Owlpen Manor
Gloucestershire

A short history and guide
to a romantic Tudor manor house
in the Cotswolds

Owlpen Press
2006

Owlpen Manor is one mile east of Uley, off the B4066, or approached from the B4058 Nailsworth to Wotton-under-Edge road: OS ref. ST800984.
The manor house, garden and grounds are **open** on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays every week from 1st May to 30th September. Please check the up-to-date opening times (telephone: 01453-860261, or website: www.owlpen.com).
There is a licensed **restaurant** in the fifteenth-century Cyder House, also available for functions, parties, weddings and meetings.
There are nine holiday **cottages** on the Estate, including three listed historic buildings. Sleeping 2 to 10, they are available for short stays throughout the year.

Acknowledgements

When we acquired the manor and estate in 1974, we little realized what a formidable task it would be—managing, making, conserving, repairing, edifying—absorbing energies forever after. We would like to thank the countless people who have helped or encouraged, those with specialized knowledge and interests as well as those responsible, indefatigably and patiently, for the daily round.

We thank especially HRH The Prince of Wales for gracious permission to quote from *A Vision of Britain*; long-suffering parents, children, and staff; David Mlinaric (interiors); Jacob Pot and Andrew Townsend (conservation architecture); Rory Young and Ursula Falconer (lime repairs); John Sales, Penelope Hobhouse and Simon Verity (gardens); Stephen Davis and Duff Hart-Davis (fire brigades); and Joan Gould and Martin Fairfax-Cholmeley (loans).

The history notes draw heavily, particularly in the section on the Daunt family, on the earlier researches of Hugh Pagan, published in the guidebook of 1966. I am grateful to Jeremy Musson of *Country Life* and Philip Venning of the SPAB for help with references.

We remember fondly our predecessors: Norman Jewson, and Francis Pagan whose own contribution to Owlpen was scarcely less heroic, and the patronage of so many 'lovers of Owlpen' departed: Francis Comstock, David Gould, Nina Griggs, Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe, Nancy Jewson, Raymond Lister, Jim Lees-Milne, Elsie Moore, Bob Parsons, David and Rosemary Verey. Commination we reserve for the burglars who removed by stealth so much of the family's—and the house's—history. Finally, we thank the many members of the public who have visited over the years, invariably showing appreciation and kindness, and often bringing fresh insights to disparate details and history.

Nicholas and Karin Mander

Photographs

Roy Botterell (p. 53), Ted Humble-Smith (p. 57), Mark Nicolson (pp. 16, 19), *Express & Star* (p. 62), *Good Housekeeping* (p. 56).

Prints and drawings and watercolours

R. Alexander (p. 65), R.A. Bell (p. 52), F.M. Bennett, F.L. Griggs (pp. 49, 74), Gertrude Jekyll (p. 18), N. Jewson (pp. 38, 72), S.R. Jones (p. 78), Gail Langley (inside back cover), A. Powell (p. 66), W.G. Rich (p. 7), W. Rothenstein (p. 46), Jack Shepherd (p. 20), George Wade (p. 43), Joseph Webb (p. 50)

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¶ *Owlpen Old Manor: South Front* by Frank Moss Bennett, May 1922

OWLPEN MANOR

OWLPEN MANOR stands in its own remote valley under the edge of the Cotswolds, its domain of pasture and meadow land enclosed by an amphitheatre of steeply-rising hills crowned with beech woods. Here the pearl-grey manor house with its enormous yews and attendant outbuildings form a remarkable group, nestling under the lee of the hillside. The Tudor manor house, built and rebuilt organically between about 1450 and 1720, its early formal garden and cluster of traditional buildings, possess a charm, a presence and a perfection of form and scale which have long been admired as one of the treasures of Cotswold scenery.

¶ *Owlpen Manor with Court House and Holy Cross Church from the south*

The Manor House

THERE HAS almost certainly been a house on the site of the present manor since the times of the earliest settlement, attracted by the springs which rise beneath it. Pevsner suggests the site is 'early medieval'.[1] The fabric of the existing Cotswold stone manor house is 'sub-medieval', having grown by accretions from east to west over a period of some three centuries, from the early fifteenth century to 1616, with minor alterations of the early eighteenth century. Since then, nothing has been done—or, more remarkably, undone—except for the sensitive repairs of Norman Jewson in 1925–6.

Today the house is not a show place or museum, but the home of a large and active family, every inch of which is lived in and most of which is shown. As such, the arrangement of interiors changes from day to day, and things may not always be where they are described in this *Guide.* It is hoped a little untidiness and household clutter may be indulged. As a Tudor house, there are steep steps, uneven and slippery floors, and decaying surfaces: *please take care.*

The oldest part of the present fabric is the east **service wing**, set at the lower end of the hall. It has arch-braced (and previously wind-braced) cruck trusses to the south end of the roof which are identifiable as fifteenth century. It has no stone wall defining its northern limits: the wall to the south of the present service entry is of medieval thickness, but was always an internal wall, within the core of the medieval house. This was likely to have consisted of a central hall, with a cross-wing at either end, a plan retained and developed in the complicated sequence of later rebuildings.

The present **hall**/great chamber block in the centre is mid-sixteenth century. There is evidence that it replaces, or is a rebuilding of, an earlier hall, which would have been a single-story structure open to the roof, with an open hearth. The hall has a screens passage entry at the lower end and a hearth set, rather unusually, in an axial stack at the upper end.

Then the most recent part of the manor is the **west wing**, an extension at the upper end of the hall, the only part of the house with some pretensions to polite "architecture". Again this is probably a remodelling of the earlier solar wing, with its storyed bay window, chimney stack with freestone diagonal-clustered chimneys, and two gables to the west front, dated 1616. Thomas Daunt's Oak Parlour represents the lord's parlour at the upper end of the hall, with the solar over at first floor level, confirming the tenacity and continuity of medieval arrangements in the Renaissance period at the manorial level. The early seventeenth-century manor is of two full stories, with attics over, the characteristic gables to the attics giving them full story height (there is a hearth in the west attic). It is essentially a conventional, but squat, H-plan hall house, with cross-wings of unequal length at either end of the hall, a passage at first-floor level connecting them, and twin newel stairs.

[1] He also suggests the medieval house was entered from the north (*Gloucestershire I: The Cotswolds*, 3rd ed., 1999). The church behind the house is dedicated to the Holy Cross; one of a group of nine so dedicated in the Upper Thames basin between Malmesbury and Cirencester, possibly indicating the origins of the Manor in an era of Celtic missionary activity during the decline of the Roman Empire.

¶ *The west wing of 1616*, watercolour by W.G. Rich, about 1890

These two western bays, containing the Oak Parlour and Hall, seem to be part of a unified extension to the medieval plan, with the hearths and stacks integral and a sixteenth-century door and frame from the Great Chamber opening to the west, suggesting a previous structure. At any rate, the early seventeenth-century additions make for a more symmetrical and formal disposition of the rooms, with the twin staircases and more ordered fenestration, notably to the west, revealing increasing classical influence. The (earlier) rear elevations are rendered, with random timber windows in a medieval arrangement; while the front is ashlar faced, except for the central section, with stone dressings of the Cotswold vernacular: recessed hollow-moulded mullioned windows, hood-moulds, string courses, and parapet tablings, kneelers and finials.

The **kitchen** wing probably dates to this early seventeenth-century period, or shortly after, when the kitchen at the rear tended to replace the service room at the end of the hall. Archaeological evidence suggests it incorporates elements of earlier detached outbuildings, set in a planned relationship to the main domestic well (north of the present kitchen). The *penthouse* (or 'pentice') extension would have been added to the north of the hall (at the end of the screens passage) to give access to the kitchen wing.

The final phase is one of **early eighteenth-century improvements**, with an emphasis on increasing classicism and symmetry and the insertion of sash windows, hearths, panelling and partitions in a general remodelling, restricted to the two main floors of the (early) east wing. All these works, by Thomas Daunt IV, are well documented from 1719 onwards.

The **Arts and Crafts repairs** by Norman Jewson of 1925–7 are understated, architecturally an epilogue or afterword. He used the term 'repair', never 'restoration', of his work. He conserved what was already there, with some small functional improvements (such as to the domestic offices and two staircases) and the installation of bathrooms and plumbing to make the house habitable for modern conditions. In 1963–5 the domestic

offices were demolished and further minor improvements were made, but essentially the manor is a survival from the early seventeenth century which has been remarkably little altered.

The house as it stands is not unified in the details of its plan or structure, for it is the creation of nearly three centuries of organic growth and adaptation to the needs and fashions of successive generations, illustrating the evolution of English domestic architecture and history, washed by the passing waves, in Ruskin's phrase, of humanity, of erosion and replacement. David Verey commented that it is one of those houses which has "been altered so much at so many different periods that is difficult to say that this is Elizabethan more than anything else".

The front (south) elevation is asymmetrical; haphazard, yet "illogically satisfactory" in its appeal (James Lees-Milne). The three gabled bays of the house contrast in architectural proportion, detail and period, yet they balance and complement one another happily, with what Jewson called 'good manners', none asserting its distinctive features over the others—showing the unity of the Cotswold vernacular building idiom throughout the centuries of the sub-medieval period.

¶ *Owlpen Old Manor: west front from the upper terrace* by Frank Moss Bennett, May 1922

Tour of the house

The Outside

The south front

THIS IS THE MAIN FRONT, facing the valley. The door jambs to the front door have Daunt graffiti of the 1640s. Early eighteenth century steps lead down here to the ice-cool well. The three irregular gables to the south front are each nearly a century apart in date, only the stepped parapet copings unifying them somewhat. The gables are surmounted by two stone owl finials, a device recalling the rebus of the *Owlpen* arms. Lead rainwater chutes remain, with scalloped edges.

The oldest block to the **east** (*circa* 1450: right facing the manor house), is the projecting end of the fifteenth-century cross-wing, altered in 1719 with the insertion of the sash windows with bolection-moulded architraves. The freestone for these cost 5*s.* each and came from Hazelbury, Wiltshire, by wagon. Note the chunky timber sections to the early glazing bars: the lead paint for these was 5*s.* The attic window was blocked then when the ceiling was raised to the first floor bedroom, to give it nobler proportions.

The wide **central gable block** (*circa* 1540) for the sixteenth-century Hall is roughcast rendered. The entrance door is at the lower end of the Hall. Above the six-light recessed mullioned window are the irregular windows of the first floor Hall Chamber (Queen Margaret's Room). Above these again, set in a cable-moulded panel, is the (later) de Olepenne/Daunt coat of arms. High up to the right (in the return of the east wing) is a window blocked up when the present Hall block was rebuilt to replace the earlier medieval single-story Hall. The diagonal-set chimneys are characteristic of the Cotswold vernacular.

The **west (left) wing** bears below the attic a panelled datestone 1616 for Thomas Daunt II:

This is the most recent part of the present structure, providing the lord's parlour and bed chamber, with good attic bedrooms over, at the upper end of the Hall. The storied and canted **bay window** is a distinguished feature: the attic story diminishes to fit the gable and has a little embattled parapet with curiously irregular moulded merlons (one a tiny acroterion). This bay was completely detached from the fabric in 1925.

Up the steps to the west is a rather severe, early seventeenth-century west façade of two gables, with stone dressings and continuous hood-moulds.

The east front

THE HOUSE is approached through the kitchen court, the gate piers with 'biretta' finials. To the left is the corbelled chimney stack of the Tudor service room. The little window (south) at first floor level lights a garderobe (described by Christopher Hussey euphemistically as an 'oratory'). An **inscription** on a panel here (high on the stack) commemorates Jewson's repairs:

> *This House, the greater part of which had not been inhabited for many years & had fallen into decay, in 1925 became the property of Norman Jewson by whom it was repaired & again made habitable 1925–26.*

This farmhouse-scale elevation is rendered: the window jamb surrounds have scalloped **parge-work** decoration, said by Norman Jewson to be in a style unique to the region: some original work survives to the north, but on this front it was reinstated in 1976. The windows here are timber, in a random medieval arrangement, although only that over the door is early. The entrance door leads to the fifteenth-century service rooms at the lower end of the Hall. To the left (ground floor) is an early eighteenth-century cross window. There is the gable of the short kitchen cross-wing to the right.

The old domestic offices (which had been much altered by Jewson), originally forming a detached range to the north of the courtyard, were demolished in 1964.

The Interior

The entrance hall

THE ORIGINAL NEWEL STAIRS were in the north corner here, by an early oak chest which belonged to William Morris at Kelmscott House. The watercolour of the manor house is by A.C. Fare (1938). A timber doorframe (with bowtell moulding) leads through thick medieval walls to the **old pantry** off the lower end of the Hall.

The **kitchen** (not normally shown) is to the north, probably part of the early seventeenth-century improvements, incorporating the 'pay room' and detached outbuildings which completed the house in an L-shaped plan. Described on Jewson's 1926 *Sale Particulars* as a "Servants' Hall", it contains a huge fireplace with bread ovens, spit rack, spits and bressumer; also an early stone cooking stove or range in the far corner.

There is a print of the *Beatitudes* designed by F.L. Griggs, and the herald's trumpet and banner used by the Mander family as High Sheriffs. The Sidney Barnsley glazed oak bookpress was commissioned by the typographer, St. John Hornby, in 1909.

The Great Hall is entered through a **pent-house** *linking it to the service wing.*

The door has an Arts and Crafts steel grille, chased with an open-work briar rose design, executed by Alfred Bucknell in 1926.

The Great Hall

(mid-sixteenth century)

THIS IS THE HEART of the Tudor manor house, evidently a rebuilding on the site of the earlier medieval Hall, which would have been open to the roof. It is dated probably shortly after 1542, when Thomas Daunt I inherited; he married Alice Throckmorton of Tortworth, and died in 1573.

The main entry is at the lower end of the Hall; the 'summer' beams of the **compartment ceiling** stop short at a huge transverse beam, marking the position of the old **screens passage**. There is a contemporary six-light window with cavetto mullions and a plain moulded fireplace (with recessed spandrels).

There is Arts and Crafts **modelled plasterwork** set in the walls: the plaster owl overdoor at the upper end of the Hall was modelled by Norman Jewson. The animals over the north door (to the penthouse) and the thistles in the east splay of the window are also by him. The plaster foliage in the west (right) splay is designed and modelled by Ernest Gimson, for

whom Jewson worked as an 'improver' after 1907. (Gimson regularly executed such plasterwork with his own hands, modelling with his fourth finger, according to Jewson.)

The classical timber arched **doorcase** (service end; east wall) is detailed in the estate accounts of Thomas Daunt IV. It was inserted in September 1722, by Henry Fryer, probably of Bristol, and represents the last phase of new work done on the house until the repairs of the twentieth century. It cost fifteen shillings; the accounts describing it as "a pair of Italian carv'd pillars" (*Italian* was a contemporary term for the composite order). It was reduced in height when the concrete floor was laid by Jewson in 1926, making it stocky in proportion. A spring rose under the floor nearby.

On the north wall is a contemporary heraldic **wallpainting** depicting the coat of arms of Daunt (*argent, a chevron sable between three Cornish choughs' heads erased proper*) quartering the canting arms of de Olepenne (the owls in the second and third quarters: *sable, a chevron between three owls argent*). The formalized mantling in spirals is vivid.

It celebrates the marriage of Margery de Olepenne, the last of the line which had held the Manor from the time of the earliest records in the eleventh century, to John Daunt, a clothier from Wotton-under-Edge, about 1462.

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The **furniture** is mainly seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century oak, and includes the great refectory table with a single plank top under the window. On the window sill **carvings** are displayed: a head of the Bodhisattva in grey schist, sixth century, from Gandahara; "Touchstone", a small monolith in granite with hand print incisions and whorls by the contemporary sculptor Antony Gormley; and a medieval limestone ram's head.

¶ *(Left) The Tudor Great Hall from the Little Parlour*

¶ *(Right above) Georgian doorcase in the Great Hall of 1722*

¶ *(Right below) Touchstone, by Antony Gormley*

¶ *(Far right) The Little Parlour*

At the upper end is a seventeenth-century buffet 'cup-board', for the display of plate. The high-backed **settle** (*circa* 1895) by the fireplace is by Sidney Barnsley and comes from Ernest Gimson's own cottage at Pinbury, bequeathed to Owlpen by Norman Jewson in 1975. The mahogany centre dining-table is an unusual early Victorian patent by Jupe, extending to seat sixteen whilst remaining round. The shield-back Hepplewhite dining chairs have wheat-sheaf splats. There are two Spanish chairs, one covered in Córdoba leather, and a South German carving of the Madonna and Child in oak. The folding **screen** is made up from the folios of a Spanish manuscript antiphonal, early seventeenth century; like the William Morris woven wool **curtains** in 'Honeycomb' (1876) on the painted book-case, it comes from Kilsall Hall, in Shropshire.

PICTURES

Pictures include many associated with the house and its history. *Owlpen Manor* (1976) by Boots Bantock is over the fireplace; above the buffet are two pictures from a series about the house painted by **Frank Moss Bennett** (1874–1953) in 1922, before the house was restored, which form an interesting historical record. Here there is a first state impression of the celebrated etching of *Owlpen Manor* (1930) and its yew trees by **F.L. Griggs** with its dedication to Norman Jewson (there are many Griggs etchings throughout the house). On the north wall, below the Coat of Arms wall-painting, are two views of the *Cyder Press* in the barn by Jewson and by his friend Russell Alexander, and sketches of Owlpen by Maxwell Armfield and John G. Garratt.

Family Portraits (either side of the doorcase at the lower end) are of Charles Mander (1780–1853: varnish manufacturer and philanthropist from Wolverhampton) and his wife, Jemima (born in Boston, Lincs., she died ministering to the poor in a typhus epidemic, aged 43). Charles Mander assisted in the repeal of the Blood Money Act, in 1817 saving two men condemned to the gallows allegedly for stealing 1*s.* 1*d.* and petitioning the Home Secretary, Sidmouth: The Prince Regent's *Reprieve* is shown. To the left is Charles Benjamin Mander (1819–1878), son of Charles Mander, founder partner in Mander Brothers in 1845 and an amateur artist, some of whose sketches are to be seen about the house. To the right of the front door is Sir Charles A. Mander (1884–1951), the second baronet, by Arthur Pan; he was much involved in public affairs in Staffordshire.

Go through the Georgian doorcase to the Little Parlour at the lower end of the Hall.

¶ *The Little Parlour* painted by Frank Moss Bennett in 1922, when the house had uninhabited for 80 years

The Little Parlour (1720)

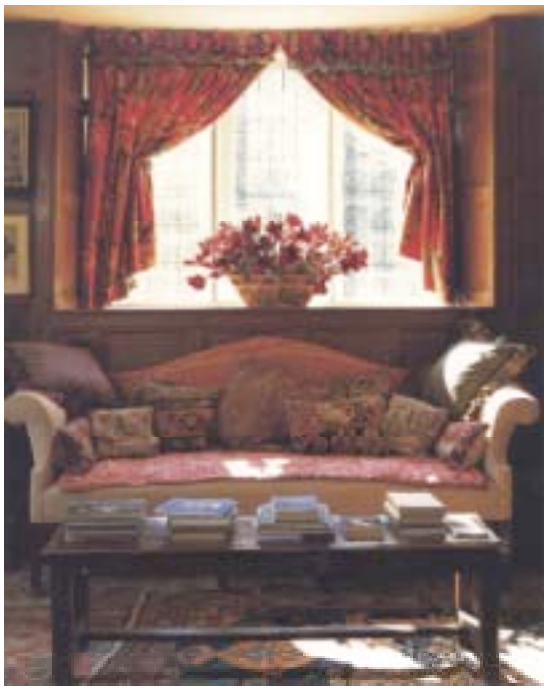
THOMAS DAUNT IV took over the Owlpen estate in 1719. His estate account book shows that he inserted the door-case, sash windows and panelling to form this elegant early Georgian interior, created within the shell of the massive walls of the old service wing at the lower end of the Hall, shortly after. The *buffet* recess to the right of the fireplace bears traces of original gilding and marbling in the shell head. The reference of Henry Fryer, the carpenter, survives stating 'he is a very good Workman and if you please to Imploy him he will do it to yr content and as wel and as Cheape as any man you can Imploy.' He was paid £7 for the 'wainscott' aneling and work to the room. The sashes were 8*s.* each, but glazing at 24*s.* seems dear. The chimney-piece cost 10*s.* The floor was raised by Norman Jewson in 1926, altering the classical proportions: the dado rail is now a few inches above the floor, and the doors cut off at the frieze rail. The room was repainted in shades of grey in 1976, a little lighter than it was in the eighteenth century, and the curtains hung. (Thomas Daunt was buying muslin and fustian for his window curtains in 1721.) This room represents the last phase of work on the house. There was a fire here in May 1981, and a burglary in 1992.

Furniture includes an eighteenth-century walnut secretaire and looking-glass in the style of Mattias Lock, with masks of Diana. There is a William and Mary arm chair in red cut velvet and an eighteenth-century Dutch marquetry chair.

Pictures include a pastel portrait (*c.* 1770) by John Russell (over the fireplace) and a portrait (far right) of Sophie Mander as *Ophelia* (1872) by the Norwegian romantic artist Nicolai Arbo. There is a series of **pictures of Owlpen:** (either side of the walnut secretaire) by Frank Moss Bennett; (north wall) by Norman Jewson, W.G. Rich, Julian Barrow, and (fireplace end) by Bennett showing this Little Parlour when the house was uninhabited in 1922.

There is a photograph of Queen Mary, avid collector and visitor of country houses, given when she visited Lady Mander at The Mount in 1939. She also visited Owlpen when she stayed at Badminton House during the War.

Now go back through the Great Hall to the upper (fireplace) end to continue to the Oak Parlour (note the carved, foliated oak spandrels to the door head).



¶ *(Above) Oak Parlour looking west*

¶ *(Below) Two Spies returning from Canaan, by Betsey Mander, c. 1770*

Oak Parlour (dated 1616)

THE DATESTONE outside on this wing is inscribed *1616 T.D.* for Thomas Daunt II. He came into possession of the manor in 1608, only after having conducted 12 years of law suits as far as the Star Chamber for possession of his inheritance against his niece, Frances, who had usurped him during his absence on his estates in Munster.

Frances was the wife of Sir John Bridgeman, who later became chief justice of Chester. After the favourable verdict, disclosing "plots and practices", the Bridgemans were ousted, and moved to Prinknash Park, now Abbey, near Gloucester.

Architecture

This is the original lord's Parlour set at the upper end of the Hall, at the time when the demand for privacy and family life had first led to the planning of such 'withdrawing' parlours and 'apart-ments', at the manorial level. The **bay window** has geometrical lead lattice lights. The **panelling** is *in situ,* in quartered oak, with naïve attempts at graining, an early example of such work, showing whorls and circles and 'rib-cage' designs. It is seen to best effect around the **fireplace.** This would have been set by the corner of the room as originally divided, with a small 'studdy' at the north end; it has Daunt graffiti on the stone surround, the dates mid-seventeenth century. Jewson's **floor,** in chestnut from the Uley saw mill, is laid with the wide butt ends reversed, tapering with the bole of the tree, dove-tail fashion, in the manner prescribed by Gimson: similar floors may be seen upstairs.

