



A garden path at Bodnant in Wales.

The Laburnum Arch at Bodnant Garden.

National Trust Gardens To Visit

Bodnant Garden
Conwy in Wales

Colby Woodland Garden
Pembrokshire in Wales

Coleton Fishacre
Devon

Fyne Court
Somerset

Glendurgan Garden
Cornwall

Great Chalfield Manor
Wiltshire

Hill Top
Cumbria in the Lake District

Scotney Castle
Kent

Sheringham Park
Norfolk

Sissinghurst Castle Garden
Kent

Stowe
Buckinghamshire

Trengwainton Garden
Cornwall

The Weir Garden
Herefordshire

Churchill's Wardrobe

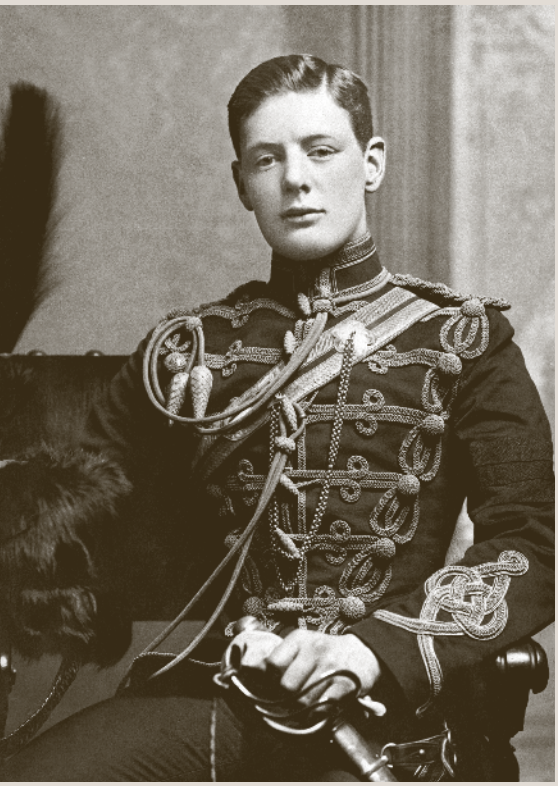
by Katherine Carter, Property Curator at Chartwell

There are few historical figures who had a more intuitive sense of the importance of clothing and appearance to power and political influence than Winston Churchill, but this went far beyond mere enjoyment or appreciation of fashion. For Churchill, his clothing was a key part of his image, and image recognition was, and in a sense still is, inherently tied to electoral success, from which political power and authority ultimately stem. Few have channelled this use of image as a campaign tool more effectively than Churchill. It was his careful curation of his attire, as well as promulgation of caricatured features of his clothing and accessories, which is why more than half a century after his death he remains one of the most recognizable individuals in history.

Winston Churchill was born the grandson of a Duke and came of age at the height of Queen Victoria's imperial apotheosis. Consequently, many of his instinctive preferences in terms of clothing had their origins in the late 19th century. Many believe that his image being rooted in this era is why he dressed the way he did. His choices however are more nuanced and his influences more colorful than simply being a hangover from the late Victorian era. To my mind there are three key influences on Churchill's style; emulation, portraying power and his own individuality — all of which were delivered through either exquisitely tailored pieces or historic garments.

When we look at Churchill's political uniform, by which I mean the outfits he wore when attending debates in the House of Commons or undertaking ministerial duties, what is striking is the extent to which he is mirroring his father, who was a highly influential politician, having held the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer at the height of his career in the 1880s. Much has been written about Winston Churchill's relationship with his father, which was a cold and distant one on Lord Randolph Churchill's part, and one of desperate approval-seeking from the young Winston, who longed to be a fellow Member of Parliament alongside his father, and who was denied the chance to do so following his father's early death at the age of 45. Evidence can be found in the display at Chartwell of Churchill's attempts to mirror his father. A triptych of Spy cartoons shows Winston on the left, his father Randolph in the center and his grandfather the Duke of Marlborough on the right. Looking at father and son on the left, we see the emulation being made by Winston in terms of his public image, from his stance to his attire. The caricature of Winston Churchill was originally published when he stood as a Conservative candidate for the parliamentary seat of Oldham in 1900, age 26. His is displayed alongside that of his father which dates from 20 years earlier, when he held the office of Secretary of State for India aged 31. The existence of the comparison made by the Victorian cartoonist is interesting unto itself, but perhaps even more so is Churchill's decision to frame the 3 images together and have them be shown as part of the permanent display at Chartwell.

