



ISSUE 48

WINTER 2022



THE COPPED HALL TRUST NEWSLETTER

THE COPPED HALL TRUST

Stables Courtyard, Copped Hall, Crown Hill, Epping, CM16 5HS
www.coppedhalltrust.org.uk

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BUYING TICKETS

Tickets for concerts, theatre etc can be purchased online via Ticketsource at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/coppedhallevents> where you can view the event, pay and print your tickets. Both debit and credit cards may be used. If you have problems with buying tickets online please contact our Box Office on 07749 397932 or tickets@coppedhalltrust.org.uk.

For Auto Club events enquiries please contact us on events@coppedhalltrust.org.uk or call our Box Office - see above.

Information about the Drawing Classes and the Antique Furniture Restoration Workshop may be obtained from Alan Cox, 112 Torriano Avenue, London NW5 2SD. Telephone: 07799 473 108. Email: chairman@coppedhalltrust.org.uk

To enquire about private tours contact Alan Cox - see above

Front cover picture shows the Greek Theatre Players performing at Copped Hall in the summer.
FRONT AND BACK COVER PHOTOS: PETER GAMBLE

CHAIRMAN OF THE TRUST REPORT

One could say that The Saving of Copped Hall is entering its third phase. Phase One was the campaign (1986-1995) the objective of which was to secure the freehold of Copped Hall under the ownership of a specially formed charitable trust. The aim was to carefully restore the site for educational, cultural and community use (with the emphasis on education) in order that every aspect of the place and its parkland be illuminated for our visitors. The campaign was exceptionally difficult as it involved the dislodging of repeated aggressive development proposals and the task of trying to borrow the purchase price in a recession. However, we prevailed.

Phase Two was another challenging campaign (1995-2020) which involved the repayment of the purchase price loans with the minimum of compromise.

The advancement of the restoration of the totally wrecked mansion, ancillary structures and gardens (which were full of trespassers and vandals) without any initial money was also arduous. However, once again, we prevailed, thanks to numerous donations, grants and the work of our excellent volunteers and builders. This was achieved by holding firm to our original objectives without any compromise.

Phase Three is what you might call the 'consolidation phase' following the achievement of the two difficult campaigns. This phase is where our financial, administrative, archive and educational departments can be fine-tuned - so that we can move forward into the future as a highly efficient body.

Alan Cox



BEAGLES AT COPPED HALL - 1912

PHOTO: PRIVATE COLLECTION

ACTING CHAIRMAN OF THE FRIENDS' REPORT

I have mentioned to the Friends before, that in my professional life, I am fortunate enough to work for The Georgian Group, a national amenity society involved with the protection and preservation of Georgian heritage. In this capacity I attended the Historic Houses AGM in November, where I was delighted to witness The Copped Hall Trust being given a special commendation for the restoration of the State Hall during the Historic Houses Restoration Award. During the announcement, the Chair of HH Martha Lytton Cobbold made a special mention to our Chairman, Alan Cox, citing his drive and determination in moving the project along.

Having been involved with Copped Hall for well over a decade I cannot express how much pride I felt seeing the images of the State Hall restoration up on the big screen in Westminster, for all the heritage world to see. In fact, an audible gasp could be heard from audience when the 'before and after' images were shown. Receiving this commendation yet further cements our identity as a nationally renowned restoration project and an example of how historic places can be saved. I hope we can all look forward to further recognition of this type in the future as the Copped Hall project gets stronger and stronger.

Louise Robertson



PHOTO: DENIS STRETTON

STILL FROM DRONE MOVIE SENT WITH AWARD APPLICATION

KEY VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED

Bookkeeping And Financial Assistance Required

Copped Hall has grown, is now regarded as a medium-sized charity and continues to grow. Four years ago we recruited a qualified accountant and company secretary as a volunteer to help us through the last passage of growth during which, for instance, we have seen the Trust become subject to an annual audit, instead of a simpler independent examination. Greville Norman undertook to stay with the Trust until its first audit had been completed and has now said that he will stay on for its second which will take place in the Spring.

Greville is involved with quite a few other charities and has indicated that he wants to do rather less for the Trust in the future than he has in the past. So we are looking for people, probably more than one, to assist with bookkeeping and finances. The Trust uses, and is likely to continue to use, an off-the-shelf accounting package for its accounts but some Excel skills would be useful.

