During the year various events and changes have taken place within the Trust. I mentioned in the last Newsletter that we were looking forward to our Sixtieth Anniversary Conference in October 2012 and am delighted to report that thanks to the huge efforts of the Attingham team, particularly Giles Waterfield, it was extremely successful drawing some 450 delegates from all over the world over the two days. It was followed by a drinks party for the Attingham alumni at the House of Lords kindly arranged by our Patron, Lord Crathorne. In addition, this summer saw a new team running the Summer School with Andrew Moore and Lizzy Jamieson as joint directors and Meg Schützer-Weissmann as Administrator. Andrew is also directing the Study Programme in Norfolk this September. New initiatives this academic year include a week-long course in October entitled ‘French Eighteenth-Century Studies’ in collaboration with the Wallace Collection and Dr Helen Jacobson, who is now Curator of Decorative Arts at the Wallace and was formerly our Summer School Director. This new programme received excellent applications and an international group of participants has been selected.

In March Rosemary Lomax Simpson decided to retire as a Trustee. After forty years involvement with Attingham in various capacities, we will miss her and her good judgement as a Trustee, but she will always be part of Attingham. At the same time Martin Drury retired as Vice Chairman to make way for James Hughes-Hallett, a member of our Council. Martin has also been part of Attingham for as long as most of us can remember and has contributed enormously to its spirit and success. He will, however, continue as a Trustee and we congratulate him on his well-deserved success at being given the 2013 European Union Prize/Europa Nostra Award for Dedicated Service. We also welcome David Adshead and Sarah Medlam as new Trustees and are delighted that Dr Thomas Campbell, Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and a great advocate of Attingham, has agreed to become one of our Patrons.

On a broader canvas, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport has announced that it intends to separate the regulatory side of English Heritage from that of running its some 420 properties. The current objective is to have the properties run as a separate Charitable Trust that is ultimately self-funding rather like the National Trust. It has properly been argued by Simon Thurley, Chief Executive of English Heritage, that to have an organisation running two completely separate entities not only blurs the profile of each but also prevents management from clearly focusing on either, potentially leading to conflicts of interest, so this change is to be welcomed. However, as currently proposed, the new charitable institution will start off with comparatively little endowment and it will be a difficult job to ensure that it equates to the National Trust in terms of funding especially as its present membership is just under three-quarters of a million against approximately five million of the Trust. We wish the new Chairman well not only in the difficulties of separating two entities but in achieving the objective of having some four hundred English properties stand on their own feet. It is to be noted that many of these represent ruins or sites which have little chance of earning income and only around one hundred and twenty charge for entry at present.

As readers will see from the above, by virtue of the efforts of those who assist and so generously support The Trust, Attingham continues to grow and prosper. Such efforts are all the more important, given the budgetary cuts being imposed on museums and their like throughout the arts world.

John Lewis
Chairman
I’ve been lecturing to the Attingham Summer School for about twenty years now, regularly enough to become a recognisable fixture. When I worked for the National Trust as Architectural Historian and then Head Curator, I usually discussed the properties I worked on and know best. One of my favourites was Calke Abbey, a house full of the accumulated chattels of the famously reclusive, sporting, Harpur Crewe family.

Calke Abbey has an extraordinary story, of increasingly eccentric squires shuttering up the house and never throwing anything away. Its rescue, in 1985, by the National Trust supported by the National Heritage Memorial Fund is one of the great country house successes. Though carefully restored, the house is shown much as it was left by the last Harpur Crewe’s, an atmospheric time-warp of faded paint, peeling wallpaper, state beds groaning with household lumber and animal heads, and cases and cases of stuffed birds. But today it can be difficult to explain this carefully contrived ‘arrested decay’ to Attinghamites who have for days been regaled with acres of spotless chintz and fancies of ormolu and marble. Calke could seem a slightly sordid anti-climax, not least because the gardens are shown as in their heyday, with an immaculate vegetable garden and serried ranks of pots on the auricula theatre.

