

The Conservation of Country House Ruins

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By

Miriam Cady

Centre for the Study of the Country House

Department of History of Art and Film

University of Leicester

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the conservation of country houses in a ruinous or formerly ruinous state. It is argued that the country house ruins are a unique and underutilized resource. They are the physical manifestation of the decline of the country house and therefore provide new opportunities for the interpretation of country houses. The study revolves around the concept of the standard country house visit, developed primarily from the work of Laurjane Smith and Gaynor Bagnall, to illustrate ways in which the ruins disrupt the established heritage tour of country houses. The thesis begins with a history of the decline and current situation of the country house, providing context for the case studies examined in the work. Through an examination of the history of country house visiting, and standardisation of the country house visit by heritage organisations, the standard country house visit is defined. This identification of the key role the standard country house visit plays for the sites themselves, the heritage organizations, and the British public is then examined to assist in a deepened historical appreciation of the larger trajectory of the country house in the life of the British people.

The disruption of this standard country house visit is explored through six case studies. The case studies were selected from the three major country house heritage organisations in Britain and fall into two categories: shells and restored or reconstructed ruins. In addition to historical analysis of the reasons for decline, the case studies are assessed on the availability and focus of interpretation. This concentrates on the attempts to include the standard country house visit in the interpretation and presentation and the ways in which the sites disrupt the standard visit. The thesis concludes with a set of site conservation proposals, drawn from the analysis of the cases studies, as to how the country house ruin should be interpreted and presented to the public.

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Abbreviations

Heritage Lottery Fund - HLF

Historic Buildings Council - HBC

National Heritage Memorial Fund - NHMF

National Land Fund – NLF

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings - SPAB

Victoria and Albert Museum – V&A

Chapter One

Introduction and Literature Review

Country houses, it has been claimed, are Britain's greatest contribution to Western civilisation.¹ While this is an inflated claim, British country houses point to a period of great prosperity in British history. The architecture, art, furnishings and landscaped gardens are the embodiment of this prosperity. However, since the late nineteenth century the country house has faced an uncertain future. Between 1873 and 1974, life within the country house changed dramatically and marked the end to nearly 1,800 houses in England alone. While there has been much emphasis on saving the country house within the national consciousness, little has been done to address the history of their decline in the same manner. The 239 country house ruins that survived demolition are the physical manifestation of the decline of the country house and the entire era that they represent.²

The long tradition of country house tourism has grown from eighteenth-century roots. The country house became an established part of the British heritage industry in the 1950s. From this period, the country house tour became a standardised visit, produced by heritage organisations such as the National Trust and English Heritage. Through interpretive methods, these organisations have created an ideal experience of their country houses for tourists. Using the furnishings and decorative elements, the visitor is guided on a path through the spaces and histories of the house.

Country house ruins disrupt this routinized visit. They lack the visual and interpretive prompts provided at intact houses. They create new ways to engage with the spaces and histories of the country house. Instead of focusing on the process of their ruination, or the larger issues of the decline of the country house, heritage organisations tend to interpret the "golden age" of the site. They are

¹ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 1.

² See appendix for complete list of ruins

freezing the monument at a specific period in its history, thereby offering the visitor a limited perspective rather than a comprehensive experience.

This thesis explores this standardised country house visit and its application at country house ruins. Through an examination of six case studies, the successful and problematic approaches to the interpretation and presentation are identified. The thesis concludes with a suggested list of best practices for the interpretation of the country house ruin.

Conceptual Framework

The concept of the standard country house visit, used throughout this thesis, developed from the work of heritage scholar, Laurajane Smith and sociologist, Gaynor Bagnall. Smith has worked for many years in the field of heritage studies. She was the course director for the Masters Degree in Cultural Heritage Management at the University of York for nine years and has published extensively on the topics of heritage, tourism, and identity.³ Smith's work on country house visiting has led her to develop the concept of the Authorized Heritage Discourse. The Authorized Heritage Discourse is a theory that suggests that heritage is not a "thing", but rather a performance or communicative tool that 'structures both the ways in which country houses are interpreted to and by visitors'.⁴

Smith describes the typical country house visit in her book *The Uses of Heritage*. During a typical country house visit, a visitor is 'invited to view the façade of the house and wander through the gardens and terraces that surround the house and imbibe the bucolic panorama'.⁵ Once inside the house, visitors move through the rooms, taking in the furnishings, paintings, and architectural details. And of course, no proper country house visit is complete without partaking 'in the performance of taking tea in the ubiquitous tearooms'.⁶ Using the Authorized

³ Australian National University, "Staff Page: Laurajane Smith."

<<http://archanth.anu.edu.au/staff/dr-laurajane-smith>> Accessed October 5, 2013

⁴ Smith, "Deference and Humility: The Social Values of the Country House," 34.

⁵ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 129–130.

⁶ Ibid., 130.

Heritage Discourse, Smith argues that the presentation of country houses reinforces certain societal values.⁷ The Authorised Heritage Discourse, as developed, relates more to the interpretation supporting the patriarchy and aristocracy and the effect on British identity, something that is very interesting and should be pursued, but is not the focus of this thesis.

Gaynor Bagnall is a Senior Lecturer in Sociology of Culture at the University of Salford.⁸ In her paper, ‘Performance and Performativity at Heritage Sites’, Bagnall investigates the process of heritage consumption at two sites in Northeast England. Through site visits and extensive visitor surveys, Bagnall ascertained that there were ‘preferred readings, or preferred ways in which to consume and experience the sites’.⁹ The visitor understanding of and engagement with the site was extensively mediated by the heritage organization. Bagnall’s work is not directly related to the country house, but her theories on performativity at heritage sites work wells with Smith’s concept of the Authorised Heritage Discourse to help establish the concept of the standard country house visit. The work by both Smith and Bagnall illustrates the close management of site experience.

Robert Hewison, in his book *The Heritage Industry*, theorized that heritage in Britain was becoming a commodity.¹⁰ His thoughts have great validity in the heritage debate overall, and to a degree, the creation of the country house visiting experience. The country house performance described by Hewison is related to site experience, which is mediated through interpretation and movement, and created by heritage organisations. However, Hewison’s text is more about the commoditisation of heritage than the performativity of site experience. For this reason, the concepts developed by Smith and Bagnall will be used for the evaluation of the creation of experience at country house ruins. The standard country house visit will be defined

⁷ Smith, “Deference and Humility: The Social Values of the Country House,” 34–35.

⁸ “Dr. Gaynor Bagnall Staff Page.” < <http://www.salford.ac.uk/nmsw/nursing-academics/gaynor-bagnall> > Accessed September 7, 2013

⁹ Bagnall, “Performance and Performativity at Heritage Sites,” 378.

¹⁰ Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*.

in this thesis as the site visit as managed by the heritage organization. The focus here is the regulation of movement and site experience throughout the visit.

In the standard country house visit, the movement around the site is regulated. The theatricality of this performance within heritage tourism has been considered in the literature. Dean MacCannell calls tourist destinations ‘stage sets’, while Edensor describes the routinised movement as a type of ‘ballet’.¹¹ This performance is stage managed by the heritage organisations through interpretation and presentation. The guidebooks, audio guides, and interpretive panelling lead the visitor on a set path through the site. This is ‘mainly constrained by the physical layout of the site, but there is a visual hierarchy of attractiveness at most locations’.¹² The itinerary set by the interpretation creates a specific type of engagement with the site. Visitors are not allowed to engage with the site in their own way. They are only able to engage with the aspects deemed worthy and interesting by the heritage organisations. When visitors participate in this routinized country house visit, country houses begin to lose their unique qualities.¹³ The history and design of each house may be different, but the performativity of the standard country house visit prevents a real connection with the site. Visitors are simply “doing heritage”.¹⁴

Literature Review

According to Malcolm Carey, author of *Qualitative Research Skills for Social Work*, a literature reviews helps to define the ‘objectives and unearth what other related research has discovered in the past’.¹⁵ This thesis, as it has developed, focuses on the ruined country houses of Britain, a topic that has gone virtually unexamined in country house literature to date. Other than a handful of ruins included in Brian Bailey’s *National Trust Book of Ruins* (1984) and Jeremy

¹¹ MacCannell, “Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings,” 299; Edensor, “Staging Tourism: Tourists as Performers,” 339.

¹² Bath, “Audio-tours at Heritage Sites,” 162.

¹³ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 128.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Carey, *Qualitative Research Skills for Social Work*, 45.

Musson's *English Ruins* (2011), books that can only be described as glorified coffee table books, the subject of standing ruins in the United Kingdom has gone uncovered in the literature.¹⁶ For this reason, completing an extensive review of country house literature would be unhelpful. Instead, this literature review will be a 'contingent mosaic'.¹⁷ This approach is described as a drawing together of different strands of research to fit the aims of the research.¹⁸ Country house scholarship bridges a gap between scholarly texts and works of public history. Professor J.V. Beckett states that within country house scholarship there is 'an uncomfortable divide between the scholarly and the popular, and between the social and architectural historian'.¹⁹ Sources will be drawn from country house and ruins scholarship, as well as television.

The major country house texts have ignored the physicality of the decline. The focus of this literature review, therefore, will be on the inclusion of the decline itself within the literature, rather than the remnants of it. This literature review is not an exhaustive study, but rather, key texts and themes are highlighted to illustrate the gap in the literature that surrounds the ruins of the country house.

The turning point in the literature was the *Destruction of the Country House* exhibition, held at Victoria & Albert Museum in 1974.²⁰ This exhibition not only brought the crisis of the country house to public attention, but also shifted the focus of the literature. Prior to this, the scholarship was connoisseurship-centred. *English Country Houses* written by Vita Sackville-West in 1941 is a personal account of the architectural development of twenty-one houses.²¹ Having lived in two country houses herself, Knole and Sissinghurst, the book is written in a personal style, rather than an academic style. Throughout the text she asserts the importance of the English country house and its integral place within British history and culture, echoing the comments made at the start of this chapter. Texts like Christopher

¹⁶ Bailey, *The National Trust Book of Ruins*; Musson, *English Ruins*.

¹⁷ Wheatley, *Re-viewing Television History*, 8.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Beckett, "Country House Life," 244.

²⁰ The *Destruction* exhibition and the decline of the country house is the focus of Chapter Two. The issues and topics related to this exhibition within the literature review will be covered in the following chapter.

²¹ Sackville-West, *English Country Houses*.

Hussey's *English Country Houses* (Early, Mid and Late Georgian) first published in 1955 and Mark Girouard's *The Victorian Country House* (1971) examined the architectural development of the country house.²² Each of these texts explored the architectural style and development of houses built between 1715 and 1890. The books are set up in a case study format, discussing individual houses in detail. Even though many of these texts were written at the height of the destruction of the country house, they pre-date the exhibition. The inclusion of demolitions would have been remarkable and outside the remit of the publication.

Following the exhibition there was a shift in focus. Two new streams of research entered the body literature. First, there was growth in scholarship on the social history of the country house and second, a new focus on the houses lost during the decline. Girouard's *Life in the English Country House* (1978) explored the use and role of the English country house in the eighteenth-century, using the architecture as evidence.²³ The years following the exhibition saw the inclusion of women and domestic staffs in the literature. Books such as Joanna Martin's *Wives and Daughters: Women and Children in the Georgian Country House* (2004) and *Keeping Their Place: Domestic Service in the Country House 1700-1920* (2005) by Pamela Sambrook were a part of a trend to fill the gap in the literature and create a fuller picture of life within the country house.²⁴

The two decades following the *Destruction* exhibition saw a plethora of works produced on the theme of the "lost" or demolished country house. Works on this topic have been published with some regularity since the 1980s. SAVE Britain's Heritage, a conservation group founded immediately after the *Destruction* exhibition, started this trend. Publications such as *Tomorrow's Ruins? Country Houses at Risk* (Binney and Andreae, 1978), *Lost Houses of Scotland* (Binney, Harris, and Winington, 1980) and *Silent Mansions* (Binney, Griffiths, and Andreae, 1981) focused on the plight of the country house and advocated for their

²² Hussey, *Early Georgian 1715-1760*; Hussey, *Mid Georgian*; Hussey, *Late Georgian 1800-1840*; Girouard, *The Victorian Country House*.

²³ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*.

²⁴ Martin, *Wives and Daughters*; Sambrook, *Keeping Their Place*.

restoration and reuse.²⁵ Smaller publications focused on the houses lost within specific counties. Each of these publications gives some background into the decline within the set county, before reviewing the houses that were lost. Books, such as the *Lost Lincolnshire Country Houses* series by Terence Leach and Robert Pacey (six volumes published between 1990 and 2010), *The Lost Houses of East Yorkshire* by David Neave and Edward Waterson (1988) and *The Lost Houses of Newcastle and Northumberland* by Thomas Faulkner and Phoebe Lowery (1996) do provide some historical information, but are generally gazetteers of the houses lost within the set county.²⁶ Two major texts were published in conjunction with *Country Life* magazine at the start of the twenty-first-century. Giles Worsley's *England's Lost Houses* (2002) and Ian Gow's *Scotland's Lost Houses* (2008) took a case study approach to the topic.²⁷ Both texts give historic accounts of the decline of the country within England and Scotland, providing context for the individual case studies.

Two books written by Architectural Historian, John Harris, begin to explore physical engagement with country house ruins. *No Voice from the Hall: Early Memories of a Country House Snooper* (1998) begins with a brief overview of the decline of the country house and how he started 'snooping' around these houses.²⁸ The bulk of the book is made up of short chapters about his visits to the houses. These personal accounts cover the whole excursion, from how he arrived at the site, to how he got inside the building, and his path around the house. The accounts also include an architectural description of the former appearance of the house, sometimes noting furnishings. The book is filled with photographs taken during his visits. There are few, if any, before photographs of the houses included in the book. Harris' second book on this topic, *Echoing Voices* (2002), provides more accounts of his visits to these houses, but moves away from the 'snooping' to personal

²⁵ Andreae and Binney, *Tomorrow's Ruins?*; Binney, Harris, and Winnington, *Lost Houses of Scotland*; Andreae, Binney, and Griffiths, *Silent Mansions*.

²⁶ Leach and Pacey, *Lost Lincolnshire Country Houses*, 1990; Leach and Pacey, *Lost Lincolnshire Country Houses*, 2010; Neave and Waterson, *Lost Houses of East Yorkshire*; Faulkner and Lowery, *Lost Houses of Newcastle and Northumberland*.

²⁷ Worsley, *England's Lost Houses: from the archives of Country life*; Gow, *Scotland's Lost Houses*.

²⁸ Harris, *No Voice from the Hall*.

anecdotes about his life outside the exploration.²⁹ However, these are hardly scholarly texts. These are personal accounts of his exploration, but are not an in-depth study of the engagement with country houses in a ruined or decaying state.

Tangentially related to this thesis, but related nonetheless, is Harris' most recent work, *Moving Rooms: The Trade in Architectural Salvage* (2007).³⁰ This text discusses the decline of the country house from a different angle. A section of the book is devoted to the discussion of the removal of rooms from country houses during the early twentieth-century and their installation in period rooms in American museums. The book is not specific to the decline of country houses though. The trade in architectural salvage, as well as period room creation, is explored through examples from across Europe from 1500 to the mid-twentieth century. It does, however, provide an interesting glimpse into the biography of not only the salvage, but of the country house.

The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home (1997) by Peter Mandler is the most comprehensive look at the decline of the country house.³¹ This work charts the economic and social issues that led to the decline of the country house and its eventual rise to become a major component of the British heritage industry. Country house ruins are not specifically mentioned, even though the period covered by the book is the time when so many ruins entered care. Moreover, the physicality of the decline was not discussed. The focus was instead placed on the reuse of houses following the decline. This work was used extensively in Chapter Two and throughout this thesis.

Also focussing on the heritage and tourism angle, are works by Adrian Tinniswood and David Littlejohn. In *Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting* (1999), Tinniswood focuses exclusively on the country house as a tourist destination from the eighteenth-century through to the 1960s.³² The decline of the country house is mentioned, but only in relation to its impact on the heritage industry. The *Destruction* exhibition is not mentioned. Tinniswood is used

²⁹ Harris, *Echoing Voices*.

³⁰ Harris, *Moving Rooms*.

³¹ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*.

³² Tinniswood, *Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting*.

extensively in Chapter Three of this Thesis to help show the evolution of the standard country house visit.

David Littlejohn's work *The Fate of the English Country House* (1997), focuses on twentieth-century use of the country house.³³ The preservation efforts following the *Destruction* exhibition are discussed, but again, only in relation to the heritage industry. Unlike Tinniswood, Littlejohn gives more detail into the process by which these houses were saved; for example, the creation of the National Trust Country House Scheme and the establishment of the Historic Buildings Councils (HBC).³⁴ Alongside his discussion of the heritage industry and the ways in which owners can generate income to maintain their properties, he examines the reuse of redundant country houses. Information is given on the conversion of houses into schools, offices, and hotels. The *Destruction* exhibit and the subsequent work by SAVE is included. He specifically notes that a means of protecting a decaying house 'is to treat it as a "stabilised" ruin, like so many old castles and abbeys.'³⁵

Littlejohn's suggestion that the ruins be treated as a ruin, like the ruins of castle and abbeys is only picked up in two books within the ruins literature.³⁶ M.W. Thompson's books *Ruins: Their Preservation and Display* (1981) and *Ruins Reused: Changing Attitudes to Ruins since the late eighteenth century*, incorporate the country house ruin into the overall discussion of the care and use of ruins.³⁷ They are not a topic in and of themselves. The physical engagement with ruins touched on in Harris' work is echoed in publications by Urban Explorers, as well as the work by Tim Edensor.³⁸ Although Edensor's work centres on industrial ruins, his theories on engagement and performativity within ruins have been used to form the conceptual framework for this thesis.

³³ Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*.

³⁴ The Country House Scheme and Historic Building Councils will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Two.

³⁵ Littlejohn, *Fate*, 289.

³⁶ The Antiquarian interest in ruins and the installation of ancient and sham ruins at country houses in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-centuries is discussed in Chapter Three.

³⁷ Thompson, *Ruins*; Thompson, *Ruins Reused*.

³⁸ For example: Edensor, *Industrial Ruins Spaces, Aesthetics, and Materiality*; Edensor, "Sensing the Ruin"; Edensor, "Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism: (Re)Producing Tourist Space and Practice."

While ‘television history cannot and never should be regarded in the same light as academic research,’ it is a popular method for sharing country house history, and does echo the sentiment that the country house is situated between academic and popular history.³⁹ Many country house-related television programmes take a connoisseurial approach, similar to pre-exhibition scholarship, such as Dan Cruickshank’s *Country House Revealed* (2011) and the ten-part SkyArts/National Trust collaboration *National Trust: National Treasures* (2007).⁴⁰ The topic of the decline and ruination of the country house is brought into the public sphere through television. Programmes such as Channel Four’s *Country House Rescue*, which first aired in 2009, illustrate the continuing plight of the country house.⁴¹ In each episode, the history and current conditions of a struggling country house are presented to the viewer. The expert, hotelier Ruth Watson and food critic Simon Davis, advise owners on how to diversify income streams to help manage the properties.

The three major Heritage organisations within Britain have each collaborated on country house restoration television programmes. English Heritage’s work to save Apethorpe Hall, Northamptonshire, was chronicled in BBC 2’s *English Heritage: A Very Grand Design*, which aired in 2009.⁴² The programme shared the story of the decline and eventual compulsory purchase of the house by English Heritage. It provided insight into the complex issues behind the restoration and showed the conservation staff at work. A similar approach was taken at the National Trust property, Avebury Manor, Wiltshire, for BBC 1’s *Manor Reborn* (2011).⁴³ The four part series, in which the BBC was in control of the redecoration of the house, revealed the intricate process behind caring for and restoring a country

³⁹ Hunt, p.95

⁴⁰ “The Country House Revealed,” first broadcast May 31, 2011 by BBC Two, directed by Philip Smith; “National Trust: National Treasures,” first broadcast February 27, 2007 by Sky Arts, directed by John Wood.

⁴¹ “Country House Rescue,” first broadcast November 11, 2009 by Channel Four, directed by James Harrison.

⁴² “A Very Grand Design,” first broadcast April 24, 2009 by BBC Two, directed by Partick Forbes.

⁴³ “The Manor Reborn,” first broadcast November 24, 2011 by BBC One, directed by Michelle Bullen.

house in care.⁴⁴ Two shows were devoted to the reopening of Dumfries House, a member property of the Historic Houses Association in Ayrshire, in 2011.⁴⁵ Because the Prince of Wales purchased the house, the majority of each of the programmes was devoted to his work to secure the house and contents, although the importance of saving the estate took second chair to the Royal.

As there is no extant literature on the country house ruin, this review has had to explore the discussion of the decline of the country house to see how the cause of the ruination is dealt with in the literature. Through this review, it has been shown that even the decline of the country house is a relatively small topic within the extensive country house literature. The topics explored within this thesis work to illustrate the gap in the literature that surrounds the country house ruin, as well as the management of the decline of the country house.

As Wheatley's notion of "contingent mosaic" applies so thoroughly to this literature review, one is left with how little help has been provided by secondary literature for this thesis. The compensatory research factor in this thesis does, however, need to be acknowledged, lest its readers worry too much about the difficulty of its tasks. For, in the face of such a drastic absence of secondary literature on country house ruins, a very felicitous dimension emerged strongly in the research and production of the thesis itself. This lack of scholarly attention to country house ruins made the thesis research concentrate almost entirely on primary material from the sites themselves. Of course, when theses have to depend on primary field material for the bulk of research and data, such theses have the honour of learning directly from the historical material itself and of providing the foundation on which subsequent scholarship can build.

⁴⁴ The work at Apethorpe and Avebury will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Three.

⁴⁵ "Britain's Hidden Heritage: Dumfries House," first broadcast August 14, 2011 by BBC One, produced by Richard Farmbrough; "Prince Charles - The Royal Restoration," first broadcast May 29, 2012 by ITV1, directed by Susanna Posnett.

Aims and Research Questions

The main aims of this thesis were to analyse the conservation of country house ruins in care and to use the results of this analysis to create a guideline to help future interpretation of these sites. To fulfil these aims, the following questions were set to guide the research.

- How is the process of ruination worked into the interpretation?
- How does the conservation at the site affect the interpretation?
- To what extent should the interpretation be sympathetic to the history and changes in the fabric of the ruin?
- What aspects of the standard country house visit are present at the ruin?
- How do the heritage organisations choreograph the visitor experience?
- Do the heritage organisations encourage physical interaction with the ruin?

Definitions

Several key terms that will be used throughout this thesis require definition. These terms either have contentious meanings within the literature or have frequently muddled definitions. So, as to avoid confusion, how these terms will be used within this thesis is set out below.

Country House

The country house, in terms of use and place within British society, is not going to be defined here. Its definition as a seat of power and hospitality is well understood within the literature.⁴⁶ Instead the definition will centre on what constitutes a country house. Many studies have defined a country house by establishing a minimum size of house or estate.⁴⁷ For this thesis, the date of construction has been used as the primary criterion for inclusion. Richard Wilson

⁴⁶ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*; Airs, *The Tudor and Jacobean Country House*; Harris, *The Design of the English Country House 1620-1920*; Arnold, *The Georgian Country House*.

⁴⁷ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating Paradise*; Stone, *An Open Elite?*.

and Alan Mackley, in their study, *Creating Paradise*, focussed on houses built between 1660 and 1880, because of the large number of building campaigns between those years.⁴⁸ However, for this thesis, the date range for inclusion was expanded to 1540 to 1873, for this period was the era in which the country house seemed to be ‘everlasting’.⁴⁹

Ruin

Three terms are used to describe the ruins studied in this thesis: “shell” and “restored or reconstructed ruin”. The shell is a roofless building.⁵⁰ In contrast, the restored or reconstructed ruin is a building that has been brought back, either partially or completely, from a ruinous state. These terms fit under the umbrella term of ruin, which is defined by Gionata Rizzi as a building that has been ‘gnawed, mutilated and reduced to a state that bears no relation to their original purpose’.⁵¹ It is the approach to conservation taken by the heritage organisations that differentiates the types of ruins.

Interpretation and Presentation

Tim Copeland has identified that these two terms are frequently used synonymously within the literature.⁵² While interpretation and presentation are interrelated, they do have separate meanings. The most straightforward definition and differentiation of these two terms comes from Laura Keim, a historic house museum curator. She defines presentation as settings or the appearance of spaces

⁴⁸ Wilson and Mackley, *Creating Paradise*, 2.

⁴⁹ Harris, *The Design of the English Country House 1620-1920*, 9.

⁵⁰ Thompson, *Ruins*, 9.

⁵¹ Gionata Rizzi, Preface to *Conservation of Ruins*, edited by John Ashurst, xix.

⁵² Merriman and Copeland, “Presenting Archaeology to the Public: Constructing Insights,” 135.

whereas interpretation is the method by which the history of the site is imparted to the visitor.⁵³

Conservation, Restoration, and Reconstruction⁵⁴

Conservation is the administration of a site. This includes the maintenance, interpretation, use, as well as any restoration or reconstruction work.⁵⁵

Restoration and reconstruction both refer to the returning of a historic structure to its original form. The two are differentiated by the choice of materials. Restoration does this without the use of any new materials, while reconstruction performs the same task, but with the introduction of new materials. Restoration is recommended only if there is sufficient evidence of the form of the previous structure. Reconstruction can be appropriate even if evidence is unavailable, if the new work retains the cultural significance of the site. All new work completed in a reconstruction must be identifiable upon inspection, or through interpretive materials.

⁵³ Keim, “Thirty-One Houses In Twenty Days on the Attingham Summer School Tour.” < <http://stenton.org/index.php/history-collections-and-interpretation/thirty-one-houses-in-twenty-days> > Accessed September 27, 2013.

⁵⁴ Unless otherwise stated, the definitions in this paragraph come from the Burra Charter, adopted in 1999. Growing from the Venice Charter (1964), the Burra Charter was developed as a guideline for the care and management of historic structures. The Burra Charter differs from the Venice Charter in that it recognises the cultural significance of historic structures and the spaces they create. (The Burra Charter, ICOMOS Australia, 1999) The debates surrounding the correctness of conservation, restoration and recreation of historic structures, influenced by nineteenth-century writings of William Morris, John Ruskin and Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, are plentiful and active. However, as the focus of this thesis is the presentation and interpretation of the work undertaken at the sites, rather than the arguments around the decision to carry out the work, these debates will not be discussed in any detail.

⁵⁵ *English Heritage Policy Statement on Restoration, Reconstruction, and Speculative Recreation of Archaeological Sites Including Ruins*. Paragraph 1.

Methodology

As shown above, many avenues can be taken from the gap in the literature. This study will focus on how the country house ruins are managed by heritage organisations. It is hypothesised that a small set of case studies will allow for an in-depth analysis of conservation styles currently employed and will provide for a wider understanding of the larger issues of country house ruins within British heritage. It is hoped that this approach will highlight the current problems within the conservation of these ruins, to create a guideline by which they should be presented and interpreted.

Why Use Case Studies?

The intention of this study is to compare and contrast different approaches to the conservation of country house ruins, in hopes to create a standard by which all 44 ruins in care will be managed. According to Yin, the use of case studies as the methodological approach is appropriate when the research aims to answer “how” and “why” questions’.⁵⁶ The specific methodological approach is a comparative case study design, as the goal is to evaluate the conservation styles of the National Trust, English Heritage and member houses of the Historic Houses Association.

Selection of Case Studies

The core of this project is the analysis of the conservation of country house ruins. Therefore, it was required that the case studies be drawn from the list of forty-four houses currently open to the public. Case study houses have been selected from the property portfolios of the National Trust, English Heritage and Historic Houses Association, as these three organisations have the largest annual visitor numbers in the British heritage industry, with 17.5 million, 5.2 million and 6.9 million visitors

⁵⁶ Yin, *Case Study Research*, 9.

in 2011, respectively.⁵⁷ During data collection to determine the number of country house ruins open to the public, the category of restored ruins emerged. This can vary greatly from the consolidation of a single room to the reconstruction of the entire house. The choice to conserve or restore a ruin is important and impacts the presentation of the site. For this reason, it was decided that along with properties currently presented as shells, a restored or reconstructed ruin would be selected from each heritage organization.

Using these two groupings, six houses have been selected for this study. The houses presented as shells are: Sutton Scarsdale Hall; Downhill Palace; and Lowther Castle. The restored or reconstructed houses are: Kirby Hall; Uppark; and Highcliffe Castle.

Sutton Scarsdale, an eighteenth-century country house shell located in Derbyshire is in the care of English Heritage. The house had rooms stripped and sold to an American museum in the early twentieth-century and was presented to the Nation in 1970. Downhill Palace is an eighteenth-century country house located in County Londonderry, Northern Ireland. It was selected because it is the only shell of a country house in the guardianship of the National Trust. Lowther Castle is a nineteenth-century country house shell located in Cumbria. The house is now run by the Lowther Castle and Gardens Trust and is a member of the Historic Houses Association. The ruin was recently stabilized with plans to open the monument to the public, as part of a larger estate regeneration project.

Kirby Hall is a sixteenth-century country house in Northamptonshire, in the care of English Heritage. Kirby Hall became a ruin when the lead was stripped from the roof in 1857. The house has undergone four drastically different conservation plans, including restoration work, since the organisation took guardianship in the 1930s. Uppark, located in West Sussex, is a seventeenth-century country house that is in the care of the National Trust, who decided to reconstruct the house to its original state following a catastrophic fire in 1989. Highcliffe Castle is a nineteenth-century country house in Hampshire run by the local council and is a member of the

⁵⁷ National Trust, “Annual Report 2011/2012,” 5; English Heritage, “Annual Report and Accounts 2011-2012,” 11; Historic Houses Association, “Annual Report 2011/2012,” 10.

Historic Houses Association. The house was gutted by a series of fires in the 1960s and the local council have been working to reconstruct the house since taking ownership in the 1970s.

Assessment

The process of assessment for the case studies had two distinct components: desk-based research and site-based data collection. The desk-based research was used to establish the long and complicated histories of each of the houses. Due to the museological focus of this project, the history of guardianship and approaches to conservation were investigated through institutional archival research. In addition to this desk-based and archival research, site visits to each case study, as well as countless other country house ruins, were completed. At each of the case studies, the entirety of the site visit was assessed. This included determining the availability and focus of interpretation. If a guidebook or audio-guide was available, these were utilized to see what information was provided and how movement was regulated. The social media outlets for each house were also evaluated to determine what parts of the site history were highlighted and what aspects of the visit were emphasized. For all interpretive methods, the inclusion and depth of the history of decline in the interpretation was established. As this thesis is an evaluation of the conservation of the sites and not an assessment of learning outcomes, visitor surveys were not completed.

Structure

Chapter Two presents a detailed account of the decline of the country house. This chapter gives the history of the ruination of over 1,800 country houses from 1874, providing context for the selected case studies. In addition to the investigation of the causes behind the decline, and the process by which the country house was “saved”, the current state of the country house will be examined.

Chapter Three of this study establishes the standard country house visit. The chapter begins by charting the development of the country house visit from the eighteenth-century through to the present day. The multitude of approaches taken to the interpretation and presentation of country houses and ruins are investigated to illustrate how they have been used to create the standard country house visit of the twenty-first century. It includes an examination of the specific conservation approaches taken to the country house ruins in care. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how the standard country house visit is created at the country house through site management and how the country house ruin disrupts this standard approach.

Chapters Four and Five present the case studies for this thesis. Chapter Four focuses on the houses presented as shells, while Chapter Five focuses on the houses that have been restored or reconstructed. The history of each house is given, concentrating on the decline and circumstances prior to entering care. The study centres on the investigation of the methods of interpretation and presentation employed by the heritage organisations at each site. The presentation and interpretation of each site is evaluated using the main and subsidiary research question established above. Conclusions are drawn from this examination, highlighting the positive approaches taken towards the conservation of the houses.

Chapter Six is a conclusion in which the positive and negative aspects of the conservation of country house ruins at the selected case studies are re-examined. Through this process, a guideline for future interpretive plans at these sites is established. Finally, the gap surrounding the country house ruins, established in the literature review, is reconsidered, presenting avenues for future research.

Chapter Two

The Decline and Reinvention of the Country House

“The stately homes of England
How beautiful they stand,
To prove the upper classes
Have still the upper hand.
Though the fact that they have to be rebuilt,
And frequently mortgaged to the hilt
Is inclined to take the gilt
Off the gingerbread,
And certainly damps the fun
Of the eldest son-
But still, we won't be beaten,
We'll scrimp and screw and save.
The playing fields of Eton
Have made us frightfully brave.
And though if the Van Dycks have to go
And we pawn the Bechstein Grand,
We'll stand
By the stately homes of England.”

- The Stately Homes of England by Noël Coward⁵⁸

The review of the literature in Chapter One situated the country house within its historiographic context. This chapter will place the country house within its historic context, illustrating how many country houses were demolished or left as ruins. The history of the country house is long and varied. This chapter will focus exclusively on the decline of the country house, beginning with the agricultural depression of 1874-1894, through the first and second world wars, to the *Decline of the Country House* exhibition of 1974 and finally, situating the British country house within its twenty-first century circumstances.

The agricultural depression of the late-nineteenth-century transformed the traditional aristocratic way of life, signalling the start of the decline of the country house. Life within the British country house as late as 1875 ‘was at its most opulent, houses were thicker upon the ground than at any other time, and families were more

⁵⁸Coward, *The Lyrics of Noël Coward*, 188.

securely landed, and confident in the permanence of primogeniture'.⁵⁹ For the first three quarters of the nineteenth century British landowners were the richest group within the richest country in the world.⁶⁰ The mid-nineteenth century was an era of prosperity for this group, developing while the British market was relatively closed to foreign imports, allowing for a lifestyle that was increasingly reliant on fixed interest loans.⁶¹ This care-free lifestyle ended with the agricultural depression (1873-1896).

The agricultural depression had two main causes: poor weather and the increase of importation of food into Britain, with the latter having the greater impact.⁶² 1879 was one of the wettest years on record, causing livestock problems that would cost the farming industry six million animals and £12 million over two years.⁶³ From the early 1870s there was a general increase in imports of foreign grains and meats due to the opening up of the cereal-growing region of the American Midwest, and the invention of fast steam ships with refrigerated containers, allowing for imports of meat from New Zealand and Australia.⁶⁴ Between 1870-4 and 1910-1914, wheat and flour imports increased by 110 per cent and meat imports increased by 290 per cent.⁶⁵ In 1871, grain traded at £53 per acre, but dropped to £23 to £28 per acre during the interwar period.⁶⁶ Livestock prices fell less drastically, but followed "the same contours".⁶⁷ Landlords, rather than tenant farmers, fared the worst during the agricultural depression. On average, landlords saw a 30 per cent drop in income from 1880-2 to 1900-2.⁶⁸ '...landowners of Britain were exposed to the full and icy blast of the global economy'.⁶⁹ With the

⁵⁹ Harris, "Gone to Ground," 15.

⁶⁰ Cannadine, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*, 90.

⁶¹ Perren, *Agriculture in Depression, 1870 - 1940*, 2.

⁶² Fletcher, "The Great Depression of English Agriculture, 1873-1896," 17.

⁶³ Perren, *Agriculture in Depression*, 7.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 27.

⁶⁶ Worsley, *England's lost houses*, 11.

⁶⁷ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 92.

⁶⁸ Perren, *Agriculture in Depression*, 17.

⁶⁹ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 90.

sudden decrease in income, the loans landowners were reliant upon became increasingly hard to pay.⁷⁰

One respite was the Settled Land Acts of 1882. Prior to this, aristocratic landowners were barred, by the rights of primogeniture, from selling or dividing the lands or contents of the house.⁷¹ The Settled Land Acts and the associated sales created a “lifeline” for landowners facing enormous debts, by permitting sales and freeing up much needed funds.⁷² Land was sold for many purposes, including urban development, if located near an urban centre, or for industrial or mining use.⁷³ However, while portions of the estate could be sold without parliamentary order, the house could not.⁷⁴ Owners could apply for an order of sale, but this was a complicated process.⁷⁵ If owners did complete this process and the sale of the house was permitted, finding a purchaser was difficult. Many wealthy property owners had surplus houses and did not want to take on the financial burden of another house. Those with enough money were most interested in newly built country houses, fitted with new technologies, if they wanted to own a country house at all.⁷⁶ This is not to say that it did not happen. For example, Thomas Brassey bought Apethorpe, Northamptonshire from Lord Westmorland in 1904.⁷⁷ Additionally, wealthy Americans purchased houses during this period, such as John Jacob Astor IV who purchased Cliveden in 1893 and Hever Castle in 1903.⁷⁸ This was also the period of advantageous marriages between cash poor, but titled, British men and wealthy American women, like that of Charles Spencer-Churchill, 9th Duke of Marlborough who was married to Consuelo Vanderbilt in 1895 or of Guy Montagu George Finch-Hatton, the 14th Earl of Winchilsea, who was married to Margareta Drexel in 1910.⁷⁹

⁷⁰ Worsley, *England's Lost Houses*, 11.

⁷¹ Yallop, *Magpies, Squirrels & Thieves*, 29.

⁷² Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 111.

⁷³ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 120.

⁷⁴ *Settled Land Act 1882*, 8. Section 5, Paragraph 15

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 121.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 120.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Montgomery, *Gilded Prostitution*, 252; “Romance in Newest International Match.”

Many owners tried to consolidate landholdings ridding themselves of extraneous property to minimize debts. John Harris remarked that in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century sales catalogues ‘we find the same words constantly recurring: “for sale...outlying portions of the estate”’.⁸⁰ The Finch-Hattons, owners of Kirby Hall, attempted to sell the house and the outlying estate in 1878, but were unable to secure a buyer.⁸¹

As stated above, the Settled Land Acts ‘allowed trustees to set aside a will in order to sell the contents of a house’ opening up the market to country house sales.⁸² From 1882 to the start of the First World War, there were yearly public and private country house auctions. The sale of portable art was favoured over land sales because they attained higher auction prices and were still in demand with foreigners, especially Americans and Germans.⁸³ Large country house sales during the late nineteenth century were driven by the surging international art market and included major sales at Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, 1881-1883 and Hamilton Palace, South Lanarkshire, 1882-1883.⁸⁴ Ironically, these sales, which were intended to save the house, were typically not lucrative enough to save the property. The Hamilton Palace estate auction of 1882, which has been called “the most magnificent sale of a single collection that has ever been held anywhere” achieved £397,562.⁸⁵ The Duke of Hamilton had another estate sale following the First World War, selling another £242,000 worth of silver, paintings and furniture.⁸⁶ Even with these two high-achieving auctions, Hamilton Palace was demolished in 1920.⁸⁷ The emergence of architectural salvage agents, such as Charles Roberson, who started trading in 1903, grew alongside the Settled Land Acts and the concurrent sales of goods and estates.⁸⁸

⁸⁰ Harris, “Gone to Ground,” 15.

⁸¹ *Plan of the Gretton Estate, 1878, MAP 3273+A, Northamptonshire Record Office*

⁸² Littlejohn, *Fate*, 133; Binney and Jackson-Stops, “Last Hundred Years,” 70.

⁸³ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 124.

⁸⁴ Binney and Jackson-Stops, “Last Hundred Years,” 71; Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 15.

⁸⁵ Gerald Reitlinger, *The Economics of Taste*, 136; Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 115.

⁸⁶ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 115.

⁸⁷ Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 94.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.

Sales of art, such as, the Garvagh Madonna (1509-1510) by Raphael and an equestrian portrait of Charles I (1637-1638) by Van Dyck, which were purchased by the government, in 1865 and 1885, respectively, first raised the debate over the definition of British National heritage.⁸⁹ If public funds were to be spent saving art for the nation, what exactly constituted “National Heritage”?⁹⁰ As works by the Old Masters were not originally painted for a British audience, should they be considered a part of the National Heritage and worthy of expenditures from the public purse?

It was during the late-nineteenth century that the preservation movement in Britain, on an institutional level, began to develop. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) was founded in 1877, the first Ancient Monuments Act was passed in 1882, and the National Trust was established in 1895. The SPAB, founded by William Morris in 1877, was formed to put a stop to overzealous restorations of historic buildings.⁹¹ Heritage organisations, such as the National Trust and the SPAB, will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Three. The Ancient Monuments Act of 1882 the outcome of a Parliamentary campaign led by Sir John Lubbock to protect ancient sites in Britain.⁹² The Act led to the scheduling of 69 Ancient monuments across England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.⁹³ The Commissioners of Works, who were assigned as guardians of the monuments and were responsible for their protection and maintenance, would care for the sites, which were all on private land.⁹⁴ Large landowners, who had to approve the inclusion of the monument located on their property, were initially resistant, concerned about government restrictions on their land. However, many eventually

⁸⁹ Cannadine, 115; Mandler, 126; Raphael, *The Garvagh Madonna* <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/raphael-the-garvagh-madonna/*/key-facts> Accessed February 23, 2013.; van Dyck, *Equestrian Portrait of Charles I* <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/anthony-van-dyck-equestrian-portrait-of-charles-i/*/key-facts> Accessed February 23, 2013.

⁹⁰ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 126.

⁹¹ SPAB. "History of the SPAB". <<http://www.spab.org.uk/what-is-spab-/history-of-the-spab/>> Accessed January 11, 2012.

⁹² Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 158.

⁹³ Mynors, *Listed Buildings*, 8.

⁹⁴ Hunter, "The Preservation of Places of Interest or Beauty," 33, Article 22.

signed on to the scheme, realizing it would increase their property values.⁹⁵ Subsequent revisions in 1900 and 1913 increased the scope of the original Act. The 1900 revision broadened the definition of monument to “any structure, erection, or monument, of architectural or historical interest” and allowed for local councils to become guardians of ancient monuments.⁹⁶ The 1913 modification introduced the ‘preservation order’ requiring all works on a scheduled monument to be approved prior to the start of work.⁹⁷ More generally, the 1913 Act established a national interest in historic preservation, as it had redefined monument again, extending it to anything that was not in ecclesiastical use.⁹⁸ However, this did not include inhabited country houses.⁹⁹

Both the SPAB and the Ancient Monuments Act were concerned with the preservation of built heritage in Britain. However their small memberships - SPAB had 372 members in 1880 and only around 50 families participated in the Ancient Monuments scheme - indicate that the preservation movement was still in its infancy.¹⁰⁰ 116 houses were lost in England from the mid-1870s to just before the First World War, 12 being demolished due to urban and industrial development, as well as surplus needs.¹⁰¹

James Lees-Milne said that the First World War ‘gravely shook the foundations’ of the institution of the country house.¹⁰² While no houses suffered from direct war damage, the change in the rate on death duties did enough damage to cause the demolition of nearly one hundred houses by the end of the war. As ‘the officer class *was* the landed class’ during World War I, the loss of heirs and the subsequent payment of single or even multiple death duties following the First World War destabilized the financial standing of the landed families of Britain.¹⁰³

⁹⁵ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 158.

⁹⁶ Mynors, *Listed Buildings*, 9.

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 190; Mynors, *Listed Buildings*, 9.

⁹⁹ Gowers, *Report of the Committee on Houses of Outstanding Historic or Architectural Interest*, 9, Paragraph 30.

¹⁰⁰ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 158–160.

¹⁰¹ Beckett, “Complete List of Lost English Country Houses.” <http://lh.matthewbeckett.com/lh_complete_list.html> Accessed October 17, 2009

¹⁰² Lees-Milne, “The Country House in Our Heritage,” 11.

¹⁰³ Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 111.

Death duties were first introduced in 1894 at 8 per cent on estates valued at over £1 million. Under the Parliamentary Act of 1909 and Finance Act of 1910, the rate was increased to 40 per cent on estates worth over £2 million by 1919.¹⁰⁴ This increase compelled sales of houses and estates by families trying to cope with the payments of duties on sometimes multiple deaths during the War.¹⁰⁵ It has been estimated that between 1918 and 1921, 6 to 8 million acres, or one quarter of England, changed hands.¹⁰⁶

Alongside the hardship of trying to pay death duties and upkeep on the houses, country house owners were struggling to find qualified staff to run the houses and estates. During the war, men and women were taken into the war effort, greatly decreasing the availability of trained domestic staffs.¹⁰⁷ This trend continued following the war, as many who would have taken a position in a country house were lured by the better pay and working conditions in office and factory jobs.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, service had come to be seen as a demeaning occupation; so many took up work outside service where available.¹⁰⁹ The number employed in domestic positions fell from 1.5 million in 1891 to 1.2 million in 1921, and continued to drop into the 1930s.¹¹⁰

Under the Town and Country Planning Act of 1932, local councils were able to prevent demolition of historic properties, as well as rescind planning permission previously granted for demolition.¹¹¹ The Office of Works also granted power to local authorities to prevent any alteration to an historic property that could damage its historic character.¹¹² Even with the increased protection under the revision of the Ancient Monument Act and the Town and Country Planning Act, the interwar

¹⁰⁴ Worsley, *England's Lost Houses*, 11; Thompson, *English Landed Society*, 327–330.

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Binney and Jackson-Stops, “Last Hundred Years,” 71; Thompson, *English Landed Society*, 332.

¹⁰⁷ Thompson, *English Landed Society*, 327.

¹⁰⁸ Binney and Jackson-Stops, “Last Hundred Years,” 71.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Elton, Harrison, and Wark, *Researching the Country House*, 157; Musson, *Up and down Stairs*, 225.

¹¹¹ *Town and Country Planning Act 1932*, 24. Section 1, Paragraph 17

¹¹² Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 274.

period saw the demolition of 221 houses.¹¹³ Most of these early demolitions were of Georgian homes, fitting with the contemporary preference for “Olden Time” Elizabethan and Jacobean architecture.¹¹⁴

Throughout the First World War and into the Interwar period, the trade in architectural salvage grew rapidly. Trade in architectural salvage had been happening for centuries. For example, the Earl Bishop of Derry discussed installing ancient Roman rooms in Downhill Palace in 1777 and at Montacute, Edward Phelps V installed the mid-sixteenth-century porch from Clifton Maybank, Dorset on the West Front of Montacute in 1786.¹¹⁵ London agents, such as Charles Roberson and Sir Joseph Duveen, saw a growth in sales, especially with American contracts, following the First World War. This exponential growth in salvage, along with the establishment of the British Antiques Dealers Association in 1918 “gave rise to an expansion of the antiques trade in Britain and to one of the biggest movements of salvages in European history’.¹¹⁶

Many of the antiques and pieces of architectural salvage stayed within Britain. Again at Montacute, Lord Curzon fitted more salvage from Clifton Maybank in a small drawing room in 1918.¹¹⁷ However, the majority of pieces went to foreign, mostly American, collections. Prominent American collectors, George Grey Barnard and William Randolph Hearst, like Curzon, were part of a growing trend of antiquarian architectural salvage collectors who, in contemporary building projects, blended historic medieval elements with twentieth-century comforts.¹¹⁸

American museums also benefitted from the increase in trade, with major museums growing their collections of period rooms. During the early interwar period, The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston purchased the Dining Room from Hamilton Palace in 1924, the Philadelphia Museum of Art acquired three Sutton Scarsdale rooms in 1928 and the Metropolitan Museum of Art acquired their first

¹¹³ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 119.

¹¹⁴ Harris, “Gone to Ground,” 16; Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 79.

¹¹⁵ Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 77–78.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 111–113.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 78.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 149.

period room, the Saloon from Kirtlington Park in 1931.¹¹⁹ The transatlantic trade peaked during the interwar period, with trade halting following the stock market crash in 1929.¹²⁰ In the years following the installation of these period rooms, their authenticity was questioned. It was found that many were ‘confections made up or modified in Robersons’ workshop’.¹²¹ This discovery led some museums to de-install their rooms, either by removing them and putting them in storage, or deaccessioning and selling them. The Lawrence Room, most likely purchased from the Wardour Street showroom of W. Thrale Wright, was donated to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston by Mrs. Elizabeth Chapman in 1876. It was the first recorded installation of an English period room into an American museum.¹²² However, by 1930, its authenticity had been questioned and the room was de-accessioned.¹²³

Troubled by the growing number of sales and the overall situation of the country house, Lord Lothian gave a speech at the Annual General Meeting of the National Trust in July 1934. Concerned for the longevity of the country house within the national culture, he ‘urged the National Trust to turn its undivided attention away from open spaces towards country houses and their contents.’¹²⁴ Lord Lothian was particularly invested in this topic. He had inherited four great country houses, including Blickling Hall, Norfolk, along with over £300,000 in death duties in 1930. Lothian, like many other country house owners, neither required, nor could afford multiple grand houses, and he took measures to sell the extraneous properties. “It was through Lothian’s desire to hand over Blickling to the Trust that the problem of country houses first became widely publicized.”¹²⁵ His impassioned speech to the AGM described the importance and unique quality of the British country house, stressing the unity of the house, garden, park, pictures and furniture. The discussion then moved to the dire situation of the country house, and

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 154; Artist/maker unknown, English, *Interior Architecture, Possibly from Sutton Scarsdale Hall*.

<<http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/42067.html?mulR=974690548|2>> Accessed July 27, 2009.

¹²⁰ Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 75 and 117.

¹²¹ Ibid., 181–2.

¹²² Ibid., 202.

¹²³ Ibid., 102.

¹²⁴ Lees-Milne, “The Country House in Our Heritage,” 11.

¹²⁵ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 119–120.

Lothian expressed concern that the war and the post-war depression had hit country house owners too hard for them to keep their houses and collections intact.¹²⁶ The remainder of his speech focussed on what should be done to preserve the country house and their collections, intact, for the nation.

Lothian recommended that either the National Trust or the government should undertake a full survey of the condition of the country house in Britain. Lord Lothian saw *Country Life* as the foremost authority on the history and situation of country houses within the nation.¹²⁷ As part of his plan, he had *Country Life* produce a list of important houses based on four sets of criteria. First, the houses had to be over one hundred years old (therefore cutting out all Victorian homes); second, the house should be of ‘definite historic or architectural merit’; third, the house should have a garden or park; and fourth, the house should be ‘suitably furnished and maintained as a dwelling-house, which filled the gap created by the Ancient Monuments Act of 1913.’¹²⁸ These criteria stressed the importance of the country house, its surrounding land, furnishings, as well as the owner-occupiers, in creating a unified country house environment. The published list names 639 houses.¹²⁹ In addition to this overall list, Lothian asked *Country Life* to compile another list, just of “big houses”, which he defined as including a minimum of 20 bedrooms, considerable grounds and a respectable suite of reception rooms reserved for special occasions or entertainment.¹³⁰ The total for this list came to 57 and included houses such as Knole, Hatfield, Haddon and Blenheim.¹³¹

Lothian called for an agreement with the government, in which the houses, and successive owners, would be permanently exempt from death duties, even upon sale, so that the nation would be able to enjoy them on regular, required open days. Rather than turning the houses into museums, where visitors would file through, Lothian wanted owner-occupiers to ‘act, so to speak, as preservers and custodians and museum keepers at their own expense.’ This was consistent with his desire to

¹²⁶ Lord Lothian, “England’s Country Houses: The Case for Their Preservation,” 1.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

maintain the unity of the country house “atmosphere”.¹³² Lothian specifically stated that this plan should be the responsibility of the government and the National Trust, as the Office of Works, the predecessor of English Heritage, was only interested ‘in houses when they have become ruins.’¹³³ Additionally, the Trust had already taken on Montacute in 1931, setting the precedent for the acceptance of country houses by the organisation.¹³⁴ Ideally however, Lothian wanted the houses to come into care with their furnishings intact. He also called for an endowment to be set up to fund repairs and maintenance.¹³⁵ The acquisition of houses by the National Trust and English Heritage will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Three.

Lothian’s prediction for the future of the country house without any sort of intervention by the government or the National Trust was eerily accurate. He stated “unless we face this situation now within a very few years, the big houses, at least, will be stripped of their contents, the roofs will be taken off to escape rates, the garden will run down to weed, and the parks will become the prey of the speculative builder who sees site value in proximity to an historic ruin.”¹³⁶ In 1939 the National Trust drew up a list of 320 houses they considered to be of primary importance for inclusion in the fledgling country house scheme. Organised by county, the list features many houses which did eventually come into the care of the National Trust, like Uppark and Knole, but also includes houses like Longleat and Lamport Hall, which have opened to the public privately, as well as houses that entered the care of English Heritage in a ruined state, such as Rufford Abbey.¹³⁷

If the First World War shook the foundations of the country house, ‘the Second World War toppled them.’¹³⁸ Overall, the Second World War caused little

¹³² Ibid., 3.

¹³³ Ibid., 4.

¹³⁴ Oswald, “Montacute Re-Visited III,” 1020.

¹³⁵ Lord Lothian, “England’s Country Houses” 4.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ National Trust, *Country Houses Considered in 1939 by the National Trust as of First Importance*.

¹³⁸ Lees-Milne, “The Country House in Our Heritage,” 11. The two main works on the country house during the Second World War are *The Country House at War* by John Martin Robinson and *The Country House: A Wartime History* by Caroline Seeböhm. Their works will be summarised here, with any additional material noted, when applicable.

direct wartime damage to country houses, although some houses did sustain some direct damage. Appuldurcombe on the Isle of Wight had its roof damaged by a German bomb and Swainston Hall, County Durham, was gutted by an incendiary bomb.¹³⁹ Most of the damage, instead, came from the troops and other various residents stationed in the houses while they were requisitioned. Virtually every country house in Britain was requisitioned during the war.¹⁴⁰ This had been done during the First World War, but not to the same extent; and then, most houses had been used as hospitals.¹⁴¹

In the early 1930s, the Committee of Imperial Defence planned on creating a master list of all the country houses within the nation, to include size, location and suitability, so in the event of a war houses could be quickly and easily occupied by the different sectors of the government and defence bodies.¹⁴² While the government was in the process of organising this list, they determined it would be best not to inform the owners that their houses were being considered for requisitioning.¹⁴³ However, once the owners discovered this, they scrambled to offer their houses for particular usages, in an attempt to pre-empt Government decisions.¹⁴⁴ John Martin Robinson calls this an act of patriotism, but it is more likely a form of self-preservation. The Marquis of Salisbury offered Hatfield House, Hertfordshire as a hospital, which was its use in the First World War and the Duke of Devonshire offered Chatsworth, Derbyshire, to Penrhos College, whose campus had been requisitioned by the Ministry of Food.¹⁴⁵

The five main uses for country houses during requisitioning were: as campuses for evacuated schools; hospitals; billeting for soldiers; intelligence headquarters; and museum storage. Many owners considered schools the best option for occupation, as they seemed to be the least destructive of all the options. In some cases provisions were put in place to protect the houses from the school

¹³⁹ Robinson, *The Country House at War*, 158.

¹⁴⁰ Binney and Jackson-Stops, "Last Hundred Years," 72.

¹⁴¹ Seebohm, *The Country House: A Wartime History*, 3.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 3–4; Robinson, *Country House at War*, 5–6.

¹⁴³ Robinson, *Country House at War*, 10.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Binney, "The Wartime Role of Country Houses."

children.¹⁴⁶ For instance, at Chatsworth, students were required to use dustless chalk.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, at Longleat, Wiltshire, only members of the teaching staff were allowed to use the main staircase.¹⁴⁸ Even so, damage did occur in houses occupied by schools. At Castle Howard, Yorkshire, occupied by Queen Margaret's School for girls, there was a large fire in November 1940 that gutted the entire centre portion of the house.¹⁴⁹

Country houses had been used as hospitals in the First World War, so their selection as auxiliary hospitals did not come as a great shock to owners. Carlton Towers, Yorkshire, was used as a treatment centre for soldiers suffering from epidemics.¹⁵⁰ At Harewood House, also in Yorkshire, the majority of the house was turned into a convalescent home for injured soldiers. However, the family were able to shut themselves off in one part of the house and live alongside the hospital.¹⁵¹

The fear of damage to the museum collections within London was the topic of discussion at a meeting of the Office of Works in 1935.¹⁵² It was decided that each museum would come up with its own emergency plan and many of them chose to evacuate their collections to country houses around the nation.¹⁵³ The Wallace Collection sent their collection to West Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, which had also been selected by the National Trust to hold their offices for a portion of the war.¹⁵⁴ Artwork from the Victoria & Albert Museum spent some time in storage at Montacute, Somerset and the Royal Zoological Society collections were moved to Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire.¹⁵⁵ The National Gallery originally chose Penrhyn Castle, Gwynedd, as the location for their offsite storage, but when the Air Ministry

¹⁴⁶ Robinson, *Country House at War*, 49.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴⁹ Anon., "Castle Howard Damaged by Fire"

¹⁵⁰ Robinson, *Country House at War*, 76.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 78.