FURNITURE

Furniture is mainly early oak, seventeenth-century English, with two late Georgian sofas (one worked by Mary, Lady Mander in the 1930s) and a *pie crust* supper table. The bookcase in the bay window is by Peter van der Waals of Chalford (1924). The leather screen was given by Princess Ratibor of Prussia (now Poland).

PICTURES

Above the Stuart chest of drawers is a **tapestry panel** [see below] of *The Spies Returning from the Land of Canaan* worked by Elizabeth Mander (1752–1828), and three more pictures of *Owlpen* in the spring of 1922 by Frank Moss Bennett. The **paintings** include religious works (a 17th-century Flemish *Crucifixion* and an 18th-century Italian *Christ Child on the Cross*); an armorial panel (1627) above the fireplace; and portrait (1896) of Sir C.T. Mander by John Collier. (Sadly, an early landscape of *Mount Edgcumbe* by Samuel Scott and George Lambert was stolen in 1992.)

PRINTS

Griggs etchings are titled *Anglia Perdita* and *Memory of Clavering* (with inscriptions), and *St Botolph's, Boston* and *Ragdale Hall.* There are engravings by William Blake from *The Book of Job* and David Jones from *The Ancient Mariner* series. A series of ten small engravings and lithographs above the Stuart side table is by **Edward Calvert** (1799–1883), the follower of Blake, produced between 1827 and 1831: they represent the core of Calvert's work as a visionary and graphic artist.

¶ *(Above) Oak Parlour*
¶ *Top right, newel stairs to top attics with monk's shoe*
¶ *(Facing page, top right) Solar*
¶ *Facing page, bottom right, Solar in derelict manor in 1910*
¶ *(Facing page, bottom left) beadwork (detail)*

Go through to the far end of the room, behind the leather screen, to continue the tour to the first floor.

Upstairs

A 'good' (D. Verey) **newel stair** vice with some original timber baulk steps leads upstairs. The upper flight leads to a haunted garret. There is a **squint** window to the Hall (supposedly for ladies to view the goings-on after withdrawing). The reliquary chasse here now houses two modern puppets. The door frames (and beams) outside the Solar have distinctive pyramid and step chamfer stops.

The Solar (dated 1616)

THE SOLAR is the principal first floor chamber of the early seventeenth-century manor, off the upper (west) end of the hall. The bay window has mullions well 'out of plumb'. There are good views over the formal

parterre garden, with early Georgian gate piers and yew parlour, and the estate, with the Stuart Court House and Uley Bury iron age hill-fort (between the yew trees) to the west, and the Grist Mill, dated 1728, to the east. The wide floor-boards—also tapering—are a thin casing, cross-boarding over the older floor. There is a fragment of a stylized lily **wall-painting** (just above the skirting-board by the dressing table). The French toile material wall-covering was put up in 1976.

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The oak four-poster **marriage bed** of Margret Tana and Lück Ings is Flemish (or Wesphalian), dated 1701. The **oak table** from Norman Jewson is by Barnsley and Gimson (*c.* 1895), with characteristic 'hayrake' stretchers and 'wish-bone' tension braces. The portrait is of Jemima Mander (1791–1834) 'with a bauble'. There are tapestry pictures of The Mount and other family houses, and Mary, Lady Mander's collection of beadwork in a Davoll cabinet. Family costumes include a man's cut-velvet embroidered costume (*c.* 1760) with tricorn and 'queue' (tail) wig, Edwardian dressing-up clothes, official uniforms and footman's livery.

There is an exhibition of manorial **charters** and deeds dating from 1220, with some good medieval seal impressions. They include leases, grants and awards with indentures (where the counterparts are cut with an *indented* zig-zag line), and court rolls of the manorial Court Baron, or 'halimote', referring to feudal dues of heriot, suit of court and the rent of a red rose on the feast of St John the Baptist, etc. (There is a comprehensive collection of estate and family records both here and deposited with the Gloucester Records Office.)

Queen Margaret's Room

(mid-sixteenth century)

THIS IS THE GREAT CHAMBER, or 'Hall Chamber' (above the Great Hall). It is known traditionally as "Queen Margaret's Room" because it has been long associated with the visit of **Queen Margaret of Anjou,** wife of Henry VI, during the Wars of the Roses.

It is said to be haunted by her benign ghost, and numerous 'sightings' have been recorded. The room did not exist in its present form on May 3 1471, when the virago Queen was reputed to have visited on her way to defeat at the battle of Tewkesbury. A letter is recorded from The Prince of Wales requesting the Daunt family to help the Lancastrian cause and muster men for the battle. (The fifteenth-century stump bed, in which she allegedly slept, was here until 1927, when it was acquired by Mr Baron Ash for Packwood House, now owned by the National Trust, where it is shown in a pretended 'Queen Margaret's Room'.)

Architecture

The double door frame with depressed arch has a fine panelled door with its original furniture (and unusual escutcheon), perhaps re-used from the old Great Hall service doorway. The cross-passage behind the room has a shouldered-arch doorway at the end. It is a 'gentry' feature of status for this early period, when rooms normally led through from one to the next; a century or so later such passages would have been usual enough, and Owlpen had been eclipsed by newer and better neighbours. The fireplace (with more Daunt graffiti) has a 'floating' frieze and entablature.

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Furniture includes the four-poster bed and cheval mirror in Chippendale style, a French *Marot*-style tapestry chair, yew 'cricket' table (with three legs), Charles II walnut side-table with 'reel' turning, early oak furniture and a fine Sidney Barnsley writing cabinet in walnut and ebony.

In the show case is a family **doll** which was given to Betsey Mander in 1764, complete with her brocade gown with stomacher, under-garments, shoes, pocket, change of clothes, etc. Also shown is a pedlar's basket (*c.* 1820), collection of Midlands polished steel jewellery, Charles II **horn book** and Gimson's own working smock. A worn (so-called) **monk's shoe**, child's size, is one of a hoard found behind the painted cloths during restorations: such shoes have been recorded in old houses as tokens of good luck in folklore.

¶ *(Above and right) Queen Margaret's Room with the painted cloths*

The Painted Cloths

THE LIVELY PAINTED CLOTHS are said to be unique as a complete decorative scheme of such work still *in situ* in England. They are certainly the best example surviving of what was once a very common form of interior decoration. Frequently recorded in early wills, inventories and account books, where such cloths are valued at sixpence to a shilling a yard, they give a privileged idea of the appearance of many Tudor and Stuart interiors, before the introduction of wall-papers. Many must have been destroyed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when 'improving' and modernizing old houses.

Now only fragments of such work survive in a few provincial museums and old houses. Some appear to be from the same workshop, the backgrounds painted to standard designs from pattern books.*

Known as 'painted' or 'stained' cloths, or 'waterwork' (the technique of each may originally have been slightly different, with painters and stainers maintaining separate guilds until 1502), they were a cheaper substitute for tapestry, as here in the upstairs rooms of manor houses, or in the halls of farmhouses. They are of the kind recommended by Falstaff to Mistress Quickly, so she should pawn her 'fly-bitten tapestry':

and for thy walls, a pretty slight drollery, or the story of the Prodigal, or the German hunting in water-work *is worth a thousand of these fly-bitten tapestries* (*2 Henry IV*, II. ii).

Shakespeare refers several times to such painted cloths: Robert Arden, his grandfather, had eleven of them. Estienne Perlin, writing in 1558, remarks that 'the English use many hangings, painted cloths (*toilles pinctes*), which are well done … you can enter few houses but you find such cloths'. By John Aubrey's time, in the 1640s, they were already old fashioned and provincial.

They are first recorded in England in the mid-fourteenth century, continuing to the late seventeenth century, carefully distinguished from *tables,* or easel paintings on panels. The painted cloth was the forerunner of the painting on canvas, which was gradually to replace the painting on panel. The technique was similar to that employed for stage scenery, festival banners pageants, and designs for masques and formal mourning accoutrements.

* Notably those at the Anne of Cleves Museum at Lewes (Sussex), Yarde Farm, Kingsbridge (Devon), The White House, Munslow (Shropshire), Gainsborough Old Hall Museum (Lincolnshire), Luton Museum, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (Stratford-on-Avon) and The Victoria and Albert Museum (from Bentley, Hampshire).

These are painted in distemper, a tempera technique where the earth pigments are bound with glue size, on 42-inch unbleached canvas-linen strips. Duty marks stamped on the back date them to after 1712: ten years later they are recorded at Owlpen.

They were cleaned by Elsie Matley Moore (of The Greyfriars, Worcester, which she left to The National Trust) and removed here from the (higher) east bedroom in 1964, so losing their bottom border. She had made a full-scale facsimile of them for the National Monuments Record during the War, writing an article for *Country Life* in 1944.

Further copies have been made, using original techniques, for display in historic interiors recently. They include The Priest's House Museum, Wimborne (Dorset), the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and Blakesley Hall (West Midlands).

They illustrate naïve and graceful scenes from the life of **Joseph and his brothers:-**

West wall (left of fireplace):
Joseph in his 'coat of many colours' (or 'long robe with sleeves') is admired by the senior Jacob (with beard and hat) in the Vale of Hebron.

East wall (opposite door):
To the left, Joseph is lifted out of the pit by his brothers (dressed in smocks); to the right, the Ishmaelites from Gilead, wearing fur-trimmed doublets and hats (the anachronism signifying their merchant status), with a 'Cotswold' camel 'laden with spicery' by the window.

North wall (behind bed):
Two of Joseph's brothers sell him to the Midianite traders for 20 pieces of silver, among sheep of their flock (and a sheep dog) in the pasture; note a dove high up to the left.

The background is a stylized arrangement of conical hills, white farmsteads, flowers, foliage, cedars, palms and other trees representing the Holy Land.

¶ *(Above left) painted cloths, east wall*

¶ *(Right) painted cloth details*

The Garden

(sixteenth to early eighteenth centuries)

THE GARDEN at Owlpen is an unusually complete survival of an early formal garden on a manorial scale. It has been described by Sir Geoffrey Jellicoe as possibly the earliest domestic garden in England to survive in something approaching completeness. And, however that may be, certainly many visitors find the medieval atmosphere, and sense of romance and mystery, are overwhelming, with yew rooms, hanging terraces linked by gravel paths and uncomfortably steep steps, and always the hill impending steeply at its back.

The garden has been visited, admired and written about by some of the last century's most inspired gardeners, including Gertrude Jekyll, Vita Sackville-West and Jellicoe himself. Gertrude Jekyll describes the lay-out, giving details, with plans [see left], views and sections, in the book she co-authored with Lawrence Weaver, *Gardens for Small Country Houses* (1914).

Then Vita Sackville-West described the garden between the Wars as 'a dream', one of 'the places one has seen and loved', whose yew rooms were precursors to those in her great garden at Sissinghurst:

> *Owlpen, that tiny grey manor-house, cowering amongst its enormous yews, yews that make rooms in the garden with walls taller than any rooms in the house; dark, secret rooms of yew hiding in the slope of the valley.* (*English Country Houses,* 1941.)

Geoffrey Jellicoe was moved by the *Englishness* of the Owlpen garden, with its medieval sense of mystery, intensified by the yews, and delightful simplicity and scale of plan, carefully recording a number of drawings, plans and

bird's-eye views [see p. 24] as a young landscape architect in 1926.

The **medieval garden** is enclosed within the coped stone walls, still suggesting the *hortus conclusus* of the semi-fortified manor of the fifteenth century emerging into an age of increasing peace and prosperity. As Jellicoe noted, the half-acre core of the garden is certainly Tudor, with early Stuart additions. To the south and west it is laid out on the earliest principle, a repetition in plan of the forms of the façades projected either side onto the ground, with the Yew Parlour set in the angle between them.

In the seventeenth century—and, particularly, under Thomas Daunt IV from 1719 onwards—the garden was reordered and classicized: 'terrasses', 'platts' and raised walks were reformed, and parterres laid out with strong axial symmetry. The main axis leads up from the flight of fine **semi-circular steps**, through the panelled stone gate piers to the centre gable of the south front. The gates were flanked by the original wooden palisade, costing £3 15*s.* 4*d.* in 1723, until the 1940s. Thomas Daunt's plantings from 1721 to 1730 are well documented for a garden of this size: he mentions pinks, Catherine peach, fool's coat tulips, a dutch herb, box edging and a holly tree. He recommends: "for y^{e} pile, y^{e} herb *linaria* [toadflax] prepared as an ointment". He bought a pair of "garden shiers" (and scythe) for 4*s.* 6*d.*, also in 1723, no doubt to trim the maturing yews.

The **Yew Parlour** (at various times known as the 'Green Drawing-Room', the 'Ballroom', 'Dancing Floor' or 'Wilderness') was probably planted by him, the small yews as accents in a formal parterre by the loggia of the **Court House**, known then as the *Summer House*, a Stuart gazebo, which also overlooks the lane. It already has its present form on the first engravings of the early nineteenth century. It is an 'unusual feature', wrote Gertrude Jekyll, 'the result of many years of growth and patient tending'.

¶ *Bird's-eye view of garden* drawn by Jack Shepherd, 1927

Nineteenth Century

The Manor was abandoned shortly after 1815, until a new mansion was built on the hills, with picturesque Reptonian prospects, evergreens, clumps and shelter belts, at the other end of the estate, a mile away. But the gardens were kept up, when labour was plentiful, and we find the manor described as a "garden house", with a caretaker/gardener living in part of the east wing, giving the topiary yews their annual tonsure and maintaining the walled kitchen gardens, with their superior soil and fertility, for the 'Big House'.

Victorian photographs show the yews neatly trimmed, the garden carefully tended as a destination for picnics and after-church excursions for house parties. Four yew pylons in front came to dominate and conceal the manor house, which cowered, as Vita Sackville-West described it, amongst them. When they were removed in the 1950s, Christopher Hussey wrote a teasing verse to the then owner, lamenting the passing of the 'introvert Owlpen of yore … though I like yew, I really love *you* even more'.

"The garden is one of the finest and most satisfying things of its kind anywhere to be found." HAROLD EBERLEIN

The garden retained its old-world charm after Jewson's restoration, becoming widely recognised. The American architectural writer, Harold Eberlein, wrote in 1927:

The garden in which Owlpen Manor House is set, and with which it is so inseparably associated, is one of the finest and most satisfying things of its kind anywhere to be found … straight-forward and simple and completely convincing in its coherence of form and logical arrangement.

Today

The present 'Old English' garden has been recreated by the owners among open lawns and a field since 1980, with box hedges enclosing quarters of *English* parterres —having plots of grass—like those in the

Stoke Edith tapestries, or Kip engravings. The planting is traditional, with herbs and aromatics, old shrub roses and cottage garden favourites, and the box, holly, juniper, Portuguese laurels, phillyrea and yew replanted, as well as formal features—a stilt hedge and pleached allée—in lime and hornbeam, and sculpture by Simon Verity.

The design makes use of old plans and records, suggesting an early garden reordered conservatively at the turn of the eighteenth century, just when the formal tradition was about to be swept away, in fashionable gardens, by the landscape garden. The mill pond walk recalls the early Georgian Elysium of rills and meandering paths. Shelter belts were planted with 2000 native trees (another of Jewson's hobby horses) for the Millennium.

Symbolism and Design

The theme of the hanging gardens on seven terraces was said to represent the Seven Gardens of Paradise. The twelve yews of the Yew Parlour symbolised the Twelve Apostles, like those at Packwood House: the four that once stood in front of the house were said to represent the Evangelists. Nineteenth-century commentators extended such correspondences in a way which today seems whimsical. . .

The **architectural form**, with the house and garden closely interlinked—the terraces rising in tiers, like a medieval vision of Babylon, edged with box and accented with clipped yews—was also intended to be seen as set in the landscape, from across the valley in front of the house. From here, in its 'narrow hand-carved valley' (as the poem by Ursula Fanthorpe describes it), it has a sculptural quality as a whole, which would have been more pronounced before the outsize Yew Parlour obscured the terraces behind.

The group is entirely enfolded by hills, writes Geoffrey Jellicoe,

as though the design has grown from the hillside … similar to the idea of growth in Gothic architecture … for this early garden is better related, in its romantic setting, than that of any other period to the countryside in which it stands.

¶ *The garden door* painted by F.M. Bennett in May 1922

The Outbuildings

THE MANOR HOUSE has acquired its dependent outbuildings over the centuries which form with it an unusually complete and changeless manorial ensemble. The manor nestles in a harmonious group, with the Court House (1620s), Grist Mill (medieval; rebuilt 1728), Great Barn (mid-fifteenth century) and Church (of medieval origins, rebuilt 1828/9 and 1874).

The interiors of the Court House and Grist Mill are not *normally open to the public. The Church is usually open with the manor: it is still in use and does* not *belong to the Estate.*

The Court House

THIS DIGNIFIED Stuart garden building is early seventeenth century, no doubt completing the same phase of building works as the nearby west wing of the manor (begun by Thomas Daunt II in 1616). It was converted to provide a little holiday cottage in 1978, 'a miracle of contrivance' (Hilary Steuert). It adjoins the manor gardens, flanking the composition well known from so many illustrated books on the Cotswolds.

Set as a banqueting house, or gazebo, with views over the lane and (originally) the parterre garden, it is called *The Summerhouse* in Thomas Daunt IV's records. It is traditionally known as the Court House, because here the successive lords of the manor of Owlpen are said to have held their **Court Leet**, or halimote, trying their servants and tenants for petty offences (like neglectful hedging and ditching, or cattle trespass), and also administering the Custom of the manor, recording the deaths of copyhold tenants and collecting their fees, rents and dues. Court rolls survive among the muniments at Owlpen. (The Court may have been held in the Hall of the manor house itself, here formerly known as *The Court.*) Thomas Daunt IV was still demanding heriot in May 1729, writing to one of his tenants 'I desire you will deliver to Michael Pasloe the best of your beasts & such as he shall choose.'

It is screened to the east by the mighty phalanx of the Yew Parlour. There is a baroque sundial on the south wall and oval bull's-eye windows in the gables. **Inside**, on the ground floor is a little loggia, the opening divided by a column 'of Tuscan simplicity' (C. Hussey). It frames here the view of the east wing of the manor house and its yew trees seen in the F.L. Griggs etching. The *necessary house* was also at this level, with a 'double decker' seat. A spiral staircase, excessively narrow, leads to a sitting-room in the old *Justice Room* on the first floor.

The Grist Mill

A mill is recorded at Owlpen in 1280. Then we hear, in an arbitration award that survives in the manor, that in 1464, Jane de Olepenne, the last of the medieval de Olepennes, after a protracted law-suit over her inheritance, agreed to pay 13*s*. 4*d*. towards the cost of rebuilding it. But the present building is largely the result of a further restoration by

Thomas Daunt IV, who records repairs begun on June 3 1728. He clearly intended this manorial corn mill, with its elaborate lantern, 'frivolous' (John Julius Norwich) cupola with flattened ogee lead roof and classical proportions, to be something of an *eye-catcher* feature at the end of his kitchen garden, rather than a purely run-of-the-mill agricultural building.

Thomas's account books show that he was anxious to make a profit on the enterprise, having taken account of the personal benefit of the miller for general duties: 'I suppose y^e^ millers work for me besides his tending y^e^ mill will pay for y^e^ keeping y^e^ horse … y^e^ repair of the mill & for carriadge of grist to & fro'. He prepares annual accounts, computing the corn sold in 1728, a bumper year, at £34 5*s.* 8*d.*, less the miller's wages at £13 a year, leaving a healthy profit: 'I did not put the Corn ground for my house in y^e^ above acct w[hi]ch at 1 bushel of wheat pr week at 4d per bushel is £0 17*s.* 4*d.*' Thus his yield of corn in 1728 was equivalent to some 80 imperial tons. In 1733 a millwright was paid 5*s.* 6*d.* for 'a shaft for y^e^ Cog wheel'.

Its intriguing mechanisms continued to grind meal through famine (when it was doled to the poor) and plenty to 1914. Then it pumped water, from the abundant springs that still feed the pond behind and the Ewelme brook that rises up the valley, to Owlpen House, the Victorian mansion whose ruins —and outhouses—still stand on the dry plateau above the Owlpen valley.

The leadwork and timber in the cupola were renewed in 1965, when over a hundredweight of honey was extracted. The mill building was carefully restored as a holiday cottage in 1978. Inside, the **machinery**, mainly nineteenth century, for bolting, cleaning and winnowing the corn was preserved, with the gantry and pulley for the sack-hoist on the top floor, and some original gearing, traps (now glazed) and chutes. An array of pulley, cord and chain holes, strap slits and empty mortise holes convey how much the machinery used in corn milling was integral to the building itself. On the attic floor is a cat-walk giving access to the grain bins. The cupola is partly functional, giving extra height for manoeuvring the sacks.

Outside is the tranquil **mill pond**, with its pan-trough, sluice and race, and a decaying water wheel which it is hoped may be salvaged. The old wheel was still turning after the last War.

The Great Barn

Inside the barn are raised **cruck trusses**, like a sturdy A-frame, whose characteristic kneed blades date it to the fifteenth century. They are yoked by arch-braced collars and key blocks, with slip tenons and cruck spur ties, similar in construction to some in the eastern wing of the manor, which probably date to the time of the last of the medieval de Olepennes.

The barn is a manorial barn, not properly a 'tithe barn' in the sense that it was ever used for the collection and storage of ecclesiastical tithes. It has six bays, and is described in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century documents as the *Cyder House,* retaining the cider mill-stones in the body of the barn until restoration works in the 1960s—these are now, alas, distributed as ornaments about the garden.

The massive wooden **Cider Press** still witnesses the centuries when orcharding was common in these sheltered valleys, and

throughout the Severn Vale. There are few original timber presses surviving: this one probably dates to the early eighteenth century—there are records of cider being made here in 1733—and must be one of the oldest in the area. There are two massive hursts of wood, uprights still with bark (known as *cheeks* or *sisters*), and an oak block and screw. The apples were pulped to pomace in a circular mill trough (called the *chase*) which stood in the centre of the barn. The vertical crushing stone (the *runner* or *bruising stone*), mounted on an axle, was turned by a pony. *Cheeses* of pulp were then wrapped in hair cloths to put on the bed of the press, several parcels, layered in a pile, at one pressing, and the juice collected in a trough for fermentation. (Note there are still old 'squash' varieties of perry pears in the orchard outside.)

There are records that the barn was re-roofed in the late eighteenth century: in July 1795 Thomas Daunt VI bought '2,000 tyles for y^{e} great barn & stable'. The west end was walled off to form a coach house, with tallet hay loft (and groom's quarters) over. Carriage licenses survive entitling Thomas Daunt to keep two- (1762) and four-wheeled carriages (1778 and 1781) 'for privet use'. He bought a 'bay Mare five years Old 14.3' for 17 guineas in 1787 and two horse blankets for the cold in December at £2. Other outbuildings were demolished in the 1960s, when the barn was again re-roofed and repaired, with grant aid.