If you have any skills or experience in these areas and would be happy to help, please get in touch with Alan Cox on 07799 473 108 or coxalan1@aol.com

Car Parking Team Leader

Many volunteers work within a team, while others tend to work on their own. Volunteers are also willing to help anywhere they are needed. Many roles cross over. A number of our volunteers regularly help with car parking but we need an overall co-ordinator - especially on the three Open Days we have during the year. Please contact Louise Robertson if you are interested.
committee.focht@outlook.com

Volunteer To Assist With Our Adult Education Programme

Would suit a retired teacher at college or university level who could advance and manage workshops, lectures and courses. The subject areas would be various but certainly include history, heritage and conservation. Contact Alan Cox on 07799 473 108 or coxalan1@aol.com



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

FURNITURE RESTORATION WORKSHOP

GARDEN AND GROUNDS - CAUSEWAY STEPS

On the Terraces, to the west of the mansion, our stonework contractor has reinstated the western flight of eleven stone steps attached to the south side of the Causeway. We do not have enough funds to provide the three stone steps from the bottom landing to the path below - so these will be created from painted plywood for the time being. A steel handrail is to be installed beside the steps. These steps will allow visitors to descend to the southern lower terrace and see - close up - the work on the various planted beds.

Of the eleven steps, only two are new. The remainder were original to Copped Hall and recovered from Bullwood Hall in Essex, where they were taken by Lord Chelmer around 1950 when Copped Hall was stripped of saleable items.



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

LOCATION OF STEPS BEFORE REINSTATEMENT



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

THE REINSTATED FLIGHT OF STEPS

SOUTH FRONT GARDEN - GLAZED CORRIDOR

We have installed a timber ramp within the basement area of the former Glazed Corridor so that visitors can access the Wintergarden through the doorway at the bottom of the ramp. The ramp was financed by the Grange Farm Trust - to whom we remain extremely grateful.

In addition we have rebuilt the low side wall to the corridor - which you can see in the photograph below. We used as much of the original stonework as possible but did need to have two new ventilators made. Had we restored the wall without the ventilators we would have had to dismantle the wall again to fit them at a later date. This restoration is important as the South Front Garden is a key area, being the formal entrance to the gardens, an external space for the South Room and an area where the adjacent Loggia and Wintergarden can be appreciated.



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

RAMP



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

THE RESTORED LOW WALL TO THE FORMER GLAZED CORRIDOR

WINTERGARDEN



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

NEW BRICK WALLS FOR THE PLANTERS

Within the Wintergarden, a considerable amount of brickwork has been constructed since the last Newsletter. This brickwork comprises the walls of the former planters situated beneath the main floor - which they supported. The aim is to reconstruct sufficient brickwork to assist visitors to understand the layout of the inside of the building. All the wall sections have been built to their original full height.

To date Jeff and Chris have been directing their energies to the brickwork around the circular pond and at the eastern end of the building - in addition to the brickwork in the Glazed Corridor. Soon they will shift their efforts to the planters at the western end of the building but not before we have installed an extra reinforced concrete slab over the underground reservoirs at that end.

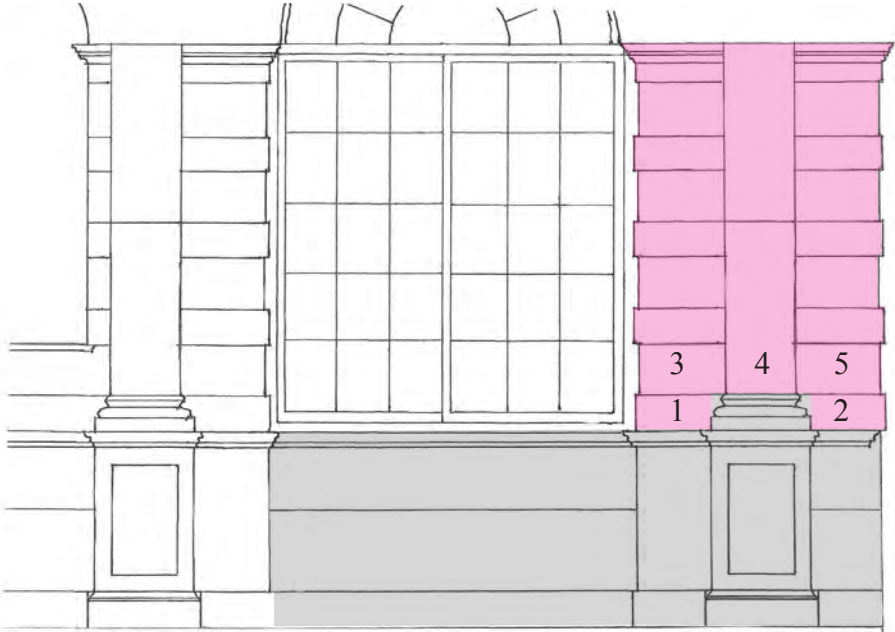


PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FALLEN CORNER
ACROSS THE LILY POND

WINTERGARDEN - THE FALLEN CORNER

DRAWING: ALAN COX



PART ELEVATION OF WEST FACADE - SHOWING POSITION OF FALLEN CORNER



PHOTO: UNIVERSAL STONE

COLUMN BASE + SILL (NOW COMPLETE)

We were fortunate to receive two generous donations towards the Fallen Corner. This has enabled the whole of the sill course and the new column base to be installed - see photo at left. This has brought us right up to the level where the actual Fallen Corner, that has been lying on the ground all these years, can now be dismantled and its stone facings re-erected back in their original positions. The Fallen Corner is lying on its south side so the condition of the stones facing the ground cannot be seen. However, most stones seem to be in a fairly good condition.

