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# Rediscovering the Private Library: The National Trust of Great Britain and the Campaign to Expand the Role of Library Collections in Historic House Museums

Heidi Hutchins Stokes

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**Rediscovering the Private Library**  
The National Trust of Great Britain and the Campaign to  
Expand the Role of Library Collections  
in Historic House Museums

Heidi Hutchins Stokes

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Dr. Charlotte Nichols, Faculty Advisor

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## Introduction

During the course of the twentieth-century, in an effort to preserve their heritage, many British historic houses opened to the public. House collections and gardens were marketable commodities but the private library remained in the background as an untapped resource: an afterthought in the development of the historic house as museum. This attitude was perhaps born out of a misconceived notion that private libraries were dusty shelved repositories full of dull books gathered by privileged men when in fact they had once been the social centerpiece of great houses. Also viewed by estate owners as potentially costly to maintain, they were often sold to alleviate financial burdens in difficult times. Mark Purcell, Library Advisor of The National Trust of Britain calls them, “set dressing until the last twenty-years . . . the poor cousin of the house.”<sup>1</sup>

This thesis draws on new primary research in discussing the ways in which the role of the private library in historic houses has changed in recent decades, when the library began to be seen as a marketable commodity. The motivating force behind this movement has been The National Trust of Great Britain. Since the 1990s, the directors of Britain’s largest preservation organization has turned attention to historic house libraries by implementing a Capital Campaign to inventory, catalog, document and interpret library collections in order to utilize them.<sup>2</sup> This includes the effort to enhance stewardship through exemplary collections care and management that also involves

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<sup>1</sup> Purcell, “The Libraries Curator,” 28-29.

<sup>2</sup> For the benefit of the readers of this thesis, The National Trust of Great Britain, with a few exceptions, will be shortened to “the Trust.”

resolving the complex issue of access versus preservation.<sup>3</sup> Since 2000 alone the Trust has added three houses with significant libraries, one of which includes the collection of mystery writer Agatha Christie.<sup>4</sup> In an effort to organize and care for them, the Trust has come to realize that private libraries have unique needs and problems that must be addressed independently of general house collections. They have also recognized the importance of a collaborative relationship between libraries, archives and their houses as well as the opportunities that exist to enhance the historic house experience by showcasing private libraries for tours, exhibits, education, programming and fundraising. This thesis will demonstrate that The National Trust campaign is a working model and source of inspiration for all historic house museums attempting to utilize their private libraries.

Following the British example, in the United States Edith Wharton's estate, The Mount, in Lenox, Massachusetts, recently purchased the author's library collection from a Yorkshire book dealer for 2.6 million dollars in a sale that made headlines in the New York Times.<sup>5</sup> The motivation behind the purchase was to return the books, which she

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<sup>3</sup> Stewardship is defined as the curatorial process of following proper procedure and good practice from the time an object is acquired for as long as it remains in the collection. It is an unspoken guarantee that collections are continually protected, cared for and utilized at a standard that conveys ownership.

It was said of the great twentieth-century collector Paul Mellon, "One of the wealthiest people in the world understood as much as anyone, it bears emphasizing is that he really owned nothing of great artistic or historical value, that he had a responsibility as caretaker to preserve and pass on, which is the essence of stewardship" (Basbane, *The Splendor of Letters*, 367).

<sup>4</sup> The three recent historic houses acquisitions with significant libraries are Greenway in Devon, Scotney Castle House in Kent, and Tyntesfield in Somerset.

<sup>5</sup> Edith Wharton sold her Lenox, Massachusetts home, The Mount in 1911 and moved to France. In the ensuing decades, the property experienced a series of owners and a period of decline, but eventually it became the only property preserved in her name. At Wharton's death in 1937, she left a collection of 4000 books, marked with her elegantly designed bookplates. They represented her interests in interior design, gardening, travel, language and the creative writing process, all research for her fruitful literary career. In her will she divided her library between friends William Tyler and her godson Colin Clark, the young son of art critic, Kenneth Clark. Tyler's inheritance was shipped to his home in Britain and stored in a London warehouse where in 1940 the collection was destroyed in the Blitz. The Clark books also went to Britain,

had willed to friends, to their original space as the house contained nothing original from Wharton's years of living there. At nearby Ventfort Hall an extensive restoration project is presently taking place that includes reinstalling the original Victorian gentlemen's library.<sup>6</sup> At Hildene, the estate of Robert Todd Lincoln in Manchester, Vermont, the staff began to seriously catalog, acquire books and organize the family archives when it was decided to expand the museum's mission to include all Lincoln family heritage. The summer 2008 ad campaign for George Vanderbilt's Biltmore estate highlights its 23,000 volume library.<sup>7</sup> In an ongoing effort to rebuild collections in their many historic houses, The Preservation Society of Newport County, Rhode Island, recently reacquired a framed cherubic plaque that had been part of the library at The Elms until it was auctioned in 1962.<sup>8</sup> These examples demonstrate that private libraries and their collections are important in the development of the historic house as museum.

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in the care of Colin's older brother, Alan. Sold in 1983, they found their way into the hands of Yorkshire book dealer, George Ramden, who dedicated two decades searching for other Wharton editions and cataloging the collection. When the Mount purchased the collection from Ramden, Stephanie Copeland, head of the Mount's restoration project, exclaimed, "It is the most important acquisition we could possibly make" (Cowell, "After a Century, An American Writer's Library Will Go to America," 1, 7).

<sup>6</sup> Ventfort Hall was the home of George and Sarah Spencer Morgan who was the sister of J.P. Morgan. The Gilded Age mansion was saved from demolition in 1994 by a group called The Ventfort Hall Association. Currently over 2.5 million dollars has been spent on restoration. Recently the name of the house was changed to "The Museum of the Gilded Age at Ventfort Hall" in an effort to expand its mission and audience (Information compiled by author on a visit to Ventfort Hall on October 31, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Biltmore's publicity campaign, "He loved his books so much he collected 23,000. Then built a castle to hold them" (<http://Biltmore.com>). Built between 1889 and 1895 in Asheville, North Carolina, Biltmore is the largest private estate in America. George Washington Vanderbilt was the youngest son to the heir of a vast Vanderbilt fortune. The scholar of the family, he began collecting at the age of eleven and by the time he built Biltmore he had acquired 23,000 volumes, 10,200 of which are presently housed in the library. It was designed by architect Richard Morris Hunt, taking three years to complete in 1898 (Carley, et al., *A Pictorial Guide to Biltmore*, 39).

<sup>8</sup> The Elms is one of a collection of Newport mansions owned by The Preservation Society of Newport County (Miller, "Rebuilding the Collections," 8-9).

Why are these private libraries important? Edith Wharton's biographer, Hermoine Lee said it best when describing the value of the writer's library: "Her whole social milieu, her private affairs and her literary career can be discerned from her collections."<sup>9</sup> In addition to books, many libraries contain manuscripts, journals, letters, specimens, artwork and ephemera. Thus, they are not limited to the collective whims of the owner but, also contain a wealth of documentation by and about household staff, village life, and historic events. Their importance cannot be underestimated as repositories of archival information, creating a contextual picture and a voice of social commentary on life in a historic house.

To summarize, this thesis will illustrate that private libraries are a viable resource in the formation of historic houses as museums. The hypothesis will be supported through an examination of the history and evolution of private libraries in historic houses of Britain and their changing roles from private collections to public collections. Further validation comes from a study of The National Trust of Great Britain which is attempting to expand the role of library collections into a marketable resource in the twenty-first century. The author will also present six examples of how to utilize library collections with consideration toward the important issue of access versus preservation.

This thesis will contain an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 1 presents a brief history of how private libraries in Britain evolved from personal to social spaces and how they became the centerpiece of connoisseur collections in the era of great estate building in eighteenth-century Britain.

Chapter 2 explains the evolution of library collections from private to public by examining the rise of the aristocracy in Britain in the eighteenth-century to their fall after

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<sup>9</sup> Cowell, "After a Century an American Writer's Library Will Go to America," 1.

World War I when social and financial discord resulted in the sale and disposal of many historic house library collections. It will discuss the role of these collections as heirlooms and how they became disposable income during the twentieth-century, resulting in the relocation of many British private library collections to America's public institutions, thus forming the libraries of universities and museums. This chapter will also discuss the development of the British preservation movement and its efforts following World War II to save many estates from destruction.

Chapter 3 focuses on The National Trust of Great Britain with a brief history of the organization and an overview of the ongoing campaign to inventory, catalog, document, and interpret historic house private libraries in an effort to utilize its collections. This effort to expand the role of private libraries rests on the Trust's ability to demonstrate superior care and management of its collections and to resolve the issue of preservation versus access. This chapter draws greatly on the author's interviews with staff members and volunteers at National Trust properties.

Chapter 4 offers six ways to utilize private library collections. This includes practicing good collections management, filling the gap of lost collections, emphasizing the value of the collections in their natural setting, giving historic collections meaning today by utilizing library collections for their social and cultural narrative, combining archives and library collections for an accurate depiction of the past, and using provenance as a storyteller. Each will be followed by examples of the current work being done by the National Trust, establishing them as a role model for all historic house museums with private libraries.

Chapter 5 focuses on the issue of access versus preservations in today's expanding role of private library collections for tours, exhibits, education, programming and fundraising. This will be followed by examples of the Trust's procedures and policies on access.

The conclusion will consider the future of private library collections in historic houses. It will review the National Trust as a role model, highlighting Hildene and The Mount as examples of the library work being done in historic house museums in the United States.

#### Research and Analysis Focus:

All historic house private libraries typically include scholarly works in such topics as connoisseurship, the Grand Tour, the history of collecting, the history of the book, architecture, the cultural history of the country house, and social history in general. Moreover, it involves a variety of objects: books, paper, photographs, plant and animal specimens, textiles, art, sculpture and furniture. Because of the diversity of objects in library collections, the management, care and utilization can be challenging and problematic especially when it comes to issues of access versus preservation. For this reason, there are a variety of opinions and solutions when dealing with the expanding role of private libraries in historic houses which will be the primary focus of this thesis.

For the purpose of this analysis, historic house and family archives are dealt with as part of private library collections. This includes letters, diaries, ledgers, inventories and purchase orders. Though many historic house museums keep these items separate from the library, they are important in analyzing the social history of house and ownership. Organization records and research facilities will not be discussed as part of

this thesis. Many of the utilization suggestions were formulated by the author from interviews and analysis of many historic house private libraries in Britain and the United States.

#### Literature Review:

There is little specific research material on private libraries in historic houses. During the National Trust of Great Britain's 1995-1999 Library Campaign, Mark Purcell said, "The study of the history of books has been seriously stunted by a general failure to take adequate account of private libraries."<sup>10</sup> Most of what is presently written is produced by The National Trust and their American counterpart, The Royal Oak Foundation, with a specific focus on their own collections. This includes books, pamphlets, and articles in newsletters, periodicals, and electronic sources. Their library publications began with the 1999 Grolier Club exhibit catalog, *Treasures from the Libraries of the National Trust*, edited by Nicholas Barker, which highlighted their rare and important books. In 2006 the Trust published *The National Trust Manual of Housekeeping: The Care of Collections in Historic Houses Open to the Public*, which includes informative chapters on the history and management of historic houses and the British policies and procedures for opening to the public. Collections care is separated into topics that include a chapter on libraries and books.

One of the best anthologies on the social and cultural history of Great Britain is *The Spirit of Britain* (2000) by Roy Strong. Book history and print culture are well presented in *The Book on the Bookshelf* (1999) by Henry Petroski and *Culture in Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (1996) by David A. Hall.

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<sup>10</sup> Purcell, "The English Country House Library, Myth or Reality?" 6.

While specific research material is deficient, the private library encompasses a variety of subjects that are well researched and documented. Nicholas Basbane writes prolifically about the history of book collecting and among his most important works is *A Splendor of Letters: The Permanence of Books in an Impermanent World*. Alan G. Thomas's publication, *Great Books and Book Collectors* (1975) is an excellent reference on the history of book collectors and private libraries.

The Enlightenment, the British Grand Tour and Neo-classicism are topics extensively covered in two books that are both compilations of essays: *Enlightenment: Discovering the World in the Nineteenth-Century* (2003), edited by Kim Sloan, and *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (1996), edited by Andrew Wilton and Ilaria Bigamini. *Panorama of the Classical World* (2006), by Dorinda Outram is exceptional at developing the symbiotic relationship between the Enlightenment, the Grand Tour and the Classical world.

The social history of the British aristocracy and their estates has been well documented by British historians and architects, many of whom were responsible for the historic house preservation movement in the 1970s. Marcus Binney, John Cornforth, Mark Girouard, and Gervase Jackson-Stops contributed to *The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art* (1985), which brought historic house collections to world attention. In *The Fate of the English Country House* (1997) author David Littlejohn presents an intriguing analysis on the relationship between the rise and fall of historic houses and heirloom collections.

It is especially interesting that private library collections are being incorporated into the strategic plans of historic house museums at a time when museum professionals,

especially in Great Britain, are redefining the traditional roles of collections. New and innovative approaches to utilization are considered in *Fragments of the World: Uses of Museum Collections* (2005) by Suzanne Keene; *Museums and the Future of Collecting* (2004) edited by Simon Knell; *The Poetic Museum: Reviving Historic Collections* (2002) by Julian Spaulding; and, in a compilation of essays, *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts* (2007), edited by Bettina Messias Carbonell.

## Chapter 1

### **The Emergence of Private Libraries in Historic Houses of Britain**

Western models have grown out of aristocratic collections.<sup>12</sup>

In the eighteenth-century Britain's private libraries and their collections developed independently of art and sculpture collections. This chapter addresses the emergence of the private library as a result of a series of events in the 1700s that developed in relationship to each other, with the Enlightenment being the catalysis for these events. The private library originated out of the demand for knowledge motivated by the Enlightenment. It opened up a world of education and opportunity to a new professional middle class and the amateur collector. Motivated by a passionate interest in science and exploration, book collecting began to dominate the social scene. Collecting books became independent of other antiquarian pursuits.

The Enlightenment also fueled the desire to educate one's self through the study of ancient Greek and Roman culture.<sup>13</sup> As Kurt DiCamillo stated, "Britain modeled itself as the New Rome."<sup>14</sup> In the eighteenth-century, the British aristocracy flocked to Europe, especially to Italy on Grand Tours, returning with precious objects that included

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<sup>12</sup> Keene, *Fragments of the World*, 23.

<sup>13</sup> The Enlightenment was a movement which started in Scotland but whose origins were rooted a hundred years before when Sir Issac Newton's (1643-1727) discovery of gravity and light unlocked God's own laws of the universe. This counteracted all religious based beliefs placing science at the heart of these theories (Strong, *Spirit of Britain*, 393).

<sup>14</sup> DiCamillo, "Temples of the Arts and Science." Royal Oak Lecture (February 13, 2008).

books to showcase their absorption of classical culture.<sup>15</sup> This desire to display classical collections resulted in an era of country estate building in the eighteenth-century.<sup>16</sup> The private library became a formative part of this development. Some library collections were created during the building of country estates, while other established collections moved from London to the country.<sup>17</sup> This shift resulted in dramatic changes to domestic architecture. Whereas country estates had previously served in a governmental capacity, houses built in the eighteenth-century functioned specifically as display venues and social spaces.<sup>18</sup> The relationship between the architecture of a house and its collections was

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<sup>15</sup> The Grand Tour was a cultural phenomenon in eighteenth-century Britain. Sir Rowland Winn, 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet (1706-1765) returned from The Grand Tour in 1729 and began to build his great country estate, Nostell Priory in Yorkshire. The library was completed in 1766 to house his collection of antiquities, curiosities and natural history specimens (Raikes, et al. *Nostell Priory*, 54-58).

<sup>16</sup> The Grand Tour houses as they are sometimes referred to are attributed to architect Robert Adams (1728-1792) whose name was given to a neoclassical style of design. Like most of the architects of the day, he remodeled or finished existing houses in the classical style and was the first to create an overall look from exterior to interior, as well as furniture and decorative accessories. Adams' houses which included Newby Hall, Nostell Priory, Harewood House, Kedleston Hall, Bowood, Luton Hoo, Syon House, Kenwood and Osterley House survive today with magnificent libraries and Grand Tour collections thanks to the activism of twentieth-century preservationists. Over six hundred country houses were built in the classical style from 1760 to 1800 all with magnificent libraries (Strong, *The Spirit of Britain*, 394).

<sup>17</sup> There were many factors for the exodus of the British aristocracy from London to country in the eighteenth-century. First, there were the worsening conditions of city living that began with The Great Plague (1665-1666) and the Great Fire of London (1666) and continued into the next century with the migration in record numbers of working class to the cities looking for industrial jobs. Another factor was the influence of the Enlightenment whose philosophies encouraged educating and nurturing the soul by returning to the moral virtues of nature. The Industrial Revolution also led to advancements in agriculture that motivated the landowning aristocracy to expand their wealth through estate improvements. Country living also became more assessable with advancements in transportation. Therefore, eighteenth-century country houses were designed to accommodate all the social pleasures of city living. All these factors encouraged the aristocracy to seek the advantages of country living (Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 215-219).