The barn would have been entered by the gabled wagon porch to the south (blocked up also in the eighteenth century). Opposite was another pair of doors to create the cross-draught for threshing. The slit high up in the gable end outside gives access to a pigeon loft: inside are ranks of nesting boxes, approached through a door from the gallery. It would have been a privilege of the lord of the manor to keep pigeons; unpopular, as they would eat the crops cultivated by his tenants. The ventilation slits were necessary in a garner used for the storage of grain for the mill.

The barn was used well into the 1980s for the storage of wool bales from the farm, for lambing, apple storage (in the flat) and informal parties; and doves continued to breed and gather—much as it had been used centuries before. It was restored and limewashed as a restaurant with catering kitchens, this time with European Union grant aid, in 1993.

¶ *Two views of Cyder House restaurant in the fifteenth-century barn, showing the cider press*

The Church of the Holy Cross

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS (or 'St Cross') stands just above the manor house, as if presiding over it. Among a cluster of Cotswold stone buildings which otherwise entirely antedates the Industrial Revolution, the widely-cherished Victorian church has mellowed as an unassuming adjunct. It is entered from the manor garden by the **lych gate** (of 1892) whose Saxon superscription, *This is the field and acre of our God*, seems to echo a challenge to the landscape around.

Owlpen Church has medieval origins as the rest of the group of buildings, for on this site Olla would have set up a church-yard cross (one is recorded in the eighteenth century) in his *pen*. Yet little enough remains above the foundation courses of the old chapel as it was before the eighteenth century. Contemporary accounts of the simple cottagy building, 'of little architectural character', which it has usurped and all but obliterated, disparage its mean and humble appearance. T.D. Fosbrooke wrote in 1807:
a very rude church…consists of a chancel and Nave, with a small low spire at the West end.

Such was the chapel-of-ease to the manor house and estate, adequate to serve the lord and his family, servants and tenants, together with the two freeholders and 'thirteen weavers of Owlpen'. The old chapel had been annexed to the parish of Bagpath, some three miles away (now with a redundant church), where most of the Owlpen lands lay, so that the Owlpen benefice was a dependent chapelry of the Bagpath rectory.

It had been used by the de Olepennes and Daunts almost as their private possession, with their privilege to worship in the chancel, much to the disgust of the rectors of Bagpath. In 1626, the Bishop of Gloucester was invoked to reconcile a quarrel between the then rector and Thomas Daunt of Owlpen and enjoined them 'to be and continue Lovers and kinde Friendes'. In 1650, the visiting Archdeacon, describing Parson Venn as "a painful Minister", recommended that Owlpen be united with Uley. This happened only in 1842, since when the united benefice has always been referred to locally as 'Uley cum Owlpen'.

¶ *(Below) chancel reredos by Powells, 1886–7*

In 1736, Thomas Daunt IV restored Owlpen Chapel, including major works at the west end, at a cost of £35 12*s.* 9*d.* His son, Kingscote, later officiated as curate of Owlpen (and Wickwar) from 1748 to 1753. Kingscote's mother, born a Millington Synge and related to half the Irish clergy, entreated her kinsmen, the bishops of Kilaloe and Elphin, to find him a better living in Ireland 'that his Subsistence might be more competent and his Situation more agreeable'. This was in vain for, although a 'sober and well inclin'd young Man', he had persistent ill health and an impediment in his speech, and died young.

By the turn of the nineteenth century, at the height of the prosperity of the Stroudwater weaving industry, the old chapel, with its 'auditory' or preaching-church plan, had become 'wonderfully small', according to Parson Cornwall, for a population of 'nearly 400'; it was 'in a sad state of decay and neglect', and its internal arrangements out of sympathy with the changing ideals of the liturgy:

the Songsters (as the singers called themselves) sat within the Communion Rails, making use of the table for their hats, instruments and books.

So it was 'rebuilt and enlarged' in 1828/9 under the architect **Samuel Manning**. The present wide, aisleless **nave**, with its coved plaster ceiling, is all that survives of this early Victorian reconstruction. The handsome fret ceiling of moulded timber is panelled with reticulated ribs and foliated bosses of 1831.

Fundamentally the old chapel survived. It had a prominent double-decker pulpit and reading desk, west gallery, high box pews 'facing away from the east', the squire's pew 'like a little room' to the south and the vestry projecting from the east wall with a commandment board forming the door to the nave, so that the priest could only enter by 'breaking the whole of the Commandments'.

In 1874 the chapel was restored in the full spirit of eclectic high-church Victorianism by **J.P. St Aubyn** (1815–95). The aisleless nave was refaced outside, repewed and given its present arrangement of **windows**, with the best Early English and Decorated styles authentically juxtaposed. The buttressed apsidal chancel was added as the richest part of the scheme, with its open timber roof, and moulded chancel arch (with rather weak responds). After the full restoration had been completed at a cost of 'about £1,000', and the chapel had been elevated to a church through the munificence of Stoughton patronage (they paid £600 of the cost), the building was reconsecrated with due ceremony by the lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol on February 19 1875.

An inscription records that the **chancel** was 'beautified' with **mosaics** in 1886–7. The neo-Byzantine work in mosaic and opus sectile was designed by Charles Hardgrave and executed by Italian craftsmen working for James Powell & Sons of the Whitefriars Glass Works, with an alabaster reredos and aumbry. The ceiling is richly painted with star-patterns and sun-bursts on a blue ground and the sanctuary floor has good encaustic tiles by Godwin of

Lugwardine (for whom St Aubyn designed). The organ (1890) is by Jardine of Manchester.

The chancel **stained glass windows** are typical of Lavers, Baraud & Westlake, and the nave windows are by Heaton, Butler & Bayne (1894–1909). Only the three west windows are by Powells (1912), most notably the *Presentation* in the Baptistery.

They date to Wadling's replacement in 1912 of a tiny bell-cote by a **tower** at the west end, with diagonal buttresses and embattled parapet. The old bell was recast and rehung. A **baptistery** below was created to accommodate the Norman **font,** rescued from use as a cattle-trough—all that effectively survives from the medieval church—and installed on a new base. The baptistery was enriched with mosaics and opus sectile by Powell at a cost of £400, with triumphal angels, standard rose trees and lilies: even the stone splays of the windows are inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and the floor and dado set with mosaic tiles suggesting Art Nouveau. The chancel **rood screen** also dates to 1912. In 1897 the half-timbered south porch was added to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee.

The **plate** includes a chalice and paten of the seventeenth century. The **parish registers** begin in 1686. A note in one tersely records: *Nov. 14th 1784 Richard Tansey of this parish was excommunicated. John Gregory Curate.*

The eight Daunt **brasses**, dating from 1542, had been removed by St Aubyn from the floor of the old chapel to their present position on the north wall of the nave; together with the later tablets, including a classical one by King of Bath to Thomas Daunt IV (died 1748). They commemorate the families which, by lineal descent, held the Manor and lordship for close on a thousand years until 1924,

Owlpen Church is a shrine to their dynastic pride. Richly textured, it is today, according to David Verey, 'the most elaborate Victorian-Edwardian interior in the Cotswolds'.

¶ *Chancel with mosaics by James Powell & Sons, designed by Charles Hardgrave, 1886–7*

The Owlpen Estate

THE MANOR STILL POSSESSES its demesne, or *pen*; its own sheltered valley hemmed about with beech hangers, insulating it from the modern world and making it 'a perfect example of a small Cotswold estate' (Ordnance Survey *Guide*). All the topographical writers have commented on the remarkable combe, or *bottom*, as the local word has it, set under the *Edge* in a mystery land of deeply wooded valleys between the 'high, wild hills' of the Cotswold uplands and the gentler Vale of Berkeley. John Smyth writes (in 1639):

Owlpen*, the situation giving the denomination … quasi* hole-pen*, being in as deep a bottom or* hole *as is elsewhere to be seen. It may perhaps like some to derive the Etimology from* Owlepen, *quasi a* pen *or Cage for* owles*; sith noe forest made up of Ivy bushes can exceed the fitness for the breed and harbour of owles.*

Samuel Rudder of Uley (1779) describes the valley as "a kind of gloomy retreat":

The church and houses lie dispersedly at the top of a deep and narrow combe, almost environed by steep hills, covered with hanging beech woods, and forming a kind of amphitheatre, except to the west.

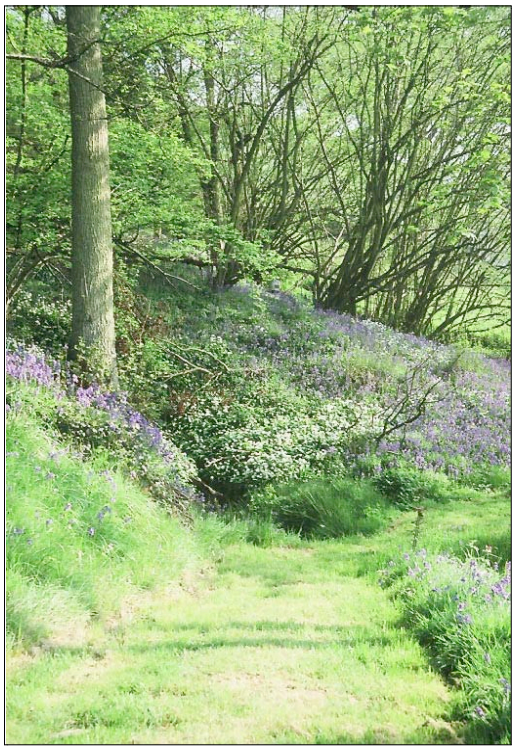
T.D. Fosbrooke (1807) finds Owlpen

a singularly romantic and sequestered spot which it owes to a half dilapidated Court House overrun with ivy, a rude church, no buildings, but now and then a simple cottage of thatch, deep dells, amphitheatres of steep acclivities, clothed with fine wood, and interjacent knolls of heath, producing a paucity of enclosure, the ruin of the picturesque.

Traces of strip lynchets dating from medieval times surround the valley and the boundaries of the "open fields" can still be seen on the Down at the top of the valley. Livestock **farming** and **forestry** enterprises are administered from the manor, with award-winning beef produced for sale. For a long time there were local breeds of Gloucester cattle and Cotswold and Hebridean sheep.

The estate lies on Jurassic limestone, and is run largely for amenity and conservation, where organic farming methods are employed. The forestry consists of traditional stands of Cotswold edge beech and ash, designated 'ancient semi-natural woodland', fringing the steep slopes of the escarpment. Its boundaries are much the same today as on the earliest eighteenth-century records. There are prolific wildflowers, including rare orchids and pasque flowers, and glowworms and butterflies associated with the unimproved, species-rich meadowland. Wildlife abounds: badgers, roe deer and foxes; there are buzzards and sparrow hawks, herons, ravens, kingfishers and, of course, the fabled owls of Owlpen.

"Owlpen … the epitome of the English village." HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES



There is a number of period **cottages** on the estate, the old dependencies and farmhouses of the feudal manor, in addition to the listed buildings around the manor house. Others were sold off in the 1920s. 'Owlpen is the epitome of the English village', writes HRH The Prince of Wales. Old weavers', keepers' and gardeners' cottages have been restored since 1974 and furnished with antiques and four-poster beds as holiday cottages, run in the style of a country house hotel and let to an international clientele returning to Owlpen from Alaska to Tasmania. The cottages have been described (by *The Sunday Times*) as constituting "a Gloucestershire Shangri-la" and (by *The Guardian*) as "some of the best available in Britain today".

"A singularly romantic and sequestered spot."
T.D. FOSBROOKE (1807)

There are about five miles of **footpaths** on the estate, with beautiful and varied walks through the beech woods, thick with bluebells and wild garlic in the spring, along the meadows of the Ewelme valley and the Cotswold edge. They interconnect with a system of public footpaths, including the Cotswold Way long-distance path, extending through infinite miles of spectacular country.

Visitors to the manor are welcome to enjoy popular walks through the woods behind the manor to Nympsfield and Uley Bury, across the fields to Stouts Hill, or along the carriage drive to Owlpen House.

Vestiges of **Owlpen House** still stand on the top of the scarp, at the end of the estate, by the Nympsfield carriage drive which leads to the Wotton-under-Edge to Nailsworth road. The House was demolished in 1957, but the trappings of a Victorian great house remain: two lodges, the stable block, ruined glass-houses and walled gardens, a gas works with retort house, a lily pond, and cellars. Victorian plantings, shelter belts, shrubberies and clumps, are now well past their maturity. The Ewelme brook rises at Twopence Spring at the head of the valley, below a bronze age round barrow.

Owlpen is now something of a 'deserted village', nettles marking the sites of many old cottages and gardens, along Fiery Lane and in the woods. The adult **population** of the Civil Parish is about 35 on the electoral roll (1994), perhaps a tenth of its peak at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The **Church of the Holy Cross** (Church of England) does *not* belong to the estate. It is still in use, with services regularly on alternate Sundays.

¶ *(Left and below) Views of the Owlpen valley*

¶ *Garret in the west wing of the Old Manor*
by Frank Moss Bennett, 1922

The Gas Works

The practical techniques for using coal gas for domestic lighting were pioneered by William Murdoch (1754–1839), who first employed gas for lighting his house in Redruth, Cornwall, in 1792. Murdoch was an employee of the Birmingham partnership of Matthew Boulton and James Watt, who had sent the young Scottish engineer to develop applications for the new steam engine technology for pumping in the Cornish tin and copper mines in 1779–98. By 1799 they were demonstrating a gas lighting plant at their Soho engineering works in Birmingham. In 1805, George Lee was the first to order gas plant from Boulton and Watt for lighting his cotton works in Manchester.[1] The early gas industry grew rapidly, often pioneered by industrialists.[2]

The Boulton family was later connected by marriage to the Stoughton family of Owlpen, through the Robb family of Great Tew, Oxfordshire. Thomas Anthony Stoughton I (1790–1862) came into the Owlpen estate on his marriage to Mary Daunt, the last of her line, in 1815.

Their son Thomas Anthony Stoughton II took over the estate in 1862, and it was probably he who shortly afterwards installed the gas works for lighting the mansion house and stable courtyard (where a rusty lantern remains in situ).[3] The Owlpen stable block is a substantial courtyard building built in two phases in the middle of the nineteenth century. It has a later clock turret and arched entrance lodge with good Gothic revival detailing.

[1] Samuel Clegg, who had been a pupil at the Soho works, installed gas lighting at a cotton mill near Halifax also in 1805 according to King's *Treatise on Gas Works*, vol. 1, 1874.

[2] John Mander, chemical manufacturer, is typical. He was the first to manufacture gas in Wolverhampton (before 1819), where he was to use it in lighting his factory and in the various chemical processes which required gas as a heat source. The gas plant was still in use in the 1870s. Then with his nephew Benjamin Parton Mander he was promoter of the Wolverhampton Gas Light Company in June 1820, when city fathers were clubbing together to supply gas to the growing manufacturing towns created by the industrial revolution.

[3] The site of the works is not recorded on the Tithe Map of 1839, but a building on the site (not the gas holder) is marked on a survey of the Owlpen estate of 1868 (with revisions to 1871).

Owlpen

The Owlpen gas works now lies in ruins and lost in woodland near the eastern boundary of the estate. It was built by George Bower, of The Vulcan Works in St Neot's (Bedfordshire). It is listed in July 1874 on a advertisement of country house gas works constructed by his firm, with others for B.S. Holford, MP, at Westonbirt, Tetbury, and Major-Gen. Lord Bridport at Cricket St. Thomas, Chard. Other installations by Bower not mentioned include those for the Duke of Buckingham at Stowe, Bucks., the Duke of Marlborough at Blenheim Palace, and the Dowager Duchess of Northumberland at Stanwick Hall, Darlington.

Bower was declared bankrupt in 1880, when he was owed some £70,000 by a gas works company in Brazil. He is known to have been involved in Brazil with installations at Rio Grande do Sol, Olinda, Porto Alegre and Pelotas. Another overseas scheme was at Christchurch, New Zealand, where the gas company was founded in 1864, with the retorts, purifiers, gas meter and gasholder bell supplied by Bower.

The Owlpen gas works comprises a gas house remaining in fair repair with a chimney stack and the vaulting of twin furnaces over ash pits. The construction is brick and fire-brick, with some stone quoin work. Only the foundations and footings of the coal stores, yard and gas holder remain, and most of the retort house has suffered from the damage caused by years of vegetation growth, three walls and whatever roof structure there may have been having fallen in. There is likely to have been a lime repository, a spent lime shed and a tar pit or tank. Water was supplied from a pump in the Grist Mill by the Old Manor.

The left hand (east) furnace is large, lined with fire clay bricks: there is no sign of tar deposit, here or round the chimney, or of corbelling to support an iron retort, indicating that it could have been used for manufacturing gas by distillation from wood fuel supplied from the estate woodland, as Bower had done in gas works installed by him on the European Continent. The centre for wood distillation in England from 1804 was Worksop. A second factory operated at Warminster for some years and a third factory at Speech House Road in the Forest of Dean still worked in 1961, yielding pyroligneous acid and charcoal as well as wood gas.

Extant gas works in a country house/private estate context are rare.[4] Gas as a means of domestic lighting had a relatively brief period of use. It developed mainly after the invention of regenerative burners (1853–4), which made gas manufacture on a domestic scale more efficient and economical. Gas was being replaced by electricity by the 1880s: Cragside (National Trust) of 1880 is often cited as one of the first examples. Certainly by the mid-1890s gas was antiquated in fashionable houses, although suppliers of country house gas works were still advertising in 1911.[5]

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[4] The gas works at Culzean Castle, Ayrshire, dating from the 1850s, is thought to be one of the only other survivors. Very little of the works itself remained, principally the gas master's cottage, and it was badly damaged when converted for acetylene gas *circa* 1900. The chimney and furnace are a reconstruction to original plans from ground level, using new hand-made bricks, to create an interpretation centre for the work of Murdoch, who was born near Lugar locally, for the bi-centenary of his development of gas lighting in 1992.

A municipal gas works is exhibited at Biggar, Lanarkshire, managed by the Royal Museums of Scotland, and there is display material at Leeds City Art Museum in connection with an exhibition held at Lotherton Hall, Aberford, West Yorkshire. Saltram House, Devon (NT), retains good gas light fittings. Other rural estate-scale gas works are recorded at: Combe Hay Manor, south of Bath (in use until 1939), Quarry Bank Cotton Mill at Styal, Cheshire (NT), Shobdon Court, Herefordshire, and Hinton St George and Tyntesfield (NT), both in Somerset.

The Manders were installing electricity in their Staffordshire houses in the early 1890s, where both Wightwick Manor and The Mount had electrical plants and dynamos.

[5] See M. Humphrys, *Construction and Management of Small Gasworks*, 1911.

History of Owlpen and its owners

OWLPEN (pronounced locally "Ole-pen") derives its name, it is thought, from the Saxon thane, **Olla**, who first set up his *pen*, or enclosure, by the springs that rise under the foundations, in the ninth century. The origins of the manor may be earlier, dating to Romano-British settlement of the area. The site of the present manor house is described as 'early medieval' (Pevsner).

The immediate area has many signs of earlier settlement. There are sites of round barrows and standing stones within a short walk of the manor. **Uley Bury**—the long, bare, flat-topped hill which shields the manor from the west wind—is an impressive multi-vallate, scarp-edge hill-fort of the middle iron age (say, 300 BC), commanding spectacular views over the Severn Vale. Nearby is **Hetty Pegler's Tump**, renamed 'Uley Long Barrow', one of the best preserved middle neolithic chambered long barrows of the Cotswold-Severn group (2,900–2,400 BC).

Between the manor and Uley Bury is the **West Hill** Romano-Celtic temple complex. Careful excavation in 1976–9 revealed a religious site of neolithic origins which maintained continuing importance through four millennia. They yielded the head of its titular god of Mercury; a masterpiece, 'one of the most important Roman sculptures to be found in Britain' (*The Times*), which is now in the British Museum. Other finds, include a hoard of over 200 sheet-lead curses.

The Owlpen estate has a recorded history of close on a thousand years, well documented for a manor of its size, whose owners were squires residing, far from typically in the earlier medieval period, on their own manor. Despite many reversals, they were never alienated from it; nor was it bought or sold before the twentieth century. Its history connects it with a number of old families, houses and estates throughout south west England, as well as Ireland, and with talented artists and writers and famous visitors.

¶ de Olepenne marriage settlement, c. 1220

de Olepenne family (1100–1462)

By 1174, the **de Olepenne** family had already been settled here for two generations, no doubt calling themselves after the place. We have records of at least ten successive generations holding uninterrupted possession as lords of the manor of Owlpen. They became local landowners of some importance, acquiring land holdings in neighbouring parishes from Tetbury to Cam and Coaley, and occur as suitors and litigants, as benefactors to the local abbeys and hospitals. They were faithful henchmen to their feudal overlords, the Berkeleys of Berkeley Castle, whose charters they regularly attested, whose wills they administered as executors (as in

1281) and with whom they served on crusades and military campaigns.

The de Olepennes were pious ecclesiastical benefactors. In the twelfth century, the father of Bartholomew "de Holepenna" died clothed in the habit of the Benedictine monks of St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester. Bartholomew confirmed his father's gift of a hide of land to the Abbey in 1174 (with his son Simon's consent) and was a benefactor also to St Bartholomew's Hospital, Gloucester; in 1227, a James de Olepenne was attorney to the abbots of Cirencester; and John de Olepenne was a benefactor to St Bartholomew's Hospital again in 1325.

In 1329 John de Olepenne III was made a ward, in his *nonage*, of the local landowner, Walter de Cheltenham. In 1350 he was threatened with being 'distrayned in his lands', but let off 'because he continued many years beyond the seas with Maurice de Berkeley', probably accompanying his overlord in Aquitaine and on the French Crécy-Calais campaigns of 1346–7. (Maurice was taken prisoner after Poitiers, until his ransom was paid in 1361.) He lengthened the vowel of his name to 'Owlepenne', from which the corruption *Owlpen* (or even 'Wolpen') developed in the next century.

Robert Owlepenne II sold Melksham Court, Stinchcombe, which he had inherited through marriage with the de Mylkesham family, to Sir Walter de la Pole in 1413. His successor, John (owner 1441–62), was a man of substance, farming the alnage (as an inspector of cloth) for Gloucestershire with Thomas Tanner of Dursley, and defeating the powerful Berkeleys in a suit over property in Cam.

His granddaughter Margery was his heiress and the last of the medieval de Olepennes. Her guardian, Richard Basset of Uley, and her grandmother, Jane, squabbled over the inheritance and had recourse to litigation, Jane pleading her case before the Lord Chancellor, George Neville. A resulting award of 1464 survives in the manor, including a provision for Richard to repair the mill, while Jane was to pay 13*s*. 4*d*. towards the cost. Above the foundation courses, only the great barn and four bays of the present east wing of the manor—all with similar cruck trusses—date from the time of these last of de Olepennes.