And then there are the birds… These were the particular passion of Sir Vauncey Harpur Crewe, the 10th baronet (1846-1924), who formed one of the great ornithological collections of his day, specialising in rarities, scarce migrants (1846-1924), who formed one of the great ornithological collections of his day, specialising in rarities, scarce migrants and unusual colour forms such as melanistic and albino specimens. The elaborate displays – often shown in sophisticated naturalistic settings and enclosed in monumental glazed cabinets – occupy virtually every room, threatening in the great Saloon to eclipse the family portraits. Sir Vauncey was a major patron of the Norfolk taxidermist, Thomas Gunn, but was not averse to experimenting himself – unfinished birds still hang upside down to dry, tightly wrapped in string, in the upper box rooms. Attingham students unused to the vagaries of the English country house found this profusion of goggle-eyed birds hard to take, and for years Calke ranked low in their feedback. But it was important that they did understand, for Sir Vauncey was not unique: in the nineteenth century, stuffed birds were considered instructive household ornaments and could be seen in almost every country house, advertising the excellence of sport in the neighbourhood (which was the whole point of many country houses), but also as curiosities. Indeed, only the virulent reaction against Victorian taste around 1900 led to many of these displays being thrown out or stored.

Loving the birds at Calke, I devised a lecture, Flights of Fancy, stuffed birds as decoration in the English country house, to contextualise Sir Vauncey’s birds and explain their importance. It worked a treat – my stories seemed to trigger the inner Gothic in many hitherto dormant stuffed bird enthusiasts, and prepared them for the eccentricities of other houses. And finally, it was sobering to point out that this was only a fraction of the collection – Sir Vauncey’s rarest specimens, including his Great Auk’s egg, were sold in Stevens Auction Rooms in Covent Garden in 1924, to help rescue an estate ruined by the Agricultural Depression.

Tim Knox, FSA has been Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge since April 2013. He was Director of Sir John Soane’s Museum 2005-13, and before that Head Curator of the National Trust. He is a member of the Council of The Attingham Trust.
This year’s Summer School took place during one of the hottest Julys on record. Despite this, the programme went extremely well and the participants formed a clearly happy and focused group with members from the UK and USA, Australia, Estonia, Germany, Norway, Romania, Sweden and New Zealand. Over the 18 days, 55 lecturers, tutors and property staff gave formal lectures, seminars and house tours. There were some new contributors as well as old friends which made for a very lively and stimulating mixture of presentations.

As in previous years, we spent five days in Sussex based at West Dean and our studies at Arundel, with John Martin Robinson, and Petworth, led by a strong home team with Peter Brears and Annabel Westman providing specialist input, were as memorable as ever. The newly re-opened Firle Place was included where we were welcomed by Viscount Gage. Deborah Gage led the visit together with Rosalind Savill providing a consummate seminar on the Firle Sèvres. We were also given special access to the beautiful gardens at Woolbeding, for which we were grateful to Stewart Grimshaw who met the participants and kindly provided wine on arrival.

In Derbyshire study visits to Kedleston and Calke Abbey provoked stimulating discussion, as did two day-long visits to Chatsworth, where we learned of the next phase of the Chatsworth Master Plan from Matthew Hirst. The Duke of Devonshire was particularly generous with his time and spoke of his forthcoming new ceramics gallery. The interior of Wentworth Woodhouse was a new inclusion, as was a programmed discussion around issues of presentation and interpretation of the country house. As ever we enjoyed wonderful hospitality at Flintham and Winkburn.

En route to Kent we visited Gorhambury, where we were met by Lady Grimston and Karen Hearn introduced the ‘Great Gallery’ of portraits, including the work of the painter Nathaniel Bacon. At Belmont House, John Martin Robinson joined us again and spoke on Samuel Wyatt and the family ‘manufactory’ while Jonathan Betts introduced Lord Harris’s clock collection. Annie Kernkaran-Smith and Treve Rosoman led the group at Eltham Palace and we had a strong team at Penshurst Place where Viscountess De L’Isle welcomed us. Private visits to Sissinghurst Castle, with an inspiring introduction from Adam Nicolson, and the magical evening of musical entertainment at Finchcocks, were each remarkable. Further highlights included Dr Roger Bowlder’s explanation of the Darnley Mausoleum and a visit to Restoration House with its Tudor water garden and visionary approach to conservation and lighting, embodying much of the thinking that Lisa White had presented in her lighting lecture. Knole provided the climax and final day of the Summer School where we were met by a group of specialist curators, conservators and managers who have been working on a £7.5 million Heritage Lottery Fund bid for the past year. Giles Waterfield joined us to lead a seminar on the paintings.