In the above architect's drawing, the grey tone represents all the stonework that has been reconstructed as a result of all the donations we have received. The pink tone shows the Fallen Corner. The numbered stones are some of the first stones to be installed - see wish list.

WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN



PHOTO: WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

SUNFLOWERS AND OTHER BLOOMS

'This garden is paradise'

These were the words spoken by one of our first-time visitors at one of the Open Days we were fortunate to be able to hold in 2021. We have all struggled in some way over the last year so to hear such praise of our volunteers' work and dedication was uplifting for everyone.

It was a challenging year with the weather being so variable. First cold, then wet, then hot and humid which made some of the plants and flowers grow bigger than usual, much to the delight of our visitors. The flower borders looked their best and our wonderful selection of plants and produce for sale proved to be very popular again.

As it was my first year choosing what to plant in the glasshouses, I decided to introduce several varieties of heritage tomatoes and one brand new one, called Indigo Rose, which is a small but tasty black tomato. It created much interest and must have been one of the most photographed plants of the day.



PHOTO: WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

HELEN IN THE LONG BORDER

WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN CONTINUED



PHOTO: WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN VOLUNTEERS

PLANTS FOR SALE ON OPEN DAY

As well as sweet peppers we also grew the hottest chilli in the world called Carolina Reaper. It certainly challenged a few chilli lovers and caused lots of conversations. If you love tomatoes and chillies give them a try, they are interesting as well as tasty.

The second phase of the Orchard Glasshouse was completed last year, which is a major achievement thanks to all involved. I hope to soon have oranges, lemons, figs, table grapes and even a pineapple growing there, so watch this space.

Restoration work on the smaller Stove Glasshouse has progressed well thanks to two of our volunteers, who needed to have a good head for heights as they climbed up to repair and replace the roof glass.

There is always something that needs either repairing, mowing, planting, installing, cutting and even weeding - so if you are interested in volunteering, please contact us to find out more.

The Walled Kitchen Garden has always been a special place for our visitors so we are lucky to have such a good team of willing volunteers who work well together and keep it productive and looking good all year round.

Thank you for supporting us and we hope to see you again next year.

Helen Lowther.
Team Leader.

WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN CONTINUED



WALLED KITCHEN GARDEN GATES

The elaborate wrought iron gates are in regular use and their condition causes great concern. It is essential that these important gates are restored and we have started to raise funds with some success. The gates will have to be taken off-site for restoration in a blacksmiths workshop. Many years ago, we had these gates inspected by experienced blacksmiths and an estimate was given for their restoration of £25,000. It is estimated that the cost today will have increased to around £40,000 - particularly as one of the piers needs underpinning. The Trust has agreed to match all monies raised and to date £8,558 has been raised by individuals which the Trust has doubled. When the funding is sufficiently advanced the gates will be taken off-site and the opening fitted with a security hoarding. This is only practical in the winter months when the ground is too soft for vehicles to use the gateway.

PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE



EAST WALL - RESTORATION BEGINNING

Our contractor has completed another phase of rebuilding the top courses of brickwork along the south wall. The scaffolding has been dismantled and transferred to a section of the eastern wall where the top is in urgent need of attention - see above. This section of wall also provides the support for the lean-to outbuilding on the outside of the wall - see below.

PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE



LEAN-TO BUILDING AWAITING RESTORATION

Our specialist glasshouse contractor has returned to complete the outstanding works on the second phase of the Orchard House. The delay has been due to the lengthy process of obtaining special castings required to facilitate the opening of the high level ventilators throughout the whole of the Orchard House.

PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

THE MANSION - STONE STAIRCASE

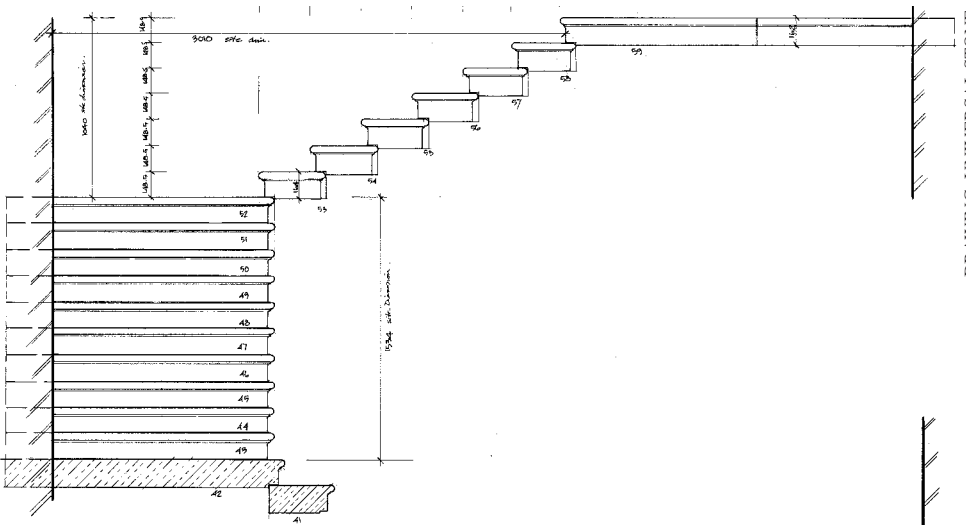


PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

THE FIRST TWO FLIGHTS TO THE SECOND FLOOR UNDER CONSTRUCTION

We have now installed 41 steps of the staircase - with another 18 to go. This is a tremendous achievement, particularly as all this work has been privately funded.

The various temporary supports and protective material over the lower flights will soon be removed so that visitors can appreciate all the excellent craftsmanship.



DRAWING: UNIVERSAL STONE

CONTRACTOR'S DRAWING - SHOWING THE LAST TWO FLIGHTS TO THE SECOND FLOOR

THE MANSION - FIRE PREVENTION

Fire prevention is a high priority as we do not want a repeat of 1917. We are approaching this issue in several ways. Once we could use parts of the mansion we immediately installed fire extinguishers in recommended places. These are inspected once a year by a specialist. In addition, we have been installing a special fire resistant rigid quilt between the floor joists, particularly at second floor level in order to create a horizontal fire barrier between the top floors and the lower floors. Recently two further areas of floor structure have been fitted with this material - with more planned. To complement this fire proofing, we are in the process of installing fire detection circuits, sensors and control panels throughout the building. Finally 'fire breaks' or 'fire stops' are being installed to prevent fire spread between rooms. These comprise of areas of brickwork beneath door openings and certain areas of wall at high level - see right.

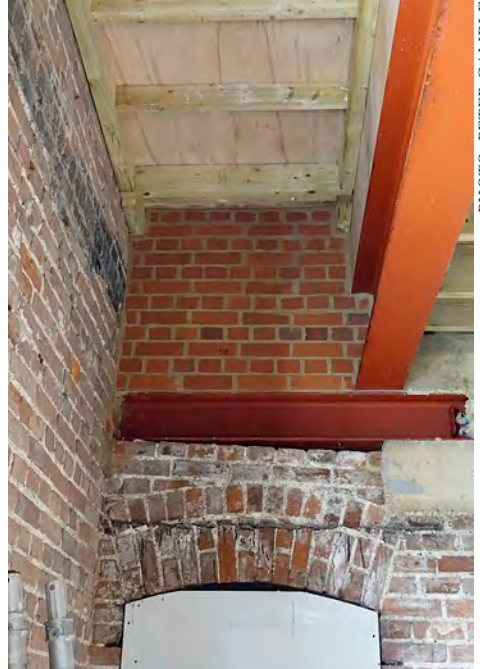


PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

BRICKWORK FIRE BREAK ABOVE CEILING



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

FIRE RESISTANT MATERIAL INSTALLED ABOVE DINING ROOM AT SECOND FLOOR LEVEL

THE MANSION - WORKS TO SECOND FLOOR

As we reinstated the various floor structures the volumes became 'rooms' again - even though the walls were bare brickwork with no doors or windows. On the second floor there are seven large rooms, although several were originally sub-divided into further rooms. We have identified two large rooms near the Wing which will make excellent administration rooms for the Trust. We have installed some windows and are generally upgrading these rooms. We have started to store some of our vast amount of administration documents, from various sources, in one of the rooms - see below. This is partly for safekeeping - but importantly, so they can also be assessed in detail and catalogued.

The picture to the right is a view looking up the stairwell linking the second floor with the attic storey. The red door at right leads to the mansion central roof area. Once the staircase is installed it will provide a key fire escape link at high level between the staircases in the mansion and the main staircase in the Wing.