Daunt family (1462–1815)

Margery de Olepenne married **John Daunt,** a member of a merchant family established in Wotton-under-Edge since the time of Edward II. Earlier in the century, Nicholas Daunt had married Alice, daughter of Sir William de Tracy, ancestor of the Sudeleys of Stanway and Toddington. John's father, also John, born about 1420, was a Lancastrian, a lawyer at Barnard's Inn in Holborn in 1446, and elected to the Parliament of 1449–50 for the borough of Wotton Bassett, by which time he had perhaps entered the service of the Crown. He married Anne, daughter of Sir Robert Stawell, ancestor of the lords Stawell of Somerton. In 1451 he was appointed Keeper of the Royal Park at Mere in Wiltshire, and the following year he was promoted from King's Sergeant and Groom to the position of Yeoman of the Crown, with a salary of sixpence a day from the issues of Wiltshire. In 1462, in the worst days after Towton, a commission was issued for the arrest of Daunt and others, including the vicar of Mere, 'evil-disposed persons, and adherents to Henry VI'.

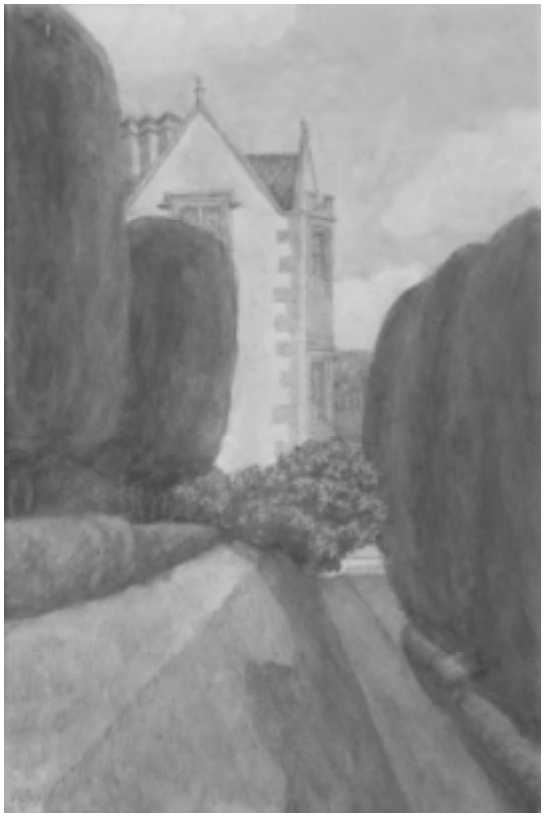
In April 1471, the outside world brushes against Owlpen. Edward, Prince of Wales, the

Lancastrian heir, wrote from Weymouth to John Daunt the elder, asking him to raise 'fellowship' and money from Mere and Purton for the Lancastrian campaign:

att our landinge wee have knowledge that Edward Earle of March the Kings greate rebell our Enemy approcheth him in Armes towards the Kinges highnes whiche Edward wee purpose with Gods grace to encounter in all haste possible.

The letter, long preserved at the manor, is now lost, but is quoted by the county historian Samuel Rudder (born in Uley) in 1779.

A tradition in the Daunt and Stoughton families records that Margaret of Anjou, the ardent queen of Henry VI, spent the night of May 2 1471, en route to the fateful battle of Tewkesbury, at Owlpen.



¶ *Thomas Daunt II's west wing, 1616;* watercolour by Norman Jewson, 1926

John the younger was doubtless as loyal a Lancastrian as his father, and would have been proud to welcome the royal guest to his manor at Owlpen. Queen Margaret is said to walk in the Great Chamber, a 'grey lady' wearing a fur-trimmed gown and wimple—a quiet and apparently benevolent ghost (and one of at least three ghosts traditionally recorded in the house).

John and Margery Daunt were richer than the de Olepennes had ever been. In the early sixteenth century their son, **Christopher** (owner 1522–42) or, more likely, their grandson **Thomas I** (owner 1542–73) was able to build, or rebuild, the centre block containing the present Hall and Great Chamber. The alliance of the two families is marked by the mid-sixteenth-century heraldic wallpainting showing the arms of Daunt quartering de Olepenne on the north wall of the Hall and, in stone outside, over the hood-mould of the first floor window. Christopher married a Basset of Uley; Thomas, more politic, married Alice, daughter of William Throckmorton of Tortworth.

The marriage was advantageous: the fortunes of the Throckmortons, also Lancastrians and a cadet branch of those seated at Coughton Court, Warwickshire (National Trust), were rising, with a succession of knighthoods, the patronage at Court of the earl of Leicester and a baronetcy by 1611. Thomas I entailed the Owlpen and Gloucestershire estates (some 945 acres in total at this time) on his male heirs, which was the unknowing cause of a disastrous family feud in the next generation.

Thomas I and Alice left five sons. Thomas II and William, their second and third sons, settled in Ireland as planters, or 'undertakers', in Munster. Thomas II acquired large estates west of Cork, at Tracton Abbey and, in 1595, Gortigrenane, which comprised (by 1638) 'one castle, 100 messuages, 200 cottages, 200 tofts, 200 gardens, 4 mills and 1,000 acres of land'. He was uprooted by the Munster rebellion in 1598 and met with constant

difficulties, but was ultimately to consolidate his Irish estates with success.

The fourth son, Giles, of Newark Park, Ozleworth (now also owned by the National Trust), was a keen hunter (and notorious poacher), described by the historian of the Berkeleys, John Smyth, in 1608 as one of 'nine men of metal, and good wood-men (I mean old notorious deer-stalkers) armed with nets and dogs' who raided the Berkeley woods and whose detection became a cause célèbre. He told Smyth of himself and George Huntley of Boxwell, that 'their slaughter of foxes in Ozleworth have byn 231 in one yeare'. He died in Ireland in 1622, having taken over his pack of hounds.

Meanwhile **Henry**, the eldest son of Thomas I and Alice, had inherited the Owlpen estate. Alice died in 1599, her epitaph stating: '*viginti sex annos vera vidua vixit*' [26 years she lived a true widow]. Henry died in 1591, leaving a son Giles to succeed him, and a daughter Frances. But Giles died in 1596 without issue, and Frances was now married to John Bridgeman, an ambitious young barrister of little personal charm. Bridgeman claimed possession of the estate in right of his wife against her uncle Thomas II, and occupied the house as next-of-kin. Bridgeman's claim was supported by the influential Sir Thomas Throckmorton, executor to Henry, described (by Smyth) as a 'powerfull and plottinge gent … who both made the maryage, and abetted the title'.

The ousted **Thomas II** returned from Ireland to defend his inheritance, pursuing his claim on the grounds that the estate was entailed to heirs male, to the Star Chamber. It took him twelve years to secure a favourable verdict before the Attorney General, Sir Edward Coke, making discovery of 'plots and practices'. Bridgeman secured the manor of Nympsfield in 1613 and in 1628 purchased Prinknash Park, near Gloucester, when he was appointed Recorder of that city. There was a magnificent fireplace at Prinknash until the 1920s bearing the Daunt/de Olepenne coat of arms, now in a museum in America. Bridgeman was later knighted and became Chief Justice of Chester. He is now immortalised in Fanelli's marble effigy beside Alice in Ludlow Church, Shropshire. He was a harsh judge and Ralph Gibbon, a local Salopian, composed a scornful pasquinade:

Here lies Sir John Bridgeman clad in his clay;
God said to the devil, Sirrah, take him away.

Thomas II had to pay compensation, but it was obviously not crippling: perhaps revenues were beginning to come in from Ireland. At any rate, in 1616 he rebuilt Owlpen's old solar/parlour wing to the west, adding a new storied bay window in ashlar with a datestone and his initials. There was some re-arrangement of the internal accommodation, hearths and chimneys, details and dressings to the gables—with their distinctive owl finials—and fenestration; he probably incorporated the old outhouses in a new kitchen block. His work represents the last major change to the fabric of the manor, so that its appearance today remains much as he left it, a house which has grown by slow accretions from 1450 to 1616 and where Thomas II's early seventeenth-century work still predominates. The Court House no doubt also represents the same phase of works.

When Thomas II died, on August 20 1621, he could look back on much solid achievement. The Daunts were established as landowners in two countries and, though the early death of his Oxford-educated eldest son, Achilles (the first of the family to use that name), was a sorrow, he had other male heirs. His next son **Thomas III** (owner 1621–69) inherited both Owlpen and Gortigrenane. The other Irish estate, Tracton Abbey, went to the line of Thomas I's third son, William Daunt, and from him a clan of Daunts, carrying the name Achilles or William, colonized the broad southern strip of Cork from Youghal to the Kerry border, which became known as 'Daunt's country'.

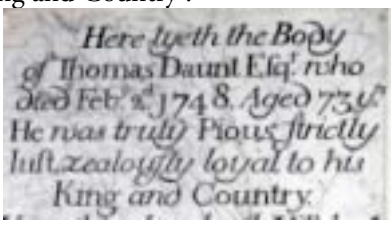
The Daunt principal landed interests, like most of their marriages, were now based firmly

in Ireland; there, according to John Smyth in 1639, they chiefly resided, so that Owlpen became a mainland base, a secondary estate which an elder son would administer, while the paterfamilias reigned in Ireland. There they joined the ranks of the Anglo-Irish 'Ascendancy' and the family by now had some pretensions to gentility: Thomas III was fined in 1630 for not taking up the order of knighthood. Surviving lists of books, in a *Catalogus librorum* of 1639, in Greek and Hebrew as well as Latin, French and Italian, indicate men of learning.

The seventeenth-century Daunts begin to emerge as personalities, coming alive through a Civil War correspondence for the years 1646 and 1650 preserved between Thomas III in Ireland (where he was High Sheriff of county Cork in 1645) and his eldest son, Thomas (1619–63) at Owlpen. Thomas is revealed as an ardent Parliamentarian, jubilant at Fairfax's successes against the "Cabbs", and confident that "if God send peace, all will doe well, for the Impartiall Judgement of parliament will confirme right to all". He writes blow by blow 'diurnals' on the progress of the Parliamentary cause. Interspersed with these are cryptic requests for his father to act in important and confidential business, requiring his presence and money. He asks for 'a barrel of pickled Samphier and some scallop shells', complains that the cattle are poor, that he has not received his share of a legacy and that only half his library has been sent over from Ireland. He is seen lobbying the Gloucestershire Committee, which included, in January 1646, 'Mr Carew Rawleigh, sonne to Sir Walter Rawleigh … Sir Gyles Overbury … and Mr Herbert, who wrote the booke of travaile, a gentleman which understands Arabicke and Persian' (and Charles I's future biographer), all of whom were expected to be friendly to the Daunts. Thomas married the daughter of Sir Gabriel Lowe of Newark Park, but he died before his father, and never inherited.

Achilles Daunt (1622–1706), Thomas's younger brother, succeeded to Owlpen and Gortigrenane in 1669. He was unmarried and took little part in affairs. Their politics did not prosper the Daunts at the Restoration. Achilles was attainted as a rebel and a traitor by James II's Irish Parliament in 1689. He was in England at the time and so avoided trouble, although the old castle at Gortigrenane seems to have been burnt down at this time. The Protestant streak was strong, but he was too old to profit from supporting William III. Besides, the Owlpen property was no longer such as to make its owner important: the estate had been eclipsed in size by its newer neighbours, the house was inconvenient.

After Achilles died in 1706, the house was hardly occupied for fourteen years. Then, in 1719, **Thomas IV** (1676–1748/9), Achilles' nephew and heir, came over from Ireland after his aunt's death to collect the Lady Day rents, and with intent to build. We see his work as the final building phase, classicizing and symmetricizing details of the old house, making small improvements to its comforts, installing five sash windows and the bolection-moulded fireplaces, panelling the Georgian rooms, raising ceilings, reordering the gardens with their yews and terraces, the gate piers and a palisade, rebuilding the grist mill, the great barn and, finally, the church. All the expenditure is carefully recorded in his surviving account books. Externally his funds allowed him only to reface the façade of the east wing; internally it was a remodelling rather than a reconstruction. His recorded works about the estate continue actively to 1739; he died ten years later, having raised what was to prove the last family (of ten children) in the house until recent times. His monument in Owlpen Church describes him as 'truly Pious, strictly Just, zealously loyal to his King and Country'.



Two bachelors, **Thomas V** (1701–77) and his younger brother Kingscote Daunt (1723–58), set up house together after their father's death. Kingscote was a contemporary at Pembroke College, Oxford, of the lawyer Sir William Blackstone and of others whom he proudly lists among those with whom he was on terms of friendship. He officiated as curate of Owlpen (and Wickwar), while his letters show him taking the Bath waters for his ill health and searching for a better living through connections at Oxford and in Ireland.

The estate then passed to **Thomas VI** (1755–1803) who had already inherited Gortigrenane from his father Achilles, Thomas V's twin brother. The house had entered its long period of neglect. He took little interest in Gloucestershire. A surviving notice shows that these last Daunts were contemplating selling the estate with 355 acres:

the estate in hand for living & for farm rent … besides the Mannor House out houses & gardens, a grist mill, some cottages, about 200 akers of well grown wood, situated in a most healthie countrey … any purchaser that will be informed in particulars, himself, his letter or messenger will be kindlie received at Owlpen…by Tho. Daunt.

He kept a carriage and a chaise at Owlpen, which he used as a convenient base for visits to Bath. His accounts from Bath tailors and hairdressers show him as fastidious, buying a 'fashionable stripe scarlet Waistcoat', bows for his boots and shoes, 'pound powder and rolers' for his hair, materials in cassimere, marseil[les], shalloon and flannel; and a pair of sidelock pistols from John Richards in the Strand.

Thomas VI was believed locally to have been a magician. After his death, the sealed room in which his books and papers had been kept for many years, was said to be haunted. They were thought so dangerous that parson Cornwall was sent for to destroy them and 'as they were burning, birds flew out of them'.

¶ *Ruins of Gortigrenane, the Daunt house of 1817 near Bandon, co. Cork, in 1998*

He was to be the last of the Daunts for, on his death in 1803, the male line again failed as it had done 300 years before. By 1807, T.D. Fosbrooke was describing the house as half dilapidated and overrun with ivy.

Stoughton family (1815-1925)

Sleeping Beauty

Thomas's daughter **Mary** inherited as a child of 13. In 1815, she married **Thomas Anthony Stoughton I** (1790–1862), a Kerry landowner who acquired interests in Monmouthshire coal through his mother. She was born a Lewis of St Pierre and Penhow, Chepstow, and was widow of John Hanbury, member of Parliament for Pontypool. Stoughton's father had managed their estates, but his Hanbury stepsons described him as 'an indigent Irishman', suing him at chancery for profiting dishonestly from their mother's dower and salting away their inheritance.

The manor was by now too small, old fashioned and uncomfortable for the patrician life they intended to live, and was soon abandoned for a 'better' site at the eastern end of the estate, a mile away, high on the open Cotswold plateau. There they built a grand and splendid mansion, in a late Georgian-Italianate style, called Owlpen House (latterly Owlpen Park), allegedly on the model of Stoughton's London Club.

The architect was Samuel Saunders Teulon, who worked locally at Tortworth, and on the church in Uley (1857). Stoughton was well connected in the architectural world: his half brother was Charles Hanbury-Tracy, first baron Sudeley of Toddington, an amateur architect who was chairman of the Committee which chose the Pugin and Barry design for the New Palace of Westminster.

Stoughton was an extravagant builder of impressive mansions on his estates. He extended his seat at Ballyhorgan, co. Kerry, in 1812; the Daunt house at Gortigrenane, co. Cork, was rebuilt as a plain classical block in 1817. The architect was probably Abraham Hargrave Sr.

Owlpen House dated from the early 1850s, a house of seven bays, with a curious four-story belvedere and extensive conservatories. Today only the lodges, stables and gasworks remain.

It was inherited, after Mary Stoughton's death in 1867, by her son, **Thomas Anthony Stoughton II** (1818–85) and his wife **Rose** (1840–1924). In 1889, after Thomas Anthony died, Rose married again Colonel H.W. Trent, who hyphenated the Stoughton name with his own. Largely to Stoughton family patronage we owe the church above the manor, heavily Victorianized in two phases; in 1828/9, when the nave was rebuilt by Samuel Manning, and 1874, when the chancel was added by J.P. St Aubyn. It is their family shrine, with brasses and monuments to the successive generations of Daunts and Stoughtons.

But in other respects the nineteenth century was disastrous for the manor and the parish. The Stroudwater woollen cloth industry, for centuries the mainspring of the local economy, was under check after the Napoleonic Wars, and after a period of expansion with the new steam technology, it could not compete with the North. There were riots and panic and mass emigration from Uley and Owlpen in the 1830s. Owlpen was badly hit by the failure of Edward Sheppard's cloth mill in Uley, which employed 'nearly all the families at Owlpen', in 1837. Parson Cornwall at the time described in his (published) diaries how 'the improvident weavers were left, almost to a man, utterly desolate. I was obliged to engage to pay the bakers, or whole families would have starved.'

¶ *The staff from Owlpen House, 1890s. The bailiff, Edward Smith, is centre (bearded).*

¶ (Above) George Wade RA (1853–1933), watercolour of the 'old manor'

¶ (Left) Owlpen House, north front, designed by S.S. Teulon for T.A. Stoughton, about 1850

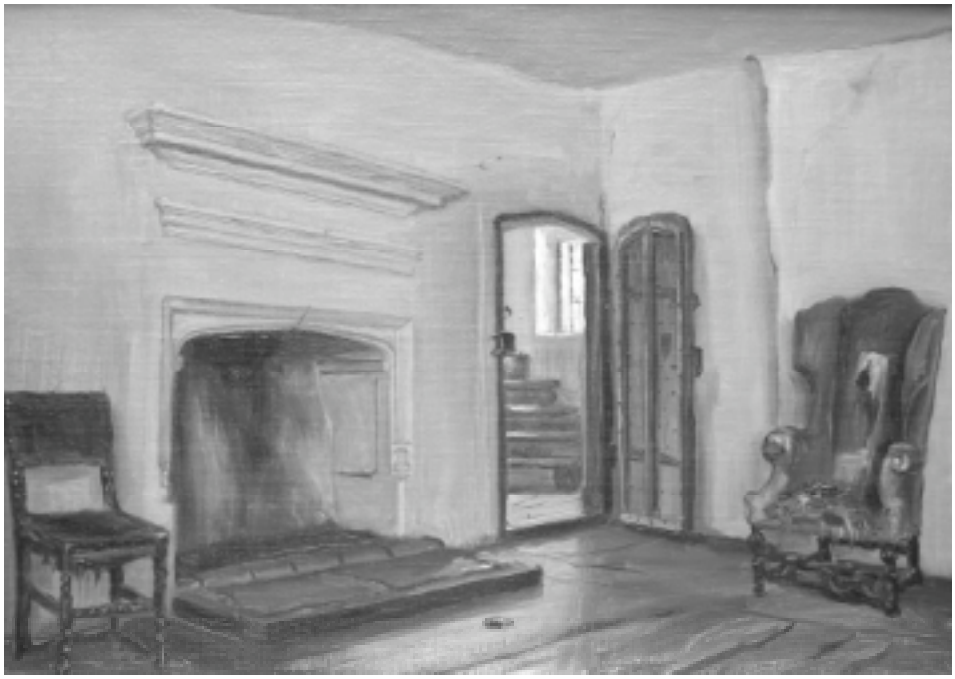
The population of Owlpen collapsed almost overnight from 255 in 1831 to 94 by 1841, still more than the estate alone could employ. The bald statistics conceal great social distress. In 1838 it is recorded that 85% of the population of the parish were officially paupers. Parishioners emigrated from Uley and Owlpen to America, Canada (in 1835), New Zealand and Australia (where Owlpen House in the Hunter Valley is dated 1837). The cottages were abandoned (we are told there were 200 empty houses in Uley). The raison d'être of the manor had gone, and the house stood shuttered, a caretaker/gardener occupying a few dilapidated back rooms in the east wing.

By the end of the nineteenth century an antiquarian interest in Tudor architecture and the things of Old England was developing, and the remarkable survival of the manor house and garden, as something of a Sleeping Beauty, was becoming known to a steady stream of visitors. The house is described as 'quaint' and 'curious', the rooms kept in modest repair for picnics and excursions, and the gardens maintained, the yews receiving their annual tonsure, in a time of plentiful labour. The manor begins to be recorded in early photographs, a romantic sight, exactly as it had been left by Thomas Daunt IV at his death in 1749, dwarfed amongst enormous yews, quite out of scale, mysterious beneath the rampant ivy. It was written up in an early *Country Life* in 1906 by Avray Tipping, who described it as by then 'a garden house more than anything else…making its brave fight against consuming Time'.

¶ Owlpen Old Manor, c. 1885

House and garden began to feature in the stately Edwardian books on English architecture and landscape. The hillside gardens were 'discovered' by Gertrude Jekyll, who may have helped with the planting of island beds. She described them appreciatively, with plans and drawings, in her standard book on *Gardens for Small Country Houses* (1914), written with Lawrence Weaver. It was visited by landscape artists in search of picturesque views and historical subject matter, by writers and architectural historians, as well as many who have left no record. Frank Moss Bennett visited in April/May 1922 (there is a collection of ten sketches at Owlpen). The young American architect, Francis Comstock, stayed in the spring of 1924, making meticulous measured drawings, which proved invaluable later for restoration work, of all its architectural details. He was later the champion and cataloguer of the work of F.L. Griggs. He described Owlpen as 'by far the most perfect small Manor House, to me, in all of England'.

The condition of the 'beautiful ancient manor house at Owlpen' had already aroused the concern of antiquarians, architects, conservationists and historical societies by 1912. Edward Hudson, founder-editor of *Country Life*, Thackeray Turner, chairman of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), F.W. Troup and A.R. Powys, two successive secretaries of the Society, Avray Tipping, the architectural writer, Ernest and Sidney Barnsley and Alfred Powell, architects of the Sapperton group, were all manoeuvring behind the scenes to persuade Thomas Anthony Stoughton II's widow, Rose, now Trent Stoughton, to make urgent repairs. 'The roof is propped up from the floor joists below and [there is] a serious fissure, reaching from the top of one of the gables to within a few feet of the ground', wrote A.R. Powys. Failing that, he was suggesting that the property be given to the National Trust, when 'it might be possible to raise a sum for its repair'.