The ultimate embodiment of this copying of father by son can be found in the moment when Churchill, almost thirty years after his father, was offered the role of Chancellor of the Exchequer. When offered the role by then Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, he



Left: Churchill as 2nd Lieutenant, the 4th Queen's Own Hussars, 1895.
Right: Churchill in Admiral's uniform, 1946.

Left: Robes of Chancellor Bristol University in the collection at Chartwell. Right: Charcoal drawing on paper of Sir Winston Churchill by John Singer Sargent.

was tempted to reply "Will the bloody duck swim?" but — knowing it was an important and formal occasion instead replied "This fulfils my ambition. I still have my father's robes as Chancellor. I shall be proud to serve you in this splendid Office." To capture this important chapter in his life, Churchill commissioned a picture by the renowned portrait artist John Singer Sargent, in his father's Chancellor robes. The robes themselves a permanent part of the display at Chartwell in the Uniform Room, and their intricate detailing is painstakingly cared for by my team at Chartwell.

The Uniform Room's existence at Chartwell offers a real insight into Churchill's curation into his home and a tangible part of his legacy. For almost twenty years, between 1947 and 1966, the Churchills worked hand-in-glove with the National Trust on the planning of how their home would be displayed for the public, and so the decision to convert a guest bedroom into a display of clothing is very telling. It wonderfully demonstrates his love of pomp, ceremony, tradition and regalia as well as his innate sense if the importance of image and clothing.

Portrayals of power within this space can be found in both his military uniforms and garments afforded to him as part of high political offices and honors bestowed upon him. Of all these uniforms, the items associated with the ancient honor of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports were his favorites. The Lord Wardenship was an honorific role historically associated with defending England's south coast against invasion from continental Europe but had by the 20th century become largely honorific. The appointment was made by King George VI in 1941 and made Churchill the most recent holder of the office of a long line dating back almost a thousand years. As an historian himself, who's legacy today is so intrinsically linked to the defence of Britain against invasion, Churchill revelled in his role as Lord Warden and wore the ceremonial attire at every opportunity, including the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

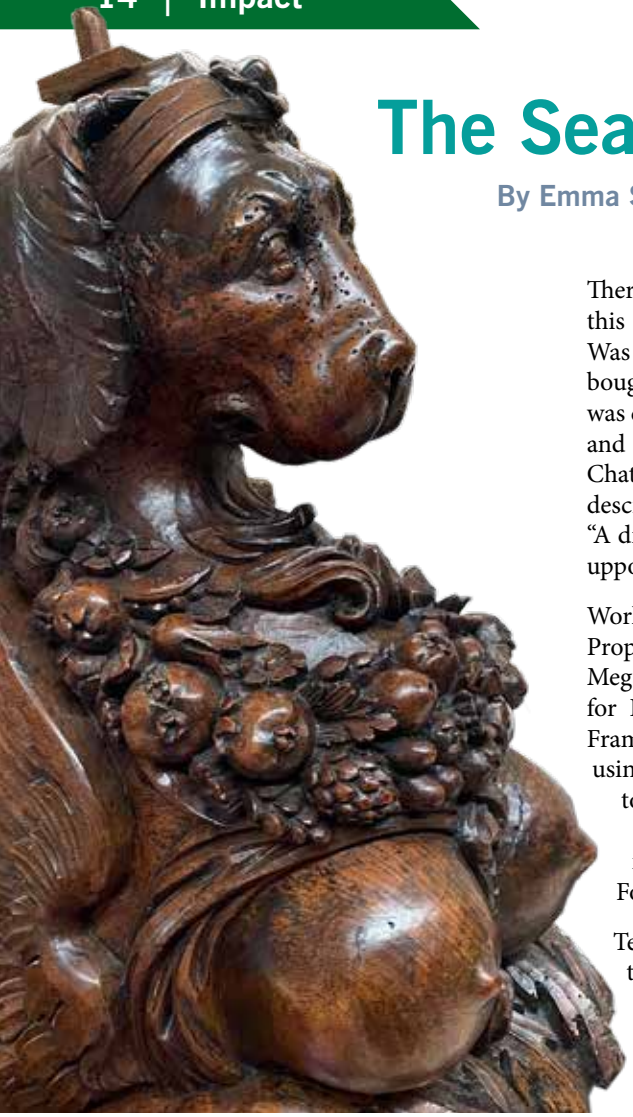
Beyond the glittering ceremonial outfits and military regalia of Chartwell's Uniform Room are the items in our collection which comprise many visitors favorites, those of his leisurewear. These pieces show Churchill in his more informal guises and comprise those chosen for comfort and convenience, as well as those which he quite simply enjoyed wearing. It was in such attire as his 10-gallon hats and monogrammed slippers that he would enjoy the gardens, paint in the Studio or tread the heavy floorboards of the Study. The pinnacle of his leisurewear, of which we are fortunate to have one on display at Chartwell, is his iconic 'siren suit'.