<sup>18</sup> In the sixteenth-century, the country estate functioned as local government with the owner the servant to the king. There remained no organized military, and the house, land and tenants made up a small army. Political positions in court provided royal support, produced income and brought wealth to those who serviced loyally. The social structure of Britain was based on hierarchy which was vital to maintaining Britain's economy (Girouard, "The Power Houses," 22-27). In the eighteenth-century, the British country house was created by a new middle class made rich by the Industrial Revolution and an aristocracy whose interests were rooted in the land, rather than feudal or courtly interests (Hussey, *English Country Houses Opened to the Public*, 13).

never more evident, with the transformation from private to social spaces that directly correlated with the manifestation of the library from portable trunks to personal closets and eventually to architectural structures.<sup>19</sup> The library became the premier room in the house, occupying the largest space, often centrally located or dominating an entire wing. Influenced by the classical design of symmetrical perfection and order, estates exhibited collections of Greek and Roman antiquities in libraries that represented the status of learned gentlemen.<sup>20</sup>

In the eighteenth-century, historic house private libraries contained books, specimens, scientific equipment, paintings, sculpture and furniture. The core collection would include histories; world, national and local, classical studies, art, architecture, science and travel. Book collector and antiquarian, Sir Richard Colt Hoare, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet (1758-1838) used his library extensively for study and research. Many county histories were based on research, notes, journals and collections of eighteenth-century aristocratic landowners.<sup>21</sup> The historic house private library became the centerpiece of great neoclassical estates and, therefore, contributed to the documentation of British social

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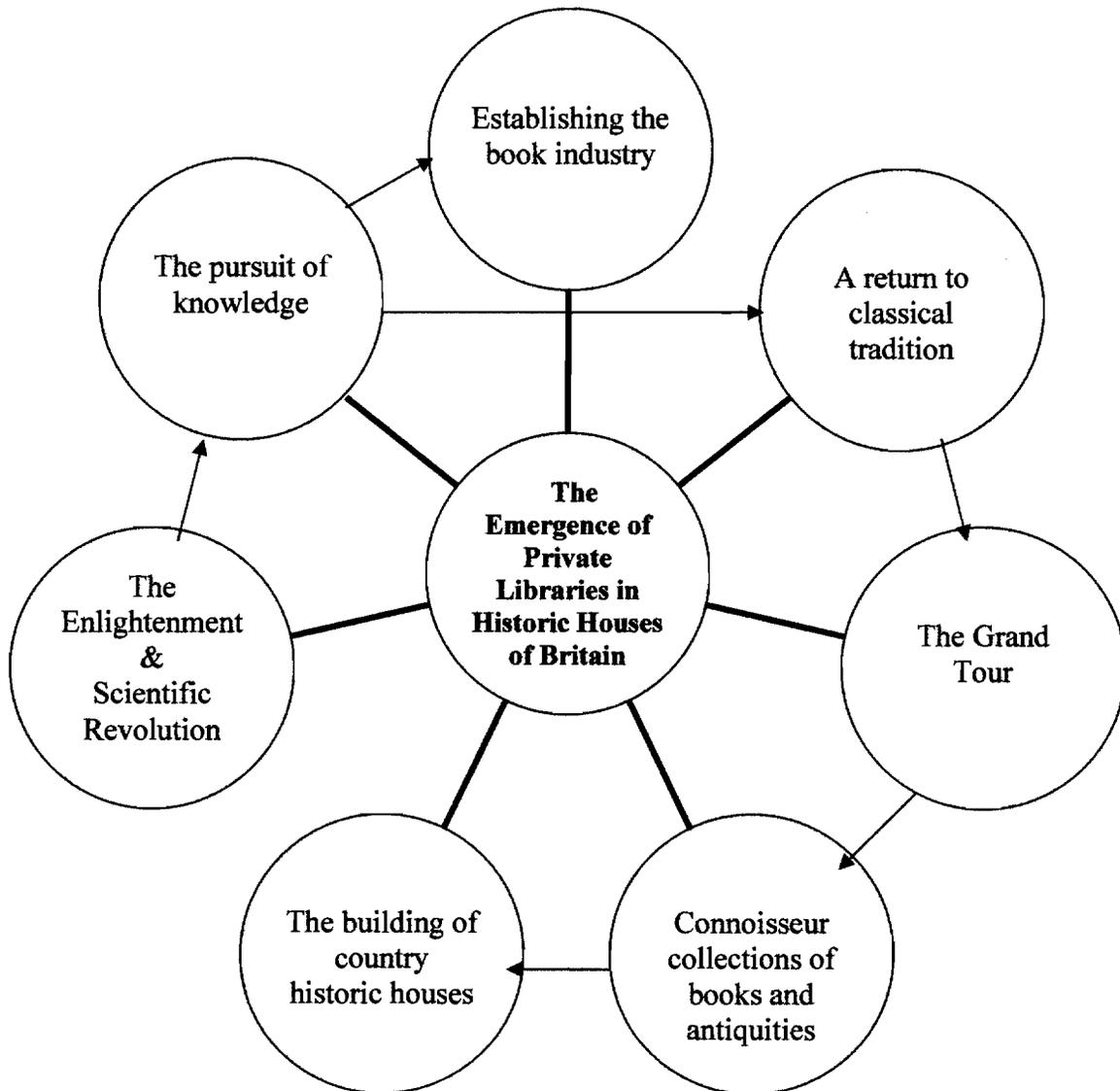
<sup>19</sup> Early private libraries were not defined by an architectural space. They were portable and books remained stored in trunks, transported from place to place for as long as they could be carried: Petworth House's inventory by Henry Percy, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland (1564-1632) listed, "item, chest of bookes of all sorts, fifie two, and to fill twelve small chests besides in 'The Library'" (Jervis, "The English Country House Library," 15). Though no book closets from this period exist today in British's historic houses, the study at Belton House in Lincolnshire and the book room at Woburn Abbey retain the qualities and appearance of early book closets. The closest example of an early book room is the Green Closet at Ham House in Greater London, built around 1670 (The author's deduction from observing these rooms during visits to Belton House and Woburn Abbey).

<sup>20</sup> The country estate at Ickworth in Suffolk was built and designed by Frederick Augustus Hervey, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bristol, (1730-1803) specifically to house treasures from his numerous trips on the Grand Tour. The library was its centerpiece occupying one half of the massive rotunda (Strachey, *Ickworth*, 42-45).

<sup>21</sup> Hoare was an archeologist and fellow of The Royal Society. Following the death of his wife and child in 1785 he left for a Grand Tour, returning in 1790 to add a library and picture gallery to his estate at Stourhead. It was in his library that Hoare wrote *The Ancient History of Wiltshire* Vol 1, (1812) and Vol 2, (1821) (Mitchell, *Stourhead*, 39).

history in the eighteenth-century. Diagram 1 summarizes the chain of events that led to the emergence of private libraries in historic houses of Britain.

**Author's Diagram I**  
**The Emergence of Private Libraries in Historic Houses of Britain**



## Chapter 2

### **The Evolution of Private Libraries in Historic Houses of Britain: From Private Collections to Public Collections**

Libraries were gathered in English Country Houses and here, more than anywhere else, were preserved those books that have gone forth to form the libraries of universities all over the English-speaking world.<sup>22</sup>

The evolution of the historic house private libraries in Britain from private collections to public collections was caused by the gradual but spectacular decline of the aristocracy. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries this phenomenon resulted in the loss of historic house estates and their collections. Library collections, which had come to represent the social status of their owners, were soon reduced to disposable income in an effort to save historic house estates. In the 1880s and 1890s many of the greatest private library collections in Britain were sold and found their way into America's public institutions, creating the nucleus of university and museum libraries. Others remained in Britain, saved by the marketing ingenuity of estate owners. This chapter will address the changing role of private library collections in historic houses of Britain from private to public collections.

While the Industrial Revolution and reform laws led to the gradual decline of the aristocracy in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the First and Second World Wars completed a swift deconstruction of the patriarchal order of the aristocracy.<sup>23</sup> The

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas, *Great Books and Book Collectors*, 254.

<sup>23</sup> A major factor in the shift of power and wealth was caused in part by the effects of the Industrial Revolution. While it had made many rich, Christopher Hussey wrote that, "the balance of social and cultural development, of economic and productive resources hitherto based primarily on an agricultural country, was undermined by the Industrial Revolution" (*English Country Houses opened to the Public*, 14).

wars killed off several generations of potential heirs and strapped estates with record death taxes.<sup>24</sup> During the Second World War, historic house estates were also seized for use by the government.<sup>25</sup> Some were vandalized, others damaged or destroyed, and many owners chose to abandon their properties rather than deal with the expense it would take to repair them.<sup>26</sup> The fall of the aristocracy forced the sale, abandonment or demolition of hundreds of historic houses and their collections.<sup>27</sup> The private libraries of major collectors were the most vulnerable because of their monetary value and the market demand for rare editions, especially in the United States. Over the course of the twentieth-century two factors contributed to the easy dispersal of library collections; the

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Industrial technology attacked the structured traditions of agriculture which adversely affected aristocratic land owners. Another factor was the enactment of numerous reform laws by Britain's Labor governments in the late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century. It resulted in the methodical deconstruction of the political and financial power of the aristocracy. These laws devalued the agriculture market, undermining the political control of the landowner. This was followed by record levels of capital taxation which financially demoralized estate owners (Hussey, 14).

<sup>24</sup> When the decline of traditional estate incomes (rents and agriculture) became compounded by the increased taxation, some estate owners were prepared, and others were not. Phyllis Sandeman, daughter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lord Newton wrote about her father's plans at the outbreak of the First World War: "The advent of the 1914 was, of course, brought to an end all the social activities such as the Servants Ball, and the Theatricals. It must have been about then that my father decided to hand Lyme over to my elder brother in order to avoid death duties and make it possible to keep Lyme in the family" (Lyme Park, 37). For others the refusal to see that their social structure was changing doomed them to failure. Many did not take personal responsibility and there was little thought toward safeguarding inheritances. Traditionally the most popular profession of the aristocracy was the military which meant extended time away from home and this added to a "sense of detachment from the income-producing activities on which great estates depended" (Historic House Association, *Stately Living*, 19).

<sup>25</sup> The owner of Ragley Hall, Hugh Seymour, the 8<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Hertford, wrote that the house, "did its bit" as a hospital during the Second World War. "It was obvious to everyone (except me) that the days of living in great houses had gone for good" (Montgomery-Massingberd, et al., *Great Houses of England and Wales*, 234).

<sup>26</sup> Highclere Castle in Berkshire, home of the Earls of Carnarvon survived unscathed the events that depleted many estates of their heirlooms. During The Second World War the house sheltered evacuees from a school in Willesden, North London. When air raids made the upper floors unsafe, the children's cots were set up in the library where they slept. A teacher recalls "the wooded framework covered in hessian protecting the priceless books" (Carnarvon, *Highclere Castle*, 11).

<sup>27</sup> In 1874, there were between 5,000 and 10,000 stately homes in Britain and from 1875 to 1975, 1,116 of them were demolished, most between the two World Wars (Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*, 34).

Settled Lands Act of 1882 and the changing attitude toward the public display of private collections.

The Settled Lands Act allowed estate owners to part with their assets, or “heirlooms,” by loosening restrictions in family wills.<sup>28</sup> This included land, furniture, art and books which suddenly became disposable income. Land was the most important commodity, and in order to sustain estates through difficult times, books were the easiest and quickest items for dispersal. Also contributing to the sale of library collections was the changing attitude toward private collections.<sup>29</sup> The American and French revolutions dispelled many social barriers and created a democratic attitude toward private ownership. It was now acceptable to publicly display collections, no longer making them only a privilege of the upper class.<sup>30</sup>

In the twentieth-century, an American aristocracy emerged that was fascinated with British culture and social status. This happened at a time when the British aristocracy was desperate to raise the money to maintain their estates. Book collections were lost to the United States in a series of spectacular auctions that saw the greatest

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<sup>28</sup> Heirlooms are movable assets, usually objects within the house.

<sup>29</sup> American collectors developed public institutions rather than the private or government controlled institutions established in Europe. It was a system of private enterprise (collectors) for public good (the private nonprofit library/museum). It began in the eighteenth-century with Charles Willson Peale’s efforts to establish his Philadelphia museum with the help of the government. The new American government took no interest in funding private enterprise even if it benefited national interest and Peale’s venture limped along on private donations. Even after Robert Smithson, an Englishman who had never stepped foot in America, left a fortune in 1846 to establish The Smithsonian Institute, “for the increase and diffusion for knowledge,” Congress was unsure of the proper disposal of private funds for public use (Helm, “Peale’s Museum: Politics, Idealism, and Public Patronage in the Early Republic,” 77).

<sup>30</sup> This change in attitude led to the formation of government funded public museums in Britain. The first was The British Museum in 1753. This was followed in the nineteenth-century by the Victoria and Albert (1852), and museums in Birmingham (1867), Liverpool (1877), Leicester (1885), and Leeds (1888). Many museums came into existence as historic house contents came on the market (Strong, *Spirit of Britain*, 566).

transfer of books from one country to another.<sup>31</sup> Some collectors bought “by the yard” in order to decorate their estates and thereby create an image of culture.<sup>32</sup> Others were more serious antiquarian collectors and entrepreneurs. Following a tradition in America to establish institutions for the public good, John Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913) and Henry E. Huntington (1850-1927) used their wealth to buy up many British private libraries.<sup>33</sup> Morgan and Huntington, reflecting the spirit of many American private collectors who felt a deep sense of obligation to be stewards of the Anglo tradition that had influenced

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<sup>31</sup> This period was called the “Age of Dibdin” which spanned six decades between the mid-nineteenth century and early twentieth-century. It represented the golden age in American book collecting when New York City became the center of the book trade, and America’s great libraries and museums were built. America was experiencing a period of economic success brought on by the Industrial Revolution, and the creation of business opportunities with the expansion of the United States into the West. It was a prosperous age of new money before income tax arrived in 1911. This helped create an aristocracy in America and a generation of wealthy and eager collectors (Basbane, *A Gentle Madness*, 174). For more information about the history of British book auctions and collectors see Appendix I).

<sup>32</sup> Books were purchased by the yard to fill library shelves with no particular purpose except as decoration and to present an image of refinement. This was the late Victorian time when libraries were designated as social spaces (see Appendix I). The Vanderbilt mansions in Newport, (Marble House and Breakers) as well as the Elms, contained beautiful libraries that were primarily used for show. Many emulated the architecture of the private libraries in British estates. The best example is George Washington Vanderbilt’s library at Biltmore which is modeled after the Elizabethan library at Hatfield House in Hertfordshire, England (deductions by the author on observing Marble House, Breakers, Biltmore and Hatfield House on visits in 2007).

<sup>33</sup> The first libraries in America belonged to places of academic learning rather than private collectors. Harvard University was founded in 1636 by members of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and enjoyed the full patronage of the British government. (before the American Revolution) The university began life as a library with four hundred volumes bequeathed by clergyman, John Harvard. The early book trade was driven by the collecting and research of Harvard colleagues. The first private book collectors included Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) who bought the collection of William Byrd II and left it along with his personal library to the nation, establishing The Library of Congress. Newspaper publisher, Isaiah Thomas (1749-1831) left his 8000 volume library to The American Antiquarian Society which he founded in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1812. The three most prominent collectors in the early nineteenth-century were John Carter Brown (1797-1874), George Brinley (1817-1875) and James Lenox (1800-1880). They specialized in collecting Americana and were influential in the development of American studies. Brinley owned an important collection of everyday books, about the New World, psalms, ledgers, and the *Narrowgansett Declaration*, signed by scientist John Winthrop and printed in Cambridge by Stephen Daye in 1645. Brown’s collection was rich in exploration, discovery and settlement in the New World. All three collectors left their libraries to public institutions, a pattern of philanthropic giving by American book collectors (Basbane, *A Gentle Madness*, 127-160).

and helped to shape the nation's identity.<sup>34</sup> Books represented this tradition in a tangible way and created a demand for early classics such as Chaucer and Shakespeare that eclipsed the value of rare British editions on the market. Many British private library collections helped to form the libraries of many American universities and museums.<sup>35</sup> In the early decades of the twentieth-century British historic house library collections also established the Huntington, Morgan, and Folger libraries. Diagram 2 charts the progression of historic house private libraries in Britain from private collections to public collections.

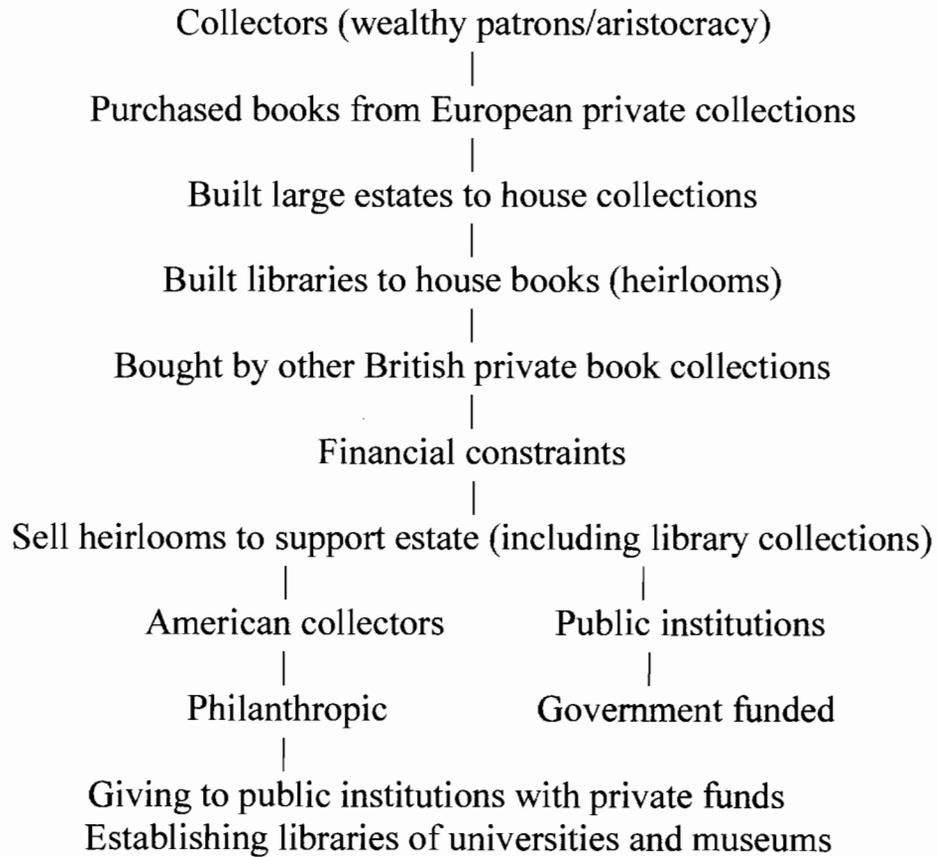
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<sup>34</sup> In the nineteenth-century, English art and design became a dominating influence especially in the newly constituted United States of America. This influence carried over into all aspects of American collecting including books (Garrett, "Antiques." *The Magazine Antiques*, August 2008, 49).