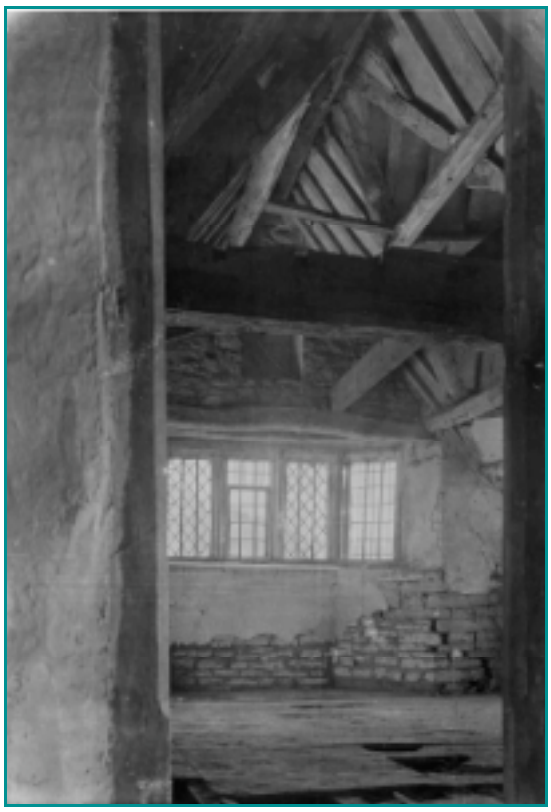
¶ *Queen Margaret's Room, 1922,* by Frank Moss Bennett

¶ *Owlpen Manor and Church, c. 1905*

However, the condition of the house only deteriorated. During the first world war, Sidney Barnsley complained (writing in December 1921) 'there was no question that repairs were not done as they should have been'. There were rumours that the old manor was to be done up and 'americanised', which Rose Trent Stoughton vehemently denied: 'my hope is to restore the Manor house as a home for myself and my heirs'. Granville Lloyd-Baker, the concerned local squire of Hardwicke Court, observed (October 1920): *I was at a Morris Dance at Owlpen three weeks ago… Of course, the floors must be as shaky as they were sixty years ago. I don't think Mrs T.-S. can do anything to it. The Irish troubles have hit her hard. She has given up her car, and is going to give up the garden…*

Sidney Barnsley was writing to A.R. Powys at the SPAB on 10 July 1921: 'It would be fatal if the house was ever again used as a dwelling place, as the alterations and repairs that would be necessary would mean its ruin—except of course if it was taken in hand by Weir and somebody could be found appreciative enough to sacrifice modern ideas of comfort!' Again, he suggested the National Trust as a fall-back. It would have been one of the first houses to be taken on by the Trust (after the Clergy House at Alfriston).

Rose had plans to put the 'Old Manor', as it came to be called, into repair for her own use. She commissioned the architect, Randoll Blacking of Guildford (he did some work at Gloucester Cathedral), to survey the manor and draw up plans for its modernization in 1921. But in Ireland times were hard. The Daunt estates at Gortigrenane had been sold in the 1880s. The Stoughton lands in Kerry had been sold to the tenants in 1905 and then the Big House, which had been kept on, was abandoned in 1917/18, to be destroyed in the Troubles in 1920/21. Rose was the last of her line. She died childless in June 1924 and her heir was her nephew, William Anthony Stoughton, an ageing bachelor who gave his address on the first sale conveyance ever signed for the estate as 'Arthur's Club, St James's'.



¶ *Garret in the decaying manor, circa 1910*

¶ *Norman Jewson by Sir William Rothenstein, 1913*

Norman Jewson (1925–6)
Cotswold Arts and Crafts repairs

Such was the condition—shuttered and forsaken, yet picturesque in its timelessness—of the manor house when Norman Jewson (1884–1975) first stumbled across it on one of his bicycle excursions from Sapperton. The Cotswold region had been 'discovered' by artists and craftsmen in the wake of William Morris (1834–96), who had lived (from 1871) at a sister manor house, Kelmscott Manor, in the Thames Valley.

Ernest Gimson (1864–1919) was in the forefront of those carrying on the ideals of Morris into a younger generation and became the leader in the revival of Cotswold Arts and Crafts, moving to the Cotswolds in 1893. He lived for a time (from 1894 to 1901) at Pinbury Park, setting up workshops and showrooms for his furniture at Daneway, another sister house, both on the Cirencester Estate at Sapperton, under the patronage of the Bathurst family.

Norman Jewson was in turn inspired by Gimson and his ideals of 'fitness', proven craftsmanship and integrity of design, sensitive repair and honesty to materials. He had been taken on as an "improver" by him, when a young architect just down from Cambridge in 1907. Norman Jewson soon settled—and married—in Sapperton also. He describes his encounter with Owlpen:

Another excursion was…to Owlpen, a very beautiful and romantically situated old house, which had been deserted by its owners for a new mansion about a mile away a century before. The house was rapidly falling into complete decay, but a caretaker lived in a kitchen wing and would shew some of the rooms to visitors, including one the walls of which were hung with painted canvas, of the kind Falstaff recommended to Mistress Quickly. The terraced gardens with a yew parlour and groups of neat, clipped yews remained just as they were in the time of Queen Anne, a gardener being kept to look after them.

There was also a large barn containing a cider mill and a massive oak cider press, as well as the old mill of the manor, which had been kept in tolerable repair, as the mill wheel was being used to pump water up to the modern house. In spite of the dilapidation of the house, which was so far advanced that one of the main roof trusses had given way, the great stone bay window had become almost detached from the wall and huge roots of ivy had grown right across some of the floors, it seemed to me that such an exceptionally beautiful and interesting old house might still be saved.

However, the owner at that time did not wish either to sell it or to repair it herself. Some years later, when the old lady who owned it died, the new owner put the property up for auction, so I was able to buy the old manor house, with [nine]

acres of garden and woodland, and put it in repair, though I could not afford to live in it myself.

Owlpen, somnolent and under a spell of enchantment, represented for Jewson all that was vital and enduring in the English tradition, 'a noble inheritance', as he wrote in *A Little Book of Architecture* (1940); like Kelmscott itself and Daneway, 'symbols of the accumulated experience of the past'.

In 1924, the Owlpen estate, including the 'Old Manor', its Victorian usurper, Owlpen House, and a number of outlying farms and cottages, in total some 720 acres, was offered for sale in lots.

In July 1925, Norman succeeded in buying Owlpen at auction with its old garden, orchards, gardener's cottage, mill, barn and outbuildings for £3,200. He was competing against Charles Wade, the eccentric collector who (in 1919) had bought Snowshill Manor, near Broadway (National Trust)—and whose offer of £3,750 the Trustees had turned down the Christmas before, evidently angling for more. (Wade later knew both Norman Jewson and F.L. Griggs.) The few remaining contents had also been sold, including the village stocks, old dog spits, and Queen Margaret's of Anjou's reputed bed and chair.

Jewson continued the work of recording and surveying begun by Francis Comstock, and took photographs and water-colour sketches, many of which survive at Owlpen. He engaged a team of craftsmen, employing them as direct labour, photographed (p. 48, below) at the steps of the garden. Many of them were from the Bisley area and had trained under Ernest Gimson or Detmar Blow, another Arts and Crafts architect who practiced locally. He sought out the sources of traditional materials —timber (he said) from the Uley sawmill; Cotswold freestone, rubble and roofing tiles; ox hair and lime. The frail old house was sensitively and honestly repaired over the next year so that it should assume as near as possible its original beauty.

Jewson was a dedicated member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings founded by William Morris; he worked under William Weir, one of the most skilful exponents of its philosophy of *repair,* not *restoration.* He took great care to preserve its textures, all that was resonant and subtle in its fabric, employing the local traditional crafts and skills: lime-based techniques, then in survival as much as revival, and the conservative practice advocated by the Society of "repair by building" and tile repair (e.g., to the hood-moulds). He used hand-made nails, clouts and spikes (he was proud of these on his own door). The wrought ironwork—forged 'arrow-head' and cockspur hinges and Norfolk latches, rat-tail casement stays and bow fasteners, as well as a brass firescreen, grille (to the cellar) and sconces—was made by Alfred Bucknell, at Water Lane, with the help of Fred Baldwin. He retained the Georgian layer of architectural development, sash windows and panelling, which many architects restoring early houses in the 1920s might have suppressed through some misguided purism.

He himself contributed modelled plaster-work, vivid animals and owls, although many of those examples now at Owlpen were cast under his supervision fifty years later, from his

own moulds; he enjoyed touching up the sixteenth-century wall-paintings with the enthusiasm of an amateur; he designed cast leadwork for scalloped spouts and the rainwater heads, with more owls and the date. He designed simple furniture and fittings; cupboards, a bookcase and an elm kitchen dresser, apparently made by Peter van der Waals of Chalford. Griggs donated a firescreen.

¶ *Owlpen Restoration 1926.*
Back row: Fred White, Tom Coles, Jack Fern, Reg Kilby, Reg Gardiner.
Middle row: Harry Drinkwater, Charlie White, Ted Hunt, Ray Parsloe, Frank Hogan, Herbert Howley, Bill Chappell.
Front row: Leslie Brown, Bill Woodward (foreman), Wilf Hunt (motorcycle).

Much of this work was removed in the 1960s (with the old casements of broad glass) and various projected designs were never carried out: sketches for an owl newel finial survive (although he did bequeath his woodcarving chisels, as much as to say, "Go, and do likewise…").

The craftsmen were supervised to the last detail of feature and flourish in which he delighted: the traditional pargework of the Tetbury area in a scalloped design made by the plasterer's hawk to the window jamb surrounds; the diapered patterns of nailheads on the battens of the boarded doors; the laying of a floor as Gimson had taught with the butt ends reversed, so that the boards taper with the bole of the tree, head to tail, a classic example of economy, beauty and use coming together; the swept valleys of the roofs, with proper galetting; graded stone 'slats' with their quaint local names, like *bachelors* and *long nines, cocks, wivots* and *cussoms*; the traditional canted chimney tops which were something of a mannerism. He removed the ivy which festooned the whole building, limewashed the exterior harling, which looks harsh in his photographs, and trimmed the yews.

Jewson's discovery and subsequent purchase and repair of Owlpen was to be his most enduring achievement. When the work was worthily done, he took some pride in having saved the building and given it new life, describing his approach diffidently in a letter to Nina Griggs in 1944:

I have never been ambitious in the ordinary sense of wanting to be somebody. *I have always been ambitious to satisfy myself (or my own standards). I suppose I got nearest to it at Owlpen than at any other time.*

¶ *Owlpen Manor* : etching by F.L. Griggs (1876–1938)

In the process the house was modestly restyled as the Gentleman's Residence of the inter-war years, with its servants' hall and capacious domestic offices, a flower room, two bathrooms, its own water-driven electric plant (in the Grist Mill) and a new-fangled patent heating system, 'The Pipeless British Marvel', circulating hot air straight into the Hall from a boiler behind.

The house was too large for him to live in himself and, little more than a year after buying it, he again put it on the market, and it was sold (this time for £9,000)—alas, to his personal loss—in November 1926.

Norman Jewson's great friend, **Fred Griggs** (1876–1938) led the revival of etching in a neo-Romantic tradition inspired by the work of Samuel Palmer, Edward Calvert and William Blake, choosing as his subject matter the scenes of an arcadian England of Gothic buildings. He aptly inscribed to him the first state of his etching of *Owlpen Manor* (1930), a proof of which is in the manor collection:
To my friend NORMAN JEWSON, who, with one only purpose, & at his own cost & loss, possessed himself of the demesne of OWLPEN / when, for the first time in seven hundred years, it passed into alien hands, & with great care & skill saved this ancient house from ruin.

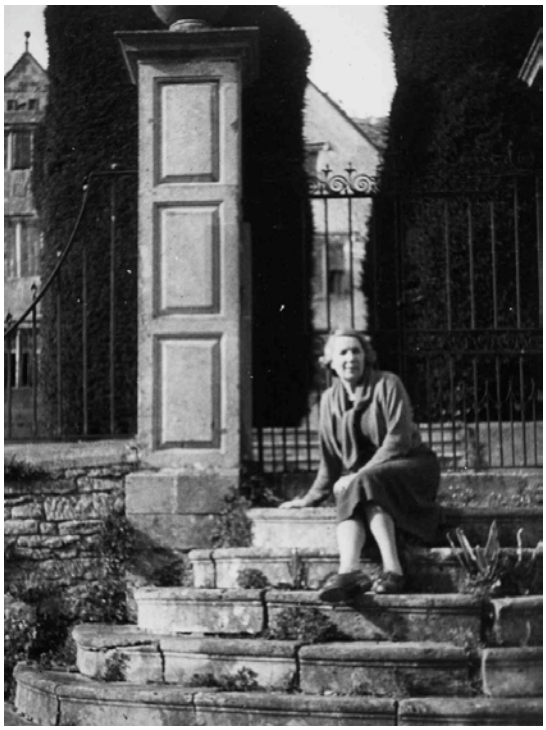
The etching is one of Griggs's most powerful, haunting images, with the gabled manor house overwhelmed, born down upon, by the neatly-trimmed yews to create an airless, claustrophobic sense of tension,

relieved by the two female figures with bobbed hair.

Later David Verey, author of the Buildings of England series guide to *Gloucestershire*, was to describe how this etching, which became widely known to collectors on both sides of the Atlantic, made of Owlpen an icon, giving it visible and literary form. The house hemmed about by maturing yews became a nostalgic symbol of Englishness for those who had known and loved this part of the West of England and were separated from it during the War years. Griggs's celebrated image of Owlpen seemed an icon of the values of English civilization for which his generation was prepared to fight. 'Owlpen in its remote and beautiful valley near the Severn estuary is the epitome of romance', he wrote. If Owlpen's story and substance was a romance, Jewson and Griggs appeared its conjurors, awakening its mysteries and making them real for a new generation.

¶ *Owlpen Manor*: etching by Joseph Webb

A good deal of work in the Cotswold Arts and Crafts tradition, prompted by Owlpen's story of grim survival and redemption, survives from this period, including examples now in public collections. A delightful stem pot by Alfred Powell may be seen in the Cheltenham Museum and Art Gallery (*see* page 70 below). A series of sketches by William Simmonds of the interior of the medieval barn and kitchen is in the Reading Museum of English Rural Life. Another jewel-like sketch by Jewson's (and Griggs's) friend Russell Alexander, much esteemed by Griggs, was left by Jewson to the manor collection (*see* page 65 below). F.L. Griggs's follower, Joseph Webb (1908–62), identified passionately with Owlpen, calling his own studio 'Owlpen' and producing a magical little etching of the manor for his own letterhead in the early Thirties (*below left*).



Barbara Bray

In November 1926, Jewson sold to Barbara Crohan; she changed her name to **Barbara Bray** *(above)* after her divorce in 1939. She addressed him, when she was selling the house in August 1963, 'as magician of this resusitated [*sic*] dream-place'. Owlpen became once again a country house and family home, over which she presided for a generation, bringing life, comfort and light into the building. She had been brought up at Langdon Court in Devon, where her parents

entertained King Edward VII and Lilley Langtry. She is remembered as an unforgettable entertainer, a voluble monologuist, active and jolly. She was socially ambitious, her hospitality attracting many interesting guests, among them Evelyn Waugh, Peter Scott and Joan Evans (who all lived nearby), and a coterie of literary figures, including her cousin, Clive Bell, and various members of the 'Bloomsbury group'. Her daughter, Bridget, married the ninth earl of Portsmouth.

The house was becoming well known in an age before the National Trust and country house visiting concentrated the limelight on a few stately and commercial examples. Between the Wars it was described with enthusiasm in the increasing literature on the English country house: the books by the country writer H.J. Massingham, by the literary garden-maker Vita Sackville-West, by the young landscape architect, Geoffrey Jellicoe (1926), who was so impressed by the mysterious, medieval atmosphere of the garden, by the American topographical writer Harold Eberlein, by the artist-writer S.R. Jones and, of course, the growing number of local writers on the Cotswolds.

Barbara Bray had a dozen evacuee children to stay from the poor East End of London during the Second World War. Francis Comstock later related how Queen Margaret of Anjou made one of her apparitions:
One night, in making her customary round, she looked in… to see that the four children were sleeping; she found them all awake and excited; they told her of their visitor, "a lovely lady with long sleeves and dress all trimmed with fur, and with a funny peaked hat that had a long veil hanging down behind", a description of such a costume as Queen Margaret might have worn, and of which the children must have been completely ignorant.

The painted cloths were now recognised as the rarity they are, and Elsie Matley Moore made a complete facsimile of them for the National Monuments Record during the War.

Christopher Hussey, another regular visitor who had first seen Owlpen before it was restored 'on a dark autumn afternoon in 1925', empty and sad behind its dripping barrier of yews in the bowels of the valley, painted a number of sketches of Owlpen; the *Country Life* articles came out in 1952. He deplored, in jocular tone, the extirpation of the four giant yews in the 1950s, writing one of his charming doggerel verses to Barbara Bray on a Reynolds Stone Christmas card:

For the owl hooting inside the pen
The view outwards *is better, I'm sure;*
And inquisitive architect men
Have no longer to peer and to pore
For a sight of your welcoming door.
But I who like yews
And picturesque views
Am still sorry to lose
The old introvert Owlpen of yore.–
But I won't go on being a bore
For though I like yew
I really love you
Even more.

Francis Pagan

Barbara Bray sold Owlpen "very, very tired, & of course, rather sad" in 1963 to **Francis Pagan**. She wrote to Jewson:
if I must part, I—you—any friend or wellwisher of the manor, & its perfect neighbours, could not hope for more suitable, & understanding newcomers.

He immediately put in hand essential repairs, with the aid of a grant from the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, particularly to the outbuildings and roofs; improvements were made to the heating, plumbing and services to make the house more convenient (even in the Twenties, such things had not been Jewson's strong point).

Elsie Matley Moore was enlisted for the conservation, cleaning and rehanging (1964) of the painted cloths so that they could be conveniently displayed in the Great Chamber,

which better suited their character. The room from which the cloths were removed was panelled in deal, matching up with some existing panelling installed by Thomas Daunt IV.

The house was regularly opened to the public in 1966 for the first time in the summer months, as it has been intermittently ever since. The first old shrub roses were planted in the gardens.

Mander family

Since 1974 Owlpen has been the home of **Nicholas and Karin Mander** (who is Swedish) and then of their family of five children who have been brought up there; Sarra, Marcus, Benedict, Hugo and Fabian, said to be the first family to have been born and raised in the house since the early eighteenth century.

Over the subsequent years they have been fortunate to reassemble much of the old estate, buying back farmland, woodland and cottages. The cottages and outbuildings—including a number of listed buildings—have been repaired and restored as holiday cottages, serving a new generation of guests from all over the world. The Manders have made their lives here, and the manor has become once again the focus of a farm and busy community.

¶ *Norman Jewson in old age*

Norman Jewson befriended the Manders in his last years, when he was able to renew his acquaintance with Owlpen after long separation. He would reminisce fondly about his work there, although the answers to many eager questions he simply couldn't remember: 'It was rather a long time ago, you know' [fifty years]. He would talk of the Arts and Crafts in all their forms and of the people he had known, and advise tenderly on new projects of conservation and adaptation. He deplored only the grubbing up of the yews and the grandiloquent Victorian restoration of the little Church behind the manor house: 'It's a pity there isn't a church like the one at Duntisbourne Rouse, but then you can't have *everything!*'

He told how Ernest Barnsley would berate his brother, Sidney's, workmanship by pushing pennies through the gaps between the back boards of his high-backed settle. When he died he bequeathed the settle, which had belonged to Gimson at Pinbury, to Owlpen, as well as his Barnsley work table, and sketchbooks and verses, and the diaries he kept of his Continental travels.

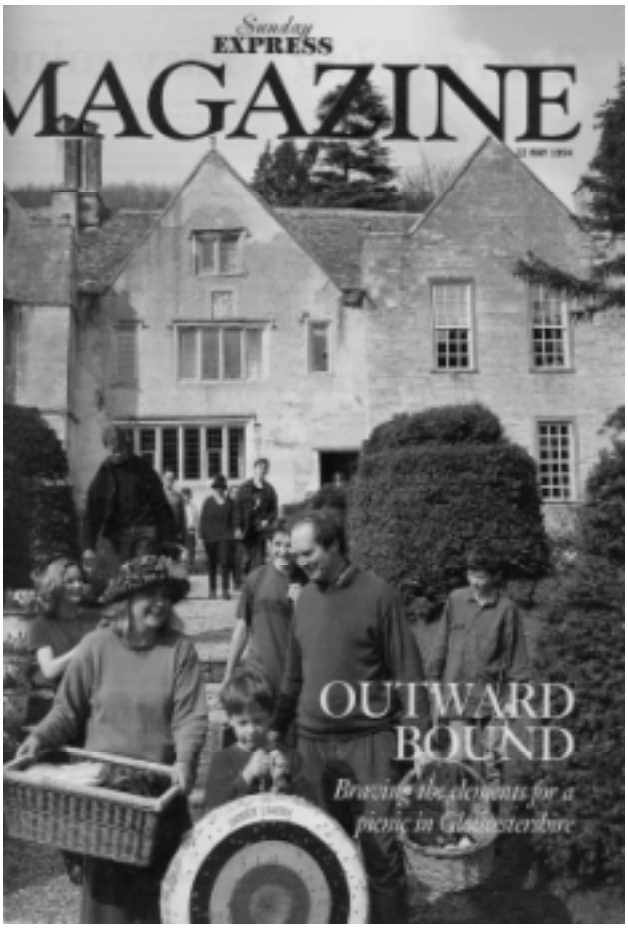
¶ *Bookplate for Mander Bros, by Robert Anning Bell, 1896*

The Mander family, too, has its links with the origins and ideals of the Arts and Crafts movement. The Manders were pioneer industrialists: an ancestor, Thomas, a younger son, moved from the Warwickshire villages where the family had settled by the thirteenth century to Wolverhampton in 1745, his sons, Benjamin and John, establishing in 1773, amongst a variety of enterprises, a japanning and (later) varnish, paint and ink businesses whose brands continue today. They were (in the eighteenth century) nonconformists and philanthropists, who became involved in many charities and public causes, in county and civic affairs in Staffordshire, in the yeomanry, in the arts and politics. Nicholas Mander is the heir to the family baronetcy awarded for public services in the Coronation honours of 1911.

As patrons of the arts, the family are notable for the two adjoining houses which were built (or rebuilt) for them by Edward Ould in the 'Ould English' style in the final decades of the last century. The Mount, the principal family seat, is now a hotel with some sixty bedrooms, although many of its contents survive at Owlpen.

Wightwick Manor is in a delicate and self-consciously picturesque 'Cheshire Tudor' idiom whose textures owe much to the late-nineteenth-century rehabilitation of houses like Owlpen. It was presented to the National Trust, the first country house to be so presented in the lifetime of its donor, by Sir Geoffrey Mander, Liberal MP for East Wolverhampton, in 1937. Today it is preserved intact as something of a period piece, much enriched by the outstanding collections of Pre-Raphaelite art and William Morris furnishings, augmented by Sir Geoffrey and Rosalie, Lady Mander, who became authorities on the circle of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites. Norman Jewson commends Lady Mander's book on Rossetti in a letter to Nina Griggs in 1966, 'to my mind, a really good and sympathetic biography.'

Owlpen represents these traditions—of long history, solid building, romantic survival, sensitive repair and adaptation, creative enterprise and public service, hospitality and a little eccentricity—which may still be an inspiration to those who visit today.