Many people need to be thanked for their contribution to the success of the School. Martin Drury really enhanced our visits to Uppark and Knole and a number of National Trust staff, in particular James Rothwell in Sussex, Andrew Barber in the East Midlands and Emma Slocombe at Knole, deserve special acknowledgement. We are also grateful for the strong representation from English Heritage this year. Last but not least, we wish to thank Meg Schützer-Weissman, the Administrator who has done sterling work over the year and Cheryl Hageman, the Administrative Director of the American Friends, who joined the programme in Derbyshire.

In 2014, the Summer School will take place between 4th-21st July
The eighteenth session of Royal Collection Studies took place in London and Windsor and at Hampton Court. Due to the strong demand for places, there were 31 participants rather than the usual 30, and we were delighted to welcome the first scholar on this course from Latin America. The membership was drawn from many parts of the world, including Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Russia, Sweden, Turkey, UK and US and included curators, academics, conservators and dealers. Scholarship assistance from a number of generous sources enabled us to assist many applicants financially, and our donors are listed in this report. We are most grateful to our loyal supporters for their faith in the value of this remarkable educational enterprise.

A number of new elements were included in the programme. The exhibition held in Buckingham Palace, The Queen’s Coronation 1953, attracted much interest in relation to our visits to Westminster Abbey (and especially the newly-displayed Coronation Chair) and the Crown Jewels. Charlotte Bolland of the National Portrait Gallery gave an excellent lecture on the culture of the court of Henry VIII. Our visit to Westminster Abbey took a new form this year and we are most grateful to Tony Trowles, Keeper of the Muniments, and his colleague Matthew Payne for guiding us round the historical and practical complexities of this site, crucially important for our understanding of the development of the English monarchy.

As always, a great deal of the teaching was carried out by the staff of Royal Collection Trust, whether formally or through discussion and informal instruction as in the State Apartments at Windsor Castle. Jonathan Marsden, Director of the Royal Collection, Jemima Rellie, Head of Publications and New Media at the Royal Collection, and Desmond Shawe-Taylor, Surveyor of the Queen’s Pictures, discussed in situ their plans for the reorganisation of the visitors’ experience at Windsor Castle. At the Queen’s Gallery at Buckingham Palace we viewed the exhibition In Fine Style: The Art of Tudor and Stuart Fashion, with an introduction by its curator, Anna Reynolds. A selection of visits for smaller groups at Windsor gave opportunities to see the collection of miniatures; the paper conservation studio; and (an innovation) a selection of silver, discussed by Kathryn Jones.

An important part was played by the staff of Historic Royal Palaces, unfailingly generous and enthusiastic in their interpretation of the properties in their care. We are most grateful to HRP for their active participation in this programme, which makes a huge contribution to its success. Sebastian Edwards and Olivia Fryman took a group round the innovatory exhibition Secrets of the Royal Bedchamber at Hampton Court, with its spectacular display of state beds, while Kent Rawlinson gave the last of many spirited interpretations of that complex building.

Staying at Cumberland Lodge in Windsor Great Park was a great pleasure, with the staff unfailingly indulgent over our unpunctualities. Edmund Newell, the new Principal, introduced us to his plans for the future. The house was the setting for an entertainment, on the final evening, on the theme of music and poetry in the royal household, featuring Lucy Roberts (soprano) and William Howard (piano), with readings by Raphael Beuing, Tara Cederholm, Thomas Gaehgents, Mia Jackson, Jonathan Scott and Giles Waterfield. It was the first time that music has been included in such an entertainment and the experiment seems to have been a great success.

Sara Heaton did a fine job as Administrator, supported by Kate Morgan, Rebecca Parker and Annabel Westman of the Attingham Trust. I am as always grateful to them all.