<sup>35</sup> Michael Conforti writes, "While the American museums grew out of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century English museological model, its evolution has been different in its funding, its legal relationship to the government and its collection mission." (Conforti, "Deaccessioning in American Museums II: Some Thoughts for England" 81). During the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries, American book collectors established great libraries, many as part of universities and museums. This included John Carter Brown (Brown University), James Lenox (New York Public Library), Alfred C. Chapin (Williams College), William L. Clemens (University of Michigan at Ann Arbor), Clifton Waller Barrett (University of Virginia), Robert H. Taylor (Princeton University), Seymour Adelman, (Bryn Mawr College), William Sheldon Lewis (Yale University), Arthur A. Houghton (Harvard University), Arthur A. Houghton (Harvard University), Henry Elkins Wideners (Harvard University), and Hubert Howe Bancroft (University of California at Berkeley) (data compiled by the author).

## Author's Diagram II

### The Evolution of Historic House Private Libraries in Britain: From Private Collections to Public Collections (16<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries)



Britain in black  
America in blue

The decline of the British aristocracy resulted in the loss of historic house estates and their collections. This shift in power and wealth, and two devastating world wars created a Britain empathic toward preservation and reconstruction. By the 1950s the country was in serious danger of selling away their cultural heritage.<sup>36</sup> In the 1970s, a concerned group of historians, architects, and writers at *Country Life* magazine began a movement to save Britain's historic houses and collections. Their efforts resulted in the ratification of preservation legislation. In 1974, strict regulations were enacted to end the demolition of historic houses. A policy called "Conditional Exception" was established whereby pictures, books, and manuscripts, as well as houses and, after 1976, parkland determined to be a significant part of "national heritage" could be exempted from taxation. This was acceptable as long as they remained unsold, maintained in good order and "reasonably" accessible to the public.<sup>37</sup> Tax benefits to home owners were also enacted and expanded in the 1970s. The Historic House Association was formed through a petition to parliament with special provisions granting owners tax exemptions in return for a minimum of sixty days public access.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Andrew Cavendish the 11<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire's father died unexpectedly in 1950. His elder brother, the heir apparent had been killed in World War II. The Duke was left with a double tax bill of eighty percent (more than 12,000 pounds) which took seventeen years to reconcile. He handed over Hardwick Hall to the government, 64,000 acres of land, sold nine major art works and a great number of rare books, all in lieu of taxes. Of all the great library collections in the British stately houses discussed in this paper, only the Dukes of Devonshire managed to save the bulk of their library. Each Devonshire generation made selective sales, such as the dispersal of the Devonshire/Kemble collection to the Morgan Library in 1914 (Mitford, *Chatsworth*, 35). Historic houses such as Wimpole Hall, Blenheim Palace, Althorp, Luton Hoo and Wrest Park lost their libraries as well as art, furniture and silver. In many cases the entire house and collections were dispersed. Many stately homes remained in private hands but others were resigned to the roles of nursing homes, vacation rentals, cooperate headquarters, hotels, spas, and conference centers. In 2007, Luton Hoo opened to the public as a five star hotel.

<sup>37</sup> Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*, 122.

<sup>38</sup> Today the Historic House Association is a successful organization with a growing membership of estate owners. It is preferred by many members over the National Trust because they allow owners the freedom to remain stewards of their properties by assisting them with the financial means to maintain them. There is also a consensus among many of these estate owners that they are retaining the home characteristics of their

The group also worked toward bringing historic houses and their collections to the attention of the public. In 1985, architectural historian and writer, Gervase Jackson-Stops curated an exhibit at the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. called “The Treasure Houses of England.”<sup>39</sup> Seven hundred objects were on loan from two hundred historic houses including many rare and valuable books. Jackson-Stops said of this exhibit, “It was trying to put the English country houses on the map as an international tourist attraction. And on a whole, I think that it did get the message across - that it isn’t our museums, it’s our country houses that are the great asset in this country.”<sup>40</sup>

Before preservation groups began protecting Britain’s cultural heritage, estate owners were already pursuing their own strategies to save their estates. Strapped for cash and drowning in government regulations, they began opening their historic houses as tourist attractions.<sup>41</sup> The first was Longleat, owned by Henry Thynne, 6<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Bath who opened to the public in 1949.<sup>42</sup> It was not a conscience attempt on the part of

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houses rather than succumbing to a museum like atmosphere, a common criticism aimed at the National Trust (<http://www.hha.org.uk>).

<sup>39</sup> A decade before Jackson-Stops’ exhibit, Roy Strong director of the Victoria and Albert Museum mounted an exhibition called, “The Destruction of the English Country House,” one of the first efforts to bring to the public’s attention the assault on historic houses. (Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*, 40).

<sup>40</sup> Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*, 129.

<sup>41</sup> Repair restrictions were the rationing of goods including those for home repair that continued long after WW II. It forced estate owners to consider opening their historic houses to the public.

<sup>42</sup> Historic houses tours originated in the eighteenth-century as a way to view collections before the formation of museums and galleries. Tours were usually conducted by the housekeeper for a shilling a head. In 1750, Horace Walpole, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Orford (1717-1797) built Strawberry Hill, one of the first great show houses. The social elite flocked to see it, so much so that by 1763 Walpole reluctantly opened it to the public. He lamented, “My house is full of people, and has been so from the instant I breakfasted, and more are coming in, in short, I keep an inn; the sign, “The Gothic Inn.” Since my Gallery was finished, I have not been a quarter of an hour together; my whole time is passed in giving tickets to see it...” It was estimated that over ten thousand visitors came through the doors by 1776, the year Walpole published his first guidebook of the house (Strong, *The Spirit of Britain*, 454).

owners to create a living museum, but the eventual success of Longleat led to the opening of many historic houses with a continual effort to improve and refine the visitor experience.<sup>43</sup>

When estate owners began opening their historic houses in the 1950s, many private libraries were not made accessible to the public. This decision had to do with the priorities of estate owners whose libraries had traditionally functioned as their personal space. It remained the social and cultural nucleus of the house and the last refuge of estate owners who had compromised their privacy in order to maintain their family seat.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the private library was never considered part of the marketing scheme of the historic house business. Gardens were the biggest selling point and remained so, because of their ability to attract repeat visitors with the changing seasons.<sup>45</sup>

Another reason why private libraries were not a priority was the realization of how costly and time consuming book collections could be to maintain and manage. From the point of view of physical integrity, antiquarian books could be quite resilient, sitting preserved and undisturbed on shelves for centuries. Books made of vellum, parchment, and cotton rag last hundreds of years. Handling puts a book at risk more than doing nothing at all and therefore neglect could be considered the ultimate form of

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<sup>43</sup> Early in the decision to open its doors, Longleat was highly criticized by other estate owners for incorporating a Safari Park into the marketing plan. In the first decades of the historic house business, estates were run primarily as hospitality venues, lacking collections interpretation or professional staff. This is changing dramatically as organizations such as the National Trust looks seriously at his historic houses and collections as a marketable resource (Data and deductions compiled by author from research and visits to Longleat, Beaulieu and Woburn Abbey).

<sup>44</sup> Today in historic houses open to the public but still under private ownership, the library remains the most personal social space of the family. At Holkham Hall in Norfolk, the library is open at the discretion of the Leicester family depending on whether they are using the room. This is common in many estates where the owners are still in residence (visited by the author, June 26, 2008).

<sup>45</sup> After the Second World War, garden reconstruction became an enormous priority (Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*, 170).

preservation.<sup>46</sup> For this reason, historic houses with libraries had more important issues to contend with such as leaky roofs and crumbling foundations, both of which could ultimately have a greater affect on libraries.<sup>47</sup> Once the focus was placed on private libraries, contending with care and management could exhaust house resources. Until recently, this has been the primary reason why private libraries and their collections have remained in the background and unattended. Only in the last fifteen years have preservation organization and owners come to realize that utilizing these collections is vital to their success. Private libraries have become a viable resource in the future endeavors of historic houses as museums.

In conclusion, the evolution of the historic house private libraries in Britain from house collections to museum collections, brought on by the decline of the aristocracy, resulted in the loss of historic house estates and their collections. These events resulted in the transfer of many British library collections to American's public institutions, ultimately forming the libraries of universities and museums. The collections that remained in Britain were saved by the marketing ingenuity of preservation organizations and estate owners who had not yet realized the marketing potential of their private libraries. Chapter 3 will look at National Trust of Great Britain, the history of the

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<sup>46</sup> While the library was a preoccupation of eighteenth and nineteenth-century British estate owners, modern historians virtually ignored their importance in assessing the history of the country estate. This neglect led to the misconception that over the years the libraries too were neglected. Through letters, diaries and other primary source materials, Mark Purcell, Library Advisor to the National Trust discovered that some great collections were disbanded and sold, but more commonly they were cataloged, dusted and cared for by housekeeping or by librarians. In many ways the books being virtually tucked away and untouched did them little harm. Private collections in many cases have fared better than their professional counterparts: "More rare books have succumbed to fire than old age" (Purcell, "The English Country House Library, Myth or Reality?" 6).

<sup>47</sup> The most serious issues libraries have had to face and continue to face is water damage. One of the finest libraries in the National Trust's care, Blickling Hall is still recovering from a devastating flood that originated from a leak in the library roof in 2002. This not only damaged books but Blickling continues to address mold and death-watch beetle problems which infest the bookshelves (as observed by the author, June 25, 2008).

organization, its campaign to expand the role of private libraries through inventorying, cataloging, documenting and interpreting its collections. The chapter will illustrate that, through enhanced stewardship of superior care and management, the Trust has become a role model for all historic houses attempting to utilize their private libraries.

## Chapter 3

### **The National Trust of Great Britain: The Library Campaign**

There are 130 historic libraries containing over 220,000 books, making the charity one of the largest holders of rare and historic books in the country, and unique because it conserves whole libraries, varied in scale and packed with books of all kind – an important part of the story of each historic property.<sup>48</sup>

In the twentieth-century, British preservation organizations and estate owners were slow to realize the potential of historic house private libraries as a viable resource. Private libraries and their collections had enormous marketing potential but they also cost a great deal of time, money and manpower to maintain and manage. Rediscovering private libraries and the living history they possessed requires changes in the way and in the attitude in which collections are cared for, managed and utilized. The National Trust of Great Britain was one of the first organizations to look closely at its private libraries, utilizing them for collaborative relationships between the library, archives and house, as well as recognizing the opportunities that it presented to enhance the historic house experience through fundraising, exhibits, education, interpretation and related programs.

The National Trust of Great Britain was founded in 1895 by social reformers Octavia Hill, Canon Hardwicke Rawnley, and attorney Robert Hunter. They envisioned an organization with the legal power “to preserve places of historic interest or natural

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<sup>48</sup> Tinniswood, *Treasures from the National Trust*, 11.

beauty permanently for the nation to enjoy.”<sup>49</sup> Hunter drafted a Memorandum and Articles of Association that were enacted by Parliament as The National Trust Act of 1907. This was the basis that gave the Trust the power to make bylaws and to declare land unalienable. In the 1930s, the organization expanded its mission to include historic buildings. The National Trust Act of 1937 paved the way for the Country House Scheme, which allowed owners to give or bequest their homes to the Trust, in lieu of taxes.<sup>50</sup>

Until the Second World War, the Trust attained primarily biography houses with libraries.<sup>51</sup> The first was Quebec House in 1918, the childhood home of General James Wolfe. This was followed by the homes of poets Samuel Coleridge (Nether Stowey) in 1935, and Thomas Carlyle in 1936, actress Ellen Terry (Smallhythe Place) in 1939 and writer Rudyard Kipling (Batesman) in 1940. The first great library collection acquired by the Trust was Blickling Hall in 1947.<sup>52</sup> Other houses followed with substantial libraries

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<sup>49</sup> This is the core mission of the National Trust of Great Britain (Mary Killen, *Trustworthy*, 88).

<sup>50</sup> In lieu of taxes allows the assets of a house, collections and land to substitute for the cash owed to the government. Museum collections ethically cannot be held at value but in Britain historic houses (including Trust properties) contains objects that can still be government seized. Today this is often resolved by allowing estates to maintain ownership “in situ” (that is, to retain an object or collection in its original setting). In April 2008, HM Government accepted 92 chattels at Nostell Priory in lieu of taxes and allotted them back to the care of the National Trust, settling 580,618 pounds of tax debt (“Acquisitions,” *ABC*, April 2008, 9). This is a subject the author has not researched in depth but it would be interesting to find out whether some of the Trust’s effort to gain museum accreditation is motivated by the issue of government estate taxes and seizure.

<sup>51</sup> Biography houses are the homes of famous people.

<sup>52</sup> Philip Kerr, the 11<sup>th</sup> Marquis of Lothian, (1882-1940) became one of the first estate owners to fight for the preservation of historic houses including his own. In a speech to the British Antique Association in 1935 he stated, “Death duties imposed in 1904, with the maximum rate of eight per cent, have since 1930 risen to a maximum rate of fifty percent, the full effect of the tax has not as yet been felt... Looking at the picture, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that within a generation hardly one of these historic houses, save perhaps a few in the neighborhood of London, will be lived in by the families who created them” (Cornforth, *The Search for Style*, 85). He left his historic house estate, Blickling Hall, to the National Trust in 1947.

but many did not.<sup>53</sup> In 1958, the Trust exhibited a collection of their best books at the National Book League in London and shortly after appointed distinguished scholar, Cecil Clarabutt as part-time librarian to catalog all books produced before 1700.

Today, the Trust is in the care of over 300 historic houses, 130 of them with important libraries in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.<sup>54</sup> This includes 220,000 books and manuscripts, and one of the largest and least known collections of early printed books, comprised of 40 medieval manuscripts, over a 100 incunabulas,<sup>55</sup> 120 later manuscripts and thousands of Bibles.<sup>56</sup> The depth of its libraries encompasses two Prime Ministers, connoisseur collections, literary libraries and libraries of country squires. The largest library in their holdings is Blickling Hall and the smallest with three books is Arlington Court. The National Trust is the fifth largest owner of books in Great Britain.<sup>57</sup> Once the Trust began to put its historic houses in order it began to take a serious look at

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<sup>53</sup> The National Trust's first property was the Alfriston Clergy house in 1896. This was followed by Barrington Court in 1907 and Monticute House in 1931, which came with no endowments and almost bankrupted the young organization. Stourhead, Lyme Park, Wimpole Hall, Petworth, Ham House and Osterley Park were acquired with pillaged or near empty library collections. One of the early champions of the Trust's house preservation efforts was their Historic Building Secretary, James Lees-Milne (1908-1987) who wrote journals of his experiences during the war; accessing houses, protecting collections, checking on damages and negotiating endowments (Tinniswood, *The National Trust: Historic Houses of Britain*, 9-18).

<sup>54</sup> As of 2008, the National Trust holdings consist of 626,051 acres of countryside, 707 miles of coastline, five World Heritage sites, 1,200 Ancient Monuments and 6000 listed buildings. Their strategic plan, "Our Future, Join In, Our Strategy to 2010 and Beyond." lists the many ways they plan to create a sustainable future for their goals and projects (<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-national-trust-strategy.pdf>). History is at the very core of the Trust's mission of preservation. In 2006 in collaboration with other major preservation organization they launched a clever survey, "Does History Matter?" posing the question to thousands of visitors over a three month period of cultural events (<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-history-matters.pdf>). The National Trust is both praised and criticized for setting standards in marketing, tearooms, car parks, gardens and events. There are some who feel they are too standardized and have taken the branding process too far, leaving their historic houses with museum coldness in the name of a marketable product.

<sup>55</sup> Incunabula is the name for the first generation of printed books. It is Latin for "things in a cradle," and represented those produced before 1501 (Petroski, *The Book on the Bookshelf*, 146).

<sup>56</sup> The library at Blickling Hall contains every major edition of the Bible since 1475.

<sup>57</sup> All statistics can be found on the National Trust's website at <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>.

its private libraries. In 1995, the National Trust's American organization, The Royal Oak Foundation launched the "Campaign for Country House Libraries" (1995-1999) to help the Trust draw attention to their private libraries and their need for enhanced stewardship.<sup>58</sup> The project raised enough funds to finance a full time librarian and book conservator. Mark Purcell was hired as the National Trust's Libraries Advisor in charge of a nationwide effort to catalog and preserve their private library collections.

Beyond the initial library campaign, the Trust remains focused on the following goals and related projects. Each project will be discussed in detail as it relates to the six utilization topics in Chapter 4.