¶ *Family group, 1994,* by Roy Botterell, *Sunday Express*

The Mander Family as Collectors

THE experience of visiting the old manor at Owlpen today is for many enhanced, or curiosity aroused, by the family clutter, still accumulating, there assembled. The Mander family have long been inveterate collectors. As Mark Girouard writes, they were part of 'a large body of cultivated upper middle-class families who read their Ruskin and Morris and expressed their artistic tastes in their houses.'

Charles II Benjamin Mander (1819–78) was an amateur artist who helped found one of the first Schools of Art in 1852, travelled widely in Italy, and would *improve* the old masters in his collection "to their great gain". Wightwick Manor still shows the family's early patronage of the Arts and Crafts movement and of the artists of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, a *tour de force* of late Victorian civilized taste. The collection at Owlpen is modest as a typical country house mélange formed by diverse inheritances and acquisitions, a galimatias of styles and periods. It derives largely from that of Sir Charles Tertius (1852–1929) and Mary le Mesurier, Lady Mander (1859–1951) at The Mount, Tettenhall Wood (Staffordshire).

Mary Mander [below] was described by Edward Ould, principal architect of both The Mount and adjoining Wightwick, a little obsequiously, as having 'more taste than any lady I have met'. Her collections were voraciously catholic, if indiscriminate. Hundreds of *objets*—fans, enamels, Rockingham, Spode and Staffordshire china, Chinese and Delft blue-and-white porcelain, maiolica and faience, china cats, textiles and needlework, lace, beadwork, dolls, domestic brass, tobacco boxes and curios—cluttered every surface, as well as accumulated books, the usual Jacobean, late Stuart and Georgian furniture, pictures, Caucasian and Persian rugs and family silver. All was listed in her annotated inventories, with prices paid to dealers for seemingly untransportable items culled on energetic travels in Taormina, Granada, Cairo, Tunis, Khartoum, Fez, Cuba and Brazil, many long before the First World War.

¶ *Mary Mander in the Library at The Mount*

All was displayed in a context of the fittings and materials of the "artistic" house, with ceilings by Leonard Shuffrey and heraldic glass by Bryans and Webb to Ould's 55-foot English Renaissance Library. This grand Edwardian living hall was modelled on Kirby Hall, Northamptonshire, "a magnificent ruin" which made a deep impression also on Jewson. Queen Mary visited her in 1939 (when she was presented with an obligatory white tortoiseshell fan, with *Mary* written on the shaft, and an enamel needle-case), The Princess Royal, as well as many public figures: Lloyd George was her guest when he announced the General Election campaign in November 1918.

Most of these things—and others more masculine, like old wine, guns, game trophies and prizes, scientific gadgets, presentation keys and trowels, official uniforms, carriages, White steam cars, and a Canadian horse-drawn sleigh —were dispersed after her death at a three-day sale in 1952. Many items found their way to Wightwick and to Midland public collections, or were divided among contentious heirs, furnishing several family houses.

Her children, too, were keen collectors. Gerald Poynton Mander was a donnish antiquarian, bibliophile and Midland historian, an asthmatic dilettante who rose for afternoon tea. He settled first at Ludstone Hall and collected from undergraduate days: incunabula and books by rare Midland printers (on which he wrote a standard monograph), miniatures and enamels, many of them now in the Wolverhampton Museum—and prints, including the Griggs etching of Owlpen.

His spinster sister, Daisy Mander, read, travelled and collected compulsively. Her numerous dolls she left to the Bantock Museum; many of her textiles and needlework (which she practised) are at Owlpen. On her death in 1968, she left thousands of books (many also at Owlpen) and some fifty packing-cases of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century porcelain.

Sir Charles IV Arthur Mander, the second baronet, lived at Kilsall Hall, Shropshire. A man of talent and charm, he devoted himself to public causes, county affairs and charity work, as well as industry. His wife, Monica Mander, left the baskets collected all over the world to the Bantock Museum.

Owlpen retains items from these sources and many others, from families in Germany, Mexico and Sweden, like fitting a quart into a pint pot. At Owlpen are many of the family papers from the mid-eighteenth century onwards, some of which have been republished for today's readers in the latest family history. With the archive of Daunts and de Olepennes, quaint medieval documents and deeds which reveal little of the personalities behind them, there is an illuminating survey of the lives of squires, merchant industrialists and country gentry spanning eight hundred years.

Much was lost in a burglary in 1992—including all the clocks, silver, cabinets and the only 'good' pictures—and display is always difficult.

Besides firebacks and antlers, only the painted cloths have remained in the house throughout. The present owners have sorted and catalogued and been lucky to add much, notably items associated with the house and the work of Ernest Gimson and his circle—Norman Jewson, the brothers Sidney and Ernest Barnsley and Fred Griggs—in the great Cotswold Arts and Crafts revival. Today there is Arts and Crafts furniture from their personal collections, from the late David Verey's Arlington Mill Museum collection at Bibury, dispersed in 1995, and a swelling archive of notebooks, drawings and ephemera.

Such Cotswold Arts and Crafts treasures mix happily with simple early oak and walnut furniture, family pictures, and paintings and sculpture, often by friends. And still thousands of books, including the original copies of Morris and Ruskin which inspired the Manders more than a century ago.

¶ *The Mander family at Owlpen, courtesy* Good Housekeeping, *1997: "We share a bathroom with 13,500 people".*

¶ *Mander family at The Mount on the occasion of Mary Lady Mander's 90th birthday on 12th March 1949, courtesy* Tatler

¶ *The Mander Family, 2000*
Marcus, Hugo, Nicholas, Fabian, Karin, Sarra and Benedict

(Left) Group photograph at The Mount:
(Front row) Emily Mander, Monica Lady Mander, Marcus Mander (*later third baronet*), Jill Ramsden, Marietta Stirling, Sir Charles Mander (*second baronet*), Mary, dowager Lady Mander (*centre*), Gerald Mander, Daphne Mander, Philip Mander, Hilary Purslow, Nancy Mander, Margaret Cardew
(Centre row) Elizabeth Neve, Hilda Vaughan, Irene Neve, Dolores Mander, James Ramsden, Rosalie Lady Mander, Sir Geoffrey Mander, Daisy Mander, Margery and Peter Nevile, Priscilla Mander, Wm Purslow, Amy Stokes, Mary Kettle
(Back row) Mary Vaughan, Edmund Vaughan, Margaret Neve, John Neve, Sir Roger Knuthsen, Mary Lena and Patrick Hickman, Cecily Phillips, Mary Amphlett, Mrs Amphlett, Reginald and Bridget Bailey, Violet Hargreaves

Mander Family Portraits

The family portraits at Owlpen form a long sequence over the generations. The earlier portraits are mostly by minor provincial artists, whose chief interest is in the lives of the sitters. They lead on to high Victorian swagger by the society artists of the day.

Benjamin Mander
(1752–1819)

Pioneer industrialist and philanthropist of Wolverhampton. Among many ventures, he was co-founder in 1773—with his brother, the chemist, John Mander—of businesses in chemicals, japanning and tin-plate working, and later varnish, paint and printing inks. The Mander brands established by him continued for at least 230 years. He was one of four Manders to be appointed among the first town commissioners of Georgian Wolverhampton in 1777, where the family continued in public service for many generations.

He was founder-chairman of the Wolverhampton Union Flour and Bread Co., a charitable venture to dole cheap bread to the poor in the social distress following the Napoleonic wars. He became a popular hero when he won a celebrated trial in 1814 at the Stafford Assizes, accused by the bakers of illegal combination.

He inherited, through his mother Elizabeth (née Clemson) property in Wolverhampton which had been in her family since the seventeenth century. It forms the core of the Mander Centre covering over 4 acres, one of the first shopping mall developments in Britain (1965–76), which dominates the city today.

Benjamin was a leading local nonconformist. On 14th July (Bastille Day) 1791, the Birmingham house of Joseph Priestley, the chemist, Unitarian dissenter and social reformer, was burnt to the ground in an outbreak of mob violence against 'Jacobinism'. The mob proceeded to Wolverhampton intending to burn down Benjamin Mander's house. He managed to defend his house and property with a drawn sword, placing a servant with a poker at the back door, until a troop of cavalry arrived to disperse the crowd.

Elizabeth Hanbury MANDER
(1752–1828)

Betsey was the wife of Benjamin Mander, by whom she had eleven children. Her doll and several examples of her needlework are in the manor house. In her youth, we are told, 'she was a giddy, lively girl, so her sisters usually spoke of her as *the romp*'.

Charles Mander I (1780–1853)

Charles followed as a japanner in his father, Benjamin's, firm in Wolverhampton. He started a varnish works in 1803, one of whose early customers was Queen Charlotte. He sold the japanning business in 1840.

Charles 'Boots' Mander was, like many early industrialists, a progressive social reformer, whose exertions led to at least two acts of Parliament. In 1817 he posted to London to petition the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, to grant against the sentence of death passed on two innocent men accused of stealing just 1*s.*1*d.*, then a capital offence. This led in the next session of Parliament to the repeal of the Blood Money Act, under which anyone who succeeded in gaining a conviction for felony was entitled to £40 as *blood money*, 'a terrible premium by which many judicial murders were committed and one of the worst Acts that had ever disgraced the Statute Book'. The incident formed the inspiration of the novel, *Now and Then* (1847), by the Methodist writer and jurist, Samuel Warren.

He was also a defender of religious freedoms. He pursued a 22-year Chancery law suit, which he financed personally and eventually won. It became a test case, one of several at the time which challenged in the courts the tenure of nonconformist chapels and endowments. The Lord Chancellor Eldon's judgment became a celebrated ruling in charity law, leading eventually to the Dissenters Chapels Act of 1844.

Jemima Mander (1791–1834)
She married Charles Mander in 1812. She was born Jemima Small, daughter of a linen draper in Boston, Lincs. Gerald Mander relates:
There was some romance in the meeting with her husband. He was travelling the eastern counties in 1809 and lost his way, which in the general absence of sign posts and A.A. men was confusing. The rider wisely left matters to his mount, and the old mare instinctively led him to Boston, where Mrs Charles Mander that was to be, dwelt, the eldest of a family of orphans, and aged 18. But her uncle and guardian made her wait till 21.

Having had ten children, she died aged 42 from typhus contracted while helping the poor in the Wolverhampton slums. Charles later married her younger sister, Elizabeth, described by an employee as 'a great economist [i.e., 'housewife'] and a real Christian'. In his letters he describes her as 'my old rib'.

Photograph of CBM by the Swedish pioneer of photography, Oscar Rejlander

Charles Benjamin Mander (1819–1878)
He established the partnership of Mander Brothers, varnish manufacturers, with his brother, Samuel (head of the Wightwick Manor cadet line), in 1845. A paint and colour works was set up in 1864 which became 'the Number One producer of paint and varnish in the British Empire and a household word'. He purchased The Mount estate at Tettenhall Wood, Staffs., in 1862.

With a keen interest in the arts, he founded the first purpose-built institution for art education in Britain in 1852–4. He travelled widely, particularly in Italy, was 'a first-rate artist' several of whose pencil sketches are about the manor house, and had a hobby of *improving* the Old Masters in his collection 'to their great gain'.

In public life, he was a magistrate and town commissioner, then one of the first town councillors, in Wolverhampton, where he promoted the free library and worthy temperance schemes to provide drinking-water fountains for the people of the town.

Sophia MANDER (1827–69)
Wife of Charles Benjamin Mander, by whom she had eight children. She died aged 42 six months after the birth of her youngest son, Jack (later chief constable of Norfolk). CBM went on to marry the children's governess, Harriet Spooner.

Sophie Mander (1855–1937) **as Ophelia**
Sophie was a younger daughter of CBM and Sophia. Here she is painted by the Norwegian historical painter Nicolai Arbo on a family visit to Paris in 1872. Arbo

wrote, delivering the painting: "It was my idea in my picture to represent Ophelia in the scene, where she—supposing Hamlet to be mad—exclaims: *O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!*"

Sophie married the antiquarian, Canon Henry Paine Stokes, hon. fellow and historian of Corpus Christi College and 'arguably the second best *local* historian Cambridge has had in the last hundred years'. The journals of their son, Louis Mander Stokes, with an account of Rugby and the events leading up to his early death in the trenches of the Somme, were published in 1995.

Alderman Sir Charles Tertius Mander
***first baronet* (1852–1929)**

'CTM' was the eldest son of Charles Benjamin and Sophia. He was educated at Rugby and Corpus, Cambridge. He was first chairman and 'governing director' of Mander Brothers Ltd. in 1924. He served uniquely four times as mayor of Wolverhampton (1892–6). He was made an honorary freeman of the borough, was a magistrate, colonel of the Staffordshire Yeomanry, and active in numerous local charities. He was granted a baronetcy for his public services in the Coronation honours of George V, who also awarded the firm (which had supplied varnishes to Queen Charlotte a century before) his royal warrant

He commissioned the architect Edward Ould to alter The Mount in 1893, later adding a fine library and music room in a grand English Renaissance style in 1909.

The portrait, presented by 'his fellow townsmen and other friends', is by Hon. John Collier (1850–1934), an Edwardian society artist in the swagger tradition. He is painted aged 44, wearing levée order with sabretache in hussar style, holding the newly-introduced busby.

Mary le Mesurier Mander (1858–1951)
Full length by Alfred Jonniaux (*circa* 1927)

Mary, wife of Charles Tertius, was Canadian, born in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She was the daughter of Henry Paint, a ship-owner of Guernsey extraction and an MP in the early Dominion Parliament. Her sister married Theodore Mander, builder of Wightwick Manor.

She presided over The Mount, a well-run country house in the Victorian/Edwardian heyday, known for its French cooking and collections visited by many public figures. She lived on in slowly diminishing splendour after the War, until she died aged 92.

Sir Charles Arthur MANDER

second baronet **(1884-1951)**

In early life he was a keen sportsman. He shot (rifle) for Eton, Cambridge University and for England, when he was just 22. But 'I prefer a good day's hunting to a good day's shooting', he would say.

He was a major in the Staffs. Yeomanry in the First World War in Egypt and Palestine. He fought in the three battles of Gaza (where he was wounded), and in the decisive aftermath of Meggido, the last great cavalry victory, riding in triumph into Damascus with General Allenby.

Full length, in hunting clothes, by Alfred Jonniaux

He lived as squire of Kilsall Hall in Shropshire. His father was a founder of the Wolverhampton Wanderers football club, of which he was also President, often attending Saturday matches muffled in a greatcoat worn over his hunting clothes. He died suddenly chairing a committee meeting of the Albrighton hunt.

After Eton and Trinity, Cambridge, Charles Arthur trained with branches of the Mander firm in Berlin, Paris, Milan and Norway—'in other words, by taking a holiday'.

He was an industrialist, serving as managing director of Mander Brothers. But he devoted his energies to public life and charitable affairs, serving at one point on over 67 committees and organizations, involved in every aspect of Midland and national life. He was president of Rotary International for Britain and Ireland and Vice-Chairman of the National Savings Committee. He was twice mayor of Wolverhampton, and an honorary freeman of the city. He was also made an honorary chief Red Crow of the Blackfoot tribe in Montana, where he dedicated the Waterton-Glacier National Park to world peace in 1932.

He was a public speaker of authority and charm on both sides of the Atlantic for the numerous causes he supported, appearing regularly on the early radio. A man of artistic talent, he wrote children's novels and lively travel journals (of his ocean voyages, hunting expeditions, war exploits, etc.); he sketched and sang. He played the piano with Sir Malcolm Sargent who was one of many public figures to stay at Kilsall, signing the visitors' book with musical quotations.

He married Monica Neame, of London and Kent, by whom he had two daughters and a son, Charles Marcus.

This portrait (1947) is by Arthur Pan, who famously painted Sir Winston Churchill.

Sir Charles Marcus Mander, third baronet (b. 1921), as high sheriff of Staffordshire in 1962. He was a director of Mander Brothers, and fought with the Coldstream Guards in the second world war, where he was wounded following the Salerno landings in Italy in 1943.

Maria Dolores Mander was born in Hamburg of English, German and Mexican descent. The portrait is by Leonardo Pizzanelli (1922–84), of Florence.

Charles Nicholas Mander, owner of Owlpen, painted as a child by Leonardo Pizzanelli in 1955. He is the sixth Charles Mander in succession and the twenty-eighth lord of the manor of Owlpen.

¶ *Mander family at launch of* Varnished Leaves, *Wightwick Manor, June 2005*
Back row*: David Mander, Steve Earl, N. Mander, Claire Mander, Barry Coles, Sir Glenn Hickman Bt, Jaki Bennett, Rosie Richardson.*
Middle row: *Emma Stirling, Lady Dolores Mander, Saskia (baby) and Sarra Earl, Sir Marcus Mander, Karin Mander, Carl Mander, Gilla Leigh, Gwen Mander*
Front row: *Chris Lahr, Charles Stirling, Fabian Mander, Hugo Mander, Penelope Loder, Francis and Georgie Mander, Marcus Mander, Charles Crole.*

The Arts & Crafts at Owlpen

OWLPEN is not an Arts and Crafts house, but rarer, remoter Tudor, where architectural development stops dead in 1616. Its later layers of accretion—very early Georgian and Cotswold Arts and Crafts—are understated and reabsorbed, yet add disproportionately to its substance and interest.

The house owes its survival to the late nineteenth-century reassessment of the vernacular styles of early houses and farm buildings under the inspiration of the Arts and Crafts movement. Owlpen's sympathetic resuscitation by Norman Jewson in 1926 harnessed the principles of conservative repair first promulgated by Morris and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). The new emphasis, which Owlpen exemplifies, on the careful conservation of a vanishing 'heritage' has been one of the most fruitful legacies of the Arts and Crafts movement, continuing to impel a vital world-wide endeavour.

The Victorian dream-houses—even Wightwick—with their picturesque revival of details and precious, self-conscious historicism, tend towards swagger, grandeur and gloom. But Ernest Gimson's generation was preaching a committed honesty and the direct practice of craft, without any pretence of 'stylism': "solid realities … not names and dreams." Gimson was "the greatest of the English architect-designers" (Nikolaus Pevsner), and one of the great furniture designers of the English tradition, whose work is apparently "rarer than Chippendale".

Gimson, in turn, was Jewson's *miglior fabbro*, his mentor and "better craftsman". And Jewson was "in many ways the greatest of all Gimson's followers" (Leicester *Catalogue*, 1969), of a generation of architects who combined sound knowledge and sureness of touch with intense poetic feeling. John Cornforth writes that Owlpen was one of a distinct group of early houses restored in the 'twenties. A dreamy feeling of escapism is evident and Jewson was alive to the sense of enchantment, catching the spirit of place, as well as texture and period. For aftercomers like Christopher Hussey, Owlpen was a dream made real, crystallizing the spirit of the secret valleys of the Cotswolds, and preserving something of a dream's lovely unreality.

Many commentators find that today "Owlpen is the quintessence of the 'old English' style" (John Sales, *Shell Guide,* 1990), where "workmanship of different dates co-exists harmoniously, and seventeenth- and eighteenth-century furnishings blend easily with later things in the manner prized by the Arts and Crafts movement" (Geoffrey Tyack, 1994). Most of the family things at Owlpen were made long before the Arts and Crafts movement, but a Catalogue offers thematic notes on the developing collections of some less familiar 'Cotswold Group' items. For Owlpen is one of few Cotswold houses where the spirit of this movement may be seen—and experienced—by the public outside a museum, and in something approaching an original context.

¶ Repairs to medieval cruck roof in east wing by Norman Jewson in 1925-6

CATALOGUE

Old Pantry

ERNEST GIMSON (1864-1919)
Trestle table
This is Gimson's own trestle work-table, the design similar to one of March 1914 in the Cheltenham Museum. Alfred Powell described Gimson's "fresh, clean rooms" in Gray's Inn
furnished with good oak furniture and a trestle table that at seasonal hours surrendered its drawing-boards to a good English meal.
A letter from Jewson to David Verey states:
This table was made to [Ernest Gimson's] design at his workshops at Daneway for his own use. He used it when making designs and working drawings for Architectural Work, Furniture and Metalwork in his office at Sapperton Cottage. After his death in 1919, Mrs Gimson gave it to me in recognition of my association with him & I am glad to know that the growing number of people who appreciate Ernest Gimson's work and influence will be able to see it…

Entrance Hall

A.C. FARE (1876–1958)
Owlpen Manor
Fare was a West Country architect with practices in Bath and Bristol. He worked with Sir George Oatley, preparing perspectives of the Wills Tower at Bristol University, and painted from old prints imaginative reconstructions of long-demolished buildings, and a popular view of Bristol in the Blitz of 24 November 1940 (now in the Bristol Museum).

SIDNEY BARNSLEY (1865-1926)
Oak bookcase (1909)
The Barnsley glazed bookcase in stained and figured oak with ebony stringing was made at the Sapperton workshops in about 1909. The design is based on seventeenth-century book 'presses', such as those made for Samuel Pepys now in the Magdalene College library, Cambridge, where Gimson worked through Sir Sydney Cockerell.

It was commissioned by C.H. St John Hornby (1867–1946), a leader in the private press movement, the revival in fine printing inspired by William Morris's Kelmscott Press. He was founder of the Ashendene Press and partner in the firm of W.H. Smith & Son. He was a friend of Sir Emery Walker, the typographer, who founded the Doves Press with T.J. Cobden-Sanderson (who is said to have coined the term 'Arts and Crafts') in 1900 and lived from 1923 at Daneway House, the house near Sapperton where Gimson and Barnsley had their workshops and exhibited their work. It is the work of these two presses which "secured for the plain unadorned type face its place in modern book production" (Nikolaus Pevsner).

Oak Chest (*circa* 1660)
The chest is from William Morris's own collection at Kelmscott House, Hammersmith, and then Kelmscott Manor, in the Thames valley. Norman Jewson describes how the Arts and Crafts designers sought out simple early chests such as this, "interesting Jacobean pieces in their original grey oak, not stained … as they invariably are in antique shops", with unrestored colour and patination. This one is panelled, with a primitive opposed beast design, based on the guardians of the tree of life, in the frieze rail.

F.L. GRIGGS (1876–1938)
The Beatitudes
Set in specimen *Leasbourne* type majuscules designed by F.L. Griggs in 1928 for the Lanston Monotype Corporation. Leasbourne was the district of Chipping Campden where Griggs settled and built his house, Dover's House, "a sort of life's job for me", using many of the same craftsmen who worked at Owlpen.

This print was produced by Davina Wynne-Jones under Nina Griggs's supervision in 1985.

ALFRED BUCKNELL
Grille (1926) [illus. above, page 11]
Briar rose motif designed by Norman Jewson and made in chased steel open-work by Alfred Bucknell, who produced most of the blacksmith work for the house at his forge at Waterlane. Bucknell had worked for Gimson from about 1903, and worked extensively for Jewson later. His son, Norman, continued to produce metalwork until the 1980s. Several of Jewson's drawings for such things as wall sconces, typical of his work, are at Owlpen].