¹⁵² Ibid., 85.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 86.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 87.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 93 and 104.

took over the first floor of the house, the museum moved their collection into a bunker within the Manod Slate quarry, also in Wales.¹⁵⁶

The use of Penrhyn Castle by the Air Ministry was atypical of the use of country houses by the military and intelligence offices, for most offices were set up in the Home Counties, in houses such as Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire and Bletchley Park, Bedfordshire, within close proximity of London.¹⁵⁷ In some cases, these offices took the utmost care of the properties they requisitioned, fitting them out with all the necessary technology, for example, at Bletchley Park, which the government eventually purchased under the Requisitioned Land and War Works Act of 1945, which enabled the government to purchase buildings it had adapted during the war.¹⁵⁸ Many more houses though, met the same fate as Woburn Abbey, which had been the headquarters of Political Intelligence Division of the Foreign Office during the war.¹⁵⁹ When the government moved out of their temporary offices, the house itself was quite damp and filthy, the stable blocks and tennis court buildings had been destroyed and there were Nissen huts set up around the courtyard.¹⁶⁰

The armed forces used country houses mainly for billeting soldiers, but also as training centres and for supply stores.¹⁶¹ Eastern England was the home to both British and American Air forces. Harlaxton Hall was used by the 1st Division of the RAF and the 8th Division United States Air Force was stationed at Wycombe Abbey.¹⁶² Houses such as Lulworth Castle and Smedmore in Dorset had their grounds used for tank training because it was believed that the southwest of England was out of reach of German bombers. The same reason was given for the selection of Lowther Castle as the site for tank technology development and

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 95–99.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 108.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 111 and 176.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 126.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 131.

¹⁶² Binney, “The Wartime Role of Country Houses”; “Visit of General Henry H ‘Hap’ Arnold.”

training.¹⁶³ Pitreavie Castle, Fife was used as the joint headquarters for the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force.¹⁶⁴ Although the houses were requisitioned by the British armed forces, properties were also used by allied forces, or even to house prisoners of war. Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire, was requisitioned by the War Office in 1942 for use by the Czech Army and the British Transport Regiment.¹⁶⁵ Deene Park, also in Northamptonshire, provided accommodation for Czech and Indian soldiers during the war, while Dalkeith Palace, Midlothian, housed Polish prisoners of war.¹⁶⁶

Regardless of the nationality of their inhabitants, country houses suffered while occupied by soldiers. As stated earlier, it took a team of servants to run a country house efficiently and without such a staff it was very difficult to keep a country house comfortable.¹⁶⁷ Soldiers had great difficulty keeping the houses warm; many soldiers resorted to chopping up any wooden elements in the house, such as staircases, and even panelling, to burn for fuel.¹⁶⁸ It was also difficult to sort out plumbing that could handle the number of people in the house, especially in the winter. At Kingsdown House, Kent, there were 60 soldiers using one bath and the toilet froze during the winter.¹⁶⁹ Robinson states that ‘Nearly every house which was used to accommodate the military has some horror story to retell...’¹⁷⁰ Eighteen regiments were billeted at Rolls Park, Essex during the War. When the owner, Andrew Lloyd, returned in 1945 he found that the soldiers had ‘hacked up the delectable back Tudor staircase’ for firewood, and had begun on ‘the Grinling Gibbons front staircase’.¹⁷¹ Lloyd ‘described the £8,000 compensation offered to

¹⁶³ Kemp, “The Top Secret Weapon to Blind Nazis Tested on Cumbrian Soil”; Penrith Museum, *The Home Front in Penrith & Eden*; Thistlethwaite, *Cumbria*, 43.

¹⁶⁴ Robinson, *The Country House at War*, 76.

¹⁶⁵ Vicki Howlett, e-mail message to author, February 15, 2013.

¹⁶⁶ Robinson, *The Country House at War*, 145; Gile, “The History of Dalkeith House,” 9.

¹⁶⁷ Binney, “The Wartime Role of Country Houses.”

¹⁶⁸ Robinson, *Country House at War*, 131.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁷¹ Harris, *No Voice from the Hall*, 5.

him by the government as not enough to repair one tenth of the damage caused to the building'.¹⁷² The house was demolished in 1953.¹⁷³

Aborfield and Clewer Park, both in Berkshire, were set on fire by soldiers and were subsequently burnt down, while the library at Wootton Place, Kent suffered a great deal of smoke damage.¹⁷⁴ Water damage was much more insidious, causing damage only after the house had been emptied. Owners would face dry rot, burst pipes and blocked gutters upon their return.¹⁷⁵ Slebech Park, Pembrokeshire suffered from dry rot, but the owners of Eggington Hall, Derbyshire, faced something unimaginable.¹⁷⁶ When moving out of the house, the troops who had been billeted in the house decided to turn the taps on and leave the water running, which was not discovered until it was far too late.¹⁷⁷ The house was eventually demolished in 1955 as a direct result of the water damage.¹⁷⁸

Wartime damage, caused mainly by allied troops, was the root cause for the demolition of the nearly 400 houses lost between 1945 and 1955.¹⁷⁹ The Compensation (Defence) Act of 1939 established the reimbursement to owners whose homes had been requisitioned during the War. Under this Act, owners were granted 'a sum equal to the rent which might reasonably be expected to be payable by a tenant in occupation of the land'.¹⁸⁰ The estate was included in the Act, but compensation was only to be paid if 'the annual value of the land is diminished by reason of the doing of the work.'¹⁸¹

¹⁷² Tobin Edmund, "Chigwell: Spotlight on Rolls Park."

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Robinson, *Country House at War*, 161.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 163.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 164.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Beckett, "Complete List of Lost English Country Houses.", Eggington Hall listing

¹⁷⁹ Seebohm, *Country House*, 63.

¹⁸⁰ *Compensation (Defence) Act 1939*. Section 2, p.2

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 4. Section 3

Compensation had to be applied for within six months of the end of occupation and no money was granted for damage incurred while the house was in use.¹⁸²

Remuneration for damages occurred during requisitioning was covered under the War Damage Act of 1941. However, the government would only pay a set amount towards the cost of repairs. ‘Provided that, if the cost of reinstatement exceeds the amount of the payment of cost of works, such part of the excess as is attributable to any such alteration or addition shall be defrayed by the applicant.’¹⁸³ At Aylsham Old Hall, Norfolk, the owners received £450 towards dilapidation, of which only £100 could be spent in the year following the first payment and then just £10 per year from then on.¹⁸⁴ The prolongation of the disbursement of these payments is attributable to the continuation of wartime rationing into the 1950s.¹⁸⁵

As stated above, nearly 400 houses were demolished in the decade following the War. Few houses were demolished immediately following the end of the war, just five in 1945 and six in 1946.¹⁸⁶ This number rose during the 1950s, with approximately 300 country house demolitions during the decade, thirty-eight in 1955 alone.¹⁸⁷ Evelyn Waugh, in the preface to the second edition of *Brideshead Revisited*, published in 1960, commented on this ‘country house blitz’.¹⁸⁸ Waugh wrote, ‘It was impossible to foresee in the spring of 1944 the present cult of the country house. It seemed then that the ancestral seats which were our chief national artistic achievement were doomed to decay and spoliation like the monasteries in the sixteenth century.’¹⁸⁹ The future popularity of country house visiting and the overall cult of the country house described by Waugh in 1960, was unimaginable during this era of incredible destruction.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 14. Section 11

¹⁸³ *War Damage Act 1941: Landlord and Tenant (Amendment)*, 9. Section 5, Subsection 3.

¹⁸⁴ Robinson, *Country House at War*, 59.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁸⁶ Worsley, *England’s Lost Houses*, 19.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*; Worsley, “England’s Lost Houses”.

¹⁸⁸ Harris, “Gone to Ground,” 16.

¹⁸⁹ Waugh, preface to *Brideshead Revisited*.

The Town and Country Planning Act of 1944 and its extension in 1947 were approved during this era. The 1944 version created an “embryonic form” of listing, allowing the Ministry of Works to set fines for unauthorized building works or demolition.¹⁹⁰ The 1947 extension laid the groundwork for the compulsory purchase of houses by the government, which was used for houses such as Burton Manor, Cheshire, bought by Liverpool City Council in 1948.¹⁹¹ The 1944 Act was only applicable in England and Wales while the 1947 amendment was extended to include Scotland.¹⁹² The National Land Fund (NLF) was established under the 1946 Finance Act, with an initial investment of £50 million from residual military funds, as a memorial to those who lost their lives during the Second World War. It was used to secure the longevity of architecturally and historically important country houses.¹⁹³

The death duty system was changed just prior to the start of the Second World War, exempting any death that occurred during combat from duties.¹⁹⁴ However, at the same time, the top rate of tax rose to 65 per cent from 50 per cent.¹⁹⁵ The Finance Act of 1948 introduced a capital levy which increased death duties to 75 per cent on estates over £1 million.¹⁹⁶ Death duties, which still had to be paid for those who did not die in combat, could be avoided if houses were handed down to the heir prior to the death of the current owner. In 1946, houses had to be handed down five years before death.¹⁹⁷ Those who missed the deadlines were penalized with heavy fines. At Chatsworth, the 11th Duke of Devonshire was made to pay £2.5 million for inheriting four months too early in 1952. At Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire, the 13th Duke of Bedford missed the deadline by just weeks in 1953 and had to pay £4.5 million for the “miscalculation”.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁰ Mynors, *Listed Buildings*, 11.

¹⁹¹ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 330; *Burton Manor, Cheshire*.

¹⁹² Mynors, *Listed Buildings*, 12.

¹⁹³ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 645; Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*, 40.

¹⁹⁴ Binney and Jackson-Stops, “Last Hundred Years,” 71.

¹⁹⁵ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 315.

¹⁹⁶ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 640.

¹⁹⁷ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 315.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

In December 1948, Sir Stafford Cripps, Chancellor of the Exchequer, commissioned a report ‘to consider “what general arrangements might be made for the...preservation, maintenance and use of houses of outstanding historical or architectural interest, which might otherwise not be preserved.”’¹⁹⁹ Appointed to allocate funds from the NLF to country houses and owners in need, the committee, led by Sir Ernest Gowers, was an interdisciplinary group, including an architect, W.H. Ansell, an art historian, Anthony Blunt, and an archaeologist, Cyril Fox, amongst others.²⁰⁰ To understand the current situation of the country house and what would need to be done to save them, the group held twenty-six meetings, taking testimony from a wide-ranging group included country house owners, such as the Marquess of Bath and ‘aesthetic enthusiasts’ such as Christopher Hussey. It also included local authorities and groups such as the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments, The Georgian Group, The SPAB and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society.²⁰¹ All those testifying stressed the cultural value and importance of the country house.²⁰²

The committee published their findings in *The Gowers Report* in 1950. The committee found that the current decline of the country house had three main causes: taxes, lack of funds to complete repairs, and the lack of qualified staffs to run and maintain the houses to the appropriate standard. The primary cause, taxation, had sharply increased for the upper classes from 1893.²⁰³ The lack of funds from paying these taxes resulted in the inability of owners to pay for repairs, not only to the house, but also for the furniture and art within the house, as supplies had tripled in cost following the end of World War II.²⁰⁴ ‘The growing difficulty of getting, and expense of paying, the necessary staff, both indoor and outdoor’ was an increasing burden to owners.²⁰⁵

As an extension of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, the Gowers Report devised different “grades” for the ‘listing of buildings of special architectural

¹⁹⁹ Gowers, *Report*, 1; Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 645.

²⁰⁰ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 341.

²⁰¹ Gowers, *Report*, 51–53; Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 342.

²⁰² Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 342.

²⁰³ Gowers, *Report*, 5. Paragraph 11.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 6. Paragraph 14.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 5. Paragraph 12.

or historic interest'.²⁰⁶ Buildings of Grade I status are of such importance that demolition is not allowed; buildings of Grade II status were indicated to be of national importance, but demolition would be allowed under special circumstances; Grade III buildings were deemed not to be remarkable enough to 'justify statutory listing'.²⁰⁷ When granted, building licences were strictly enforced and the Duke of Bedford was fined over £5,000 for undertaking an "illegal scheme of truncation and remodelling at Woburn."²⁰⁸

The proposals made in the Gowers Report focus on relieving the financial burden on owners, while creating new agencies to manage the preservation of the buildings. The committee found that the National Trust's Country House Scheme had been remarkably successful, with more than 50 properties open to the public under the programme.²⁰⁹ Even with this success, the committee suggested a central preservation authority, which would be both administrative and advisory. The body, the HBC, would provide broad supervision of houses and their contents and give advice to owners undertaking general preservation work, as well as the training of new specialised architects and craftsmen.²¹⁰ The proposed HBCs would be created in England, Scotland, as well as Wales, and would be made up of a team of architectural, furniture and art experts.²¹¹ Each council would have a member appointed by the National Trust and one by the council, so that all sides were equally represented.²¹² It was specifically stated that the HBC would not take over the work of the National Trust.²¹³

The NLF, discussed above, only created a network for accepting houses and land in lieu of tax, rather than creating the tax relief the owners need to maintain their properties.²¹⁴ Exemption from death duties would be extended if the house were to be passed, following the death of the owner, to the National Trust with an

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 28. Paragraph 113.

²⁰⁷ Ibid. Paragraph 115.

²⁰⁸ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 640.

²⁰⁹ Gowers, *Report*, 7. Paragraph 19.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 19. Paragraphs 69-70, 41, Paragraph 169.

²¹¹ Littlejohn, *Fate of the English Country House*, 71; Gowers, *Report*, 21. Paragraph 79.

²¹² Gowers, *Report*, 27. Paragraph 108.

²¹³ Ibid. Paragraph 108.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 36. Paragraph 148.

endowment, or was scheduled as an ancient monument and given to the Ministry of Works, or was given to the local authority.²¹⁵ The foundation for the process by which owners could transfer their country houses to the National Trust was laid out in the National Trust Act of 1937.²¹⁶ As the committee felt the ‘preservation of these houses is a matter of public concern’, it was recommended that owners be given access to maintenance grants ‘provided they show their houses to the public in accordance with arrangements approved by the HBC.’²¹⁷ This matches with subsection 3 of the 1937 National Trust Act, which states that the preservation of country houses, their contents and wider estates was for “the access and enjoyment” by the public.²¹⁸ The Acceptance in Lieu-Country House scheme in conjunction with the National Trust only became a popular option amongst owners following the Second World War.²¹⁹ The uptake in numbers may have been due to the encouragement given by Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer, encouraging owners and The Inland Revenue to make full use of the provision for acceptance in lieu, set out in the 1910 Finance Act.²²⁰

Finally, the Gowers Report provided suggestions for the potential use of country houses. The committee recognized that each case would be different, but came up with four general recommendations for future use.²²¹ As the country house was traditionally the social centre of the local area, the committee’s first suggestion, drawing upon a comment from the Georgian Group, was for mixed use, allowing the community to be brought back into the house.²²² Converting the houses into museums was suggested with some hesitation. The committee thought it ‘would be a pity to overdo the conversion of historic house into museums’, believing instead that they should be kept “‘alive’”.²²³ It was also recommended that a full catalogue of open houses be printed, to make these houses well known to the public.²²⁴

²¹⁵ Ibid., 34. Paragraph 139.

²¹⁶ “National Trust Act 1937,” 15–16. Subsection 3.

²¹⁷ Gowers, *Report*, 32. Paragraph 131.

²¹⁸ “National Trust Act 1937,” 16. Subsection 3.

²¹⁹ Barker, “Case Study 8: Heritage and The Country House,” 202.

²²⁰ Binney, “The Albatross and the Phoenix,” 16.

²²¹ Gowers, *Report*, 42. Paragraph 173.

²²² Ibid. Paragraph 174.

²²³ Ibid., 43. Paragraph 177.

²²⁴ Ibid., 40. Paragraph 163.

Finally, it was suggested that houses could be converted into flats, hotels or for institutional use.²²⁵ In the case of retaining the house as a home, either as a museum or in mixed use, the Committee, much like Lord Lothian, stressed the importance of the unity of the house and its collections.²²⁶ By extension, the ancestral owners could be included in this definition. Lord Esher stated that families ““make the best custodians””, suggesting that the National Trust or another organisation would be able to keep the traditional country house atmosphere by allowing the families to remain *in situ*.²²⁷ Under the Ancient Monuments Act of 1953, art and contents could be accepted in lieu, if they remained in the property.²²⁸ The Duke of Bedford suggested that art accepted in lieu be left in situ, with access granted to the public, to maintain the atmosphere.²²⁹

Many of the suggestions set out in the Gowers Report were incorporated into the Historic Buildings and Monuments Act of 1953 and the creation of the HBCs.²³⁰ Recognising the expense of repairs and up keep at country houses, the HBCs would grant aid to owners. In return, it was stipulated that houses would have regular open days if owners wanted to remain eligible for further grants.²³¹ There was no set number of days required, but rather the HBCs would work with owners to determine what number was best for the house.²³² In its first year, the HBC for England made 87 grants, totalling £265,000, although most individual grants were for less than £10,000.²³³ Within the first twenty years of the HBCs, one quarter of the total expenditure went to 230 private country houses.²³⁴ It was under this plan that there was an upturn in country house visitor numbers. The 6th Marquess of Bath opened Longleat in 1949 and welcomed 149,000 visitors in the first year.²³⁵ The “stately home business” took off during the 1950s and 60s, once owners, like the Duke of

²²⁵ Ibid., 46–47. Paragraph 199.

²²⁶ Ibid., 29. Paragraph 119

²²⁷ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 342.

²²⁸ Ibid., 347; Cornforth, *Country Houses in Britain, Can They Survive?*, 43.

²²⁹ Neild, “Tax, Land and Art Treasures,” 37.

²³⁰ *Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953*, 1. Part 1, Section 1, Subsection 1.

²³¹ Cornforth, *Can They Survive?*, 26.

²³² Gowers, *Report*, 40. Paragraph 163.

²³³ Littlejohn, *Fate of the English Country House*, 71.

²³⁴ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 349.

²³⁵ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 646.

Bedford of Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire, realized that the only way to maintain their ancestral seats was to open the house and allow visitors to ““see it in return for an entrance fee.””²³⁶ Lord Montague of Beaulieu, Hampshire published *The Gilt and the Gingerbread or How to live in a Stately Home and Make Money* in 1967 to help owners through the process of turning their family homes into business. The history of country house visiting, with a focus on twentieth century visiting and tourism, will be discussed in depth in Chapter Three.

Capital Gains Tax, first introduced in 1965, was established to capitalise on the profits made by landowners from increased land and property prices.²³⁷ The tax would be applied to sales of houses, unless the house had been the main residence of the owner.²³⁸ If not the main residence, a percentage of the realised price of the house, to be calculated by the Treasury, would be taken.²³⁹ It was not until the 1972 Finance Act that all gifts and bequests of property to the National Trust were made exempt from Capital Gains Tax.²⁴⁰

The remit of the NLF was broadened between 1953 and 1956 to include works of art and by the start of 1957 the funds available had reached £60 million.²⁴¹ However, the 1957 finance act reduced the NLF budget to £10 million.²⁴² According to Wright, the programme never achieved its potential and was essentially just a “bureaucratic accounting device within the Treasury.”²⁴³

The Town and Country Planning Acts of 1968 and 1971 fully established the listing process and extended stronger protection to these newly listed buildings.²⁴⁴ Under the Acts, ‘listed building consent’ was required before any work was undertaken on a listed building and an application had to be made to the Royal

²³⁶ Tinniswood, *The Polite Tourist*, 185.

²³⁷ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 396.

²³⁸ *Finance Act 1965*, 36–37. Section 29, Subsection 2.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 37. Section 29, Subsection 3.

²⁴⁰ Cornforth, *The Country Houses of England, 1948-1998*, 65.

²⁴¹ Binney, “The Albatross and the Phoenix.”

²⁴² Cornforth, *Can They Survive?*, 35.

²⁴³ Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*, 40.

²⁴⁴ Mynors, *Listed Buildings*, 14; Cornforth, *The Country Houses of England, 1948-1998*, 42.

Commission on Historic Monuments.²⁴⁵ Before approval of a planning application was given, heritage organisations, such as the National Trust or the Ministry of Works, would be consulted.²⁴⁶ Even buildings which had not been listed, but were considered to be of special interest, were extended some protection. Prior to any alterations or demolition work, a building preservation order could be served, which would stop any work until the secretary of state decided if the building should be listed.²⁴⁷ The punishment for breaking these laws was a fine of £250 or a short prison sentence.²⁴⁸

In 1974, the Architectural Historian John Cornforth was commissioned by the British Tourist Authority to report on the economic conditions of the country house.²⁴⁹ Peter Mandler suggests that the report grew out of pressure from owners who were ‘concerned about the growing dependence on tourism and wished to explore the case for further tax exemptions.’²⁵⁰ In this report, *Country Houses in Britain: Can They Survive?*, Cornforth expressed great concern that ‘the future of country houses ultimately depends on government policy or, rather, on a bewildering range of different policies that may well conflict with one another.’²⁵¹ Cornforth suggested that from 1972 country houses were entering a new phase of crisis, due to the astronomical repair costs, which were well above the amounts the HBCs and owners ever imagined.²⁵² To be kept going, houses would need substantial amounts of money injected into them. Tax exempt grants, with the public viewing stipulation was considered the best option especially when combined with the proposal to allow houses to keep their taxed tourist income separate from their maintenance and repair funds.²⁵³ Cornforth was against some of the proposals

²⁴⁵ *Town and Country Planning Act 1968*, 37. Part 4a-4b.

²⁴⁶ *Town and Country Planning Act 1971*, 52. Part 4, Section 54, Subsection 3.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 56–57. Section 58, Subsections 1 & 3.

²⁴⁸ *Town and Country Planning Act 1968*, 38. Part 7.

²⁴⁹ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 403. John Cornforth was one of the leading country house historians of the twentieth century. He joined the National Trust Historic Buildings Committee in 1965 and in 1967 he took over the post of architectural editor at *Country Life* from Christopher Hussey. (*Telegraph* obituary and *Guardian* Obituary by Martin Drury)

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁵¹ Cornforth, *Can They Survive?*, 22.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 121–122.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 123–124.

that came out of the Gowers Report. For example, Cornforth did not want to ‘limit the rights of ... owners to sell objects for the highest price.’²⁵⁴ While this was a move against the generally accepted call for the maintenance of the traditional country house atmosphere, Cornforth felt it was more important for owners to have access to money to keep up their homes.

1974 was a pivotal year for the British country house. An alarming trend had been noticed by architectural and country house historians alike; the country house was on the verge of extinction. Conceived of by Sir Roy Strong, then director of the Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A), following a conversation with architectural historian John Cornforth, an exhibition to highlight the plight of the country house was organized by a small committee of architectural historians, heritage campaigners and museum professionals. The committee included Marcus Binney, architectural historian and later president of *SAVE Britain’s Heritage*, John Harris, then curator of RIBA’s Drawings Collection, and Peter Thornton, then Keeper of the Furniture and Woodwork department at the V&A.²⁵⁵ The *Destruction of the Country House* exhibition was the V&A’s contribution to the European Architectural Heritage Year 1975, bringing the dire state of the British country house to the world stage.²⁵⁶

Cannadine has described the 1974 *Destruction of the Country House* exhibition at the V&A as ‘a heart-string-tugging exercise in nostalgia’ and Cornforth has stated that the exhibition created a sense of shock amongst the public.²⁵⁷ Both of these descriptions fit Sir Roy Strong’s original intention. In the provisional program for the exhibition, he specified that he wanted the Hall of Lost Country Houses, the central focus of the exhibition, to produce ‘an enormous impact and a big shock’, using the wrecking ball to heighten this feeling.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 107.

²⁵⁵ Strong et al., *The Destruction of the Country House, 1875-1975*, 6.

²⁵⁶ Letter, John Harris to Peter Thornton, March 29, 1974, MA/28/243/1, The V&A Archive, Blythe House, Victoria and Albert Museum.

²⁵⁷ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 653; Cornforth, *Country Houses of England*, 91.

²⁵⁸ Letter, Sir Roy Strong to Cecil Farthing, January 22, 1974, MA/28/243/1, The V&A Archive, Blythe House, Victoria and Albert Museum.

Visitors were led on a set route through the exhibition. The introductory section gave brief information on the house, the people, the interior, and the garden, culminating in the 'Hall of Lost Houses' that featured a slide show of lost houses with a recorded list of the names of these houses read aloud by John Harris.²⁵⁹ Visitors were then led through specially commissioned Osbert Lancaster drawings, on to a section on the unity of the country house. The importance of the unity of country house architecture, furnishings, estates and residents, discussed in Lord Lothian's speech to the National Trust, as well as in the Gowers Report, was brought out in the text panels of the exhibition. Quotations from Cornforth, T.S. Eliot and Lord Lothian referred to the 'community' of the country house and the interiors and landscape were discussed as vital to the understanding and beauty of these houses.²⁶⁰ Interiors and exteriors of the houses were featured in the following two sections, before visitors were led through a section on 'facets of the present'. In a letter to Peter Thornton, John Harris suggested that in the introductory section of the exhibition there should be a collage of textures and components found in a country house. Examples of wallpaper, tassels, marquetry, églomisé, and delft tiles, amongst many others were to be used to evoke the opulence of the country house interior.²⁶¹ The exhibition concluded with a section on the problems the country house was facing in 1974. Visitors exited through a specially set up gift shop, featuring books on architectural history, landscape, paintings and other aspects of the country house.

Public inclusion had been planned from the beginning. This was executed in an appeal to visitors in the final "future" section of the exhibition, asking for help in the identification of photos and information on demolished houses and their estates.²⁶²

The *Destruction* exhibition travelled around the nation to spread the word of the situation of the country house, visiting cities such as Aberdeen, Cardiff, and

²⁵⁹ *Brochure, Destruction of the Country House 1875-1975* MA/28/184/3, The V&A Archive, Blythe House, Victoria and Albert Museum.; Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 404.

²⁶⁰ "Country Houses Exhibition, Storyline: Text", MA/28/184/3, The V&A Archive, Blythe House, Victoria and Albert Museum.

²⁶¹ Letter, John Harris to Peter Thornton, March 29, 1974.

²⁶² "Country Houses Exhibition, Storyline: Text"

Birmingham.²⁶³ Extending beyond the exhibition itself, the V&A offered a free lecture series over a two-month period covering topics such as the general loss of the country house, the role of the National Trust, and the garden and the country house.²⁶⁴

It was agreed that the exhibition should not end on a sad note: instead it should illustrate that houses have been and could continue to be saved.²⁶⁵ It was also stressed that in no way was the exhibition to suggest that the V&A, or any of those involved in the production of the exhibition, wanted a return to the life and culture of the country house in the seventeenth through to the nineteenth centuries.²⁶⁶ Rather, the exhibition was to act as a statement calling for the protection of the houses ‘on aesthetic and historic grounds alone.’²⁶⁷ The inclusionary aim of the exhibition was echoed in statement from the Duke of Bedford. “‘...I am convinced that these houses, built in the past, perhaps for the pleasure of a few, should now be made available for the pleasure and the education of the many.’”²⁶⁸ Even though this was the intention, Caroline Tisdall, the Arts critic for *The Guardian*, found the exhibition to simply be ‘garrulous hysteria’, and referred to country houses as just an expression of the ‘greed of the families who held power in a certain form of society.’²⁶⁹

While it was understood that the exhibition was covering the situation of the country house on a national level, the only country covered in great detail was England. The organizers of the exhibition were acutely aware of the lack of coverage of Wales, Scotland, the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland, but the decision was due to several legitimate reasons. Welsh houses were, and are, difficult to discuss in depth due to the lack of research and resources.²⁷⁰ Also, Wales was considered by experts at that time not to be an architecturally rich country,

²⁶³ Letter, Marianne Ryan To Mr. Hatfield, February 6, 1975, MA/28/184/3, The V&A Archive, Blythe House, Victoria and Albert Museum..

²⁶⁴ "Invitation to Private Viewing." October 8, 1974, MA/28/184/3, The V&A Archive, Blythe House, Victoria and Albert Museum."

²⁶⁵ Letter, John Harris to Peter Thornton, March 29, 1974.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Harris and Binney, "Letter to the Editor: In the Wake of the Greedy Bulldozer."

²⁶⁸ Neild, "Tax, Land and Art Treasures," 37.

²⁶⁹ Tisdall, "Englishmen's Castles."

²⁷⁰ Lloyd, *The Lost Houses of Wales*, 3.

containing only medieval castles, rather than stately homes.²⁷¹ Scotland, much like Wales, did not have enough research published to be included in any great detail.²⁷² Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were not included because of difficulty with the different administration of architectural heritage in the two countries.²⁷³

The 1975 Finance Act gave an additional tax exemption to country house owners based on three conditions. The first condition was the traditional granting of public access to the house and gardens for an arranged number of days per year. This condition was extended, requiring owners to grant public access to art and furnishings that had been exempted. The second condition stated that the 'exempted property had to be kept preserved and in good repair, with its historic character maintained.'²⁷⁴ Third, if the house were ever to be sold, the government would collect any Capital Gains Tax and Transfer and Inheritance taxes the family had avoided through exemption.²⁷⁵

The National Heritage Act of 1980 established the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF), replacing the NLF, using the £16.6 million remaining in the NLF budget.²⁷⁶ Much like the NLF, the NHMF required public access and proper maintenance of houses that received grant money.²⁷⁷ Funding would be allocated at the start of each fiscal year to 'acquire, maintain or preserve' eligible buildings, land or objects of historic, architectural, or scientific interest, with additional funds granted as the NHMF saw fit.²⁷⁸ The procedure for Acceptance in Lieu of Capital Gains Tax was set out in section 12 of the Act.²⁷⁹

The NHMF was established in response to the controversy surrounding the sale of Mentmore. Following the death of his father in 1974, Lord Rosebery

²⁷¹ Cornforth, *Can They Survive?*, 71.

²⁷² McWilliam, "The Tale in Scotland," 101.

²⁷³ Memo re: Country House Exhibition, Roy Strong to John Harris et. al, March 12, 1974, MA/28/243/1, The V&A Archive, Blythe House, Victoria and Albert Museum.

²⁷⁴ Cornforth, *Country Houses in Britain, Can They Survive?*, 73.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶ Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*, 40.

²⁷⁷ *National Heritage Act 1980*. Section 3, Subsection 4, Paragraph a, subparagraphs i & ii

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Section 2.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Section 12, Subsection 1, Paragraph a.

approached the government regarding the acceptance of Mentmore in lieu of death duties.²⁸⁰ After much debate, the government had decided not to purchase Mentmore for the Nation. It was determined that the £2 million purchase price, along with the substantial running costs, was too much for the government to take on.²⁸¹ In 1977, *SAVE Britain's Heritage*, Marcus Binney's pressure group established in 1975 following the *Destruction* exhibition, to police the preservation and of Britain's architectural heritage, stepped in.²⁸² Through a major fundraising campaign *Save Mentmore for the Nation*, enough money was raised to save the house, which was sold to the Maharishi International College for £240,000 in 1978. Lord Rosebery, however, did sell the contents to cover the inheritance tax payments. By 1997, the NHMF had granted over £58 million to save 15 country houses, such as Canons Ashby, Belton, and Calke Abbey.²⁸³ An additional £25 million was given by the Treasury to aid the NHMF's purchase of Kedleston, as well as the contents and grounds of Weston Park, and the furnishings from Nostell Priory, all of which were then transferred to the National Trust.²⁸⁴

The National Heritage Act of 1983, under the guidance and recommendation of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, established English Heritage under the management of the Department of the Environment, to present, preserve and protect historic properties for England.²⁸⁵ Additionally, the newly formed EH would administer HBC grants.²⁸⁶

After the *Destruction of the Country House*, the next large exhibition of country houses and their contents was *The Treasure Houses of Britain: 500 Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting*. Shown at The National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C., *Treasure Houses*, was exhibited from 3 November 1985 to 13 April 1986.²⁸⁷ The show included seven hundred objects and seventeen period

²⁸⁰ Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*, 29.

²⁸¹ Cornforth, *The Country Houses of England, 1948-1998*, 117.

²⁸² SAVE "Save Britain's Heritage - Information"; Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 406.

²⁸³ Cannadine, *Decline and Fall*, 653–655.

²⁸⁴ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 411.

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 410; *National Heritage Act 1980*, 19–20. Section 33, Subsection 1.

²⁸⁶ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 410.

²⁸⁷ National Gallery of Art, Washington, "The Treasure Houses of Britain: 500 Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting."

rooms from over two hundred country houses.²⁸⁸ The show was extended by one month and had a total attendance of 990,474 visitors.²⁸⁹ The organisers, including Gervase Jackson-Stops, then Architectural Adviser to the National Trust, hoped the show would encourage American tourism to Britain, especially to the country houses shown in the exhibition.²⁹⁰ Called a clear demonstration of ‘the sheer longevity and staying power of the country house’, the exhibition did draw criticism.²⁹¹ Much like the criticism aimed at the *Destruction* exhibition by Tisdall and others, David Cannadine felt that Treasure Houses was organised to protect an ‘anachronistic group in decline’.²⁹²

Unlike the *Destruction of the Country House* exhibition, *Treasure Houses* was designed around collectors and their collections, rather than the atmosphere created by and within country houses.²⁹³ As the main focus was, according to Jonathan Marsden, then a curator with the National Trust, “art collecting and patronage”, creating a country house atmosphere in the exhibition would have been difficult and even unnecessary. The National Gallery of Art was in some respects, acting as a country house – as a repository and display case for the objects, as country houses did in the eighteenth century.²⁹⁴

The Sunday Times magazine called it a “disgraceful kind of Harrod’s sale” for rich Americans.²⁹⁵ This claim later gained authority when the *Three Graces* by Canova, part of the Duke of Bedford’s collection at Woburn Abbey, was scheduled for sale to The Getty Museum in Malibu.²⁹⁶ There was great debate over the status of the statue group within the context of the house. If the statue had been included in the listing of Woburn Abbey, then listed building consent would have been required prior to the sale.²⁹⁷ Although the Town and Country Planning Act of 1971

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Barker, “Case Study 8: Heritage and The Country House,” 211.

²⁹¹ Marsden, “Remembering ‘The Treasure Houses of Britain’.”

²⁹² Cannadine, “Brideshead Re-Revisited.”

²⁹³ Marsden, “Remembering ‘The Treasure Houses of Britain’.”

²⁹⁴ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 73.

²⁹⁵ Marsden, “Remembering ‘The Treasure Houses of Britain’.”

²⁹⁶ Bush, “The Protection of British Heritage: Woburn Abbey and The Three Graces,” 272.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 273.

was vague in reference to this issue, following a campaign by SAVE, the V&A joined with the National Galleries of Scotland to purchase the statue for Britain.²⁹⁸ The two museums, along with funds from the National Art-Galleries Fund and the NHMF, purchased the *Three Graces* for £7.6 million in November 1994.²⁹⁹ The statue was on view at the V&A in January 1995.³⁰⁰

Looking Ahead: The Future of the Country House was the title of a two-day conference held by The Attingham Trust in October 2012. The aim of the conference was to illustrate what hurdles the country house has overcome and to discuss what the future may hold. The overall message of the conference was that country houses need a great deal of support. Financial support is mainly needed, but also educational support, through education programs at the houses, as well as university courses on country house history. As of 2013, only two universities in Britain were offering Masters Degrees in country house studies. The University of Leicester's Centre for the Study of the Country House has offered the course *Country House in Art, History and Literature* since 2004.³⁰¹ The University of East Anglia course *At Close Quarters: The English Country House and its Collections*, in conjunction with the Attingham Trust, is commencing in September 2013.³⁰² The Universities of Leeds, Buckinghamshire and York offer country house themed modules within other courses, such as history, art history and heritage courses, while the Hull and Warwick Universities offer country house certificate programmes.³⁰³

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 280.

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 281.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ University of Leicester, "Vision for the Future." < <http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/arhistory/research/countryhouse/vision-for-the-future> > Accessed March 23, 2013.

³⁰² University of East Anglia, "At Close Quarters." < <http://sifa.uea.ac.uk/art-history/at-close-quarters> > Accessed March 23, 2013.

³⁰³ University of Leeds, "BA History of Art with Museum Studies" <<http://www.fine-art.leeds.ac.uk/ug/history-of-art-museum-studies/>> Accessed March 23, 2013.; University of Buckingham, "The Country House: Management, Interpretation, Conservation" <<http://www.buckingham.ac.uk/arhistory/undergraduate/country-management/>> Accessed March 23, 2013.; University of York, "Yorkshire Country House Partnership" < <http://www.ychp.org.uk/who-university-of-york> > Accessed March

The Duke of Buccleuch, in his paper at the conference stated that he believed many country houses are treading a fine line, financially speaking.³⁰⁴ He then discussed how the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust has diversified to make cash. This includes offering mud runs, holding weddings, and opening up for film shoots for television shows and movies, such as *The X Factor* and *Les Miserables*. The discussion of income diversification is reminiscent of Lord Montagu's *How to Run a Stately Home*, as well as the launch of safari parks at Woburn and Longleat in the 1960s and 70s.³⁰⁵

Repair work and general maintenance are still the most costly undertaking for country house owners and it is the rate of tax on these required repairs and maintenance that are especially harmful. VAT was reduced to 5% on repairs to historic places of worship in 2001 and alterations to historic sites are currently zero-rated.³⁰⁶ However, repairs and maintenance are taxed at 20%, the normal rate of VAT.³⁰⁷ It has been stipulated in the House of Commons, that "zero-rating only applies to work that is an 'alteration' of a protected building; any works of 'repair or maintenance' is specifically excluded."³⁰⁸ Private owners, until only recently, had few places to turn for tax-free grants for such repairs. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), founded in 1994 by an Act of Parliament, and funded by proceeds from the sale of lottery tickets, is one of the largest grant-giving organizations in Britain for heritage projects.³⁰⁹ Edward Harley, President of the Historic Houses Association

23, 2013.; University of Hull, "Country House Studies Certificate"
<<http://www.hull.ac.uk/05/elements/downloads/parttime/countryhousestudies.pdf>>
Accessed March 23, 2013.; University of Warwick, "Architecture: The English Country House."

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/study/cll/open_courses/certs/architecture/> Accessed March 23, 2013.

³⁰⁴ Richard Scott, The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, "The Buccleuch Estates."

³⁰⁵ Woburn, "Celebrating 40 Years"; "About Longleat"

<<http://www.woburn.co.uk/news/article/celebrating-40-years>> Accessed March 22, 2013.; Binney, "The Albatross and the Phoenix," 16.

³⁰⁶ Seely, *VAT on Construction*, 1.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁹ Heritage Lottery Fund, "Heritage Lottery Fund: Our Background."

<<http://www.hlf.org.uk/aboutus/Pages/OurBackground.aspx#.UiG7FbzA4tt>>
Accessed March 1, 2013.

(HHA), successfully lobbied the government and from 2013, private owners will be able to apply for matched grants of up to £100,000.³¹⁰

Many houses are still turning to auctions to fund necessary repairs. Althorp House, Northamptonshire and Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, both held estate auctions in 2010. The Althorp contents, sold through Christie's, included "A Commander Being Armed for Battle" by Rubens, and achieved £21 million.³¹¹ The funds were used for a re-roofing project and general renovations.³¹² The Chatsworth sale included only items that were "surplus to requirements" from across the Devonshire estates.³¹³ The auction achieved £6.5 million, which was used for work across the wider Chatsworth estate.³¹⁴ In December 2012, the Duke of Devonshire sold "Head of a Young Apostle", a drawing by Raphael, through Sotheby's for £29.72 million.³¹⁵ The proceeds of the sale are to be used to finance maintenance work at Chatsworth.³¹⁶ Within the first decade of the twenty first century, three major country houses, complete with original contents, came on to the market. Tyntesfield, Easton Neston, and Dumfries House, met three different fates. Tyntesfield, North Somerset, came on to the property market in 2002 following the death of Lord Wraxall.³¹⁷ Lord Wraxall died without issue, the nearly £5 million in death duties levied on the estate put the house in a precarious position.³¹⁸ Simon Jervis, Director of Historical Buildings for the National Trust, called Tyntesfield the "southern Cragside" in the *SAVE* campaign literature, and Mark Girouard placed the house in the second spot, just after Cragside, on the "must buy" list for the

³¹⁰ Kennedy, "Stately Home Owners to Gain Access to Lottery Money."

³¹¹ Grice, "Althorp and Spencer House Sales at Christie's"; Anon., "Diana home auction raises £21.1m."

³¹² Grice, "Althorp and Spencer House Sales at Christie's."

³¹³ Anon., "The Chatsworth House Attic Sale."

³¹⁴ Anon., "Chatsworth 'Attic Sale' Makes £6m" <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-11499030>> Accessed March 24, 2013.; Moore, "Chatsworth's Attic Sale."

³¹⁵ Melikian, "Raphael Draws Big Money."

³¹⁶ Rhodes, "Chatsworth's Raphael Drawing Sells for £30m in Record-breaking Sale."

³¹⁷ Save Britain's Heritage, *The Tyntesfield Emergency*, 1.

³¹⁸ Reynolds, "Rescued High Gothic Gem Opens Its Doors"; Save Britain's Heritage, *The Tyntesfield Emergency*, 1.

National Trust.³¹⁹ Campaigns were led by *SAVE*, The Victorian Society, The World Monuments Fund, and the National Trust.³²⁰ The importance of the unity of the ‘untouched’ nature of the house, along with its intact collection of Victorian furnishings and painting, was universally recognised and stressed in campaign literature and its potential loss was compared with that of Mentmore.³²¹ The numerous campaigns raised over £8 million from the public, along with £20 million from the HLF and £17 million from NHMF.³²² The house opened to the public just ten weeks after acquisition by the National Trust in 2002.³²³

Lord Hesketh put Easton Neston on the market in 2004, citing the £3 million spent annually on maintenance to be too costly for him and his family.³²⁴ The house and entire 3,000 acre estate entered the market at an asking price of £50 million.³²⁵ When a buyer was not found, Lord Hesketh broke up the sale, offering the house at £18 million, and selling the contents at auction.³²⁶ The house was sold to Leon Max, a Russian-born, US-based, fashion mogul for £34 million and the contents sale at Sotheby’s realized £8.7 million.³²⁷ Since purchasing the house, Max has spent over £5 million on restoration work, which has been applauded by The Georgian Group.³²⁸

There was a tremendous amount of public outcry when Dumfries House, Ayrshire, along with its original eighteenth century contents, was put up for auction

³¹⁹ National Portrait Gallery, “Simon Swynfen Jervis (1943-), Art Historian” <<http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/person/mp59835/simon-swynfen-jervis>> Accessed February 14, 2013.; Save Britain’s Heritage, *The Tyntesfield Emergency*, 2–3.

³²⁰ Kennedy, “£25m Bid to Save Victorian Treasure.”

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Peterkin, “Treasure Trove of Oddities Found at Tyntesfield House”; Govan and Edwardes, “National Trust ‘Deceived Public’ over Funds for Restoration of Tyntesfield”; Kennedy, “Heritage Campaign Saves Victorian Treasure Trove.”

³²³ Anon., “Could You Be Tyntesfield’s 1 Millionth Visitor.” <<http://www.ntsouthwest.co.uk/2012/08/tyntesfield-prepares-to-welcome-its-1-millionth-visitor/>> Accessed March 23, 2013.

³²⁴ Owens, “Easton Neston Revived,” 1.

³²⁵ Anon., “Part of Country House Estate Sold.”

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Owens, “Easton Neston Revived,” 1; Anon., “The Measure of Easton Neston.”

³²⁸ Beckett, “The Country House Revealed – Easton Neston, Northamptonshire”; Owens, “Easton Neston Revived,” 3.

in 2007, and once again the “past disasters” like the Mentmore debacle, were referenced.³²⁹ It was, however, not the first time John Crichton-Stuart, 7th Marquess of Bute, had tried to sell the house or transfer it into care. The Marquess had approached the National Trust Scotland, first in 1994, when faced with tremendous death duties, and again in 2004.³³⁰ The NTS declined the property both times.³³¹ In 2007, Historic Scotland ‘declined to support the campaign financially and declared that Dumfries House could not be saved.’³³² In mid-2007, it was announced that the house was to be sold through Savills, while the contents would be sold at auction through Christie’s.³³³ SAVE stepped in and lobbied the Scottish government, along with the NHMF and private donors, to raise the £25 million required to purchase the house and the contents.³³⁴ Charles, Prince of Wales, stepped in two weeks prior to the auction, offered a £20 million loan to secure the house through his Charities Foundation.³³⁵ Along with £25 million from other sources, such as the Scottish government, the NHMF, and the supermarket chain Morrisons, enough money was raised to halt the auction and purchase the house.³³⁶ The house opened to the public in June 2008 and is managed by The Great Steward of Scotland’s Dumfries House Trust.³³⁷

Even with these historic sales and national efforts to rescue collections and houses from the auction block, Clive Aslet, Editor-at-Large for *Country Life*, suggested in a *Telegraph* article in 2010 that country houses were “in surprisingly good health”.³³⁸ In the short article he discusses the problems that have faced owners in recent years and that it is now relatively easy to diversify income streams. The Duke of Buccleuch, in his paper at the Attingham Trust conference in 2012, examined the recent approaches taken to the diversification of income across the

³²⁹ White, “Dumfries House.”

³³⁰ Wales, “Conserving Scotland’s ‘Save of the Century’.”

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ Cornwell, “Bid to Save House for Nation Looks Doomed.”

³³⁴ “SAVE Newsletter,” 1–2.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*; Annabel Freyberg, “Dumfries House.”

³³⁶ Freyberg, “Dumfries House.”

³³⁷ Cramb, “Stately Home Dumfries House Finally Opened to the Public.”

³³⁸ Aslet, “Country Houses Like Chatsworth Still Provide a Gold Standard.”

Buccleuch Estates, and encouraged other owners to follow suit.³³⁹ Aslet, however is more optimistic about the impact of contents auctions and commercialising the country house than the Duke of Buccleuch or Lord Montagu. Aslet is correct in saying that owners and houses have come through a great deal of difficulty, but it is difficult to think of them as in “good health”. Increasing taxes, the cost of vital repairs, and decreasing visitor numbers will take a toll on privately owned houses.³⁴⁰ Houses in care also face a ‘stable for now’ future, but with drastic budget cuts for organisations such as English Heritage, the future of the country house is still unclear.³⁴¹

This chapter has charted the decline of the country house. There is not one single issue that is responsible for the destruction of so many houses from the late-nineteenth-century to mid-twentieth-century, but rather a combination of events that worked together to destabilise the economic power of their owners. The agricultural depression and the First and Second World Wars, created an environment that made country house ownership too expensive to maintain. Efforts to save the country house were made through the National Trust’s country house scheme in the interwar period and the Gowers’ Report following World War Two. Even then, nearly 400 houses were demolished between 1945 and 1955. The *Destruction* exhibition at the V&A brought the plight of the country house to the national stage. While the future of the country house has been stabilised since this exhibition, it is by no means safe. The houses are expensive to maintain and both owners and heritage organisations are struggling in the current economic climate.

The next chapter will explore the country house as an aspect of the heritage industry. It investigates the development and standardisation of the country visit from the eighteenth-century to the twenty-first-century. The approaches taken to interpretation and presentation of intact and ruinous country houses by heritage organisations are examined. These approaches will be used to illustrate the stage conservation of these sites, and how the country house ruin disrupts this experience.

³³⁹ The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, “The Buccleuch Estates.”

³⁴⁰ Aslet, “Country Houses Like Chatsworth Still Provide a Gold Standard.”

³⁴¹ Fulcher, “Spending Review.”

Chapter Three

The Country House Visit

‘It is a truth universally acknowledged that a country house not in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a heritage tourist.’³⁴²

The standard country house visit, enjoyed by millions each year at hundreds of houses across Britain, has deep and complex roots. This chapter explores the development of the country house visit from its seventeenth-century beginnings, through to the professionalization of the visit in the twentieth century by heritage organisations, such as the National Trust and English Heritage. The development of ruins visiting will be charted alongside that of country house visiting. This chapter also explores the development of different approaches to interpretation and conservation. Using these standard methods of interpretation, presentation and conservation, the standard country house visit will be defined and analysed. Finally, the country house ruin will be situated within the standard country house visit, illustrating the ways in which the ruin disrupts the standard visit.

Origins of Country House and Ruins Visiting

Seventeenth-Century Country House Visiting

Country House visiting in the seventeenth century differed greatly from eighteenth century and even present day visiting. It was not until after the Restoration that leisure travel became more common, but even then, it was restricted to the wealthier classes and was ‘still in its infancy’.³⁴³ It was during this era that travel writing also became popular. Writers, such as William Camden and Celia Fiennes, chronicled their travels around Britain, giving details on the estates

³⁴² Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 115.

³⁴³ Harris, “Country House Guidebooks, 1740-1840,” 58; Tinniswood, *Polite*, 65.

they passed through and houses they visited.³⁴⁴ Fiennes, on her 1697 visit to Chatsworth, wrote a thorough description of the house and grounds. Although done unintentionally, the detail of the description and order in which she moves through the house, in essence takes the reader on a tour of Chatsworth.

Typically the seventeenth-century tourist was very interested in the art kept in house collections. Tourists visited houses to see paintings, tapestries, and sculpture, but in actuality, they simply wanted to be dazzled. The early tourist ‘was ready to be impressed and amazed by anything which was outside his normal sphere of experience.’³⁴⁵ It was during the late seventeenth century that methods for managing “tourists” were being developed. Senior members of house staff who were normally responsible for vetting visitors ‘asking for hospitality, came to do the same with tourists, and often showed them over the house’.³⁴⁶

Eighteenth-Century Country House Visiting

The eighteenth century saw the start of the popularization and the formalization of country house visiting; this is when ‘modern tourism began to emerge’.³⁴⁷ Many houses continued the seventeenth century practice of members of the domestic staff acting as tour guide for the visitors. The most famous of these housekeeper/guides is probably Mrs. Garnett from Kedleston.³⁴⁸ Mrs. Garnett was employed as a housekeeper at Kedleston from 1766 to 1809, and during her time as housekeeper and guide, she famously showed Dr. Samuel Johnson and James Boswell around the house.³⁴⁹ A portrait of her, holding a printed guide to the house, is still hung in the Smoking Room at Kedleston. However, by the mid-eighteenth century “the public was demanding not only the right of entry to country houses, but a more authoritative and comprehensive account of their contents than a

³⁴⁴ See Fiennes *Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary* (1888) and Camden *Britannia: or, A chorographical description of the flourishing kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the islands adjacent; from the earliest antiquity* (1610)

³⁴⁵ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 53.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 65.

³⁴⁷ Ousby, *The Englishman’s England*, 65.

³⁴⁸ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 104.

³⁴⁹ Staniforth, “Building for Tomorrow’s Visitors,” 23; Johnson, *A Diary of a Journey Into North Wales, in the Year 1774*, 26.

housekeeper could provide.”³⁵⁰ To meet with this growing demand, houses began to publish guidebooks for their collections and estate.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the new guidebooks, much like the tours of the seventeenth century, focused primarily on art collections.³⁵¹ Most country houses only published one edition of their guide, the exceptions being large houses such as Stowe House, Buckinghamshire and Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire.³⁵² These larger houses were publishing single commemorative guides by the 1730s and commercial ones by the 1740s to meet with the demand of the growing number of Polite tourists.³⁵³ With this growing number of Polite tourists, who were interested not only in paintings, but also the architecture of the house, the focus of the guides began to shift. It was during the mid-eighteenth-century that the guidebook format was established.³⁵⁴ The newly established format for guidebooks contained three essentials: genealogy of the family, descriptions of the house and gardens and a room-by-room account of the paintings.³⁵⁵

‘After the purchase of a Catalogue and the entrance of our names in the porter’s book, we proceeded to the investigation of the house.’³⁵⁶ This account of a country house visit in 1780 is how many visits began following the adoption of the guidebook. However, while some houses allowed visitors to roam around the house once a guidebook had been purchased, the adoption of a guidebook at a country house did not necessarily mean that visitors were allowed to explore the house unaccompanied.³⁵⁷ Even without guides or guidebooks in the eighteenth century, the length of published accounts, like those by antiquarians William Bray and Samuel Pegge, show that visitors spent a great deal of time investigating the house and wider site.³⁵⁸ Longer visits like these became common practice in the mid to late-

³⁵⁰ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 94.

³⁵¹ Harris, “Country House Guidebooks, 1740-1840,” 62.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁵³ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 99.

³⁵⁴ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 85; Harris, “Country House Guidebooks, 1740-1840,” 68.

³⁵⁵ Harris, “Country House Guidebooks, 1740-1840,” 68.

³⁵⁶ Anonymous quote in Moir, “Touring Country Houses in the 18th Century,” 586.

³⁵⁷ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 10.

³⁵⁸ Moir, “Touring Country Houses in the 18th Century,” 586.

eighteenth century, rather than the short visits by seventeenth century tourists like Celia Fiennes.³⁵⁹

Many country house owners found the growing numbers of tourists difficult to handle and a constant irritant. Some owners issued tickets, typically accompanied by a set of rules, in an attempt to manage the numbers wandering through their houses.³⁶⁰ The most famous of these ticket-issuing owners is Horace Walpole, who referred to visitors to Strawberry Hill as worse than the plague.³⁶¹ Those that wanted to visit Strawberry Hill were required to apply in writing to Strawberry Hill or to Walpole at his residence in central London.³⁶² Once receiving their ticket, visitors were only allowed to tour the house on the date specified and only between the hours of twelve and three.³⁶³ Additionally, ‘they who have tickets are desired not to bring children’.³⁶⁴ Many owners chose to open their houses only during the summer, as it was easier to accommodate tourists when they were not in residence.³⁶⁵ However, specific opening hours and days were still set to allow normal life in the house to continue.³⁶⁶

Normally, eighteenth-century country house owners opened their houses to display items collected on the Grand Tour and other travels of this sort. Adrian Tinniswood writes ‘Henry Hoare at Stourhead, the Earl of Exeter at Burghley, Thomas Coke at Holkham, and William Windham at Felbrigg were just a few of the patrons who drew together works of art while on the Grand Tour, as pictures by Claude, Poussin and Salvator Rosa...made their appearance in the galleries and halls of the English landed classes.’³⁶⁷ The displays of these collections were an illustration of their power.³⁶⁸ But these collections also had educational value. By providing access to many aspects of the Grand Tour, the country house visit replaced the Grand Tour itself during the period at the end of the eighteenth century

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 93.

³⁶¹ Walpole, “To Mann 30 July 1783,” 423.

³⁶² Walpole, “Book of Visitors,” 220.

³⁶³ Ibid.

³⁶⁴ Ibid.

³⁶⁵ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 9.

³⁶⁶ Ibid.

³⁶⁷ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 73.

³⁶⁸ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 8.

and the beginning of the nineteenth when travel to the Continent was not possible.³⁶⁹

Eighteenth- and Early-Nineteenth-Century Ruins visiting

While on the Grand Tour, along with collecting art, country house owners became enamored with the picturesque quality of ancient ruins; they returned to Britain wanting to incorporate ruins into the designs of their houses and gardens. Owners saw the ruins as a ‘visible testimony of their ancestry’, a link between them and ancient Rome.³⁷⁰ Ruins quickly became a major part of the new ‘natural’ English park, which was a reaction against the formal, planned French park.³⁷¹ James “Athenian” Stuart was commissioned to decorate Shugborough with classical ruins in the 1760s and Robert Adam was commissioned to design artificial ruins for Kedleston in 1759.³⁷² At Virginia Water in Windsor Great Park, architectural salvage from Leptis Magna was used by Sir Jeffrey Wyattville in his creation of a “Picturesque” monument in the park in 1827.³⁷³ Some missing portions were filled in during the eighteenth century, but there was no attempt to fully re-create the temple.³⁷⁴

Domestic ruins were also used to create Picturesque landscapes at country houses. An early example is Sir John Vanbrugh’s campaign to save Woodstock Manor, the medieval house on the grounds of Blenheim Palace. In his *Reasons Offer’d for Preserving Some Part of the Old Manor*, written in June 1709, made the case for the preservation of the house, citing its historical association with King Henry II and Rosamund Clifford.³⁷⁵ His supplemental argument for its preservation focused on its value in the landscape. If the house were allowed to stand, it would remain ‘One of the Most Agreeable Objects that the best of Lanskip Painters can

³⁶⁹ Montagu, *The Gilt and the Gingerbread*, 19.

³⁷⁰ Baridon, “Ruins as a Mental Construct,” 88.

³⁷¹ Zucker, *Fascination of Decay*, 195.

³⁷² *Ibid.*, 221 and 209.

³⁷³ “The Ruins at Virginia Water, Past and Present,” 5–6.

³⁷⁴ Zucker, *Fascination of Decay*, 206–207.