- Cataloging the libraries on CD for the Collections Online Project.
- Cleaning books and applying uniform housekeeping methods.
- Preparing digital images for eventual entry into the Collections Online Project.
- Inventorying and documenting library collections.
- Publishing catalogs and other material about the libraries and their collections.
- Creating an online inventory of Trust's publications.
- Researching book provenance.
- Reuniting lost books with their libraries and collections.
- Combining library collections with estate and family archives (some located in county offices) for house interpretations
- Highlighting library collections in exhibits.

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<sup>58</sup> To mark the end of the campaign period in 1999, an exhibit opened at the Grolier Club in New York City called, "Treasures from the Libraries of the National Trust."

The latest acquisitions by the Trust demonstrate the serious commitment they have taken as guardians of libraries and their collections. This includes two historic houses with significant private libraries. Acquired in 2000, Greenway was the summer home of novelist Agatha Christie (1890-1976). In 2007, the property received a \$22,000 grant from the Royal Oak Foundation for the cataloging and conservation of photographs, books, furniture, china and art. The library also contains an extensive collection of archival material and many of Christie's inscribed first editions with original dust jackets.<sup>59</sup> The other estate, Scotney Castle House was acquired in 2006. It was the home of the architectural historian Christopher Hussey (1899-1970), who wrote many of his *Country Life* articles in the library. The library is the accumulation of over 400 years of collecting and includes Jacobean plays, eighteenth-century school texts, nineteenth-century hand press books and antiquarian editions of architecture and gardening.

The National Trust cares for a variety of historic houses and diverse private library collections. Because no two properties are alike, there are no set administration standards. Many staff positions do not require the same formal museum or library education expected in America and experience is the most essential ingredient.<sup>60</sup> Many Trust properties are cared for by a property manager, and a trained housekeeping staff made up of a house manager, house stewards and volunteers who are responsible for the upkeep of the house. Staffing is comparable to property size and importance of collections. Properties such as Belton House and Lanhydrock with outstanding

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<sup>59</sup> In a recent article, Mathew Prichard, grandson of Agatha Christie recalls his childhood at Greenway: "Possibly the room we spent the most time in as a family in the 1950s at Greenway was the library. We read the newspapers there after breakfast, we assembled there for a drink before lunch, and if it was raining it was the center of all social entertainment" (Prichard, "A Letter from Greenway," *The Royal Oak Newsletter*, Summer, 2000, 7).

<sup>60</sup> Curators are required to have advanced degrees as they do in the United States.

collections and valuable libraries retain a curator. Smaller properties are run by house managers who perform a multitude of tasks.<sup>61</sup>

Each historic house private library remains under the care of a house curator or manager. House managers refer to regional curators on all aspects of collections care, especially when dealing with conservation issues and in emergency situations. Final authority for all libraries rests with Library Advisor Mark Purcell. For the last ten years he has employed specialized groups of staff and volunteers to work specifically on the libraries. It is flexible work and projects vary. Staff and volunteers come and go as needed.<sup>62</sup> The following is a general overview of house staff that would have a role in the care of the Trust's private libraries:<sup>63</sup>

- The Library Advisor: In charge of all library collections in the Trust's holdings.
- Property managers: Responsible overall for estate, gardens, house and collections.
- Head curators: Responsible for care, display and interpretation of collections.
- House curators/managers: Responsible for house, collections, volunteers, and monitoring housekeeping.
- House stewards: Housekeeping duties.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Claire Ayres is house manager of Gunby Hall in Lincolnshire and lives on the estate as caretaker (Interview with Mrs. Ayres by the author, September 14, 2007).

<sup>62</sup> Presently (from 2005-2008), the most important projects in the NT libraries are cataloging and cleaning books.

<sup>63</sup> The Trust's *Manual of Housekeeping* lists staffing in historic houses and specific staffing for housekeeping duties in season and off season. However, there is not a specific list for private library staff and duties. The author has compiled the library staff list from research and discussions with staff at Trust houses that include Anglesey Abbey, Belton House, Berrington Hall, Charlecote Park, Chartwell, Chastleton House, Dunmaston Hall, Gunby Hall, Hughenden, Lanhydrock, Melford Hall, and Quebec House (Lloyd, "Staffing Historic Houses," 686-695).

<sup>64</sup> Housekeeping involves specific collections care duties (Staniforth, "Introduction," 2-7).

- Room stewards: Volunteers that familiarize themselves with the house and individual rooms and function as both docents and security guards.<sup>65</sup>
- Regional curators
- Freelance staff: Inventory officers, cataloguers, librarians
- Project specialists: Usually a temporary position for the length of the project.
- Volunteers: Many are presently active or retired professional staff such as librarians, archivists, museum professionals, conservation specialists, and professors and teachers.

Private libraries require an enormous amount of trained and specialized staffing all at great expense. Financial support is the Trust's biggest concern and challenge and is the key to the success of its libraries and collections. Funding is vital for collections care and management, both of which are time consuming and labor intensive, especially in unforeseen emergencies.<sup>66</sup> The library at Charlecote Park is a unique example of the challenges facing the Trust now and in the future. The collection contains invaluable sources on life in Elizabethan England. The importance of the library has made it a priority to inventory, catalog, document and preserve. Mark Purcell and his staff have spent 452 hours (from December to May 2007) cleaning books.<sup>67</sup> The next month, in June, the rain began and continued for most of the summer. The river overflowed its

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<sup>65</sup> Room stewards are extremely important in enhancing the visitor's experience. At Melford Hall in Suffolk the author discovered the room steward was a former librarian and highly knowledgeable on the history of the library and its collection (June 22, 2008).

<sup>66</sup> The Trust employs only 5000 staff overall and depends greatly on its 50,000 volunteers. (In comparison, Biltmore employs 1,500 staff for the house, hotel and 8,000 estates.) The Trust has over 3.5 million members and thousands of visitors a season; 12,000 alone from April to October of 2007. All statistics can be found on the National Trust's website at <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>.

<sup>67</sup> The Elizabethan library at Charlecote Park, Warwickshire has remained in the Lucy family for six hundred years. Sir Thomas Lucy, (1532-1600) was a renowned book antiquarian and responsible for a large portion of the spectacular collection presently at Charlecote Park. Carved on his tomb in Charlecote church are books representing his favorite authors including Homer, Virgil, Cato, and Xenophon, and an unidentified book called, *Winters Ayres* (Tinniswood, *Treasures From the National Trust*, 31).

banks, continually threatening to flood the library. While Charlecote escaped damage, Coughton Court and Calke Abbey were flooded and had to close for repairs. At Calke Abbey flooding damaged over a hundred books. Thirty-eight books were put in deep freeze while another ninety-three were air dried in the dining room. Never one to miss an opportunity, Calke's staff created an exhibit about the event called, "Hail or High Water."<sup>68</sup>

Though The National Trust never planned to care for private libraries, they have worked to achieve a high level of stewardship in the care and management of its library collections. While dealing with the cost issues involved with care, management, staffing, and disaster planning, the Trust has found innovative ways in which to facilitate the use of its library collections. Chapters 4 will discuss six means of successfully utilizing private library collections in all historic houses while Chapter 5 will consider the dilemma of access versus preservation in the utilization process. These issues will be discussed through suggestions by the author and examples by the National Trust in the effort to expand the role of private library collections in all historic houses.

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<sup>68</sup> Charlecote Park information as told to the author by volunteer, Harry Rickman in Charlecote's library, September 19, 2007. Information about the floods at Coughton Court and Calke Abbey can be viewed in Alcock, "Hail or High Water," *ABC*, April 2008, 2.  
[http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/wabc\\_spring\\_08.pdf](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/wabc_spring_08.pdf).

## Chapter 4

### Six Ways to Utilize Private Library Collections in all Historic House Museums

Books left in libraries offer a picture of the intellectual and literary interests, the needs of an increasingly literate community and its character that is at least as vivid as portraits, furniture, tools, ledgers, the house themselves, and all the other shards of archeological evidence from which we try to reconstruct the social life of past times. Their bindings, the name on bookplates or written in approbation or disagreement – all these tell us something. But the best and most important thing about books is that they can be read. That is how the country house library can still speak to us.<sup>69</sup>

Private libraries and their collections have become a valuable resource in the development of historic houses as museums. They began in Britain as display venues and store houses of Grand Tour collections and were the archives for generations of family histories. Private libraries served as the workplaces of the literary, artistic and scientific community and social spaces to educate and enlighten. Kathlin Smith writes, “The library supports social interaction and collaboration in an environment that stimulates cross-disciplinary inquiry.”<sup>70</sup> In fact, the private library is a complete repository of learning, a research center, an archive and a museum.<sup>71</sup> Utilizing the

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<sup>69</sup> Barker, “The Rise and Fall of Country House Library,” 11.

<sup>70</sup> Smith, “The Value of Library as Place.” CLIR, No. 43, (January/February 2005)  
<http://www.clir.org/pubs/issues/issues43.html>.

<sup>71</sup> Libraries can be defined in several ways, both as a verb, non-spatial: The act of collecting and the personal ownership of books; and as a noun, spatial: The architecture or physical space of storing book collections (author’s definitions). As well there are many types of libraries mentioned in this paper. Connoisseur or Antiquarian: Libraries designed for display, not only for books but architecture, art, sculpture, cabinets of curiosities and furniture. Genealogy: Collections that document family history through their collecting and reading habits. Scholarly: Collections for research and study. Biography: The

private library for all of the resources it offers may even be considered the key to the success of the historic house as museum. This chapter will highlight six ways in which all historic house museums can utilize their private library collections. Each utilization suggestion is a recommendation of the author and is introduced in bold (**HS**). The author will then access The National Trust's work (**NT**) in these six areas.

**1. Follow the procedures of accredited museums and practice good collections management (HS).<sup>72</sup>**

Practicing good collections and inventory management is the key to utilizing collections and acquiring museum accreditation. Caring for collections brings many problems to light: This includes poor to nonexistent documentation, unacceptable storage conditions, conservation needs, objects unrelated to the mission, and gaps in procedure and policy.<sup>73</sup> Historic houses are a specific discipline of museum but they still need to handle collections' issues in the same way as any museum.<sup>74</sup> This includes inventory management, cataloging, housekeeping (which include all aspects of collections care: conservation, climate control, pest control, security, and emergency management) and the issue of access versus preservation.

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collections of a writer, artists, scientist, statesmen, or any famous individual. In this setting the private library is often referred to as a study or work space (Definitions compiled by the author).

<sup>72</sup> Collections care is part of collections management but can be dealt with separately when legislating policies and procedures.

<sup>73</sup> AAM Guide to Collections Planning at [www.aam.-us.org](http://www.aam.-us.org).

<sup>74</sup> Historic houses contain a wide range of collections in an architectural setting that can incorporate a variety of museum types: Art museums, history museums, science museums, biography houses, libraries, and even botanical gardens.

Inventory management is tremendously important and the first action in controlling all elements of collection care. This includes keeping good records of objects, confirming their existence within a collection and monitoring their location at all times. Library collections are composed of many individual parts and must be properly inventoried in order to be utilized. Inventorying goes hand in hand with the ability to catalog, research, document and develop collections. For these reasons, a separate collections management plan for the library is useful and efficient. Within its own requirements it can be incorporated into the overall plan for each house.

At Hildene, Robert Todd Lincoln's estate in Manchester, Vermont, it has taken many years to organize all the archival materials found in the house since it became a museum in 1978. By inventorying, the work has cleared up much misinformation. Found in the safe were important documents pertaining to Lincoln's mother Mary Todd and her commitment to an asylum. Lincoln burned many family papers and refused to speak of his mother's case which resulted in public speculation and bad press that seriously affected his reputation. Instead the newly discovered documents shed positive light on his effort to care for his mother who was in the throes of mental illness. Hildene is continually rewriting their docent tours as new information is uncovered.

(NT): The Trust is dedicated to enhanced stewardship. The organization recognizes that the practice of good collections care and management is key to utilizing collections and acquiring museum accreditation.<sup>75</sup> Following the American

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<sup>75</sup> Sarah Staniforth, Historic Properties Director at the Trust, said: "Accreditation is a real way of ensuring that our core goals of 'deepening understanding of our cultural heritage' and 'putting learning at the heart of everything we do' are fully achieved. What is more, it also gives us independently fixed criteria and auditing to ensure that are high standards of conservation and curatorship are maintained" (National Trust,

system closely, the Trust received accreditation in 2006 from the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council in Great Britain (MLA). The next step is registering 149 historic house properties under the same standards. Because the Trust's historic houses are so diverse, streamlining policies and procedures while keeping the individuality of the properties remains an important goal of the organization. Under MLA requirements, the Trust must ensure that it meets the following criteria for governance:<sup>76</sup>

- A drafted strategic plan.
- Implementing procedures for the development of staff.
- Auditing of accounts.
- User services.
- Following display and interpretation requirements.
- Active support of formal and informal learning.
- A well regulated collections management criteria and conservation programs.

Within these MLA requirements, the National Trust continues to perfect the care and management of collections. The Trust's conservation objective is "the careful management of change"<sup>77</sup> and is the world leader in preventive

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"Trust Gains Prestigious New Status as Accredited Museum Authority." *ABC: The Arts, Buildings and Collections Bulletin*, Spring 2006, [http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc\\_bulletin](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc_bulletin), 1-2).

<sup>76</sup> Formed in 2000, The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is a strategic agency working with and for museums, archives and libraries to deliver leadership in England and each of its regions and to develop potentials for collaboration (The MLA Partnership Strategic Statement 2007-2010, "Inspiring Creativity, Celebrating Identity" at <http://www.mla.gov.uk/website/home>). The complete document of MLA accreditation standards may be viewed at: [http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//A/accreditation\\_standard\\_pdf\\_5640.pdf](http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//A/accreditation_standard_pdf_5640.pdf).

<sup>77</sup> Lloyd, "Opening Historic Houses," 673.

conservation.<sup>78</sup> This includes all aspects of what the Trust calls “housekeeping:” dusting, handling conditions, temperature, relative humidity, light management, insect control, access and security, inventory and risk management. In 2006, the Trust published an encyclopedic handbook, *The National Trust, Manual of Housekeeping: The Care of Collections in Historic Houses Opened to the Public*.<sup>79</sup> The book was produced as a working collections management policy, outlining procedures toward obtaining further accreditation. The manual deals with the care of books as a separate issue, but at this time there is no individual collection policy for its private libraries. Library collections fall under the care of general house collections.<sup>80</sup>

Along with the publication of the Housekeeping manual, the Trust opened the Victorian estate Tyntesfield in 2004 as a visual case study of their preservation, conservation and housekeeping procedures. The house was a “time capsule estate” that was in immediate need of funds to restore it.<sup>81</sup> Tyntesfield opened to the public early in the restoration process, thereby presenting a bird’s eye view of the Trust’s

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<sup>78</sup> Preventive conservation is defined as noninvasive care designed to keep deterioration to a minimum.

<sup>79</sup> “Housekeeping describes the care of historic collections and interiors, designed to keep them in good order and to sustain their useful existence as long as possible . . . the *Manual* it is used to demonstrate that modern methods are rooted in traditional practices” (Staniforth, “Introduction,” 4).

<sup>80</sup> *AAM*: The American Association of Museum at <http://www.aam-us.org/>.

<sup>81</sup> Time capsule houses are estates that have been left the same for centuries with collections that merely accumulated with time. The National Trust describes it as “minimal disturbance to what was found at the time of acquisition” (Cooper, *Chastleton House*, 5). Calke Abbey, Chastleton House and Tyntesfield are three examples of time capsule estates owned and interpreted this way by The National Trust.

preservation approach and allowing visitors to observe a variety of conservation projects and housekeeping techniques.<sup>82</sup>

## **2. Fill in the gaps of lost library collections (HS).**

One of the main functions of a museum is to acquire objects based on its mission. One difference between historic houses and other museums (for example, art or science) is that house museums do not necessarily engage in the practice of acquiring, but rather are obligated to care for past acquisitions. The exception is in the effort to reunite lost objects with their collections and/or lost collections with their house. This has become an important goal to many historic house museums who wish to enhance their house narrative with an accurate interpretation.

To achieve this goal, provenance research is an important investigating tool in connecting books and objects to a specific house and/or family. Library collections have tremendous historic value in presenting the social commentary of a house. This is an area where private libraries and their contents become invaluable.<sup>83</sup>

Even if it is impossible for collections to return to their origins, archival material, inventories, letters, journals and family histories help fill in the narrative of lost library collections, creating a visual picture of the past. The present library at Wimpole Hall is a shell of its original self, with the core of the collection permanently

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<sup>82</sup> In the nineteenth-century, Tyntesfield was owned by William Gibbs (1790-1875) who belonged to the Oxford movement, a group which began in the 1830s in an attempt to reform The Church of England. He had a traditional Victorian gentlemen's library but also a space for the family gatherings and theatrical performances. Reverend J.B. Medley acted as librarian; cataloging Gibb's collection and publishing it in 1894 (Greenacre, *Tyntesfield*, 5-7, 17).

<sup>83</sup> At Charles Darwin's home Down House, the English Heritage interprets his working library (study) with his original specimens and tools on loan from the Botany School at Cambridge, by arrangement from the University Library (Morris, et al., *Charles Darwin at Down House*, 6).

part of The British Library in London. Yet, the existing archives have helped to document the importance of Wimpole Hall in the development of connoisseur collections in eighteenth-century Britain. This concept could be developed further with collaborative projects between historic house museums and the institutions that have acquired their library collections.