The Great Hall

RUSSELL ALEXANDER (d. 1951)
Cyder Press (1926) [illus. above]
Arcadian, Palmeresque vision of the cider press at Owlpen in crayon and gouache by Russell Alexander. He was a close friend of Norman Jewson and of Fred Griggs. Griggs wrote to the artist on 17 January 1926 (letter at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford) which records that in 1925 Alexander presented Jewson with a small drawing of Owlpen which Griggs admired. Alexander prepared the first *Catalogue* of Griggs' etchings and wrote the introduction to Griggs's illustrated book on Campden. He was a poet and essayist, and the foreign news editor of the *News Chronicle.*

NORMAN JEWSON (1884–1975)
Cyder Press (1927)
Jewson was an amateur watercolourist of some distinction and left a number of his water-colours and drawings to Owlpen. In later life he recognised the superiority of his friends' work:
I would be well satisfied if I could produce a painting with as much poetry in it as one of his [Russell's] best. I suppose it is my friendship with Fred [Griggs] and Russell, Gimson & William Simmonds, that has made me so dissatisfied with my own failure. (Letter to Nina Griggs, 16.11.44).
He was happy to sell this version to David Verey:
The Cider Press was one my old friend F.L. Griggs liked, but I have another of the same subject painted by his and my late friend Russell Alexander which I like much better (4.9.68).

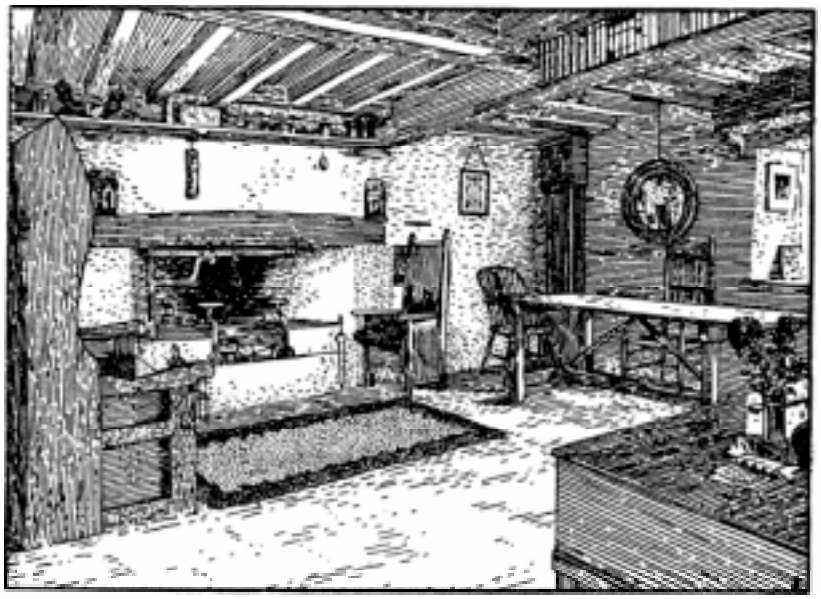
MAXWELL ARMFIELD (1881–1972)
Owlpen Manor
Armfield was associated with the Birmingham Group of painters, a leader of the 'tempera revival' and author of *A Manual of Tempera Painting* (1930). He married Constance Smedley in 1908, and they both worked in the circle of artists close to William Morris. They moved to the Cotswolds "because it was remote and inexpensive", in 1909. She describes "the quiet lovely life" at Minchinhampton in her autobiography:
We seem to have stepped into almost feudal peace, and the craftsmanship … delighted us as much as the Tudor manorhouses and characteristic architecture.

SIDNEY BARNSLEY
Oak High-Backed Settle (*circa* 1895)
Made for Ernest Gimson's own cottage at Pinbury, above Sapperton, where it is shown in a drawing of the sitting-room by Alfred Powell [above right]:
The room was large, and the floor flagged with white stone, the walls and ceiling, beams and joists white. A large black dresser, hung with gay and well-used crockery, a large settle at the fireside … and other rush-bottom chairs made by himself on his pole lathe, were its furniture.

Inspired by traditional farmhouse settles, it shows the design principles of the Cotswold Arts and Crafts movement in one of Gimson's treasured pieces. Made of local quarter-sawn oak and with a coved top, it has decorative bands and diapers of simple chiselled gouge-work (similar to those on a chest at Froxfield, Hants), and the constructional joiners' tenons 'honestly' displayed.

Norman Jewson subsequently acquired it (at Emily Gimson's sale in March 1941) for his own cottage at Sapperton.

The settle is a characteristic Arts and Crafts revival of traditional forms. CHB Quennell, discussing a similar Barnsley settle (in *The Case for Modern Furniture*), wrote:



¶ *Ernest Gimson's living room at Pinbury, drawn by Alfred Powell in 1922, showing furniture now at Owlpen*

It must be made by hand, and therefore…seems to mock at the industrial system. If settles could talk, it would say: "Here I am, and know not the meaning of compromise; I must be made as once all settles were made; if you attempt to standardise my parts and make me by machinery, I shall at once become so hideously ugly that you will be appalled. I am human in that men have made me."

F.L. GRIGGS (1876–1938)
Owlpen Manor (1930)
Fred Griggs was perhaps the best-known of the small group of etchers in the British etching revival working in the neo-Romantic tradition, as followers of William Blake and Samuel Palmer. This is one of three impressions of the first state (the others are in the Ashmolean, Oxford, and the Boston Public Library, U.S.A.), with Griggs's apt dedication to Jewson. [See above, p. 49.]

The Minster (1918: *right of the* Owlpen *etching*)
This represents an ideal of the English abbey at the end of the fifteenth-century, an imaginative epitome of the development of Gothic styles in the centuries before the Reformation. It is dedicated to the bells of Oseney Abbey. Pencil studies, a germ for this early etching, are also in the manor collection. Griggs said he was reminded of a passage of Froude:
It has all gone, like an insubstantial pageant, faded; and between us and the old England there lies a gulf of mystery which the prose of the historian will never adequately bridge.
Gimson wrote of this plate to Griggs:
If the 'Gothic revival' had been half as convincing as your etchings it would have gone deeper into people's hearts. They be grand towers & sure enough were this the 13th Cent. you would be king's Mason & I your carpenter.

Sarras (1926: *above the Gimson settle*)
This is the Arthurian city of legend: a pilgrim road approaching the city of God leads tortuously by the fragments of pagan ruins and a spring of renewal. Griggs writes to Russell Alexander of the walled city, hidden and mystical, with three churches at its heart.

¶ *Modelled plaster vine trail by Jewson*

NORMAN JEWSON & ERNEST GIMSON

Modelled plasterwork

Plasterwork was the only craft that Gimson regularly practised himself. The example in the splay of the window to the west (right) is by Gimson. The remaining plasterwork in the room, including the animals above the door from the pentice entry and the owl overdoor to the Oak Parlour, is from moulds made by Norman Jewson, and cast under his supervision 50 years later. The owl overdoor was cast by Simon and Judith Verity.

Modelled plasterwork was one of the crafts revived by the Art-Workers' Guild, under the influence of George P. Bankart (1866–1929). He was a specialist in decorative plasterwork (also lead and metalwork) who extolled the simple, hand-modelled work at houses like Wilderhope (Shropshire), Speke Hall (Merseyside), Chastleton (Oxfordshire) and Haddon Hall (Derbyshire). Bankart collaborated with Gimson, who studied the craft with the leading London firm of Whitcombe & Priestley. Gimson describes the treatment of flowers at Knole House in Kent:

The modelling is very simple. There are no sharp lines, no quick curves, no undercutting, none of those tricks of the modern plaster-worker for making his designs 'sparkle'; but instead, dull lines, gentle curves, and little variety of relief … though it may lack something of realism, it expresses the freshness and healthy growth which is the most vital quality in the natural flower.

Jewson was early struck by the "unusual beauty very local in character" of Gimson's modelled plaster ceilings. W.R. Lethaby describes Gimson's work as "quite original and modern, but as good, every bit, as old work, and yet as simple as piecrust." The contrast between the distinctively 'Cotswold' Arts and Crafts modelled plasterwork here, with its soft shadows and subtle relief, and L.A. Shuffrey's more or less contemporary Italianate work, also derived from Jacobean examples, with rich pendetives, armatures and undercutting, as at Wightwick and The Mount, is instructive.

¶ *Curtains in woven wool "Honeycomb" pattern by William Morris & Co.*

WILLIAM MORRIS & CO.

Curtains (from The Mount, *circa* 1891)

They are woven wool in 'Honeycomb', designed by Morris in 1876. In 1877 Morris had brought M. Bazin over from France to teach him the new techniques of weaving on Jacquard power looms, used here for this 'triple-cloth' (three-ply) weave. His woven textiles were worked under his direct supervision at Merton Abbey from 1881.

The Morris & Co. showrooms were in Oxford Street, next door to Sedding's offices where Gimson worked, and Morris's naturalistic textile designs were an important early influence.

¶ *The Manders were early clients of William Morris. Here Sir Geoffrey and Lady (Rosalie) Mander show ('Bird') tapestry curtains to the Clement Attlees at Wightwick Manor. The Morris circle was influenced by progressive ideals—a romantic, Utopian socialism—and Sir Geoffrey, following the strong family tradition of public service and radicalism, was a Liberal MP 1929–45. He gave Wightwick to the National Trust in 1937; it was one of the first houses to be given under the Country Houses Scheme, and the first in the lifetime of its donor.*

The Little Parlour

NORMAN JEWSON (1884–1975)
Owlpen Manor (1926)
One of two versions at Owlpen of a watercolour of the east front painted while Jewson was working on the house. It is a similar view to the one chosen by Griggs for the etching of Owlpen.

The Oak Parlour

F.L. GRIGGS (1876–1938)
Memory of Clavering (1934)
Half-timbered houses at Clavering in Essex, with a glimpse of the early Perpendicular church in the background, provide an idealized village street. The subject was composed entirely from memory, a poetic evocation, 15 years after he had last visited. The street is deserted in early morning sun, after heavy rain, with a foreboding of the Black Death, or apocalypse, or Reformation. The sonnet is from *The Rose as Fair* by the pastoral poet W. Browne. This was the most successful of the later, nostalgic etchings. When sent some photographs after completing the etching, the artist was saddened how much the village had changed: today the houses have been modernized, with integral garages.

Ragdale Hall (1931)
Ragdale Hall, in the Leicestershire wolds, is a parallel print to the Owlpen one, of a Tudor house under threat, symbolized by the graveyard outlined in the foreground. Here the house was condemned to demolition in 1959, despite the protests of conservationists all over England. There is now a health farm in the 'new' hall.

Anglia Perdita (1921)
"Lost England": this is a pair to *The Minster*, depicting the courtyard of an abbey on the eve of the Reformation. The inscription is dedicated to the famed bells of Croyland Abbey, "than which there were none so consonant in all England" (Ingulph's *Chronicle* of 1091), proclaiming "the glory of the Crucified". Printed on Griggs's own Dover House Press in Campden.

St Botolph's, Boston (1924)
The church is at Boston, Lincolnshire, the largest parish church in England, with a tower which rises above the fens, 'Boston Stump', of 300 feet, begun in 1309. Griggs wrote: "I've got nearer to the *soil* of England in it, I think, than ever before." This proof is dedicated to A.J. Finberg, the Turner scholar and author of the catalogue of Turner's *Liber Studiorum* mezzotint engravings, a work (in the Owlpen collection, with prints from Griggs's and Ruskin's own collections) which greatly influenced Griggs.

PETER VAN DER WAALS (1870–1937)
Bookcase (in bay window) (1924)
The oak bookcase was made for H.P.R. Finberg, A.J. Finberg's son. He founded the Alcuin Press in Chipping Campden and after the War became Professor of English Local History at Leicester.

Waals was Gimson's Dutch foreman at Sapperton who set up his own workshops at Chalford after Gimson's death in 1919, taking with him almost all Gimson's cabinet-makers, tools and materials. He continued to produce furniture, much of it based on Gimson's designs, until his death. Waals worked closely with Jewson between the Wars and apparently executed joinery for Owlpen.

Sir George Trevelyan has written a *Memoir* of his time working for Waals in 1929-31 which (he told the writer) was "'the greatest experience of my life'. (The Trevelyans were described by Rosalie Mander as another 'liberal and eccentric family', who encouraged Sir Geoffrey Mander to give Wightwick Manor to the National Trust in 1937. In 1941, they gave their own house at Wallington, Northumberland, to the Trust.)

In addition the room contains examples of graphic art by the romantic artists who influenced Griggs: William Blake and Edward Calvert.

Bathroom

ERNEST GIMSON
Oak table (*circa* 1910)
The framing has stopped chamfers, responding to those in the beams of the room. The typical stretcher detail is derived from a yoked hay-rake design adapted by the Gimson-Barnsley furniture-makers. Illustrated in *Ernest Gimson: his life and work*, it has been much copied by later designers.

NEVILLE NEAL (d. 2000)
Ash chairs
There are various chairs about the house made by Neville Neal of Rugby in the traditional manner. Neal joined Edward Gardiner as a pupil in 1939 and

worked with him until his death in 1958. Gimson learnt the craft of chair-making from the Bosbury (Herefordshire) chair-bodger, Philip Clissett, in about 1886–7. He later encouraged Gardiner in the craft, using a pole lathe to turn the uprights and stretchers; the splats, arms and seat rails are shaped with a draw knife and spoke-shave; the seats are of rushes. His clients included Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley, who owned several pieces now at Owlpen and commissioned a house, Mill Hill, Brandsby, in Yorkshire, with work by Bankart, Gimson, the Barnsleys and A.H. Powell. Designs at Owlpen are 'Gimson', 'Clissett' (modified by Gimson from a design by Clissett) and 'Pass' (commissioned by Mrs Pass for a village hall).

The Solar

ERNEST BARNSLEY (1863–1926)
Oak worktable (*circa* 1895)
This early Barnsley table belonged to Norman Jewson, acquired from Gimson. The under-framing has characteristic faceted chamfering, a form used by wainwrights to reduce weight, with bowed 'hay-rake' stretchers and 'wish-bone' tension braces.

Lionel Lambourne writes of a similar table:
Barnsley forged the grammar and syntax of the Sapperton style with such pieces as this table, at first sight plain, strong and simple in construction, but enriched and enlivened by the power of the smoothly chamfered structural details, which in the struts underneath possess an organic form akin to that of a pelvic bone.

HARRY DAVOLL (1875-1963)
Display cabinets
Davoll was trained by Gimson and worked under him at Daneway to his death in 1919; he subsequently worked with Peter van der Waals at Chalford to 1933, before setting up on his own.

Queen Margaret's Room

WILLIAM MORRIS & CO.
Child's chair (*circa* 1880)
The chair may be after a design by Ford Madox Brown (1821-93) after chairs from Sussex in 1864-5, and one of numerous examples made for Morris & Company 1864–1940. Its prototype has been described as 'unpretentious furniture in a Sheraton/Regency tradition' (Simon Jervis), deriving from D.G. Rossetti's interest in turning and ebonized finishes. This one was in the Nursery at The Mount, probably bought for the generation of 1884.

EMILY GIMSON
Smock
Gimson's working smock, embroidered by his wife, Emily Ann, née Thompson. She was the daughter of a Yorkshire rector who, writes Jewson, 'took a keen interest in village activities, helped Gimson in his work and was an excellent housewife'.

The craft of smocking, which was dying out as an article of everyday wear for country folk by the mid-nineteenth century with increasing urban-isation, was revived under the general interest in traditional handicrafts inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement. Mrs Oscar Wilde, an active member of the Rational Dress Society, Liberty & Co. and Kate Greenaway, the children's book illustrator, were all enthusiasts. Smocks were promoted as 'aesthetic dress' for children and smocking has remained popular, particularly on children's clothes, intermittently ever since.

Other smocks shown include a child's smock made for C.A. Mander in about 1888, a brown child's smock from Ticehurst, Sussex, and a smock worked by Karin Mander in 1975.

SIDNEY BARNSLEY
Writing desk (1913) [detail p. 70]
The first design for this fine English walnut and ebony writing desk (now in the Cheltenham Museum 1972.187.81) is dated Feb. 1913. It is one of Barnsley's acknowledged masterpieces, described by furniture makers as an 'epiphany of technique and skill'. It is based on a re-interpretation of the William and Mary period fall-front secretaire cabinet. The front opens on tooled quadrant hinges, enclosing twelve drawers and ebony cupboards. The finish has holly stringing, moulded panels of octagons in ebony, bands of gouge-work diapers, exposed dovetails forming decorative patterns, turned ivory handles to the interior drawers and the typical stepped sledge feet of the Gimson school. The raised and fielded panels of the sides are solidly framed by flat-chamfered stiles in the form of posts, inlaid with lozenges of ebony, recalling Barnsley's interest in Byzantine prototypes. Even the back is carefully finished with ten raised panels in moulded frames.

The Cyder House

SIDNEY BARNSLEY
Cupboard (*circa* 1913) [illus. above]
This large cupboard of English walnut and ebony is a lavish piece of later Barnsley furniture, finished and detailed to the highest standards. It has fielded ebony panels with holly inlays, and beautifully fitted doors and drawers. Octagonal posts frame a fret frieze, finished in chiselled gouge work, to the upper stage. It deploys motifs used by the wainwright, where the chamfers reduce weight, as described by George Sturt. The centre of the base stage is set in a canted plan. It was commissioned by Hugh Fairfax-Cholmeley: the design drawings in the Cheltenham Museum (1972.187.17) are dated 21 March 1913. The completed work was invoiced on December 10th 1913 for £70.

SIDNEY BARNSLEY (1865-1926)
Farmhouse dresser (*c.* 1900)
A simple kitchen dresser in pine from Barnsley's own Sapperton cottage contrasts with the cupboard. It illustrates the ideals of the Arts and Crafts designers to create "good citizen's furniture … well made to the last degree" (Morris). Gimson's aim was to produce this "cottage-type furniture at a price that working-class people could afford to pay" (Jewson). These early, functional pieces are rare as they were not economic, their established clients preferring to commission quality pieces finished in veneers, inlays and exotic woods—ebony, satinwood, walnut, burr elm—now associated with the movement.
The dresser, like the settle, was a type of piece much loved by Arts and Crafts designers for its homely associations, and Gimson and the Barnsleys designed many different versions (Good Citizen's Furniture).

The dresser belonged to Sidney Barnsley, then to his daughter, Grace. She was a pottery designer of distinction and a pupil of Alfred and Louise Powell, decorating pottery for Wedgwood in the '20s and '30s. She later started the Roeginga Pottery at Rainham, Kent, with her husband, Oscar Davies, where they made and decorated their own pottery.

¶ Stem pot by Alfred Powell (1865–1960) illustrating Owlpen, painted for Wedgwood in 1928

¶ *Norman Jewson, photographed by his father-in-law, Ernest Barnsley, outside his cottage in Far Oakridge*

Biographies

Norman Jewson

Norman Jewson was born in 1884 of a family of established timber merchants in Norwich, and spent all his early life in East Anglia. He went to school in Norfolk and Suffolk and went up to Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge. He served his articles in the architectural practice of Herbert [Bertie] Ibberson in London, which he 'disliked as a place to live in permanently the longer [he] stayed there'. Ibberson had worked in the same office as Gimson, Ernest Barnsley and Alfred Powell under J.D. Sedding. Sedding worked in the 'crafted Gothic' tradition, with a love of handicraft; like Morris, Philip Webb and Norman Shaw, he had been a pupil of G.E. Street.

Jewson describes, in his autobiographical reminiscences, *By Chance I did Rove*, how, having finished his apprenticeship in 1907, he set out with a donkey and trap on a sketching tour in the Cotswolds, 'a part of the country little known at that time'. He had no idea that he would stay there for the rest of his life.

Ibberson had recommended him to visit the workshops of Ernest Gimson, who soon took him on as an 'improver', or unpaid assistant, and put him to work at making sketches from life and studying the crafts of modelled plasterwork, woodcarving and design for metalwork, as for Gimson, architecture and the crafts were vitally interdependent. He describes how, as part of his training under Gimson, he was encouraged to draw a different wild flower every day from nature, noting its essential characteristics and adapting it to a formal pattern suitable for modelled plasterwork, wood-carving or needlework.

He soon became an invaluable member of the group, and a pupil, friend and close companion of Gimson in his later years. In 1911 he married Ernest Barnsley's daughter, Mary, and converted for himself a group of cottages at Bachelor's Court in Sapperton.

He supervised much of Gimson's architectural and repair work. He writes that he admired in Gimson an assured distinction, traditional in the use of the best craftsmanship and materials, where in design grace of form was combined with simplicity; these are the qualities of his own best architectural work. He set up in practice on his own in 1919 and soon gained a reputation for the sympathetic conservation and adaptation of old buildings. His credo was clear:

My own buildings I wanted to have the basic qualities of the best old houses of their locality, built in the local traditional way in the local materials, but not copying the details which properly belonged to the period in which they were built… I hoped that my buildings would at least have good manners and be able to take their natural place in their surroundings without offence.

¶ *Jewson's wedding to Mary Barnsley in Sapperton, with Ernest Barnsley, his father-in-law, right*

¶ *Sketch by Jewson of Bachelor's Court, Sapperton*

He also worked confidently in a classical idiom in his country houses, when necessity or the spirit of place demanded it, as Shaw and Lutyens and, in the Cotswolds, Guy Dawber had done. The Lindens, Norwich (1921), and The Garden House, Westonbirt, are some of his most successful essays in a whimsical, vernacular classicism, with characteristically fine plasterwork detail and restrained use of mouldings. He travelled whenever he could in Italy, making sketches of architectural details, lettering, farm carts, landscapes and village scenes. Many of these are now at Owlpen.

As Ruskin had taught in the *Lamp of Truth*, working by hand was working with joy. And in accordance with Ruskin's advice to Sedding, Jewson always had either pencil or chisel in his hand, acutely involved in the simple craft processes of building, experimenting and practising with delight, familiarizing himself with the qualities of tested materials, tools and techniques, rediscovering, reviving the fabrics, textures and disciplines of traditional construction, from drystone walling in the Cotswolds, and cob, which he used with success on his summer house at Lane End, Kilve, in the Quantocks, to twisted gut in a weather-clock set above a row of simple almshouses.

He worked for a time with William Weir, a skilful architect in the repair of old buildings and churches, such as Salle, in Norfolk, on behalf of the SPAB, and The Priest's House at Muchelney. He also assisted Ernest Barnsley, supervising the completion of Rodmarton Manor when Barnsley died in 1925, most notably the chapel (1929). Rodmarton was Ernest Barnsley's most important work, 'probably', Jewson wrote, 'the last house of its size to be built in the old leisurely way, with all its timber grown from local woods, sawn on the pit and seasoned before use.'

In 1925, he purchased Owlpen, whose repair described above is often considered his outstanding work. His other major architectural repair work was at Campden House (formerly Combe House) outside Chipping Campden, where he demolished some untidy Victorian additions and domestic offices, unifying with the skilled use of detail and materials a cluttered design of various dates to form a pleasing and comfortable house, with terraced garden and summerhouse.