³⁷⁵ Whistler, *Sir John Vanbrugh, Architect and Dramatist, 1664-1726*, 302.

invent', undoubtedly enhancing the view from Blenheim.³⁷⁶ Lord Feversham of Duncombe Park and William Aislabie of Studley Royal pursued the fashion of including a ruin in their gardens as an eye-catching garden ornament' to an even greater degree. Both Duncombe Park and Studley Royal were built within close proximity of the ruined Yorkshire Cistercian Abbeys, Rievaulx and Fountains, respectively.³⁷⁷ At Studley Royal, Fountains Abbey was used as a decorative feature by Aislabie, which then prompted Lord Feversham to arrange Picturesque views of Rievaulx from Duncombe Park.³⁷⁸

It was during this time that ruins became more valuable than the sum of their parts. They had 'acquired an economic value as a means of attracting tourists and the custom of well-heeled visitors' rather than just being seen as a repository of available building materials.³⁷⁹ The popularity of ruins and the Picturesque changed visiting behaviour. Sites that had, in the early eighteenth century, been considered too 'wild' for polite society, were becoming acceptable tourist destinations.³⁸⁰ Ruined sites 'were found to provide curious contrasts to the well-manicured house and garden, and by the late eighteenth century to hold aesthetic value of their own.'³⁸¹

The interest in classical ruins transferred to domestic ones. 'It was as if the corpses of abbeys and castles had been given a second life by artists and "men of feeling".'³⁸² Antiquarians, such as William Stukeley and Nathaniel and Samuel Buck, began recording the ruins of Britain. Stukeley published his *Itinerarium Curiosum* in 1724 and the Bucks published over 400 prints of ruins in their *Views of Antiquities* between 1726 and 1742.³⁸³ The illustrations of ruins by Stukeley and the Bucks brothers were straightforward, detailed

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 303. Vanbrugh had taken up residence at Woodstock Manor during the construction of Blenheim Palace, so his desire to maintain the house was more related to the preservation of his home, than to preservation of views or historical association (Woodward, pp.118-9)

³⁷⁷ Ousby, *The Englishman's England*, 88.

³⁷⁸ Baridon, "Ruins as a Mental Construct," 89.

³⁷⁹ Sweet, *Antiquaries*, 297–298.

³⁸⁰ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 11.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Woodward, *In Ruins*, 124.

³⁸³ Thompson, *Ruins*, 15; Kennedy, "Antiquity and Improvement in the National Landscape: The Buck's Views of Antiquities 1726-42," 488–489.

depictions. The shift towards the Romantic came through artists J.M.W. Turner and Paul Sandby later in the century.³⁸⁴

The Picturesque, Romantic ruins depicted by Turner and Sandby acted as a powerful trigger for nostalgia. The ruins depicted created pathways to the past for visitors, while simultaneously indicating that the past was no longer accessible.³⁸⁵ Joseph Michael Gandy, a pupil of Sir John Soane, saw London as a new Rome.³⁸⁶ His *An imagined view of the Bank of England in ruins*, painted in 1830, illustrated the inevitable fall of the British Empire, like Rome before it.³⁸⁷ Like Gandy, Turner used his studies of ruins to ‘represent the glories of English civilization’ and communicate ‘his belief in the inevitability of empires’.³⁸⁸ Although artists used ruins as *memento mori*, it was the aesthetic of the ruins that attracted the public.

For Romantic tourists in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries, the past was ‘of minimal interest: only the sublime or timeless mattered.’³⁸⁹ The ruin was an element in the landscape ‘to stimulate and excite the onlooker’.³⁹⁰ By the end of the eighteenth century, authors, like William Gilpin, were publishing guides aimed at visitors interested in visiting Picturesque locations, such as the Wye Valley.³⁹¹ Gilpin established a formulaic approach to the painting of ruins, specifying how the picture should be arranged and what should be included.³⁹² For example, he stated that ‘A ruin unadorned by the appropriate vegetation is “incomplete”’.³⁹³ His work helped to create the popularity of the look of dilapidation and decay that began in the eighteenth century and is still present in the twenty-first century.³⁹⁴

³⁸⁴ Nottingham Castle Museum, *Ruins in British Romantic Art from Wilson to Turner*, 6.

³⁸⁵ Huyssen, “Nostalgia for Ruins,” 7.

³⁸⁶ Woodward, *In Ruins*, 164.

³⁸⁷ “Soane’s London: The Bank of England.”

³⁸⁸ Musson, *English Ruins*, 13.

³⁸⁹ Troost, “Filming Tourism, Portraying Pemberley,” 478.

³⁹⁰ Thompson, *Ruins*, 15.

³⁹¹ Gilpin, *Observations on the River Wye*.

³⁹² Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 115–116; Gilpin, *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty, Made in the Year 1772*,.

³⁹³ Thomas, “Assembling History: Fragments and Ruins,” 182.

³⁹⁴ Stead, “The Value of Ruins: Allegories of Destruction in Benjamin and Speer,” 53.

Nineteenth-Century Country House Visiting

As a part of a more general cultural shift, the beginning of the century saw an enormous number of country houses opening to the public.³⁹⁵ By the mid-nineteenth century, more than one hundred houses were featured in guides on the open houses in England, with houses near urban areas becoming increasingly popular.³⁹⁶ Ticketing became more common in the nineteenth century, but was more a means of control than money making, as the decision to open a house in the nineteenth century was a ‘cultural and political gesture’ and ‘not a commercial transaction’.³⁹⁷ Most houses were open during the summer, just as they were in the eighteenth century, but there were exceptions.³⁹⁸ Haddon Hall, Derbyshire and Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire, were open all year.³⁹⁹ When houses were open while the families were in residence, the family moved to more private areas of the houses to accommodate the tourists.⁴⁰⁰

The increase in open days at Haddon Hall and Compton Wynyates is unsurprising. The rise in number of accounts of visits to Bolsover might also be related to the increasing Victorian interest in the ‘Olden Time’. Mandler defines the “Olden Time” as ‘broadly the period between medieval rudeness and aristocratic over-refinement, the time of the Tudors and early Stuarts’.⁴⁰¹ This interest emerged in contemporary country house literature. Joseph Nash published the first volume of his *Mansions of England in the Olden Time* in 1839. These heavily illustrated books focused on the history of the architecture, as re-peopling the houses, providing readers with a romanticized view of life in the Tudor and Stuart periods.

In the mid-nineteenth-century three new types of guidebook emerged. These new types included first person accounts of visits, like William Howitt’s *Visits to Remarkable Places* (1840), as well as site-specific guidebooks, with detailed information on one house. A large number of this type was produced in the nineteenth century. Practical guidebooks, which featured itineraries, train

³⁹⁵ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 71.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 76; Tinniswood, *Polite*, 137.

³⁹⁷ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 142; Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 198 and 71.

³⁹⁸ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 79.

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁴⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

timetables, architectural descriptions, as well as information on the art collections, and a history of the family, grew in popularity throughout the century. The inclusion of family history fits with the growing Victorian interest in “how the other half lived”.⁴⁰²

Curiously, country house visiting was at its height in the 1870s, right at the start of the agricultural depression.⁴⁰³ However, the mid-to-late-nineteenth-century saw the closure of many country houses.⁴⁰⁴ The reason for the closures was less associated with financial hardship than with a change in aristocratic feeling towards visitors. The older generation of owners tolerated, and to a degree valued, the growth of country house tourism. The newer generation, however, were less interested in sharing their space with the public.⁴⁰⁵ Many country house owners in the mid-to-late-nineteenth-century shared Horace Walpole’s feeling towards the visitors to Strawberry Hill in the 1780s.⁴⁰⁶

John Harris states, ‘except for the few really great houses, the mansions of our Victorian ancestors were generally closed to the public’.⁴⁰⁷ These closures angered local residents who had enjoyed the open access to the parks and houses.⁴⁰⁸ The first publication of *Country Life* in 1897 was specifically aimed at this demographic, those ‘city dwellers who yearned to experience the joys of the country’.⁴⁰⁹ Tourists continued to be welcomed at “Olden Time” mansions, which remained open throughout the nineteenth century. These houses remained quite popular with tourists because they were seen to be a ‘part of the common heritage’.⁴¹⁰ Visitor numbers grew at houses like Knole, Kent and Warwick Castle, Warwickshire.⁴¹¹ Old Wardour Castle, Wiltshire, became more popular than the Palladian New Castle with visitors during this time.⁴¹²

⁴⁰² The information in this paragraph was derived from Tinniswood, *Polite*, 145-158

⁴⁰³ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 196.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., 209.

⁴⁰⁶ Littlejohn, *Fate*, 166.

⁴⁰⁷ Harris, “Country House Guidebooks, 1740-1840,” 69.

⁴⁰⁸ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 204.

⁴⁰⁹ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 161.

⁴¹⁰ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 88.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., 86.

⁴¹² Ibid.

The closure of houses in the nineteenth century led to a shift in tourist interests, including a revival in visits to ruins.⁴¹³ This was related to the spate of antiquarian accounts of these sites during the century. Antiquarians in the early to mid-nineteenth century, when including buildings in their books ‘most often chose to write about medieval secular...ruins’ for ‘they knew that their audience would have relatively free access to these sites’.⁴¹⁴ Many visitors enjoyed the atmosphere created by a medieval ruin. An image of the ruins of Netley Abbey appeared in the Penny Magazine in 1883 with the caption ‘a popular early Victorian picnicking spot’.⁴¹⁵ Kirby Hall was visited frequently in the nineteenth century, with tour groups visiting the ruin as early as 1882.⁴¹⁶ There was a shift in the style of house frequented by tourists, with arts and crafts style houses becoming increasingly popular by the turn of the century.⁴¹⁷ Garden visiting also increased during this time.⁴¹⁸

Twentieth-Century Country House Visiting

The country house visit became increasingly commercialised from the turn of the century and ‘by the inter-war years, the tourist industry had become a well-established part of British social and economic life’.⁴¹⁹ The earliest commercially run house is Warwick Castle, which has been open to the public since 1885.⁴²⁰ For the houses that were open during the early decades of the twentieth century, their popularity with tourists was greatly affected by the growing popularity of the automobile. In 1919 there were 250,000 cars on the road in Britain, rising to 1.5 million in 1929.⁴²¹ Car based tour guidebooks, such as the Dunlop Guide in 1925, became increasingly popular.⁴²² Reminiscent of accounts written by Fiennes and Camden nearly three centuries earlier, these new guidebooks provided motorists with places of interest and historic information, along with maps of suggested

⁴¹³ Ibid., 214.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 40.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 41.

⁴¹⁶ *Gentlemen from the Architectural Association*.

⁴¹⁷ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 214.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 217.

⁴¹⁹ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 159.

⁴²⁰ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 219.

⁴²¹ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 153.

⁴²² Ibid., 154.

tours of Britain. These new guides also paved the way for authors such as Nikolaus Pevsner, who published the first in his *Buildings of England* series in 1951.

As stated in Chapter Two, the stately home business began following the Second World War. Heritage scholar Laurajane Smith has noted that there were three major social changes that led to the rise in country house visits during this time. There was first an increase in leisure time; second, greater mobility, related to the growth in car ownership experienced in the interwar period; and third, the emergence of a disposable income.⁴²³ With the increase in donations to the National Trust via the country house scheme, the number of private owners receiving HBC grant funding, the number of houses open to the public on a regular basis skyrocketed during the first two decades after the War, with some 599 houses open to the public by 1966.⁴²⁴

The growth in country house tourism grew alongside the related literature. Post war tourists needed information on what houses were open to tourists and Barbara Freeman's *Open to View: English Country Houses You Can Visit and How to Find Them*, published in 1952, is just one example of the guides being published during this time. *Open to View* was, in essence, a manual to country house visiting, giving tourists a description of houses and their families, along with location maps, opening hours and prices. Guides like *Open to View* were more tailored to the country house visitor than Pevsner's *Buildings of England*, which were being published at a rate of nearly one per year from 1951. Houses were soon featured on television news programmes. In 1959, reporting for Midland Montage, an ATV regional news programme, Jenny Martin visited Stoneleigh Abbey. Martin conducted short *vox populi* interviews with a guide at the house, as well as members of the public visiting the house. One visitor stated that he found visiting a country house 'a very pleasant way of spending a holiday afternoon', offering support to the view that a visit to a country house had become an established aspect of post-war British leisure time activity.⁴²⁵

The habit of country house visiting that developed in the Georgian and Victorian periods had a voyeuristic element. Guests toured the houses to see how the other

⁴²³ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 121.

⁴²⁴ Montagu, *The Gilt and the Gingerbread*, 17.

⁴²⁵ *Midland Montage*.

half lived, a habit which continued in post-war visiting.⁴²⁶ In this new era of country house visiting, the voyeurism of the previous centuries had developed into ‘middle-class yearning for contact with a more opulent lifestyle’.⁴²⁷ In Martin’s interviews with visitors at Stoneleigh Abbey, one visitor noted that her favourite room in the house was the drawing room because of ‘all the red plush furniture and the gilts and the candelabra in the middle’.⁴²⁸

The interest in the lives of the owners soon developed into a style of presentation adopted by owners and heritage organisations, soon becoming ‘an essential ingredient in the visitor’s experience’.⁴²⁹ At Woburn Abbey, although no longer living at the house, the Duke of Bedford chose to present the house as if the family were still in residence.⁴³⁰ The Duchess “‘‘had succeeded most cleverly in arranging the main state-rooms for show while still making them look as if they were lived in’’” giving the visitors the view into the aristocratic lifestyle they came to see, while living elsewhere.⁴³¹ The Duke realized that he was, in fact, the main attraction, not the furnishings or the history. He soon began taking walks through the house during open hours and even worked in the gift shop, much to the delight of visitors, who then spent a great deal more on souvenirs.⁴³² Lord Montagu did much the same thing at Beaulieu. Unlived in areas were presented to the public as lived in to ‘maximize human interest’ in the house.⁴³³ Television has also had a major impact on country house visiting in the late twentieth-century. Visitor numbers at Castle Howard increased to 250,000 following the 1981 Granada production of *Brideshead Revisited* for ITV.⁴³⁴

Twentieth-Century Ruins Visiting

Traditional ruins visiting virtually disappeared in the early to mid-twentieth century. In the Pevsner guides, ‘Ruins were not ignored, although they were not a

⁴²⁶ Montagu, *The Gilt and the Gingerbread*, 25.

⁴²⁷ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 194.

⁴²⁸ *Midland Montage*.

⁴²⁹ Waterfield, *Opening Doors*, 19.

⁴³⁰ Tinniswood, *Polite*, 185.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*

⁴³² *Ibid.*

⁴³³ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 382.

⁴³⁴ Lyons, “‘A Film’s Home Is Its Castle’”; Cardwell, *Adaptation Revisited*, 222.

primary consideration'.⁴³⁵ By the late twentieth to early-twenty-first century, ruins visiting had re-emerged, with abandoned industrial buildings replacing the traditional ruined castles and abbeys visited in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Urban Explorers, or Urbexers, have replaced the polite tourists. Urban exploration is somewhat of a misnomer as abandoned country houses have been visited, but are less popular than industrial sites. John Harris and his exploration of decaying country houses in *No Voice from the Hall*, could be considered a type of urban exploration. Urban exploration is popular worldwide.⁴³⁶ American cities such as Detroit, as well as British cities such as Manchester are especially popular. Although the sites have changed, the emotions involved are similar to those of early artists and tourists. What appeals to these modern visitors is the decline of empire.

Capturing the essence of the ruins is as important to the Urbexers, as it was to their historic counterparts. Urbexers are the tourists and the artists in twenty-first century ruins visiting. The photographs captured by Urbexers have been categorised under the term "Ruins Porn".⁴³⁷ These images are most popularly distributed via social media outlets such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr. While the photographs of urban exploration excursions are most prominently displayed on the Internet, more traditional avenues have been taken to share the photographs. French Urbex photographers, Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre, have exhibited their photographs of the ruins of Detroit in galleries around the world.⁴³⁸

In her paper *Ruins Revisited: Modernist conceptions of Heritage*, Brigitte Desrochers argues that in the twentieth century ruins stopped being 'objects of desire, precious anachronisms for adventurers to appropriate'.⁴³⁹ However, Urbexers desire to visit

⁴³⁵ Thompson, *Ruins Reused*, 51.

⁴³⁶ For Example: <http://www.28dayslater.co.uk/forums/>; <http://www.ukurbex.co.uk/>; <http://www.placehacking.co.uk/>; <http://detroiturbex.com/>

⁴³⁷ Greco, "The Psychology of Ruin Porn." <<http://www.theatlanticcities.com/design/2012/01/psychology-ruin-porn/886/>> Accessed September 21, 2013.

⁴³⁸ Tristan Hoare Gallery, "Yves Marchand & Romain Meffre: The Ruins of Detroit" <http://www.tristanhoare.co.uk/exhibitions_detroit.htm> Accessed March 11, 2013.; Edwynn Houk Gallery, "Yves Marchand & Romain Meffre: The Ruins of Detroit." <www.houkgallery.com/exhibitions/2013-03-14_yves-marchand-and-romain-meffre/> Accessed August 20, 2013.

⁴³⁹ Desrochers, "Ruins Revisited: Modernist Conceptions of Heritage," 35.

these ruins, to find new sites, to have new experiences. These new experiences are “more about the sense of ownership than anything else”.⁴⁴⁰ Visiting these modern ruins has become a ritual whereby Urbexers visit sites multiple times to fully experience the site.⁴⁴¹ Much like their eighteenth and nineteenth century predecessors, twentieth- and twenty-first century visitors explore these sites to commune with nature and the past.⁴⁴² Through these visits, Urbexers are able to engage, mentally and physically with the ruin, and begin to see the industrial ruins as a form of *memento mori*.⁴⁴³

Professor Tim Edensor suggests that Urbexers seek “to create a relationship that’s not been museumized or curated by experts”.⁴⁴⁴ These ruins allow for freedom of movement and experience not typically available to tourists.⁴⁴⁵ They allow for an escape from the ‘over regulated public spaces’ of the modern age.⁴⁴⁶ These sites, along with the intimate engagement with space, are precious to the twenty-first ruins visitor. If sites are “saved” and enter care, Urbexers advocate for the protection of the essence of the ruin, so that future visitors can engage with the sites in similar ways.⁴⁴⁷

The Heritage Industry

The heritage industry of the twentieth-century created the modern country house visit. Like the private owners, heritage organisations were designing their perfect country house visit during this period. Their history was mentioned briefly in Chapter Two, but will now be discussed in greater depth. This section will focus on the acquisition of houses by the National Trust and English Heritage, as well as the approaches taken to the interpretation and conservation of the country houses and ruins in their care.

⁴⁴⁰ Greco, “The Psychology of Ruin Porn.”

⁴⁴¹ McNamara, “What Kind of Space(s) Do Ruins Produce?”.

<<http://tryingtobeanarchitect.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/what-kind-of-spaces-do-ruins-produce.html>> Accessed April 27 2013

⁴⁴² Bailey, *The National Trust Book of Ruins*, 9–10.

⁴⁴³ McNamara, “What Kind of Space(s) Do Ruins Produce?”.

⁴⁴⁴ Edensor in Greco, “The Psychology of Ruin Porn.”

⁴⁴⁵ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins Spaces, Aesthetics, and Materiality*, 87.

⁴⁴⁶ McNamara, “What Kind of Space(s) Do Ruins Produce?”.

⁴⁴⁷ Ousby, *The Englishman’s England*, 86.

Founded in 1895 by Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, one of the main aims of the National Trust was to promote ‘the permanent preservation for the benefit of the nation of lands and tenements (including buildings) of beauty or historic interest’.⁴⁴⁸ As stated in Chapter Two, the National Trust began a major campaign to save the country houses of Britain in 1934, through the Country House Scheme, established by Lord Lothian. Currently the Trust cares for ninety-nine country houses, three of which are in ruins.⁴⁴⁹

The Trust’s first country house acquisitions were gifts the Trust felt obligated to accept and ‘did not reflect a coherent or concerted country house policy’.⁴⁵⁰ Barrington Court, Somerset was the first country house acquired by the Trust.⁴⁵¹ When the house passed into care in 1907, it was in an unfurnished and dilapidated state.⁴⁵² With no funds available for restoration, the Trust leased the house to Colonel A.A. Lyle, who funded the restoration of the property from 1921-1925.⁴⁵³ Although Lyle was funding the restoration project, the Trust supervised all work completed on site.⁴⁵⁴ Previously leased as a showroom to a reproduction furniture company, the house is now interpreted in an unfurnished state. From April to August 2012, Antony Gormley’s *Field for the British Isles* was installed in three rooms at Barrington Court, as a part of the Trust New Art Programme.⁴⁵⁵

Montacute House, Somerset was the first house to be gifted to the Trust. Ernest Cook, heir to the Thomas Cook fortune, purchased the house and presented it, along with the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, to the National Trust in 1931.⁴⁵⁶ At the time of acquisition, the house was empty. Over the past 80

⁴⁴⁸ “National Trust Act 1907,” 4. Section 4.

⁴⁴⁹ Calculated using the “Find a Place to Visit” search function on the National Trust website

⁴⁵⁰ Cannadine, “The First Hundred Years,” 19.

⁴⁵¹ Cannadine, *In Churchill’s Shadow*, 228.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

⁴⁵³ Hussey, “Barrington Court II, The Seat of Colonel A.A. Lyle,” 404; Hussey, “Barrington Court I, The Seat of Colonel A.A. Lyle,” 370.

⁴⁵⁴ Hussey, “Barrington Court I, The Seat of Colonel A.A. Lyle,” 370.

⁴⁵⁵ Anon., “Antony Gormley’s ‘Field for the British Isles’ Arrives at Barrington Court.”

⁴⁵⁶ “Obituary: Mr. E. E. Cook”; “The National Trust in 1931. Acquisitions of Great Beauty.”

years the National Trust has worked to fill the house with furniture and currently displays over 50 Tudor and Jacobean paintings on permanent loan from the National Portrait Gallery.⁴⁵⁷

Blickling Hall, Lord Lothian's Jacobean country house in Norfolk, was left to the Trust for a specific purpose: to encourage the growth of the Country House Scheme.⁴⁵⁸ In his bequest Lord Lothian stressed that the house was to be open to the public.⁴⁵⁹ As was previously discussed in Chapter Two, the Country House Scheme was a response to the predicament faced by country house owners in the mid-twentieth century.⁴⁶⁰ Matching Hill's desire for Trust properties to be self-sufficient, Lord Lothian's plan called for the revenue to come from rents from owners and heirs who were still residents in the properties, as well as visitor fees.⁴⁶¹

Although it was an aim of the Trust to resist shifts in contemporary fashion regarding their acquisitions, many of the early houses were Medieval or Tudor in origin. As the founders shared similar beliefs with Ruskin and Morris, they were particularly keen on saving buildings that had survived from the 'heroic Middle Ages'.⁴⁶² By the late 1960s, however, the majority of buildings were from the Georgian period.⁴⁶³ Concurrently, the Trust had started to move their acquisition policy away from country houses, back to their original purpose of saving large portions of coastline, as well as gardens.⁴⁶⁴

The Trust acquired several major country houses in the 1980s. Kingston Lacy, Dorset was bequeathed to the Trust, entering guardianship in 1982.⁴⁶⁵ Throughout the decade the NHMF was used to acquire Calke Abbey, Derbyshire, Belton House, Lincolnshire, and Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire.⁴⁶⁶ In the first decade of the twenty-first century, two houses entered the care of the National Trust.

⁴⁵⁷ National Portrait Gallery, "Montacute House - Room by Room." <<http://www.npg.org.uk/beyond/montacute-house/room-by-room.php>> Accessed August 27, 2013.

⁴⁵⁸ Weideger, *Gilding the Acorn*, 43.

⁴⁵⁹ Fedden, *The Continuing Purpose*, 31.

⁴⁶⁰ Waterson, *The National Trust*, 113.

⁴⁶¹ Fedden, *The Continuing Purpose*, 121 and 127.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, 117.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴ Cannadine, "The First Hundred Years," 24.

⁴⁶⁵ Borders, "A \$40 Million Gift of British History to National Trust."

⁴⁶⁶ Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 81–82.

Tyntestfield, Somerset, was acquired in 2002, the details of which were discussed in Chapter Two. Seaton Delaval, Northumbria, a Vanbrugh-designed country house entered care in 2009, following a massive public campaign.⁴⁶⁷ The National Trust is no longer actively seeking country houses.⁴⁶⁸ However, this does not mean that no acquisitions will be made. Bequests and houses in dire need, such as Tyntesfield and Seaton Delaval, will surely materialize in the future.

English Heritage

As discussed in Chapter Two, English Heritage was established as part of the National Heritage Act of 1983. Prior to this, the work carried out by English Heritage was under the remit of the Ministry of Works and the Office of Works before that. The mission of English Heritage has not changed since its inception in 1983. Their mission statement is to ‘secure the preservation of ancient monuments and historic buildings; promote the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of conservation areas; and promote the public’s enjoyment of, and advance their knowledge of, ancient monuments and buildings’.⁴⁶⁹ The organization cares for nearly 400 historic sites within England, of which twenty-two are country houses. Twelve of these country houses are in ruins.⁴⁷⁰

Although Kirby Hall entered guardianship in 1930, the Ministry of Works did not begin to actively acquire country houses until after the Second World War. The 7th Duke of Portland donated Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire, to the Nation in 1945 and Audley End, Essex was purchased in 1948.⁴⁷¹ Appuldurcombe, Isle of Wight, came into care in 1952.⁴⁷² Later acquisitions included the shell of Witley Court,

⁴⁶⁷ Kennedy, “Public Appeal Helps Save Seaton Delaval Hall”; Swain, “National Trust Saves Seaton Delaval Hall.”

<<http://www.countrylife.co.uk/countryside/article/435491/National-Trust-saves-Seaton-Delaval-Hall.html>> Accessed August 29, 2013

⁴⁶⁸ White, “The National Trust and Its Country Houses,” 85.

⁴⁶⁹ “English Heritage Corporate Plan 2011/2015,” 23.

⁴⁷⁰ See appendix

⁴⁷¹ *Bolsover Castle Conservation Plan*, 213; Pevsner and Bettley, *Essex*, 97.

⁴⁷² Pevsner and Lloyd, *The Isle of Wight*, 66.

Worcestershire in 1972 and the derelict The Grange, Hampshire in 1973.⁴⁷³ The decaying Brodsworth Hall, South Yorkshire, passed into guardianship in 1990.⁴⁷⁴

Apethorpe, Northamptonshire is the most recent house to enter the care of English Heritage. As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Brasseys purchased Apethorpe in 1904. They sold the house in 1949 and it was used as a school until 1982.⁴⁷⁵ Mr. Wanis Mohammed Burweila bought the house in 1982, but was an absentee owner, and reportedly never spent a night in the house.⁴⁷⁶ As he was never on site, the house soon fell into disrepair and has been on the English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register since 1998.⁴⁷⁷ After many failed attempts to contact Mr. Burweila regarding emergency maintenance works, English Heritage took possession of the Hall, following the filing of a compulsory purchase order in 2004.⁴⁷⁸ From 2004, English Heritage has undertaken an extensive programme of restoration works, to prepare the house for sale. The Hall has been open to the public during the programme of works.⁴⁷⁹ The total cost of the project, including purchase price, is estimated to be over £7 million and when the house was last on the market in 2012, it was listed at £2.5 million.⁴⁸⁰ As discussed in the Literature Review, the controversy surrounding the acquisition and the cost of the subsequent stabilisation and repair work was covered heavily in the media.

The Historic Houses Association

The Historic Houses Association (HHA) is a membership organization that provides support and help for private country house owners in Britain. Founded in 1973, with the aid of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, the organization lobbies the government on behalf of its member owners for tax cuts, policy initiatives, and

⁴⁷³ Witley Court; Anon., *The Grange, Northington*.

⁴⁷⁴ Allfrey, "Brodsworth Hall: The Preservation of a Country House," 115.

⁴⁷⁵ Musson, "The Rebirth of Apethorpe Hall."

⁴⁷⁶ Kennedy, "Order to Sell Slapped on Absentee Owner of Rotting Stately Home."

⁴⁷⁷ Ezard, "Purchase Order Served to Save Decaying Manor."

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ English Heritage, "Apethorpe Hall."

⁴⁸⁰ Kennedy, "Restoration Opens Doors on a Royal Scandal after 400 Years"; Hall, "Taxpayer-owned Apethorpe Hall on Sale at Knock-down Price."

listing regulations.⁴⁸¹ The HHA also provides member owners with access to specialist help for the preservation of the houses and collections, as well as financial advice. Over 1,500 owners have joined the organization, with 348 houses open to the public.⁴⁸² Only four of the 348 open houses are ruins.

Interpretation

Standard Methods

The post-war era of country house visiting brought with it a professionalization of interpretation. Shaped by the tours created during the previous two hundred years of country house visiting, heritage organisations developed a set method for the interpretation and presentation of the houses in their care during this era. Good interpretation begins with good visitor management.⁴⁸³ At the house, this starts from the moment the visitor enters the site. Maps of the site, along with signs indicating the location of the car parks, the restrooms and shop, help orientate the visitor and manage his or her experience of the site as a whole.⁴⁸⁴ Historically, country house interpretation relied on the housekeeper guide and, when available, a printed guidebook.⁴⁸⁵ From the 1950s to the present era, English Heritage and the National Trust have utilized four main methods of interpretation, each of which affects the experience and understanding of the house.⁴⁸⁶ These four are as follows: Display or interpretive panels; Guide books; Audio/visual materials; and room stewards.

Display, or interpretive, panels are the most popular method of interpretation.⁴⁸⁷ These panels use text alongside images to convey information to visitors and to direct the visitor's attention to specific aspects of the site. While a

⁴⁸¹ Boylan, *Museums 2000*, 6; "Memorandum Submitted by the Historic Houses Association (HHA)."

⁴⁸² "Historic Houses Association: About Us." <<http://www.hha.org.uk/about-us.html>> Accessed August 29, 2013.

⁴⁸³ Goulding, "Interpretation and Presentation," 65.

⁴⁸⁴ Thompson, *Ruins*, 31; Shackley, "Visitor Management," 70; Brisbane and Wood, *A Future for Our Past?*, 29.

⁴⁸⁵ Waterfield, *Opening Doors*, 115.

⁴⁸⁶ Matero, "Heritage, Conservation, and Archaeology: An Introduction," 1–2.

⁴⁸⁷ Bath, "Audio-tours at Heritage Sites," 108.

popular method, they have several negative qualities. Managing the appropriate amount of text without overpowering or boring the visitor is difficult.⁴⁸⁸ If too many panels are used, they may impact the visitor experience of the house. Some houses are without interpretation, for fear that any signage or displays ‘may detract from the ambience and presumed authenticity of the house’.⁴⁸⁹

Guidebooks, like the interpretive panels, are one of the most popular methods of interpretation. Due to their format, they are able to convey more information in a single space than the display panels. They are typically used to provide in depth information on family history and to describe the contents.⁴⁹⁰ Although they act as a primer to the contents of the house and the former owners, guidebooks cannot cover every aspect of site history. Like the display panels, only items of note are covered in the guidebook. Guidebooks provide the visitor with enough information so that they are able to conduct a self-guided tour of the house. This gives the visitor control over his or her own experience of the house.⁴⁹¹

Audio-visual methods of interpretation are rapidly becoming a popular option for country houses.⁴⁹² These methods include audio-guides, multimedia-guides, as well as internet based interpretation. This new approach to interpretation allows for greater visitor participation. Both the audio-guides and the multimedia-guides act in the same manner as a guidebook. New technology helps visitors imagine that the site is still in use through sounds and structured movement, allowing for a more engaging visit.⁴⁹³

‘Web sites are an exceptionally powerful off-site medium for interpretive information.’⁴⁹⁴ The main websites of the National Trust, English Heritage, and the Historic Houses Association give visitors information on the organization itself. Individual property sites give more detailed history and additional interpretive material, such as areas of the site visitors should not miss during the visit. This information is alongside basic visitor information, such as opening hours. With the

⁴⁸⁸ Brisbane and Wood, *A Future for Our Past?*, 34.

⁴⁸⁹ Smith, “Deference and Humility: The Social Values of the Country House,” 37.

⁴⁹⁰ McManus, “A Visitors’ Guide to the Contents and Use of Guidebooks,” 165.

⁴⁹¹ Abramoff Levy, “Historic House Tours That Succeed: Choosing the Best Tour Approach,” 199.

⁴⁹² Bennett, “AV in the Interpretation of Historic Places,” 32.

⁴⁹³ Batty, “English Heritage: Sharing the Stories of Our Sites.”

⁴⁹⁴ Aplin, *Heritage*, 46.

growing popularity of social media websites, most houses now manage site-specific Facebook and Twitter accounts. These social media accounts alter the visitor/museum relationship. The inherent nature of these accounts shifts the dynamic of house management from the traditional teacher-student relationship to one that promotes public engagement and participation.⁴⁹⁵

Room stewards are a standard country house approach to interpretation. They are a frontline visitor service used in many country houses by providing a personal approach to the presentation of the houses. Unlike docents or tour guides, room stewards are stationed in a specific room in the house. They are available to answer questions visitors may have on less formal basis and also manage the flow of visitors through the room.⁴⁹⁶ Alongside their visitor engagement role, National Trust room stewards also look after the collections on display. Normal security guards were found to detract from the atmosphere of the country house, whereas room stewards aid the “lived-in” quality the Trust presents to the public.⁴⁹⁷ In addition to theft prevention, room stewards also safeguard the collections against damage. As they present in the rooms on a daily basis, they would be the first to notice any change in condition or damage to an object.

Interactive exhibits have recently become a popular form of interpretation, but are not as widely used as the methods discussed above. While antithetical to the museum’s purpose to protect objects, this method gives visitors more control over their site experience. These tactile and digital interactive exhibits challenge the traditional hands-off approach to museum interpretation.⁴⁹⁸ The participatory nature of this method of interpretation increases the educational benefits of a visit to a historic house museum.⁴⁹⁹ Visitors report that interactive exhibits allow them to

⁴⁹⁵ Russo, Watkins, and Groundwater-Smith, “The Impact of Social Media on Informal Learning in Museums,” 160.

⁴⁹⁶ Forsyth and White, *Interior Finishes & Fittings for Historic Building Conservation*, 183.

⁴⁹⁷ McKay, “The Preservation and Presentation of 2 Willow Road for the National Trust,” 158.

⁴⁹⁸ Claessen, “Museum Manners: The Sensory Life of the Early Museum,” 895.

⁴⁹⁹ Falk, Scott, Dierking, Rennie, and Jones, “Interactives and Visitor Learning,” 188.

connect with the history of the site in a more meaningful manner than more traditional forms of interpretation.⁵⁰⁰

Unfortunately, there is not enough time or space to interpret every aspect of the history of a house.⁵⁰¹ Many of these interpretive methods are reliant upon the cultural competence of the visitor.⁵⁰² A country house is seen to be able to ‘speak for itself’; so many aspects of the country house are virtually ignored in standard interpretation.⁵⁰³ Only the main achievements of the family, the architect, and the landscape designer can be covered.⁵⁰⁴ When these main achievements are from one specific era, however, the interpretation risks focusing only on this “golden era”, at the expense of all other eras.⁵⁰⁵

The Interpretation and Presentation of Country Houses

As stated above, the approach to the interpretation of the country house has developed from the eighteenth century. The professionalization of interpretive methods has led to the creation of a standardized approach taken by heritage organisations towards the interpretation of their country houses. The development of the interpretive methods used by the National Trust and English Heritage will now be explored. As stated above, the Historic Houses Association is an umbrella group that acts on behalf of private owners. For this reason there is no organization-wide policy on interpretation. While there is no set interpretive policy for all member houses, education and outreach activities are fundamental to the mission of the Historic Houses Association.⁵⁰⁶ In 2006, the Historic Houses Association launched the Learning Advisory Service, another element of the specialist services provided by the Historic Houses Association.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁰ Bagnall, “Performance and Performativity at Heritage Sites,” 90.

⁵⁰¹ Rumble, “Interpreting the Built and Historic Environment,” 30.

⁵⁰² McIntosh and Prentice, “Affirming Authenticity: Consuming Cultural Heritage,” 591.

⁵⁰³ Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 127.

⁵⁰⁴ Rumble, “Interpreting the Built and Historic Environment,” 60.

⁵⁰⁵ Trigg, “Architecture and Nostalgia in the Age of Ruin,” 8.

⁵⁰⁶ “Historic Houses Association: Learning.”

⁵⁰⁷ “Historic Houses Association: Learning Advisory Service.”

National Trust

Using the methods described above, the National Trust interprets the architecture, furnishings and families. They present the houses as lived-in, shying away from a more “museumised” style. From the outset, the Trust has encouraged owner-occupation. Like Lord Montagu’s experience at Beaulieu, the Trust found that proximity to the aristocratic owners greatly enhanced a visit. The presence of owners on site matches the Trust’s desire for the house to appear more like a residence.⁵⁰⁸ However, Gervase Jackson-Stops has likened the approach to interpretation taken by the National Trust to ‘spoon feeding’.⁵⁰⁹ He posits that the Trust, in an attempt to maintain the atmosphere of a living house, gives visitors information in a set way, instead of allowing the visitor to discover the house on his or her own.⁵¹⁰

In the 1980s, the focus of interpretation shifted to “downstairs” or domestic service life. Erddig, Wrexham, was the first National Trust country house where “below stairs life” was considered important enough to interpret.⁵¹¹ At Erddig, life below stairs is interpreted using costumed interpreters.⁵¹² At Petworth, West Sussex, visitors are able to interact with “Mrs. Brown” during kitchen demonstrations and to explore the refurbished servants’ quarters.⁵¹³ The National Trust currently advertises a collection of thirteen houses where visitors can ‘get a taste of life below stairs’.⁵¹⁴ The interpretation of the “downstairs” has not always sat well with owner-occupiers. In the case of Berrington Hall in Herefordshire, a descendant, Charles Cawsley felt that the Trust was knowingly misrepresenting his grandmother, Lady

⁵⁰⁸ Gervase Jackson-Stops, foreword to *Historic Houses of the National Trust*, by Adrian Tinniswood, 11.

⁵⁰⁹ Jackson-Stops, *foreword*, 11.

⁵¹⁰ Jackson-Stops, *foreword*, 11.

⁵¹¹ Waterfield, *Opening Doors*, 18.

⁵¹² National Trust, “Erddig: Things to See & Do.”

<<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/erddig/things-to-see-and-do>> Accessed April 10, 2013.

⁵¹³ National Trust, “Petworth House and Park: Things to See & Do.”

<<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/petworth-house/things-to-see-and-do/>> Accessed April 10, 2013.

⁵¹⁴ National Trust, “Places: Get a Taste of Life Below Stairs.”

<<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/article-1356401785596>> Accessed April 10, 2013.

Vivienne Cawsley.⁵¹⁵ Mr. Cawsley has said that the servant's quarters at Berrington have been 'changed beyond recognition' and the interpretation based on this revision is skewed, presenting his grandmother in an unfavourable light.⁵¹⁶

From the 1990s the Trust faced two main accusations regarding the interpretation of their country houses. Firstly, Deborah, Duchess of Devonshire, remarked that she felt that the Trust was 'bound by their very being to freeze a house'.⁵¹⁷ Each house was presented at a specific era that the Trust felt was proper and was not allowed to progress into the twentieth century, instead becoming an 'idealized, tightly edited fabrication'.⁵¹⁸ Secondly, the Trust's ambition to "warm things up a bit" at houses such as Calke Abbey in Derbyshire was criticised. Following acquisition, the Trust attempted to maintain the essence of decay present the house. However, the "conserve-as-found" approach backfired with critics, who alleged that the Trust had removed the atmosphere of the Harpur-Crewe family through the process of preparing the house for the public.⁵¹⁹ The conservation and presentation of Calke Abbey will be discussed in greater depth later in this chapter.

In the early twenty-first century, the interpretive policy had started to shift once again. Three words set the tone for the policy: Aspirational, Resonate and Bespoke.⁵²⁰ The plan aimed to have visitors try something new at each property, that there are appropriate activities and interpretation for all types of visitors and that the interpretive plan be created specifically for each site.⁵²¹ Within this new plan are hints as to what the plans are for the Trust during the twenty-first century. The most controversial change has been to adapt the tour to 'appeal to all the senses'.⁵²² The Trust aimed to "re-people" the houses with indications that family members, past and present, had just left the room 'the second before the visitor has

⁵¹⁵ Stokes, "Aristocrat Grandson Accused National Trust of Maligning Her Memory."

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.; Williams, "National Trust."

⁵¹⁷ Weideger, *Gilding the Acorn*, 350.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 341 and 348.

⁵¹⁹ Ibid., 351.

⁵²⁰ Taylor, "The National Trust," 102.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

⁵²² Ibid., 106.

entered' through the lighting of fires and the laying out of food.⁵²³ This practice is an attempt to recreate the 'ambience of the past'.⁵²⁴

Since Sir Simon Jenkins took up his three-year post as Chairman of the National Trust in 2008, the organisation has been heavily criticised for its interpretative policies.⁵²⁵ From the start, Jenkins has aimed to change the perception of the Trust. A Trust publication from 2010 stated, 'some people feel that the Trust is exclusive or remote'.⁵²⁶ To counter this and make properties feel more welcoming, the current approach has been to reduce rules and their associated signage, such as 'don't touch' and 'please follow the carpeted path'.⁵²⁷ In addition, the Trust also aims to make their sites much more of a community project by including the public in their decision-making process, as at Seaton Delaval, Northumberland, or the recently launched virtual *MyFarm* program at Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire. It aims as well to increase versatility by making sites into 'village hall and community centres'.⁵²⁸ Many of these projects fit well with Lord Lothian's original mission not to allow the country houses to turn into "melancholy museums", but rather, they "should continue to nurture creativity, 'setting a standard of beauty in garden and furniture and decoration by which later generations can mould their own practice...'"⁵²⁹

This process though, comes with the apparent disposal of expert staff. The Trust has stated, 'Deciding what is historically significant is no longer the preserve of the expert but involves the shared judgement of everyone with a stake or interest.'⁵³⁰ However, alongside this promise to incorporate the ideas of the public, are two pieces of Trust legislation that essentially negate the resolutions. The Oliver Report clearly states that the Council is under 'no fiduciary obligation to implement members' resolution if it considers them to be injurious to the Trusts interests' and as of 2009, the Arts Panel was still responsible for providing 'advice and expertise to staff to ensure that the Trust achieves high standards of curatorship, conservation,

⁵²³ Ibid.

⁵²⁴ Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*, 71.

⁵²⁵ Cockcroft, "National Trust Appoints Sir Simon Jenkins as Chairman."

⁵²⁶ National Trust, *Going Local*, 5.

⁵²⁷ Elliott, "Welcome to Britain's Stately Home from Homes."

⁵²⁸ Ibid.

⁵²⁹ Waterson, *The National Trust*, 112.

⁵³⁰ National Trust, *History and Place*, 5.

public access, presentation and interpretation of its houses and art collections'.⁵³¹ Following the plan for each site to have a bespoke interpretive plan, presentational power has recently been shifted to each house manager. It is the hope of the directors that this will allow for each property to have fitting stories told and to encourage visitor participation.⁵³² As was done in the late twentieth century, Curators have approached this change by adding 'life' to the properties through the lighting of fires and encouraging visitors to play pianos.⁵³³

English Heritage

Under the direction of Sir Charles Reed Peers, the Ministry of Works created a standardised approach to sites in their care. This was 'characterised by mown grass, gravel paths, a discreet and small amount of signage (principally to identify buildings and give essential instructions), and a complete absence of vegetative cover on the masonry'.⁵³⁴ Through this philosophy, Peers was trying to make the site readable for visitors.⁵³⁵ Under the Peers system, sites were interpreted and conserved to a distinct time period in their history, decided upon by the Ministry.⁵³⁶ This meant that many features from outside of the established "golden era" were removed.⁵³⁷ This 'cricket pitch' approach remained the set approach until the 1970s.⁵³⁸

Current English Heritage interpretation has a set minimum standard. Interpretation at every site covers the who, what, when and why questions, giving visitors the basic information needed to explore and understand the site.⁵³⁹ Additional interpretive materials available at some sites include a site plan and a recreation drawing.⁵⁴⁰ This is the

⁵³¹ Newby, "The Next Hundred Years," 152; National Trust, *Governance Handbook*.

⁵³² Christiansen, "The Future of the National Trust."

⁵³³ "Simon Jenkins Interview."

⁵³⁴ Ashbee, "Beyond the 'Ministry of Works' Approach to Site Presentation," 29.

⁵³⁵ Thurley, "The Fabrication of Medieval History: Archaeology and Artifact at the Office of Works."

⁵³⁶ Ashbee, "The Presentation of Ruins: a Historical Overview," 15.

⁵³⁷ Ibid.

⁵³⁸ Thurley, "The Fabrication of Medieval History: Archaeology and Artifact at the Office of Works"; Doggett, "Peers, Sir Charles Reed (1868–1952)."

⁵³⁹ Hems, "Thinking About Interpretation: Changing Perspectives at English Heritage," 190.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid.

interpretive material provided at many of English Heritage's 255 free sites. Free sites are challenging to interpret as there are rarely areas to install large displays or to distribute guidebooks or audio-guides.⁵⁴¹ However, this minimum standard has been criticized as 'woefully inadequate'.⁵⁴² English Heritage has uploaded audio-guides for fifteen of their free sites to their website, which can be downloaded before visiting.⁵⁴³ The Properties Presentation division at English Heritage has been developing new interpretive materials for each of these 255 sites.⁵⁴⁴

At pay sites, the basic standard interpretation is enhanced with guidebooks, audio-guides, further interpretive panels and, if space is available, small exhibitions.⁵⁴⁵ Recently, there has been a move towards visitor participation. Beyond encouraging visitors to actively explore the site on their own, without the support of the curator, English Heritage has recently provided an educational activity where children are asked to interpret a site on their own.⁵⁴⁶

Anna Keay, former head of Properties Presentation at English Heritage has suggested that country houses in their care have 'always been treated somewhat differently from the rest of the sites'.⁵⁴⁷ This is understandable, as the majority of English Heritage country houses are in a ruinous state. English Heritage takes an approach similar to the National Trust's approach, to the interpretation and presentation to their intact country houses. Audley End, for example, has basic interpretation around its family history and intact collection of furnishings. The focus has shifted recently to interpret the "downstairs" aspect of Audley End, through the refurbished Victorian stables and service wing.⁵⁴⁸

⁵⁴¹ Bernard and Westlake, "Free Sites Unlocked: Facing the Challenges at Free and Unstaffed Sites," 35.

⁵⁴² Ibid.

⁵⁴³ English Heritage, "Property Audio Tours." < <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/about/multimedia-library/audio-tours> > Accessed August 29, 2013.

⁵⁴⁴ Savage, "English Heritage," 1.

⁵⁴⁵ Hems, "Thinking About Interpretation: Changing Perspectives at English Heritage," 191.

⁵⁴⁶ Heritage, "Activity – Interpret Your Own Site" < <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/education/heritage-learning/issue45/sharing-stories/activity> > Accessed August 29, 2013.; Hems, "Thinking About Interpretation: Changing Perspectives at English Heritage," 192.

⁵⁴⁷ Keay, "The Presentation of Guardianship Sites," 14.

⁵⁴⁸ English Heritage, "Audley End Service Wing 1880." < heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/audley-end-house-and-gardens/explore/the-service-wing > Accessed August 29, 2013.

At both intact and ruinous country houses, there has been a shift in focus to the gardens. It is through the interpretation of the gardens that the unity of the country house becomes evident to the visitor, as it shows the close relationship between the house and the wider estate. English Heritage has undertaken several major garden restoration and reconstruction projects at Witley Court, Kirby Hall, and Kenilworth Castle.⁵⁴⁹ There are differing opinions on these garden reconstructions. Historic landscape consultant Krystyna Campbell believes that the reconstruction ‘can devalue the genuine historical interest of a site’.⁵⁵⁰ Keay, however, believes that the garden reconstructions act as a reminder of historic inhabitation.⁵⁵¹

The Interpretation and Presentation of Ruins

Jeremy Ashbee, Head Properties Curator at English Heritage, has written that ‘there is no obvious way of presenting a ruin’.⁵⁵² Decisions must be made as to how much of the remaining structure should be exposed to the visitor and if any sort of reconstruction is going to be attempted. The interpretation of a ruin is also complicated for the ruin is simultaneously complex and simple. While there is less of a structure to interpret, the lack of identifiable features makes the ruin more difficult to interpret and for the visitor to understand. The questions then are, as with any historic site, what aspects of the site should be interpreted.

Throughout the literature, ruins have been described as “dead”. They are seen as ‘structures devoid of apparent use, stripped of most traces of practical involvement in people’s daily lives’.⁵⁵³ Others see the ruin as still alive through the integration of nature. In opposition to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century romantic views of ruins as dead and being reclaimed by nature, some authors have approached the encroachment of nature as a sign that the site is still alive. Not alive in the way it was previously, but in a new stage of life.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁴⁹ Dix, “Tracing the Past: Archaeology and Garden Restoration”; Keay, “Kenilworth Garden,” 38.

⁵⁵⁰ Campbell, “Time to ‘Leap the Fence’,” 129.

⁵⁵¹ Keay, “Kenilworth Garden,” 38.

⁵⁵² Ashbee, “The Presentation of Ruins: a Historical Overview,” 13.

⁵⁵³ Schönle, “Ruins and History: Observations on Russian Approaches to Destruction and Decay,” 649.

⁵⁵⁴ Simmel, “The Ruin,” 260.

Their association with death has become a part of the treatment of ruins by heritage organisations. Traditionally, ruins have been seen ‘as a representation of the complete building it once was, rather than as something with its own validity’.⁵⁵⁵ According to Sir Charles Peers ‘buildings which are in ruin are dead; their history is ended. There is all the difference in the world in their treatment’.⁵⁵⁶ More recent interpretation scholarship has opposed this claim. The ruination is seen as another stage in the life of the building. Keay believes that the ruination of properties is an important part of the site’s overall story and should not be ignored.⁵⁵⁷

It must also be recognized that once a ruin enters care, it is entering another stage of its life. Through conservation work their decay is stabilized, or managed, by the heritage organization. This work, which is not always identified in the on-site interpretation, inevitably modifies the ruin.⁵⁵⁸ The ruin is tied up and made ready for public consumption, but through this process, the process of decline and the passage of time, are lost.⁵⁵⁹ Heritage organisations have created a paradox by maintaining the ruins to a fixed point in their decline. The difficulty surrounding the approach to the presentation and interpretation of ruins is the desire only to interpret what the building once was, rather than what it is currently.

As many ruins are free sites, they face the same problems as outlined above. The most common method of presentation for ruins is to make the ground plan visible to the visitor, as was done in the “Cricket Pitch” approach by the Ministry of Works. This is completed by clearing vegetation from original features or by using contemporary materials to mark out the ground plan.⁵⁶⁰ By making the ground plan visible to visitors, heritage organisations are helping visitors envisage the original size and shape of a site. With this information, visitors can begin to understand the space the building once occupied, both internally and externally. The provision of an orientation system literally “lays the groundwork” for

⁵⁵⁵ Ashbee, “The Presentation of Ruins: a Historical Overview,” 14.

⁵⁵⁶ Peers in Emerick, “Archaeology and Architecture: A Tradition of Collaboration,” 59.

⁵⁵⁷ Keay, “The Presentation of Guardianship Sites,” 19.

⁵⁵⁸ Summerson, “The Past in the Future,” 237.

⁵⁵⁹ Keay, “The Presentation of Guardianship Sites,” 19.

⁵⁶⁰ Feilden, *Conservation of Historic Buildings*, 267.

understanding the site.⁵⁶¹ The original size and space of the original building can also be conveyed to visitors through a ground plan, if one is included onsite. Without these physical orientation systems, visitors may be unable to engage with the site and therefore lose interest in the visit.⁵⁶²

As stated above, heritage organisations tend to see the site as it was, as an intact building, rather than in its current state as a ruin.⁵⁶³ This is evident in the approach to the interpretation of many ruined sites. Interpretive panels are the most popular form of interpretation at ruins.⁵⁶⁴ As described above, the panels are used to explain the history of the site. As is done with country houses, ruins are ‘usually allocated to a defining period’, which is the focus of the on-site interpretation.⁵⁶⁵ Visitors are asked to examine architectural features and other aspects of the site, while ignoring that the majority of the structure is missing.⁵⁶⁶ Additionally, Hester Davis has argued, these panels do little to connect the visitor to the occupants or life of the site, and are therefore an ineffective method of interpretation.⁵⁶⁷

Some scholars and museum professionals believe interpretation to be detrimental to the ruin. It is the interaction with or experience of the ruin that makes the visit unique and important. ‘Historical instruction can be better obtained elsewhere’; instead the visitor should be encouraged to experience and engage with the site, as was first done in the eighteenth-century.⁵⁶⁸ Cultural Geographer, Dr. Tim Edensor, suggests that the uniqueness of a visit to a ruin is the freedom granted to the visitor. Tourists are able to explore and discover the site according to their interests and ‘to what catches the eye’.⁵⁶⁹ They are not told where to look or how to look; they are free to create their own tour. The problem with views like these is that they require cultural competence of the visitor. As with the country house, discussed above, this type of ruins visit implies that the ruins will be able to “speak

⁵⁶¹ Stanford, “On Preserving Our Ruins,” 30.

⁵⁶² Moscardo, “Mindful Visitors,” 384.

⁵⁶³ Ashbee, “The Presentation of Ruins: a Historical Overview,” 14.

⁵⁶⁴ Davis, “Is an Archaeological Site Important to Science or to the Public, and Is There a Difference?,” 94.

⁵⁶⁵ Ashbee, “The Presentation of Ruins: a Historical Overview,” 15.

⁵⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵⁶⁷ Davis, “Is an Archaeological Site Important to Science or to the Public, and Is There a Difference?,” 94.

⁵⁶⁸ Stanford, “On Preserving Our Ruins,” 31.

⁵⁶⁹ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins Spaces, Aesthetics, and Materiality*, 87.

for themselves”; that they are a document from which their history can be read.⁵⁷⁰ Unless visitors are able to “read” the ruins, the lack of interpretation can be detrimental to visitor comprehension.

Interpretation of Country House Ruins

‘To our tourists without whose interest,
many of Britain’s historic homes would be roofless ruins’⁵⁷¹
- Lord Montagu

The theme of death is sustained in the descriptions of the ruins of country houses. In *The National Trust Book of Ruins*, Brian Bailey calls Sutton Scarsdale a ‘hollow carcass’ and at the Attingham Conference referenced in Chapter Two, Keay called Kirby Hall a ‘dissected corpse of a building’.⁵⁷² But with the country house ruins, the theme of death is not seen as romantic. Unlike the ruins of castles and abbeys, which are described as haunting, the ruins of country houses are seen as sad.⁵⁷³ This is not an entirely new sentiment. John Aubrey, the seventeenth-century antiquarian and botanist, wrote “...the eie and mind is no less affected with these stately ruines than they would have been when standing and entire. They breed in generous minds a kind of pittie”.⁵⁷⁴

Country house ruins, like other ruins, are difficult to interpret and present to the public. As described above, the history at intact country houses is interpreted through the architecture and furnishings. At ruins, however, there are no furnishings and much of the structure is missing. This lack of recognizable features can be ‘bewildering’ for visitors.⁵⁷⁵ Heritage organisations use the presentation and interpretation to help bring the ruins “back to life”. As will be shown, the methods used focus on the “golden era” of the house, rarely

⁵⁷⁰ Thompson, *Ruins*, 20–21.

⁵⁷¹ Montagu, Foreword to *The Gilt and the Gingerbread*.

⁵⁷² Bailey, *The National Trust Book of Ruins*, 246; Keay, “Nationalised Buildings: Reflections on Their Presentation, Past, Present and Future.”

⁵⁷³ Keay quoted in Musson, *English Ruins*, 16.

⁵⁷⁴ John Aubrey in Earl, *Building Conservation Philosophy*, 69.

⁵⁷⁵ Thompson, *Ruins*, 31.

explaining how the house came to be in its current state. Heritage organisations must expand upon these standard methods and stories to appropriately interpret the country house ruins.

National Trust

From the outset, the National Trust has not actively pursued ruins. It was understood that a ruin might be within an estate acquired by the Trust, but the ruin would not be the primary reason for acquisition.⁵⁷⁶ The strength of the National Trust is in its intact country houses and tracts of countryside. In 2011, Sir Simon Jenkins, Chairman of the National Trust, said that the British obsession with ruins is antiquated and that by not rebuilding ruins, as was done at Uppark, modern Britain is taking an overly romantic approach to the past. For these reasons, the Trust maintains few country houses in a ruined state. However, the Trust has taken on several houses in poor condition. From the purchase of the dilapidated Barrington Court and the gift of the unfurnished Montacute House, the National Trust has acquired a handful of neglected country houses. The Trust has adopted several approaches to present and interpret these houses to the public.

Calke Abbey was furnished but in a dilapidated state when it was acquired by the National Trust. The house and collections had remained unaltered by the Harpur-Crewe family for nearly sixty years prior to entering care.⁵⁷⁷ The house is currently presented as a monument to the decline of the country house. In visitor material, it is called ‘the un-stately home’. The approach to presentation is clearly explained to the visitor. It is explained that the National Trust has preserved the house as it was when it entered care in 1984, so that the visitors ‘can see how country houses struggled to survive’. The presentation of the house as a ‘time capsule’ is carried across all visitor interfaces, from the National Trust website to the onsite interpretation.⁵⁷⁸ As stated above, the National Trust has received criticism for this approach. Critics, such as Paula Weideger and Adam Nicolson, have said that while the National Trust has preserved the contents and collections in the same state as when the house first entered care, the atmosphere of the house, one

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 6.

⁵⁷⁷ Salmon, Marren, and Harley, *The Aurelian Legacy*, 184.