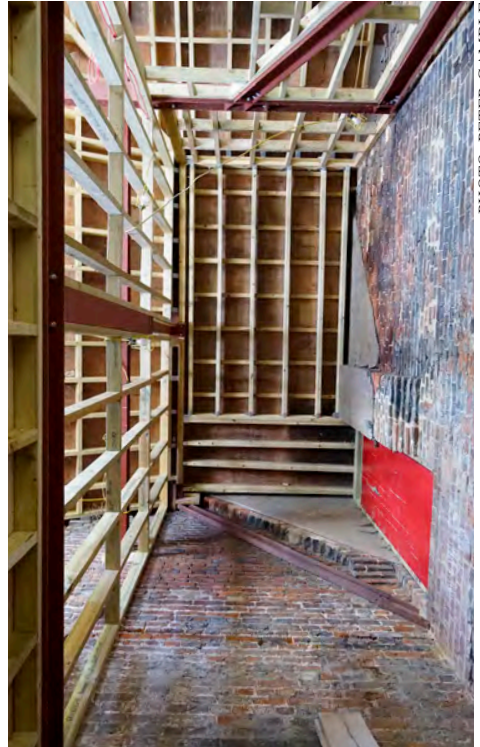


PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

VIEW UP STAIRWELL TO ATTICS AND ROOF



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

SECOND FLOOR ROOM IN MANSION - SHOWING CATALOGUING OF DOCUMENTS IN PROGRESS

THE MANSION - LIGHTWELL PROGRESS



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

VIEW OF LIGHTWELL ROOF - SHOWING FLAT ROOF AREAS SURROUNDING THE SKYLIGHT POSITIONS

Since the last newsletter, all the building work in the mansion and wing - apart from the stone staircase - has taken place on the second floor. Accordingly, our builder - Robert - has moved his mess room up to this level. The Glazed Roof over the Lightwell has been advanced in two ways. Firstly, the extensive area of unstable white bricks on the west wall of the Lightwell has been rebuilt - see photographs below.

Secondly, the timber joists have been installed to support the flat areas of roof around the two skylights. These are now fitted with plywood - see picture above. The final roof finish will shortly be installed prior to the skylights being constructed. The next task is to clean the white bricks below, then lower the scaffolding to enable further repair and cleaning of the Lightwell.



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

WEST WALL BEFORE RESTORATION



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

WEST WALL AFTER RESTORATION

RESTORATION WORK IN THE STABLES



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

STALL RESTORED BY ROY OSBORNE TO DISPLAY PART OF HIS GARDEN EQUIPMENT COLLECTION



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

GRAIN FEED CHUTE AND WALL FINISHES RESTORED BY ROGER BLAKE



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

DETAIL SHOWING GRAIN CONTROL OUTLET - RESTORED BY ROGER BLAKE

RECENT DONATIONS

A total of ten projects listed in the Wish List of the last Newsletter have been funded. These include £6,500 towards the stone staircase and £1,900 and £1,800 towards the Dining Room reveals and security shutter. We received thirteen donations totalling £8,558 in response to our request for funds to restore the Walled Kitchen Garden gates. We received the £700 for roses in the Rose Garden. A total of £4,912 was given for the Fallen Corner which included all five sill items listed in the Wish List. A total of £2,188 was given to the General Fund and £1,000 was given for mansion windows. A total of £350 was given to the Lift Fund and £500 was given to the Wintergarden. These donations totalled £28,408 including gift aid where applicable. Once again we are enormously grateful for this level of support.

WINTER WISH LIST

Mansion	Contribution to the creation of the archaeology archive room	£500
Mansion	Stone staircase - provision of one further step	£1,850
Mansion	Further second floor window	£2,000
Mansion	Power sockets for Servants Hall	£450
Mansion	External steel security shutter for John Conyers' Dressing Room	£1,900
Mansion	Internal door to John Conyers' Dressing Room	£2,500
Walled Garden	Towards the restoration of the decorative wrought iron gates	£1,000
Grounds	Post and rail timber fence beside northern car park	£2,050
Walled Garden	Contribution to restoration of the east wall	£1,000
Walled Garden	Aluminium crop protection hoops and cages	£200
Walled Garden	New garden tools	£150
Gardens	Yew bushes for hedges - a number of locations	£750
Gardens	Philadelphus plants for the Meditation Circle - Lower Gardens	£75
Terraces	Yucca gloriosa for the Eastern bed	£50
Racquets Court	One 6 seater bench for the Racquets Court Tea Garden	£180.00
Racquets Court	One 8 seater round table for the Racquets Court Tea Garden	£360.00
Wintergarden	Fallen Corner - Stone 1 Repair and install	£410
Wintergarden	Fallen Corner - Stone 2 Repair and install	£450
Wintergarden	Fallen Corner - Stone 3 Repair and install	£500
Wintergarden	Fallen Corner - Stone 4 Repair and install	£670
Wintergarden	Fallen Corner - Stone 5 Repair and install	£470
Walled Garden	Contribution to the restoration of the Lean-To Building	£1,500

CONTEXT

Readers will have noticed that our various appeals for funds cover the whole of the site. Right from the time of purchase in 1995 we have mostly worked on all areas of the site - rather than just one aspect. This was particularly so once the volunteers started to arrive in 1998. Although the mansion is the most important part - especially since it is the centrepiece of the parkland - the grounds, gardens and ancillary buildings all contribute substantially to the importance of the whole.