In 2014, Royal Collection Studies will be based at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor between 31st August - 9th September.
‘This week with Attingham has been so wonderful and inspiring …’
Elyze Storms-Smeets, The Netherlands

With an excellent group of 32 international members, our tour of ‘the wilds of Norfolk’ began with a walk of King’s Lynn, led by the irrepressible Paul Richards. The medieval and mercantile strategic importance of this seaport to the landed estates of the region, with its links to the Low Countries and the Hanseatic League, was quickly established. A stimulating day at Holkham followed and proved to be an excellent choice to start the house visits. The seminars were expertly presented by the Holkham team alongside guest speakers Nick Penny, Annabel Westman and Christopher Hartop, all of whom added significantly to our understanding of this major house. The evening finished with an entrancing musical recital with harp and flute in the Saloon as the sun lowered over obelisk wood before our wondering gaze.

Our visit to Narford Hall was especially rewarding in relation to Raynham, Houghton and Holkham. Narford was the home of Sir Andrew Fountaine who acquired the greatest collection of maiolica outside the Medici Court. Although much is no longer in situ, a series of interiors survive, still evocative of Sir Andrew’s taste and erudition, contacts and connections which made him an arbiter of taste for Robert Walpole, Charles Townshend, and Thomas Coke. At Raynham Hall Lord Townshend led an energetic tour of the principal floor and the attic story, as well as an inspiring visit to the Great Townshend archive.

A day spent at Gunton Park and at Melton Hall provided a fascinating insight into the issues of conservation and preservation. Kit Martin introduced us to the idea of ‘Martinising’ a dilapidated property - dividing it vertically into separate dwellings of historical importance with all the comforts of modern living. We saw the recreated park and learned of the major tree-planting campaign to restore Gunton Park with Repton’s tree belts and Gilpin’s ‘clumps’. Roger Gawn showed us how he was gradually taking on the future of Melton (Constable) Hall, driven by his passion for the traditions of craftsmanship associated with the house.

The focus of the Study Programme was a full day at Houghton Hall in order to appreciate the miraculous return of the European Master paintings belonging to Sir Robert Walpole that were sold to Catherine the Great in 1779. A once in a lifetime event, the redisplay of the principal parade rooms has proved enlightening. For the first time it has been possible to understand the importance of Walpole’s collection to William Kent’s designs for the parade rooms. A walk through the park with Tom Williamson to see James Turrell’s Skyspace was followed by a reception in the Picture Gallery by kind invitation of David, Marquess of Cholmondeley, who also showed us the newly completed private rooms.

A visit to Wells-next-the-sea to see the medieval Hall house moved by Miss Savidge from Ware in Essex provided an extraordinary tale of an owner’s dedication to her house. This was followed by an afternoon in Norwich to see the medieval Great Hospital and the paintings and decorative arts at Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery. Invited guests, including Attingham alumni, were welcomed to an evening reception there. The programme concluded with visits to Oxburgh Hall and East Barsham Manor, and three private houses in King’s Lynn conducted by their owners and residents. The final view was from the Elizabethan tower of Clifton House over the medieval warehouses and town houses stretching out below.

The Attingham Trust would like to thank everyone involved in putting together such a richly focused programme. It could not have been done without the unflappable Kate Morgan, administrator of the course, and her calm efficiency and attention to detail.

In 2014, The Attingham Study Programme will take place in Belgium; Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels, 11th-19th June

Seminar on the library at Holkham Hall, Norfolk
It might seem that the American Friends of Attingham’s 51st year should be a chance to catch a breath, after all of the excitement of last year’s hosting of the first-ever American Study Programme and the celebrations of our own 50th anniversary. Instead we are as busy as ever, having fielded an outstanding group of Summer School candidates, nine American students for Royal Collection Studies and a diverse class for the Study Programme in Norfolk which commences as I write these words. Twenty-two of these students required some level of scholarship support in order to make their participation possible: the Board, staff and volunteers at the AFA work very hard to develop that support and are very grateful to those whose generosity makes this possible.

We have not neglected our alumni: programs this Fall include a September day trip to view the world-renowned contemporary art and sculpture collection of Sherry and Joel Mallin, a sold-out Study Trip to Richmond to see the historic and cultural riches of that great city, and our Annual Fall Lecture on October 28, which this year features The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Luke Syson, speaking on factors which influenced the development of Regency sculpture in England.