**NT:** The Trust is dedicated to reuniting lost collections especially in the private libraries where the connection between the social history of the house and family is invaluable to accurate interpretation. This is an area where the Trust's library campaign has made tremendous progress. Provenance research and archival documentation has helped to reunite books and other objects with their historic house private libraries. Three recent examples of the Trust's successful endeavors are Peckover House, Lyme Park and Nostell Priory.

- Peckover House in Cambridgeshire was the home of Lord Peckover (1830-1919). Before leaving the house to The National Trust, he sold the entire library including fixtures and furnishings, and a classic collection of biblical, liturgical and theological books. With the help of archival documentation, the Trust is attempting to restore the library with faithful replicas of the room fittings, shelves and wallpaper just as Lord Peckover had displayed them. With the help of The Pilgrim Trust, an American organization, the Trust has recently purchased one of Lord Peckover's Greek manuscripts.
- The Legh family lived for many generations at Lyme Park and accumulated a valuable library collection of Elizabethan and Jacobean books, which were sold by the time the Trust took control in 1946. Many of the books possessed

ownership marks that undisputedly connected their origins to the house.<sup>84</sup> In late 2007, the Trust acquired the *Sarum Missal*, published by William Caxton in 1487. It is the only copy in existence and has been associated with the Legh family for five hundred years.<sup>85</sup> The *Sarum Missal* will be on display at Lyme Park beginning in the spring of 2009 and will be joined by a digital facsimile of the manuscript using The British Library's, "Turning the Pages" technology.<sup>86</sup> Lyme Park's property manager David Morgan added, "We shall be working with outside experts to learn more about its unique survival, and to understand how it fits into Lyme's long history. The Caxton Missal will form a new and key element in the future interpretation and presentation of Lyme to visitors."<sup>87</sup>

- In 2007, Nostell Priory hosted a major exhibit called, "The Cultivated Eye," on the history of the book. The exhibit's goal was to bring the public's attention to the invaluable treasures of the Trust's private libraries and to the connections between historic houses and their collections. The exhibit included two books on loan, a *Latin Vulgate Bible*, printed in Nuremberg in

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<sup>84</sup> Ownership marks can be handwriting, mottos, crests and symbols, any distinguishable mark that identify specific ownership.

<sup>85</sup> The *Sarum Missal* was purchased for 465,000 pounds with funding support from the Heritage Lottery Fund, The Art Fund, The Foyle Foundation, The Pilgrim Trust, The Friends of the National Libraries, The Robert Gavron Charitable Trust, The Peak District National Trust Association and The Royal Oak Foundation. It is not clear whether the manuscript will be on permanent display at Lyme and/or the facsimile is created to preserve the original and eventually take its place ("National Trust Saves Unique Caxton Book for the Nation," *The National Trust News*, 2008 <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-global/w-news/w-news-trust-saves-caxton-book.htm>).

<sup>86</sup> It is not clear whether the original will be on permanent display at Lyme Park or eventually be replaced by the digital facsimile.

<sup>87</sup> "National Trust Saves Unique Caxton Book for the Nation," *The National Trust News*, 2008 <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-global/w-news/w-news-trust-saves-caxton-book.htm>.

1487 and Erasmus' *De Ratione Studii ac Legendi, Interpretandique Autores*, printed in Cologne in 1524. Both survived the original dissolution of Nostell's Augustinian priory in 1540.<sup>88</sup>

The National Trust is collaborating with other museums, libraries and archives to allow objects once associated with their houses to return on permanent loan as well as pursuing lost collections and reuniting books with their original libraries. In the spring and summer of 2008 book purchases dominated the Trust's acquisition news.<sup>89</sup>

Items included:

- *Thesaurus Graecae Linguae*, Geneva, 1572, by Henri Estiennes, three volumes in folio with a provenance from Chirk Castle, Wales.
- A copy of *The Handbook to the Cathedrals of England* by R.J. King, London, 1869, eight volumes with bookplates attributed to the Earl of Enniskillen of Florence Court, Northern Ireland.
- A two-volume record of scientific and philosophical debates organized by Theophraste Renaudot in Paris in the 1730s. Published in English as *A General Collection of Discourses of the Virtuosi of Paris*, London, 1664-65.

The volumes were annotated by Sir John Brownlowe of Belton House, England and carry his bookplates.

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<sup>88</sup> Nostell Priory is one of Adam's Neo-classical Grand Tour houses and stands on the grounds once occupied by an Augustinian priory.

<sup>89</sup> All three acquisitions were reconciled with their historic house libraries at Chirk castle in Wales, Florence Court in Northern Ireland and Belton House in Lincolnshire. All books were purchased with funds and bequests. ("Acquisitions," *ABC*, April 2008, 9, [http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc\\_spring\\_08.pdf](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc_spring_08.pdf). and "Acquisitions," *ABC*, Summer 2008, 12, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc-summer08.pdf>).

### 3. **Emphasize the value of library collections in their original settings (HS).**

In the twentieth-century, museums still operated on a foundation based on material culture and on centuries of collecting traditions in which the museums' prime responsibility was to its collection. The traditional functions of museums were to collect, preserve and interpret. In the twenty-first century, new collecting methods looked at collections outside the traditional boundaries bringing the visitor into the experience. As Monica Risnicoff de Gorgas writes, "The historic house which is converted to a museum calls up feelings and memories in visitors more than does any other type of museum. It possesses a special 'atmosphere' which takes visitors back to other times and makes them wonder what other persons had transited through the same space they are now passing through."<sup>90</sup> Architectural surroundings play an equally important role in creating an intimate environment where the visitor can experience collections in their original settings.<sup>91</sup> Interpretation is the key and when collections are interpreted in the space for which they were meant this combination creates an authentic visitor experience. An ideal venue is provided by a historic house private library where the setting and the collection have a symbiotic relationship, and, more than any other room, where the individual personalities of ownership are conveyed.

**NT:** The Trust's *Manual of Housekeeping* states, "The Trust must have consistent national standards; it must ensure that the treatment of each separate

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<sup>90</sup> Risnicoff de Gorgas, "Reality as Illusion, the Historic Houses that Becomes Museums," 356.

<sup>91</sup> Keene, *Fragments of the World: Uses of Museum Collection*, 181.

collection is tailored to its particular needs and requirements.”<sup>92</sup> The Trust refers to interpretation as “house interpretation,” applying it to each room as part of the complete vision for the house. The *Manual* explores the issue of interpreting collections in their natural surroundings endeavoring to preserve the individuality of each house through research and evaluation. It also emphasizes the importance of context beginning with a statement of significance which lists what is important about the place, setting it within its historic context. It evaluates each property and its history, preservation issues and individual needs, so that each house is kept in the spirit of the place. This includes the visitor’s experience of sound, smell, visual tone, and presentation. Historic context is the association of objects and interiors with each other, with people, and with the house as a whole resulting in the “sum of the significance being greater than that of the individual parts.”<sup>93</sup> The evaluation and interpretation is the responsibility of the Trust’s regional curators who research each property individually and have access to primary source materials. Trust houses such as Petworth, Hardwick Hall and Knole have archives that go back to the medieval period.

The following examples at Calke Abbey, Anglesey Abbey, and Bateman demonstrate the way in which the Trust interprets its houses and collections individually according to the historic context available to them in its library archives.

- When the Trust received Calke Abbey in 1985, it was in severe decline. Owned by the same eccentric family for generations, the house remained

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<sup>92</sup> Rowell, “The Historic House Context: The National Trust Experience,” 12.

<sup>93</sup> Stanforth, “Conservation: Principles, Practice and Ethics,” 43.

untouched for centuries. The result was generations of uncontrolled collecting with no attempt to organize or display.<sup>94</sup> It also meant that the house exposed layers of historic documentation from which to work. The Trust decided to leave the house as is, making the needed foundational repairs, cataloging all the objects and then returning them to the exact spot where they were originally discovered. Calke Abbey contained two large and entirely separate libraries on two floors with cabinets of stuffed birds, skulls, shells, dried plants, and books that simply were dumped on the floor. The Trust curators' decision to leave objects as they found them created an interesting interpretation of one family's collecting obsession and chaotic style.<sup>95</sup>

- Anglesey Abbey is a twentieth-century house and collection of a single owner, Huttleston Rogers Broughton, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Fairhaven, who gave the estate to The National Trust in 1966.<sup>96</sup> With the house, he left strict instructions on how it should be cared for and interpreted. The Trust has remained faithful to his

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<sup>94</sup> As a time capsule house, Calke Abbey has remained unaltered since the time of James I (1600s).

<sup>95</sup> The first of two of Calke's libraries was created in 1805 by Sir Henry Harpur-Crewe, landowner, squire and collector. It included books on architecture, music, both legal and military issues, fishing, riding, travel, exploration, animal management, gardening, and both local and country history. The collection was extended by Sir Vauncey Harpur-Carew who was fascinated with natural history. The second library contained the collection of Egyptologist, Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797-1875). Death duties forced the family to sell most of the valuable books in the collection including Audubon's *Birds of America* in 1924 (*Calke Abbey* 1-96, and Tinniswood, *Treasures from The National Trust*, 34).

<sup>96</sup> Huttleston Rogers Broughton, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Fairhaven (1896-1966), was born to a British father and American mother. His grandfather was co-founder of Standard Oil (Exxon). The influx of American money made Anglesey Abbey one of the few British estates untouched by death, war, and taxes in the twentieth-century. Fairhaven bought the estate in 1926 and built the library in 1937-8, creating a vaulted ceiling and a floor to ceiling collection of 9000 volumes. This included large-format color-plate books produced between 1770 and 1820, and a magnificent collection of fine-bindings, color coded by the leading binders of the twentieth-century. Because of the conservative nature of the collection and Fairhaven's tendency to acquire mostly modern editions the library became outdated and unpopular, undervalued for the times. It is only with the recent emergence of historic house private libraries that there been a renewed appreciation for his aesthetic style. The library still contains the books for which it was built. This author believes it is the most beautiful library in the care of the National Trust (Garnett, *Anglesey Abbey*, 1-47).

“Memorandum of Wishes,”<sup>97</sup> which includes retaining the twentieth-century flavor of the house and a library representative of the year 1964. Nothing is allowed be taken away or added to alter the atmospheric presence of the former owner. Restrictions include the banning of children in the house and exhibits of any kind.

- Bateman was the home of writer Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936). He purchased it in 1902, and it was in this house that he wrote many of his classic works. When his widow left the property to the Trust in 1939, it was received exactly as Kipling had left it. The Trust interprets the library as Kipling had used it, as a reference library for researching his writings. The library contains volumes on poetry, prose, India, Africa, history, naval history and folklore.<sup>98</sup>

#### **4. Give historic collections meaning today by utilizing the library collections for their social and cultural narrative (HS).**

Historic houses museums have typically presented their collections within the contents of narrative to a greater degree than object-based museums. The narrative approach moves collections from an antiquarian-based focus (the object) to fieldwork based study (the story behind the object), revising historic house museums’ missions from the traditional uses of collections as private treasures to public resources. Yet their private libraries have remained untapped.

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<sup>97</sup> Memorandums of Wishes or Deed of Wishes were requests made by estate owners who bequeathed their property to the Trust and were considered part of the traditional honor system. In 2002 among public protest, The National Trust broke with Sir Richard Acland’s wishes, (to allow stag hunting on his Killerton estate, circa 1944) by banning the sport on his property (Killen, “Trustworthy,” 88).

<sup>98</sup> Biography houses are well suited for interpretation because they come with a predetermined road map of a person’s life.

The uses of traditional collections were also limited to research and interpretation. Today, education professionals have become more immersed in how museums can teach their audience, expanding the role of collections. Can aged collections be capable of meeting contemporary needs? The five “traditional” collections missions of a museum were to collect, preserve, study, exhibit and interpret. According to Suzanne Keene there are five specific uses in reevaluating museum collections in the twenty-first century: research, ongoing learning, creativity, memory and identity, and enjoyment.<sup>99</sup> Collections are not just to “view with the eye,” but to absorb with social and cultural context. Museums are realizing that a collection’s context can be a marketable commodity, an essential part of making people believe they are receiving a valuable museum experience.”<sup>100</sup> Refocusing collections to attract visitors is foremost on the agendas of historic house museums today.

**NT:** The National Trust’s Library Advisor, Mark Purcell, stresses that “the mission of the library campaign is not only to highlight the rarity or size of historic house private libraries but to focus on the stories of those who owned them.”<sup>101</sup> The Trust’s focus is the value of collections for their social history. Private libraries are important to the history of private ownership, and the Trust is working on creating personal narratives through effective cataloging and research. They realize the importance of primary source materials and library collections to complete the

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<sup>99</sup> Keene, *Fragments of the World: Uses of Museum Collection*, 181.

<sup>100</sup> Ferran, “Asking The Right Questions,” 83.

<sup>101</sup> Herdman, “The Libraries’ Curator.” *The National Trust Magazine*, no. 112 (Fall, 2007): 28.

picture. The importance is both for research and commentary and the Trust uses the term “fresh interpretation” when rediscovering and working with their private library collections.

The Trust is using its archives to create exceptional exhibits to tell the social history of the house, family and related events. Most properties have excellent Welcome exhibits: permanent exhibits that introduce the history of the estate. The Trust recently opened a new visitor’s reception at Ickworth, displaying an exhibit on the history of the Hervey family of Ickworth.<sup>102</sup> Properties such as Quebec House and Coughton Court present exhibits on historic events relating to house and family.<sup>103</sup> At Stourhead, a new exhibit opened in May 2008 called “Servants” that highlights the life of the staff who worked for the Hoare family before the Trust took over 61 years ago.

Through the cataloging and documenting their libraries, the Trust is working toward developing a social and cultural framework for historic house interpretation. Interpretation is already a fundamental part of why a Welsh estate, Erddig, is one of the Trust’s most popular tourist destinations. It was given to the organization in 1973, with superb documentation of 400 years of Yorke family history.<sup>104</sup> Because family members kept meticulous records of the estate through many generations,

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<sup>102</sup> Viewed by the author, September 15, 2008.

<sup>103</sup> Quebec House’s exhibit titled, “1759, The Capture of Quebec: One Event in the Seven Year War from 1756-1763,” documented the events leading up to the death of General Wolfe at the Battle of Quebec (viewed by the author, September 22, 2007). Coughton Court’s exhibit highlighted the relationship between the house and family, and the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.

<sup>104</sup> Erddig was the home of the Yorke family from the early eighteenth-century to 1973. The library was built by Philip Yorke I, antiquarian, scholar and found there is his work, *The Royal Tribes of Wales* (1799) (Waterson, *Erddig*, 49). The social history of family and staff was documented in such detail that the Trust created an ‘Upstairs/Downstairs’ interpretive tour, one of the first of its kind.

there already existed detailed information about the staff and tenants. This has given the Trust the opportunity to interpret the house from several viewpoints producing a social history unsurpassed by any other historic house property.

## **5. Combine library collections and archives for an accurate and descriptive depiction of the past. (HS)**

Library collections document the social and cultural history of ownership. They contain primary source materials that are the middleman between the objects and the past: county papers, land deeds, maps, invoices, family papers, letters, and journals that have great value to “illustrate the history and mode of life of generations passed or passing away.”<sup>105</sup> Among the archival treasures in Charlecote’s library is a ledger in Thomas Lucy’s own hand titled, *Quarterly List of Wages paid to Servants at Charlecote Park 12 March 1513 - 25 December 1587*.<sup>106</sup> The document alone contains a wealth of information about running an Elizabethan estate. Equally fascinating are the guest books from Winston Churchill’s estate, Chartwell, which reveal decades of socializing and strategizing.

Inventories are another useful way in tracing the changing shape of private libraries and ownership. At Kingston Lacy in Dorset, house inventories document the library through many generations of the Banke’s family.<sup>107</sup> Cultural documentation gives objects vitality and voice providing historic house museums tools in which to create relationships with their audience.

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<sup>105</sup> Flower, “Local Museums,” 315.

<sup>106</sup> As viewed by the author, September 16, 2007.

<sup>107</sup> Kingston Lacy’s inventories were first assembled during the English Civil War (1640s) with supplements from 1856, 1860 and 1905.

Tours are greatly enhanced by the use of primary source materials. At Ripley Castle in Yorkshire, docents use family letters to support interpretation, tell stories and enliven the visitors' experience. The estate of Audley End in Suffolk is interpreted from the point of view of many owners and various house renovations. This is supported by six centuries of superb documentation.<sup>108</sup>

Historic houses can take a valuable lesson from the way biography houses combine museum collections and archives to interpret personal experiences. Biography houses are well suited to the concept of incorporating the archival information of an individual with their physical objects. In his study/library at Sunnyside in Tarrytown, New York Washington Irving wrote the five volume biography, *George Washington*, and many other works. In the study he greeted guests and friends, many of whom were famous luminaries of the nineteenth-century. One visitor to Sunnyside wrote that Irving's study was a "labyrinth of books and manuscripts and tender associations."<sup>109</sup> The study and collection remains original to the house and eighty percent of the furnishings are from Irving's time. A wealth of correspondence and documents from the family has made his study the most documented period room in the United States.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Author participated in an Audley End tour, June 20, 2008 and took the Ripley Castle tour several years ago.

<sup>109</sup> McClatchy, *American Writers at Home*, 123.