For enquiries regarding the above lists contact Alan Cox on 07799 473 108 or coxalan1@aol.com

EDUCATION - SIXTH FORM PHOTOGRAPHY STUDENTS

As we approached Christmas, we teachers at Copped Hall kept our fingers and toes crossed that we can resume our schedule of classes in 2022.

Over the summer, we were contacted by Haringey 6th Form asking for us to welcome their photography students, which we did. What a busy, bustling day it proved to be. The Housekeeper's Room was changed into a dark room and all the students had to use a pin-hole camera to produce outdoor images - see below.



PIN-HOLE CAMERA PHOTOGRAPH

PHOTO: HARINGAY SIXTH FORM STUDENT

Then they went into the gardens, it was wonderful to hear their gasps of admiration when stepping into the Walled Garden.

Finally, they used drapes and cloths to form a fashion show. The students were so pleased that they could use our furniture, fans and masks.



PHOTO: JANE TAYLOR

ASPIRING MODEL NO. 2



PHOTO: JANE TAYLOR

ASPIRING MODEL NO. 1

We have taken the opportunity of our enforced break to review and renew our provision for the local primary schools - taking into account national curriculum changes and the effect of the pandemic. Invitations have been sent to each school that previously attended. If you know of a school which may be interested, please contact me on schools@coppedhalltrust.org.uk We always have room for more!

Jane Taylor

ARCHAEOLOGY REPORT



PHOTO: LEE JOYCE

Over the August bank holiday weekend (29th – 30th) WEAG at last returned to excavations at Copped Hall. It was decided, that given the restrictions, we would concentrate our main effort in one place and we chose to look for evidence of the continuation of the revetment wall on the change of level on either side of the staircase we have been excavating for a number of years and to cut a section on the staircase trench.

Over the weekend 25 WEAG members took part in the excavations and some good progress was made. The Sunday coincided with the Copped Hall Open Day and the archaeology drew a lot of interest. We also had the archaeology rooms open within the house.

Meanwhile back down in the trenches three 1 x 0.5m trenches were located to help us find evidence of the retaining wall, two to the east of the staircase and one to the west. Over the course of the weekend evidence of the wall was found in both of the eastern trenches and, although nothing was found in the one to the west, it is hoped that with a little more digging this will also come to light. On the Sunday site records for the staircase were tidied up and a sondage cut through the brick rubble between the sides of the staircase.

This work continued on the Monday revealing five rebates within the wall in which the treads of the earlier staircase would have sat, with a possible sixth at the base with what maybe the lowest tread still in situ. All this can be seen in the picture left.

On the upper terrace immediately behind the staircase sondage, another trench was cut, in order to investigate what happens at the change of level. This trench was eventually joined up with sondage trench within the staircase and revealed the back wall of the staircase and the beginnings of a pebble path which appear to abut it. Trench G was cleaned and recorded. While doing this some interesting finds were made including a clay tobacco pipe which dated to the early 18th century with maker's initials which we will study further once the pipe has been cleaned.

In Trench Ya, the eastern most of the small test trenches, a small selection of pottery was found including some early English stoneware and two shards of Surrey Hampshire border ware. Trench Y (the main staircase trench) had two very interesting finds, a prehistoric worked flint and a large piece of dressed stone - see below.



PHOTO: LEE JOYCE

All in all it was a very successful, if short, excavation season with interesting finds and new discoveries. It was good to be discussing the archaeology with visitors again in these wonderful surroundings.

Lee Joyce

NEWS FROM THE REFRESHMENTS TEAM



PHOTO: MARION SMITH

REFRESHMENTS TEAM

We've had a really good summer of events. We held our Summer Afternoon Tea event which was very successful and enjoyed by around 60 guests. The Garden Afternoons resumed in July and were very well supported. Tour Days are now running regularly and seem to be even more popular than BC (Before Covid).

We provided lunches for a couple of events, refreshments for a very well attended Shakespeare event, catered for a couple of very busy Open Days, and served seasonal refreshments to our carol concert guests and choirs. It is so good to be back behind the Tea Room counter again and seeing so many of our regulars along with some new Friends.

We raised enough money from selling handmade masks and jams to buy some new picnic tables for the tea room garden and these have proved so popular that we are now hoping to buy some more for the 2022 season - see Wish List.