⁵⁷⁸ Drury, “Stopping the Clock,” 33.

of the many things Lord Lothian stressed should be maintained, has been altered. They argue that Calke has been made to feel like all other country houses in the care of the National Trust. The interpretation of the conservation work completed at Calke will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

At Gibside, located just outside of Newcastle a large portion of the gardens, including the ruinous orangery and chapel, came into the care of the Trust in 1965, but the house, which fell into ruin in the early twentieth century, is not open to the public.⁵⁷⁹ As at Gibside, and so many intact country houses, the gardens at Nymans House, a mock fifteenth-century manor house in West Sussex, take centre stage.⁵⁸⁰ Originally constructed in the 1920s, a fire destroyed the house in 1947.⁵⁸¹ When Lieutenant Colonel Leonard Messel bequeathed the estate to the Trust in 1954, the garden, especially the collection of old roses was what of particular interest to the organisation.⁵⁸² The small portion of the house that was restored for family use following the fire was opened to the public in 1997.⁵⁸³ From May through October 2012, a contemporary art installation was exhibited at Nymans.⁵⁸⁴ The project, developed by the Unravelled arts organisation and funded by the Arts Council England, expands the relationship between contemporary artists, heritage organisations and the public.⁵⁸⁵ At Nymans, twelve artists were commissioned to create works that would both evoke the history of the site, while encouraging public interaction with the site.⁵⁸⁶ An Unravelled installation is due to open at Uppark in 2014.⁵⁸⁷ At Croome Court in Worcestershire, the landscape also takes precedence over the house. While the landscape was purchased by the Trust in 1996, the empty house is owned by the Croome Heritage Trust, but leased and administered by the

⁵⁷⁹ *Discover Nature Conservation at Gibside: An 18th Century Landscape Garden.*

⁵⁸⁰ Worsley, *England's Lost Houses*, 2002, 103.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸² Weideger, *Gilding the Acorn*, 204.

⁵⁸³ "Nymans." < <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans> > Accessed September 4, 2013.

⁵⁸⁴ "Unravelling...Nymans." < <http://www.unravelled.org.uk/nymans.html> > Accessed September 4, 2013.

⁵⁸⁵ "Unravelled Arts Home Page." < <http://www.unravelled.org.uk/index.html> > Accessed September 4, 2013.

⁵⁸⁶ "Unravelling...Nymans."

⁵⁸⁷ unravelled arts, "Unravelling the National Trust: Uppark. Call for Submissions." < <http://unravelled.org.uk/Uppark%20Brief%20Final.pdf> > Accessed September 4, 2013.

National Trust.⁵⁸⁸ As Downhill and Uppark have been selected as case studies for this dissertation, they will be discussed at length in Chapters Four and Five, respectively.

The Trust's most recent acquisition, Seaton Delaval Hall, was left partly in ruins for nearly forty years of its history. The Vanbrugh designed house, like Gibside, is located just outside of Newcastle. Perhaps this is an illustration of the Trust trying to diversify itself through the acquisition of properties in the North of England. The central hall suffered fire damage in 1822 and has remained unrestored since.⁵⁸⁹ Following the death of his parents in 2007, Lord Hastings approached the Trust, offering the house in lieu of death duties.⁵⁹⁰ The house was purchased through funds raised from a public appeal, as well as additional funding from The Art Fund and One North East, a regional development agency.⁵⁹¹ Seaton Delaval entered the guardianship of the National Trust on 17 December 2010.⁵⁹² The treatment of Seaton Delaval Hall from the outset was unique for the National Trust due to the enormous amount of public participation.⁵⁹³ In addition to the public appeal for funds, the Trust asked members and the general public for suggestions on how the site should be used.⁵⁹⁴

As mentioned above, Barrington Court has been presented as an empty house following the departure of the furniture company in 2009, aside from short art installations.⁵⁹⁵ The presentation of a house as unfurnished is an accepted practice. Several historic house museums in the United States, such as Drayton Hall in South Carolina, Mount Pleasant in Pennsylvania and the Stanton House in New York, are presented in an unfurnished state. The National Park Service, which administers the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House in Seneca Falls, New York understand that an unfurnished house is difficult for visitors to connect to and to understand. However,

⁵⁸⁸ Anon., "National Trust Delighted at Support from HLF to Restore Croome Court."

⁵⁸⁹ Aslet, "Seaton Delaval Is 'Sir John Vanbrugh's Greatest Country House'."

⁵⁹⁰ Kennedy, "Public Appeal Helps Save Seaton Delaval Hall."

⁵⁹¹ Bailey, "National Trust Takes Control of Seaton Delaval Hall"; Henderson, "£1million Boost to Help Save Seaton Delaval Hall."

⁵⁹² Kennedy, "Public Appeal Helps Save Seaton Delaval Hall."

⁵⁹³ Swain, "National Trust Saves Seaton Delaval Hall."

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Applegate, "Watch This Space."

they see the space as an opportunity to discuss Cady Stanton's life and ideas. They use the space within the house as a starting point to discuss the emergence of the women's rights movement in America.⁵⁹⁶ Barbara Wood of the National Trust, South West Region, in her paper at the Lost Mansions Conference in July 2013, echoed the National Park Service's concerns about visitor comprehension of an unfurnished property. In her paper, Wood discussed the fact that without furnishings there was nothing to connect the visitor to the space and that the Trust was considering refurnishing Barrington Court.⁵⁹⁷ This choice emphasizes the standard approach to presentation and interpretation taken by the National Trust. Instead of developing new site-specific interpretation and using the space 'as evidence to support a storyline' about the history of the house, Wood's suggestion to refurnish the property allows the Trust to recycle an interpretive plan and recreate the house in their image.⁵⁹⁸ This suggestion indicates that the National Trust is unable to deal with disruption caused by the lack of furnishings. Instead they are opting to refocus a visit to Barrington Court from an exploration of the architecture and space to a standard country house visit.

English Heritage

As stated earlier in this chapter, the majority of the country house ruins open to the public are in the care of English Heritage. Half of these houses are free sites and are therefore plagued by the interpretive problems outlined above. Both Houghton Hall and Titchfield Abbey have audio-guides available for download from the English Heritage website.⁵⁹⁹ The interpretation at the pay sites does not vary greatly from the minimum standard applied at the free sites. In addition to the standard interpretive panels, free audioguides are available at Berry Pomeroy, Witley Court and Bolsover Castle.⁶⁰⁰ Alongside the audioguide, two small history exhibitions are

⁵⁹⁶ Christensen, "Ideas Versus Things," 161.

⁵⁹⁷ Wood, "The Loss of Country Houses and Estates through the Destruction and Obscuring of Identity."

⁵⁹⁸ Abramoff Levy, "Historic House Tours That Succeed: Choosing the Best Tour Approach," 198.

⁵⁹⁹ "Audio Tour of Titchfield Abbey." < <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/titchfield-abbey/audio> > Accessed September 1, 2013.

⁶⁰⁰ Site visits 16 May 2011, 27 April 2010, 25 September 2010

available in the visitor's centre at Hardwick Old Hall.⁶⁰¹ Appuldurcombe does not have an audioguide, but there is an exhibition on the first floor of the visitor's centres.⁶⁰² Kirby Hall and Sutton Scarsdale have been selected as case studies for this project and they will be discussed in greater depth in the next two chapters.

From September 2013, viewing platforms will be debuted in Leicester's Building at Kenilworth Castle, allowing visitors to share Queen Elizabeth I's 'view of the castle and the surrounding countryside'.⁶⁰³ These platforms will also allow for increased movement within Leicester's Building. Visitor access has been kept to the basement since the site came into care. With these new platforms visitors will be able to 'stand where Elizabeth I stood' and experience the space within the castle in a more authentic way.⁶⁰⁴

Belsay Hall, Northumberland, is an unfurnished country house with a fourteenth-century castle in its garden. The guardianship agreement stipulated that Belsay be presented in an unfurnished state.⁶⁰⁵ In a similar approach to the National Trust's recent treatment of Barrington Court, English Heritage has presented the house as a contemporary art gallery. Several short exhibitions of contemporary art have been held at the site since 1996.⁶⁰⁶ Stella McCartney's *Lucky Spot* has been exhibited twice at Belsay, once in 2005 and again in 2010.⁶⁰⁷ *Extraordinary Measures*, the sixth contemporary art installation at Belsay, was shown in 2010. The exhibition, which centred on the theme of size and concept of scale, featured works of art by Ron Mueck, Mariele Neudecker and Mat Collishaw.⁶⁰⁸ Here English Heritage is taking advantage of the disruption by creating a new visitor experience; one that offers new engagement with the house and gardens. It has been suggested that modern art installations, like those at Barrington Court and Belsay Hall, 'breathe life' into

⁶⁰¹ Site visit 20 October 2012

⁶⁰² Site visit 16 May 2010

⁶⁰³ English Heritage, "A View Fit for a Queen."

⁶⁰⁴ Ashbee, "Rooms with a View," 25.

⁶⁰⁵ Ashbee and Keay, *Country House Ruins in the Care of English Heritage*. <<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/flv/a-view-fit-for-a-queen.mp4>> Accessed August 27, 2013.

⁶⁰⁶ Tilley, "Belsay Hall to Showcase Cutting Edge Artwork."

⁶⁰⁷ Anon., "In Pictures." <

http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/tyne/hi/things_to_do/newsid_8189000/8189240.stm> Accessed August 28, 2013.

⁶⁰⁸ Cumming, "Extraordinary Measures."

the ruinous houses.⁶⁰⁹ Rather than seeing the use as a gallery as another stage of the life of these houses, the inclusion of art is seen as bringing the life back to a dead house.

Conservation interpretation

The concepts of conservation and restoration, as well as the debates that surround the work, were explained in the introduction. This section will illustrate the choices made by heritage organisations for the conservation and the interpretation of this work, of country houses in their care. The conservation, restoration or reconstruction of a ruin is a management decision. Beyond the duty of care to maintain the structure, any decision to restore or reconstruct the house is a decision that is deeply related to interpretation and presentation.

In the twentieth century, conservation work began to appear in conservation plans. Within the heritage community, it was felt that the communication of conservation work being undertaken was a part of ‘an institution’s duty of care’.⁶¹⁰ It is through the interpretation of the conservation that visitors are able to connect with the work and to understand that ‘conservation is not an event but a process’.⁶¹¹ It is felt that if visitors are able to see the conservators at work, the visitor will leave with a positive view of the work being undertaken and the staff completing the project. This call for conservation interpretation was matched by visitor interest. Museum surveys have found that there is a ‘fascination for the behind the scenes activities’.⁶¹²

While it has been found that the interpretation of conservation is popular with visitors, attention must be given to the interpretive plan following the completion of the works. It has been found that visitors lose interest when the work is completed, so efforts must be made to ensure that the interpretation continues to engage the visitor.⁶¹³ The conservation work is yet another chapter in the history of the site and needs to be interpreted. Also, visitors should be made aware of any work that has been completed. The

⁶⁰⁹ Allfrey, “The Shock of the New: Contemporary Art and Historic Places,” 34.

⁶¹⁰ Jones and Holden, *It’s a Material World: Caring for the Public Realm*, 98.

⁶¹¹ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Vol.1, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, 303.

⁶¹² Sanders and Whittaker, “Displaying Information on Conservation in the V&A,” 33.

⁶¹³ Waterfield, *Opening Doors*, 75.

interpretation of the conservation work does not need to be aggressive; it simply needs to be available.

National Trust

The National Trust has taken an active approach to the balancing of preservation and access. In properties that require extra care, tours are only offered by timed ticket. To reduce footfall at fragile properties, the National Trust has lowered the profile of these sites in promotional material. At Claydon House, Buckinghamshire, the plasterwork ceilings on the ground floor have been identified as fragile and at risk of cracking. The visitor route has been altered to direct visitors away from the bedrooms that sit directly above these ceilings.⁶¹⁴ At Attingham Park, Shropshire, a new curatorial plan has been established to engage the visitor in the conservation debate. Visitors are put ‘into the curator’s shoes by asking *what would you do?*’⁶¹⁵

Three houses in the care of the National Trust suffered catastrophic fires in the 1950s and 60s. At Coleshill, Berkshire, a fire broke out in 1952 during roof repair work. Within four hours, a burned out shell was all that remained of the house.⁶¹⁶ The entire house was demolished.⁶¹⁷ Box hedges have been used to outline the ground plan of the house.⁶¹⁸ As at Coleshill, Florence Court, County Fermanagh, was undergoing normal roof repair work in 1955 when a fire started.⁶¹⁹ The fire gutted the central portion of the first floor and the ground floor suffered a great deal of water damage.⁶²⁰ In this instance, the National Trust decided to restore the damaged portions of the house. Not all lost features were restored, however. Sir Albert Richardson, the architect commissioned for the project decided not to restore the stucco ceiling in the drawing room or replace the partition in the entry hall.⁶²¹ The fire and subsequent restoration is included in the guided tour of the house.⁶²² A programme of conservation works had just been completed at Dunsland, Devon

⁶¹⁴ Winfield, “Why Preserve?,” 31.

⁶¹⁵ Kay, “Attingham Re-Discovered,” 39.

⁶¹⁶ Worsley, *England’s Lost Houses*, 2002, 113.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Fielder, “X Marks the Spot: Narratives of a Lost Country House.”

⁶¹⁹ McParland, “Florence Court, Co. Fermanagh - I,” 1242.

⁶²⁰ McParland, “Florence Court, Co. Fermanagh - II,” 1318.

⁶²¹ Ibid.

⁶²² Site visit 17 March 2012

when a fire consumed the house, including the furnishings.⁶²³ Although some of the walls remained, they were structurally unstable and the National Trust ultimately decided not to rebuild.⁶²⁴ An interpretive panel has been placed on the former site of the house.⁶²⁵ These three cases no doubt played a role in the decision to reconstruct Uppark, which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

At Calke Abbey, the National Trust's plan was to 'arrest decay'.⁶²⁶ Through a rigorous programme of works, the Trust aimed to preserve the decay present when the house entered care. Alongside traditional methods, the decline and conservation work are worked into the on-site interpretation. The National Trust runs conservation tours, which are offered on a semi-regular basis. These tours lead the visitor around the house on nearly the same route taken during a regular tour, but conservation staff are on hand to explain the conservation work undertaken at Calke and to answer any questions visitors may have.

A similar approach has been taken at Tyntesfield. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Tyntesfield entered the care of the National Trust in 2002 and has undergone a programme of conservation works ever since. Recognizing the visitor interest in conservation, the Trust has integrated the conservation work into the interpretation. Visitors are able to see the conservators at work, helping them to understand the importance of the work being done.⁶²⁷ Here the Trust has acknowledged the significance of the conservation and its place in the on-going story of the house.

Several television programmes that centre on the conservation of country houses in the care of the National Trust have aired in the past two years. The two programmes, discussed briefly in the literature review, centred on Petworth House, West Sussex and Avebury Manor, Wiltshire. Both programmes aired on the BBC in 2011. *Petworth House: The Big Spring Clean*, hosted by art historian Andrew Graham Dixon, focused on the cleaning regime carried out at Petworth each year.⁶²⁸ As the cleaning occurs during the off-season, the programme not only shows the careful work completed by the conservation staffs, but also illustrates why Trust properties cannot be open year-round. *The Manor*

⁶²³ Worsley, *England's Lost Houses*, 2002, 160.

⁶²⁴ Ibid.

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Drury, "Stopping the Clock," 33.

⁶²⁷ Waterfield, "Realms of Memory: Changing Perceptions of the Country House," 94.

⁶²⁸ "Petworth House: The Big Spring Clean," first broadcast April 13, 2011 by BBC Four, produced by Peter Sweasy.

Reborn was presented by actress Penelope Keith and television host Paul Martin.⁶²⁹ The four part series showed the behind-scenes work to restore and reinterpret Avebury, from the planning stages through the installation to the unveiling of the restored interiors to the public. The programme featured interviews with the craftsmen commissioned for the restoration work, charting their work. Avebury is now presented as a multi-era house, to show the development of the interiors and history of the house. Each era is interpreted and the decisions behind the work are explained. These programmes are an extension of the work being done at houses like Calke and Tyntesfield. They are a method of presenting the work the Trust's conservation staff undertakes to the public.

In addition to the presentation of conservation work on television, several Trust properties have made an effort to present their conservation programmes to the public through a series of blogs. The conservation staffs at Knole, Kent, Nostell Priory, Yorkshire, and Mount Stewart House, County Down regularly update their blogs with photographs and descriptions of their work.⁶³⁰ These blogs serve to demystify the conservation process and the life of a country house. These blogs add the personal side to the conservation work, which has been identified as popular with visitors. The interpretation of the programme of conservation works at Uppark, will be discussed in greater depth in Chapter Five.

English Heritage

The Ministry of Works took a drastic approach to the conservation of country houses that entered their care in a semi-ruinous state. Many houses, such as Appuldurcombe, had their roofs stripped, because it was thought that a de-roofed property would be easier to maintain.⁶³¹ This decision has since been reversed and English Heritage is selectively re-roofing properties 'where appropriate and, where the necessary evidence is available'.⁶³² The replacement of the roof is seen as an opportunity to recreate interiors to give 'visitors a better idea of how the building looked when it was in use'.⁶³³ This type of roof replacement and interior reconstruction was recently attempted at Kirby Hall. A HLF

⁶²⁹ Bullen, "The Manor Reborn."

⁶³⁰ Worsley, *England's Lost Houses*, 113.

⁶³¹ Musson, *English Ruins*, 16.

⁶³² Keay, "The Presentation of Guardianship Sites," 16.

⁶³³ Ibid.

bid was made in 2012 for funding to replace the roof of the Long Gallery, with plans to hang paintings, similar to the National Portrait Gallery/Montacute partnership.⁶³⁴ The bid was unsuccessful.⁶³⁵

At Brodsworth Hall, South Yorkshire, English Heritage has adopted the ‘leave it alone approach’ to conservation, meaning, that as at Calke Abbey, the house is presented as it was when it entered care.⁶³⁶ The interpretation, however, gives greater detail about the history of the house. A chronological approach has been adopted for the interpretation, which covers the history of the house from construction, through the decline, to the conservation work completed by English Heritage. While no era is interpreted in any great depth, the approach ‘demonstrates the evolution of a country house’.⁶³⁷ The decline at Brodsworth is subtler than the decline at Calke, so the visual clues to the approach to presentation by English Heritage are less obvious. Unless visitors fully understand the approach it may seem as if the house and furnishings are in need of attention.⁶³⁸

Similarly, a new approach has been taken to the conservation and interpretation of Wigmore Castle, Herefordshire. Following consolidation works, the walls were soft capped, allowing for vegetation to grow safely on the castle ruin.⁶³⁹ By presenting the castle in this way, English Heritage elected ‘to maintain the mystery and atmosphere of discovering and exploring a "romantic ruin"’.⁶⁴⁰ From a management perspective, this approach allows for minimal intervention by English Heritage, instead allowing for the castle to remain a part of nature. Interpretively, this approach directly links the visitor to the romantic ruin hunters of the nineteenth-century.

The Performance of the County House Visit

The interpretation and presentation of country houses in care has become standardized over the past sixty years. Through the standardization of conservation of the sites in their care, both the National Trust and English Heritage have created a fixed site experience for their visitors. The conservation of the site controls the

⁶³⁴ Stacey, Kirby Hall re-roofing project.

⁶³⁵ Nicola Stacey, email message to author, October 19, 2012.

⁶³⁶ Cornforth, *The Country Houses of England, 1948-1998*, 95–96.

⁶³⁷ Allfrey, “Brodsworth Hall: The Preservation of a Country House,” 115–116.

⁶³⁸ Keay, “Radical Approaches of Recent Years, Have They Worked?,” 27.

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Channer, “Wigmore Castle,” 21.

visitor experience through the interpretation by setting the points at which visitors will stand, what they will look at and how they will move around the site. The heritage organisations have created a specific country house performance for visitors.

If, as stated in the introduction, the movement around the site is the performance and the presentation is the stage set, then the interpretation is the script. Movement through the site is one of the most important aspects of a country house visit. It is the one instance visitors are able to physically encounter the history of the house. This experience is choreographed by the heritage organisations. Visitors are guided through the space, on a set route, by the interpretation. The standard interpretive methods described above are used to educate the public, but also to manage the visitor experience of the house. All the interpretive methods and techniques work together to create the atmosphere of a country house, as imagined by the heritage organization, to place the visitor in their specific role and prepare them for their visit.⁶⁴¹

Guidebooks, as stated earlier, are one of the most popular forms of interpretation. They are typically purchased at the beginning of a country house visit as a method of preparation. As stated above, the guidebooks do provide some visitor control over site experience, however they act as an “answer key”, to which visitors can refer, to check that their ‘own experiences accord with perceived evocations’.⁶⁴² The guidebook works to create a specific visitor experience. These guides tell the story of the house room by room.⁶⁴³ This layout matches the specific path set by the heritage organization and visitors inevitably move through the space according to the layout of the guide. The movement and site experience as created through guidebooks, is not a recent development. The guidebook for Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey, published in 1890, explicitly stated to visitors that ‘the routes most advisable to be pursued are stated as explicitly as possible; the positions are specified from which the most picturesque views are obtainable’.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴¹ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins Spaces, Aesthetics, and Materiality*, 133; Garden, “The Heritagescape: Looking at Landscapes of the Past,” 398.

⁶⁴² Edensor, “Staging Tourism: Tourists as Performers,” 335.

⁶⁴³ Edensor, “Performing Tourism, Staging Tourism: (Re)Producing Tourist Space and Practice,” 73.

⁶⁴⁴ Preface to *Studley Royal and Fountains Abbey*, by George Parker.

Audio and video guides, like printed guidebooks, create a route for the visitor. Unlike the guidebook however, the audio and video guides lead the visitor on this path by prompting movement. At the end of a section, the visitor is told where to go and what to look at next.⁶⁴⁵ In defence of the audio guide, some scholars and heritage professionals have argued that while the audio guide does instruct movement, it also allows for independence. Visitors can move at their own pace around the site, selecting areas in which to spend more time.⁶⁴⁶

The presentation of sites is another component of the standard country house visit. The Ministry of Works “cricket pitch” approach established the aesthetic for the presentation of ruins until the 1970s. The National Trust has established the “proper” presentation for country houses. Nicolson has been vocal about his disapproval for the “identikit” approach the National Trust has taken towards their houses. On the ‘sameness’ of the National Trust approach to properties presentation, he writes ‘you might think that you are simply arriving at another ‘branch’ of the National Trust, as if it were a Midland Bank or a Holiday Inn’.⁶⁴⁷ The value is placed on the beauty of the house, furnishings and estate, not their use.

As the heritage organisations have created the ideal look of a country house, the standard visit is then affected by the manifestation of decline and decay. The heritage organisations are required to keep up appearances. If they do not, it disrupts the formulated site experience. It is a part of the aesthetic control of the site. The approach to presentation taken at Wigmore Castle, described above, has confused and concerned visitors, who thought that the site was being neglected.⁶⁴⁸ Having been inculcated with the ideal traditional approach to presentation, the divergence at Wigmore was distressing to visitors. The correct appearance however, is not always one that fits within the uniform National Trust approach. At Calke Abbey, Weidiger and Nicolson chastised conservators for removing the patina of age. In this instance, the evidence of age and decline were of the utmost importance to the presentation of the house.

⁶⁴⁵ Simon, *The Participatory Museum*, 164.

⁶⁴⁶ Timothy and Boyd, *Heritage Tourism*, 221.

⁶⁴⁷ Nicolson, “Tidiness and the Trust,” 39.

⁶⁴⁸ Keay, “Radical Approaches of Recent Years, Have They Worked?,” 27.

Disruption of the Country House Visit

At a country house ruin, this stage management of movement and site experience is altered. The furnishings, and in some cases, walls, are not present. The lack of these prompts and reduced interpretation challenges the relationship between the house and the visitor. Here the visitor is able to create his or her own experience, thus disrupting the standard country house visit.

This divergence creates new sources of visitor engagement and experience. By moving away from the routinized movement of the standard country house visit, visitors become more aware of their surroundings.⁶⁴⁹ In his paper *Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived Through the Feet*, Professor Tim Ingold discusses the kinaesthetic experience of place.⁶⁵⁰ The ability to touch is powerful. Dr. Tim Edensor states ‘the ruin is a space in which things can be engaged with’, that they ‘invite’ interaction.⁶⁵¹ Unlike the controlled environments created by heritage organizations, the ruin provides the visitor with the opportunity to touch within the larger country house setting upsetting the preconceived notion of the country house. Visitors appreciate sensory experience, like the interactive exhibits discussed above. This kinaesthetic experience is not found through an installed exhibit. Instead, the monument itself serves this purpose. It is also found through the free movement around the site. At outdoor museums, such as Old Economy in Pennsylvania, visitors engage with the site sensorially. The feel of cobblestones underfoot and the smell of hearth fires provides a new way of connecting to history.⁶⁵² The sensory experience at country house ruins is not managed as at Old Economy, but this type of interaction is accessible, particularly at country house ruins that are open to the elements. The smell and soundscape cannot be managed by a heritage organisation. At the country house ruins, visitors can focus on using senses other than sight, therefore increasing the potential for a greater learning outcome.⁶⁵³

⁶⁴⁹ Edensor, “Sensing the Ruin,” 226.

⁶⁵⁰ Ingold, “Culture on the Ground The World Perceived Through the Feet.”

⁶⁵¹ Edensor, “Sensing the Ruin,” 228–229.

⁶⁵² Craig, “Interpreting the Historic Scene: The Power of Imagination in Creating a Sense of Historic Place,” 111.

⁶⁵³ Leon, “A Broader Vision: Exhibits That Change the Way Visitors Look at the Past,” 144.

The lack of furnishings and other typical facets of a country house visit do not make a visit to a country house ruin easier, in some ways it makes it more difficult. Tinniswood writes ‘every country house open to the public is a text, and every tourist is a reader’. At the ruin, the visitor requires more help to read the monument. Interpretation must help the visitor understand the structure itself, as well as the process of ruination. The country house ruin offers an opportunity to discuss the decline of the country house, a topic rarely discussed at country houses. Instead of following the prescribed route and remaining disconnected from the house, visitors must engage with the site. This engagement or exploration will help ‘to generate a narrative’ about the house and wider landscape.⁶⁵⁴ This is not to say that all interpretation should be removed from ruinous sites. Instead, the interpretation needs to work with the ruins to create a balance between the educational environment and the exploratory element.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the standard visit employed at twenty-first century country houses. This standard approach was grown from eighteenth- and nineteenth-century roots, but was ultimately professionalised by the heritage organisations in the twentieth-century. This standard country house visit has been incorporated into the interpretation, presentation and conservation plans at the houses to stage-manage the ideal site experience for visitors. The country house ruins disrupt the standard country house visit. The removal of visual and physical prompts, freedom of movement, altered interaction with the site, at the ruins, work to disrupt the established country house visit. The interpretation at country house ruins needs to be altered to match this altered site experience.

The following two chapters will introduce a series of six case studies. These case studies will examine the differing methods of site management employed at ruins and restored and reconstructed ruins. How these sites have been fitted into the standard country house visit, as well as how they disrupt this visit format will be explored. It is hypothesized that by looking closely at individual sites, the impact of

⁶⁵⁴ Gregory and Witcomb, “Beyond Nostalgia: The Role of Affect in Generating Historical Understanding at Historical Sites,” 269.

conservation approaches taken by heritage organisations will become clearer. It is hoped that through this investigation a guideline for the interpretation of country house ruins can be developed.

Chapter Four

Case Studies: Shells

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the ruin of a country house presents challenges to the standard methods of site management; there is no ‘obvious way’ to approach these ruins. This chapter will look at sites that have been maintained in their ruinous state. It is the aim of this chapter to compare and contrast the methods by which these country houses are managed by English Heritage, the National Trust and the member houses of the HHA. Although the architectural development of each house is explained, this only serves as background information. Instead, each case study will examine the causes of decline, the process by which the house came into care, and the approaches taken to interpretation, presentation and conservation. Additionally, how the site is situated within the typical country house visit will be considered. As discussed in Chapter Three, the standard country house visit has shaped the conservation of country houses. It is the contention of this thesis that the ruins disrupt the standard country house visit and therefore the presentation and interpretation need to reflect this. New methods of conservation need to be developed to deal with the unique characteristics of these sites. It is hoped that this exploration will draw out the best aspects of the approaches, which can be used towards a new guideline for the conservation of country house ruins. The sites selected for this chapter are: Sutton Scarsdale, Derbyshire, an English Heritage property; Downhill Demesne, County Londonderry, a National Trust site; and Lowther Castle, Cumbria, a member house of the Historic Houses Association.

Sutton Scarsdale, Derbyshire

The ‘hallow carcass’ of Sutton Scarsdale is located in the parish of Sutton-cum-Duckmanton, outside the city of Chesterfield, Derbyshire. Nicholas Leeke rebuilt the Grade I listed house, now a shell, between 1724 and 1728, to rival nearby Derbyshire country houses. Occupied successively by three families until just after the First World War, Sutton Scarsdale was sold to speculators who stripped and sold architectural elements from the house. The house was saved and entered guardianship in 1970. It is now one of 225 free sites in the care of English Heritage.⁶⁵⁵

Architectural Description and Development

Sutton Scarsdale is attributed to Francis Smith of Warwick (1672-1738) and was built between 1724 and 1728, around a seventeenth-century core.⁶⁵⁶ It is two storeys high and nine bays wide, built of brick, but faced with a biscuit-coloured ashlar from the nearby Wrang quarry.⁶⁵⁷ There are two frontages, one to the east, in the direction of Bolsover Castle, and the other to the north. Both frontages were used in the Hall’s history, but never at the same time.⁶⁵⁸ A pediment featuring the Leeke family crest, which rests upon four engaged Corinthian columns, caps the central three bays of the east façade.⁶⁵⁹ The entrance of the north façade has a surround in the style of architect James Gibbs.⁶⁶⁰ The west front, which is the current English Heritage imposed approach to the house, has two projecting wings with Corinthian pilasters. The south façade is unremarkable, as it is placed quite close to the church. There is evidence of a balustraded roof. Pevsner declared that

⁶⁵⁵ Sue Bernard and Susan Westlake, “Free Sites Unlocked: Facing the Challenges at Free and Unstaffed Sites,” 35.

⁶⁵⁶ Andor Gomme, “The Genesis of Sutton Scarsdale,” 35; Margaret Jourdain, “Sutton Scarsdale: The Seat of Mr. William Arkwright,” 166.

⁶⁵⁷ Jourdain, “Sutton Scarsdale,” 169.

⁶⁵⁸ Anon., *Sutton Scarsdale*. < <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1108914> > Accessed September 11, 2013.

⁶⁵⁹ Jourdain, “Sutton Scarsdale,” 169.

⁶⁶⁰ Gomme, “Genesis” 35.

the Smith of Warwick modernisation made Sutton Scarsdale ‘into easily the grandest mansion of its date in the county.’⁶⁶¹ The great Pond was created in 1728.⁶⁶² The only remaining images of the interior appeared in the 1919 Country Life article by Margaret Jourdain. The Hall today is displayed as a shell, with roof and nearly all internal fittings having been stripped in 1919.⁶⁶³ Although the interior has been stripped, large pieces of the classically inspired lime plaster stuccowork created by Venetian *Stuccatori*, Albert Artari and Francesco Vassalli, still remain in the New Hall or Billiard Room (Figure 3).⁶⁶⁴

Line of Ownership

Nicholas Leeke

Nicholas Leeke II, the 4th Earl of Scarsdale (1682-1736) decided to rebuild his family seat from 1724-1728.⁶⁶⁵ Leeke attended St. John’s College, Cambridge, was Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire from 1711-1712 and was Envoy to Vienna in 1712.⁶⁶⁶ He retired from public service and began reconstructing Sutton Scarsdale, hoping to rival nearby houses such as Chatsworth.⁶⁶⁷ Leeke chose to modernise and enlarge the standing seventeenth-century house that had been built and fortified by the 1st Earl of Scarsdale.⁶⁶⁸ He became so caught up in this construction that he soon began to overspend; so much so that he had to sell off another property, Holme Hall in Newbold, near Chesterfield, in 1735, to continue funding the Sutton Scarsdale project.⁶⁶⁹ Even with his efforts to offset the construction costs, at his death in 1736, his debts amounted to £97,116 15s 3¾d.⁶⁷⁰ It has been said that ‘his mania of building had ruined him and his last guinea had been spent in pilasters and

⁶⁶¹ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Derbyshire*, 335.

⁶⁶² Anon., “Local Notes and Queries.”

⁶⁶³ Giles Worsley, “Sutton Scarsdale,” 27.

⁶⁶⁴ Anon., *Sutton Scarsdale*.

⁶⁶⁵ Pamela Kettle, *Sutton Scarsdale’s Story, Part I: The Leekes of Sutton.*, 56; Richard Sheppard and Beverly Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale Hall, Derbyshire*, 10.

⁶⁶⁶ John Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, 60.

⁶⁶⁷ Kettle, *Sutton Scarsdale’s Story*, 56.

⁶⁶⁸ Jourdain, “Sutton Scarsdale,” 166.

⁶⁶⁹ Kettle, *Sutton Scarsdale’s Story*, 58.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

Doric columns.⁶⁷¹ He died unmarried and without legitimate issue; Sutton Scarsdale was sold to cover the debt.⁶⁷²

Clarke-Kynnersley

Godfrey Clarke bought the Sutton Scarsdale estate in 1740.⁶⁷³ Like Nicholas Leeke, Clarke ran up enormous amounts of debt in the years following the purchase. Clarke spent £30,000 funding the campaign of his son, Godfrey Bagnall Clarke (1742-1774) to become an MP for Derby in 1768.⁶⁷⁴ While at Sutton Scarsdale, the Clarke family was very charitable to the surrounding community.⁶⁷⁵ Both the Clarks were very involved in the Jacobite rebellion against George I, donating significant amounts of money to the movement.⁶⁷⁶ Both Godfrey Clarke and Godfrey Bagnall Clarke died in 1774, the elder with nearly £100,000 in debts.⁶⁷⁷

Following the death of both Clarks, the contents of the house were sold at auction.⁶⁷⁸ The house was to go to Bagnall's nephew, when he came of age, although Bagnall's cousin, Clement Kynnersley would have control of the estate in the intervening years.⁶⁷⁹ However, Bagnall Clarke's nephew died in 1802, before he was of age to inherit, so Kynnersley remained in residence until his death in 1815.⁶⁸⁰ During Kynnersley's occupancy, the house was repaired and updated. Kynnersley rebuilt the chimneys, added water closets and built a new coach house, stable, and greenhouse.⁶⁸¹ Kynnersley died without issue in 1815.⁶⁸² The estate, as well as Kynnersley's debts, were inherited by Bagnell Clarke's niece, Anne, The

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., 57.

⁶⁷² Jourdain, "Sutton Scarsdale," 167.

⁶⁷³ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 13.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibid., 13–14; Lewis Bernstein Namier, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790*, 248.

⁶⁷⁵ Anon., "Local Notes and Queries."

⁶⁷⁶ Paul Kléber Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People, 1688-1788*, 286 and 306.

⁶⁷⁷ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 14.

⁶⁷⁸ Anon., "Classified Ads: To Be Sold at Auction by Mr. Christie."

⁶⁷⁹ Anon., *Comprising Reports of Cases in the Courts of Chancery, King's Bench, and Common Pleas, from 1822 to 1835*, 182.

⁶⁸⁰ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 15.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

⁶⁸² Anon., *Courts of Chancery*, 187.

Countess of Ormonde.⁶⁸³ Her brother-in-law, the 19th Earl of Ormonde, petitioned parliament to sell the house to pay off debts.⁶⁸⁴ The trustees of Anne's estate eventually sold the house in 1824.⁶⁸⁵

Arkwrights

Richard Arkwright (1755-1843), the wealthy cotton manufacturer and landowner, purchased Sutton Scarsdale in 1824 for £216,000.⁶⁸⁶ This high price was most likely due to the wealth of mineral reserves in the land, rather than for the house.⁶⁸⁷ In fact, Arkwright was probably interested in the property 'as a source of future industrial exploitation'.⁶⁸⁸ When he took possession of the house, it was in need of major repairs and superficial updating before his second son Robert could move into the house.⁶⁸⁹ This work was completed in 1836 and Robert moved from the family house Stoke Hall, Bakewell, near one of the family's mills.⁶⁹⁰ Robert's son, the Reverend Godfrey Harry Arkwright took over the hall after his father's death.⁶⁹¹ Robert's nephew William followed Godfrey in ownership of Sutton Scarsdale and was the last Arkwright to live in the Hall.⁶⁹² William Arkwright did face some financial difficulty and leased some of the estate to the Staveley Coal and Iron Company to try to recoup some of his losses.⁶⁹³ When William reached his 60s in 1919 and was without an heir, he decided to sell the property.⁶⁹⁴ The estate, including the Hall and 5,176 acres, was put up for auction in November 1919.⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁸³ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁴ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 15.

⁶⁸⁵ Anon., *Courts of Chancery*, 188.

⁶⁸⁶ Anita McConnell, "Arkwright, Richard (1755–1843)"; R.S. Fitton, *The Arkwrights*, 234; Anon., *Courts of Chancery*, 188.

⁶⁸⁷ Fitton, *The Arkwrights*, 250.

⁶⁸⁸ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 17.

⁶⁸⁹ Jourdain, "Sutton Scarsdale," 168; Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 17.

⁶⁹⁰ Fitton, *The Arkwrights*, 235.

⁶⁹¹ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 18.

⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., 20.

⁶⁹⁵ Thurgood & Marshall, "The Freehold Estate Known as 'Sutton Scarsdale' [sale Catalogue]."

20th century Sutton Scarsdale

Sutton Scarsdale was put up for auction, but when it did not reach its reserve price, it was withdrawn from the sale.⁶⁹⁶ The house was then sold to a group of asset-strippers, who in turn, sold off fragments of the house, including furniture, panelling and lead from the roof.⁶⁹⁷ Noted salvager, Charles Roberson, bought up the majority of the fittings to sell in his London showrooms.⁶⁹⁸ As stated in Chapter Two, Fiske Kimball, then Director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, bought three rooms from Roberson for the museum in 1928.⁶⁹⁹ These salvaged rooms now hold the John Howard McFadden Collection of English Paintings.⁷⁰⁰ (Figure 5) There has been some debate over the authenticity of the provenance of the salvaged and Harris thinks that only one ‘of the three rooms from Sutton Scarsdale can be confidently located to a room in the house’.⁷⁰¹ Donna Corbin, Associate Curator of European Decorative Arts at the Museum, believes that none of the rooms as installed in the museum’s collection are complete rooms from Sutton Scarsdale.⁷⁰² Corbin and David de Muzio, Senior Conservator of Furniture and Woodwork at the Museum, have examined the panelling and believe that the rooms are fabrications, created by Roberson, but do include portions salvaged from rooms at Sutton Scarsdale.⁷⁰³ William Randolph Hearst also acquired a Sutton Scarsdale room from Roberson.⁷⁰⁴ This last room was purchased by movie director, James Mitchell Leisen in 1943,

⁶⁹⁶ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 20; Maxwell Craven and Michael Stanley, *The Derbyshire Country House*, 66.

⁶⁹⁷ Worsley, “Sutton Scarsdale,” 26–27.

⁶⁹⁸ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 21.

⁶⁹⁹ Artist/maker unknown, English, *Interior Architecture, Possibly from Sutton Scarsdale Hall*, 1724-27?, Oak, 711.2 x 1002 cm., Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

<<http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/42067.html?mulR=974690548>> Accessed July 27, 2009.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁰¹ Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 172.

⁷⁰² Donna Corbin, interview by author, Philadelphia, PA, July 21, 2009.

⁷⁰³ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁴ Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 191.

who used it as part of the set for his film *Kitty* (1945).⁷⁰⁵ The room was donated to the Huntington Library in Los Angeles, where it is now in museum storage.⁷⁰⁶

After the speculators sold off what they could, they did not look after the house and shortly after, the lead was stripped from the roof, leaving the Hall as a shell.⁷⁰⁷ Messrs. Haslam, Ltd., a Chesterfield demolition contractor, bought the shell and stripped out any remaining timberwork and movable stone, as well as stonework from outbuildings. They reused the materials in local building projects they were completing during the 1920s and 1930s.⁷⁰⁸ In a return to earlier house dismantling practices, Sutton Scarsdale had been ‘reduced to the value of the building materials’ found within its walls.⁷⁰⁹

Sitwells

The Hall sat uncared for, amongst the ‘detritus of the coal-mining industry’, into the 1920s when Sir Osbert Sitwell of nearby Renishaw Hall visited the ruin.⁷¹⁰ In his autobiography *Left Hand, Right Hand!*, Sitwell described the state in which he found Sutton Scarsdale as having ‘been reduced by the greed of the native speculator to an eyeless and roofless ruin in which the foxes nest’.⁷¹¹ In 1946, Osbert heard that Sutton Scarsdale was going to be demolished.⁷¹² He stepped in and bought the Hall for £100.⁷¹³ Sitwell’s interest may have been due to Sutton Scarsdale’s situation on the landscape, as it had been in the eye line of Renishaw Hall for centuries.⁷¹⁴ This harkens back to the Romantic use of ruins as landscape features of the eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries and is reminiscent of William Aislabie’s use of Fountains Abbey at Studley Royal, discussed in Chapter Three. Additionally, the Sitwells and the Leekes had been in business in the seventeenth

⁷⁰⁵ Letter, James Michael Leisen to Fiske Kimball, October 6, 1943, FKR Box 169, f.11, The Philadelphia Museum of Art Archive; American Film Institute, “Kitty.”

⁷⁰⁶ Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 298.

⁷⁰⁷ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 21.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁹ Rosemary Sweet, *Antiquaries*, 297–298.

⁷¹⁰ Worsley, *England’s Lost Houses*, 2002, 32.

⁷¹¹ Sir Osbert Sitwell, *Left Hand, Right Hand!*, 105–106.

⁷¹² Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale*, 21.

⁷¹³ Ibid.

⁷¹⁴ Heather A. Clemenson, *English Country Houses and Landed Estates*, 134.

century. Nicholas Leeke, the 2nd Earl of Scarsdale, rented out his Iron furnaces at North Wingfield to Robert Sitwell between 1662 and 1666, so there was a long relationship between the Sitwell family and the Sutton Scarsdale estate.⁷¹⁵ Sacheverell Sitwell noted in his *British Architects & Craftsmen* (1948), that Sutton Scarsdale was just an example of the growing crisis of country house destruction. ‘This story is in fact an extraordinary instance of what has been allowed to happen under our eyes, by way of destruction of our national heritage of works of art, with no redress, and no means of prevention.’⁷¹⁶ Sitwell’s nephew, Reresby, inherited the Hall after Sitwell’s death. Unable to afford both Renishaw and Sutton Scarsdale, he approached the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works in 1969 with the goal of donating the house to the Nation.⁷¹⁷ Reresby’s proposal of Sutton Scarsdale brought to light the issue of newer buildings, which were in desperate need of State care, including Witley Court and Northington Grange.⁷¹⁸ In 1970, the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works altered their policy and Sutton Scarsdale entered guardianship.⁷¹⁹

Conservation

For five years after taking the house into guardianship, the Ministry of Works completed emergency repairs and conservation work, part funded by Derbyshire County Council.⁷²⁰ This programme of works has been described as ‘heavy-handed’ and saw extensive use of concrete in the works.⁷²¹ Archaeological excavations and surveys were completed on site from 1987 until 1996 to supplement the incomplete documentary record.⁷²² The findings are included in the

⁷¹⁵ Kettle, *Sutton Scarsdale’s Story*, 49.

⁷¹⁶ Sacheverell Sitwell, *British Architects and Craftsmen*, 167.

⁷¹⁷ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale Hall*, 22.

⁷¹⁸ John Cornforth, “The Uncertain Future of Sutton Scarsdale,” 851.

⁷¹⁹ Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale Hall*, 22.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*, 22–23.

⁷²¹ Lucy Worsley, “Sutton Scarsdale,” 27.

⁷²² Sheppard and Nenck, *Sutton Scarsdale Hall*, 27.

1996 Trent & Peak Archaeology Report.⁷²³ Additional structural consolidation work was completed in 1996.⁷²⁴

In buildings conservation, consolidation sees the application of compounds onto the face of exposed masonry that bind with the stone to improve strength and slow the rate of decay, without affecting the appearance of the stone.⁷²⁵ The extant stuccowork in the New Hall was repaired and conserved to protect it, as it is exposed to the elements.⁷²⁶ Overall, the conservation work completed on site did not affect the appearance of the Hall.

Interpretation

Following the completion of the consolidation work, the site was formally opened to visitors in 1996.⁷²⁷ From 1996 until 2010, the on-site interpretation was minimal. There was one “Guardianship” panel (Figure 8) and one information graphic panel (Figure 7). The Guardianship panel gave basic visitor information, including opening hours, safety information, along with very brief historical information. The graphic panel was placed at the back of the house, near the car park, the English Heritage entrance to the house. The panel featured two large black and white photos of the interior, from the 1919 *Country Life* article. The historical information provided on this panel gave a brief account of the construction and eventual decline of the house. In June 2010, the Properties Presentation department of English Heritage decided this interpretation was ‘not adequate’, as well as misleading, as it led ‘the visitor into thinking it is situated near the front of the house’.⁷²⁸

⁷²³ Ibid., 29–81.

⁷²⁴ Ibid., Summary.

⁷²⁵ David Odgers and Alison Henry, *Practical Building Conservation*, 216; Garrod, “Stone Consolidation: Halts Decay and Prolongs Life.”

⁷²⁶ John Cunnington Architects, “Projects: Sutton Scarsdale Hall.” <<http://www.jcarchitects.co.uk/projects/ancient/scarsdale.html>.> Accessed January 23, 2013.

⁷²⁷ Sheppard and Nenck, Summary of *Sutton Scarsdale Hall*.

⁷²⁸ Properties Presentation, *Interpretation Plan: Free Sites*, 3.

It was decided that a new interpretive plan should be put in place, replacing the single panel with five new, more informative panels by the end of 2010.⁷²⁹ By spring 2011, the five new panels were installed on site, covering the following themes: a general introduction with an overview of the history; how the house was used; the decoration of the house; the architectural development of the house; the wider estate. “Welcome to Sutton Scarsdale”, the introductory panel to the site (Figure 9), has been moved to the rear of the car park, and specifies that the west front was to the rear and was primarily the service area. While the placement is an improvement from the location of the earlier single panel, visitors might miss this important introductory panel as it is placed so far from the house. This panel gives an overview of the nearly 300-year history of the hall, including the rebuild by Leeke and the eventual decline. Walking around to the front of the house, past the north front, visitors will come across the “A Great Country Estate” panel (Figure 10). This panel, overlooking the valley towards the M1, situates Sutton Scarsdale within the larger landscape, including an 1824 plan of the estate, as well as placing the house in the context of the other country houses within the immediate area. At the east front of the house is the “An Architectural Gem” panel (Figure 11), which illustrates the development and design of the house. The inclusion of the Geophysical survey of the planned gardens (Figure 14), completed by Trent & Peak, works in tandem with the “A Great Country Estate” panel, providing visitors with an impression of the views from the Hall in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. “A House for Entertaining” and “Lavish Baroque Interiors”, the two panels inside the shell (Figures 12 and 13), give visitors an idea of what the interior of Sutton Scarsdale looked like and how it was used, through pictures and an 1800 floor plan (Figure 2). “A House for Entertaining” gives the story of the Arkwrights. The “Lavish Baroque Interiors” panel tells the story of the sale of interior elements to American museums and the rescue of the Hall by Sitwell. The stuccowork completed by Artari and Vassalli in the New Hall is locked behind metal grates, preventing access to the decorative work. Even with this new interpretive plan, the design of the site and placement of the panels, fits with the traditional Ministry of Works ‘cricket pitch’ look, established in Chapter Three.

⁷²⁹ Ibid., 3 and 5.

As a free-site, Sutton Scarsdale has no guidebook or audioguide. Sutton Scarsdale has almost no social media presence. The Sutton Scarsdale Facebook page has sixty-one followers, but is not associated with English Heritage. Only photos are displayed on the page, including images from the sales catalogues, early nineteenth- and twentieth-century images and more recent photos. Curiously, there are photos of the basement, which is not publicly accessible, due to Health and Safety regulations, but it would appear that a visitor with an interest in Urban Exploration has managed to get down to photograph them. There is no Twitter account associated with the site. Until May 2013, the English Heritage site page had a link to an associated Flickr account. This account was relatively unused, as it only had twelve shared photographs, and as of July 2013, this link was removed. As the conservation work completed at Sutton Scarsdale was structural, the work has not been included in the interpretation on-site.

Discussion

The updated interpretive plan has greatly improved the site and is a good example of how the ruin of a country house should be interpreted. The former plan, with the single panel situated at the back of the house, gave a disappointing first impression. The current plan gives enough background history without being overwhelming, covering the development of the house, life in Sutton Scarsdale both up and down-stairs, as well as discussing the decline of the house. The amount and placement of interpretation matches Howard's recommendation, discussed in Chapter Three, that the interpretation should be able to be ignored, if the visitor chooses to do so. The estate and wider landscape are highlighted, showing an understanding of the importance of the unity of the country house in the Gowers Report. Other free-sites in the care of English Heritage, such as Houghton Hall, Bedfordshire, have an audioguide available on the English Heritage website for visitors to download prior to their visit. While the new text panels render this option almost unnecessary, some visitors might find this to be a useful option.

The current plan also embraces the ruin. By maintaining the house as a ruin, English Heritage has recognized the importance of the decline in the on-going story

of Sutton Scarsdale. Through the on-site interpretation, each chapter in the biography of Sutton Scarsdale has been shared with the visitor. The house is a monument to the decline of the country house, which is similar to the approach English Heritage has taken at Brodsworth Hall, South Yorkshire, discussed in Chapter Three. Presented as a ruin, the marks of construction and decoration are visible to the visitor. The visible elements include: putlog holes, holes made in the structure to support scaffolding during construction; laths and studs for wall formation, which sometimes have plaster *in situ*; and exterior rendering covering the brick and stone. None of these exposed elements is interpreted. These marks can help an educated visitor make sense of how the house was built and decorated, but to the uneducated can be uninteresting or confusing. For this reason, the inclusion of a panel giving a brief overview of country house construction would be beneficial.

There is also potential for visitor confusion regarding the historic use of space within the shell. However, this is reduced by the inclusion of a ground plan. With the ground plan on the ‘A House for Entertaining’ panel, the visitor is presented with an important tool as to how the house was used.

Rather than providing visitors with a staged, scripted view of the house, the interpretive panels at Sutton Scarsdale provide information, not a route around the house. This allows visitors to place themselves within the ordered space of the intact house, while still being able to create their own path around the ruins, to create their own experience of the site. ‘Ruins have always been visited primarily for the experience of being there...It is our experience of them that validates their continued existence.’⁷³⁰ The site experience is not stage managed. There is not a fixed path, but there is movement, experience and education within the ruins of Sutton Scarsdale.

Its status as a free site, without the standard visitor services, such as a kiosk or restrooms, emphasises the freedom of visitor experience. It frees those who visit from the standardized country house visit. Historian Lucy Worsley has even called a visit to Sutton Scarsdale ‘an exhilarating change from the usual country house

⁷³⁰ Stanford, “On Preserving Our Ruins,” 31.

experience'.⁷³¹ The fact that the house is in ruins and therefore devoid of furnishings and the normal "grandstanding" of intact country houses, offers a new perspective on the concept of the standard country house visit, discussed in Chapter Three. Not only is the experience of walking through the space of a country house ruin drastically different to that of an intact country house, the ruin allows for a break in the regulated experience of intact houses.

As stated above, the conservation work completed on the Hall has not been included in either the former interpretive panels or the current interpretation. The exclusion of this work is detrimental neither to the visitor experience nor visitor understanding of the Hall. As the work was purely structural, it did not alter the appearance of Sutton Scarsdale, so inclusion in the interpretation was not crucial.

Not discussed in the interpretation section above is the failed proposal by The Centre of Attention art organisation for re:place, 'an ambitious two-year curated programme of site-specific contemporary visual arts commissions and installations across Derbyshire' sponsored by the Derbyshire Arts Development Group. The HLF and Derbyshire County Council supported project provided funding for contemporary art installations around Derbyshire from 2008 to 2011.⁷³² The project 'The Pavilion of Post Contemporary Curating: A Semi-staged Total Work of Art' was proposed in 2009 as a multifunctional new media art space.⁷³³ In their plan, Centre of Attention would transform the ruin into offices for the company, studio and gallery space for local artists, and would include a small gallery devoted to the history of the site.⁷³⁴

The project also had an architectural component that was to transform Sutton Scarsdale into a work of art itself, by incorporating it into the sculptural design for the new centre. An open call for proposals was held and 103 were received, thirty-six of which have been posted on the Centre of Attention website. The majority of the thirty-six published designs propose to rebuild the Hall (Figure 15), with

⁷³¹ Worsley, "Sutton Scarsdale," 29.

⁷³² re:place, "Contact/About." < <http://re-place.co.uk/home/contact> > Accessed April 13, 2013

⁷³³ re:place, "The Centre of Attention." < <http://re-place.co.uk/home/2009-projects/the-centre-of-attention> > Accessed April 13, 2013

⁷³⁴ Ibid.

modern embellishments, but some encapsulate the house, maintaining the ruin (Figure 16).

While this project did not receive funding, it does give some insight into how Sutton Scarsdale, and other country house ruins are viewed by the public. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Anna Keay found that visitors saw the ruins of castles and abbeys to be haunting and beautiful, while disused country houses were sad. The language used by Centre of Attention in their proposal echoes this sentiment and completely ignores the work done by English Heritage. Centre of Attention calls the Hall ‘a dilapidated wreck of a structure [which] you enter at your own risk’ and that ‘Sutton Scarsdale needs to live again’.⁷³⁵ While this is an ignorant statement, as Sutton Scarsdale has been properly cared for since entering the care of English Heritage, it does show that Sutton Scarsdale is not seen as a country house in its current state. Without the availability of the typical ritual of a country house visit, or the atmosphere associated with a “living” house, Sutton Scarsdale does not fit the definition of a country house.

⁷³⁵ the centre of attention, “The Pavilion of Post Contemporary Curating.” < <http://www.thecentreofattention.org/exhibitions/sutton1.html>> Accessed May 3, 2013

Downhill House, County Londonderry

The Downhill Demesne is located on the Northwest coast of County Londonderry, Northern Ireland. Built between 1775 and 1787, the mansion was the Earl Bishop of Derry's first and largest building project.⁷³⁶ Downhill remained in the family until 1946 when it was sold and subsequently stripped and abandoned. The B+ listed house sat as a roofless ruin until acquired by the National Trust in 1980.⁷³⁷ Downhill is open year round as a free site and is the only country house shell in the care of the National Trust.⁷³⁸

Architectural Description and Development

There has been some confusion over the appropriate name for the mansion house on the Downhill estate. It has been referred to by many names in the literature on the house. Alastair Rowan, in *The Buildings of Ireland*, calls the house "Downhill Castle" while the National Trust in its promotional material, refers to it as both "Downhill House" and "The Bishop's Palace".⁷³⁹ Author Mark Bence-Jones, like the National Trust, refers to the house as one of the Earl Bishops' three 'eclectic palaces', the other two being Ickworth, Suffolk and Ballyscullion, County Londonderry.⁷⁴⁰ As Ickworth is not a Bishop's Palace, it is hard to know from what definition Bence-Jones is working. For the purposes of this study, the mansion house on the estate will be referred to as a country house.

Downhill is a part-classical, part-castellated, U-shaped country house. It began as a simple rectangular two-story house, which is now the south block. The house is now comprised of three major sections: the south or central block; the east and west wings; and the east and west service yards. The central block and both wings are decorated with Corinthian pilasters and sit upon a rusticated basement. The south

⁷³⁶ Peter Rankin, *Irish Building Ventures of the Earl Bishop of Derry, 1730-1803*, 12.

⁷³⁷ The listing of historic properties in Northern Ireland is similar to that in England; however, the names of the tiers have been altered. Grade B+ is equal to Grade II* in the English system. (DOENI, Listed Buildings)

<<http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/finding-a-listed-building>> Accessed August 28, 2013.

⁷³⁸ "National Trust HBSMR: Full Monument Report, Bishop's Palace, Downhill."

⁷³⁹ Alistair Rowan, *North West Ulster*, 245.