<sup>110</sup> Washington Irving's called his study/library the "workshop." Irving (1783-1859) was the first professional writer in the United States and with James Fenimore Cooper became the first American writer acclaimed in Europe. He bought Sunnyside on the Hudson in 1835 intending it to be a summer residence but eventually moved there permanently. Because Irving was so well loved by his family, friends and by the nation as the "first man of letters," his study was treated as a shrine after his death. Irving was highly cultured and aware of the importance of legacy. He traveled in Europe extensively and renovated Sunnyside in the revival Gothic style called American Romanticism. He convinced John Jacob Astor to donate his collection of books to establish The New York Public Library. Sunnyside was one of the first

NT: The Trust realizes the importance of archives as primary source material and combined with library collections are finding ways to incorporate them into historic house projects. Future plans include developing an educational blueprint for the interpretation of historic house archives. This blueprint is presently under discussion at Great Chalfield Manor in Wiltshire where the Trust has acquired many family items. The most important is the *Tropnell's Cartulary*, a compendium of fifteenth to twentieth-century documents that include maps, deeds, histories and titles to various Wiltshire properties.

Many historic houses have museum rooms where they combine objects and documentation from their library collections and archives.<sup>111</sup> Lanhydrock is particularly innovative at this approach. The house has an impressive museum and displays books throughout the house in a variety of settings. Displayed in the Footman's livery are books on horses and rural England and in the Day Nursery are shelves full of children's classics. The kitchen pantry exhibits an inventory list for plated ware and silverware from the Victorian period. For the first time Wimpole Hall opened their Document room, displaying a selection of architectural drawings

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nineteenth-century structures to be become a historic house museum in the United States and the study the most well documented period room in the America (Eagen, *Washington Irving's Sunnyside*, 1-27).

<sup>111</sup> Museum rooms remain a popular space in National Trust houses to display objects from their libraries and archives, usually based around a social theme relating to house and/or family. Kedleston Hall contains an India Museum dedicated to Lord Curzon's collection from his years as Viceroy to India. These displays are often found in outer buildings that do not inhibit visitor flow. This is crucial in popular houses, especially biography houses such as Chartwell that draw large crowds. The home of Winston Churchill, Chartwell is looking into ways of moving their exhibits and museum spaces out of the house where pinch points inhibit visitors' flow. They are also working in every way to alleviate overcrowding with timed tickets and tours (The author experienced the crowds at Chartwell on September 22, 2007).

from their archives. Hughenden is working toward expanding their Disraeli Room to include more books and documents from the prime minister's library.<sup>112</sup>

Since the 1940s, the Trust has worked to improve documentation access by storing all historic house archives in their county record offices. This excludes bound materials that contain photographs, watercolors, postcards, plant specimens and other ephemera that generally stay in the Trust's private libraries. After years of working without a central location, The National Trust recently moved to headquarters outside of London.<sup>113</sup> One of their projects at the new facility is called "Organizational Memory,"<sup>114</sup> whose key initiative is to secure the lasting history of The National Trust. The new facility was designed to give the organization's archival history an accessible central location in an effort to work in more efficient and productive ways. Although this thesis does not include the study of administrative archives, it is important to note that this project is an important step toward streamlining all archival information for use in historic house interpretations.<sup>115</sup>

## **6. Use provenance as a storyteller (HS).**

Provenance traces the origin of ownership and the archival history of an object. A Caxton book whose documented history places it in the Huntington Library via the Duke of Devonshire's collection has a valuable pedigree. With

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with house manager, Annabelle Douglas at Hughenden, September 16, 2007.

<sup>113</sup> The National Trust's new headquarters is a state-of-the-art, environmentally sustainable facility named *Heelis* after the organizations most famous benefactor, Beatrix Potter (*Heelis*).

<sup>114</sup> Shaw, "Organizational Memory-The Trust's Cornerstone," *ABC 2* (January, 2007) [http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc\\_bulletin-issue\\_2.pdf](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc_bulletin-issue_2.pdf).

<sup>115</sup> Most of The National Trust's house archives are stored in county offices. Centralizing organizational records will help the Trust work toward effectively utilizing all archives in their care.

books, provenance becomes an archival road map for researchers in recording authorship, revealing information about the social and cultural life of the owner(s), and documenting individual thoughts and opinions.

Documents that establish the provenance of a book include bookplates, donation inscriptions, armorial stamps, annotations and insertions, specific and significant orders of shelving, documentary sources relating to the books, early catalogues, probate inventory, and booksellers' receipts. The provenance of early, lost books as discovered in book scraps remains the only archival proof that they ever existed and is a useful tool for literary historians who are trying to trace the social history of books. Provenance research can help match books to their original owner or document its path through multiple owners.

Researching provenance can uncover new discoveries and create insightful and fresh interpretations. The writer Leon Edel (1907-1997) devoted his early life to the study of novelist Henry James (1843-1916) in the hope of creating a definitive bibliography of his personal collection. In 1936, Edel became immersed in James' library at Lamb House inventorying, researching and writing a bibliography. While examining his books, Edel realized that, like Kipling, James had created a research library where his books were the tools of his trade. In many, James had written hundreds of informal messages to himself. Edel thus used new information to write not only the bibliography but a five volume biography that remains the definitive work on Henry James.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Henry James' library was sold in the 1950s. The private libraries of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning and other literary greats have suffered the same fate, forcing researchers to travel the world searching out primary sources from dispersed collections thus losing the opportunity to research collections in their original settings (Basbanes, *Every Book Its Reader*, 75).

As collections are being cataloged, researched and documented researchers are finding a wealth of information written on pages, covers, flyleaves, and by examining bindings and bookplates. These primary sources open the door for new methods of historic interpretation and should not be underestimated.

**NT:** The National Trust continues to discover new information through provenance research as it documents its private libraries. The Trust's success at reconciling lost collections can be attributed to provenance research. Future utilization of its library collections greatly depends on their ability to continue this direction of study. The following are the Trust's more intriguing discoveries that were derived from provenance research.

- Petworth's private library contains a collection of books that once belonged to Henry Percy, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland (1564-1632), whose scientific experiments earned him the nickname, "The Wizard Earl." The collection is traced to his ownership through annotations in his distinctively neat and graceful handwriting and by the Percy crest as identified on the vellum "livery bindings."<sup>117</sup>
- Blickling Hall's private library is made up of many collections through several centuries. The core collection, containing the most valuable books, was inherited in the eighteenth-century by the Hobart family from a distant cousin and great book collector Sir Richard Ellys of Nocton. This fact is

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<sup>117</sup> A livery binding may be defined as a book bound in a characteristic style that can determine ownership. Provenance also revealed that the library collection traveled with him to The Tower of London when he was implicated in The Gunpowder Plot of 1605, a conspiracy planned by Guy Fawkes to blow up Parliament and James I. It was discovered before it could succeed and Fawkes, with other conspirators, was executed. It is still recognized in Britain with parties and bonfires every November 5<sup>th</sup>.

verified by the initial “M” on the free endpaper of the books which is known to be Ellys’ identification mark.<sup>118</sup>

- Belton House contains one of the finest private libraries in the Trust’s collection, comprising over 6,000 volumes. The collection is a compilation of 350 years of book collecting beginning in the sixteenth-century. From the study of bookplates and signatures, it was determined that hundreds of family members through many generations contributed to the creation of the library.
- Similar to Blickling Hall and Belton House, provenance revealed that Lanhydrock’s library collection predated the house and that during the cataloging came the discovery of meditations on flyleaves and annotated pages. This facilitated the attribution of the collection to a variety of family members, giving the library a rich tapestry of information on which to document the house history. Provenance is as important as the physical value of the books.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The Ellys collection contained one hundred rare books before 1500. When many libraries were pillaged between the two world wars, owner Philip Kerr, the 11<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Lothian, managed to keep the library intact, selling only one hundred less important books, none of which belonged to the Ellys’ collection (Maddison, *Blickling Hall*, 52).

<sup>119</sup> The library at Lanhydrock is a rare example of a collection that pre-dates the house. Through exceptional provenance and documentation, it is known that the collection was an accumulative effort of four men and that the books came to the house between 1590 and 1685 with the Robarte family. In 1808 the collection was placed in the spectacular Long Gallery where they are displayed today. No fewer than 2385 are pre-1701 and 25 are incunabulas. Among the collection is the earliest known *ABC* primer printed in London around 1535 and four volumes of parchment maps of the Lanhydrock estate created in 1696 by the renowned cartographer, Joel Gascoyne. The library contains extraordinary examples of early bookbinding, and continental and provincial printing. The majority of the books have a Theological theme and represents a scholar’s collection rather than one of a collector (Holden, “Monitoring the Book Collection at Lanhydrock” in *Lanhydrock House Journal*, 3 (Winter 2003/4) 42-50).

These discoveries support the rationale to inventory, catalog, and document. Provenance is an effective marketing tool in fundraising because every new discovery has the potential for a great story and positive publicity for the organization. Provenance has also contributed to the reuniting of many books with their historic house private library collections.<sup>120</sup> Recent Trust acquisitions include:

- *Designs of Inigo Jones and Others*, by Issac Ware possessing the bookplate of the The Earls of Jersey. Purchased through gifts and bequests for the library at Osterley Park.
- *Histoire Ancienne des Egyptien*, by Charles Rollins, Paris, 1740, with Vernon of Sudbury's bookplate, in six volumes. Purchased with funds from gifts and bequests for the library at Sudbury Hall.

Provenance is also vital to academic viability, an area in which the Trust believes they need improvement. The goal is to produce more academic publications based on their private library collections. House curators such as Paul Holden have succeeded in publishing excellent articles on Lanhydrock's early collections and provenance history.<sup>121</sup>

In conclusion, The National Trust is finding innovative ways to utilize its private libraries and to strengthen the role of library collections as a viable resource in the development of historic house as museum. This includes practicing good collections management, filling the gap of lost collections, emphasizing the value of the collections in their natural setting, giving historic collections meaning today by utilizing library

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<sup>120</sup> See "Acquisitions," *ABC*, April 2008, 9.

<sup>121</sup> Author's interview with Paul Holden on September 18, 2007.

collections for their social and cultural narrative, combining archives and library collections for an accurate depiction of the past and using provenance as a storyteller. In order to effectively utilize private library collections in historic houses, the complex issue of access versus preservation must be addressed and will be the topic of discussion in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 5

### Access versus Preservation in All Historic House Private Libraries

Preservation may always permit access, while without preservation access becomes forever impossible.<sup>122</sup>

When utilizing private library collections one of the most challenging issues for historic houses is access versus preservation. Preservation is vital to the integrity of objects, but access to them works against the traditional museum mission of protecting and preserving its collections. Utilization can only be successful if this issue of access versus preservation is resolved. This chapter will look at ways to make private library collections accessible, giving historic houses the opportunity to utilize them for fundraising, exhibits, education, interpretation, and programs without compromising their preservation. This will be followed by a look at The National Trust's policies and procedures for dealing with access versus preservation. The two types of access to be addressed are physical and intellectual.

Historic houses, whether in Great Britain or the United States, vary in their policies and procedures for physical access to their private libraries and archives. Some access is available by appointment to researchers, but in libraries with rare collections the staff is often reluctant to admit even serious scholars.<sup>123</sup> Many librarians and curators try

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<sup>122</sup> Attributed to John Barley, Chairman of the National Trust, 1923-1931 (Lloyd, "Opening Historic Houses," 672).

<sup>123</sup> Though more resilient than books made in the last two hundred years, rare editions are still most vulnerable when handled. Dusting books can create more harm than good if it means it exposes them to potential damage. This is the opinion of the author. Opinions on handling books and paper vary as it does on many issues of preservation and conservation. The conservation of books has greatly changed in the last

to be cooperative and have a prototype available or locate a less vulnerable copy to handle.<sup>124</sup> Library collections can also be accessible to the general public through rotating exhibits, displays and private tours.

Intellectual access is the accessibility of objects by virtual means. This includes visual information such as an image of the original and factual information such as history and provenance. Technologies help to access collections in a variety of ways. Online documentation and image storage technologies allow researchers and visitors to study objects not on view or those which are physically inaccessible. It also permits access to information without physically handling and possibly subjecting an object to harm.

As a documentation tool, computer technology is useful for storing information, organizing inventory and cross-referencing collections, as well as organizing already catalogued collections for access online. One of the more sophisticated and expensive digital projects to date, The British Library's "Turning the Pages" is heralded for the superb clarity and scrupulous color of its images.<sup>125</sup> The project has not missed its importance as a learning tool for research and education. Its excellent "surrogates"<sup>126</sup> allow visitors and researchers access to every page simultaneously, a plus for scholars and a tool to be considered in historic house private libraries.

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twenty years as well as the techniques for preservation and the improvements in the quality of conservation materials.

<sup>124</sup> A prototype may be defined as a suitable copy of the original that can be safely used for viewing or research, either of inferior value or a later edition.

<sup>125</sup> "Turning the Pages" at [www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html) contains over twenty examples of world classics in the British Libraries' collection, including an early work by Jane Austen, *The History of England* (1791), Leonardo da Vinci's notebook called *Sketches By Leonardo* (1508), and one of the great manuscripts of the middle ages, the *Lindisfarne Gospel* (7th century).

<sup>126</sup> A surrogate is defined as a superb model of the original.

Image source technologies such as digitizing can be combined with documentation to create online collections. Digital imaging is especially useful in natural history collections where specimens are unstable or suspect. It is more effective in processing printed information than in capturing the physical qualities of three-dimensional objects, thus it is well suited to archive and library collections. The online phenomenon can be utilized effectively to bring museum collections to the public with virtual museums and online private library tours. However, digitizing is a selective process because it is expensive, and there remain unanswered questions about the preservation and life expectancy of digital images. Therefore, only a small percentage of collections can be accessed in this manner.

**NT:** The National Trust is dedicated to improving physical and intellectual access of its library collections. In the past, the Trust considered its collections and especially the books, “resources of last resort.” But today, the Trust is committed to providing physical and intellectual access.<sup>127</sup> Peter Hoare, freelance librarian for the Trust states, “The National Trust is not a public library in the same sense, but its books are held in trust for the nation and are available to scholars by arrangement, in absence of more accessible copies.”<sup>128</sup>

Each Trust house has different policies for access depending on their individual guidelines for visiting. With over 4 million members and 11 million visitors a year, maintaining a healthy visitor flow throughout the house is important. Where

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<sup>127</sup> Bendix, et, al., “Books,” 475.

<sup>128</sup> Peter Hoare is working on the Belton House collection as part of the Trust’s database inventory project. This project has led to the discovery of many literary treasures (Hoare, “An Icon of Gay Literature at Belton House” *ABC*, July 2007 <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc4.pdf>).

overcrowding is a serious concern, the situation is handled with timed ticket entries, roped-off spaces, and house tours.<sup>129</sup> For example, two of the National Trust's most important libraries, Charlecote Park and Belton House, are roped off. Other houses like Anglesey Abbey, Chastleton, Melford Hall and Stourhead are free flowing with self-guided tours; here visitors have direct contact with the books but are controlled by the presence of room stewards. Lanhydrock's library is secured by a touch sensitive alarm system built into the bookshelves.

Research and study access to private library collections is also determined by the staff of each house individually, and accessibility often depends on the number of copies of the book requested available in the public domain. Although Lanhydrock's curator Paul Holden answers queries for research and makes the best effort to assist scholars, he prefers to refer them to academic centers such as public libraries and universities where there are more accessible copies. The Trust's private libraries, however, are unable to match the access capabilities of research libraries because of preservation issues, money constraints, and staffing. Because of the manpower required to maintain a private library collection, the Trust depends on a rich volunteer network of professionals that include librarians, archivists, museum educators, scholars, professors, and conservators.

The Trust realizes that in order to utilize the libraries more fully they must first be inventoried, cataloged, and documented. In 2007 Mark Purcell oversaw the inventory of the private libraries at Hughenden and Blickling Hall, and many others are moving toward completion. The Trust has made great progress in improving intellectual access

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<sup>129</sup> Sustainable capacity is the number of the visitors that can routinely be accommodated in a historic house at anyone time without causing irreparable damage. Sustainable access is the healthy perimeters for visitor flow. These are the methods in which the Trust measures overcrowding. Sustainable capacity must be met to assure sustainable access (Lloyd, "Staffing Historic Houses," 677).

of its private library collections. The organization is producing publications, catalogues and exhibits to highlight their books and an electronic bibliography to record the material already published for access online. In partnership with the Royal Collection, the Trust recently completed a five year venture called, “The Collections Online Project” to inventory over half a million objects in 350 of their properties including 200 historic houses.<sup>130</sup> The inventory will be placed on a new web-based collections management system for access by the staff and the public for study and research. A catalog of all of the books in the Trust’s library collections will also be included. The objective is to prepare the libraries’ collections for a more central role in the narrative process.<sup>131</sup>

Access versus preservation is the most important issue and obstacle in the utilization of private library collections in historic houses. Access is absolutely necessary for the successful utilization of these collections even though physical access conflicts with the responsibility to preserve. Although all issues of access versus preservation cannot be reconciled, advancements in technologies have allowed for the secure utilization of library collections through intellectual access. With innovative ways to access private libraries in historic houses, there are new opportunities to expand the role of library collections and to enhance the historic house experience for tours, exhibits, education, programming and fundraising.

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<sup>130</sup> The Royal Collection: An online source to collections owned by the British Monarchs now on display in Royal Palaces, residences, in exhibits and on loan to institution around the world. <http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/>.

<sup>131</sup> The Collections Online Project has taken over 10,000 digital images with plans to photograph every object in the Trust’s collections by 2010 (Conybeare, et al., “Five Centuries of Social History: The Completion of a Five Year Inventory of Trust Treasures.” *ABC*, July 2007). <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-abc4.pdf>

## Conclusion

In the eighteenth-century Britain's historic houses were created to display Grand Tour collections. These included private library collections that were seen as the prized heirlooms of the house but were the first to be sold during difficult financial times in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. Many British book collections were sold to collectors in the United States where they found their way into America's public institutions, creating the nucleus of university and museum libraries. Following the Second World War, British estate owners who still had their properties intact, became preoccupied with the job of saving their houses and collections. They opened their historic houses to the public with many under the care of the National Trust of Great Britain.