Looking forward to 2022 and wishing all our Copped Hall Friends a Happy and Healthy 2022. See you in the Racquets Court!

Marion and Janet - Co-Team Leaders - Refreshments

AN AWARD FOR THE VOLUNTEERS AT COPPED HALL

In March 2020 we were delighted to hear that the Volunteers at Copped Hall, in recognition of their achievements over the last 25 years, had received a Commendation from Epping Forest District Council as part of the Team of The Year 2020 Civic Awards. It was planned that representatives from Copped Hall would be invited to an Awards ceremony, but like much else in Britain, this ceremony was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is an excellent acknowledgement of all the hard work that our volunteers have put into transforming what was a completely derelict and overgrown site into what you see today. If you wish to join us please contact - Alan Cox on 07799 473108 or email chairman@coppedhalltrust.org.uk



PHOTO: PHIL MCKINDER

TEAM OF THE YEAR 2020 AWARD

A KIND LEGACY



PEGGY RUST

PHOTO: THE REV'D CANON E.A. GOODYER

Many years ago Peggy Rust fell in love with Copped Hall and our efforts to restore it for public benefit. I used to see her at our various open days and events with members of her family and friends.

Some time ago now she invited me to her beautiful Georgian house in Highgate, London, as she was assembling her will. She wanted to leave Copped Hall many items of her high quality antique furniture.

Peggy has now sadly passed away aged 90 and over eight items of her furniture are now at Copped Hall. We remain very grateful to Peggy and I think of her whilst walking through the rooms.

Alan Cox



BOOKCASE

PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE



FOUR POSTER BED

PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

A KIND RESTORATION



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

THE BEAUTIFULLY RESTORED SETTEE - IN LADY HENRIETTA'S BEDROOM

One day I received an email by mistake. It transpired that the sender was wanting to dispose of a completely wrecked settee. I felt sorry for it and obtained it for £160 and it was delivered to Copped Hall. Some time afterwards Tobias Robins asked if he could have his wedding photo taken at Copped Hall. We do not normally allow this but in return he offered to restore the settee free of charge. This was an offer we could not refuse as Tobias and his father are local and run one of the top furniture restoration firms in the country (R. D. Robins Upholsterers Ltd) - restoring furniture for the royal palaces and the Prince of Wales. Once the settee was stripped to the frame it was found that much restoration was required. I offered to pay towards this but Tobias refused - saying the restoration was part of our agreement. Tobias delivered the completed settee to Copped Hall. We remain very grateful to Tobias and his father for their very kind gesture.

Alan Cox



THE WRECKED SETTEE

PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE



DURING RESTORATION

PHOTO: R. D. ROBINS

ON THE TRAIL OF THE OLD COPT HALL



PHOTO: PHIL MCKINDER

COPPED HALL VOLUNTEERS AT KNOLE

On the 15th October, Copped Hall Guides and other key volunteers were hosted by the National Trust at Knole House in Kent. In 1701 the 6th Earl of Dorset sold the Old Copt Hall, but not before transferring its most important contents to Knole House. This included both the Earl's and the Cranfield possessions, comprising many portraits, tapestries, furniture, the copies of the Raphael Cartoons and other royal perquisites; a staggering quantity of items from an enormous household.

The reason for our visit was two-fold. Firstly, it was to see these wonderful items first hand and imagine how the old house, dismantled in the 1740s, would have looked when furnished. Secondly, and equally important was to build a relationship with fellow guides, volunteers and staff at Knole who do so much to keep these precious things of a shared history for us to see 320 years later.

We were treated to an excellent presentation by Natalie Cohen about the recent 'Inspired by Knole' conservation project and then to a private tour of the house and the Copt Hall artefacts by Knole's property curator, Samantha Bailey. Particularly impressive were the copies of the Raphael Cartoons that dominate the Cartoon Gallery and the magnificent Spangle and Venetian Ambassador's bedrooms, presented in all their magnificence.

It was a superb day and we look forward to hosting the Knole volunteers and staff at a special event to be held at Copped Hall in the New Year.

We would wholeheartedly recommend a visit to Knole to see the wonders from the Old Copt Hall for yourself.

Phil McKinder

CONNECTIONS

The following is an extract of an interview recorded in 1972 with a Mrs Whythe, whose husband had been a chauffeur to the owners of Copped Hall, Mr and Mrs Wythes. (Note the different spelling). Mrs Whythe's father-in-law, James Whythe had also been employed at Copped Hall as a Coachman (see Copped Hall Trust Newsletter; Spring 2017, Page 13.)

She first recalls seeing Ernest and Aline Wythes after they had returned from their honeymoon in 1896, about the time the mansion and gardens were undergoing an enormous amount of work as part of their modernisation programme.