⁷⁴⁰ Mark Bence-Jones, *Burke's Guide*, 106.

façade of the central block is nine bays wide comprised of three central bays, flanked by two canted bay windows. The stair hall was located in the semicircular pavilion on the north front of the central block. The east and west wings extend out towards the North Atlantic, each with two bay windows. The majority of the roof was hipped, but each wing originally terminated in domes.⁷⁴¹ Two large semi-circular, crenellated projecting wings extending towards the ocean dominate the north side. These wings contained the service yards for the house.⁷⁴²

Construction on the south block and east wing began in 1775 (Figure 19). During his tour of Ireland in 1776, writer Arthur Young visited the Downhill estate.⁷⁴³ He remarked that the house, was a ‘large and convenient edifice’, but was not yet complete.⁷⁴⁴ By the end of 1776, the southern block had been roofed.⁷⁴⁵ The original main entrance to the house was through the semi-circular pavilion on the north side of the southern block.⁷⁴⁶ The kitchen was originally housed in the basement of the east wing, along with the housekeeper’s room. It was later moved to the crenellated extension. In 1777 the stable block had been completed on north end of the west wing. This original stable block was situated parallel to the southern block. When the wings were extended off the southern block, the stables were moved into the west wing. The Earl Bishop was able to move into the house in 1779.⁷⁴⁷ The west wing was built and roofed from 1782 to 1783, replacing the original gateway to the courtyard. The west wing was reserved for the double height Gallery. The construction of the crenellated wings began in 1784. In the same year, the house was clad in granite ashlar, to conceal the freestone used to build the house and to create a unified appearance. By 1786 the interiors were nearly finished. However, in 1787 the Earl Bishop began construction on an additional country house, Ballyscullion, near Bellaghy, County Londonderry, focusing his attention

⁷⁴¹ Neale and Moule, *Views of the Seats*, 1821.

⁷⁴² Terence Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume II*.

⁷⁴³ Arthur Young, *A Tour In Ireland*, 189.

⁷⁴⁴ Young, pp.189-190

⁷⁴⁵ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume II*.

⁷⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁷ Ibid.

away from Downhill.⁷⁴⁸⁷⁴⁹ The house at Ballyscullion was never finished, but did serve as a foundation for the Earl Bishop's plan for Ickworth.⁷⁵⁰

Michael Shanahan (1731-1811), an architect and stonecutter from Cork, was commissioned to design and construct Downhill.⁷⁵¹ Shanahan travelled with the Earl Bishop between 1770 and 1772 on one of his tours to the Continent.⁷⁵² The Earl Bishop employed Italian *stuccador* Placido Columbani at Downhill after meeting him during a trip to Rome in the 1770s.⁷⁵³ In 1783, Shanahan took a leave of absence from the building project and Columbani took his place.⁷⁵⁴ Shanahan returned as the lead on the project in 1785.⁷⁵⁵

The Earl Bishop employed David and James McBlain, father and son stonemasons, for the re-facing project.⁷⁵⁶ The McBlains were active in County Derry in the mid-eighteenth century.⁷⁵⁷ They had previously worked for the Earl Bishop at Derry Cathedral and were contracted for the re-facing of Downhill in granite ashlar between 1784 and 1785.⁷⁵⁸ The McBlains also built the Lion Gate at the entrance to the demesne in c.1787.⁷⁵⁹

The Hervey Bruce family, who inherited the Earl Bishop's Irish estates upon his death in 1803, did not undertake any major structural modifications of the house until 1870. The Reverend Henry Hervey Aston Bruce, 1st Baronet, planted nearly 40,000 trees on the estate and removed many decorative features from Ballyscullion

⁷⁴⁸ Rowan, p.139

⁷⁴⁹ Rowan, *North West Ulster*, 139.

⁷⁵⁰ H. Avray Tipping, "Ickworth - I. Suffolk. The Seat of the Marquis of Bristol," 674.

⁷⁵¹ Brian Fothergill, *The Mitred Earl*, 41.

⁷⁵² John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701-1800*, 850.

⁷⁵³ Christopher Hussey, *English Country Houses: Late Georgian*, 240; Bence-Jones, *Burke's Guide*, 106; Rankin, "Downhill, Co. Derry - I," 95.

⁷⁵⁴ Letter, Michael Shanahan to Frederick Augustus Hervey, Earl Bishop of Derry, c. 1783, D2798/2/101, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland; Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume II*.

⁷⁵⁵ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume II*.

⁷⁵⁶ Rowan, *North West Ulster*, 246.

⁷⁵⁷ *Dictionary of Irish Architects, 1720-1940*, online edition, s.v. "McBlain, David."

⁷⁵⁸ Rankin, *Irish Building Ventures*, 14; Bence-Jones, *Burke's Guide*, 106.

⁷⁵⁹ Rankin, *Irish Building Ventures*, 22.

to Downhill.⁷⁶⁰ In 1851, a fire broke out in the carpenter's workshop, which was situated under the Library.⁷⁶¹ The family was in England at the time of the fire, but estate and house staffs were on hand to remove as many furnishings as possible.⁷⁶² Many pieces were saved, but twenty sculptures and countless books were destroyed.⁷⁶³ The fire was brought under control by cutting through ceilings and floors. By the time it was extinguished 'only the bare walls of' the 'once splendid mansion' remained.⁷⁶⁴ Only the east wing was undamaged.⁷⁶⁵

John Lanyon (1840-1900) was hired by Sir Henry Hervey Bruce, the 3rd Baronet, to rebuild the house following the 1851 fire.⁷⁶⁶ Lanyon was an engineer and architect from Belfast and a founder of the Belfast Architectural Association in 1872.⁷⁶⁷ The reconstruction took place between 1870 and 1874, during which many alterations to the layout were made. The entrance was moved from the east front to the bowed hall in the basement of the west façade (Figure 21), the long gallery and library were converted into a Wintergarden, large paned sash windows were installed, and the domed roofs on the wings were removed and replaced with a hipped roof.⁷⁶⁸ Between 1878 and 1877, Downhill was fitted for gas lighting.⁷⁶⁹

Few alterations were made at Downhill between the Lanyon reconstruction and the requisitioning of the house during the Second World War. In June 1949, the Belfast Telegraph reported that the house was to be demolished.⁷⁷⁰ Ultimately Downhill was not demolished, but the roof was removed in 1950 and the interiors were stripped and dispersed.⁷⁷¹ A chimneypiece went to Castle Upton, Co. Antrim and a pair of columns went to Ballyward Lodge, Co. Down.⁷⁷² Following thirty

⁷⁶⁰ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume I*. Section 9.4

⁷⁶¹ Anon., "Fires."

⁷⁶² Ibid.

⁷⁶³ Ibid.; Green, "Downhill Castle, County Derry, Northern Ireland," 36.

⁷⁶⁴ Anon., "Fires."

⁷⁶⁵ Anon., "Restoration of Downhill."

⁷⁶⁶ Rankin, *Irish Building Ventures*, 157; Rankin, "Downhill, Co. Derry - I," 96.

⁷⁶⁷ *Dictionary of Irish Architects, 1720-1940*, online edition, s.v. "Lanyon, John."

⁷⁶⁸ Bence-Jones, *Burke's Guide*, 107; Rankin, "Downhill, Co. Derry - I," 96-97; "Restoration of Downhill"; Jan Eccles, *Downhill*, 20.

⁷⁶⁹ Eccles, *Downhill*, 20.

⁷⁷⁰ Anon., "Downhill to Be Demolished."

⁷⁷¹ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume II*.

⁷⁷² Bence-Jones, *Burke's Guide*, 107.

years of abandonment a section of the southeast corner collapsed in 1983.⁷⁷³ Presently, the house is in a drastically altered state. Many of the walls have been reduced and the windows blocked. These alterations, made by the National Trust, will be discussed further on in this case study.

Line of Ownership

Earl Bishop

Frederick Augustus Hervey (1730-1803), later the 4th Earl of Bristol and the Bishop of Derry, was born 1 August 1730 at Ickworth House in Suffolk. He graduated from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.⁷⁷⁴ He was the chaplain for King George III in 1763.⁷⁷⁵ Frederick Hervey was consecrated as Bishop of Cloyne in 1767.⁷⁷⁶ Following the death of Dr. Barnard, Bishop of Derry, in 1768, Hervey was transferred to take over the Diocese of Derry.⁷⁷⁷ Upon the death of Augustus John Hervey, 3rd Earl of Bristol, in 1779, Hervey inherited the title, becoming the 4th Earl of Bristol.⁷⁷⁸ In the same year, the Earl Bishop moved into Downhill.⁷⁷⁹ The Earl Bishop has been described as ‘addicted to foreign travel’ and took five extended trips to Italy from 1765 to 1790.⁷⁸⁰ The Earl Bishop’s love of the continent was evident in the decoration of Downhill, as ‘the spoils of Europe adorned its halls’.⁷⁸¹ During his time at Downhill, the Earl Bishop filled his large art gallery with paintings by Rubens, Rembrandt, Van Dyck, Raphael and Titian.⁷⁸² It has been stated that the collection was arranged according to the Earl Bishop’s particular

⁷⁷³ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume I*. Section 11.4

⁷⁷⁴ Gerard O’Brien, “Hervey”; Rankin, *Irish Building Ventures*, 6.

⁷⁷⁵ Rankin, *Irish Building Ventures*, 6.

⁷⁷⁶ O’Brien, “Hervey”; Rankin, *Irish Building Ventures*, 6.

⁷⁷⁷ O’Brien, “Hervey”; Rankin, *Irish Building Ventures*, 6.

⁷⁷⁸ Ruddock Mackay, “Hervey, Augustus John, Third Earl of Bristol (1724–1779).”

⁷⁷⁹ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume II*.

⁷⁸⁰ Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701-1800*, 126.

⁷⁸¹ George Ashton Chamberlin, “Frederick Hervey: The Earl-Bishop of Derry,” 272.

⁷⁸² Neale and Moule, *Views of the Seats*, 1821.

curatorial plan, although no record of this plan remains.⁷⁸³ The Earl Bishop left Ireland for Italy in 1791, and died in Rome in July 1803.⁷⁸⁴

The Bruces

Following the Earl Bishop's death in 1803, the house and title passed to his cousin and agent in Ireland, the Reverend Henry Hervey Aston Bruce (1752-1822).⁷⁸⁵ His son Frederick William inherited his properties in England.⁷⁸⁶ The Reverend Sir Henry Hervey Aston Bruce was created 1st Baronet Bruce of Downhill 29 June 1804.⁷⁸⁷ Sir Henry Hervey Bruce (1820-1909), 3rd Baronet Bruce of Downhill, was MP for Coleraine from 1862-1874 and again from 1880-1885.⁷⁸⁸ Hervey Bruce was a conservative magistrate for Ulster.⁷⁸⁹ Hervey Bruce suspected that the 1851 fire was intentionally set and even went so far as to offer a £500 reward to determine the genuine cause.⁷⁹⁰ The shell of Downhill was host to a party held in honour of Sir Hervey Jukes Lloyd Bruce (1843-1919) attaining majority in 1864.⁷⁹¹ A marquee was set up in the courtyard and the ruins were open for partygoers. By 1900 the Hervey Bruce family were in residence at Clifton Hall, Nottinghamshire, but maintained Downhill as a casual residence until just after the First World War.⁷⁹² The house and estate were sold at auction in December 1948.⁷⁹³

⁷⁸³ Fothergill, *The Mitred Earl*, 43.

⁷⁸⁴ E.R.R. Green, "Downhill Castle, County Derry, Northern Ireland," 34; Anon., "Ireland."

⁷⁸⁵ Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, "Introduction: Hervey/Bruce Papers," 15–17; Eccles, *Downhill*, 19.

⁷⁸⁶ Tipping, "Ickworth - II. Suffolk. The Seat of the Marquis of Bristol," 702.

⁷⁸⁷ Mosley, *Burke's Peerage & Baronetage*, 399.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 401.

⁷⁸⁹ Frank Thompson, *The End of Liberal Ulster*, 192.

⁷⁹⁰ Henry Hervey-Bruce, "Statement Regarding Fire."

⁷⁹¹ Mosley, *Burke's Peerage & Baronetage*, 401–2; Anon., "Festivities at Downhill."

⁷⁹² Anon., "Clifton Hall, Nottingham: The Seat of Lieut. Col. Hervey Jukes Lloyd Bruce," 592; Green, "Downhill Castle," 34.

⁷⁹³ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume I*

Royal Air Force

Like so many country houses during the Second World War, Downhill was requisitioned and was used to billet service men and women.⁷⁹⁴ According to Malachy Conway, an archaeologist with the National Trust, the site was a part of the larger radar station complex in Downhill Village.⁷⁹⁵ Pottery fragments marked “RAF 1942” were found during excavations of the West wing from 2009-2012.⁷⁹⁶

National Trust

The acquisition of buildings on the Downhill Demesne was piecemeal. Mr. F.W. Smith donated the Mussenden Temple (Figure 24) to the Trust in 1949, along with unrestricted access for visitors.⁷⁹⁷ The Bishop’s Gate and Lodge were acquired in 1962.⁷⁹⁸ The house and mausoleum did not enter care for another eighteen years.⁷⁹⁹ Following the recommendation by the Executive Committee for their acquisition, the National Trust purchased the house and mausoleum from Robert Marcus O’Neil and John Andrew Reid, who had acquired the house when it entered the market in 1950, and on the 21st of May 1980, they entered the care of the National Trust.⁸⁰⁰ The temple, mausoleum, and entrance gates are Grade A listed.⁸⁰¹ In 1982, the National Trust approved the purchase of 85 acres surrounding the

⁷⁹⁴ Anon., “Demolition”; Eccles, *Downhill*, 20.

⁷⁹⁵ Pers. Comm. 20 March 2012

⁷⁹⁶ June Welsh and Randall Scott, “Survey Report: No. 26, Survey of West Yard, Bishop's Palace, Downhill, County Londonderry,” 11.

⁷⁹⁷ Anon., “For the Nation: Temple, Farmhouse and Estate.”

⁷⁹⁸ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume I*.

⁷⁹⁹ “National Trust HBSMR: Full Monument Report, Bishop’s Palace, Downhill.”

⁸⁰⁰ National Trust Executive Committee, “Minutes, 15 March 1979.”

⁸⁰¹ Department of the Environment Northern Ireland, “Historic Building Details: Downhill Palace, Downhill Co. Londonderry.”

<<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/built/buildview?id=6821&js=true>> Accessed February 26, 2012.

house.⁸⁰² The walled garden, adjacent to the Lion's Gate, was acquired in 1986.⁸⁰³ The walled garden was to provide space for interpretation as well as parking.⁸⁰⁴

A seasonal archaeological excavation of the service wings (Figure 25) has been occurring since 2009. The dig has an annual summer school in which members of the local community can participate. Twenty volunteers participated in the 2010 season.⁸⁰⁵ In 2010, a gasholder associated with the Lanyon reconstruction of the house was discovered in the west service yard.⁸⁰⁶ In 2012, fragments of decorative masonry, such as pilasters and Vitruvian scroll corning, were found.⁸⁰⁷

Archaeological excavations have become a quite popular interdisciplinary approach to country house research. Additionally, these excavations allow for public engagement with the site, which increases interest and understanding. Public excavations, like the one held each summer at Downhill, can be found at Petworth House in West Sussex, as well as Harewood House in Yorkshire, as a part of the Yorkshire Country House Partnership.⁸⁰⁸ The Downhill excavation is well advertised, but not well interpreted. It has its own section on the Downhill site page of the National Trust website, although visitors are instructed to visit the Downhill Facebook page for updates on the excavation.⁸⁰⁹ It was included in *Archaeology Days 2010*, a NIEA publication, encouraging public participation at local heritage sites, and was featured in a recent BBC news story.⁸¹⁰ There is no interpretation of the excavation on site, but the work completed and finds found during excavation

⁸⁰² National Trust Executive Committee, "Minutes, 21 October 1982."

⁸⁰³ National Trust Executive Committee, "Minutes, 15 January 1986."

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁵ Welsh and Scott, "Survey Report" 8.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid., 11.

⁸⁰⁸ Ben James, "Archaeologists Dig at Petworth House in Search for Medieval Banqueting Hall" <

http://www.theargus.co.uk/news/10551515.Archaeologists_dig_at_Petworth_House_in_search_for_medieval_banqueting_hall> Accessed August 28, 2013.; "Student Archaeologists on Trail of Yorkshire Gem's Hidden Past."

<<http://www.harewood.org/whats-on/news/1/745>> Accessed August 13, 2013

⁸⁰⁹ "Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House: Things to See & Do."

<<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/downhill-demesne-and-hezlett-house/things-to-see-and-do>> Accessed August 4, 2013.

⁸¹⁰ "Under and over Downhill." <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-20799046>> Accessed August 4, 2013.

are documented in photo albums on Facebook. The National Trust hopes to open the wings in the future.⁸¹¹

Conservation

The programme of conservation works at Downhill began immediately following acquisition. In June 1980, National Trust workers began clearing the site of overgrowth and sorting fallen masonry.⁸¹² When the National Trust first acquired the ruins it was believed that the majority of the structure could be retained, allowing for the silhouette of the house to be maintained. In 1982 the Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland completed a structural report on the ruins. This report found major structural instability and recommended that all dangerous sections of the walls be demolished. The report also recommended that the walls be treated with a render to protect the masonry from the elements.⁸¹³

Although the National Trust desired to keep the outline of the ruin intact, after the receipt of the DoE report, it was decided that major portions of the structure had to be demolished. In 1985, the National Trust decided ‘to retain as much as possible of the original south block of the building and to reduce in gradual irregularly patterned steps, all the side elevations.’ Stabilization work began in 1986 and was contracted to Robert Logue & Son of Londonderry. The wall reduction work was done almost entirely by hand. The structurally unstable areas were identified, a new top wall level was marked out in chalk and the walls were cut down. (Figure 26) Following reduction, the walls were rendered with cement. (Figure 27) Stainless steel ties were used to secure decorative elements, such as corncicing. All basement level openings, such as the east entrance created by Lanyon, and all the windows, were filled and rendered with cement. Salvaged masonry was moved to the east service yard. The stable block and bastions were not

⁸¹¹ Malachy Conway, “The Downhill Archaeology Project 2009-2011,” 5.

⁸¹² Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume II*.

⁸¹³ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume I*. Section 11.3.

included in this conservation work.⁸¹⁴ The Unionist graffiti on the courtyard walls was removed during this programme of works. (Figure 28)

Additional conservation work was undertaken from 1990 to 1991. Masonry on the north service yard walls and crenellations were repaired and re-pointed.⁸¹⁵ New gates were installed in both service yards and a new path was laid in the courtyard from the north entrance arch to the north bow entrance of the house.⁸¹⁶ Terence Quinn, a chartered buildings surveyor, completed the Quinquennial Report for Downhill for the National Trust in 2002.⁸¹⁷ This report was completed as part of the standard National Trust 'Quinquennial surveys of Buildings held for Preservation'.⁸¹⁸ The survey was restricted to accessible areas of the house ruins and other estate buildings.⁸¹⁹ The report found that much of the ruin had extensive weed overgrowth and masonry deterioration. It was recommended that regular maintenance work be completed to preserve the ruin.⁸²⁰

Interpretation

The National Trust website page for Downhill instructs visitors to park at the Lion's Gate on Mussenden road. (Figure 29) The Lion's Gate entrance is un-staffed and there is no interpretation in the car park. This car park is adjacent to the walled garden. Only one sign is present in the car park, directing visitors towards the walled garden, dovecote, picnic area, and bathrooms. The walled garden was intended to provide a space for interpretation for the overall site.⁸²¹ Within the walled garden, beside the picnic area, are three large interpretive sheets hung from the garden walls. These sheets describe the conservation work completed on the Lion's Gate. There are two additional short text panels for the newly planted areas

⁸¹⁴ The material in this paragraph is derived from Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne*, Volume I, Sections 11.3-11.4.

⁸¹⁵ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume I*. Section 11.5.

⁸¹⁶ *Ibid.* Section 11.5.

⁸¹⁷ A Quinquennial Review is a routine monitoring of an historic site, conducted every five years, as part of a long-term maintenance plan. (Feilden, p.243)

⁸¹⁸ Terence Quinn, Foreword to *Quinquennial Report on Downhill Estate*.

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.* Foreword.

⁸²⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁸²¹ National Trust Executive Committee, "Minutes, 15 January 1986."

beside the walled garden. No history of the buildings or Lion's Gate is provided. From the Lion's Gate car park, it is a short walk up to the ruins and the Mussenden Temple; however, no signs guiding the visitor up to the house are provided.

At the Bishop's Gate entrance, there is a small, staffed visitor cabin. The Bishop's Gate entrance is one half mile from the Lion's Gate entrance. There are no signs at the Lion's Gate car park directing visitors to the Bishop's Gate entrance. There is a single interpretive panel just beyond the Bishop's Gate visitor cabin.

The 1964 National Trust Tourbook for the Mussenden Temple gives a thorough biography of the Earl Bishop and background of the construction of the demesne. The house was not yet in the care of the National Trust at this point, but the original construction, 1851 fire, and twentieth-century dispersal of collections were all described. As the ruin was not in the care of the National Trust at this time, no tour of the house was provided, and the history was skewed towards the Mussenden Temple. The first house specific tour information was published in 1985, following the acquisition of the property. Visitors were instructed to park and enter the site via the Lion's Gate. A map of the entire site, including all outbuildings and landscape features, was included. Short descriptions and histories of the buildings are included. The ruins were undergoing extensive conservation work in 1985 and visitors were prohibited from entering the structure, so no tour or path is provided through the buildings.

The interpretation on site at the Downhill ruins is scarce. There is one text panel within the ruins, one located next to the Mussenden Temple. The text panel within the ruins is located just inside the door of the south front, within the former library. (Figures 30 and 31) The main text is brief and covers the construction of the house by the Earl Bishop. Alongside the main text are three photographs of the house during the mid-twentieth-century. One photograph is of the exterior, the second is of military officers with a cannon beside the Mussenden Temple in 1942 and the third is a small photograph of the furnishings of the study in 1945. Below the photographs is a small block of facts entitled 'Did you know?' These facts relate to the Earl Bishop's use of Downhill, his other house at Ballyscullion, and the requisitioning of the house by the RAF. It is in this selection of facts that the visitor

is told that the house ‘fell into disrepair’ following requisitioning by the RAF. No other information related to the ruination of the house is given. Rooms within the southern block of the house have been identified through small name labels attached to the walls. (Figure 32) No overall ground plan of the house is provided. The major structural and demolition works completed by the National Trust are not described in this interpretive panel.

The Mussenden Temple text panel is situated on the path from the house down to the Temple. This panel explains the placement of the Temple in the landscape, that due to coastal erosion, the Temple is at present closer to the cliff edge than it was originally. The text panel also translates the Latin inscription around the dome. As with the house text panel, alongside the text are three images. There are two photographs, one of the interior and the other a detail of the Latin inscription. The third is a computer-generated image of the interior in a partially furnished state. The text panel adjacent to the Mussenden Temple provides information on coastal views and wildlife.

The National Trust website page for Downhill also includes information for another Trust property, Hezlett House, a seventeenth century house a mile away from the demesne. All visitor information is split between the two sites. There are normal opening hours and an entrance fee charged for Hezlett House, neither of which applies to Downhill.⁸²² The “Things to See and Do” section of the page gives information on events occurring at Downhill and Hezlett House.⁸²³ The Downhill specific “Things to Do” page provides a link to a biography of the Earl Bishop, who is discussed, along with previous Earls, on a separate page entitled “Becoming an Earl Bishop at Downhill”.⁸²⁴ The history page gives information on the construction of the house, the fire, and twentieth century occupation of the house and subsequent

⁸²² “Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House.”

<<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/downhill-demesne-and-hezlett-house>> Accessed November 17, 2009.

⁸²³ “Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House: Things to See & Do.”

⁸²⁴ Reeves-Smyth, *Downhill Demesne, Volume I*, “Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House: Becoming an Earl Bishop at Downhill Demesne.”

abandonment of the estate. The Lanyon reconstruction is not mentioned.⁸²⁵ A guided tour of the demesne, led by staff from the Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Trust, was given in April 2013.⁸²⁶ The tour covered aspects of the site's history and the National Trust's work on the estate. This walk was advertised on both Facebook and Twitter.

Downhill is quite active on the social media pages, Twitter and Facebook. The accounts have been open since 2011 and 2009, respectively. Both accounts give general visitor information and cover events on site, the majority of which are family days out and weddings. Photo albums of the archaeological excavations provide a brief history of the site and the Earl Bishop. Conservation work included in tweets and Facebook posts are not explained, but photographs of work are provided. No in-depth National Trust interpretation is provided on either account. The 'History Space' interpretive project and Ballymena Northern Regional College three-dimensional recreation of the house are given preference on both accounts.

A new multimedia interpretive tool called 'History Space' was introduced at Downhill on 27th of June 2013.⁸²⁷ (Figure 33) The University of Ulster and the Northern Periphery Programme, funded by the European Union, developed the interpretive application for smart phones as part of the *Tourist Guide for Northern Periphery* project.⁸²⁸ The main areas of the site, which include the ruins, the Mussenden Temple, the mausoleum, the Lion's Gate, amongst several others, have been geotagged with zone specific digital interpretive material. Geotagging 'refers to the process of adding geographical identification metadata to media resources'.⁸²⁹ The geotagged material is accessed by "opening a door" – drawing a door in the air

⁸²⁵ "Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House: History."
<<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/downhill-demesne-and-hezlett-house/history>>
Accessed November 17, 2013.

⁸²⁶ Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust, "Downhill Estate Walk."
<http://www.ccght.org/ai1ec_event/downhill-estate-walk?instance_id=491>
Accessed April 10, 2013.

⁸²⁷ "Downhill Facebook Page."
<<https://www.facebook.com/DownhillNationalTrust>> Accessed January 17, 2010.

⁸²⁸ "TG4NP Main Projects: Tourist Guide for Northern Periphery 5.3."
<<http://www.tg4np.eu/en/launch-of-history-space-university-of-ulster-2013-07-01>>
Accessed August 7, 2013.

⁸²⁹ Yan-Tao Zheng, Zheng-Jun Zha, and Tat-Seng Chua, "Research and Applications on Georeferenced Multimedia: a Survey," 80–81.

with their cellular telephone – and “stepping” into the past.⁸³⁰ (Figure 34) According to the project website, by using the application ‘the visitor is essentially acting out stories to understand what it would have been like to live at Downhill during the life and times of Bishop Hervey.’⁸³¹ By “stepping into the past” new content is opened to the visitor, such as activities and historic photos. The activities for the ruins are a series of challenges. First, to serve beverages to the Earl Bishop’s guests without spilling any of the liquid and second, to ‘follow a midnight philanderer’, which involves visitors following footsteps left in flour scattered on the floor by the Earl Bishop.⁸³² The activities, although seemingly trivial, are encouraging visitor engagement with the house and wider estate, something that is not done by the National Trust. Additional activities include playing a harp by the Lion’s Gate and catching a fish in the Black Glen Lough.⁸³³ While not directly linked on the National Trust Downhill Demesne page, information is provided on the application and visitors are encouraged to download it prior to their visit.⁸³⁴

Media students at the Ballymoney Northern Regional College have spent four years recreating the mansion at Downhill. Beyond learning the digital media necessary to recreate the mansion, the project has involved researching the Earl Bishop and the historic interiors. (Figure 35) Archival resources have been used to accurately depict the interiors, as they would have looked while the Earl Bishop was in residence.⁸³⁵ The 3D recreation video has been posted several times on the Downhill Facebook page. A special architecture compilation episode of *Countryfile* on BBC One in April 2013 featured Downhill and the 3D recreation was used in

⁸³⁰ “History Space: The Games.” < <http://www.historyspace.eu/games> > Accessed July 27, 2013.

⁸³¹ “History Space: The App.” < <http://www.historyspace.eu/app> > Accessed July 27, 2013.

⁸³² It is reported that when the Earl Bishop had guests at Downhill, he liked to see who was visiting whom in the night, so he would sprinkle flour on the floor to trace the footsteps.

⁸³³ *HistorySpace*. < <http://vimeo.com/58447634> > Accessed July 27, 2013.

⁸³⁴ “Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House.”

⁸³⁵ “The Legacy of an Eccentric Man.” < <http://www.londonderrysentinel.co.uk/news/around-the-province/the-legacy-of-an-eccentric-man-1-4221818> > Accessed August 27, 2013.

John Craven's historical explanation of the house and Mussenden Temple.⁸³⁶ The National Trust plans to use the Ballymena NRC research and project in future interpretation on site and in a guidebook.⁸³⁷ The 3D recreation is not available on site, but the National Trust hopes to include this work in a permanent interpretive feature on site in the future.⁸³⁸

Discussion

The conservation work done at Downhill has completely altered the look of the building. The losses are unfortunate, but understandable, as the fabric was unstable and dangerous and the cost of repairs too great. Without the intervention of the National Trust, the house surely would have been lost. The National Trust needs to recognise that their work at Downhill is an important chapter in the biography of the site. This needs to be reflected in the interpretation. With the change in appearance, the understanding of the site is substantially diminished. To the visitor, Downhill is already a complicated site to understand. The building is a peculiar shape, it is seemingly in the middle of nowhere and with only one short interpretive panel, the interpretation provided by the National Trust is mediocre. The significant reduction of original material makes it even more difficult for the visitor to understand the structure. It no longer looks like a country house, or any other recognisable building. The process of ruination, including the National Trust intervention, is not interpreted on-site. This oversight ignores White's recommendation, discussed in Chapter Three, that at minimum the interpretation should explain the cause of ruination. Additionally, the cement render applied during conservation work has obliterated any marks of construction made during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. These structural changes, along the 'cricket pitch' approach developed by the Ministry of Works, have created an entirely altered Downhill, one that has removed the domestic atmosphere, akin to that described by Lord Lothian, from the structure.

⁸³⁶ "BBC One - Countryfile, Country Architecture Compilation," first broadcast on April 28, 2013 by BBC One, produced by Teresa Bogan.

⁸³⁷ Toby Edwards, "Rebuilding the Past at Downhill Demesne," 5.

⁸³⁸ "Under and over Downhill."

The interpretation at Downhill desperately needs to be updated. What is currently available is insufficient. It does little to help the visitor understand the building, the people or the overall significance of the site. Most importantly, the process of ruination is not explained to the visitor. An additional history-based panel is necessary.

A visit to Downhill is not at all managed by the National Trust. With the current presentation, visitors are permitted, not encouraged, to wander. But this is not informed wandering. The prompts given in a typical country house visit are not present at Downhill. So, there is an element of exploration, but to no end, as visitors are not given any information to substantiate their findings. The exploration of the site is comparable to nineteenth-century ruin visiting. However, at Downhill, the romantic atmosphere has been removed, but, confusingly, the romantic, natural exploration is still present.

The provision of a ground plan of the house is one of the simple changes to the site that could drastically change the visitor experience. Second only to the ground plan, an interpretive panel illustrating how the National Trust has altered the building and what the east and west wing once looked like, is of primary importance. There is no clear indication where the house ends and the service yards begin. A map of the estate should also be installed, as visitors risk missing key parts of the wider landscape, or even getting lost. The archaeological excavations on site are a tremendous resource and should be interpreted. The finds from these excavations are adding to the National Trust's understanding of the use of the house with every season.

Downhill disrupts the standard country house visit in that the National Trust has not even tried to create a coherent experience for visitors at Downhill. The visitor has all of the control, but none of the information. The visit that is advertised on site and on social media platforms is one of a day out, but a day out that could easily be achieved in a large country park. The grounds are used for events and the Mussenden Temple is now used for weddings. It seems as if the ruin of Downhill is simply a monument that happens to be in the estate. The Ulster Archaeological Society, in their report on the excavation on the West Wing, have recommended

improvement of the on site interpretation, so the lack of good interpretation has not gone unnoticed. The Society also stated that ‘a tearoom and gift shop would be welcome additions’ to the visitor experience of the site.⁸³⁹ This suggests that the Ulster Archaeology Society considers a tearoom and gift shop to be of equal importance as good interpretation for a visit to Downhill. The addition of these two components of a standard country house visit is unnecessary, especially before the interpretation has been updated.

Other organisations have recognized the importance of the house. Both the ‘History Space’ application and the three-dimensional recreation of the house by the Ballymena NRC are great improvements to the interpretation of the site. The ‘History Space’ application drastically improves a visit to the site. Even though the activities in the app are simplistic, it does encourage visitors to physically interact with the space, while learning about the house during the time of the Earl Bishop. None of the other interpretation available to visitors offers the same combination of information and interaction with the space. While the Ballymena NRC 3D recreation does not encourage the same interaction with the structure as the “History Space” application, it does illustrate the life and use of the house during the eighteenth century. The information provided through the recreation, such as the tour of the Gallery, allows for the visitor to place himself or herself within the eighteenth century house.

If the National Trust does decide to improve the on site interpretation, beyond the incorporation of the text panels mentioned above, these two media based projects are prime examples of the interpretive tools available. The National Trust could easily encourage their use simply by adding links to the Downhill site page and by placing a panel on site with information on how to download the application onto a smart phone. These changes, if made, would provide the information necessary for visitors to fully understand the site, while still allowing for the freedom of movement provided by the ruin to remain.

⁸³⁹ Welsh and Scott, “Survey Report,” 30.

Lowther Castle, Cumbria

‘Lowther! in thy majestic Pile are seen
Cathedral pomp and grace, in apt accord
With the baronial castle's sterner mien’⁸⁴⁰

Lowther Castle is located in the North Lakes region of Cumbria, five miles south of Penrith. Designed by Robert Smirke in 1806 for the Earl of Lonsdale, the house remains in the family to this day. The castellated mansion was de-roofed in 1957, remaining an ornament in the extensive Lowther estates until 2007 when a major project to restore the house began. Once described as the ‘most stately of the “stately homes”’, Grade II* listed Lowther opened to the public in April 2011, while undergoing an extensive conservation programme, and celebrated its grand opening in May 2012.⁸⁴¹ The Castle stabilisation programme of works is on-going. Lowther is open year round and receives an estimated 120,000 visitors per year.⁸⁴²

Architectural Description and Development

The standing shell of Lowther Castle is the third configuration of grand manors built by the Lonsdale family on their Cumbrian estate. The current formation is the replacement for Lowther Hall, a late seventeenth-century Palladian house, partly designed by William Talman (*bap.* 1650, *d.* 1719), which itself had been a replacement for a smaller Jacobean manor house.⁸⁴³ This earlier house, built in the 1690s, burnt down between 1717 and 1720.⁸⁴⁴ James Lowther, 1st Earl of Lonsdale rebuilt the house to a habitable level, as he was living there at the time of

⁸⁴⁰ William Wordsworth, *The Sonnets of William Wordsworth*, 279.

⁸⁴¹ Llewellyn Jewitt, *The Stately Homes of England*, 291.

⁸⁴² Anon., “Revealing the Lost Treasures of Lowther Castle and Grounds.”

⁸⁴³ Howard Colvin, J. Mordaunt Crook, and Terry Friedman, *Architectural Drawings from Lowther Castle Westmorland*, 6–10; Peter Smith, “Talman, William (*bap.* 1650, *D.* 1719).”

⁸⁴⁴ Colvin, Crook, and Friedman, *Architectural Drawings*, 12; John Burke, *A Visitation of the Seats and Arms of the Noblemen and Gentlemen of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1:28.

his death in 1802, but he did not complete a major building campaign⁸⁴⁵ William Lowther commissioned Robert Smirke to build the present house between 1806 and 1810.⁸⁴⁶

The Castle is Gothic-revival in style and is built of a pink grey ashlar.⁸⁴⁷ (Figure 37) The north front is 420 feet long featuring turrets, mock crenellations and a porte-cochere.⁸⁴⁸ The south front is 280 feet long, two storeys high and nine bays wide, with a tower rising from this centre portion. An 1833 view shows the south front dominated by a large gothic window, which was fitted with a stained glass window and flanked by spires.⁸⁴⁹ The two projecting end pavilions are three bays wide and two storeys high. The estimated cost of construction is £77,000, but as many of the building materials were sourced from the estate, the cost was drastically reduced.⁸⁵⁰ If these materials had been purchased the total cost would have been closer to £150,000.⁸⁵¹ The sculpture gallery was added in 1866.⁸⁵² In the late-nineteenth-century, the drawing room was re-decorated.⁸⁵³ The Castle was de-roofed in 1957 following a demolition sale and has remained in a semi-ruinous state ever since.

Robert Smirke

When Lord Lonsdale first decided to begin building Lowther Castle, Sir George Beaumont recommended that he employ George Dance the younger (1741-

⁸⁴⁵ J.V. Beckett, "Lowther, James, Earl of Lonsdale (1736–1802)"; John Britton, *The Beauties of England and Wales, Vol.15, Wiltshire, Warwickshire, Westmoreland and Worcestershire*, 124.

⁸⁴⁶ Colvin, Crook, and Friedman, *Architectural Drawings*, 16.

⁸⁴⁷ John Preston Neale and Thomas Moule, *Views of the Seats*; Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd et al., *A Guide to the Country Houses of the North West*, 277; Anon., "Letter to the Editor," 315; Colvin, Crook, and Friedman, *Architectural Drawings*, 16.

⁸⁴⁸ Colvin, Crook, and Friedman, *Architectural Drawings*, 13.

⁸⁴⁹ Neale and Moule, *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen*.

⁸⁵⁰ Port, "Lowther Hall and Castle," 192.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid.

⁸⁵² Ibid.

⁸⁵³ Ibid.

1825) as the chief architect.⁸⁵⁴ Lonsdale was close friends with Beaumont, who had recently employed Dance to reconstruct his house Coleorton, Leicestershire.⁸⁵⁵ Dance visited the Lowther estate in 1803 and drew up several plans, including both classical and gothic revival designs.⁸⁵⁶ Dance's gothic design was selected, as it was the most romantic and fitted best with the site.⁸⁵⁷ However, after submitting these plans to Lord Lonsdale, Dance decided not to work on the project, for he felt he was too old to take on any new building projects.⁸⁵⁸ Dance recommended his pupil, Robert Smirke for the new commission. Smirke's designs were approved and he received the official commission in February 1806.⁸⁵⁹ Smirke (1780-1867) began his architectural training under Sir John Soane before leaving to study with Dance.⁸⁶⁰ He is best known for his work at the Royal Mint, the British Museum and Cirencester Park, Gloucestershire.⁸⁶¹ But Lowther Castle was Smirke's first successful castellated style house.⁸⁶²

Line of Ownership

William Lowther, 1st Earl of Lonsdale

William Lowther (1757–1844) attended Trinity College, Cambridge and was MP for Carlisle (1780-84).⁸⁶³ Upon the death of his cousin, James Lowther, 1st Earl of Lonsdale, in 1802, William Lowther inherited the Lowther Viscountcy and estate.⁸⁶⁴ William became the 1st Earl of Lonsdale (of the second creation) in

⁸⁵⁴ Roger Bowdler, "Dance, George, the Younger (1741–1825)"; Colvin, Crook, and Friedman, *Architectural Drawings*, 16.

⁸⁵⁵ M.H. Port, *Lowther Hall and Castle.*, 128.

⁸⁵⁶ Colvin, Crook, and Friedman, *Architectural Drawings*, 16.

⁸⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁵⁸ Port, *Lowther Hall and Castle.*, 129.

⁸⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁰ Colvin, *British Architects, 1600-1840*, 875.

⁸⁶¹ Ibid., 875–879.

⁸⁶² Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530 to 1830*, 485.

⁸⁶³ Namier, *The House of Commons, 1754-1790*, 61.

⁸⁶⁴ Port, *Lowther Hall and Castle.*, 127–128.

1807.⁸⁶⁵ It was under the direction of William that Lowther Hall was transformed into Lowther Castle.

Hugh Cecil, The Yellow Earl

Hugh Cecil Lowther (1857-1944), the 5th Earl of Lonsdale, was the second son of Henry Lowther, although he lived, and spent, as if he were destined to inherit the Lowther fortune.⁸⁶⁶ Even though he lived with his wife, Lady Grace Cecilie Gordon, on a £1,000 annual allowance from his brother, St. George Lowther, he still frivolously spent enormous sums of money. In 1879, he invested £40,000 in a cattle ranch in Wyoming, USA, which went under and Hugh Cecil lost his entire investment.⁸⁶⁷ Hugh Cecil did eventually become the 5th Earl, following his brother's death in 1882.⁸⁶⁸ Along with the title, Hugh Cecil inherited Lowther Castle, along with three other family residences, and £70,000 in land revenue.⁸⁶⁹ Even with his money under the control of the family agents in London, Hugh Cecil was still able to live the life of a *bon vivant*, spending nearly £3,000 per year on cigars.⁸⁷⁰

By the mid-twentieth century, the tide was starting to turn. As shown in Chapter Two, many large landowners faced financial difficulty in the early twentieth-century. The Lowther family was not directly affected by financial problems related to the First World War. It was rather the change in economic climate, which began during the agricultural depression, that affected their financial situation. In 1921 he had sold off Whitehaven Castle, one of the family residences in Cumbria.⁸⁷¹ In 1926, the General Strike caused the closure of another Lowther pit in Whitehaven, essentially ending Hugh Cecil's main source of income.⁸⁷² In the

⁸⁶⁵ Beckett, "Lowther, James"; Montgomery-Massingberd et al., *A Guide*, 280; Colvin, Crook, and Friedman, *Architectural Drawings*, 16; Jewitt, *Stately Homes*, 295.

⁸⁶⁶ Mark Blackett-Ord, "Lowther, Hugh Cecil, Fifth Earl of Lonsdale (1857–1944)."

⁸⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁰ Montgomery-Massingberd et al., *A Guide*, 280.

⁸⁷¹ Blackett-Ord, "Lowther, Hugh Cecil."

⁸⁷² Douglas Sutherland, *The Yellow Earl*, 227.

same year, the Cumberland coalmines, a huge income generator for the Lowther family, closed.⁸⁷³

As Hugh Cecil had not saved any money and there were no financial reserves, the family agents therefore had to strongly recommend that he give up living at Lowther and the family house in London and take up residence in a small estate in Rutland.⁸⁷⁴ In 1932, an order was set to destroy the deer in the Lowther deer park.⁸⁷⁵ Hugh Cecil and his wife, Lady Grace, went to Lowther for Christmas 1935 and on '1st January 1936 Hugh's yellow Daimler swung through the castle gates. The gatekeeper saluted for the last time and then walked sadly back to the castle to lower Hugh's flag.'⁸⁷⁶ Hugh and Lady Grace simply walked away from the house when they left on New Year's Day 1936. Hugh Cecil left correspondence on his desk and clothes in the closets, as if he might return.⁸⁷⁷ In an attempt to offset his losses in Cumbria, Hugh Cecil sold the library at auction in 1937 and his mansion in Carlton House Terrace was put on the market.⁸⁷⁸ Even though the family could no longer afford to use Lowther as a residence, the gardens remained open, with a one-shilling admission fee.⁸⁷⁹

Requisitioning

As stated in Chapter Two, Lowther was requisitioned during the Second World War. In 1940, Lowther housed children evacuated from Newcastle.⁸⁸⁰ In December 1940, the War Office set up the top secret Canal Light Defence School at Lowther.⁸⁸¹ The Canal Defence Light, at 13,000,000-candle power, was more intense than normal tank lighting and was to be used to blind the enemy during

⁸⁷³ Blackett-Ord, "Lowther, Hugh Cecil."

⁸⁷⁴ Sutherland, *The Yellow Earl*, 227–232.

⁸⁷⁵ Anon., "The Lowther Parks Deer to Be Destroyed."

⁸⁷⁶ Sutherland, *The Yellow Earl*, 233.

⁸⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁸ Anon., "Lord Lonsdale's Books"; Anon., "Lord Lonsdale's London Mansion."

⁸⁷⁹ Anon., "The Gardens of Lowther Castle."

⁸⁸⁰ Anon., "Defence Against Enemy Aircraft."

⁸⁸¹ *The CDL Tank*, F.G. Howe, 1991, IWM K05/2490, Imperial War Museum Archives, 1.

night battles.⁸⁸² 6,000 officers from the 35th Royal Tank Brigade were trained at Lowther.⁸⁸³ £20,000,000 was spent on the CDL project until the program was shut down in 1945.⁸⁸⁴ During their possession of Lowther, the CDL School laid out tank trails around the wooded areas of the estate, to be obscured from view of planes.⁸⁸⁵ The CDL school covered the estate with Nissen huts, but did not cause much damage to the Castle, as much of the training occurred in out buildings.⁸⁸⁶

De-roofing and Intermediate years

Hugh Cecil died before the end of the war and, other than for military occupation during the Second World War, the house was never used again.⁸⁸⁷ Under the direction of Lancelot Edward Lowther, 6th Earl of Lonsdale, a series of five auctions was held in the spring of 1947 to empty the house of furnishings and art.⁸⁸⁸ A total of 7,813 lots were sold, which included paintings by Zuccarelli and Poussin, Axminster and Persian carpets, architecture books by Vitruvius and Alberti and a great deal of eighteenth century and Jacobean furniture.⁸⁸⁹ The gardens were still open during this time, but were closed by the mid-1950s.⁸⁹⁰

Lancelot Edward died in March 1953, with an estate valued at £19,557.⁸⁹¹ The following year, James Hugh Lowther, Hugh, 7th Earl of Lonsdale (1922-2006) began selling off the Lowther land holdings in West Cumberland.⁸⁹² These sales

⁸⁸² Laurie Kemp, "The Top Secret Weapon to Blind Nazis Tested on Cumbrian Soil"; Penrith Museum, *The Home Front in Penrith & Eden*, 3.

⁸⁸³ Penrith Museum, *The Home Front in Penrith & Eden*, 3.

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid.; Kemp, "Top Secret Weapon."

⁸⁸⁵ Captain Henry Charles Francis "Frank" Brewis, interview by Harry Moses, August 3, 1992, 12707 Reel 4, Imperial War Museum Archives.

⁸⁸⁶ Kemp, "Top Secret Weapon "; Captain Henry Charles Francis "Frank" Brewis, interview by Harry Moses, August 3, 1992, Imperial War Museum Archives.

⁸⁸⁷ Montgomery-Massingberd et al., *A Guide*, 280.

⁸⁸⁸ Maple & Co, *Lowther Castle, Near Penrith, Cumberland*.

⁸⁸⁹ Maple & Co, *Lowther Castle*.

⁸⁹⁰ J.H.H., "A Country Diary"; Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Heritage Impact Statement*, 17.

⁸⁹¹ Anon., "Lord Lonsdale"; Anon., "Lord Lonsdale's Estate."

⁸⁹² Anon., "Demolition Sale at Lowther Castle."

continued until 1957.⁸⁹³ Three-quarters of the 18,000 acres were sold to sitting tenants.⁸⁹⁴

As discussed in Chapter 2, country house owners had three choices for their redundant houses when the market collapsed in the 1940s: demolition, desertion or reuse.⁸⁹⁵ All other options were exhausted prior to James Hugh's decision to de-roof and strip the house in 1957. Four local authorities in Cumbria had considered converting the house into a school, but the £100,000 conversion cost was prohibitively expensive.⁸⁹⁶ De-roofing the Castle was ultimately decided to be the most cost effective option.⁸⁹⁷ Due to public demand, the Castle was open for tours for one week in March prior to the start of demolition work.⁸⁹⁸ A series of demolition sales were held in the spring of 1957. These sales were mostly architectural elements, such as panelling and doors; stone flooring and marble mantelpieces; plaster ceilings and silk wall coverings.⁸⁹⁹ Following these auctions, the roof was removed and the Castle was maintained as a landscape feature in the estate.⁹⁰⁰ Pevsner called the abandonment 'regrettable, but understandable'.⁹⁰¹ The following year, architect Sir Albert Richardson (1880-1964) drew up designs for a house that would be built within the ruins, but this never came to fruition.⁹⁰²

The Lowther estate continued to be used following the removal of the roof. In the 1960s, the immediate area around the Castle was converted to farm use, housing pigs and chickens.⁹⁰³ (Figure 40) These farms were removed in 2008.⁹⁰⁴ Various pageants have been held on the estate since the 1970s. 1972 was the inaugural year of the Lowther Horse Driving Trials, which have continued through

⁸⁹³ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁹⁵ Mandler, *Fall and Rise*, 359.

⁸⁹⁶ Anon., "Castle to Become a Shell? Too Big to Use."

⁸⁹⁷ Helen Carter, "English Heritage to Save Lakeland Castle."

⁸⁹⁸ Anon., "Last Chance to See Lowther Castle."

⁸⁹⁹ Henry Spencer & Sons, *Lowther Castle, Westmorland*.

⁹⁰⁰ Montgomery-Massingberd et al., *A Guide*, 280.

⁹⁰¹ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Cumberland and Westmorland*, 272.

⁹⁰² Simon Hurst, "Sir Albert Richardson, 1880-1964"; *Sketches Made by Sir Albert Richardson*, 1958, DLONS/L/11/9/53-54, Cumbria Archive Service.

⁹⁰³ Anon., "Revealing the Lost Treasures of Lowther Castle and Grounds."

⁹⁰⁴ Eden District Council, "Application for Consideration: Application 7/2010/3091." Paragraph 1.15

to today, closing briefly from 2010 to 2013.⁹⁰⁵ The Pageant of Motoring was hosted at the estate in 1976.⁹⁰⁶ The family used the estate as well, as William James (Jim) Lowther, the second son of the 7th Earl and current owner of the Castle, who was born the year the Castle was de-roofed, remembers playing in the ruin as a child.⁹⁰⁷ More recently, the estate has been used for the World Sheepdog trials in 2011.⁹⁰⁸

Lowther Regeneration Trust

From 1989, there has been interest in regenerating Lowther, with particular interest in new uses for the public.⁹⁰⁹ The Castle was placed on the Heritage at Risk Register in 2000, motivating the Lowther Trust to take immediate action at the site.⁹¹⁰ An emergency conservation work plan was drawn up, with English Heritage splitting the £45,000 cost of the development of the plan with the Lowther Trust.⁹¹¹ In 2004, the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) proposed a partnership with the Lowther Trust to open the Castle to the public.⁹¹² The emergency conservation works laid out in the English Heritage plan were completed in 2005 at a cost of £150,000, paid for by English Heritage.⁹¹³ In April 2005, The NWDA drew up a draft development plan for the Lowther Castle and Gardens regeneration project.⁹¹⁴ Included on the Board of the future project were Jim Lowther, on behalf of the Lowther Trust, and representatives from English Heritage, the NWDA, Eden District Council and Rural Regeneration Cumbria.⁹¹⁵ The Lowther Castle and Gardens Trust was established in 2007 as a charitable Trust,

⁹⁰⁵ Tim Walker, “Duke of Edinburgh’s Favourite, the Lowther Show, Calls It a Day”; Hodges, “Lowther Show 2013 Will Be ‘More Spectacular’, Pledges George Bowman.”

⁹⁰⁶ City of Carlisle, *Pageant of Motoring - Carlisle Great Fair August 29th 1976*.

⁹⁰⁷ Charles Mosley, *Burke’s Peerage & Baronetage*, 1756; Carter, “English Heritage.”

⁹⁰⁸ Neil Midgley, “World Sheep Dog Trials in Cumbria.”

⁹⁰⁹ Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Lowther Castle and Gardens Project Overview*, 7.

⁹¹⁰ Richard Pealing, *Meeting Minutes Appendix 1*, 1.

⁹¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹¹² *Ibid.*

⁹¹³ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

separate from the Lowther Estate Trust, to conserve the castle and create a tourist destination in the north Lake District.⁹¹⁶

In 2007, a £25 million bid was made to the Big Lottery Fund's Living Landmark's programme.⁹¹⁷ This bid was to fund an extensive programme of works to open the estate to the public and create a cultural hub for the northwest of England, at an estimated cost of £100 million.⁹¹⁸ Included in this overly-ambitious bid were plans to build a 1,500-seat amphitheatre, create an underground art and history gallery, restore the gardens, and conserve the Castle.⁹¹⁹ The plan for the Castle was extensive. Glass walkways and platforms were to be built to allow visitors to see the Castle up close, as well as take in the views of the gardens and Lake District.⁹²⁰ Following the initial bid, the Lowther Trust received a £250,000 development grant to further their application for major funding.⁹²¹ The Trust applied for a £25 million grant from the HLF, also in 2007, for the restoration of the Castle and gardens.⁹²² Both the BLF and HLF bids were ultimately rejected.⁹²³ During 2007, a two-part Conservation Management Plan for the Castle and gardens was drawn up.⁹²⁴ In 2008 the project was granted £7 million from the NWDA and £2 million from the Northwest European Regional Development Fund.⁹²⁵ These funds were used in the restoration of the Sculpture Gallery and the creation of the visitor centre in the Stable wing, as well as the creation of a children's play area on the estate.⁹²⁶

Members of the 2007 Conservation Management Plan team were brought back to the project in 2008.⁹²⁷ Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios were put in place as

⁹¹⁶ Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Lowther Castle and Gardens Development Plan*, 5.

⁹¹⁷ Anon., "Lowther Castle Restoration Project Gets New Director."

⁹¹⁸ Anon., "Restoration Plan for Lowther Castle in Line for Lottery Funding"; Pealing, *Meeting Minutes Appendix 3*, 5.

⁹¹⁹ Phil Coleman, "From Castle Ruin to Culture Hub: a Lowther Dream Moves Closer."

⁹²⁰ Ibid.

⁹²¹ Anon., "Restoration Plan for Lowther Castle in Line for Lottery Funding."

⁹²² Matthew Appleby, "Lowther Castle Scoops £9m for Improvements."

⁹²³ Pamela McGowan, "Double Setback for Ambitious Castle Revamp."

⁹²⁴ Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Development Plan*, 42.

⁹²⁵ Appleby, "Lowther Castle Scoops £9m for Improvements."

⁹²⁶ Ibid.

⁹²⁷ Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Project Overview*, 12–14.

the architects on the restoration of the Castle and conversion of the stable wing.⁹²⁸ Garden designers Patrick James of the Landscape Agency and Dan Pearson, of Dan Pearson Studio, were selected to work on the garden restoration.⁹²⁹ After a yearlong search, in January 2010 Land Use Consultants (LUC), landscape architects, were selected for the restoration of the seventeenth-century garden.⁹³⁰ LUC is best known for its work at the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall.⁹³¹ Patton Heritage Group was contracted in 2011 to complete the building works for the restoration of the Castle.⁹³² Patton Heritage entered administration in November 2012.⁹³³ The conservation work is on-going.

The Grade II* listed Gardens are to be ‘reclaimed’.⁹³⁴ The plan set out in the Heritage Impact Statement is to reveal the 400-year development of the gardens through their intact structure. New plants will be introduced into this structure to create the twenty-first century phase of the garden’s development.⁹³⁵ It is Pearson’s hope that the new plantings will complement the melancholic atmosphere already present in the “lost gardens”.⁹³⁶

The Lowther regeneration project has had three directors since the project began. David Horton-Fawkes was appointed in 2007, Andrew Mercer in July 2010, and Lloyd Taylor in December 2012.⁹³⁷ However, by May 2013, Mr. Taylor had left the project.⁹³⁸ There is no director in place as of August 2013. While no reason has

⁹²⁸ Fielden Clegg Bradley Studios, “Lowther Castle & Gardens.” <<http://www.fcbstudios.com/projects.asp?s=5&proj=1439#>> Accessed August 23, 2013.

⁹²⁹ Anon., “Land Use Consultants Picked as Landscape Architect for Lowther Castle & Gardens.”

⁹³⁰ Ibid.

⁹³¹ Land Use Consultants, “Heligan Gardens.”

⁹³² Anon., “First Step on Way to Gardens Restoration.”

⁹³³ “Patton Group Administration.” <<http://www.patton.co.uk>> Accessed November 6, 2012.

⁹³⁴ Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Heritage Impact Statement*, 15.

⁹³⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁹³⁶ Appleby, “Lowther Castle Scoops £9m for Improvements.”

⁹³⁷ Anon., “Lowther Castle Restoration Project Gets New Director”; Thom Kennedy, “New Director for Lowther Castle Facelift Project”; Anon., “Lloyd Taylor, Director, Lowther Castle.”

⁹³⁸ Sarah Ross, email message to author, May 22, 2013.

been offered for this rapid turnover, the quick succession of site directors may have negatively impacted on the progression of the project.

Conservation

Two types of work are being completed on site. Firstly, the conservation of the ruin and secondly, the conversion of the stable wing into a visitor centre. The ultimate decision not to restore the Castle was a financial one. Not only would the restoration be incredibly expensive, but once complete the Lowther Trust would then have the extra expense of repairs, insurance, room stewards, amongst all the other costs of running an intact historic house museum.⁹³⁹ The conservation ruin is a multi-phased project, with the ultimate goals of removing the Castle from the Heritage at Risk Register and stabilising the structure, while maintaining the Castle as a ruin.⁹⁴⁰

Only the central portion of the Castle is to be opened to the public. For the first phase of the restoration programme, the top priorities are the consolidation of the ruin, to prevent further losses, and to create a safe visitor route through the ruin. From the outset, the ruin is to be understood and any and all inevitabilities of working with a ruin should be recognised. Only experienced and educated craftspeople will be used on the project. Furthermore, the conservation work will be ‘a live act of training and an opportunity for visitors to engage first hand in the process and philosophy of conservation and repair’.⁹⁴¹

A philosophy has been established for the conservation works. This was set out in the Heritage Impact Statement (2010) and will be summarised here. Throughout the project, original fabric and finishes will be kept and used when possible. All new work is to be compatible with and ‘technically subservient’ to, the original materials.⁹⁴² New work should be sympathetic, but recognizable, as well as

⁹³⁹ Andrew Mercer, in discussion with the author, November 8, 2011.

⁹⁴⁰ Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Heritage*, 23.