Since 1990 private libraries have become an important part of historic house museums, not only for the history of private ownership but for their social context. They play a crucial role in interpreting the story of the house within the context of tours, exhibits, education, programming and fundraising. Historic houses can take a valuable lesson from the way in which biography houses combine museum collections and archives to interpret personal experiences. The issue of access versus preservation is a constant subject of debate. Advances in intellectual access are improving the ability to utilize collections and with careful consideration private libraries can be effectively accessed in many ways without putting them at risk.

The private libraries of historic houses have enormous marketing potential but collections care and management issues such as inventorying, cataloging, documenting,

general care and access versus preservation have added to the concerns that their collections cost a great deal in time, money and manpower to maintain. They are the main reasons why it has taken so long for private libraries to be considered an important asset.

The National Trust's accomplishments in its private library campaign are due to the success of their fundraising expertise and with the continual support of the Royal Oak Foundation in America, whose grants also support cataloging, preservation and reuniting lost collections. The Trust's Library Advisor, Mark Purcell, continues to get the message out by keeping the libraries in the forefront of fundraising. Funding is a continual process and also vital to the success of utilizing private library collections. The campaign to locate and reunite books with their historic houses has been met with enthusiasm and many private donations. It is an attractive venture that has been a successful fundraising tool.

The National Trust continues to take on ambitious acquisitions with important libraries, substantiating their vision that private libraries are an important resource in the development of historic houses as museums. They are presently fundraising for Greenway and Scotney Castle House, both with extensive libraries and archives. To date, the Trust has cataloged 120,000 of their 230,000 books and manuscripts, with plans to launch its online catalog of collections in the near future. Purcell is cautious, stating, "The date cannot be confirmed until funds are in place."<sup>132</sup> Other programs such as the digital imagery project will take additional funding to complete.

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<sup>132</sup> Letter to editor, NT Library Advisor, Mark Purcell's response, *The National Trust Magazine*, no 113, Spring 2008, 9.

The National Trust's historic house library campaign has given private library collections new life, legitimacy and marketability. The campaign is setting precedence as a role model and influencing other historic house museums to look at their libraries as a viable resource. Historic houses in the United States such as Hildene and the Mount are working with their private library collections on many of the utilization methods devised by the Trust in Chapters 4 and 5.

At Robert Todd Lincoln's estate, Hildene, the organizing, inventorying, and cataloging of both archival records and books is a continual project. Curator Brian Knight is focused on creating a Lincoln archives for researchers and a library facility on the four hundred acre estate. It is an exciting project vital to the mission of creating a Lincoln site for visitors and scholars.<sup>133</sup>

The purchase and reconciliation of Edith Wharton's library collection at The Mount has come with challenges and risks of its own. A majority of the books arrived from Yorkshire in poor condition and cannot be displayed until their condition is determined and conservation undertaken. Although the books were purchased for the estate with private funds, it is questionable whether the cost of the books and the conservation work needed will bring the return (via tours, exhibits, education, programming and fundraising.) that The Mount hopes to achieve.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> After Robert Todd Lincoln died in 1926 the house remained in the family until 1978 when a group called the Friends of Hildene purchased the estate and began restoring the house and gardens.

<sup>134</sup> In an interview with the author in November of 2007, The Mount's curator, Molly McFall, was optimistic but cautious. She hopes to recreate the library as it was in Wharton's years through pictures from the archives. Wharton's books had custom-made bindings, color coded according to subject (a binding system), and Ms. McFall wants to put the books back in their exact shelving order. The Mount may be overly ambitious to believe what the reconstitution of the library can accomplish for them. They do not have the luxury of original furnishings that compliment a library and often makes a library collection a useful source for the whole historic house experience. However, as a research tool the book collection is invaluable because the books are full of Wharton's annotations, notes ticks in the margins, and underlining;

Historic house museums in America can take a lesson from The National Trust of Great Britain which serves as an invaluable model in the utilization of private library collections. The Trust has been remarkably successful in showcasing its private library collections by providing access to and presentation of them through its efforts to implement superb collections care and management policies and procedures. This has included the inventorying, cataloging, documenting and general care and preservation of its collections. The Trust is continually working toward the goal of expanding the role of private library collections in historic house through enhanced stewardship in order to achieve museum accreditation for all its historic houses. This enthusiasm for preserving heritage, evident in the army of volunteers at all levels is crucial to its success. The Trust would prefer not to be considered in the historic house business, but it is this high quality of stewardship that has kept the organization successful and growing.

In the twenty-first century, with its quickly changing technologies and predictions for the future, there is still a great fascination to discover new things from history. The power of the past and the possibilities for historic collections are endless. Historic houses under the care of The National Trust of Great Britain are putting their private libraries in order. They have recognized the importance of a collaborative relationship between libraries, archives and their houses as well as the opportunities that exist to enhance the historic house experience by showcasing private libraries for tours, exhibits, education, programming and fundraising. The Trust's continual efforts to enhanced stewardship

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as Ms. McFall says, the books contain "a world of scholarship vital to discovering the mind of a writer." Access will be an issue and the library will remain roped off. The future goals are to put the catalog of books online, to digitize specific works, and to create a research center. The July 2008 issue of *Antique* magazine carried a full-page advertisement by The Mount announcing the threat of foreclosure if 3 million dollars could not immediately be raised.

through superior collections care and management and to resolve the issue of access versus preservation have led to a greater awareness of what the private libraries of historic houses everywhere can offer and what they may achieve in the future.

## Appendix 1

### Timeline The Social Evolution of Books, Collectors and Private Libraries in Historic Houses of Britain

#### **Before the Fifteenth Century:**

Though the invention of paper and the production of books are centuries old, it remains a relatively new technology in Britain. The first great libraries in Britain emerge within the monasteries which remain both the consumer and supplier of books and dominate their development and production in the West. Early private book collections exist only as part of larger collections or are relegated to trunks, cabinets or closets, private spaces off a bedroom or dressing room.

The earliest British book collectors are Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham (1287-1345), and Humfrey, Duke of Gloucester (1391-1447), youngest son of Henry V, whose library now forms the core collection at the Bodleian Library.

#### **The Fifteenth Century:**

**1476:** William Caxton (1415?-1492) becomes Britain's first printer. He publishes the first book in England, the Westminster edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*.

**1485:** The printing press is invented, revolutionizing "the spread of shared knowledge."<sup>135</sup> Its main contribution is the preservation of the authenticity of information. Historian Elizabeth L. Eisenstein writes that such accuracy led to "print as a prerequisite for modern scholarship and science."<sup>136</sup>

**1485-1501:** The first generation of books is called "Incunabula," which is Latin for *things in a cradle* and refers to books printed up to 1501.<sup>137</sup>

#### **The Sixteenth Century:**

**1536-1541:** The Reformation causes the destruction of ecclesiastic libraries when they are seized as property by the crown. Most Incunabula and other early books are lost to the scrap piles only to be rediscovered as part of bindings and covers on new books.

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<sup>135</sup> Hobhouse, *Gardening Through the Ages*, 99.

<sup>136</sup> Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Modern Europe*, 84.

<sup>137</sup> Petroski, *The Book on the Bookshelf*, 146.

## **The Seventeenth Century:**

**1600:** The first private library is designed by architect Robert Smythson for a study closet. His patron requests walls designed in a manner to store books, loose papers, maps and ink, and a sensible working space with room for a desk, good lighting and a fire. Smythson's solution is to create an interior completely filled with shelving. He arranges them like masonry patterns with the largest shelves on the bottom diminishing in size as they rise.<sup>138</sup> Early book closets no longer exist today in Britain though there is considerable documented evidence that they did. Sir William More, landowner and MP lists (in his 1556 inventory) the contents of his closet: "273 books," one of the largest at that time.<sup>139</sup> Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset writes in April of 1617 about an evening at Knole, "in working and going down to my Lord's Closet, where I sat and read much in the Turkish History and Chaucer."<sup>140</sup> The closest example of an early book room is the Green Closet at Ham House in Greater London, built around 1670 for John Maitland, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Lauderdale (1616-1682). The Green Closet is considered the earliest purpose built library in a historic house.<sup>141</sup>

**1620s:** Robert Bruce Cotton (1571-1631) is an avid book collector and arguably the first book preservationist. He is responsible for collecting and thus saving hundreds of books from destruction, including the only existing manuscript of *Beowulf*, now at The British Library in London.

**1622:** *The Compleat Gentleman* by Henry Peacham is published, highlighting the educational guidelines for the upper class.

**1636:** Thomas Howard, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Arundel (1585-1646), Britain's first antiquarian book collector, purchases the library of Willard Pirckheimer, a wealthy Renaissance humanist. The collection includes books and incunabula, some illustrated by Pirckheimer's friend and artist, Albrecht Durer. Howard's library is the first interior designed in the Grand Italian fashion with displays of busts and statues adorning spaces. He acquires an agent, the cleric and antiquarian William Petty, and employs a librarian, Francis Junius.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Smythson, *Design for a Closet* at The Royal Institute of British Architects, [http://www.architecture.com/Search/Search.aspx?CommandArray=SR%7cSC\\_Content%7cLIKE%7cSmythson+closet](http://www.architecture.com/Search/Search.aspx?CommandArray=SR%7cSC_Content%7cLIKE%7cSmythson+closet).

<sup>139</sup> Besides his books, the inventory lists "maps of the world, and of France, England and Scotland, a painting of Judith, a desk, two chairs, a coffer, a pair of scales, a pair of scissors, pens, seals, compass, a rule, a hammer, a perpetual calendar, a slate to write on, an ink stand, and a counting board." The subjects of his books are classical, religious, medical, legal and political. He lists a volume of Boccaccio, a songbook and an old book of fables (Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, 166).

<sup>140</sup> Tinniswood, *The National Trust: Historic Houses of Britain*, 163.

<sup>141</sup> Lauderdale is an example of a manic collector. In a letter dated the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, 1670, his wife complains that, "their Highgate house was threatened with collapse owing to the weight of the books" (Tinniswood, 128).

<sup>142</sup> Franciscus Junius (1591-1677) is a scholar and collector who wrote about connoisseurship.

Howard's antiquities inspire Robert Cotton to commission a book called *Marmora Arundelliana*, the first study of classical archaeological material by an Englishman. The book makes Howard's collection the most famous in the world.<sup>143</sup>

**1642-1651:** The English Civil War disrupts the advancement of private libraries. One of the few to pre-date the English Civil War is Dunham Massey in Cheshire. Unchanged since 1730, it contains one of Britain's earliest library interiors. The room is designed specifically to hold books with oak "presses" arranged by subject.<sup>144</sup> It is also known for its rare collection of "usefull" books that include sermons, maps, music, medicine, classics, history, rat catching, draining bogs, shoeing horses and suing ones neighbors.<sup>145</sup>

**1660:** The Restoration brings extended peace to Britain. It also transfers power from the church to a new secular bureaucracy of lesser gentry whom embraces education. The emergence of this enlightened middle class leads to landed wealth, estate building and collecting. The sudden increase in learning among the gentry creates a desire to collect books.

**1660:** A royal charter is approved by Charles II to form The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge. The Society conducts experiments, discusses new philosophies, publishes books and creates a library. Their publication, *Philosophical Transactions*, remains the oldest scientific journal in continuous publication.<sup>146</sup> Science helps to create the book industry.

**1660-1703:** Writer Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) establishes the most important private library of the seventeenth-century. His library represents the practice of good collections management. Fitted with free-standing bookcases, it contains three thousand books, the perfect number to suit a gentlemen's library. Under his exact instructions, books are shelved by size (One being the smallest and 3,000 the largest). It is indexed and cataloged twice, both numerically and alphabetically. Pepys prepares a memorandum outlining his policies and procedures of collecting; it defines what he feels a private library represents and includes specific instructions on library policy after his death. This includes maintaining exactly 3000 books intact, no accessioning or de-accessioning, and strict rules pertaining to access. Upon his death he specifies that the library be left to his nephew for the remainder of his life, at which time it is to be placed with his alma mater, Magdalene College at Cambridge University. Trinity College is instructed to carry out

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<sup>143</sup> Strong, "The Virtuoso: Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel," in *The Spirit of Britain*, New York: Fromm International, 2000, 239-251.

<sup>144</sup> Book presses is another name for book shelves, a term the British still use.

<sup>145</sup> "Usefull books are ordinary, everyday publications of obvious practical value" (Tinniswood, *Treasures from National Trust*, 33).

<sup>146</sup> Royal Society website is at <http://royalsociety.org>.

regular inspections with the stipulation that the collections will revert to their care if Magdalene ever breaks with protocol.<sup>147</sup>

**1676:** The first book auction takes place in England. By 1700 there are hundreds held throughout Great Britain. Seventeenth-century British collectors include William Blathwayt, owner of Dyrham Park; book seller, George Thomason; book collectors Humfrey Dyson and Frances Wolfreston; and diarists, Narcissus Luttrell and John Evelyn.

### **The Eighteenth Century:**

**1700s:** The Enlightenment and the scientific revolution drive book circulations, creating a greater demand for reading material.

**1700s:** The Grand Tour begins. The British aristocracy flocks to Europe, especially Italy.

**1707:** The Society of Antiquity is founded followed by the Society of the Dilettanti in 1734. The Dilettanti is an influential gentlemen's dining club made up of men who have traveled on the Grand Tour. The club produces publications devoted to archeological discoveries.<sup>148</sup>

**1719:** Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is published and is widely regarded as the first novel in the English language.

**1720-1741:** The finest library of the eighteenth-century is the collection of Robert Harley, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Oxford (1661-1724), at Wimpole Hall. He employs the renowned Anglo-Saxon scholar, Humfrey Wanley, as librarian and together they purchase most of the early libraries in Britain. Wanley keeps meticulous diary accounts that become the most important records pertaining to the growth of early book collecting in Britain. When Harley's son, Edward, inherits the house and title in 1724, he quickly surpasses his father's relentless drive for collecting. He commissions the architect James Gibbs and oversees the building of a magnificent library that sets the fashion as one of the first library spaces designed specifically to house a collection. By his death in 1741, he had amassed over 50,000 printed books, 41,000 prints, and 350,000 pamphlets. Excessive collecting bankrupts him, and the library is dispersed for 13,000 pounds in 1744. His collection of manuscripts becomes part of the newly established British museum in 1753.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Pepys is a diarist and collector known for his six volumes of diaries (Jan 1, 1660 - May 31, 1669) documenting Charles II ascension to the throne, court life, and the events of Stuart England. (Basbane, *A Gentle Madness*, 99).

<sup>148</sup> Strong, *The Spirit of Britain*, 456.

<sup>149</sup> Souden, *Wimpole Hall*, 10-18.

**1741:** Private libraries evolve into social spaces. Robert Adam's library or "Great Room" at Kenwood House, Greater London is intended "both for a library and a room for receiving company."<sup>150</sup> William Kent renovates Holkham Hall incorporating a library into a room of its own within Lord Leicester's apartments. Originally a private wing, the renovation creates a common space similar to a present day living room.

**1742:** The first subscription library opens followed by the first lending library in Liverpool in 1758. By 1800, there are hundreds of public libraries throughout Great Britain.<sup>151</sup>

**1750s:** Book collecting becomes the fashionable pursuit of the British aristocracy. Four of the greatest collectors to emerge in the early eighteenth-century are William Cavendish, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1672-1729) at Chatsworth, John Ker, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Roxburghe (1680-1741), at Floors Castle, Charles Spencer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Sunderland (1674-1722), at Althorp, and Thomas Herbert, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Pembroke (1656-1733), at Highclere Castle.

**1750s:** The British economy is controlled by financiers, merchants, industrial capitalists and the aristocratic land owners.<sup>152</sup>

**1750-1800:** Private libraries migrate from city residences to the country house as estates are built. Thomas Coke, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Leicester (1754-1842), moves his collection from Thanet House in London to Holkham Hall in Norfolk, where he builds a spectacular library. Private libraries evolve out of the closet to spaces at the center of activity. One of the first examples is William Kent's design for Robert Walpole's library at Houghton Hall (c.1729).<sup>153</sup> The library adjoins his bedroom and dressing room, dominating a space that normally is occupied by a closet. The bookcases are created as part of the architecture with books fitted into the scheme.

**1751-1791:** William Constable (1721-1791) amasses the greatest Grand Tour library collection in Britain. A devout Catholic, he is banned from public life and devotes himself to the private pursuits of improving the mind. What Constable sees as a "library and philosophical room" houses his family portraits, scientific instruments, books, gems, metals, fossils and herbarium.<sup>154</sup>

**1753:** The British Museum is created from several private library collections including the natural history collection and books of physician and scientist Sir Hans Sloane. In

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<sup>150</sup> Bryant, *Kenwood*, 15.

<sup>151</sup> Strong, *The Spirit of Britain*, 370.

<sup>152</sup> White, "The Laboring-Class Domestic Sphere in Eighteenth-Century British Social Thought," 247-263.

<sup>153</sup> Jackson-Stops, et al., *The English Country House-A Grand Tour*, 200.

<sup>154</sup> Cornforth, "A Backward Look" 67.

1823, George III's collection of 65,000 printed books is left to the museum to form the King's Library.

**1760s:** "Book presses" or free standing bookcases become fashionable when Vile and Cobbs design glazed cabinets for Queen Charlotte, and Chippendale builds them for the Earl of Pembroke.