I am delighted to report that the AFA is an extremely healthy organization by any measure, with committed alumni, sound finances, a strong Administrative Director in Cheryl Hageman and a core group of volunteers who are exceedingly generous with their time, ideas and support. Initiatives at present include efforts to promote alumni-created events outside of our core Northeast Corridor region, outreach to younger alumni and work to strengthen ties to The Attingham Trust and the non-American participants in the various programs. The increasing numbers of students from Asia, Australasia and other regions beyond Attingham’s traditional UK and European base offer a significant opportunity to our American students and alumni to expand their own professional and intellectual ties and to make their own collections, expertise and scholarship available on a more global basis.

Our great success would not be possible without the efforts of many individuals and institutions, and my very heartfelt thanks go out to all of them.

Attendance on an Attingham Trust course means automatic membership of The Attingham Society and its huge international network of friends and colleagues. Aside from activities from our central hub I regularly get requests for contact details in various corners of the world where alumni know they will find someone with a shared experience. It is wonderful to see the well-oiled cogs of the Attingham community working with members sometimes organising their own ‘mini-Attingham’ trips, such as a few from the 2011 Summer School meeting up in Gloucestershire this summer.

I am proposing regular Society e-bulletins so I would love to hear of these excursions as well as news of jobs and life changes, book publications, conferences, exhibitions and events that we could help publicise or even attend.

The News section of our website often has information of events and conferences organised by alumni so do let me know if you would like things uploaded there. Equally if you have events that you would like to see organised from ‘central hub’ please let me know. Early morning exhibition previews, such as the recent one to ‘Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts and the Russian Tsars’ at the Victoria & Albert Museum are especially popular so we would like to organise more – and not just in London!

The next confirmed date for your diary is the Annual Reunion on Thursday 16th January 2014. This will take place at the Society of Antiquaries with Jonathan Marsden, Director of Royal Collection Trust, as our pre-drinks speaker.
The generous donations received from individuals, charitable trusts and institutions to support core funds and participants on the Attingham courses continue to be invaluable. We are delighted that The Monument Trust has renewed their commitment for scholarship funding and that other donors have continued to provide grants on an annual basis to allow the UK and US selection boards to choose deserving candidates. The Copland Foundation, supported by two Attingham legacies, has funded three Australian scholars this year and we continue to be grateful to the Clark Collection for New Zealand, ACE for supporting members from Central Europe, and the Dr Hendrik Muller Vanderlasch Fonds for their assistance with Dutch nationals. In the US, a new initiative has provided funds for an employee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art to attend the Summer School and The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America, has fully supported one of their employees. In thanking all our supporters, we remain on the look-out for further assistance to help build up our funds to ensure success in the future.

MAJOR DONORS
Margaret Civetta; The Clark Collection; Alex Copland Foundation; The Crescent Trust; Huyler Held; Lillian Hirschmann; New York Community Trust, Edward Maverick Fund; Peter and Wilhelmina Minet; The Monument Trust; Stewart G. Rosenblum; The Royal Oak Foundation; Basil Samuel Charitable Trust.

SCHOLARSHIPS 2013

SUMMER SCHOOL
American Friends of Attingham
American Friends of Attingham Summer School Class of 2012
Association for Cultural Exchange (ACE)
The Attingham Society
The Attingham Trust
Biltmore Estate
Michael R. Carter
Chatsworth House
The Clark Collection
Copland Foundation
The John Comforth Memorial Fund
Decorative Arts Trust
English Heritage
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
David and Maggi Gordon
Historic Hudson Valley
Henry E. Huntington Library & Art Gallery
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The Monument Trust
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
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The Friends of the Victoria & Albert Museum
David Wilton Metropolitan Museum of Art Scholarship

ROYAL COLLECTION STUDIES
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Philadelphia Museum of Art
Kate de Rothschild
Royal Collection Trust
Basil Samuel Charitable Trust
Adrian Sassoon
Swedish Royal Collection
The Victoria & Albert Museum
The Wallace Collection
Yale Center for British Art

STUDY PROGRAMME
American Friends of Attingham
The Attingham Trust
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Dr Hendrik Muller Vanderlasch Fonds
The Monument Trust
National Trust (for England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
The University of Leiden, The Netherlands
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The Arts Fund Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grants Programme