⁹⁴¹ The material in this paragraph is derived from the Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Heritage Impact Statement*, pp.22-25.

⁹⁴² Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Heritage Impact Statement*, 25.

reversible.⁹⁴³ A mixture of traditional and new materials will be used, including English lime mortar and stainless steel cramps and dowels.

Fallen materials are not to be reinstated, unless the original location can be determined. The loss of elements reflects the ‘true nature of the structure’.⁹⁴⁴ This shows an appreciation of the ruin, recognising that it is an important chapter in the Lowther story. Fallen materials may be used for repairs. The quarry used by Smirke is now closed and sourcing new appropriate materials would be difficult. When new masonry is required, it will be sourced from the Elton quarry in Derbyshire. The Watts Cliffe Lilac sandstone from the quarry is a similar pink colour and weathers in a similar way to the original materials.⁹⁴⁵

Soft-capping is to be used where possible to prevent ‘the ruin being presented as a scraped masonry structure devoid of any dialogue with the surrounding environment’.⁹⁴⁶ The Scottish method of soft-capping, which includes clay in the soft-capping materials, is to be used. This technique is more sympathetic with the site than the traditional English technique, as the local environment is closer to the Scottish environment than of Southern Britain.⁹⁴⁷

Interpretation

At the start of the regeneration project, there was nominal interpretation placed around the site and in the small visitor room. The interpretation focused on the programme of works being undertaken by the Trust, rather than historical information. Adjacent to the visitor car park is a small office block, housing the temporary staff offices and visitor room. (Figure 43) Standard country house visit services were available to visitors. A refreshment table provided tea and coffee, as well as a small variety of crisps and biscuits. This room was unstaffed. In the visitor room each wall was used to display historical items, as well as material related to

⁹⁴³ Ibid., 25–26.

⁹⁴⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁹⁴⁵ The material in this paragraph is derived from the Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Heritage Impact Statement*, pp. 28–30

⁹⁴⁶ Ibid., 28.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid., 29.

the conservation and regeneration project. This material ranges from historic photographs, to the ground plan of the new visitor areas of the stable block, to the development of the garden. The process of ruination is not included in any part of the first interpretive plan. The “Photographs from the Past” display along the east, west, and north walls of the visitor room, features early twentieth- century Lowther family photos of the Castle and gardens. In addition to the historic photographs, the north and east walls also display conservation and reuse plans for the castle and stable block.

The north wall displayed plans for conversion of the stable block. (Figure 44) The stable block has been converted into a visitor centre, containing the admissions desk, toilets, café, a gallery and interpretive space, and staff offices. The colour-coded plans for the stable block show change in room use and restoration work that would be completed. For example, the gallery and history display space is to be housed in the former sculpture gallery, which is highlighted in dark green on the plan. Images of the sculpture gallery in use during the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries have been placed next to the plan, along with the programmes of works to be undertaken. The restoration work includes repairing the ceiling plasterwork, re-glazing the windows and installing lighting. The east wall holds plans of the work on the castle ruins. Two CAD drawings of the central portion of the Castle are displayed, with portions highlighted to indicate works to be completed. A ground plan with the area contracted for conservation works is highlighted in red. (Figure 46)

The south wall is dedicated to the garden. The garden display illustrates the development of the garden from 1683 to 1859. Each era is illustrated with two images, one historic and one fitting the historic plan on a measured drawing of the estate. The garden work is continued on a separate board in the hall of the building. This board holds an image of the garden in 2007, composite image of all the eras of garden development and the plans for the garden restoration. These colour plans give visitors an idea of what the plantings will look like when the project is completed. The decision behind the multi-era garden restoration project was not shared with visitors during a visit to Lowther. The pictures of the garden development and the restoration plans are grouped with historical images, such as

the depiction of Lowther from Kip and Knyff's *Britannia Illustrata*, and photographs of the gardens from the early twentieth century. (Figure 45) Visitors may miss this additional board though, as it is not in the visitor room.

A table was set up with portable interpretive material for visitors who wished to walk around the site while it was under construction. The two main visitor materials provided were a map of the site and a brochure. The visitor map includes a plan of the paths through the gardens and a key marking out the different sections of the original garden, currently under restoration. (Figure 46) The brochure gives a brief description of the project, but gives little historical background of the site. When fully unfolded, there is a map identical to that of the stand-alone map. There is a section of promotional material, calling for public participation and asking for visitors to join the friends' group. Along with standard visitor information, including opening hours, admissions charges, the Lowther Castle Facebook group is advertised.

The Lowther Castle and Gardens "Inform" newsletter was also made available. This double-sided A4 sheet was available and provided information on the conservation work being undertaken and Lowther's presence in the media. In Issue Two of the newsletter, available in November 2011, visitors were informed that Lowther was to be on "Britain at Risk", a BBC Two production. The show was later re-titled "Heritage Heroes" and aired February 2012.⁹⁴⁸ An additional newsletter for the Castle, written by the then director, Andrew Mercer, was also available. This newsletter has a more personal tone than the "inform" newsletter, but also covers conservation work being done on site. The October 2011 newsletter focuses heavily on the garden restoration, with smaller sections devoted to the work in the stable block and castle.

An effort was made to interpret the Castle while it was undergoing restoration work. All interpretation was placed outside the chain link fence around the Castle ruin. On the specified path around the house, visitors first reach a panel illustrating the schedule of restoration works. A CAD drawing is shown with

⁹⁴⁸ "Britain's Heritage Heroes," Episode 2, first broadcast February 7, 2012, by BBC 2, Directed by Ali McBride.

sections of the front façade highlighted, indicating which areas are to be restored. (Figure 49) Further along the visitor route is a panel with a historic photograph of the Grand Entrance Hall. (Figure 48) No interpretive text is associated with this image, but the panel is placed directly in front of where the Grand Entrance Hall once stood, in an attempt to connect the visitor to the Castle's former use. This type of connection, the historic image in front the present ruined state, is continued throughout the site, illustrating the development and decline of the Castle and gardens. This technique is used again on a panel to the north west of the north façade, showing a full view of the Castle while inhabited. From January through March 2013, the site manager, Nigel Simpson, gave tours of the Castle ruin.⁹⁴⁹ These tours gave visitors the opportunity to go up the scaffolding and get an "up close" perspective on the extensive conservation work being completed.

The approach to the garden restoration is similar to that taken for the Castle ruin. Panels with historic images are placed in front of the abandoned garden sections. These can be found at the Yew Avenue, Japanese Garden, and Rock Garden, amongst others. Waymarking maps are placed around the gardens, locating the visitor along the created garden paths, within the extensive estate. As stated by Mercer, no "Do Not Touch" or "Do Not Enter" signs appear within the garden. The historic photo technique is used again at the South Lawn, above which is another waymarking map. (Figure 50) A small sign in front of the South Lawn providing a bullet point list of what work is being undertaken is found beside these two panels. Adjacent to the South Lawn, on the path back to the car park, is a panel showing the master plan for the garden restoration. This is the same plan as is shown in the visitor centre. There is no description of the garden development on site.

Unfortunately, due to funding difficulty, Lowther has not been able to update their interpretation at the same rate as the conservation work.⁹⁵⁰ Currently, the only new interpretation is in the form of eight panels in the café. (Figure 51) These panels feature important dates in the Castle's history from the thirteenth-century when the family was granted the land by King Edward the First, through the

⁹⁴⁹ Lowther Castle and Gardens, "Castle Tours with Nigel Simpson."

<<https://www.facebook.com/LowtherCastle>> Accessed February 18, 2013.

⁹⁵⁰ Sarah Ross, email message to author, May 22, 2013.

construction of the Smirke house, to the de-roofing in 1957 and the current project to save the Castle. The panels are graphically quite striking, but only provide minimal information. The 1957 panel is the only place the ruination has ever been mentioned.

In the Lowther Castle Heritage Impact Statement, it is noted that visitor routes around the stabilised ruin will be created as a part of the conservation programme.⁹⁵¹ These routes aim to allow the visitor to move safely around the site, while experiencing the Castle in its ruined state.⁹⁵² In areas that cannot be made completely safe for visitor access, viewing platforms will be built to allow visitor access.⁹⁵³

As a part of the on-going effort to engage with visitors and create access to the site during the construction phase, Lowther has been very active on social media sites. Lowther initiated its social media presence prior to opening to the public, joining Facebook in November 2010 and Twitter in January 2011.⁹⁵⁴ Both profiles have been used to show the public the conservation projects in progress on the site. As the Castle itself is not yet open to the public, neither outlet is used to direct the visitor around the house.

The Facebook profile regularly posts photo albums of the work being done on the site. The Lowther Castle newsletter has been posted every month since June 2011. Historic photographs are occasionally posted, both by Lowther staff and by visitors. Prior to the grand opening of the estate in May 2012, the posts centred on the conservation work underway. These posts were split between work on the Castle and work on the gardens. Albums during this period include: “Chimney Pots and Finials”, “Roofers”, “Windows”, and “Tree Surgery to Yew Avenue”. Each of these albums (Figures 41 and 42) shows conservation in action, but they only provide minimal information on the work being completed or the history of the section being repaired. On the 18th of January 2012, a photo was posted of the tile floor in

⁹⁵¹ Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Heritage*, 25.

⁹⁵² Ibid.

⁹⁵³ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁴ “Lowther Castle Facebook Account”; “Lowther Castle Twitter Account.”
<<https://twitter.com/lowthercastle>>

the former Orangery. This photo is accompanied by information on their manufacture. According to the post, a German tile maker, Herman Harkevitz, in the late-nineteenth-century, made the tiles and other examples of his work appear at the Keswick Mining Museum. Visitors are then encouraged to find the tiles on their next visit.

From May 2012, the posts have gravitated towards a more standard country house visit with the inclusion of photos of cake available in the tearoom. (Figure 52) The house is not open, but the tearoom is, so that aspect of the standard country house “day out” can be completed. Events, such as a production of *Pride and Prejudice* and craft fairs, are also updated on the page, as are updates on the conservation work in the Castle and gardens. In July 2013, architectural photographer, Andy Marshall visited Lowther to document the ruin. Many of these photographs were posted on the Castle’s Facebook profile. The use of Facebook as a link with the public has proved to be quite popular, as Lowther currently has over 4,800 followers.⁹⁵⁵ The Lowther Twitter account provides much the same information and interaction with the public. It is the less popular of the two, with just over 1,300 followers.⁹⁵⁶ The Lowther Castle and Gardens website gives little information on the restoration project, focusing instead on visitor information and events on site. On the 1st of May 2013, both sites were used to advertise openings for Garden and site guides.

As mentioned above, Lowther was featured on the BBC Two television programme “Heritage Heroes”. This half hour programme gave viewers a brief introduction to the site’s history, focusing on the decline, before discussing the current regeneration project. Hosts John Craven and Jules Hudson visited the site and toured the works in progress before speaking with Andrew Mercer about the project. The show highlighted the difficulty of the conservation work and supported the philosophy behind the decision to maintain the Castle as a ruin.

⁹⁵⁵ “Lowther Castle Facebook Account.” As of 15 August 2013

⁹⁵⁶ “Lowther Castle Twitter Account.” As of 15 August 2013

Discussion

The Lowther Castle project is unfinished, but has potential in terms of interpretation and visitor experience. The current interpretation is woefully inadequate. The eight panels in the café only give a bullet point history of the site. The information provided in the visitor room, prior to the completion of the visitor centre in the stable block, gave more insight into the restoration project than is currently available, but gave little historical information. This was also true of the panels placed around the site. With this lack of interpretation along with the conclusion of the first phase of conservation work, a visit to Lowther now is more about the cake on offer in the tearoom than the country house ruin. The tours of the ruin given in the spring of 2013 by the site manager did allow visitors to engage with the site in a new way. However, this was a short series of led tours, so the freedom of movement and experience within a ruin discussed in Chapter Three, was prevented.

The conservation work on the Castle is exceptional, but what really makes this project stand out is how the work is being disseminated to the public. The site was open from the start of the conservation work specifically to include the public in the on going project. As discussed in Chapter Three, conservation is a process, not an event, and the Lowther Castle and Gardens Trust want the public to be a part of this process. Visitors to the site could see the work being done in front of them. Fans of Lowther on Facebook and Twitter are presented with constant updates on the aspects of the project, as well as photographs of the work in progress. The connection built between the public and the site during the conservation phase will likely have a positive impact on visitor numbers when the work is complete. Good interpretation and site experience will ensure repeat visits.

The Trust is quite aware of the size of the estate. They have provided maps from the very start of the project, including on site waymarking maps. These maps show various routes around the estate, but do not require the visitor to move around the site in any particular way. Areas of interest are marked out and visitors have the freedom to explore these as well as the site in general. It is unclear at this early stage if there is going to be a set path through the house. If the same approach is taken

within the ruin, it will allow visitors the same explorative experience as they currently have in the gardens.

The project as it currently stands illustrates the funding issues associated with historic sites. The multiple failed bids have made the Lowther Castle and Gardens Trust rethink their approach to restoration and interpretation of the site. The Trust does recognise the importance of the Castle in its ruined state. However, the funding difficulty has deprived the institution of an interpretative plan. The original Big Lottery Fund plan would have allowed visitors extensive freedom within the ruin. Access to the top of the tower via a viewing platform would have aided visitor understanding of the house's place, as well as the family's place within the landscape and community. It would have also helped connect visitors to nineteenth and twentieth century life at Lowther. The proposal is similar to the current platform project at Kenilworth, discussed in Chapter Three. Like English Heritage, the Lowther Castle and Gardens Trust recognises the importance of allowing visitors to encounter the house and the wider landscape as they would have been originally.

The recognition of the importance of the gardens and wider estate at Lowther is admirable. The restoration of both the house and gardens at Lowther shows the Trust understands the importance of the unity of the country house that Lord Lothian and Ernest Gowers both spoke of. The gardens provide historical context for visitors and the multi-era restoration will show how the site developed over time. However, the focus on the garden restoration could create an environment in which the Castle becomes a large garden ornament in the restored park. The Castle, prior to the start of the project was called a 'magnificent ruin enhancing the picturesque landscape' and even Trust has said that the ruin is 'most impressive as a silhouette and theatrical backdrop to the gardens and North Park'.⁹⁵⁷ As the gardens are so important in this restoration work, it would be ideal if the house and garden could be linked to each other throughout the interpretation. This would prevent the house becoming simply a garden ornament like Rievaulx.

⁹⁵⁷ Port, "Lowther Hall and Castle," 193; Lowther Castle and Gardens, *Heritage*, 23.

On the topic of the approach to the restoration of the Castle, Andrew Mercer, former director, has said ‘There’s no manual I’ve found that says, “This is how you restore a castle.”’⁹⁵⁸ This may be true, but the Lowther Castle and Gardens Trust has made great headway in the restoration of the site. The approach taken to the project is one that recognises the importance of the ruin as a part of the history and experience of the site. While the current interpretation leaves much to be desired, with funding, appropriate interpretation, which should include the story of the ruination, can be created and installed. The future interpretive plan should be a thorough biography of the site and must include information on the decline of the estate, as well as the work completed by the Lowther Castle and Gardens Trust. Additional efforts should be made to ensure that the same freedom of movement and engagement currently available to visitors within the gardens are created within the ruin.

⁹⁵⁸ Anon., “Revealing the Lost Treasures of Lowther Castle and Grounds.”

Conclusion

These case studies demonstrate the multitude of approaches taken to the conservation of the country house ruin. They show that there is indeed no one right way to approach a ruin. Unfortunately there are many bad ways. Sutton Scarsdale presents the best approach to the conservation of a country house ruin. At Sutton Scarsdale, the old inadequate interpretation has been replaced. The new series of panels cover not only the history of the house itself, but include the history of the estate and connection within the wider landscape. These panels allow for an informed visit, but not one that is stage-managed. The conservation work has been minimal. The ruin has been stabilized to safeguard both the visitor and the monument, but this intervention has not obscured any of the marks of construction.

The conservation of Downhill and Lowther is poor, but for two different reasons. The interpretation at Downhill is woefully inadequate. A single panel is provided, which only briefly presents the site to the public. The information given focuses on the “golden age” of the site under the Earl Bishop, and ignores the story of ruination and how it came to look as it does today. Nor are the visitors given information on the scale and layout of the wider estate. The focus instead is on the Mussenden Temple and a “good day out”. The decline and ruination have been excluded from the two interpretive plan employed at Lowther Castle. Instead, the former interpretive plan focused on the programme of conservation works. The current interpretation is simplistic and does not allow for an informed visit. Due to lack of funding, a more holistic approach to the interpretation was unable to be prepared. As the ruins are not yet fully open, the current focus of the site, like Downhill, is a “good day out”, centred on the gardens and tearoom.

Both Sutton Scarsdale and Downhill completely disrupt the typical country house visit. This is most likely due to the fact that they are both free sites and the visitor facilities associated with a country house visit, such as the tearoom, are not available. This has not affected the presentation and interpretation at Sutton Scarsdale. Visitors are given the information they need to understand and engage with the house. At Downhill, however, it seems as if the National Trust does not know what to do with the ruin. The “cricket pitch” approach to the presentation

removes any romantic association with the ruin. The National Trust's approach to the country house visit is the standard approach to a country house visit. Without the normal visitor facilities or furnishings as a method to connect the visitor to the history of the house, the National Trust is at a loss for what to do with the monument. This echoes Barbara Wood's attitude towards the interpretation of Barrington Court from her paper at the Lost Mansion's conference, discussed in Chapter Three. Her paper showed that the National Trust does not consider the stories to be enough to support a visit. While the standard country house visit is present at Lowther, it is unclear how large its presence will be once the site is fully open. As the site has promoted these aspects, management of visitor expectation will become an issue. Lowther will not be able to downplay any of these standard visit facilities, as they have become a part of a routine visit to the Castle. It is hoped that once the ruins are open this spotlight will be shifted and the focus shared between the house and tearoom.

Beyond the visitor facility aspect of the country house visit, the movement and physical engagement allowed, and in some cases encouraged, at each site works to disrupt the standard country house visit. At Sutton Scarsdale, through the placement of the interpretive panels around the site, movement is encouraged, but not regulated. Curiosity encourages movement at Downhill. Due to the openness of the site, visitors are allowed to wander, but are only propelled around the site by their own interest and curiosity, not by interpretation or other forms of site management. Although the ruins at Lowther are not yet open to the public and there is no movement within that space, there is free movement around the gardens. The gardens and wider estate have paths and waymarking signs, but the movement is not regulated. The visitors are situated within the overall plan, but they are free to experience the grounds in their own way. The lack of "do not touch" and "do not enter" signs emphasises this freedom. It is hoped that this freedom of movement and experience will be brought into the castle ruins. The next chapter will explore the issues developed here, but in relation to country house ruins that have been restored or reconstructed.

Chapter Five

Case studies: Restored and Reconstructed Ruins

Following from the discussion in Chapter Four, which highlighted the methods used to interpret and present country house ruins which have been maintained in a ruinous state, this chapter presents houses that have been restored, either partially or completely. As was done in the previous chapter, this chapter examines the architectural development and decline, as well as the occupation of each house discussed, to afford more time to the investigation of approaches to restoration and reconstruction, presentation and interpretation. In addition to the decisions regarding restoration and reconstruction, the debates surrounding the restoration work are examined. The issue of authenticity in conservation, restoration, and reconstruction at historic properties is a large and complex subject. The primary concern of this thesis, however, is the presentation and interpretation of this work, not the decisions or methods. Therefore, the authenticity of the work will not be assessed.

The sites selected for this chapter are: Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire, an English Heritage site; Uppark, West Sussex, a National Trust house; and Highcliffe Castle, a member property of the Historic Houses Association. Kirby Hall has a long and complicated history, both in terms of architectural development and decline, but also in regards to family occupation. Before entering care, Kirby had twelve successive owners, most of whom made an indelible mark on the house. As all of these owners and their associated alterations impact the appearance of Kirby today, they have been described in the case study, but as succinctly as possible. As stated in the introduction, the Uppark case study utilises information gleaned from visitor surveys. These surveys were previously completed and were not conducted for this thesis. As the surveys have been published and the information is accessible, the results have been used to critique the approach taken by the National Trust. The terminology used in the Uppark and Highcliffe case studies needs to be clarified. In the literature for both houses, the term restoration is used to describe the work completed at each site. However, the term reconstruction is used in the case studies, fitting with the definitions set out in the introduction to this thesis.

It is the contention of this thesis that country house ruins disrupt the established country house visit. Restoration is one method of managing a ruin. It is a distinct form of presentation. The unique characteristics of these sites do not stop with the ruination of the house. The restoration is an additional story in the biography of the site and presents its own issues in terms of presentation and interpretation. That the disruption of the country house visit at the restored ruin is more dependent on the presentation is less obvious than at a shell, if present at all. Through the investigation of these three case studies, the best approaches to the presentation and interpretation of restored ruins emerges.

Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire

Kirby Hall is located in northeastern Northamptonshire, near the town of Corby. This Elizabethan courtyard house is positioned within close proximity to several other fine Renaissance houses, such as Deene Park, three miles to the east and Apethorpe Hall, nine miles to the north. Two families have owned the hall from its original construction in the sixteenth century, through to the 1930s, when it entered the guardianship of the Ministry of Works. Kirby Hall is open year-round and receives approximately 35,000 visitors per year.⁹⁵⁹

Architectural Development

Kirby is made up of four ranges, all two storeys tall, is built of Weldon stone, a local ashlar and roofed with Colleyweston slates.⁹⁶⁰ Elements of an earlier manor house, which was integrated into the structure of the hall, can be seen throughout Kirby, the most obvious being the trapezoidal shape of the ground plan.⁹⁶¹ From this earliest manor house, Kirby has undergone several periods of change from the sixteenth century to the twenty-first century. These eras of building include the original construction in the sixteenth-century, the seventeenth-century alterations, including the improvements made by Nicholas Stone, the alterations made by the Finch-Hatton family and the Ministry of Works in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and finally, the display of the Hall, created by the Ministry of Works and English Heritage.

Sir Humphrey Stafford commissioned Thomas Thorpe of Kingscliffe, father of the architect and surveyor, John Thorpe, to build Kirby.⁹⁶² The construction of

⁹⁵⁹ Wollen, "English Heritage Kirby Visitor Numbers."

⁹⁶⁰ Tipping, *English Homes*, 80; Anon., "Kirby Hall Will Remain a Ruin, but It Will Be a Tidy Ruin and a Safe Ruin."

⁹⁶¹ Worsley, *Kirby Hall Conservation Plan, Working Draft*, 8; Summerson, *The Book of Architecture of John Thorpe in Sir John Soane's Museum.*, 82.

⁹⁶² The original ground plans include an inscription by John Thorpe, stating "*Kerby whereof I layd y^e first stone A^o 1570*". This has led some to believe that it was the pre-eminent master mason who constructed the Hall; however, as Summerson has

Kirby began with the porch, dated 1572, and the hall in the south range and continued clockwise around the courtyard, finishing with the service quarters and southeast re-entrant, dated 1575.⁹⁶³ Sir Christopher Hatton I finished construction and completed minor updates on the Hall by 1584.⁹⁶⁴ Sir Christopher Hatton III modernised the Hall from 1638-1640, commissioning Nicholas Stone, the King's master mason, to carry out the building project.⁹⁶⁵ Under Stone's direction, the house became more fashionable through the addition of classical motifs to the exterior of the Hall. Stone altered the exterior of each of the ranges; however, the north range was the most dramatically changed. The Stone renovations still dominate the decorative scheme.

The eighteenth century saw fewer changes. In the Great Chamber a coved ceiling and columned screen were inserted.⁹⁶⁶ Additionally, at the southern end of the east wing, an apse was added to the Great Withdrawing room echoing the bow of the window.⁹⁶⁷ The ground floor rooms of the State Apartments, which were originally bedrooms, were converted into a billiard room to the east and a library to the west.⁹⁶⁸

The house began to deteriorate during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the nineteenth-century the chapel in the north range collapsed and the Finch-Hatton family began to remove architectural elements.⁹⁶⁹ The alterations made while in care are discussed later on in this case study. During the late 1870s and early 1880s descriptions of Kirby Hall in its ruined state began to appear with some frequency. This is most likely due to the increased interest in the 'Olden Time', described in

pointed out, in 1570, John Thorpe was only seven years old. (Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530 to 1830*, 47; Airs, "Thorpe, John (1564/5–1655).")

⁹⁶³ Heward and Taylor, *The Country Houses of Northamptonshire*, 248.

⁹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 245.

⁹⁶⁵ Purser, *Kirby Hall: the house in the hollow*, 44.

⁹⁶⁶ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 256.

⁹⁶⁷ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 256.

⁹⁶⁸ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 240

⁹⁶⁹ Letters, Lady Hatton to Lord Hatton, Undated, 4397 and 4409, Northampton Record Office

Chapter Three. In the February 4th 1882 issue of *The Graphic*, Lady Constance Howard described Kirby as one of the saddest ruins in all of England.⁹⁷⁰

Architectural Description

South Range

The primary entrance to the house is through the porch in the south range, to the screens passage and into the Great Hall (Figure 55). The porch at Kirby is decorated with classical pilasters on the first and second storeys, Ionic and Composite, respectively. The third storey is adorned with nine diminutive Corinthian columns and is capped with a curved and intricately carved roof gable. Originally constructed by Stafford, the Great Hall is 23 feet wide and is of double height. Above the doorway to the screens passage is the wooden music gallery.⁹⁷¹ The sixteenth-century roof is of an unusual form as it is “neither flat nor open timbered, but a kind of barrel-vault formed of four straight faces.”⁹⁷² These faces are further divided into large sections by carved oak ribs.⁹⁷³

The decorative scheme of the south range was altered twice in the seventeenth century. During the Stone modernisation, the second storey of the porch was enhanced with the addition of the balcony and door-case with broken pediment. On the south side of the range, the “Queen’s Steps” were added, which lead to the gardens and bridge beyond.⁹⁷⁴ In the 1670s, the two doors that led from the Great Hall into the Screens were replaced with one larger door and the rest of the wall was panelled.⁹⁷⁵

⁹⁷⁰ Howard, “Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire,” 122.

⁹⁷¹ Compton, 122.

⁹⁷² Gotch, *The Old Halls and Manor-houses of Northamptonshire*, 161.

⁹⁷³ Pevsner, *Northamptonshire*, 271.

⁹⁷⁴ Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 21.

⁹⁷⁵ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 254.

North Range

The north range acts as a gateway between the forecourt and the inner courtyard. (Figure 56) The first two storeys of the north front were constructed of ashlar, but the upper section of the tower would have been made of timber to reduce weight.⁹⁷⁶ Sir Christopher Hatton I modified the original configuration of the north front of the north range, which saw two turrets flanking the entrance archway. Under Hatton I, the space between the two turrets was filled in and the projecting ends of the east and west ranges were extended.⁹⁷⁷ The whole of the north front was drastically altered during the Stone modernisation.⁹⁷⁸ The north front was re-fenestrated with more classical round-headed window surrounds.⁹⁷⁹ Stone added the shaped gables and the balustraded parapet, as well as extending and enhancing the entry gateway by adding the porch and doorway and inserting the clock tower.⁹⁸⁰

The south front of the north range was completely altered during the Stone modernisation, through the addition of a host of classical features. (Figure 57) The south front is nine bays wide with seven arches, under which is a loggia. The windows on the second storey have alternating rounded and triangular pediments. The central window has a broken pediment with a bust of Apollo in the centre, dated 1638. The two deeply carved pilasters that flank the gateway were directly inspired by the title page of John Shute's *First and Chief Grounds of Architecture*, published in 1563.⁹⁸¹ Additional interior redecoration and construction projects were undertaken throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The chapel was built around 1677 in the centre of the north range.⁹⁸²

East and West Ranges

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid., 253–254.

⁹⁷⁷ Ibid., 249.

⁹⁷⁸ Ibid.; Pevsner, *Northamptonshire*, 270.

⁹⁷⁹ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 249.

⁹⁸⁰ Baker, "The History and Antiquities of the County of Northampton," 40.

⁹⁸¹ Summerson, "John Thorpe and the Thorpes of Kingscliffe," 294.

⁹⁸² Northants, p.256

The east and west ranges comprised a series of domestic quarters. (Figure 57) Along the ground floor were lodgings, entry to which would have been direct from the courtyard, through one of the four doors down the length of the range.⁹⁸³ The service quarters were located in the south end of the east range, spreading into the south range, and placed across the screens from the Great Hall. Directly above the lodgings in the west range was the Long Gallery. Now lost, it was 160 feet long and 16 feet wide and had panelled walls with a barrel-shaped plasterwork ceiling.⁹⁸⁴ To the south of the Long Gallery sat the State apartments. Added by Sir Christopher Hatton, these included the Great Chamber, the Great Withdrawing Room and the Best Bedchamber, which would have been reserved for Royal use. In the 1680s, the lodgings were panelled and fitted with ornate plaster ceilings.⁹⁸⁵ The State apartments were the only section of the house to retain a roof during the stripping of lead by George James Finch-Hatton in 1857.⁹⁸⁶ Several of the rooms in the State apartments were redecorated in 1999 when the house served as a set for the film *Mansfield Park*.⁹⁸⁷

During his renovation Stone added the obelisk-capped, scroll-sided gables, to the west range, as well as the half-reeded pilasters, which can also be found on the east range.⁹⁸⁸ It was during the Stone modernisation that the Vitruvian scroll parapet was added to the house.⁹⁸⁹ The east range had a secondary staircase fitted with a cantilevered staircase and an intricate plasterwork ceiling added in the Stone modernisation.⁹⁹⁰ New decorative elements to the exterior included a mixture of stepped gables and carved, curved-top gables.⁹⁹¹ Additional alterations to the interior, which were completed in the seventeenth century, included the introduction

⁹⁸³ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 250.

⁹⁸⁴ Baker, "History and Antiquities," 40; Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 252.

⁹⁸⁵ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 256.

⁹⁸⁶ Hill, p.31

⁹⁸⁷ Hill, "Kirby Hall: The Inside Story," 45.

⁹⁸⁸ Summerson, "Thorpes of Kingscliffe," 294.

⁹⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁹⁰ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 294.

⁹⁹¹ Summerson, "Thorpes of Kingscliffe," 294.

of the geometric patterned decoration of the plaster ceiling in the Long Gallery and the blocking of a window in the southeast corner of the Great Chamber.⁹⁹²

Line of Ownership

Stafford Period

In 1542, Sir Humphrey Stafford of Blatherwyck, Esquire of the Body of Henry VIII, purchased the land on which Kirby was to be built, from Lord Thomas Brudenell of Deene Park.⁹⁹³ After Sir Humphrey Stafford died in 1545, his son, also named Humphrey, inherited the estate.⁹⁹⁴ Sir Humphrey Stafford, the younger, was a minor player in the Elizabethan court, who became the Sheriff of Northamptonshire in 1565.⁹⁹⁵ He began construction of a new house nearly twenty-two years after he had inherited the property, with work starting in 1570.⁹⁹⁶

Hatton Period

Sir Christopher Hatton (Hatton I) purchased Kirby Hall in 1576, following the death of Sir Humphrey Stafford.⁹⁹⁷ Born at Holdenby in 1541 Hatton was educated at Oxford, but left before receiving a degree.⁹⁹⁸ He served as MP for Northampton in 1572, but gained prominence after he became a close friend of Queen Elizabeth. He was knighted in 1577 and became the Lord Chancellor in 1587.⁹⁹⁹

⁹⁹² Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 252.

⁹⁹³ Tipping, *English Homes*, 80; Purser, *Kirby Hall*, 41; Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 8.

⁹⁹⁴ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 245.

⁹⁹⁵ Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530 to 1830*, 47; Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 245.

⁹⁹⁶ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 245.

⁹⁹⁷ MacCaffrey, "Hatton, Sir Christopher (c.1540–1591)."

⁹⁹⁸ Dryden, *Memorials of Old Northamptonshire*, 230–231; Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 245.

⁹⁹⁹ Dryden, *Memorials*, 231; MacCaffrey, "Hatton, Sir Christopher."

Hatton did complete major alterations at Kirby, including the south extension of bay windows and the Long Gallery; however, the refitting of the Hall was not his highest priority.¹⁰⁰⁰ Instead, his principal interest was in remodelling his ancestral home of Holdenby, Northamptonshire into a palace that would surpass houses like Burghley and Theobalds and be fit for the Queen.¹⁰⁰¹ Hatton died childless and the house passed to his nephew William Newport, who took the name Hatton after inheriting the Hall.¹⁰⁰² Newport did not live at Kirby, instead he divided the house and rented it to two different tenants.¹⁰⁰³

Newport died in 1597 without issue and Kirby passed to Sir Christopher Hatton's Godson, also named Sir Christopher Hatton.¹⁰⁰⁴ Sir Christopher Hatton (Hatton II) was educated at Cambridge and married Alice Fanshawe in 1602.¹⁰⁰⁵ In 1608 Hatton II sold Holdenby to King James I, in lieu of the debt carried down from Sir Christopher Hatton I.¹⁰⁰⁶ Hatton II did not carry out much, if any, building at Kirby.¹⁰⁰⁷ However, Hatton II did a great deal of entertaining, welcoming Queen Anne of Denmark in 1605, and King James I in the summers of 1612, 1616 and 1619.¹⁰⁰⁸

Upon his death in 1619, Kirby passed to his son, Sir Christopher Hatton III. Hatton III, born in 1605, was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge and was married to Elizabeth Montagu in 1630.¹⁰⁰⁹ In 1625 he was knighted and also made MP for Peterborough.¹⁰¹⁰ Hatton III commissioned Nicholas Stone to modernise the

¹⁰⁰⁰ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 245; Summerson, "Thorpes of Kingscliffe," 295.

¹⁰⁰¹ Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 9; MacCaffrey, "Hatton, Sir Christopher."

¹⁰⁰² Worsley, *Conservation Plan, Working Draft*, 9; Hasler, *The House of Commons, 1558-1603*, 280.

¹⁰⁰³ Sladen, "The Garden at Kirby Hall, 1570-1700," 141.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Hasler, *House of Commons*, 280.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Ibid., 279; Pinto, "The Music of the Hattons," 87.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Pinto, "Music," 87.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Purser, *Kirby Hall*, 44.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions, and Magnificent Festivities, of King James the First*, 1828, 1:525; Nichols, *Progresses*, 2:453-454; Nichols, *Progresses*, 3:180 and 558.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Stater, "Hatton, Christopher, First Baron Hatton (bap. 1605, D. 1670)."

¹⁰¹⁰ Purser, *Kirby Hall*, 44; Stater, "Hatton, Christopher, First Baron Hatton."

Hall from 1638 to 1640.¹⁰¹¹ A Royalist, Hatton III fled to France after the Civil War, living there from 1648 to 1656, while his family remained in England.¹⁰¹² At the time of his death in 1670, Hatton III was living in London and accruing large debts.¹⁰¹³ Following his father's death, Christopher Hatton IV inherited the Governorship of Guernsey, but also his father's debts.¹⁰¹⁴ He married three times, first to Lady Cecily Tufton; second to Frances Yelverton; and third to Elizabeth Haselwood.¹⁰¹⁵ His second wife Frances was responsible for the refitting at Kirby that was completed in the 1670s.¹⁰¹⁶ This work was by and large decorative, and included the addition of the ornate plasterwork ceiling inside the porch and the panelling in the Great Hall.¹⁰¹⁷

While his wife was responsible for the refitting of the Kirby interiors, Hatton IV focussed his efforts on the gardens. (Figure 59) Hatton IV hired John Simpson as head gardener for the project.¹⁰¹⁸ The Great Garden was designed with a series of symmetrical beds, with a plinth in the centre, bordered by paths lined with limestone and gravel.¹⁰¹⁹ Along with this formal garden, there was a wilderness to the south of the house that "contained nearly every species of English tree."¹⁰²⁰ A mount was also created on the site of the former church, to the southwest of the house, which was most likely created during this period of garden construction.¹⁰²¹

After the death of Hatton IV, in 1706, Kirby went through a quick succession of owners and entered a period of decline for nearly seventy years.¹⁰²² The house passed quickly down through Hatton IV's children, as they all died

¹⁰¹¹ Purser, *Kirby Hall*, 44.

¹⁰¹² Pinto, "Music," 88.

¹⁰¹³ Purser, *Kirby Hall*, 44.

¹⁰¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 45.

¹⁰¹⁵ Broadway, "Hatton, Christopher, First Viscount Hatton (bap. 1632, D. 1706)."

¹⁰¹⁶ Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 10.

¹⁰¹⁷ Heward and Taylor, *The Country Houses of Northamptonshire*, 256.

¹⁰¹⁸ Steane, "The Development of Tudor and Stuart Garden Design in Northamptonshire," 392.

¹⁰¹⁹ Dix, Soden, and Hylton, "Kirby Hall and Its Gardens: Excavations in 1987-1994," 328-330.

¹⁰²⁰ Britton and Evans, *The Beauties of England and Wales, Vol.11, Monmouthshire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire*, 204.

¹⁰²¹ Dix et al., "Excavations," 334.

¹⁰²² Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 245.

childless: it went from William, who died in 1760, to Henry Charles, who died just two years later, finally going to their sister Elizabeth.¹⁰²³ Elizabeth bequeathed Kirby to her nephew Edward Finch, on the condition that he took the Hatton name.¹⁰²⁴

Finch-Hatton Period

Edward, the son of Anne Hatton, a daughter of Hatton IV from his first marriage, and Daniel Finch, agreed to these conditions and took the Hatton name in 1764.¹⁰²⁵ Edward was groom of the royal bedchamber.¹⁰²⁶ Just five years after inheriting Kirby, Edward Finch-Hatton also inherited Eastwell Park, Kent, the Finch family seat.¹⁰²⁷ Although Edward updated the furnishings at Kirby, Eastwell Park became his primary residence and he died at his London residence in 1771.¹⁰²⁸

His son, George Finch-Hatton, was the next to come into possession of Kirby. Born at Eastwell Park, George was a lawyer, as well as an MP for Rochester from 1772-1784.¹⁰²⁹ In 1772, George held an auction at Kirby to sell off his father's possessions at the Hall. No reason was given for the auction, but another auction was in 1824.¹⁰³⁰ It can only be assumed that George was clearing out unwanted furnishings from the house. The sale included goods from nearly every room in the house, excluding only the Long Gallery. In addition to the listing of items, the sale catalogue described the decoration of the rooms. This is one of the only records of Edward Finch-Hatton's refitting of the Hall, which included the hanging of green silk damask and red flock wall coverings.¹⁰³¹ In accordance with a rumour heard by

¹⁰²³ Broadway, "Hatton, Christopher, First Viscount Hatton."

¹⁰²⁴ Anon. and rev. Eagles, "Hatton, Edward Finch- (1697?-1771)."

¹⁰²⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰²⁷ Stone, *An Open Elite?*, 367.

¹⁰²⁸ Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 11; *The Annual Register*, 178.

¹⁰²⁹ Boase and rev. Wolffe, "Hatton, George William Finch-, Tenth Earl of Winchelsea and Fifth Earl of Nottingham (1791-1858)"; Anon., "Lawyers in Parliament."

¹⁰³⁰ Deacon, *Kirby Hall: To Be Sold by Auction*, 1824. *Kirby Hall*. Auction catalogue. 23-24 August.

¹⁰³¹ Langford, *A Catalogue of the Household Furniture...of Kirby Hall*.

Horace Walpole in 1786 that there was a plan “‘to refit Kirby, and inhabit it,’” George returned to live at Kirby and his son, George William, was born at the Hall.¹⁰³²

Born at Kirby in 1791, George William Finch-Hatton was the last person to inhabit the hall. He attended Christ’s College Cambridge, and may be best known for his duel with the Duke of Wellington in 1829.¹⁰³³ On the 2nd of August 1826, George William became the 10th Earl of Winchilsea and the 5th Earl of Nottingham, succeeding to the peerage after the death of his cousin George Finch.¹⁰³⁴

The 1810 Evans and Britton description of Kirby, stated ‘the paintings, furnishings, &c. have been sold, the gardens and grounds unaccountably neglected, and the whole thing is going fast to ruin and decay’.¹⁰³⁵ This suggests that neither George, nor George William, was living at Kirby on a fulltime basis by the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century. Following the death of his father in 1823, George William held another auction at Kirby in 1824, revealing the late eighteenth century redecoration done by George. Samuel Deacon, a local Northamptonshire auctioneer, conducted the sale over two days.¹⁰³⁶ Although this sale was much smaller than the previous auction, with slightly fewer than half the number of lots sold in the 1772 sale, many the furnishings were of the highest fashion.¹⁰³⁷ The reduction in the number of furnishings available for sale indicates that the Finch-Hattons had either not been using Kirby as a primary residence or had moved the items they wanted to keep out of the house prior to the sale. Whatever the reason behind the small number of items included in the sale, it is apparent that the Finch-Hattons had ceased to use Kirby on a regular basis.

¹⁰³² Walpole, Letter “To Lady Ossory 30 August 1786”; Boase and rev. Wolffe, “Hatton, George William Finch.”

¹⁰³³ Pine, *Burke’s Peerage*, 2156; Anon., “Duel Between the Duke of Wellington & Lord Winchilsea.”

¹⁰³⁴ Boase and rev. Wolffe, “Hatton, George William Finch-”

¹⁰³⁵ Britton and Evans, *The Beauties of England and Wales, Vol.11*, 204–205.

¹⁰³⁶ Pine, *Burke’s Peerage*, 2156; Deacon. 1824. *Kirby Hall*. Auction catalogue. 23–24 August 1824.

¹⁰³⁷ Deacon. 1824. *Kirby Hall*. Auction catalogue. 23–24 August 1824.

Furthermore, in 1829 George William had inherited Haverholme Priory in Lincolnshire from Sir Jenison William Gordon.¹⁰³⁸ It can be surmised that the family had left Kirby prior to moving into Haverholme, as the title page of the catalogue of an additional one-day auction held in 1831 states that the items for sale were ‘...the property of a Mr. Webster, who is currently changing his residence’.¹⁰³⁹ Mr. Webster, according to the 1841 Pigot’s directory, was serving as the agent to the Finch-Hattons.¹⁰⁴⁰ Also, George James’ tutor, Roundell Palmer, mentions in a diary entry that the family was living at Haverholme in 1835.¹⁰⁴¹ It is plausible that the family had moved to London during this time, as Haverholme was being rebuilt, as George William was deeply involved with the London political scene, leading to his duel with Wellington in 1829.¹⁰⁴² According to English Heritage publications, the Finch-Hattons moved out of Kirby following the death of the 9th Earl of Winchilsea in 1836.¹⁰⁴³ However, Burke’s Peerage shows that the 9th Earl was George Finch, a cousin of George William, who died in 1826, not 1836.¹⁰⁴⁴

George James Finch-Hatton, George William’s son from his first marriage, inherited Kirby and succeeded the title upon his father’s death in 1858, becoming the 11th Earl of Winchilsea.¹⁰⁴⁵ He was educated at Christ Church, Oxford and was Tory MP for Northamptonshire from 1837 to 1841.¹⁰⁴⁶ He died from scarlet fever in 1887 at his residence in Cadogan Mansions, London.¹⁰⁴⁷ Struggling to pay off gambling debts, George James stripped and sold the lead from the roof in 1857.¹⁰⁴⁸

¹⁰³⁸ Sir Jenison William Gordon, "Will" 1827 REEVE 8/5/23 Lincolnshire Archives.

¹⁰³⁹ Deacon. 1831. *Kirby Hall*. Auction catalogue. 23 April 1831.

¹⁰⁴⁰ MacArthur, “‘One Likes to See People’s Things’: The Kirby Hall Auctions, 1772-1831,” 4.

¹⁰⁴¹ Palmer, *Memorials. Part 1, Family and Personal, 1766-1865*, 180.

¹⁰⁴² Pevsner, Harris, and Antram, *Lincolnshire*, 274; Anon., “Duel Between the Duke of Wellington & Lord Winchilsea.”

¹⁰⁴³ Worsley, *Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire.*, 33.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Pine, *Burke’s Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Peerage, Baronetage and Knightage, Privy Council & Order of Precedence*, 2156.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Boase and rev. Wolffe, “Hatton, George William Finch-, Tenth Earl of Winchilsea and Fifth Earl of Nottingham (1791–1858)”; Pine, *Burke’s Peerage*, 2156.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Anon., “Death of the Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham.”

¹⁰⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Wheeler, *Too Close to the Sun*, 7; Stone, *An Open Elite?*, 367–368.

He was reported to be bankrupt in 1870 and, as stated in Chapter Two, in 1878 Messrs. Philip D. Tuckett & Co., were employed to sell the Gretton and Weldon Estates, including Kirby.¹⁰⁴⁹ Because no other records from this sale are available and Kirby remained in the family, it can be concluded that nothing came of this sale.

In 1887, Murray Edward Gordon Finch-Hatton became the 12th Earl of Winchilsea, inheriting the title and Kirby from his half-brother George James.¹⁰⁵⁰ In contrast to earlier generations, Murray Edward Gordon put the house back into use. In 1888, the 12th Earl included Kirby in a promotional tour of his Weldon quarry. The Earl received a group of would-be investors to lunch in the Hall to illustrate the enduring quality of Weldon stone before taking them on a tour of his quarry in nearby Weldon.¹⁰⁵¹ In 1894, Lord and Lady Winchilsea opened the house up for a picnic benefitting The Children's Order of Chivalry, welcoming 300-400 children from the East End of London to the grounds of Kirby.¹⁰⁵² Yet, even with this use, by 1896 the kitchen quarters had collapsed, and in 1899 the rooms to the east of the Great Hall were in ruins.¹⁰⁵³

Henry Stormont Finch-Hatton inherited Kirby and became the 13th Earl of Winchilsea upon the death of his brother, Murray Edward Gordon in 1898.¹⁰⁵⁴ Like his brother, Henry Stormont used the Hall, holding a bazaar at the house in 1907 to raise money for the restoration of the bells and organ at the Weldon church. It was noted that so much money had been raised that there might also be enough to restore Kirby.¹⁰⁵⁵ However, it would be another two years before the Earl would visit Kirby and even then, the diary of Henry Stormont, indicates that he only visited Kirby once in 1906.¹⁰⁵⁶

¹⁰⁴⁹ Anon., "Bankruptcy of the Earl of Winchilsea"; *Plan of the Gretton Estate, 1878, MAP 3273+A, Northamptonshire Record Office.*

¹⁰⁵⁰ Pine, *Burke's Peerage*, 2156.

¹⁰⁵¹ Anon., "Kirby Hall and Weldon Stone."

¹⁰⁵² Anon., "The Children's Order of Chivalry: Grand Gathering at Kirby Hall."

¹⁰⁵³ Heward and Taylor, *Northamptonshire*, 245.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Pine, *Burke's Peerage*, 2156.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Anon., "Bazaar at Kirby Hall: An Attractive Event."

¹⁰⁵⁶ Finch-Hatton, "Diary" 1906, FH 4773, Northamptonshire Record Office.

After several years of possessing Kirby, however, Henry Stormont put Kirby up for sale through his agent Mr. Joseph Stower, in June 1913.¹⁰⁵⁷ When the house was still on the market in August, another announcement of the sale was placed in the Times, marketing the additional land and rental income that would be available with the purchase of the Hall.¹⁰⁵⁸ This included 548 acres adjoining the house, as well as the Gretton property of 2,310 acres with a rental income of £2,100.¹⁰⁵⁹ There were rumours of a purchaser, one who would restore Kirby; however the sale fell through.¹⁰⁶⁰

Henry Stormont's son, Guy Montagu George succeeded to title and became the owner of Kirby in 1927 on the death of the 13th Earl.¹⁰⁶¹ Guy married American heiress Margaretta Drexel and in 1910 it was rumoured that they were going to restore and inhabit Kirby.¹⁰⁶² This however, did not occur. In 1919, many of the remaining fittings were stripped and sold.¹⁰⁶³ The *Northampton Independent* lamented that the 'beautifully carved panels were ripped from the walls, floors were torn up, parts of the ornamental fireplaces were taken away'.¹⁰⁶⁴ After the sale, the Earl continued to manage the site, requesting that the weeds be removed from the Hall.¹⁰⁶⁵

Early Life as a Tourist Destination

Kirby began to welcome groups of visitors in the late nineteenth century. While the interest in "Olden Time" mansions inevitably brought in some tourists, it was the spectacle of the ruins that was drawing the crowds. Tours began as early as

¹⁰⁵⁷ Anon., "Impending Sale of Kirby Hall"; Anon., "Private Sales and Lettings: Kirby Hall, Northants."

¹⁰⁵⁸ Anon., "Properties on the Market: Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire."

¹⁰⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Tipping, *English Homes*, 88.

¹⁰⁶¹ Pine, *Burke's Peerage*, 2156.

¹⁰⁶² Anon., "Romance in Newest International Match."

¹⁰⁶³ English Heritage, "Kirby Hall, Terrier File: AA 3627613."

¹⁰⁶⁴ Anon., *Northampton Independent*.

¹⁰⁶⁵ FH 4890

1882, when the Architectural Association visited the property.¹⁰⁶⁶ (Figure 60) While the Kirby entry in Richard Greene's 1889 Cycling guide does give a general architectural description of the site, it also illustrates the interest in the "romantic" quality of the ruin. Greene likens Kirby to 'a petrified poem – an epic poem in stone' and states, 'to some of us it may possibly be more fascinating as a ruin than it would be interesting as a palace'.¹⁰⁶⁷ Author Alice Dryden was overcome by feelings of 'melancholy' following a visit to 'the ruin of what was one of the finest houses in England'.¹⁰⁶⁸

The ruins of Kirby continued to be of great interest in the twentieth century, as a letter from the Londoner's Circle requesting permission for a visit to Kirby in 1926 demonstrates.¹⁰⁶⁹ The Earl's agent advised that there would be a caretaker on site who would be available to show the group around.¹⁰⁷⁰ This type of formal request, however, did not seem to be required all of the time, for in 1918 Herbert Evans' description of Kirby declared that the 'deserted house is a dreary spectacle enough but then there are not difficulties in the way of visiting it – for the shepherd and his family who tenant one corner of the huge mansion will give you cordial welcome and such refreshment as you require'.¹⁰⁷¹

Conservation

Guy Montagu George Finch-Hatton passed the guardianship of Kirby to the Ministry of Works (now English Heritage) in 1930.¹⁰⁷² Since entering the care of English Heritage, several drastic conservation plans have been carried out at Kirby. Nick Hill, then an historic buildings surveyor with English Heritage, has

¹⁰⁶⁶ *Photograph, Gentlemen from the Architectural Association, 1882, PH/128/C/1/19, Northamptonshire Central Library.*

¹⁰⁶⁷ Greene, *Northampton as a Cycling Centre*, 14.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Dryden, p.241

¹⁰⁶⁹ Letter, Percival J. Ashton to P.B. Gregoire, Martin & Co., 14 April, 1926, "The Londoner's Circle, Visit to Kirby Hall."

¹⁰⁷⁰ Letter, P.B. Gregoire, Martin & Co. to Percival J. Ashton, 15 April, 1926 "The Londoner's Circle, Visit to Kirby Hall."

¹⁰⁷¹ Evans, *Highways and Byways in Northamptonshire and Rutland*, 218.

¹⁰⁷² English Heritage, "Kirby Hall, Terrier File: AA 3627613."

appropriately likened these quick changes in conservation philosophy to the swinging of a pendulum.¹⁰⁷³

During the early period of guardianship, work was largely confined to structural repair, with only minor decorative work completed. For example, in the Great Hall, the Oak roof panels were removed, repaired and then replaced.¹⁰⁷⁴ (Figure 55) The ribs were painted white and sail canvas was tacked to the panels and painted blue ““as it was originally.””¹⁰⁷⁵ In the Long Gallery, the walls were re-grouted and consolidated, the brick buttress was removed from the base of the chimneystack at the south end of the Gallery and the half-glazed balcony doors were repaired.¹⁰⁷⁶ By 1932 interest had shifted to the Great Garden.¹⁰⁷⁷ George Chettle, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, first excavated the Great Garden to determine its original design. This excavation at Kirby was ‘the scene of the first horticultural archaeology in Britain’.¹⁰⁷⁸ Based on his findings, Chettle laid the Great Garden out in a set of four rectangular beds with scalloped corners and bisecting gravel-lined pathways, bordered in concrete kerbs.¹⁰⁷⁹ The garden work was completed by the outbreak of World War II.

During the 1960s and 70s work at Kirby was completed by H.Gordon Slade. Normal structural repair work was completed throughout the site, but at the same time historic fabric was being removed to expose the original features and construction.¹⁰⁸⁰ The Ministry removed seventeenth- and eighteenth- century panelling and other features from Kirby, because they were ‘considered as later accretions and the key Elizabethan period was obscured by them’.¹⁰⁸¹ It was argued that by stripping out the later additions it would ‘enable visitors to read the building and see the bones of its construction’.¹⁰⁸² Slade had plans to restore all the rooms, to

¹⁰⁷³ Hill, “The Inside Story,” 36.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Slade, *Situation Report: Kirby Hall*, 1.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibid., 2.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Jacques, “What to Do About Earlier Inaccurate Restoration: A Case Study of Chiswick House Grounds,” 8.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Harvey, “The Society Comes of Age,” 5.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Slade, *Situation Report: Kirby Hall*, 3.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Keay, “The Presentation of Guardianship Sites,” 14.

¹⁰⁸¹ Thurley, “The Fabrication of Medieval History,” 7.

¹⁰⁸² Ibid.

‘remove all essence of the ruin,’ but this project was not completed.¹⁰⁸³ Work that was undertaken included the removal of the doorway to the screens and the eastern wall in the Great Hall, the removal of the columned screen and coved ceiling from the Great Chamber, as well as the unblocking of a window in the Billiard Room, originally blocked in the eighteenth century.¹⁰⁸⁴ (Figure 62)

From 1967-1994, the conservation and interpretation of the Hall began to see a shift back to the approach taken prior to Slade’s intervention. A 1619 inventory was discovered in the early 1980s, spurring a new treatment for the interiors, as well as the creation of a new interpretive plan, which was to focus on seventeenth-century Kirby. In support of the reinstatement of earlier fittings and furnishings, Beric Morley, then Inspector of Ancient Monuments, wrote a report criticizing past treatment of the interiors at Kirby. He considered the lack of coherent interpretation policy to be detrimental to the public’s understanding of the Hall. According to Morley, the archaeological approach taken by Slade ‘accepts that the building is dead: the building lies at the end of an historical process that cannot be reversed,’ an approach that involved reading the story of Kirby through the remaining fabric, which may only be of interest to a select group of visitors. Morley considered the restorative approach to be more accessible to the public. The employment of the 1619 inventory would have seen the reinstatement of period fittings and furnishings, drastically altering the appearance and atmosphere of Kirby. In 1987, Curator Nicola Smith, in opposition to Morley’s plan, wanted to strip everything back to the era before Kirby came under guardianship. After much discussion and concern that ‘once the delicate patina of authentic ruination is lost, it is very difficult to recapture,’ neither of these plans was carried out. Instead, artist Ivan Lapper was commissioned to create drawings of the 1619 interiors for new interpretive panelling.¹⁰⁸⁵ (Figure 64) These panels are still in use today. Following this installation there was a shift to work on the garden due to increased interest and funding.¹⁰⁸⁶

¹⁰⁸³ Slade, *Situation Report: Kirby Hall*, Section K, 1.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Hill, “The Inside Story,” 41.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Hill, p.36

¹⁰⁸⁶ The information in this paragraph was derived from Hill “Inside Story”, pp.35-36

The 2002 Conservation Plan, written by Lucy Worsley, then Inspector of Ancient Monuments, recommended that the eighteenth century should be the primary focus of the interpretive plan because it had not been yet been the focus of an interpretive plan at Kirby before. It was believed that eighteenth-century Kirby would be more accessible to the public, as it would closer to an era interpreted at many other country houses.¹⁰⁸⁷ This approach was stressed after the discovery of the 1772 and 1824 auction catalogues.¹⁰⁸⁸ It was decided that the new interpretive plan would instead focus on the 1670s refitting, but would interpret other eras, if evidence were available.¹⁰⁸⁹ Set out in the conservation plan, the ‘archaeological evidence for successive periods of construction and use’, was noted to be of key significance to the site.¹⁰⁹⁰ The most recent conservation work, completed in 2004, centred on this viewpoint. It was described by Hill as more of ‘a voyage of discovery’.¹⁰⁹¹ Paint and historic fabric analysis began in 2001 and were used in conjunction with historic documentation, such as auction records, to recreate the historic interiors.