**1774-1842:** At Holkham Hall in Norfolk, Thomas Coke, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Leicester (1754-1842) compiles a Grand Tour collection which includes the *Codex Leicester*, the only major scientific work of Leonardo da Vinci in private hands.

**Late 1700s:** The private library becomes an essential part of every British home. The Enlightenment is no longer the privilege of only the upper class and the private library more than any other venue reflects this.<sup>155</sup> *In the Rise and Fall of the Country House Library*, Nicolas Barker writes, "There is a distinction to be drawn between the library of great collectors and the family library of a country house."<sup>156</sup> Library collections are used by everyone: relatives, friends, staff and community, all of whom contribute to the formation of the collection. Even women build personal libraries despite the limitations of formal education.<sup>157</sup>

**1775-1799:** The American and French Revolution effectively end The Grand Tour, with the greatest period of British book collecting yet to come.

**1791:** British newspaper circulations begin with *The Observer* followed by the *Manchester Guardian* (1821) and the *Evening Standard* (1827), bringing substantial reading material into every home. There is also the establishment of magazines such as *The Quarterly Review* (1809) and *Blackwood's Magazine* (1817).

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<sup>155</sup> Even the country estate of a modest squire can contain a significant library. At Gunby Hall in Lincolnshire, the ancestral home of the Massingberd family, the library reflects generations of important connections. The family cousins included the Darwins and Wedgewoods and they welcomed many famous people including, Bonnie Prince Charlie, Dr. Johnson, the Pre-Raphaelites, Rudyard Kipling, Edward Lear, Virginia Woolf and Ralph Vaughan Williams (Montgomery-Massingberd, *Gunby Hall*, 5).

<sup>156</sup> Barker, "The Libraries of the National Trust," 7.

<sup>157</sup> At Wimpole Hall, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Oxford's daughter, Margaret Cavendish Harley, later The Duchess of Portland (1715-1785), amasses a natural history and antiquarian collections of her own. She belongs to a club called the Bluestockings, a literary discussion group of privileged women that promotes independent thought and self-education through literary pursuits. It becomes the first woman's social club in Britain (Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour*, 34).

## **The Nineteenth Century:**

**1800:** A variety of libraries began to emerge as education improves. Between 1730 and 1830 adult readership rises steadily and by 1830's three-quarters of the working class has access to some kind of literacy.<sup>158</sup>

**1812:** The 10,000 volume collection of John Ker, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Roxburghe (1740-1804), is auctioned off in London. The sale causes a frenzy over the anticipated fight for the rare 1471 Valderfen first edition of Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Taking part are the greatest book collectors of the era: George John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Spencer (1758-1834), William Cavendish, 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire (1790-1858) and George Spencer, Marquis of Blandford (1766-1840), who obtains the *Decameron* for 2,260 pounds.

**1813:** Architect James Wyatt remodels a bedroom and staircase into a library for the Legh family at Lyme Park. As a result of the Grand Tour, libraries become the premier room in the house. Every house contains one, and many are built while others are enlarged, demolishing rooms to make space. In 1819, the library at Saltram in Devon is enlarged by adding on a drawing room. The long galleries at Lanhydrock, Blickling Hall and Chatsworth are turned into elaborate libraries. At Sheringham Hall in Norfolk, Humphry Repton (1752-1818) proposes a combination library and living room connected by a covered walkway to the conservatory.<sup>159</sup>

**1815:** The end of the Napoleonic Wars follows with a period of economic prosperity in Britain.

**1830:** The aristocracy continues to exist as Britain's political ruling class. They derive income from their agricultural lands, rent from tenants and home farms, and town revenues.

**1830:** Library additions become popular as collections out grow their spaces. Thomas Philip Weddell, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl de Grey (1781-1855), inherits Wrest Park and immediately expands the present library to include his extensive book collection. Additions are given a variety of names: book room, anti library, map room, saloon, conservatory, annex, and long gallery. Original library rooms are called The Old Library to distinguish them from new additions. Multiple libraries are given specific names. An example of this is Harewood House in Yorkshire where there are three libraries: the Old Library, the Spanish Library and the Victorian Library.

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<sup>158</sup> Strong, *The Spirit of Britain*, 484.

<sup>159</sup> Humphry Repton is known primarily as a landscape architect, the greatest in the nineteenth-century after Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. He creates design books called *Red Books*, named after the color of the bindings. They display the before and after renovations of gardens and house interiors. He creates over 400 designs during his career (Jervis, "The English Country House Library," 17).

**1832:** The Great Reform Law diminishes the political influence of British landowners by expanding voting rights to tenants. This shifts voting power to a broader base of the working class and those living in industrial cities.

**1837:** Queen Victoria (1819-1901) ascends the throne.

**1840:** The effects of the Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) begin to undermine Britain's agricultural traditions.

**1840s:** The decline of Britain's traditional agriculture system begins with the repeal of the Corn Laws, import tariffs that protect British corn prices against foreign competition.

**1860s:** Free trade is established removing restrictions that benefit the exporter. This results in the influx of cheap foreign goods into Britain.

**1861-1865:** The American Civil War and the opening of the American Middle West reduce the demand for Britain's cotton industry, one of their greatest exports.

**1872:** Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872) dies, leaving the greatest manuscript collection in Britain at his home at Thirlestaine House in Cheltenham. A preservationist, Phillipps had saved over 10,000 manuscripts by overbidding and raising the value of works that otherwise would have been destroyed for scrap. To no avail, he tries to negotiate with the government to bequest the collection to the British Museum. A Protestant, Phillipps stipulates in his will that neither his eldest daughter nor her husband (a Catholic) "shall ever be admitted to the inspection of my library of books and manuscripts."<sup>160</sup>

**1875-1879:** Britain is hit by four continual rainy seasons that ruin harvests. The collapse of the agricultural economy demoralizes the great estates as the power bases of the nation, "as a result, the whole territorial basis of patrician existence is undermined."<sup>161</sup>

**1882:** The Settled Lands Act (1882) allows British estate owners to part with assets. Books are considered *heirlooms* and as disposable income they are the first objects put up for sale.

**1877-1886:** The first British preservation societies are organized in the late nineteenth-century out of concern for the destruction of the natural landscape by the Industrial Revolution. William Morris helps to form The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1877). This is followed by The Ancient Monument Act (1882) and the establishment of The National Trust (1885-86) to protect and preserve the landscape. The Trust eventually expanded its mission to include historic buildings.

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<sup>160</sup> Thomas, *Great Books and Book Collectors*, 264.

<sup>161</sup> Littlejohn, *The Fate of the English Country House*, 47.

**1880s and 1890s:** A series of spectacular British book auctions take place: The historic library of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Sunderland is dispersed in a series of sales by his relative, the 7<sup>th</sup> Duke of Marlborough, from 1882-1884 at Blenheim Palace. The Hamilton Palace Library which includes the William Beckforth collection is sold in 1882-1883. The Osterley Park Library of Victor Villiers, the 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Jersey, is sold in 1885; it includes Caxtons from the Harleian Library.<sup>162</sup>

**1888:** *Country Life Magazine* is first published in Britain and run by a zealous group of young architects and historians focused on the plight of the country house estate.

**1892:** The library of the Second Earl Spencer at Althorp, containing the greatest of all collections of incunabula and early printed books, is auctioned in 1892. It is purchased “in bloc”<sup>163</sup> by Mrs. John Ryland in memory of her husband. It becomes one of the few private library collections to remain in Britain as part of the Ryland Library at the University of Manchester.

### **The Twentieth Century:**

**1900-1912:** Americans John Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913) and Henry E. Huntington (1850-1927) buy the majority of British private libraries during the first part of the twentieth-century. Morgan begins collecting in the 1890s and continues until his death in 1913. He and Huntington go head to head in many book auctions though they have varied tastes and go about acquiring in different ways. Morgan prefers to collect early printed books, first editions, fine bindings, incunabula and illuminated, literary and historical manuscripts, the most aesthetic copies of editions and ones of absolute authenticity. He makes superb single purchases and amasses the finest autograph collection that includes John Keats’s signed manuscript of *Endymion* and *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Morgan’s wish to establish a library, museum and research facility for the public is realized only after his death. His son, J.P. (Jack) Morgan Jr., sells the bulk of his father’s artwork to pay the estate taxes in order to maintain his collection of books, manuscripts and prints. The Morgan Library and Museum is established in 1924 as a public reference library.

**1909:** The “People’s Budget” is enacted in Britain which includes a thirty percent tax on incomes exceeding 5,000 pounds a year, followed by an Act of Parliament (1910-1911) that ends residual power in the House of Lords.<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Harleian is the name given to the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Earls of Oxford’s collection at Wimpole Hall.

<sup>163</sup> In bloc is to acquire collections in their entirety. Henry Huntington was famous for this method of purchasing.

<sup>164</sup> The Peoples Budget is a series of social legislation enacted by Chancellor of the Exchequer, David Lloyd George.

**1911-1945:** The First and Second World Wars devastate the social and economic order of Britain. First and second generation heirs are killed and estates are strapped with record level capital taxes. Estate workers and house staff leave to fight in the two world wars to seek jobs in industrial cities.

**1914:** Huntington acquires from the 9<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire the *Devonshire-Kemble* collection of English plays and twenty-four Caxtons, nearly one-fourth of the titles issued by England's first press. Although there is an outcry in the British press about the loss of their great national treasures, the *London Times* treats the sale with stoic resignation. According to an editorial, it is a selective sale by the Duke, "in order to meet the heavy burden of death duties."<sup>165</sup> Between 1916 and 1927 he purchases the entire Britwell Court library of William Henry Miller (1789-1848) whose core collection is early English poetry and drama. In amongst the Britwell books is the collection of Thomas Isham, of Lamport Hall, whose 1599 edition of Shakespeare's, *The Passionate Pilgrim* and *Venus and Adonis* is believed to be the only copy in existence. Huntington also acquires "en bloc" the Bridgewater House Library of Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Seal under Queen Elizabeth I. The collection includes early English books and manuscripts, and the *Ellesmere Chaucer*. At the Arbury Hall sale he acquires 362 lots from the library of Sir Francis Newdigate. Huntington buys the collection of nineteenth-century American bibliophile, Robert Hoe III (1839-1909) founding member and first president of the Grolier Club. Huntington acquires 26,143 editions of books printed before 1641 in England or in the English language. This is surpassed only by The British Library and The Bodleian Library in Oxford. He buys with such intensity that he depletes the entire British and American markets by the 1920s. In 1919 Huntington creates an institutional trust to protect his collection, establishing the Huntington Library in San Marino, California in 1923.<sup>166</sup>

**1918-1921:** Between six to eight million acres of land changes hands in Great Britain.<sup>167</sup>

**1929:** The Stock Market Crash of 1929 effectively ends the great era of American book collecting.

**1937:** The National Trust Act (1937) paves the way for the Country House Scheme that allows British estate owners to give or bequest their homes to the Trust in lieu of taxes. Government assistance arrives with The Historic Buildings and Monuments Act (1953).

**1937-1945:** Historic houses are billeted to the British government during the Second World War for military garrisons, evacuation centers, nurseries, military offices, hospitals, and as storage facilities to protect works of art, rare books and valuable documents.

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<sup>165</sup> Dickerson, *Henry E. Huntington, Library of Libraries*, 67.

<sup>166</sup> Schad, *Henry Edward Huntington*, 13-29.

<sup>167</sup> According to Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*.

**1949:** Henry Thynne, the 6<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Bath, opens his property, Longleat, to the public. Others follow: Edward, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron of Montagu, opens Beaulieu, in 1952 and John Russell, 13<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford and owner of Woburn Abbey, welcomes tourists in 1955.

**1995:** The National Trust's American affiliate, The Royal Oak Foundation, launches the "Campaign for Country House Libraries" (1995-1999) to help The National Trust draw attention to their private libraries and need for enhanced stewardship.

**The Twenty-First Century:**

**2000:** The historic house business becomes a thriving tourist industry in Britain. This success has allowed owners and organizations to focus on their private library collections and museum accreditation.

**2008:** The National Trust (Great Britain) and Royal Oak (USA) continue to raise money and awareness for their historic house private libraries.

## Appendix 2

### Historic Houses with Private Libraries Researched for this Thesis

Appendix 2 lists the British historic houses and their private libraries researched for this thesis. Also included are institutional libraries and museums where many private library collections are found. Some of the historic house libraries are mentioned for their historic significance while others involve people related to important library collections. They are highlighted in parentheses and include writers, artists, scientists, actors, statesmen, and book antiquarians.

\* Denotes historic houses with libraries visited by author

+ Denotes historic houses with libraries owned by the National Trust

#### **Great Britain: Historic houses with private libraries**

Anglesey Abbey \* + (Huttleston Rogers Broughton, 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Fairhaven, 1896-1966.)

Althorp (Frederick Spencer, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Spencer, 1798-1857.)

Arbury Hall ( Sir Frances Newdigate, d. 1710.)

Attingham Park (Thomas Noel-Hill, 3<sup>rd</sup> Lord Berwick, 1770-1832.)

Audley End \*

Baddesley Clinton \* + (Rebecca Dulcibella Orpen, 1830-1923)

Berrington Hall\* +

Bateman's \* + (Rudyard Kipling, 1865-1939)

Belton House \* + (John Brownlow, 5<sup>th</sup> Baronet, 1690-1754.)

Blenheim Palace \* (George Spencer-Churchill, Marquess of Blandford, 1766-1840.)

Blickling Hall \* + (Philip Kerr, 11<sup>th</sup> Marquis of Lothian, 1882-1940.)

Bowood \*

Burton Constable \* (William Constable, 1721-1791.)

Calke Abbey \* +

Chastleton \* +

Charlecote Park \* + (Sir Thomas Lucy III, 1565-1640, George Hammond Lucy, 1789-1845.)

Chartwell \* + (Winston Spencer-Churchill, 1874-1965.)

Chatsworth \* (William Spencer Cavendish, 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Devonshire, 1790-1858)

Corsham Court \*

Down House \* (Charles Darwin, 1809-1882.)

Dunham Massey +  
 Dunrobin Castle \*  
 Dunmaston Hall\* +  
 Dunvegan Castle \*  
 Erddig \* +  
 Felbrigg Hall \* + (William Windham II, 1717-1761)  
 Great Chalfield Manor  
 Greenway \* + (Agatha Christie, 1890-1976)  
 Gunby Hall \* + (Hugh Montgomery Massingberd, 1946-2008)  
 Florence Court +  
 Ham House \* +  
 Harewood House \*  
 Hatfield House \*  
 Highclere Castle \* (Henry Herbert, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Carnarvon, 1831-1890.)  
 Holkham Hall (Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester, 1754-1842)\*  
 Houghton Hall (Robert Walpole, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Orford, 1676-1745)  
 Hughenden \* + (Benjamin Disraeli, 1804-1881.)  
 Ickworth \* + (Frederick Hervey, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Bristol, “The Earl Bishop”, 1730-1803.)  
 Kedleston Hall\* + (George Nathaniel, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess Curzon, 1859-1925)  
 Kenwood House \*  
 Killerton House \* + (Richard Acland, 15<sup>th</sup> Baronet, 1906-1990)  
 Kingston Lacy \* (William Bankes, 1786-1855)  
 Lamb House + (Henry James, 1843-1916)  
 Lamport Hall \*  
 Lanhydrock \* +  
 Longleat \* (Henry Thynne, 6<sup>th</sup> Marquess of Bath, 1905-1992.)  
 Lyme Park \* +  
 Luton Hoo (John Stuart, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Of Bute, 1713-1792.)  
 Melford Hall (Beatrix Potter)\* +  
 Montecute House \* +  
 Newby Hall \*  
 Nostell Priory \* + (Sir Rowland Winn, 5<sup>th</sup> Baronet, 1739-1785.)  
 Penrhyn Castle \* +  
 Polesdon Lacy \* + (Mrs. Margaret Greville, 1863-1942.)  
 Powis Castle \* +  
 Quebec House\* + (General James Wolfe, 1727-1759)  
 Ragley Hall  
 Ripley Castle\*  
 Saltram \* +  
 Shaw’s Corner + (George Bernard Shaw, 1856-1950)  
 Sissinghurst Castle\* + (Vita Sackville-West, 1892-1962)  
 Sledmere \*  
 Smallhythe \* + (Ellen Terry, 1847-1928)  
 Stourhead \* + (Richard Colt Hoare, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet, 1758-1838.)  
 Strawberry Hill (Horace Walpole, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Orford, 1717-1797.)  
 Syon House

Tyntesfield \* +  
The Vyne \* +  
Walpole Hall \* + (Edward Harley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Oxford, 1689-1741.)  
Wrest Park \* (Thomas, Earl de Grey, 1781-1859.)  
Woburn Abbey \* (John Russell, 13<sup>th</sup> Duke of Bedford, 1917-1992.)

**Great Britain: Libraries and institutions with libraries:**

The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester. (Enriqueta Augustina Rylands, 1843-1908.)  
The King's Library, The British Museum, London (George III)  
The British Library, London  
The Samuel Pepes Library, Magdalene College, Cambridge

**United States: Historic houses with private libraries:**

Biltmore \* (George Washington Vanderbilt 1862-1914)  
The Elms \*  
Hildene \* (Robert Todd Lincoln 1842-1926)  
The Mount \* (Edith Wharton 1862-1937)  
Sunnyside \* (Washington Irving 1783-1859)

**United States: Libraries and institutions with libraries:**

The Huntington Library (Henry E. Huntington, 1850-1927.)  
The Pierpont Morgan Library \* (J.P. Morgan, 1837-1913.)

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