He became established as a well-known 'gentleman's architect' in the Cotswolds between the Wars, working on a number of distinguished Cotswold manor houses and farmhouses. They include Charlton Abbots, Cotswold Farm (with his most extensive garden, on a hillside), Doughton Manor, Eycot House, Glenfall House (for Arthur Mitchell, also a patron of both Waals and Griggs), Hidcote House, Iles Farm (for Sir William Rothenstein), Little Wolford Manor, Southrop Manor, Througham Court, and Througham Slad (for William Cadbury). He executed church repair work (Chalford, near Stroud, was re-ordered by him), and designs for memorials, inscriptions, headstones, and lettering; also for metalwork, as Gimson had done, including sconces, chimney furniture and gates, and architectural leadwork.

He turned his hand to the woodcarving of details such as finials and newels for his houses. A number of furniture designs are strikingly successful, from the fine piano-case with marquetry inlay, made by Waals, which he designed for Mrs Clegg of Wormington Grange, to the sturdy child's chair with back splats showing humorous carvings of village characters which he made and painted himself, as well as a number of toys, for his daughters.

He wrote two books: *By Chance I did Rove* has become established as a minor classic of the

background to the Gimson group and Cotswold life before the First World War, appearing in three editions, and *The Little Book of Architecture* (1940) is a useful beginner's guide to English architectural styles. He wrote a number of poems, illustrated for his friends, and would declaim a Victorian peepshow in a whining, sing-song drone.

He did little professional work after 1940, and felt increasingly at odds with modernism and the historical-artistic developments of the post-war period. David Gould wrote in his *Times* obituary:

His architectural work has a dignity and simplicity in keeping with the traditional Cotswold manner. His buildings look as if they had grown naturally from the ground. He was equally skilled and sympathetic in the restoration of old houses, the most notable of which is the romantic and unique gabled manor house of Owlpen, which he bought in a dilapidated condition in [1925] and restored at his own cost and, alas, ultimate loss. His friend F.L. Griggs, RA, inscribed and dedicated his etching of Owlpen to him.

Norman Jewson, with Fred Griggs and the poet and essayist Russell Alexander, were a trio of friends whose hearts beat as one in their regard and love for all that was finest in the English tradition. Their appreciation of sturdy architecture and the traditions of the English countryside was not the backward-looking dream of the medievalist harping upon a once golden age. They were realists whose desire was to maintain the character of the English countryside and its architecture and keep it alive and free from hideous modern accretions. Traditional things, long tested and tried, were not to be indiscriminately cast aside.

Jewson was content to pursue his own unfashionable path, never deviating from his high ideals and what he knew to be right. He produced many delicate watercolours and a number of poems of much felicity. Always courteous and with a charm which comes from a man at peace with himself, he was a delightful companion, whether on a long ramble through Sapperton woods, or at his own candlelit table where he always had a fund of comic and entertaining reminiscences…

Fred Griggs

Frederick Landseer Maur Griggs was born in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, in 1876. He studied at the Slade School and worked for two years 1896–8 in the architectural office of C.E. Mallows, the architectural draughtsman. He largely abandoned architecture for drawing and from 1900 worked on pen and ink illustrations to 13 volumes of the *Highways and Byways* series of regional guides for Macmillan's, beginning with *Hertfordshire*.

He was closely associated with Gimson, whose interest in the traditional methods and materials of building he shared, working in partnership with him from 1917 to 1919. He settled in Chipping Campden where there was a Guild of Handicrafts established by C.R. Ashbee. He lived at Dover's House in the High Street from 1903; from 1927–37, he designed for himself a new house of the same name. In 1912 he became a Catholic and took up etching seriously, becoming a leader in the British etching revival, "the most important etcher who followed in the Palmer tradition" (K.M. Guichard, *British Etchers*, 1977). He produced a highly-wrought body of etched work, 57 prints technically unchallenged, depicting idealized Gothic buildings and landscapes and suggesting an idyll of vanished dreams, vividly realized, evoking "silences of noons", haunted by a hidden god, almost dehumanized.

He executed some architectural design work, mainly in and around Chipping Campden. He was an early champion of the cause of conservation: an executive member of the National Trust, the SPAB and the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (whose letterhead he designed). He founded the Campden Trust in 1929 with Norman Jewson and others and did much to preserve the town and area, in particular Dover's Hill, which he saved from development in 1926. There is an extensive collection of his prints and drawings at Owlpen.

¶ *Gimson's cottage at Sapperton by F.L. Griggs*

Ernest Gimson

Gimson was born in Leicester in 1864, the son of Josiah Gimson, engineer. He attended a lecture by William Morris in Leicester in 1884, and Morris recommended him to the architectural practice of J.D. Sedding in London. From Sedding he derived his interest in craft techniques, the stress on textures and surfaces, naturalistic detail of flowers, leaves and animals, always drawn from life, the close involvement of the architect in the simple processes of building and in the supervision of a team of craftsmen employed, as at Owlpen, direct. He met Ernest Barnsley at Sedding's, and soon learnt the crafts of chair-making and plasterwork.

In 1889 he joined Morris's SPAB. In 1890, he was a founder member of the short-lived furniture company, Kenton and Co., with Sidney Barnsley, Alfred Powell, W.R. Lethaby, Mervyn Macartney, Col. Mallet and Reginald Blomfield. Here they acted as designers rather than craftsmen and explored inventive ways of articulating traditional crafts, "the common facts of traditional building", as Philip Webb, "their particular prophet", had taught.

Gimson and the Barnsleys moved to the Cotswolds in 1893 "to live near to nature". In 1900 he set up a small furniture workshop in Cirencester, moving to larger workshops at Daneway House, at Sapperton, in 1902, where he stayed until his death in 1919. He strove to invigorate the village community and, encouraged by his success, planned to found a Utopian craft village. He concentrated on designing furniture, made by craftsmen, under his chief cabinet-maker, Peter van der Waals.

His architectural commissions include a number of early works in and around Leicester, such as Inglewood (1892), The White House (1898), Lea and Stoneywell Cottages (and others) at Markfield (1897/8); his own cottage, The Leasowes, at Sapperton (1903, with a thatched roof, since burnt); Bedales School memorial hall and library; alterations to Pinbury Park (with plasterwork) and Water Lane House (1908); cottages and the village hall (built under Norman Jewson in 1933) at Kelmscott; a cob house, Coxen, at Budleigh Salterton, Devon; and the window for Whaplade Church, Lincolnshire. His architectural style is "solid and lasting as the pyramids… yet gracious and homelike" (H. Wilson, 1899).

Lethaby described him as an idealist individualist: "Work not words, things not designs, life not rewards were his aims." As Gimson stated in a correspondence preserved at Owlpen: "Life is commensurate with the number of beautiful impressions that can be squeezed into it. Let us have as many as we can."

Ernest Barnsley

He was born in Birmingham in 1863 into a family of builders who (like the Manders) had been japanners and varnish manufacturers. He was articled to J.D. Sedding, where he met Gimson. He practised as an architect in Birmingham and later joined his brother, Sidney, and Gimson, in the Cotswolds. Jewson describes his more urbane and hospitable character as a *bon vivant* and conversationalist. He made furniture in partnership with Gimson until 1905, when, after a quarrel, he turned to architecture in the Cotswolds and for the SPAB. He converted his own cottage at Upper Dorvel in Sapperton, with

a three-story tower block loosely modelled on that at Daneway, today the most attractive of the group's houses. Rodmarton Manor was his most important work, occupying him from about 1912 until his death in 1926. It contains a collection of associated furniture and fittings which make it one of the great monuments to the Sapperton group and the Arts and Crafts movement.

Sidney Barnsley

He was born in 1865 in Birmingham and articled to Norman Shaw, a pioneer of the 'Old English' vernacular revival who emphasised the subtleties of craft detailing. He travelled in Greece in 1888 with R. Schultz-Weir to study Byzantine styles, in 1901 publishing together a study of the church at Daphne. He designed a scholarly neo-Byzantine church at Lower Kingswood, Surrey.

After the failure of Kenton and Co. in 1892, he moved to the Cotswolds with Gimson, whom he had met through his brother, Ernest. Jewson describes how he lived by high ideals, to the extent that "austerity was almost a religion"; he preferred to make his furniture entirely on his own, without assistance, rather than to design for other craftsmen. His work is accordingly rare and Owlpen has a representative collection of his various styles. He did not believe in delegating humble and unpleasant tasks to others; so that, Jewson wrote, "a great deal of his time was taken up by gardening and sawing and splitting wood for the winter fires."

His work as a cabinetmaker is of the highest standard. He was an innovator in design, laying down the principles of the 'Sapperton' style in the years 1893–1900. His designs are less elaborate and spindly than Gimson's mature work, perfect in workmanship, subtle, almost Shaker in their unremitting simplicity.

His architectural commissions included Beechanger (for himself), Combend Farm (for Asa Lingard), St Loe's (1911; for the artists, Henry Payne, who painted Owlpen, and his wife Edith), and work at the memorial library at Bedales School and at Rodmarton Manor, which he took over on Gimson's and Ernest Barnsley's deaths respectively, until he himself died nine months after Ernest on 26 September 1926.

¶ *The Sapperton Group at Pinbury,* c. *1896.*
From left to right: Sidney Barnsley, Lucy Morley, Ernest Gimson (seated), Alice and her husband Ernest Barnsley, and their two daughters, Mary, who later married Norman Jewson, and Ethel.

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Impressions of Owlpen

"A garden house more than anything else … carefully and reverently preserved… We may go a long way before we find anything so quaint as this old house, making its brave fight against consuming Time. . . There is surely an enduring charm in such a garden . . . a pleasaunce of terraces and clipped yews, of woodland and distant views – a true old garden of England."
H. A. TIPPING, 1906

"Among little hillside gardens treated in a formal fashion, none is more delightful than that of Owlpen Manor… with what modesty the house nestles against the hillside and seeks to hide itself amidst regiments of yews."
GERTRUDE JEKYLL, 1914

"Owlpen Manor House … hidden away in the deep country … [although] comparatively small, possesses a great presence, the house and garden bound together so that they form a single entity… and the fabric … practically unchanged since the time it was built [in 1616]. The garden in which [it] is set … is one of the finest and most satisfying things of its kind anywhere to be found."
HAROLD EBERLEIN, 1927

"Not for the most explicit of Ordnance Maps would I have forgone the folk directions given as follows: 'You must go along the green and down the hill by Fiery Lane until you come to Cuckoo Brook, then a little further on you will pass Horn Knep, after which you will go by Dragon's Den; next you go through Potlid Green; after that is Marling's End, and that will bring you to Owlpen, but you must take care not to miss the road.'

"To Owlpen I came … to the end of the world, a very secret place, where a small manor and a small church are screened by an abrupt, wooded conical hill at their backs and a massed guard of trained yews in front. But in the winter, the many-gabled little manor is of so transparent a grey between the dusky shapes before and behind that it is owlish indeed in its seclusion, in its mysterious greyness with the hill impending at its back and the soft water-meadows in front, and in the composure of a beauty that steals in so quiet a way upon the senses. This rare Cotswold treasure…[was built] very plainly and so sparingly of ornament that the slight decoration at the apices of the gables are all that the eye picks out. It depends … upon line and proportion and the treatment of space… How pompous and overgrown appear many an Elizabethan and Jacobean mansion in comparison with the early Tudor of Owlpen whose architectural courtesy gently rebukes their over-bearing manners!"
H.J. MASSINGHAM, 1937

"Owlpen in Gloucestershire—ah, what a dream is there! Owlpen, that tiny grey manor-house, cowering amongst enormous yews, yews that make rooms … dark secret rooms of yew hiding in the slope of the valley."
VITA SACKVILLE-WEST, 1941

"in one of the deepest of the valleys penetrating the Cotswold escarpment . . . the vision [of Owlpen], is so out of the world that momentarily it seems unreal, as if the descent from the wide plateau above had led one down out of time into the world of legendary shades. . . long recognised as one of the treasures of Cotswold scenery, [Owlpen] in its incomparably romantic situation [is] a dream made real, yet preserving, with all the substance of its structure and history, something of a dream's lovely unreality."
CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY, 1951

"Of medieval origin, [Owlpen] has always been considered one of the most picturesque manor houses in the county… a nostalgic symbol for anyone who has known and loved this part of the West of England and been separated from it during the world wars of this century. The drawings of F.L. Griggs . . . have given the romance visible and literary form. Owlpen in its remote and beautiful valley near the Severn estuary is the epitome of romance."
DAVID VEREY, 1970

"By far the most perfect small Manor House, to me, in all of England."
FRANCIS COMSTOCK, 1976

"The setting is unforgettable … shut off from the twentieth-century world. All – manor house, outbuildings and church, against a backdrop of woods – are in stone and of a piece. There is nowhere quite like Owlpen in the Cotswolds or, indeed, anywhere else."
C.R. CROSHER, 1976

"Olla's pen … a paradise on earth, steeped in peace and timeless English beauty."
LEE PERSSON, 1983

"Owlpen's secluded site in one of the deepest combes of the Cotswold escarpment… The main front, its stone-tiled roof lines wonderfully undulating, lacking any pretence of symmetry…yet a delight to witness, we admire on picturesque grounds. Owlpen is traditional, dignified and illogically satisfactory. The interior is just as appealing … cherished and very much a home."
JAMES LEES-MILNE, 1985

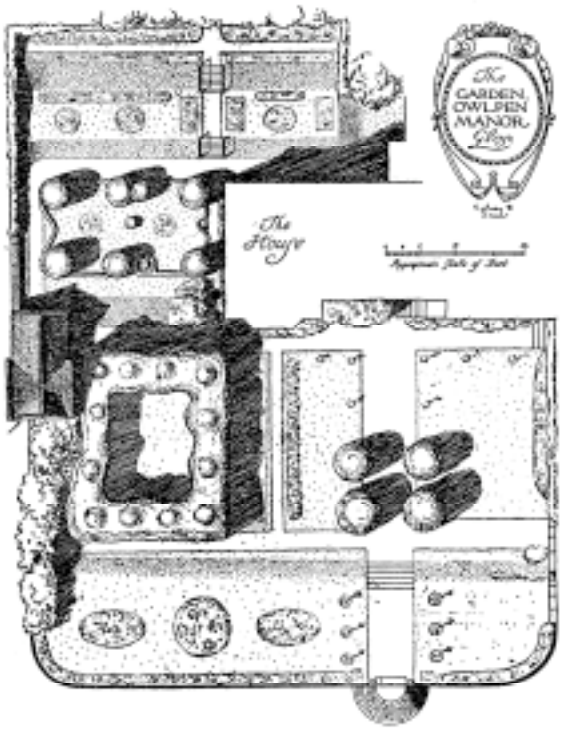
"Owlpen … the epitome of the English village … Its character evolved through the slow passage of centuries of rural life."
HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES, 1989

"A breathtaking ensemble of truly English beauty."
HUGH MASSINGBERD, 1993

"Few English houses are more seductively beautiful than this manor house of grey limestone, tucked away in a deep wooded valley."
GEOFFREY TYACK, 1994

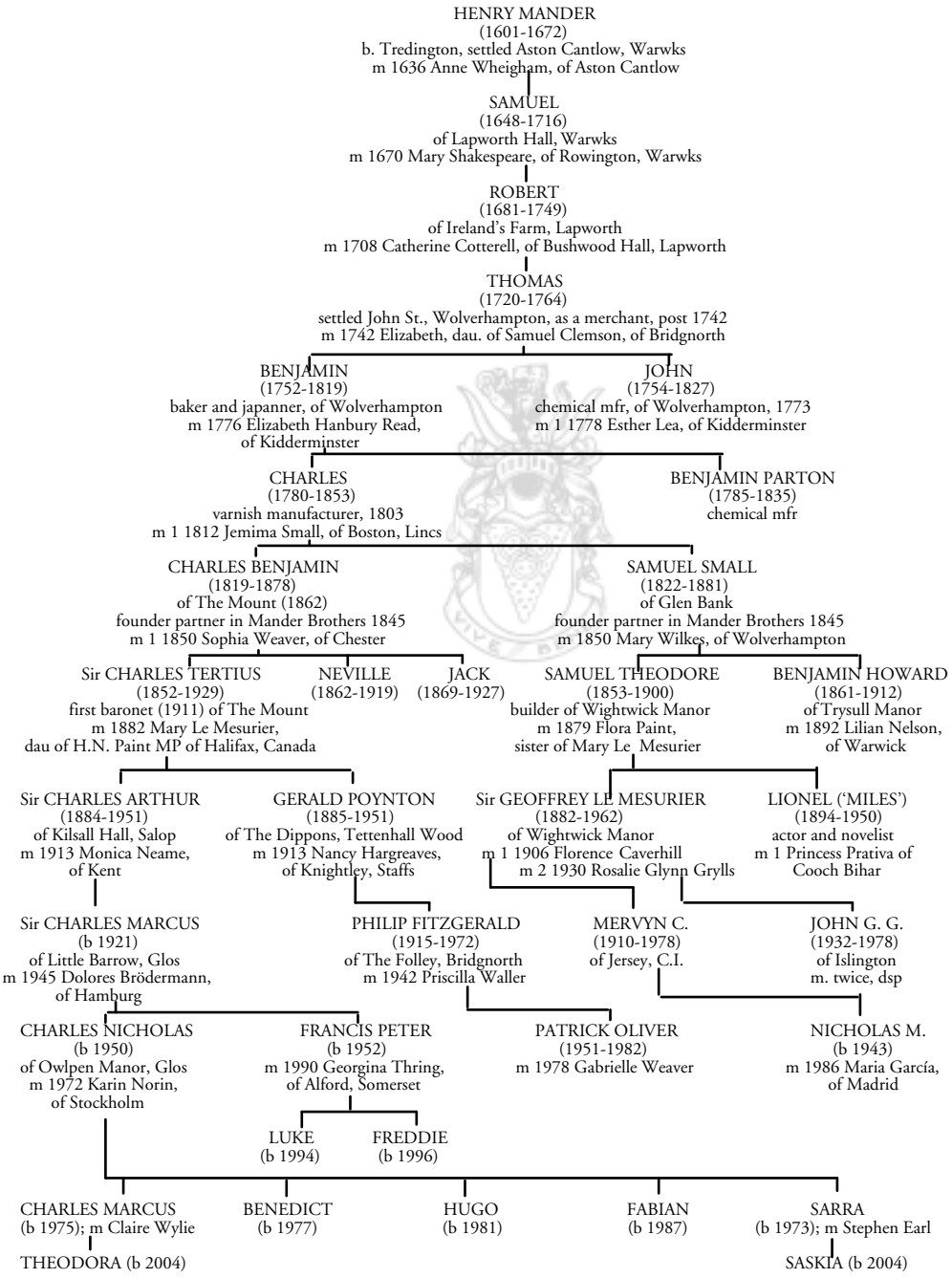
"Owlpen … the most beautiful place in England."
FODOR's *Britain Guide*, 2000

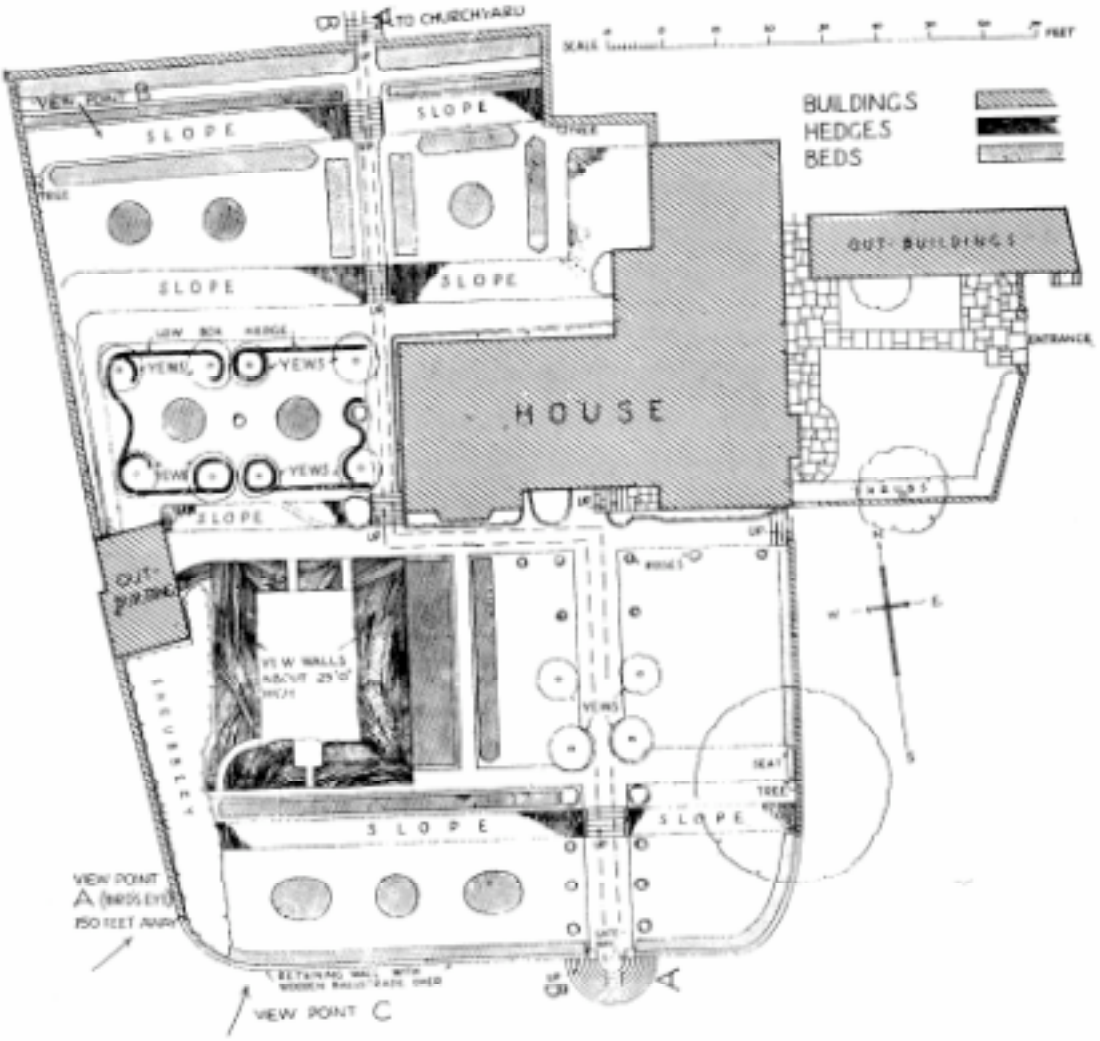
"Owlpen … elevated as a paradigm of the values of English civilisation."
SIMON JENKINS, 2003



¶ GARDEN PLAN drawn by Sydney R. Jones
from ***Homes and Gardens of England*** by H. Batsford and C. Fry, 1932

The Mander Family Tree (abridged)





¶ *Plan of the garden* drawn by Gertrude Jekyll,
from *Gardens for Small Country Houses*, 1914