In the Billiard Room, while removing the *Mansfield Park* set, the original 1670 panelling was found, *in situ*, just behind the 1960s-1970s plasterboard. (Figure 65) The conservators found that the panelling had been adapted to take wallpaper in the eighteenth century by tacking canvas onto the panels. Behind the twentieth-century plasterboard, red wool fibres were found, matching the description of the “red room,” or the room with red flock wallpaper, in the 1772 sales catalogue. Traces of green fleur-de-lis wallpaper from the 1790s were also found in the Billiard Room. (Figure 66) The green fleur-de-lis wallpaper was recreated using period techniques and reinstalled in the room, along with an eighteenth-century fireplace surround from Audley End. The original door leading into the library was located in storage using historic photographs and was repainted cream and re-hung. In the Library, as in the Billiard Room, the doors were identified in storage, using historic photographs, and re-hung. There was evidence of crimson and grey striped

¹⁰⁸⁷ Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 20.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Hill, “The Inside Story,” 37.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

¹⁰⁹⁰ Conservation plan, p.16

¹⁰⁹¹ Hill, “Kirby Hall: The Inside Story,” 38.

wallpaper, however, there was not enough money in the budget to recreate it, so the room was painted grey to give the ‘essence’ of the wallpaper.¹⁰⁹²

In the “Brown” or Best Bedchamber a great deal of work was needed to remove the *Mansfield Park* film set. This room, like the Billiard Room and the Library, had the 1670 panelling *in situ*, as well as an original fireplace. English Heritage repainted the room a light brown colour called “Oak” in the seventeenth century. In the Pallet Room, no specific period was reinstated. Instead the space was used as a facilitator for illustrating period construction techniques, which has proved to be a popular feature with visitors. (Figure 67) During this programme of works, Hill suggested that Kirby would ‘be an ideal place to develop displays on the theme of the construction of the English country house’.¹⁰⁹³ Hill’s recommended buildings archaeology approach was a divergence from the standard country house interpretive plan.

In addition to the conservation efforts, and the associated interpretive changes, completed by English Heritage, Lucy Worsley, made many recommendations for the interpretation and collections program in her 2002 conservation report. She stated that overall the interpretation needed to be reworked as visitors were presented ‘with a slightly confusing combination of pristine restored garden, ruinous house, and empty interiors’.¹⁰⁹⁴ This included the updating of interpretive panels to match the architectural display.¹⁰⁹⁵ Worsley has also argued that research should be on-going, especially in areas not yet investigated or interpreted, such the east lodgings and the service wings.¹⁰⁹⁶

¹⁰⁹² The information in this paragraph was derived from Hill, “Inside Story”, pp.40-43

¹⁰⁹³ The information in this paragraph was derived from Hill, “Inside Story”, p.45-46

¹⁰⁹⁴ Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 44.

¹⁰⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 40–42.

Current Interpretation

Kirby has a limited media presence. The Facebook page is not affiliated with English Heritage and it is specifically stated that the page is ‘for visitors and fans of Kirby Hall to share photos, thoughts and recommendations.’¹⁰⁹⁷ The page has received 153 likes and there are six photos of the Hall. There is no Twitter account associated with the site. The English Heritage property page, in addition to standard visitor information, such as opening hours, location and admission costs, offers a brief history of Hatton I and information on the garden. There is a link to the Kirby Flickr account. The ruined portions of the house are mentioned, but the focus is on the juxtaposition of the ruin with the striking sixteenth and seventeenth century decoration.¹⁰⁹⁸

There are three ways visitors can tour Kirby Hall: a self-guided tour with the guidebook, a self-guided tour without the guidebook, and an audiotour. Although all three options discuss the conservation of the roofed portion of the Hall, the ruined sections of the house are almost entirely ignored, unfortunately a common occurrence in the treatment of Kirby.

The most recent guidebook, written by Lucy Worsley in 2000 and most recently republished in 2009, is, at 36 pages, a relatively brief account of Kirby. It covers the basic architectural and family histories, as well as the garden archaeology, garden history and the reinstallation of the cutwork design. The sections on the decline and the era in which Kirby entered the care of the Ministry of Works are very short. There is no mention of how Kirby came to be an almost entirely roofless ruin, nor is there any mention of conservation work completed on site. The guidebook does include a detailed ground plan, which indicates the different eras of construction, but this ground plan is the only place where portions of the ruined sections are named.

Without this guidebook, visitors are reliant on the interpretive panels placed around the restored interiors and garden. Guided by Hill’s desire to showcase the work that went into building and conserving a country house, these panels focus on

¹⁰⁹⁷ Kirby Hall, “Facebook.”

¹⁰⁹⁸ English Heritage, “Kirby Hall.”

construction and conservation. The panels take a diachronic approach to work done at Kirby since entering care, covering subjects such as paint analysis, the discovery and recreation of historic wallpaper and the reintroduction of the columned screen in the Great Chamber. (Figure 62) Bizarrely, the history of Kirby and its residents is not included in any of these panels. Rather than providing visitors with a staged, prescribed and socially mediated view of the house, the interpretive panels at Kirby provide information, not a route around the house. Scholar Dylan Trigg has stated that the ruin illustrates the ‘cessation of previous function’.¹⁰⁹⁹ It could be argued that the focus of the interpretive panels at Kirby emphasise this cessation of function. They concentrate on construction rather than use. This focus on conservation over history creates a more museum-like atmosphere rather than the country house atmosphere praised by Lord Lothian. The panels do, however, lead the visitor on the same “voyage of discovery” that Hill and the English Heritage team embarked on when undertaking the work. In the Great Stair hall there is a reproduction of a portion of the stair to illustrate how wood was made to look like stone in the construction of the staircase. (Figure 69) Visitors are able to touch this facsimile, to feel the difference in texture before and after the application of the stone layer. In the Billiard Room, the panel narrates the changes the room has undergone, from being a bedchamber in the 1670s through to the 1960s alterations. Many of the interpretive panels feature reconstruction drawings by Ivan Lapper, who has created similar artwork for other English Heritage properties. The Long Gallery is illustrated in a Lapper drawing, as it would have looked in the late seventeenth century, in a panel at the top of the Great Stair, by the window overlooking the ruined west range. (Figure 70)

The audio guide, on the other hand, focuses on the re-peopling and re-furnishing of Kirby. With the focus upon the aristocracy and material culture, both touchstones of heritage media, it briefly presents the residents while painting a vivid picture of the furnishings and decorative schemes that would have existed at Kirby in the seventeenth century. The brief discussion of conservation research and methods is an option that visitors have to select. For example, when in the Withdrawing Room, if a visitor selects the conservation option, they will hear an

¹⁰⁹⁹ Trigg, “Architecture and Nostalgia in the Age of Ruin,” 4.

explanation of the science and practice of paint analysis and how it was used at Kirby.¹¹⁰⁰ These descriptions are presented by the experts who worked on the projects, enhancing the connection between the visitors to the work that has been completed on site. This option augments the audio guide to allow for a more holistic, yet more fragmented, history of Kirby.

Lucy Worsley has stated ‘there is no clear or logical visitor route for those without the audio-guide or guidebook.’¹¹⁰¹ In negotiating Kirby geographically and historically, both the guidebook and the audio guide formats guide the visitor through the house on a specific set path. The path laid out by both the guidebook and the audio guide takes visitors through the courtyard, into the roofed and restored portions of the house and house into the garden. No ruined sections are visited.

Discussion

Kirby has undergone a series of interpretive plans and changes to the presentation of site since it entered care. The plans have been affected by, and have become a part of, the continuing cycle of decline and regeneration that have plagued Kirby Hall since it was built. The lack of a “golden age”, as defined in Chapter Three, has created issues for curators at English Heritage, as evidenced by the rapidly shifting periods of display. At the beginning of guardianship, under Chettle, the house was displayed “as found,” with a focus on bringing the gardens back to what was thought to be their seventeenth-century appearance. Like the “medievalising” of properties carried out by Peers, Slade decided all evidence of later periods should be removed, stripping out any post-seventeenth-century additions. In the 1980s, Morley wanted to refit Kirby in full accordance with the 1619 inventory, whereas Smith wanted to strip all later accretions, bringing the Hall back to the era just prior to when it entered guardianship. While neither of these two latter plans was fully executed, they illustrate disparate thoughts on the interpretation of Kirby.

¹¹⁰⁰ Antenna Audio, “English Heritage: Kirby Hall, Audioguide.”

¹¹⁰¹ Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 28.

The current approach to presentation makes the most of all the changes Kirby has undergone. The interiors of the roofed portion display three centuries of Kirby occupation. Within a sixteenth-century structure, seventeenth-century Kirby is found in the Great Hall, while for the first time eighteenth-century Kirby is displayed in rooms such as the Great Chamber and the Billiard Room. For example, a visitor is able to stand next to the columned screen in the Great Chamber, while viewing a Lapper drawing of the room in 1619. While the presentation of multi-era Kirby is justified, the presentation of so many eras is supported by little interpretation, which is potentially confusing to visitors.

The management of a visit to Kirby is dependent on the choice of interpretive material. Visitor movement is regulated within the restored portions, if a visitor chooses to use an audio guide or guidebook while touring Kirby. The ruinous portions of the house are ignored. Like many other country house ruins, this section of the house lacks any formalized tour, which does allow the visitor to determine their own path. Worsley notes this aspect of a visit in the conservation plan, stating that ‘visitors can wander freely throughout the whole building, with a sense of exploration and discovery’.¹¹⁰² However, if on a self-guided tour, this wandering is unaided by any historical or interpretive material, other than the information on the most recent conservation programme. Not even a ground plan is provided to help situate the visitor within the structure of the house. Freedom to explore the ruins is to the benefit of the visitor, but without any information, the visitor will not understand the history or significance of the site. Additionally, if a visitor is using an audio guide or guidebook, there is potential then, for the ruined portions of the house to be missed. If the audio guide is to manage the visitor movement around the restored rooms, the areas in ruin need to be included on that tour. The history of the site is not interpreted, except for in the additional tour materials, which visitors may opt not to take.

The current interpretive plan developed by Hill has enormous potential; it just needs to be pushed further. This buildings archaeology approach, which explains how Kirby was built and decorated over the course of several centuries of occupation, is an approach rarely taken for country house interpretation. It would

¹¹⁰² Worsley, *Conservation Plan*, 17

make for a unique country house visit. Shown throughout this thesis, the public enjoys the interpretation of conservation work. The approach would tie into this interest. As the archaeological evidence has been noted to be of significance to the site, Kirby would be the ideal location to attempt this new approach to interpretation.

Not only should this approach be pushed further to help visitors understand the construction and decoration of a country house, but to give a visit to Kirby a clear aim. The current visit is a mixture of a standard country house visit and this buildings archaeology approach. If a visitor chooses to take a tour with an audio guide or guidebook, they approach the site as a historic house museum. However, the presentation of the rooms does not give a coherent history. There is no reasoning provided to the visitor as to why so many different eras have been presented. This only becomes clear when the conservation story emerges. In addition, the panels and nature of the ruin work to de-centre the country house narrative. Essentially, while the panels have been designed to teach visitors about the construction of the country house, they have effectively stopped Kirby from acting as a country house in the traditional manner. This gives more reason for the buildings archaeology approach to become the central theme.

Alongside period interpretation, the interpretation of the conservation work gives the visitor a more complete picture of what was involved in building, decorating and restoring a country house. Unfortunately, the confusing display of period decorated rooms and the lack of thorough interpretation of the ruined portions of the Hall prevents visitors from understanding the whole story of Kirby Hall.

Uppark, West Sussex

Uppark is located in the South Downs, outside of the village of South Harting, near Petersfield, West Sussex. Built between 1685 and 1690, the Grade 1 listed house is positioned 15 miles from Petworth House and less than 30 miles from the Solent. Uppark remained in the possession of the Fetherstonhaugh family until the end of the nineteenth-century before being passed to selected close friends of the family and finally entering the care of the National Trust in 1954. Uppark is open seven months out of the year, from March to October, and receives approximately 55,000 visitors per year.¹¹⁰³

Architectural Description and Development

Uppark is attributed to architect William Talman and was built between 1685 and 1690.¹¹⁰⁴ (Figure 72) The William and Mary style house is nine bays wide and seven bays deep. The north front has a Tuscan columned portico with two statue niches. The south front has a large sweeping staircase leading up to a central doorway with Corinthian columns and crowned with a broken, scrolled pediment with rosettes, similar to that of a bonnet top high chest. The central portion of the south front is quoined and topped with a pediment that displays the Fetherstonhaugh family crest.

The house was remodelled twice in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the mid-eighteenth century, James Paine was commissioned by Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh to update the house, which included decorative plaster ceilings and wall ornaments in the Stair Hall, Drawing Room and Saloon.¹¹⁰⁵ New wallpaper was also hung in the Drawing Room.¹¹⁰⁶ The Stone Hall became the Dining Room during this update; no decorative change was applied to the room.¹¹⁰⁷ Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh commissioned Humphry Repton to undertake another updating scheme

¹¹⁰³ Alison Patrick, "Visitor Numbers Enquiry."

¹¹⁰⁴ Salzman, *The Victoria County History of Sussex: The Rape of Chichester*, 4:11; Porteus et al., *An Archaeological Watching Brief at Uppark House, South Harting, West Sussex. Draft.*, 3.

¹¹⁰⁵ Ian Nairn and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Sussex*, 359.

¹¹⁰⁶ Hussey, *Mid Georgian*, 37.

¹¹⁰⁷ Nairn and Pevsner, *Sussex*, 360.

from 1810 to 1815.¹¹⁰⁸ The Saloon was painted gold and white and several built-in bookcases were added. A large round stained glass window was inserted in the Servery, off the Dining Room.¹¹⁰⁹ Repton also constructed a portico on the north side of the house, shifting the main entrance to the house from the south side to the north.¹¹¹⁰ Very few changes were made following the Repton update, allowing Uppark's Rococo and Regency decorations to make it through the Victorian era nearly unchanged.¹¹¹¹

Line of Ownership

Sir Matthew Fetherstonhaugh (1714-1774) purchased Uppark in 1747 for £19,000.¹¹¹² Sir Matthew began the remodel of Uppark in 1747.¹¹¹³ In its entirety, the project cost £16,615, not including the furnishings.¹¹¹⁴ If the furnishings, which Sir Matthew purchased during his grand tour from 1749 to 1751, were to have been included, the total cost would have been closer to £100,000.¹¹¹⁵

Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh (1754-1846) inherited Uppark upon his father's death.¹¹¹⁶ Apart for the Repton commission, Sir Harry made very few changes to the estate. In 1825, at age 70, Sir Harry married Mary Ann Bullock, a dairymaid on his estate.¹¹¹⁷ Sir Harry and Mary Ann did not have any children and the estate was left to Mary Ann upon Sir Harry's death in 1846.¹¹¹⁸

¹¹⁰⁸ Margaret Meade-Fetherstonhaugh, *Uppark and Its People*, 70–90.

¹¹⁰⁹ Christopher Hussey, *Early Georgian 1715-1760*, 39.

¹¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 38; Meade-Fetherstonhaugh, *Uppark*, 74.

¹¹¹¹ Meade-Fetherstonhaugh, *Uppark*, 97.

¹¹¹² Salzman, *The Victoria County History*, 4:16; Meier and Meier, "The Featherstone Fortune," 3; Meade-Fetherstonhaugh, *Uppark and Its People*, 29.

¹¹¹³ Hussey, *Early Georgian*, 30.

¹¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹⁵ Meade-Fetherstonhaugh, *Uppark*, 31.

¹¹¹⁶ Salzman, *The Victoria County History*, 4:16.

¹¹¹⁷ Hussey, *Early Georgian*, 39.

¹¹¹⁸ Meade-Fetherstonhaugh, *Uppark*, 97.

Mary Ann and her sister Frances remained in the house and made very few changes. The National Trust describes this extended period of little change as a “long Victorian afternoon” carried out because Mary Ann and Frances wanted to preserve Uppark “as Sir ‘Arry ‘ad it”.¹¹¹⁹ When Mary Ann died in 1874, Frances inherited Uppark and took the Fetherstonhaugh name.¹¹²⁰ In 1895, when Frances died, her will stipulated who would inherit Uppark. As no Fetherstonhaugh blood relations remained, Frances chose Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable Keith Turnour (1848-1930), the son of her close friends, to inherit the house.¹¹²¹ She also specified that upon Turnour’s death the house was to pass to Sir Herbert Meade (1875-1964), and that both Turnour and Meade were to take the Fetherstonhaugh name. After Turnour’s death in 1930, Sir Herbert Meade and his family moved into Uppark. The Meade-Fetherstonhaugh family is still in residence at Uppark.

Donation to the National Trust

When James Lees-Milne visited the house in 1946, to discuss the donation of the House to the National Trust, he was met with a disheartening scene.

“Lady Meade-Fetherstonhaugh kindly gave me coffee – stone cold – from a pot she held over a log fire. She was welcoming and friendly and most anxious that our scheme should succeed...A romantic house, yet it disappoints me a little. Perhaps because it is so tumbledown...”¹¹²²

In 1954, Uppark passed into the guardianship of the National Trust, accepted in lieu of death duties.¹¹²³ The endowment for maintaining Uppark was drawn from the

¹¹¹⁹ Hussey, *Early Georgian*, 39.

¹¹²⁰ Salzman, *Victoria County History of Sussex*, 4:16.

¹¹²¹ Hussey, *Early Georgian*, 39.

¹¹²² James Lees-Milne and Michael Bloch, *Diaries, 1942-1954*, 221–222.

¹¹²³ National Trust, Meade-Fetherstonhaugh, and Meade-Fetherstonhaugh, “Deed of Grant and Covenant”; Hussey, *Early Georgian*, 40.

Pilgrim and Dulverton Trusts, from gifts of timber from the estate, as well as a large anonymous donation.¹¹²⁴

Fire

Shortly after I returned from my tea break the fire alarm sounded and an orderly evacuation of visitors took place. We did not know if it was a false alarm or ‘for real,’ as everything seemed so normal. Then wisps of smoke were seen coming from the southeast corner of the roof, where workmen had been putting the finishing touches to repairs. I saw the Administrator, Mr. Bloomfield, rushing to a ladder with fire extinguishers to try to stem the outbreak pending the arrival of the Fire Brigade, who had been automatically alerted by the Alarm. The smoke quickly thickened and then, to our horror, flames were leaping from the roof.¹¹²⁵

- *Harold Milford, an eyewitness*

At 3:38pm on the 30th of August 1989, the fire alarms sounded at Uppark.¹¹²⁶ A wisp of smoke appeared on the eastern side of the pediment on the south front where roofers had been working.¹¹²⁷ The workmen had been replacing lead flashings, part of the work to repair the damage done during “Great Storm” in 1987.¹¹²⁸ This process involved the use of welding torches. The workmen left the roof before checking the torches and the recently completed hot work.¹¹²⁹ It was found in subsequent investigations that “heat from the Oxy-acetylene lead-welding torch overheated and ignited roof timbers” which ultimately resulted in the fire.¹¹³⁰ The fire alarms at Uppark are linked to three fire stations in the region and engines from stations at Petersfield, Midhurst and Chichester, in West Sussex, were the first to arrive at the scene.¹¹³¹ By the height of the fire, there were 156 fire fighters and 27 fire engines from brigades from West Sussex, Hampshire and Surrey.¹¹³²

¹¹²⁴ Anon., “Uppark Presented to National Trust.”

¹¹²⁵ Harold Miford, “The Uppark Fire: An Eyewitness Account.”

¹¹²⁶ Adam Nicolson and National Trust, *The Fire at Uppark*, 13.

¹¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹²⁸ Gill Baker and Debbie Stevens, “Newspaper Clippings.”

¹¹²⁹ Nicolson, p.15

¹¹³⁰ West Sussex Fire Brigade, *Uppark Fire Investigation Report*.

¹¹³¹ Nicolson and National Trust, *Fire*, 13.

¹¹³² *Ibid.*, 16.

As soon as it became clear how widespread the fire was, the National Trust enacted their disaster plan, which had been revised following the fire at Hampton Court Palace in 1986.¹¹³³ Although most of the furnishings were off site in storage while the work was being done on the house, Jan Smith, one of the on-site custodians, and Joan Bloomfield, wife of Brian Bloomfield, the National Trust administrator for Uppark, in keeping with the disaster plan, started to move objects that remained on site and on the ground floor to what were thought to be safer areas.¹¹³⁴ The salvage scheme quickly extended to include room stewards, who aided Joan Bloomfield in the removal of objects from the Saloon and Little Parlour.¹¹³⁵ (Figure 74) Once the fire grew too strong for the employees and family members to enter the house, a group of fire fighters were instructed as to which objects and decorative details should be removed from Uppark. These fire fighters tore eighteenth century red flock wallpaper from the walls of the Red Drawing room and the red and yellow silk damask festooned curtains were ripped from the windows.¹¹³⁶ The early nineteenth-century curtains were strong enough to withstand this treatment because Margaret Meade-Fetherstonhaugh had conserved them in the 1930s.¹¹³⁷ A pair of large Uppark landscapes done by Tillemans was ripped from the walls using crowbars.¹¹³⁸

Thirty-five years after entering the guardianship of the Trust, Uppark had been almost completely gutted by a fire that had lasted nearly 24 hours.¹¹³⁹ This was due to the fact that the seventeenth-century staircase hall in the centre of the house, acted like a chimney.¹¹⁴⁰ The exterior stone and brickwork of the house were only lightly damaged, leaving an almost perfect shell of a house.¹¹⁴¹ The Purbeck stone floor in the Stone Hall was not damaged directly by the fire, but instead by falling

¹¹³³ Christopher Rowell and John Martin Robinson, *Uppark Restored*, 19.

¹¹³⁴ Nicolson and National Trust, *Fire*, 14; *Uppark House: The Restoration, Stage II*.

¹¹³⁵ Nicolson and National Trust, *The Fire at Uppark*, 17; Rowell and Robinson, *Uppark Restored*, 15–16.

¹¹³⁶ Rowell and Robinson, *Uppark Restored*, 20.

¹¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹¹⁴⁰ Dan Cruickshank, “Rebuilding Uppark,” 56.

¹¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*

debris.¹¹⁴² One of the main concerns for the structure of the house, once the fire had been extinguished, was the water damage. As the wooden beams of the house had been inundated with water, it was thought that dry rot fungus could flourish within the structure of the house.¹¹⁴³

Reconstruction

The Debate and Decision

Immediately following the fire, the debate about what should be done with Uppark began. The most famous declaration was from David Martin, the conservative MP for Portsmouth South, who called for Uppark to be demolished and the landscape to be restored and kept as a green-field site.¹¹⁴⁴ (Figure 75) Others, such as Ruth Gledhill illustrated that the National Trust had several ways to approach the situation. They could fully restore the house, demolish the house, preserve it as a ruin, or finally, ‘partially restore it as a museum for the art treasures and furnishings that were saved’.¹¹⁴⁵ Many who were moved by the destruction of Uppark and the subsequent debate probably recalled fires at other Trust houses, such as Coleshill, Oxfordshire, in 1953, and Dunsland House, North Devon, in 1967.¹¹⁴⁶ Following the fires, both Coleshill and Dunsland were demolished and it was most likely feared that Uppark would succumb to this same fate.¹¹⁴⁷

The National Trust took many things into consideration prior to making the decision to restore the house, including how the extant historic furnishings would look within a modern museum environment.¹¹⁴⁸ However, the most important reason – and the reason that would render all arguments against reinstatement redundant – was that the insurance policy would only pay for a complete

¹¹⁴² Iain McLaren, “Historic Floors at Risk: Uppark, a Case Study,” 181.

¹¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴⁴ David Martin, “Letter to the Editor.”

¹¹⁴⁵ Ruth Gledhill, “New Life for Burnt-out Uppark House.”

¹¹⁴⁶ Catherine Bennett, “The Trust’s Gilt Complex.”

¹¹⁴⁷ Ibid.; “Uppark,” 13.

¹¹⁴⁸ “Uppark,” 15.

reconstruction of the property.¹¹⁴⁹ The policy, which Sir Matthew had taken out with the Sun Alliance in 1753, and was still active, ‘could only be used for the rebuilding and repair of Uppark and not for any other purpose’.¹¹⁵⁰

Once the National Trust announced their decision to restore Uppark in its entirety, the debate moved to questions of authenticity and how the Trust was going to approach the recreation. Andor Gomme, professor of architecture at the University of Keele, stated that ‘Uppark is a house of incomparable importance and value, and its full restoration is essential’.¹¹⁵¹ He also believed that due to the outstanding evidentiary support for a possible recreation, an accurate recreation could, and should, be made and should not be labelled a pastiche. Journalist Anna Pavord questioned if Britain needed Uppark to be reinstated. Her controversial query brought forward the idea that Britain has “‘heritage” in quantity’ and for that reason, she did not believe that it was necessary for the nation’s history that Uppark to be restored.¹¹⁵²

Process and Methods Used

Even before the fire was fully extinguished staff and volunteers were starting on their “archaeological excavation” of the remains. The ground floor was gridded off and the last vestiges of the house were shovelled into 3,860 dustbins, section by section.¹¹⁵³ This process continued through November 1989 when the course of action turned to sorting through the debris.¹¹⁵⁴ During this process an outline of work to be completed was created, each individual project was hired out to separate tradesmen who would all work under John Lelliott Ltd., a Surrey-based contractor.¹¹⁵⁵ The project began with the structural elements, i.e. the roof, floors and walls.¹¹⁵⁶ During the early reconstruction period planning permissions were

¹¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁰ Rowell and Robinson, *Uppark Restored*, 31 and 44.

¹¹⁵¹ Lady Jane Howard, “Letter to the Editor: The Future of Uppark.”

¹¹⁵² Anna Pavord, “A Phoenix from the Ashes.”

¹¹⁵³ Rowell and Robinson, p. 25

¹¹⁵⁴ Rowell and Robinson, *Uppark Restored*, 27.

¹¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 59–61.

¹¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 62.

worked out. New additions, such as the use of fire resistant materials, required Listed Building Consent, which had to be approved by the Chichester District Council and English Heritage, while repair or reconstruction work would not be subject to the same scrutiny.¹¹⁵⁷

A revival of historic craft techniques, in addition to the conservation work, was required for the type of reconstruction that the National Trust had envisaged. These historic craft techniques included brickwork and stonework, wallpaper reproduction, the plasterwork and woodworking.¹¹⁵⁸ While many of these techniques were still in use, there were some, such as plasterwork, that had to be relearned.¹¹⁵⁹ The process of restoring the interiors of Uppark was aided by photogrammetric surveys. This method used computer design software to create measured drawings of the burnt shell upon which historic drawings, documentary photographs, and even family pictures were placed.¹¹⁶⁰ Conservators were then able to tell exactly what had been destroyed in the fire and required recreation. The reconstruction can be divided into three main categories: floors, walls and ceilings and the discussion of the reconstruction will follow these categories.

Floors

The floors of the ground floor of Uppark were wide boards, approximately eight inches wide, mostly made of oak, save for the Dining Room and the Little Parlour where the floors were made of pine.¹¹⁶¹ It was determined that of the eight main ground floor rooms that had wooden floors, only three would need replacement.¹¹⁶² The Little Drawing room needed around half of its floor replaced, while the Little Parlour and the Flower Room required completely new floors.¹¹⁶³ The other timber-floored rooms on the ground floor required ‘relatively minor and

¹¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 59.

¹¹⁵⁸ Nicolson, *Restoration*, 182–186.

¹¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 73.

¹¹⁶⁰ Ann Hills, “After the Fire - the Restoration of Uppark”; Marcus Binney, “A House Scarred but Not Licked by the Flames.”

¹¹⁶¹ Nicolson, *Restoration*, 93.

¹¹⁶² McLaren, “Historic Floors at Risk,” 182.

¹¹⁶³ Ibid.

peripheral repairs' prior to their reinstatement.¹¹⁶⁴ For the rooms that did demand partial or complete replacement, new wood was brought in and 'artificially finished to impersonate an aged finish'.¹¹⁶⁵ During conservation, the boards that were removed were marked so that they could be placed back in their original position.¹¹⁶⁶

Walls

The wall treatments at Uppark vary from paint to wallpaper to applied intricate woodcarving. The Dining Room and Saloon retained substantial amounts of their original paint and gilding, which was done during the Repton redecoration. For the remaining painted rooms, microscopic paint analysis was used to establish the types of paint used and the order in which they were laid. After this analysis, it was decided that the early nineteenth-century paint schemes would be recreated and a special new lead paint was created that was 'pre-aged' or 'pre-faded' so that it wouldn't fade with age. The Red Drawing Room retained substantial amounts of its red flock wallpaper due to the efforts of the fire fighters. The wallpaper that had been torn from the walls during the fire was conserved and new matching wallpaper was produced. Both wallpapers were laid on conservation grade linen as opposed to original coarse hessian and were then hung on recycled wood panelling, as was done in the nineteenth century. The old paper was hung first, then the new, with a bit of space left between the two. This space was then tinted to 'disguise the joins'.¹¹⁶⁷

70 percent of the original eighteenth-century joinery and carving were intact after the fire; however, they were found in over 5,000 pieces. In the reconstruction these original pieces were used, not only to keep within the overall theme of reuse throughout the house, but also because it was the more economical choice. These old pieces were conserved, but none of the original paint or gilding was removed,

¹¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁶ Rowell and Robinson, *Uppark Restored*, 95.

¹¹⁶⁷ The material in this paragraph is derived from Rowell and Robinson, pp.118-125

unless the surface was significantly charred. New pieces were constructed, which were fitted in with the conserved original work to recreate the eighteenth-century designs. Once the designs were recreated, they were painted and placed back in their original locations.¹¹⁶⁸

Ceilings

The reconstruction of the plasterwork ceilings throughout Uppark was more extensive than just completing the task; it required a re-education in plasterwork hand modelling that had not been used in over 150 years. Prior plasterwork recreations at other historic houses had not been done in the authentic manner mandated by the National Trust, so the conservation team had to undertake the task of re-learning these lost skills. This plasterwork team was selected by interviewing a group of 10 firms, four of which were then chosen to create full-scale models of eighteenth century plasterwork to demonstrate their skill and technique.

The reconstruction of the ceilings was a multi-stage process. The first stage was to sort through the salvaged material to retrieve original pieces of the plasterwork and determine how much of this material could be used. Once these pieces were separated, analysis and research was completed to determine the composition of the original plaster. Full size drawings of each ceiling were created and placed in their appropriate locations. New plasterwork was built up until the reclaimed pieces could be placed in their original positions. Once the plasterwork was complete, surfaces were gilded, which created a uniform appearance, making the reclaimed work “indistinguishable from the surrounding new work.”¹¹⁶⁹

¹¹⁶⁸ The material in this paragraph is derived from Rowell and Robinson, pp.91-96

¹¹⁶⁹ The material in these two paragraph is derived from Rowell and Robinson, pp.78-83

Interpretation

General interpretation

Uppark has a wide social media presence. There are Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest accounts associated with the site. Twitter, with 705 followers, is the largest social media outlet for the site.¹¹⁷⁰ However, the main focus for all three accounts is the gardens and wider estate, rather than the house. Andy Lewis, the Uppark Head Gardener, manages the Twitter and Pinterest accounts, rather than the house staff, who, for example, manage the accounts for Ickworth and Knole.¹¹⁷¹ The Uppark page on the National Trust site features the ordinary visitor information, general history of the families and collections and a three-minute preview video of the site, which features images of both the interior and exterior of the house.¹¹⁷² The fire and the work to restore the house to ‘as it was the day before the fire’ are mentioned briefly in the ‘Things to See & Do’ section of the main Uppark page.¹¹⁷³

There are seven rooms open to the public on the ground floor: The Dining Room, the Little Parlour, the Saloon, the Red Drawing Room, the Tapestry Bedroom, the Still Room, and the Butler’s Pantry. The interpretation in each room has been given a theme. For example, in the Red Drawing Room the interpretation focuses on the objects collected by Sir Matthew and Sir Harry while they were on the Grand Tour.¹¹⁷⁴ Due to the “discreet conservation work”, the rooms have ‘retained much of the “untouched” atmosphere present before the fire’.¹¹⁷⁵ There is a standardized route and room stewards direct visitors through the house. In addition to room stewards, each room is furnished with an interpretive area, which consists of a lectern covering the use and history of the room and smaller “Story Cards” which give more in-depth information on objects within the room, which

¹¹⁷⁰ “Uppark House and Garden Twitter Account.” <<https://twitter.com/UpparkHG>> Accessed June 28, 2013.

¹¹⁷¹ “Ickworth Twitter Account” <<https://twitter.com/IckworthNT>> Accessed June 28, 2013.; “Knole Twitter Account.” <<https://twitter.com/KnoleNT>> Accessed June 28, 2013.

¹¹⁷² National Trust, “Uppark House and Garden.”

¹¹⁷³ National Trust, “Uppark House and Garden: Things to See & Do.”

¹¹⁷⁴ Anon., “Uppark Room Themes.”

¹¹⁷⁵ Diestelkamp and Rowell, “Minutes: Arts, Architectural & Archaeology Panel’s Visit to Uppark, West Sussex,” 3.

were introduced in 2007.¹¹⁷⁶ There is a “before” photo placed within each period room. Locating these photos is sometimes difficult, for instance in the Red Drawing Room where the photo is placed nearly under the piano and can only be seen from one place in the room. In 2008, the Marketing Research Group at Bournemouth University completed a survey of the interpretation at Uppark. In this survey, it was found that 82 per cent of visitors looked at the lecterns and story cards.¹¹⁷⁷ This indicates that most visitors are engaging with the interpretive materials provided by the National Trust.

The main guidebook is eight chapters long, covering the development of the estate, the histories associated with Uppark, as well as the fire and reconstruction. In the “house tour” section, the rooms are described and their reconstruction is briefly discussed. It is in this section that, remarkably, the word “new” is used. It is used to describe the floor of the Little Drawing Room, which had its floor replaced in the reconstruction. It is remarkable that the Trust used the word “new” as, while it is entirely accurate, their choice of words in other forms of interpretation has tended towards “restored” or “reconstruction”, if mentioned at all. Unlike “restored”, “new” indicates to visitors that the floor they are walking on is from after the fire. It has no historic provenance, no Fetherstonhaugh ever walked on it. It is no longer how ‘Sir ‘arry ‘ad it.’ The guidebook does include a ground plan of the basement and first floor, highlighting the building eras, but does not include the reconstruction phase, even though the book was published in 2006.

Two guidebooks were produced that directly covered the events of the fire and subsequent reconstruction. The first, *The Fire at Uppark*, a book devoted just to the fire, was published in 1990. It begins with a brief history of the house and families, and then discusses the events of the fire and the process of saving objects and furnishings in the house. It concludes with the rationale behind the National Trust’s decision on reconstruction. *The Fire at Uppark* is now out of print, with no plans to reissue it. The second book, *Uppark Restored*, was published in 1996, following the reconstruction of the house. The book is now out of print, with no

¹¹⁷⁶ Edward Diestelkamp and Christopher Rowell, “Minutes: Arts, Architectural & Archaeology Panel’s Visit to Uppark, West Sussex.”

¹¹⁷⁷ *National Trust, Uppark Evaluation of Interpretation Research*, 11.

plans to reissue it. This book does not go into family history or architectural development in any great depth, but instead focuses on the reconstruction efforts and is the only published source on the reconstruction work. *Uppark Restored* is out of print. Like *The Fire at Uppark*, *Uppark Restored* does examine the rationale behind the Trust's decision to reconstruct, but the focus is on the reconstruction process, the materials and methods used are discussed in depth, as are the craftsmen. Visitors who participated in the 2008 Bournemouth survey noted that the selection of, and work done by the craftsmen, was of particular interest. This is an example of the interest visitors have for conservation projects, discussed in Chapter Three. Unfortunately, *Uppark Restored* is one of the few places where the craftsmen receive recognition for their work.

Original Fire Exhibition

The original fire exhibition was open from 1995 to 2007 and was housed in the workshops on site, which were built for the reconstruction work.¹¹⁷⁸ This temporary exhibition was an 'after-thought', put together just before the house was reopened to the public.¹¹⁷⁹ It illustrated the fire and the reconstruction using photographs, videos and debris from the fire.¹¹⁸⁰ A survey completed by Southern Tourist Board in 1995, found that the exhibition was visited by 91 percent of visitors, 92 per cent of whom thought it should be a permanent feature.¹¹⁸¹ 71 per cent of visitors described the exhibit as "excellent" and it was nominated for the Museum of the Year award and won the Interpret Britain award in 1996.¹¹⁸² However, the National Trust did not expect that interest in the fire would last beyond the turn of the century.¹¹⁸³ It was believed that the traditional interest in the furnishings and Fetherstonhaugh family would return quickly. Ylva Dahnsjö, Consultant Conservator for National Trust, South East Region, expressed concern that the reconstruction exhibit should not take precedence over the presentation of the house.¹¹⁸⁴ In August 2001, it was stated that the "temporary and subservient" nature of the current exhibit space "struck

¹¹⁷⁸ "Uppark – the Exhibition Building. Draft," 1.

¹¹⁷⁹ Chessum, "Innovative Management Course: Uppark," 2.

¹¹⁸⁰ "Exhibition Building," 1.

¹¹⁸¹ Southern Tourist Board, *The National Trust Visitor Survey 1995*, i.

¹¹⁸² Ibid., 17; "Uppark – the Exhibition Building. Draft," 1.

¹¹⁸³ "Exhibition Building," 1.

¹¹⁸⁴ National Trust, "Future Interpretation at Uppark," 4.

exactly the right note”.¹¹⁸⁵ Martin Drury, then a member of the National Trust Arts Panel, in opposition to National Trust institutional opinion, encouraged that the exhibition should not be temporary.¹¹⁸⁶

In 2007, Hallahan consultants found that the fire was Uppark’s unique selling point.¹¹⁸⁷ Following this report, the National Trust began to show interest in constructing a permanent structure to house the fire exhibit. However, the purpose built Fire Exhibit building was removed in November 2007 after the local planning authority refused an extension application.¹¹⁸⁸ Following the demolition of the exhibition building, curatorial staff planned to move interpretation away from the fire and back to the history of the house and family.¹¹⁸⁹ To reconcile the interest in the fire and reconstruction with the plans to move the interpretation back towards the family and architectural histories, Uppark curators did discuss creating an online component to the fire exhibit in 2007. This plan included a virtual tour and a podcast to supplement the in house interpretation. However, it never came to fruition.¹¹⁹⁰

Current Fire interpretation

Members of the Uppark Arts Panel expressed desire for the fire exhibit to remain outside of the house, to function as a primer before entering the house.¹¹⁹¹ However, a permanent exhibit building has been estimated to cost £3 million.¹¹⁹² Francis Carnwath, Chairman of The National Trust's Architectural Panel, suggested that the temporary fire exhibit be moved to a permanent home in the basement of

¹¹⁸⁵ “Exhibition Building,” 2.

¹¹⁸⁶ National Trust, “Future Interpretation,” 4.

¹¹⁸⁷ John Marjoram and Halahan Associates, “Assessment and Conservation Management Plan,” 25.

¹¹⁸⁸ National Trust, *Interpretation Project Brief*, 1.

¹¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹⁰ National Trust, “Uppark: Our Vision for Learning & Interpretation (28.7).”

¹¹⁹¹ Diestelkamp and Rowell, “Minutes,” 3 and 6.

¹¹⁹² Jeremy Capadose, Ylva Dahnsjo, and Caroline Thackray, “A Discussion Paper on the Fire Salvage Material at Uppark, West Sussex,” 1.

Uppark in 2006.¹¹⁹³ In 2008, the fire exhibit opened in the servant's hall in the basement of the house, the only area in the house to escape major fire damage.¹¹⁹⁴

Like the period rooms on the ground floor, the fire exhibit space also uses “story cards” to disseminate the story of the fire and reconstruction. These fire story cards go through the events of the fire, from start, through the difficulty extinguishing the fire, rescuing the collection, and the effects on the building and contents. There are short snippets on the reconstruction, but it is not covered in depth in the story cards.¹¹⁹⁵ The main interpretive features within the fire exhibit are a central table, a video, and a telephone information point, all of which had been moved from the temporary exhibit space.¹¹⁹⁶ The central table has four panels covering the fire, rescue, rebuilding and reconstruction. (Figure 76) Pictures of these phases are interspersed with basic facts. In the centre of the table is a charred fragment of wood from the house. The video point shows a short film of the fire. The National Trust Arts Panel found the exhibition to be ‘over-designed, wasteful of space and awkward to use’.¹¹⁹⁷ The panel suggested that members of the conservation team be consulted for the exhibition, but also specified that no time ‘be wasted in capturing their memories’.¹¹⁹⁸ According to the 2008 Bournemouth survey, visitors thought the video was “good” but needed more content.¹¹⁹⁹ The Uppark Arts Panel agreed that the video should be longer.¹²⁰⁰ As of May 2010, this had not been done. The telephone information point allows visitors to listen to oral histories of the fire and reconstruction. There are additional fire materials and interpretation in the stables. The exemplars used for the reconstruction of the ceilings of the ground floor rooms are stored in one of the stalls. (Figure 77) There is one small interpretive sheet explaining what they are and how they were used in the reconstruction. However, visitors are not directed to this area and these important artefacts of the reconstruction could easily be missed.

¹¹⁹³ National Trust, “Future Interpretation,” 4.

¹¹⁹⁴ Eggert, *Securing the Past*, 49.

¹¹⁹⁵ “Fire Cards (26.9).”

¹¹⁹⁶ Diestelkamp and Rowell, “Minutes,” 6.

¹¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹⁹ *National Trust, Uppark Evaluation of Interpretation Research*, 17.

¹²⁰⁰ Diestelkamp and Rowell, “Minutes,” 7.

The 2008 Bournemouth survey showed that 85 percent of visitors to Uppark saw the current fire exhibit.¹²⁰¹ Visitors interviewed for this survey were not fully satisfied with the interpretation. A third of visitors thought that the reconstruction of Uppark is the most important aspect of the history of the house.¹²⁰² Of the 85 per cent of visitors who saw the fire exhibit, 16 per cent wanted to see more specific information on the craftsmen who completed the reconstruction.¹²⁰³ Participants in the focus group held alongside the general survey expressed ‘disappointment that the Lecterns haven’t had the objects/artefacts in the flap for people to touch and feel and maybe they would have been received better if they were fully functional’.¹²⁰⁴ The participants would have preferred a hands-on element to the interpretation. This echoes the position taken in Chapter Three, that physical interaction aids learning and increases site appreciation.¹²⁰⁵

Discussion

When a visitor enters Uppark now, they are greeted and welcomed to an eighteenth-century country house, one that just happens to have suffered a catastrophic fire and been restored. The debate as to what should have been done with Uppark has continued right into the twenty-first century. This matter, while an interesting academic issue, is unnecessary when it comes to visitor interaction with the site. The main issue at hand, is how to interpret a country house that is, in essence, both old and new. Anna Pavord, in a 1994 article in the *Independent* asks this very question. ‘But what exactly have we now got at Uppark? An old building or a new one?’¹²⁰⁶ This is echoed by Paul Eggert, who asks ‘In what sense is it still historic? In what sense is it not?’¹²⁰⁷ The straightforward answer would be that it is a new house with old furnishings. It is however, not that simple. As so much time

¹²⁰¹ *National Trust, Uppark Evaluation*, 4.

¹²⁰² *Ibid.*, 19.

¹²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹²⁰⁵ Falk, Scott, Dierking, Rennie, and Cohen Jones, “Interactives and Visitor Learning,” 178; Descombes, “Shifting Sites: The Swiss Way, Geneva,” 80.

¹²⁰⁶ Pavord, “A Faked Body, a Lost Soul.”

¹²⁰⁷ Eggert, *Securing the Past*, 51.

and attention was paid to salvaging, restoring and reusing many fragments of the original house, what stands now is an amalgamation of old and new. John Arnold, Kate Davies and Simon Ditchfield, in the foreword to *History and heritage: consuming the past in contemporary culture*, put forth that if there is a distinct difference between the ‘old’ Uppark and ‘new’ Uppark, it is this difference that is attracting more visitors.¹²⁰⁸ But, as Art Historian Emma Barker has pointed out ‘visiting the house today cannot...be the same experience as it would have been before the fire’.¹²⁰⁹ With the current interpretive plan, it would seem that the National Trust is unaware of, or unwilling to admit to, this change. By taking almost the same approach to the presentation of the house as it did ‘the day before the fire’, the National Trust was keeping Uppark safely within the realm of the standard country house visit. The methods used and decisions that were made by the National Trust allow the visitor to complete their normal country house visit in a house, without sensing that although Uppark was originally constructed in the eighteenth century, it is now also a twentieth-century country house. Many authors have expressed concern for the clarity of the presentation of historic materials alongside modern ones. Even prior to the reconstruction, V&A student Jonathan Shaw thought that the ground floor should be reinstated, but calling for honesty in interpretation, stating that ‘it would be disingenuous however to seek to recreate in these rooms the patina of age’.¹²¹⁰ According to the National Trust, the methods that were used in the reconstruction, that blend the new with the old, were chosen, as they would not be jarring to the visitor.¹²¹¹ The joins between the old and new would be harmonious and allow the visitor to enjoy Uppark as a whole, as opposed to two buildings, the old and the new. In her Courtauld MA dissertation, Melanie Blake takes issue with the restored areas, stating:

‘...the visitor is hard-pressed to tell which surfaces are old and which are new, despite diagrams designed to assist such identification. Now that the

¹²⁰⁸ John Arnold, Kate Davies, and Simon Ditchfield, *History and Heritage*, xiii.

¹²⁰⁹ Barker, “Case Study 8: Heritage and The Country House,” 225.

¹²¹⁰ Shaw, *Uppark, the Restoration of a Country House*, 133.

¹²¹¹ Sekers, “Uppark: Non Omnis Moriar,” 17.

mends are painted over they are invisible. There is the least possible disharmony between the original contents and new structure.’¹²¹²

Alongside the larger authenticity issues, what Blake picks up on is the harmonious environment created by the combination of furnishings and their setting. As nearly all the furnishings from the ground floor were offsite during the fire, they needed to be taken into account when considering how to proceed with the ruin. Many suggestions were made to the National Trust, including razing the house or stabilizing the ruin.¹²¹³ However, if either of these options had been selected, the relationship between the house and the visitor would have been altered. The Trust felt that a ‘part-restored, part-reconstructed replica’ of the house would be the most appropriate setting for the surviving furnishings.¹²¹⁴ Although Professor Paul Eggert is quite outspoken about his disapproval of the reconstruction of Uppark, calling it a ‘triumph...of simulacrum’, he does recognize that the furnishings, in combination with a fully restored house, would recreate the spirit or essence of Uppark.¹²¹⁵ It may not be exactly what stood on the 29th of August 1989, but the feeling that visitors get is exactly that; nothing has changed in the eye of the viewer. The National Trust has worked hard to present the house as it was the day before the fire. They have not only recreated the house to this exact day, they have recreated the visitor experience to this day as well.

However, as seen in the visitor surveys, one of the main draws for visitors was, in fact, the fire and subsequent reconstruction. Over one third of visitors to Uppark who participated in the 2008 survey ‘still think the restoration is the most important aspect of the house’.¹²¹⁶ Visitors are interested in the spectacle of a house that has been rebuilt following a catastrophic fire. They come to learn about the restoration and to see any remaining evidence of the fire. As stated above, the authors of the Hallahan report called the fire and reconstruction ‘a significant

¹²¹² Blake, “The Rebuilding of Hampton Court Palace, Uppark and Windsor Castle: Three Recent Attempts to Restore the Past,” 38.

¹²¹³ Baker, “Demolish It!”; Pavord, “A Phoenix from the Ashes.”

¹²¹⁴ Eggert, *Securing the Past*, 50.

¹²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹²¹⁶ *National Trust, Uppark Evaluation*, 19.

Unique Selling Point (USP) for the property'.¹²¹⁷ This has been echoed on the blog *Visiting Houses & Gardens*. The post on Uppark stated that the reason to visit the house is to 'learn about restoring & repairing a historic house'.¹²¹⁸ The public view of the current significance of Uppark matches the Halahan report assessment, that the fire and reconstruction are the unique selling point of the property. It is ironic that the National Trust has attempted to move on from the reconstruction of the house, as the image of a phoenix rising from the ashes, the image that they used to portray Uppark, is still what is drawing the crowds.

The current interpretation and presentation of Uppark, bar the small exhibition in the basement, is almost the same as it was before the fire. There has been a reversion to the standard country house visit at the "new" Uppark. The Fetherstonhaugh rooms on the ground floor and the Victorian servants quarters are the main components of the tour. The movement within the house is managed not only by the interpretation, but also by the guides. They ensure that the visitors are progressing through the house on the correct route. In a review on Trip Advisor, "Sarah B." notes that upon entering the house, was 'promptly told "You need to go to that room over there first" by the lady who had positioned herself in the doorway. Even if we didn't want to visit that room we were basically given no choice.'¹²¹⁹ If the National Trust interprets the story of the house via movement through the house on a set path, which is in opposition to Howard's view that visitors should be able to ignore any and all interpretation, then the Trust must make sure that the fire exhibition is included in this managed path.

As the National Trust has included the fire and reconstruction in the interpretation, they have been recognised as an important chapter in the biography of Uppark. However, an important aspect of the reconstruction work that

¹²¹⁷ Marjoram and Halahan Associates, "Assessment and Conservation Management Plan," 25.

¹²¹⁸ Visiting houses and gardens, "Uppark House (Sussex)." <<http://visitinghousesandgardens.com/2011/01/30/uppark-house-sussex-the-house-that-was-put-back-together-again/>> Accessed September 16, 2013.

¹²¹⁹ "Not a Lot to See - Uppark, South Harting Traveller Reviews - TripAdvisor." <http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g1837371-d547419-r158170002-Uppark-South_Harting_West_Sussex_England.html> Accessed September 16, 2013.

desperately needs to be included is the team of conservation professionals that rebuilt the house. As Chapter Three has shown, visitors enjoy seeing conservators at work. While the direct connection with the conservation team is no longer possible, the stories still are. The National Trust needs to reverse its policy and conduct oral histories for the conservation team. These first person accounts would then be available for any future interpretive plans.

As discussed in Chapter Three, there has been a call to curators to incorporate conservation into interpretation.¹²²⁰ The Trust has moved in this direction in recent years. With the acquisition of properties such as Calke Abbey and Tyntesfield, and the on-going conservation of Knole, new approaches to the presentation of conservation efforts have been taken. This type of approach has begun to appear at Uppark. Noted on the 'Events' section of the Uppark site, visitors have the opportunity to meet with the house staff to 'find out how they care for the house and collection' on the 25th of July 2013.¹²²¹ As of July 2nd, 2013, a new multimedia guide was introduced at Uppark, which will present 'interesting facts and information about the people, the collection, the history (including the fire and reconstruction) and even the scandals of this unique place' to visitors, for a £2 hire fee.¹²²²

The National Trust missed an opportunity when they put their post-fire interpretive plan into effect. It would have been an appropriate moment to try a radical approach to the presentation of a country house, as the rebuilt ruin was effectively a blank slate. The reconstruction of the house was the correct course of action, based on the collection that survived the fire and the desire to display that in its original context. However, following the fire, the Trust should not have simply reinstated the earlier interpretive plan with an addendum covering the fire and reconstruction. Instead, Uppark could have been turned into an educational resource for visitors. It would have been a good place to work in a kinaesthetic element to the

¹²²⁰ Pye, *Caring for the Past*, 192.

¹²²¹ National Trust, "Uppark House and Garden: Things to See & Do - Events." <<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/uppark/things-to-see-and-do/events>> Accessed July 13, 2013.

¹²²² "Uppark House and Garden." <<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/uppark>> Accessed July 13, 2013.

standard country house visit. Visitors are typically unable to touch the fabric of a country house and where better to allow them to feel and understand the materials that went into the construction and decoration of a country house, than one that has recently been built to eighteenth-century standards? Reminiscent of John Harris' desire to have the textures of the country house on display in the *Destruction* exhibition, as discussed in Chapter Two, allowing visitors to touch within the country house context would have opened up new learning pathways. The educational impact would have been significant, giving visitors knowledge they could employ on subsequent country house visits, through a physical link to the past. As the original furnishings were undamaged and were reinstalled, this kinaesthetic approach would not be possible in every room. Nor should it be. Uppark is an historic house museum; it is the National Trust's mission to present it as the home of the Fetherstonhaugh family. However, it is clear that visitors would have appreciated if the provision for a hands-on area had been included in the new interpretive plan. This aspect could have been incorporated through exemplars of restored work on a lectern, or better yet, a small section of a restored area of one of the rooms could have been dedicated to this kinaesthetic activity.

Highcliffe Castle, Hampshire

“‘Someday the Castle will make a beautiful and interesting ruin’...”¹²²³

Lady Abingdon made this statement to author and friend Tahu Hole in 1949, not knowing that within twenty years her prediction would come true.¹²²⁴ Grade I listed Highcliffe Castle is located just outside the New Forest on the Hampshire coastline, with views of the Needles, off the coast of the Isle of Wight. Built between 1830 and 1834, the Gothic revival house is less than 20 miles from many fine seventeenth and eighteenth century country houses, such as Kingston Lacy, as well as two other country house ruins, Lulworth Castle and Appuldurcombe House. Highcliffe passed from the de Rothesay family to the Stuart-Wortley family before being sold in 1950. The house entered the full care of Christchurch Council in 1999. Highcliffe is a member of the Historic Houses Association and is open eleven months per year, from February through December, and receives approximately 50,000 visitors each year.¹²²⁵

Architectural Description and Development

Lord Stuart de Rothesay commissioned William Donthorne (1799–1859) to remodel the pre-existing smaller house that stood on the site.¹²²⁶ What Donthorne created at Highcliffe has been described as ‘as romantic as Fonthill in conception but even more eccentric in plan.’¹²²⁷ Nikolaus Pevsner was correct when he described the house as stretching ‘out in all directions, on a varied and completely irregular plan...’¹²²⁸ Christopher Hussey was a bit more forgiving, and

¹²²³ Tahu Hole, *Highcliffe Castle*, 48.

¹²²⁴ Hole, *Highcliffe*, 48.

¹²²⁵ Anon., “Highcliffe Castle Celebrates 15th Anniversary.”

¹²²⁶ John Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 60; Howard Colvin, *British Architects, 1600-1840*, 317–319.

¹²²⁷ Christopher Hussey, *Late Georgian 1800-1840*, 23.

¹²²⁸ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Hampshire and the Isle of Wight*, 292.

mathematical, in his description, stating that ‘the general arrangement of the house, is a right-angled triangle, the hypotenuse forming the centre...’¹²²⁹

Highcliffe is built around a central block with extending wings, creating a stunted L-shaped ground plan. The central block is comprised of three sections, two of which are two storeys and one that is three storeys. Each section of this central block has octagonal clasped buttresses. The wings are both one story. The majority of the house has a pierced parapet with a geometric design. The north façade is dominated by a two-storey porte-cochere. Beneath the arch is a large stained glass window with reticulated tracery. The remainder of the north façade is a one-story wing that projects to the east. This portion is ten bays wide, each window capped with ogee arches, and one canted bay window. The north end of the west façade is marked by the clerestory of the Great Hall. The west tower bisects the west façade and has a canted bay window on the ground floor and a perpendicular window with reticulated tracery. There is a one-story extension that is two bays wide, towards the south end of the house. The south end is a one-story structure, used as a Wintergarden. It has one large window on the west side, a large canted bay with door in the centre of the south side, flanked by two bays, and another canted bay on the east side.

The east façade comprises the inside of the L plan and therefore faces both east and south. (Figure 80) The west tower is two storeys tall and contains the south porch. Over the south porch is the salvaged Oriel window. The southeast facing portion of the central section is three bays wide and two storeys tall. A salvaged parapet has been used instead of the geometric pierced parapet used elsewhere on the house. The east tower is three storeys. The top two storeys have canted bay windows and the ground floor has a door that currently leads to the gift shop. The one storey portion of the east wing is three bays wide, terminating in two canted bay windows, one on the south-facing side and the other on the east-facing side. Extending from the east-facing side of the east wing is a one-story purpose built annexe that was added in the mid-twentieth-century.

¹²²⁹ Hussey, “Highcliffe Castle I,” 809.

Complicating the remodelling, Lord de Rothesay required Donthorne to incorporate salvages of several medieval buildings, which he had acquired in France.¹²³⁰ While returning from Paris in 1830, Lord de Rothesay purchased materials from the Hotel des Andelys, the church of St. Vigor, and Jumièges Abbey, all along the Seine, in and around Rouen. He had the fragments sent to England, where they were delivered to the beach below Highcliffe.¹²³¹ The majority of the salvaged elements were fitted into the southeast front, facing the sea. Salvaged elements include the Oriel window, salvaged from the Hotel des Andelys, situated above the west-facing arch of the south front. The Jesse window above the door on the North façade was salvaged from the church of St. Vigor in Rouen.¹²³² The southeast-facing portion of the central block has a pierced parapet, also salvaged, which reads “*Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora venis terra magnum alterius spectare laborem.*” This translates to ‘It is pleasant, when the winds trouble the waters on the great sea, to watch another man’s great trouble from the shore’ so its location is fitting.¹²³³ Lord de Rothesay also purchased thirty-seven carved oak panels from the Abbaye de Jumièges, which were installed in the Great Hall.