Courtesy of the London-based tailors Turnbull and Asser, Churchill turned a one-piece garment, which had previously been used as work-wear for laboring professions, into a wardrobe staple that he would wear over his everyday clothing. Featuring pleats in the back for ease of movement and breast pockets, often used to store a cigar or two, they came in a variety of colors and materials, though his preferred choice was the green velvet one in Chartwell's collection. Velvet is of course not the hardiest of fabrics and his siren suits were often sent back to Turnbull and Asser for repairs, including a few cigar-related injuries to the garments. It is the images you see of him at Chartwell in his siren suits that you can see him most at ease. It is still a garment that is inherently linked to Churchill's own tastes and preferences, but reflects the comfort and escape from political pressure and the eyes of Westminster that his home in Kent afforded him.

Churchill's wardrobe and choice of attire helped him to cultivate an image, which could be adapted depending on the message he intended to convey in any given scenario, whether he wanted to portray his family lineage, his power and influence, or his unique sense of style and the fun he had with his clothing. Perhaps more impressive even than his conscious curation of image during his lifetime is the extent to which its power has permeated his legacy even since, so much so that even a silhouette can be recognisable as Sir Winston Churchill. Few other political leaders could claim such a level of fame and recognition, and Chartwell's permanent display of his favorite garments allow us to continue to share his history, through his wardrobe, for generations to come.

Churchill painting at Cap D'Antibes, French Riviera in 1932.

Photos: ©Alamy. Top: ©National Trust Images. Left: Charles Thomas. Right: Nick Guttridge.



The Seadog Table Sails to America

By Emma Schmuecker, Studio Lead and Senior National Conservator

For the first time in a generation the magnificent seadog table from Hardwick Hall is being prepared for exhibition outside of its home. The table's pedigree and provenance distinguish it from all other surviving 16th-century furniture in England, and it is further elevated by its association with the royal families of 16th-century France, Scotland and England. It is part of a group of furniture based on designs drawn by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau (c.1519.12-85) around c. 1565-70.

Selected for loan alongside another treasure of Hardwick, the portrait of Queen Elizabeth I, these astonishing items are being prepared for travel to America where they will feature in "The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England." The exhibition opens at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, October 10, 2022 through January 8, 2023 and then goes onto The Cleveland Museum of Art and the Legion of Honor, San Francisco.

There is a great deal of intrigue surrounding this table. Who did it originally belong to? Was it Mary, Queen of Scots (1542-87), who bought it to furnish the rooms in which she was confined or was it purchased by the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury for the early Chatsworth? Was it painted or gilded? A description in the 1601 inventory describes "A drawing table carved and guilte standing uppon Sea dogges."

Working in collaboration, Liz Waring, Property Curator for Hardwick Hall, Dr Megan Wheeler, Assistant National Curator for Furniture and Gerry Alabone, Senior Frames and Furniture conservator, have been using this once in a generation opportunity to work with other specialists to answer some of these questions as the table is prepared for loan at The Royal Oak Foundation Conservation Studio.

Technical examination and analysis hope to establish structural stability and characterize the decorative surface. X-ray could help identify areas weakened by the historic infestation of common furniture beetle, i.e. the four sea-dogs, tortoises, and the base platform, while X-ray Fluorescence (commonly used for elemental and chemical analysis) could help identify pigments used in the paint and gilding of the decorative surface. Consideration can be given to taking small samples for cross-sectional analysis to further characterise pigments, media, and stratigraphy of the decorative surface. This analysis could establish a fuller understanding of the original appearance of the table.

Assessing the disassembled table in the studio will enable a better understanding of the table's condition and establish the best arrangement of assembly. Examination will also help determine changes made to the table over time, which include previous restoration campaigns.

The loan of this internationally significant piece of furniture has provided Hardwick with a fantastic opportunity to really delve into the history and structure of the table. This not only contributes to the academic knowledge about 16th-century furniture but it also enables us to share the table's story with our visitors. The table will of course be missed while it is on loan, but we are extremely happy that many more people will have the opportunity to see how unique and special it is.

The Seadog table undergoing conservation work at the Royal Oak Foundation Conservation Studio at Knole in Kent.

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Looking northeast from the heights of Llyndy Isaf on an early summer evening. Llyn Dinas is in the middle distance and Carnedd Cribau on the right side horizon.

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

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