The de Rothesay period portions of the house are made of a rosy tinged ashlar.¹²³⁴ During construction, Donthorne used distemper to colour match the new stone to that of the salvaged pieces. However, the newer stone has now lost its colour, while the antique French stone has kept the colour.¹²³⁵

In the 1950-60s an extension was added to the southern side of the Castle, the Great Hall was converted into a chapel by replacing the staircase with an altar and a gravel drive was laid.¹²³⁶ The house suffered two devastating fires in the 1960s, altering the appearance of the house, internally and externally. The current presentation of the house, although accurately rebuilt, was created during the restoration and reconstruction work of the late 1990s and early 2000s and will be discussed later in this case study.

¹²³⁰ Colvin, *Dictionary*, 318.

¹²³¹ Hussey, “Highcliffe Castle I,” 809; Hussey, “Highcliffe Castle II,” 855.

¹²³² Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 62.

¹²³³ Richard Tottel and Tom MacFaul, *Tottel’s Miscellany*, 464.

¹²³⁴ *Highcliffe Castle, Hampshire*.

¹²³⁵ Sheila D. Herringshaw, *A Portrait of Highcliffe*, 20.

¹²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

Line of Ownership

Lord Charles Stuart de Rothesay

Lord Charles Stuart de Rothesay (1779-1849) attended Christ Church, Oxford, and entered diplomatic service in 1801, with appointments in Vienna, St. Petersburg and Lisbon.¹²³⁷ He was ambassador to France from 1815 to 1824 and again from 1828 to 1831.¹²³⁸ It was during this time that Lord de Rothesay began to aggressively collect French antiques, especially during his second appointment.¹²³⁹ His areas of particular interest were Empire furniture and Gothic salvages.¹²⁴⁰

Lady Waterford and Major Stuart-Wortley

Following Lord de Rothesay's death, his title became extinct and the Castle went to his widow, eventually passing to their younger daughter, Lady Louisa Waterford (1818-1891).¹²⁴¹ Lady Waterford took care of the Castle for the remainder of her life, even selling off the Gobelin tapestries from the Drawing Room in 1889 to fund drainage works and cliff stabilization.¹²⁴² Lady Waterford was very keen for Highcliffe to remain in the family. Prior to her death in 1891, she arranged for the Castle to pass on to a distant cousin, Edward Stuart-Wortley.¹²⁴³ Major General Edward Stuart-Wortley (1857-1934) lived at Highcliffe with his wife, Violet, and she remained there following his death until 1950.¹²⁴⁴ During his tenure at Highcliffe, Edward Stuart-Wortley did not make any major changes to the

¹²³⁷ Franklin, "Stuart, Charles, Baron Stuart de Rothesay (1779–1845)."

¹²³⁸ Harris, *Moving Rooms*, 60.

¹²³⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁴⁰ Hussey, "Highcliffe Castle II," 857.

¹²⁴¹ Franklin, "Stuart, Charles"; Christie, *Catalogue of the Contents of Highcliffe Castle*; Brisby, "Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford: A Feminist Intervention in the Perception of Art?," 17.

¹²⁴² Herringshaw, *A Portrait*, 21.

¹²⁴³ Worsley, *England's Lost Houses*, 179.

¹²⁴⁴ Herringshaw, *A Portrait*, 13; Worsley, *England's Lost Houses*, 179.

Castle, but did host many famous and royal visitors, including Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany who visited in 1907.¹²⁴⁵

Decline

In 1949, Major Stuart-Wortley's daughter, Elizabeth and her husband Lord Abingdon, began the process of emptying and selling off the property.¹²⁴⁶ In a scene similar to the acquisition of furnishings and salvages in the nineteenth-century, the contents of Highcliffe were sold. Held over three days, the sale, conducted by Christie's, included 804 lots of paintings, sculpture, carpets, general decorative arts objects and French furnishings.¹²⁴⁷ The paintings catalogue included pieces by Reynolds, Raphael and Holbein, amongst others.¹²⁴⁸ Lord de Rothesay had purchased the majority of the furniture in the sale while he was Ambassador to France between 1815 and 1831.¹²⁴⁹ Included in the group of French furnishings were the carved oak panels from the Abbaye de Jumièges in Normandy, which were purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and are now on display in The Cloisters.¹²⁵⁰

In 1950, Highcliffe was sold to Mr. J.H. Lloyd who converted it into a convalescent home for children.¹²⁵¹ The house was placed on the market again in 1951.¹²⁵² No buyer was found and the house was put up for auction in 1952.¹²⁵³ The auction was cancelled when the Claretian Missionary Order purchased the castle privately.¹²⁵⁴

¹²⁴⁵ Anon., "The Kaiser Shooting Near Highcliffe."

¹²⁴⁶ Anon., "Sale at Highcliffe Castle."

¹²⁴⁷ Christies, *Sale Catalogue*.

¹²⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁴⁹ Anon., "Forthcoming Sales."

¹²⁵⁰ Freeman, "Late Gothic Woodcarvings in Normandy," 260; Unknown, *Panel with Joachim's Offering Rejected*.

¹²⁵¹ Fox & Sons Land Agents, "Advertisement: Highcliffe Castle March 23, 1951."

¹²⁵² Ibid.

¹²⁵³ Anon., "Property Market."

¹²⁵⁴ Anon., "News in Brief: Sale of Highcliffe Castle."

The Claretians

The Claretians established a boys' school at Highcliffe in 1954.¹²⁵⁵ In 1956 the school began to accept students studying to join the Order.¹²⁵⁶ By 1966, the Claretian college did not have enough students to retain Highcliffe as a campus and the college moved to Oxford.¹²⁵⁷ When they moved, the Order left behind a substantial amount of possessions, giving the impression that the 'Claretians had simply got up and gone out of the Castle for a walk and not returned'.¹²⁵⁸

Fires and Dereliction

The house was placed on the market again in January 1967.¹²⁵⁹ In July 1967, the house suffered the first of two fires. Following this fire, the Castle was sold for £21,000 to a Bournemouth solicitor, who was suspected of acting on behalf of a group of speculators.¹²⁶⁰ In May 1968 an application for planning permission was submitted.¹²⁶¹ The particulars of this application saw the demolition of the Castle and the construction of fifty chalets and a car park on the site.¹²⁶² This application was rejected.¹²⁶³ In June 1968, another fire broke out at Highcliffe. This fire did considerable damage to the house. The roof over the library and Great Hall was lost and the interiors were almost entirely gutted.¹²⁶⁴ (Figure 81)

In December 1968, Mr. John Cordle, MP for Bournemouth East and Christchurch, raised concern about the status of Highcliffe in a parliamentary session. 'No attempt has been made to protect the castle from vandals, and beatniks

¹²⁵⁵ Salsbury, *Highcliffe Castle and the Claretians 1953-1966*, 23–24.

¹²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵⁹ Fox & Sons Land Agents, "Advertisement: Highcliffe Castle, January 19, 1967."

¹²⁶⁰ "House of Commons Debates (HC Deb.) 17 December 1968 Vol 775 Cc1338-50."

¹²⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶² *Ibid.*

¹²⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

have been in the habit of camping there and lighting fires.’¹²⁶⁵ Mr. Cordle found the negligence on the part of the owners worrying and questioned why the house had not been restored and returned to use.¹²⁶⁶ He proposed that Mutual Households Associated, Ltd., a company set up to restore and convert country houses, be permitted to purchase and save Highcliffe.¹²⁶⁷ The MHA estimated the cost of renovation and reconstruction to be £550,000, of which they could secure £400,000.¹²⁶⁸ Mr. Cordle asked for the HBC to provide an additional £50,000 per year for three years to push the project through.¹²⁶⁹ Mr. Arthur Skeffington, The Joint Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government responded to Mr. Cordle’s request. Mr. Skeffington cited the extent of the damage following the fire in June 1968 and the prohibitive cost of reconstruction. He stated that Hampshire County Council had explored the option of restoring Highcliffe, but rejected any plans due to the expense.¹²⁷⁰ The HBC confirmed their conclusion.¹²⁷¹ He assured Mr. Cordle that Highcliffe was protected from demolition, as all listed buildings have mandatory building preservation orders.¹²⁷²

On the 4th of June 1969, Lady Diana, the Duchess of Newcastle, née Montagu-Stuart-Wortley, wrote to the Times expressing her concern over the current ownership and successive planning applications to demolish Highcliffe.¹²⁷³ She felt it was vital to save the Castle as an important historic structure.¹²⁷⁴ On the 9th of June an additional letter opposing Lady Diana’s stance was published in the Times stating that the cost of repair and maintenance of the Castle would be too great for the council.¹²⁷⁵ The author of the letter, F.H. Ward, wrote, ‘Britain is in no position to look backwards. Our aim should be to improve on the past, not preserve

¹²⁶⁵ *ibid.*

Figure 1: Burnt Shell of Highcliffe (*Country Life*, 27 sept 1990)

¹²⁶⁷ *Records Relating to Gosfield Hall*; “HC Deb 17 December 1968 Vol 775 Cc1338-50.”

¹²⁶⁸ “HC Deb 17 December 1968 Vol 775 Cc1338-50.”

¹²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷² *Ibid.*

¹²⁷³ Anon., “Diana, Duchess of Newcastle”; Lady Loraine and Diana, Duchess of Newcastle, “Letter to the Editor: ‘Highcliffe Castle’.”

¹²⁷⁴ Lady Loraine and Diana, Duchess of Newcastle, “Letter to the Editor.”

¹²⁷⁵ F.H. Ward, “Letter to the Editor: ‘Highcliffe Castle’.”

it.¹²⁷⁶ Highcliffe remained protected, but in a vulnerable state. In 1974, the same year the V&A opened their *Destruction of the Country House* exhibition, Christchurch Council demolished the East Tower because it was becoming dangerous.¹²⁷⁷

Rescue

Christchurch Borough Council secured a compulsory purchased order for Highcliffe in 1976.¹²⁷⁸ Planning permission was granted in 1977 for a tearoom in the east wing.¹²⁷⁹ The plan was to open the estate as a public open space with access to the beach with parking for 100 cars and an official opening ceremony occurred on the 4th of June 1977.¹²⁸⁰ However, immediately following the purchase, the Castle had to be fenced off due to the instability of the structure.¹²⁸¹ Highcliffe sat again, protected, but vacant, until 1988, when English Heritage, along with Christchurch Council, hired Niall Phillips Architects to produce a feasibility study for future uses of the Castle.¹²⁸²

The architectural firm came up with three possible plans of action: first, to sell the Castle to a private owner; second, to maintain the Castle in its ruinous state and open it to the public; and third, to sell Highcliffe and the remaining grounds to the neighbouring golf course, who would restore the castle, but would also build 200 houses on the property.¹²⁸³ Christchurch Borough Council conducted a survey of local residents from 1989 to 1990 as to their feelings on the potential developments on the site.¹²⁸⁴ It was found that many residents were opposed to option three, conserving the Castle.¹²⁸⁵ English Heritage and Christchurch Borough

¹²⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷⁷ Worsley, *England's Lost Houses*, 2002, 181.

¹²⁷⁸ "House of Commons Debates (HC Deb.) 19 January 1977 Vol924 Cc302-2."

¹²⁷⁹ Christchurch Borough Council, "Application for Consideration: Application 8/07/0176," 2.

¹²⁸⁰ Herringshaw, *A Portrait*, 111.

¹²⁸¹ Ibid., 22.

¹²⁸² Marcus Binney, "Cliff-hanging Suspense."

¹²⁸³ Ibid.

¹²⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁸⁵ Herringshaw, *A Portrait*, 113.

Council disagreed with the findings and in March of 1990, emergency repairs began on the Castle, with the two organizations splitting the £400,000 cost.¹²⁸⁶

The state of Highcliffe drew attention from the country house community, spawning several letters to the editor of *Country Life* from 1986 to 1992. In an early call for reconstruction of the Castle, Conservation Architect Donald Insall wrote that even ‘after two fires’ Highcliffe ‘still deserved maintaining – perhaps partly roofed, and partly as an evocative and splendid ruin.’¹²⁸⁷ Mr. N.W. Josling agreed with Insall, calling for protection of the house and the proposed August 1990 demolition and the construction of new houses or ‘the monuments to mediocrity’, as Josling called them, should be blocked.¹²⁸⁸ One dissenting voice was raised in 1992, when Michael A. Hodges wrote that the house was ‘of no practical use’ and that ‘the cost of restoration would far outweigh its value’.¹²⁸⁹ Architectural Historian Jeremy Musson, in a lengthy response to Hodges’ letter, stated ‘listed buildings in the possession of local authorities should be restored and maintained as an example to the private owner, not as an exhibit to the consequences of neglect and inaction’.¹²⁹⁰ The argument between Hodges and Musson shows that the sentiment raised by Caroline Tisdall in her review of the *Destruction* exhibition was still firmly held by some members of the public.

In 1992, the Council submitted a reconstruction programme to be completed by 1994, which was, again, to be joint-funded by the Council and English Heritage.¹²⁹¹ This work concentrated on structural stabilization and the protection of the de Rothesay era architectural salvage.¹²⁹² Planning permission was granted to reroof the south wing in 1994 and the reconstruction of the east tower was approved in 1995.¹²⁹³ In January 1995 the Highcliffe Castle Charitable Trust (HCCT) was founded, with members of the Council and a small friends group and a permanent

¹²⁸⁶ Binney, “Cliff-hanging Suspense.”

¹²⁸⁷ Donald Insall, “Letter to the Editor.”

¹²⁸⁸ M.W. Josling, “Letter to the Editor.”

¹²⁸⁹ Michael A. Hodges, “Letter to the Editor.”

¹²⁹⁰ Jeremy Musson, “Letter to the Editor.”

¹²⁹¹ Herringshaw, *A Portrait of Highcliffe*, 113.

¹²⁹² Ibid.

¹²⁹³ Christchurch Borough Council, “Application for Consideration: Application 8/07/0176,” 2.

exhibition of the castle's history was installed in the purpose built visitors' centre.¹²⁹⁴ The HLF awarded Highcliffe £2.65 million in 1995 for a major reconstruction project.¹²⁹⁵ This award was used to rebuild the east tower and to complete internal repairs to the Castle, such as the reconstruction and repair of the Great Hall and the reinstatement of the Jesse Window.¹²⁹⁶ This work was completed in 1998.¹²⁹⁷ In April 1999, the Council took over the administration of the property from the HCCT.¹²⁹⁸ In January 2013, another bid was made to the HLF. The application for £2.5 million is to be used for several projects, such as the restoration and reinstallation of the de Rothesay collection of stained glass and the repair of the Victorian kitchen in the basement of the house, as well as the creation of a new heritage centre.¹²⁹⁹

Conservation

Mann Williams, a civil and structural engineering firm, were contracted for the interior reconstruction and construction work. All work done by Mann Williams is easily identifiable as new work and is reversible, if necessary. In the Great Hall, the brick was cleaned and new plasterwork laid in preparation for the new history exhibition.¹³⁰⁰ The passageway from the dining room into the east tower has been blocked, with plans to reopen it during future reconstruction work.¹³⁰¹ Mann Williams also constructed the new rear staircase and basement bathrooms, both of which are modern in style, but are sympathetic with the ruins. The new staircase uses a great deal of glass, exposing the *in situ* original elements, such as damaged plasterwork, to visitors. (Figure 82) In the bathroom, the barrel vaulting is exposed, as are arched windows, which have been converted into mirrors.

¹²⁹⁴ Herringshaw, *A Portrait*, 113.

¹²⁹⁵ Editorial, "Museums and The Lottery," 427.

¹²⁹⁶ "Project Snapshot: Highcliffe Castle."

¹²⁹⁷ Herringshaw, *A Portrait*, 114.

¹²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 116.

¹²⁹⁹ Katie Clark, "Bid for £2.5m Lottery Funding to Transform Highcliffe Castle."

¹³⁰⁰ Mann Williams, "Portfolio: Highcliffe Castle."

<<http://www.mannwilliams.co.uk/portfolio/conservation/castles/highcliffe-castle-dorset.html>> Accessed August 3, 2013.

¹³⁰¹ David Hopkins, Interview: Highcliffe Castle Project.

The Highcliffe mission, as set during the 1995 HLF bid, is ‘to develop and maintain both physically and aesthetically the heritage that is HIGHCLIFFE CASTLE in a framework that broadens the horizons of awareness and understanding, public access and economic benefits to the area.’¹³⁰² These goals are evident in the Highcliffe conservation statement. James Webb, conservation officer for Christchurch Borough Council wrote the Highcliffe Castle Conservation Statement, in 2004. This document outlines the significance of the site and the conservation issues that need to be addressed.¹³⁰³ In the report, elements of the site are organized into a hierarchy of importance for conservation work, retention, and further research. The four categories are: exceptional, considerable, moderate and low. Marked as of exceptional significance are: the architecture of the house, specifically the association with William Donthorne and the use of medieval French salvage; the collection of stained glass, including the Jesse window; and the Castle’s coastal setting. Elements noted as of considerable significance are: the rescue of Highcliffe and the potential reuse of architectural fragments; the research and reinstatement of dispersed furnishings of de Rothesay provenance; and the formal landscaping, such as the parterre, as well as aspects of the wider estate that have been lost. Noted to be of moderate significance are: the preservation of architectural fragments on site and the wider Highcliffe estate, including areas now outside of the grounds, such as the golf course and St. Mark’s Church, where members of the family are interred. Additional aspects of the lost estate, such as a number of follies, are marked as low significance, as is the installation of an Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning system. The 2013 HLF bid mentioned above, incorporates many items noted to be of exceptional or considerable significance.

David Hopkins, the manager of Highcliffe, has stressed the importance of involving the local community in the reconstruction of the castle. Local craftspeople can be seen throughout the reconstruction work at Highcliffe – sometimes literally – one of the grotesques on the rebuilt east tower is the face of one of the craftsmen. A local metal worker made the replica pierced metal flag finials on the roof of the

¹³⁰² Hopkins, “RE: Conservation Plan.”

¹³⁰³ Management Board, Community Services Committee, *Highcliffe Castle Conservation Statement*.

Great Hall.¹³⁰⁴ The conservation statement also addresses the issue of the potential loss of local and specialist knowledge. This inclusion recognises that the work completed by local craftspeople and volunteers is an important part of the Highcliffe story.

Interpretation

Interpretation at Highcliffe Castle has been developing since the house opened, alongside the reconstruction. The interpretation at Highcliffe, although a work in progress, is quite detailed and thorough. Current interpretation of the main part of the house is self-guided, but volunteer stewards are available and willing to assist visitors. Each room is fitted with interpretive cards, covering the history and use of the room, the historic decoration and furnishing, and how the decline, including the fires, affected the room. (Figure 84) There are children's activities in several of the rooms, which connect to the theme of the interpretation of the room, or the house overall. The house is presented in an unfurnished, un-restored state. (Figure 83) The only furnishings are those used for events held on site and are set up on an as-needed basis. The effects of the fire and subsequent reconstruction are visible in every room. All but the Great Hall have been left un-plastered and all are without ceilings, leaving the joists in plain view. The ceiling of the short passageway into the Dining Room from the Octagon is charred black, with newly plastered portions in brilliant white. (Figure 85) The floors have been replaced, but are covered with simple surface treatments until appropriate flooring can be installed.

Visitors enter the house via the South Porch, immediately entering the Octagon. This room holds the admissions desk and a small auxiliary gift shop, and is where the volunteer stewards are stationed. The Octagon is the central room, connecting to the Dining Room, the Drawing Room, the Great Hall and the Library; giving visitors freedom of choice as to what room is entered next. The Dining Room is to the right of the Octagon. The interpretive card is just inside the door and focuses on the famous visitors to the Castle. On the far side of the room are the

¹³⁰⁴ Hopkins, Interview.

remnants of a silver cabinet. An information panel on the history of the use of silver in the country house is placed along the wall by the cabinet. A soft right turn from the Octagon leads to the Great Hall. The Great Hall is the main interpretive area for the Castle. (Figure 86) Directly inside the room is an introductory video that gives background information on the Castle. This video is played on a loop. There are two interpretive cards located next to the video. One interpretive card gives a history of the use and decoration of the Hall, while the other explains the story of the Jesse window, including its acquisition, reinstatement following reconstruction, as well as the symbolism of the window. Along to the two front walls of the Great Hall are ten text panels, covering the history of construction, residents, rescue and reconstruction. These panels are identical to the pages in the guidebook. In the centre of the room is a scale model of the Great Hall, with stairs reinstated. A large lever arch file of over a hundred photographs documenting reconstruction work is available for visitors to examine. The hall that connects the Great Hall to the rear stairs is currently used as an exhibition space for Highcliffe-themed art produced by local artists and school children. The walls are exposed brick and the ceiling has not been reinstalled, so the area is open to the roof.

The Ante-Library and Library, to the left of the Great Hall, are accessed via the Octagon. The wall between the rooms has been removed and the space is currently used as a gallery for local artists. (Figure 87) All the artwork is available for purchase and the exhibitions dominate the space. Interpretive materials are available. The laminated interpretive card tells of the former collection of books, as well as the collection of French furnishings, and their sale at auction. This description is the only key to understanding the former use of the rooms. The Wintergarden is only accessible via the Drawing Room or the Library. The room is primarily used for the weddings held on site. The Drawing Room is the final room open to visitors on the ground floor of the house. It can be entered from either the Wintergarden or the Octagon. The interpretive card is next to the door nearest the Octagon. There is a *Country Life* photograph showing the Drawing room in its furnished, intact state in 1942.

A guided tour of the un-restored areas of the house is given three times per week and is led by one of the Highcliffe volunteers.¹³⁰⁵ This “Hard Hat” tour allows a visitor to see the ‘behind the scenes’ reconstruction work, artefact storage, as well as service areas such as the kitchen. The tour starts on the first floor of the house, leading visitors through three rooms of salvaged elements, including doors, wood panelling and a portion of a staircase. (Figure 88) This tour leads the visitor across the landing of the former staircase, giving a view over the Great Hall. No interpretation, other than that given by the tour guide, is available on the first floor. The basement portion of the tour starts in the un-restored kitchen. Supplementary interpretation cards on the kitchen, the former cook and ‘life below stairs’ are available for visitors. Visitors are taken into the former wine and beer cellars to learn about the stone and plasterwork reconstruction work at the Castle. Fallen and removed elements are stored in this area, as are moulds for new plasterwork. There is one additional text panel in the basement, explaining that the wall in front of the panel is thought to be the foundations of the house Lord De Rothesay remodelled, Penleaze House.

The Highcliffe guidebook is thirty-two pages long and covers the history of the construction of the house, the families who lived at Highcliffe, the decline and ruination, and the efforts to conserve the house. Following the historical information, a tour of the house is given; starting in the Great Hall, the tour moves through the Octagon into the Library and Ante-Library, then to the Wintergarden, Drawing Room and Dining Room. The tour continues outside, into the landscaped gardens. The tour does include the bedrooms and basement, even though these are not available in a normal tour of the house. There is a plan of the ground floor of the house inside the front cover of the guidebook. This is the only floor plan available to visitors.

The Highcliffe website, along with giving visitor information, venue hire and a calendar of events, provides an adequate history of the site. Family histories and original construction are covered. An entire page is devoted to ‘Rescuing the Castle’, which covers the decline and process of conserving the house, including the

¹³⁰⁵ Highcliffe Castle, “Guided Tours.”

<<http://www.highcliffecastle.co.uk/guidedtours>> Accessed August 1, 2013.

craftsmen who worked on the project.¹³⁰⁶ Highcliffe has a reasonable social media presence. Its Facebook page has been active since April 2010. The page gives details on visitor information, such as opening hours, as well as the ‘Hard Hat Tours’ and other events at the house.¹³⁰⁷ Highcliffe only recently joined Twitter; the account has only been active since December 2012. The site is not very active on Twitter and tweets are very similar to those on the Facebook page.

Discussion

Keith Miller wrote in his Telegraph column *Making the Grade*, that many country houses in public care ‘haven't quite found their new identity yet’.¹³⁰⁸ It would be fair to place Highcliffe in this category, but only just. Although Highcliffe is open to the public, the current experience laid out for visitors is one that is confused, but is also one that is in process. This lack of a clear identity is most likely due to the fact that the reconstruction work started nearly a decade before the conservation plan was established. Conservation architect Bernard Feilden, in *Conservation of Historic Buildings*, specified that ‘before a conservation project is started, its objectives should be defined, then appropriate presentation policy can be proposed’.¹³⁰⁹ When the reconstruction work began at Highcliffe it was unclear what the house would become. Unfortunately, this is apparent in the presentation and interpretation of the site.

Highcliffe, like Calke Abbey and Brodsworth Hall, discussed in Chapter Three, is a monument to the decline of the country house. Unlike Calke and Brodsworth though, Highcliffe is not a fading glory. It is an example of a house that made it through the various stages of ruination that many other country houses did not survive. The current project to restore Highcliffe recognises this fact and the story is coming through to the public.

¹³⁰⁶ “Rescuing the Castle: The Fall and Rise.”

¹³⁰⁷ Highcliffe Castle, “Facebook, April 18 2013.”

<<https://www.facebook.com/HighcliffeCastle1>>

¹³⁰⁸ Keith Miller, “Making the Grade.”

¹³⁰⁹ Feilden, *Conservation of Historic Buildings*, 261.

Overall, Highcliffe presents a standard country house visit. Visitors are encouraged to visit the tearoom and the gift shop. Even within the completely un-restored areas of the house, the standard country house visit is present.

There are many positive aspects to the reconstruction of Highcliffe. The honesty in the reconstruction work and the maintenance of the ruin within the evolving structure are two of the high points of the project. The reconstruction work has been fully integrated into the interpretation at Highcliffe, while still allowing the ruin to be present and available to visitors. It has been included in the interpretive cards in each room and visitors have the option of taking the 'hard hat' tour. This 'hard hat' tour is the only place where visitors can fully experience Highcliffe in its ruined state, but even this experience is a mediated one. For obvious reasons, the safety of both the visitor and the collection, this tour has to be led by a guide. However, by being led, the freedom of exploration provided by un-restored areas, as discussed in Chapter Three, is disrupted. The ruin in this instance has become a part of the standard country house visit.

Highcliffe is an empty house. Empty houses require a strong story to connect to visitors and at Highcliffe this story is the ruination and reconstruction. The interpretive cards in each room cover both of these aspects. The main interpretive area in the Great Hall provides extensive information for the visitor, but by having the interpretation fill the space, the signposting for seeing and understanding its original use is lost. The incorporation of the local community is an important aspect of the Highcliffe mission. This can be seen in the reconstruction work, as well as in the art gallery in the Library.

As discussed in Chapter Three, it has been recommended that if no furnishings or records exist, curators install an art exhibition and Highcliffe has done just this.¹³¹⁰ The art gallery, however, like the interpretive display in the Great Hall, affects the experience of the house. The room use is lost, not just through the loss of furnishings, but also through the transformation of the space. In the Great Hall and the Library, the standard country house visit is disrupted by the inclusion of an excess of interpretive materials and commercial artwork. If the HLF bid is

¹³¹⁰ Butcher-Youngmans, *Historic House Museums*, 207.

successful and the heritage centre is built, these interpretive materials will be removed and the rooms should be able to be finally interpreted as part of a coherent whole.

A potential interpretive issue is the presentation of the house if and when the original furnishings are reinstalled. As mentioned above, the reinstatement of furnishings with a de Rothesay provenance has been noted to be of considerable significance. If these furnishings are returned to the site, how will they be incorporated into the current plan? The focus on these original furnishings hints at a reinstitution of a standard country house visit at Highcliffe, instead of allowing the architecture or the stories to lead the interpretation, the approach taken at the Elizabeth Cady Stanton House or Drayton Hall, discussed in Chapter Three.

Highcliffe is a good example of a site that has not been stage-managed. The movement through the empty space has not been set by the museum. This approach is not one that has been actively taken; it is just the evidence of the status of the reconstruction. Although unintentional, the normal prescribed movement through the space has been disrupted. The omnipresence of the ruin, while good in terms of presenting the biography of the site through the historic fabric, does come across as unfinished as there is no interpretation available explaining the process and philosophy of the reconstruction, for the rooms specifically. Neither the reinstatement of architectural features nor the future plans for the project have been explained to the visitor. The rooms are presented in a half state, which does not do justice to either side, or to the enormous amount of effort and skill that has gone into the reconstruction project.

Furthermore, an empty room, like the space created in a ruin, should encourage exploration and allow for freedom of movement. The interpretation cards, while informative, draw visitors to the corners of each room. They do not encourage exploration of the visible ruined section or the original de Rothesay salvages. Additionally, the floor plan is only available in the guidebook, so only visitors who purchase the guidebook will have an understanding of the spatial structure of the house.

While the reconstruction work itself is outstanding, it is concerning that the interpretive plan at Highcliffe is centred on the reconstruction work. Once the work is complete, the story will be complete. Giles Waterfield has suggested that visitors lose interest once the work has been completed.¹³¹¹ Once Highcliffe has found its identity, an engaging interpretive plan will need to be developed for the future, but one that does not lose sight of the hard work that went into the reconstruction or the previous ruined state of the Castle. Hopefully, as the local community has been so involved in the reconstruction process, interest in Highcliffe will remain high. What Highcliffe will become once the reconstruction is complete and the interpretation has been moved out of the house is yet to be determined. The reconstruction is one part of the journey towards an end goal, but it is unclear what exactly is that goal. In this instance, Miller is correct – because Highcliffe does not know what it is going to be, it is hard to express what it is now.

¹³¹¹ Waterfield, *Opening Doors*, 75.

Conclusion

As with the shells, the approaches taken towards the conservation of restored and reconstructed ruins differ between the heritage organisations. Not one of the approaches has found a way to balance the interpretation of the histories of use, decline, and reconstruction. The presentation of Kirby Hall is confused. Is it a country house? Is it a ruin? This has been an issue throughout Kirby's history in care. This confusion is echoed in the interpretation. The entire focus of interpretation – across all methods – is the roofed portion. Other than passing mention the ruin is ignored. The ruins are managed, but not interpreted, creating a confusing approach to presentation. The history of the site is not made clear to a visitor who selects a self-guided tour. Looking closely at current interpretation, developed by Hill, a picture of what Kirby could be is made clearer. This buildings archaeology approach allows for the building to tell the story. And it is not just the story of its construction and former residents, but also its time in care. This approach, if executed across the site, would give a visit to Kirby a clear aim. A visit would be to learn about the construction and decoration of a country house.

The current presentation and interpretation of Uppark is very similar to the approach taken prior to the fire. It is as if the standard tour was reinstated along with the interiors and furnishings. Even though visitors have expressed considerable interest in the fire and reconstruction, it appears that the National Trust has done the opposite and has tried to remove the fire and reconstruction from the visit. Although the fire is included in the statement of significance for the house, it was only through strong encouragement that the fire exhibition was retained. The interpretation of the fire and reconstruction on the ground floor is minimal, to a degree that it could go unnoticed. It seems that the National Trust recognises that the fire happened, but they do not want it to take away from the furnishings or country house atmosphere. The interpretation within the fire exhibition in the basement gives a thorough, but brief account of the fire and reconstruction. If the National Trust was interested in incorporating a “hands-on” element, this contained exhibition would be the ideal place to include exemplars for visitors to touch. The decision to not interview and record oral histories of the conservation team is to the detriment to the restoration project. While, as the National Trust has noted, the team

is still around to act as consultants on future interpretation and conservation, they will not always be. It is important that their stories are recorded for an archive on the restoration programme. These stories could also be incorporated into the interpretive plan as was done in the audio guide at Kirby.

Miller wrote that Highcliffe has not yet found its identity. Unfortunately, this is correct. Currently, the house is presented as a country house, a ruin, a gallery, a wedding venue, and a community space. The decline and efforts to restore the house are thoroughly interpreted. Interpretation dominates the space in the Great Hall, to the point that its former use is lost. This loss is also seen again in the Library, but here it is the gallery that dominates the space. This quick change in focus – or lack of focus – does not present a clear idea of what Highcliffe is today. As the work at Highcliffe is a long-term project, it is hoped that an identity for the site will be developed.

The critics of the reconstruction of Highcliffe and Uppark have been as outspoken about the projects as Tisdall was in regards to the *Destruction* exhibition. In the letter from F.H. Ward regarding the reconstruction of Highcliffe, he wrote that there is no need to look backwards and that the past should be improved upon rather than reconstructed. Pavord argued that Uppark should not be rebuilt as Britain has ‘heritage in quantity’. This debate is clearly one that does not have a correct or single answer. The debate is valid and important, but is not the focus of this thesis. These houses have been saved. It is how they are presented and interpreted to the public that is of interest here.

The buildings archaeology approach at Kirby, offers a unique focus of interpretation for the restored ruin. This approach could easily be utilised at both Uppark and Highcliffe Castle. For complete restorations, like Uppark, where the original furnishings are available, this approach would not work as the main focus of interpretation, but it should be offered as an experience. As discussed in Chapter Two and in the Uppark Case Study, Harris wanted the textures of the country house to be conveyed to visitors in the *Destruction* exhibition. Alongside the interpretation of construction methods, these restored ruins would allow for visitors to connect with the textures of the country house. This would be a unique and innovative

approach to the world of the country house museum. It would allow for visitors to fully engage with the site, as they would a real home.

The restored ruins do not disrupt the country house visit in the same way as the shells. It is as if the reinstatement of a roof leads to the reinstatement of a standard country house visit. At Uppark, the National Trust reinstated the former standard visit as soon as the house was reopened to the public. The country house visit is present at Highcliffe, but is not omnipresent. Visitors to Highcliffe are encouraged to visit the tearoom and gift shop. The current interpretation focuses on the reconstruction of the house, but the reinstallation of period furnishings has been noted to be of high priority for the site. The presence of period furnishings would lead to the reinstatement of a standard country house visit. At Kirby, the standard country house visit is created through the guided interpretation. Both the audio guide and guidebook situate the visitor within the standard country house visit by focusing on the “golden age” of the house. The ruination of the house is not discussed in any depth.

There is a mix of levels of regulation of movement within the selected case studies. At Kirby, the visitor is allowed to move freely throughout the site. This has been identified by English Heritage as an important aspect of a visit to the house. It is recognised that free movement helps the visitor to engage with the site. As stated previously, this freedom of movement is not supported by interpretation. Uppark is at the other end of the spectrum. The visit to Uppark is well managed and the route through the house is regulated. Room stewards direct visitors through the ground floor of the house. Some freedom is given in the basement, but visitors are encouraged to move on from the basement rooms to the gift shop. Highcliffe is a mix. Visitors can move freely throughout the ground floors, but must be escorted on a tour of the basement and first floor. This movement is regulated to ensure visitor safety.

The approaches taken to the conservation of shells and reconstructed country house ruins have been investigated in the previous two chapters. What has been made clear is, as Ashbee noted, there is no one right way to approach a country house ruin and that each case study suggests different options. Using the

information gathered through the examination of the selected case studies, the next chapter will discuss the positives and negatives of these approaches. The information will be used to create a set of guidelines for how best to assess and manage these country house ruins, both in terms of presentation and interpretation, as well as the place of the ruins within the standard country house visit.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

This thesis has examined the conservation of country house ruins by heritage organisations. An investigation of six case studies highlighted the many approaches currently used to interpret these sites. Through an examination of the approaches to interpretation and presentation taken by heritage organisations, such as the National Trust and English Heritage, a standard country house visit was defined. By situating the country house ruin within the standard approach to and performance of the country house visit created by heritage organisations, it has been shown that the ruins disrupt this standard visit, thus requiring a new focus for their interpretation.

These country house ruins are an underutilized resource within the heritage industry. They provide new opportunities for interpretation and education. Their present condition is a record of the decline of the country house, a facet of country house history that has been largely ignored by the heritage organisations. Both forms of the ruin examined in this thesis, the shell and the restored or reconstructed ruin, provide a space for the interpretation of the methods used to build and decorate country houses. Like the decline, the construction and decoration is rarely interpreted during a standard country house visit. Additionally, the country house ruin allows for new forms of engagement with the country house. The freedom of movement and exploration made available in the ruin disrupts the standard country house visit. By removing the standard performance, the visitor is able to interact with the monument in a more holistic manner. They are able to engage with the spaces and textures of the monument in a more personal way. A shift in focus is needed in the interpretation of these ruins because of the interpretive possibilities presented at these sites, as well as the disruption of the standard country house visit.

Chapter Two traced the history of the decline of the country house, providing context for the ruination of the case studies discussed in Chapters Four and Five. Chapter Three charts the development of country house and ruins visiting. Focusing on the professionalization of the country house visit by heritage organisations in the twentieth century, it analyses the country house visit, defining what became a standard approach to interpretation and presentation, and examining

how this approach has affected the site visit. Through the standard country house visit, the site experience has been stage-managed by the heritage organisations. The movement through and engagement with the houses have been routinised. By applying facets of this standard country house visit to the ruins, the heritage organisations are not allowing for appropriate engagement with the monument, while simultaneously ignoring the aspects that are unique and interesting at these sites.

The case studies examined in Chapters Four and Five illustrate the multitude of approaches taken for the conservation of country house ruins. Chapter Four focused on country house ruins that are displayed in their ruinous state. The heritage organisations have struggled to find an approach that fits the specific needs of the each of the country house ruins examined in this thesis. Prior to the new interpretive panelling at Sutton Scarsdale, the history of the site was only briefly explained. Downhill is suffering from the same fate at Sutton Scarsdale, in that only one panel is available. However, there are no plans for the institution of a new interpretive plan. Like Downhill, Lowther does not have a timeline for the reinterpretation of the ruin and the current interpretation only gives a bullet point historical overview of the site.

Chapter Five examined the houses that have either been restored or reconstructed. The process of ruination is almost entirely ignored at Kirby. The ruinous portions of the house are un-interpreted on a self-guided tour. Even with the aid of the guidebook or audio guide, visitors are only given brief information on the ruinous portions of the house. While the reconstruction of Uppark is remarkable, the interpretation of the work does not do justice to this enormous undertaking. With the return to the traditional visit to Uppark, the National Trust has attempted to downplay the role of the fire in the biography of the house. Highcliffe is very well interpreted. Unfortunately, the interpretation panels, along with the gallery space, obliterate any prompts as to the former use of the house.

Ruins management proposals

With the dissertation's analysis of the background of country house decline, the emergence of the country house visit in the life of England itself, the transition of country house management from private to professional hands, the phenomenon of country house ruins treated at the case study level, and the ironies of site juxtaposition of ruins and the standard country house visit; a series of observations and recommendations about present and future conservation of country house ruins can now be made.

Such observations and recommendations must begin with a relatively obvious conclusion emerging from this dissertation's case studies: A standard approach to the conservation of country house ruins is not served well by a standard approach to every site. Standardisation would take away from the unique qualities of each house. Site interpretation of country house ruins is best done through focus on these unique qualities, and so doing allow these site-specific qualities to determine the approach to interpretation, rather than attempting to pigeonhole the ruin into a standard form of interpretation. In interpretive plans at empty houses, such as The Elizabeth Cady Stanton House, Drayton Hall and Mount Pleasant, the stories and architecture do lead the visit, rather than the furnishings. With this approach, the biography of the house is being told, and by extension, the stories of the inhabitants. To reiterate Ashbee's analysis, there is no one right way to present a ruin, but certain characteristic elements keynote the interpretation.

It is important that the decline be interpreted. A shift by heritage organisations toward acknowledgement of the country house decline is crucial to this interpretation. The process by which the house became a ruin is surely one of the most important aspects of the biography of a ruin. As noted in the case studies, integration of the general history of country house decline and the specific terms of each site's decline into the site interpretation make for both a more thorough acknowledgement of the site itself and a dramatic subtext. Along a similar line, if the appearance of the house has been significantly altered while in care, these changes need to be made clear to the visitor. Any changes made prior to the ruin entering care are best explained in the story of decline. It is important that visitors understand how and why the country house ruin came to be in its current form.

Inasmuch as the country house is emblematic of the nation itself, so too the ruination of some country houses adds significant national portraiture.

Beyond the ruination of the site, three other topics have been identified as important for the interpretation of a country house ruin. These are: the history of ownership; previous use; the situation of the house within the estate, including gardens and outbuildings. These three topics fit within Lothian's concept of the unity of the country house. In addition, it is necessary to include a ground plan of the house. This helps orientate the visitors within the structure and also aids understanding of previous use of the house.

These ruins provide an opportunity to discuss the methods by which the country house was built and decorated. Standing ruins and restored or reconstructed ruins provide an excellent occasion for such a focus, as there are no furnishings in competition. The inclusion of interpretation on construction marks or *in situ* decorative elements visible in the ruin not only help visitors understand the specific site, but also help them to understand the overall process by which these houses were built and decorated. This understanding of construction and decoration methods could then be applied at other ruins and intact country houses.

Site interpretation is enhanced when visitors are given the freedom to explore, experience and engage with the ruin. Support of such freedom can be immensely enhanced interpretation. Meanings of the structure of the site, the eloquence of the original building, and the reality of the decline become much more available with such interpretation. For this reason, interpretive panels are a superior method of interpretation at country house ruins. They provide information without creating a route for the visitor to follow. If placed strategically around the site, such panels will encourage movement. At the same time the visitor has control over the order in which the panels are viewed. Also, if possible, the "cricket pitch" approach should not be taken for the presentation of the shells. Instead of this managed surface, nature could be allowed to encroach, to a degree. A mixture of grasses, stone and moss would produce an interesting sensory experience underfoot, by creating an awareness of place and interaction with the textures of the ruin.

Site Specific Recommendations

Based on the guidelines established above, recommendations can be made for each of the houses included in this study. As stated in the case study, the methods used at Sutton Scarsdale are the best within the selected group of case studies. The panels cover a wide range of information and are strategically placed around the site to encourage movement. The only addition that could be made would be inclusion of a panel on construction techniques. At Downhill only a single panel is available, so a new interpretative plan needs to be developed. An approach similar to the one taken at Sutton Scarsdale would allow for informed movement, not just within the house, but also the wider estate. Specific interpretation concerning the history of the different eras of construction and demolition, including the work completed by the National Trust, is needed. A ground plan would provide orientation and overview. A QR code for the historyspace app could be available on site so visitors can download the application when they have arrived at the house. The stabilisation work at Lowther is unfinished and a comprehensive interpretive plan has yet to be set. Each of the points addressed in the guideline should be considered for the future interpretive plan.

At Kirby, two aspects of the interpretation are in need of change. First, availability of interpretation of the history of the site, including the decline and ruination, for visitors that do not purchase the guidebook or use an audio guide does not exist. This could be done through the installation of a small number of interpretive panels placed around the site. Second, the buildings archaeology approach currently undertaken should be pushed further. The buildings archaeology approach taken at Kirby Hall is an interesting and appropriate choice for interpretation. It provides new insight into the construction and decoration of country houses, which, like the decline of the country house, is rarely interpreted on site.

Continuing the interpretation of Uppark as an historic house museum has substantial merit. As many of the period furnishings survived the fire, the National Trust was correct to reinstate them in the ground floor rooms following the reconstruction of the house. However, more information for visitors concerning the

fire and restoration are needed within these ground floor rooms. This could be achieved through the use of post-fire photographs, in keeping with the current method of fire interpretation on the ground floor. However, instead of placing them within the period room set up, it is recommended that these photographs be paired with a photograph of the reconstruction work and placed on a podium near the entry to each room. This would allow visitors to see the effects of the fire and the work that was completed within the room itself. At the same time it would not detract from the period room set up the National Trust has worked so hard to recreate. The main fire exhibition in the basement should be improved. This could be achieved through the addition of two key components: a hands-on exhibit and recorded interviews with the reconstruction team. These components would meet the visitor desire for greater interaction with the reconstruction work. The hands-on exhibit would allow visitors to touch meeting the needs set out in the visitor studies conducted in 1995 and 2008. It is difficult to make specific suggestions for Highcliffe as it is unclear what the identity of the house is at present. Too much is being attempted at the house. A single use needs to be decided upon. The guided tours of the unfinished areas should be continued during the programme of reconstruction works.

Further Study

The gap that surrounds the country house ruin, identified in the literature review at the start of this thesis offers many opportunities for further study. Moving from the museological approach to a more academic approach, the country house ruin could be used in a re-examination of twentieth-century British identity. In his *English Hours*, Henry James describes the country house:

Of all the great things that the English have invented and made part of the credit of the national character the most perfect, the most characteristic, the only one they have mastered completely in all its details, so that it becomes a compendious illustration of their social

genius and their manners, is the well-appointed, well-administered, well-filled country house.¹³¹²

Within country house scholarship, the houses are seen as symbols of British power. They were built with the proceeds of British economic dominance and owners embarked on building campaigns to illustrate their wealth and power. Mark Girouard describes country houses as ‘power houses’ for they were once the seats of local political, economic and social power.¹³¹³ Sophia Cross, in her work on the country houses of Northern Ireland, posits that a country house is ‘an affirmation of ownership, territory and identity’.¹³¹⁴ The presence of the ruins of country houses in the landscape can offer new insight into the change of British identity in the twentieth-century. The disruption of the standard country house visit created by ruins, also disrupts British identity. As stated in Chapter Three ‘the ruin is a space in which things can be engaged with’, that they ‘invite’ interaction.¹³¹⁵ Unlike the controlled environments created by heritage organizations, the ruin provides the visitor with the opportunity to touch within the larger country house setting upsetting the preconceived notion of the country house. As ‘identity is the effect of performance’ this disordering of space and performance leads to the disordering of identity.¹³¹⁶

Donna Corbin, Associate Curator of European Decorative Arts at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, was featured on the first series of the BBC Two program *Restoration*, to discuss the connection between the Cromford Mill, the Arkwright family, Sutton Scarsdale and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.¹³¹⁷ Following her appearance she received correspondence regarding the Sutton Scarsdale rooms at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. One of the letters was quite damning, stating it was a travesty that such an important piece of British history was

¹³¹² James, *English Hours*, 260.

¹³¹³ Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 7.

¹³¹⁴ Cross, “The Country House Is Just Like a Flag,” 53.

¹³¹⁵ Edensor, “Sensing the Ruin,” 228–229.

¹³¹⁶ Leach, *Rethinking Architecture*, 301.

¹³¹⁷ “Restoration,” first broadcast August 20, 2003 by BBC Two, produced by Andrea Miller.

in a museum in the United States and that the Philadelphia Museum of Art should give the panelling back.¹³¹⁸

This reaction, however, fits with the overall loss of the country house. Identity theory observes ‘if possessions are viewed as part of self, it follows that an unintentional loss of possessions should be regarded as a loss or lessing of self’.¹³¹⁹ As the country house is related to the power and might of Britain and her empire, these ruins are reminders of the loss of the country house and perhaps an idealized way of life; but more, the ruins are diagnostic of the loss of power. The sadness that Keay suggests is associated with the ruins of country houses and the feeling, as stated by Prince Charles, that ‘something went wrong’ when Britain began to destroy its own heritage, can be interpreted as feelings of regret, the feeling that more could have been done in the second half of the twentieth-century for the country houses.¹³²⁰ The ability to wander through the ruins allows visitors to interact with the loss and regret of not being able to save the grand houses that are so indicative of Britain and Britishness. Being released from the regulated space of power and dominance allows visitors to confront and experience the loss of this power. These ruins are reminders of the loss of the country house and perhaps an idealized way of life; but more, the ruins are indicative of the loss of power; they are standing reminders of the decline and loss of British world power.

As shown throughout this thesis and in the suggested areas for future study, country houses are an underutilized resource. These country house ruins are not sad or dead. They are a record of British history and they deserve proper attention.

¹³¹⁸ Donna Corbin, interview by author, Philadelphia, PA, July 21, 2009.

¹³¹⁹ Belk, “Possessions of the Extended Self,” 142.

¹³²⁰ Musson, *English Ruins*, 16; Baucom, *Out of Place: Englishness, Empire, and the Locations of Identity*, 165.

Appendix

Compendium of Country House Ruins in the United Kingdom

Gazetter of Country House Ruins

(Open Ruins as marked)

House	County
Aden House, <i>Council</i>	Aberdeenshire
Balgownie House	Aberdeenshire
Brucklay Castle	Aberdeenshire
Craig House	Aberdeenshire
Ellishill House	Aberdeenshire
Fetternear House	Aberdeenshire
House of Auchiries	Aberdeenshire
Leask	Aberdeenshire
Lessendrum	Aberdeenshire
Philorth House	Aberdeenshire
Pitlurg House	Aberdeenshire
Seaton House	Aberdeenshire
Strichen House	Aberdeenshire
Tonley House	Aberdeenshire
Urie House	Aberdeenshire
Wardhouse	Aberdeenshire
Baron Hill	Anglesey
Rosemount House	Angus
Kintyre	Argyll and Bute

Poltalloch	Argyll and Bute
Dalquharran Castle	Ayrshire
Eglinton Castle (<i>Open, in park</i>)	Ayrshire
Loudon Castle	Ayrshire
Houghton House, <i>EH</i>	Bedfordshire
Ickwell Bury	Bedfordshire
Cranbourne Lodge	Berkshire
Lambourne Place	Berkshire
St. Leonard's Hill	Berkshire
The Lee	Berwickshire
The Hermitage	Breconshire
Trewalter	Breconshire
Glanarbeth	Cardiganshire
Llania	Cardiganshire
Ty Glyn Aeron	Cardiganshire
Edwinsford	Carmarthanshire
Glenbrân	Carmarthanshire
Iscoed	Carmarthanshire
Neaudd Fawr	Carmarthanshire
Bronwydd	Ceredigion
Rocksavage	Clackmanshire
Rathlin	County Antrim
Kilmore House	County Armagh
Ardigon	County Down
Mountpanther	County Down
Portaferry House	County Down

Portavo	County Down
Ford Hall	County Durham
Gateshead Park	County Durham
Gibside Hall (grounds only), <i>NT</i>	County Durham
Helminton Hall	County Durham
Hoppyland Park	County Durham
Ravensworth Castle	County Durham
Caldwell Castle <i>Private (in public park)</i>	County Fermanagh
Downhill Castle, <i>NT</i>	County Londonderry
Learmount Castle <i>Private (in public park)</i>	County Londonderry
Glasgwm Hall	Conwy
Gwrych Castle	Conwy
Carclew House	Cornwall
Newton Ferrers	Cornwall
Penfrane	Cornwall
Theidy Park	Cornwall
Trehane	Cornwall
Duddon Hall	Cumbria
Highhead Castle	Cumbria
Kirklington Hall, <i>HHA</i>	Cumbria
Lowther Castle, <i>HHA</i>	Cumbria
Netherall	Cumbria
Barnbarrow	Dumfries and Galloway
Castle Wigg House	Dumfries and Galloway
Kenmure Castle	Dumfries and Galloway

Mount Annan House	Dumfries and Galloway
Gwylfa Hiraethog	Denbighshire
Plas Mostyn Mawr	Denbighshire
Bennetston Hall	Derbyshire
Bolsover Castle, <i>EH</i>	Derbyshire
Bradshaw Hall	Derbyshire
Errwood Hall	Derbyshire
Farnah Hall	Derbyshire
Hardwick Old Hall, <i>EH</i>	Derbyshire
Riber Castle	Derbyshire
Stuffynwood Hall	Derbyshire
Sutton Scarsdale Hall, <i>EH</i>	Derbyshire
Walton Old Hall	Derbyshire
Berry Pommeroy, <i>EH</i>	Devon
Eggesford House	Devon
Fowelscombe	Devon
Poltimore House, <i>Trust</i>	Devon
Shobrooke	Devon
Lulworth Castle, <i>HHA</i>	Dorset
The Down House	Dorset
Craigend Castle, <i>Private (in public park)</i>	East Dunbartonshire
Archerfield House	East Lothian
Dunglass Castle	East Lothian
Ormiston Hall	East Lothian
Seacliff House	East Lothian

Beedingwood House	East Sussex
Brambletye House	East Sussex
Nymans, <i>NT</i>	East Sussex
Shillinglee Park	East Sussex
Copped Hall, <i>Trust</i>	Essex
Felix Hall	Essex
Shortgrove Hall	Essex
Crawford Priory	Fife
Largo House	Fife
Mount Melville House, <i>Private</i> (<i>in public park</i>)	Fife
Mugdrum House	Fife
Torry House	Fife
Kilowen	Flintshire
Aberpergwm House	Glamorgan
Margam Park, <i>Council</i>	Glamorgan
Newland Hall	Gloucestershire
Siston Court	Gloucestershire
Woodchester Mansion, <i>Trust</i>	Gloucestershire
Brynkir Hall	Gwynedd
Basing House, <i>Council</i>	Hampshire
Highcliffe Castle, <i>HHA</i>	Hampshire
Sopley House/Park	Hampshire
The Grange (only exterior) <i>EH</i>	Hampshire
Titchfield Abbey, <i>EH</i>	Hampshire
Bromtrees Hall	Herefordshire

Cheshunt Great House	Herefordshire
Freens Court	Herefordshire
Lee Hall, <i>Council</i>	Herefordshire
Old Gorhambury House, <i>EH</i>	Herefordshire
Stoke Edith Park	Herefordshire
Urishay Castle	Herefordshire
Armadale Castle, <i>Private Trust</i>	Highlands
Beaufort Castle	Highlands
Guisachan House	Highlands
Kinkell Castle	Highlands
Redcastle	Highlands
Thurso Castle	Highlands
Ulva House	Highlands
Penrhos	Holyhead
Appuldurcombe House, <i>EH</i>	Isle of Wight
Hale Hall	Kent
Lees Court	Kent
Bonnington House	Lanarkshire
Wardhouse	Lanarkshire
Bank Hall	Lancashire
Birch Hall	Lancashire
Feniscowles	Lancashire
Hale Hall	Lancashire
Lydiat Hall	Lancashire
Winstanley Hall	Lancashire
Bradgate House	Leicestershire

Cavendish House, <i>Council</i>	Leicestershire
Edmonthorpe Hall	Leicestershire
Tooley Hall	Leicestershire
Harpwell House	Lincolnshire
Haverholome Priory	Lincolnshire
Nettleham Hall	Lincolnshire
Nocton Hall	Lincolnshire
Northorpe Old Hall	Lincolnshire
Ravesby Abbey	Lincolnshire
Uffington House	Lincolnshire
Walmsgate Hall	Lincolnshire
Wothorpe Hall	Lincolnshire
Costerton House	Midlothian
Mavisbank	Midlothian
Penicuik House	Midlothian
Piercefield, <i>Private (beside public park)</i>	Monmouthshire
Ruperra Castle	Monmouthshire
Hiriaeth	Montgomeryshire
Appleton Hall	Norfolk
Bixley Hall	Norfolk
Bracon Hall	Norfolk
Claxton Hall	Norfolk
East Carleton Manor	Norfolk
Godwick Hall	Norfolk
Great Melton Hall	Norfolk

Ranworth Old Hall	Norfolk
Rougham Hall	Norfolk
Stow Bardolph Hall	Norfolk
Sturston Hall	Norfolk
Thorpe Hall	Norfolk
Woodbastick Hall	Norfolk
Kirby Hall, <i>EH</i>	Northants
Steane	Northants
Belsay Castle, <i>EH</i>	Northumberland
Birtley Hall	Northumberland
Gosforth Hall	Northumberland
Hulne Priory	Northumberland
Low Lynn	Northumberland
Pawston Hall	Northumberland
Ray House	Northumberland
Seaton Delaval, <i>NT</i>	Northumberland
Twizell Castle	Northumberland
Kirklington Hall	Nottinghamshire
Rufford Abbey, <i>EH</i>	Nottinghamshire
Hampton Gay Manor	Oxfordshire
Achalader House	Perthshire
Culdees Castle	Perthshire
Moncreiffe House	Perthshire
Farrington	Radnorshire
Cavers House	Scottish Borders
Minto House	Scottish Borders

Moreton Corbet Castle, <i>EH</i>	Shropshire
Carmichael, <i>Council</i>	South Lanarkshire
Alton Towers, <i>Private Trust</i>	Staffordshire
Bellamour Hall	Staffordshire
Broadmeadow Hall	Staffordshire
Manley Hall	Staffordshire
Ranton Abbey	Staffordshire
Stafford Castle, <i>Council</i>	Staffordshire
Trentham Hall, <i>Private Trust</i>	Staffordshire
Woodseat	Staffordshire
Buchanan Castle	Stirling
Rougham Hall	Suffolk
Betchworth Castle	Surrey
Eastwick Park	Surrey
Oxwich Castle, <i>Cadw</i>	Swansea
Westoe House	Tyne & Wear
Ansley Hall	Warwickshire
Astley Castle	Warwickshire
Four Oaks Hall	Warwickshire
Guys Cliffe, <i>Private Trust</i>	Warwickshire
Midhope	West Lothian
Old Cowdray House, <i>HHA</i>	West Sussex
Imber Court	Wiltshire
Rood Ashton	Wiltshire
Seagry House	Wiltshire
Lea Castle	Worcestershire

Witley Court, <i>EH</i>	Worcestershire
Broomhead Hall	Yorkshire
Crow Nest	Yorkshire
Dodworth Hall	Yorkshire
Hutton Bonville Hall	Yorkshire
Pontefract New Hall	Yorkshire
Ravenfold Hall	Yorkshire
Sockburn Hall	Yorkshire
Thornes House	Yorkshire
Upper Shibden Hall	Yorkshire
Welton House	Yorkshire
Wetherby Grange	Yorkshire

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