At that time there were 27 house servants that included a butler, two footmen, a hall boy, an odd job man, a housekeeper, a first still room maid and a second still room maid, who also made the cakes and bread for the Hall. There was a dairy maid, four or five house maids, a head laundry maid with three other laundry maids and a man whose job it was to “turn the mangle”, amongst other things.

The 31 gardeners at that time, as well as caring for the gardens and plants in the conservatory, had to furnish a constant supply of flowers for the house. Another servant was a “shepherd” who supplied the meat. One sheep was regularly killed each week, though local suppliers were also patronised. Meat for instance came from Kirkbys in Epping, now known as Churches. The estate also had a Bailiff, a Mr Ormond, remembered as “very strict and very tall”. People on the estate were allowed to buy the butter made in the dairy for a shilling a pound, though the estate dripping was only four pence a pound.

Children were given preference when it came to collecting blackberries. They were paid sixpence for each pound they picked.

Just as Stan Farthing recalled, Christmas at Copped Hall was a special occasion. Mrs Whythe remembers the grand parties given for the children living on the Copped Hall estate. Two wagons covered with evergreens would go out to collect the children and bring them back to the Hall. A Christmas tree would be set up that was decorated with real candles. She recalls that the servants had sponges ready to mop up the dripping candle wax. Games were organised for the children by the Wythes' daughters and they were given presents such as oranges, bags of sweets, photograph frames and suchlike.

The daughter of one of the gardeners, a Miss E. Wood remembered that the parties were very grand affairs and that the presents were hidden in a great big model of a shoe in the middle of the Hall. She also remembers her brother getting a present of a Kaleidoscope, while she received a needlework set. She wanted to swap but he would hear none of it!

A Servants Ball was also held at the Hall but it seems it often ran into problems and extra “partners” had to be imported from Epping to make up the numbers.

All this of course would change after the dreadful fire of 1917...but more on this another time.

[The Still Room was where distilled water was prepared (as there was no tap water) and used for the preparation of beverages, cakes, jams, biscuits, scents, etc]

Phil McKinder

WILDLIFE AND CLOSE-UP PHOTOGRAPHY

Following the wonderful spring and summer weather of 2020, by contrast 2021 was wet and cold well into May. Added to this there were noticeably more walkers using this relatively remote area owing to increased travel restrictions as a result of the pandemic. Whatever the reasons, there were fewer wildlife sightings this year; a single red kite was seen regularly close to its breeding area but didn't appear to find a mate and moved on. The kestrels too failed to repeat their successful breeding of the previous two years although little owls once again set up a base in the walled garden.



PHOTO: PETER WARNE

COMMA

Insects too were very slow to start. Early butterflies such as orange tip waited until the end of May to take flight. Larger butterflies, peacocks and commas were equally late relative to their normal flight times although there was a surge towards the end of August. The image of the comma above was one of many seen along the long border which runs to the south of the walled garden. If butterflies (and moths) were late, so too were dragonflies on the walled garden pond.



PHOTO: PETER WARNE

FALLOW DEER RUT

And so to autumn and the arrival of the fallow bucks in preparation for the October rut. Once again there were high numbers of returning males although I was unable to track down our lone red deer stag previously reported. He was reported by others but I didn't see or hear him and I fear his injuries of last year may have had a detrimental effect. One particularly sad observation was seeing some dog owners allowing their pets to worry the deer. It seems we need to spell out the necessity to control our canine friends to all users of the forest.



PHOTO: PETER WARNE

TREE STUMP BONNETS

As I write we are coming to the end of the peak fungi season and the late summer rains saw to it that the sprouting was profuse. While the usual haunts didn't provide the diversity reported elsewhere in the country, the numbers of individuals was very high as the image of the tree stump bonnets illustrates.

Peter Warne

MEET A VOLUNTEER



PHOTO: PETER GAMBLE

OLIVER MASON

I retired from my career in Children's Services in June 2020 without a precise plan of what I was going to do next. In July a friend invited me to an open day at Copped Hall – I had never visited before, but was aware of the building from driving around the M25. My initial impressions were strong, the huge chimneys coming into view as we proceeded up the drive, the magnificent situation of the mansion - then further on, the beauty of the Walled Garden and the magnificently ruined state of some of the greenhouses. Despite my career in Children's Services, I have always been interested in practical skills, and there seemed to be a lot I could get stuck into here, so I volunteered within the week.

Unusually, I have ended up as part of two teams – the Walled Garden and the Mansion. I have no great horticultural expertise, so I joined myself to the maintenance team in the Walled Garden, and became a sort of apprentice to Den. We did a number of projects together, before he indicated one of the greenhouses, which was in need of refurbishment.

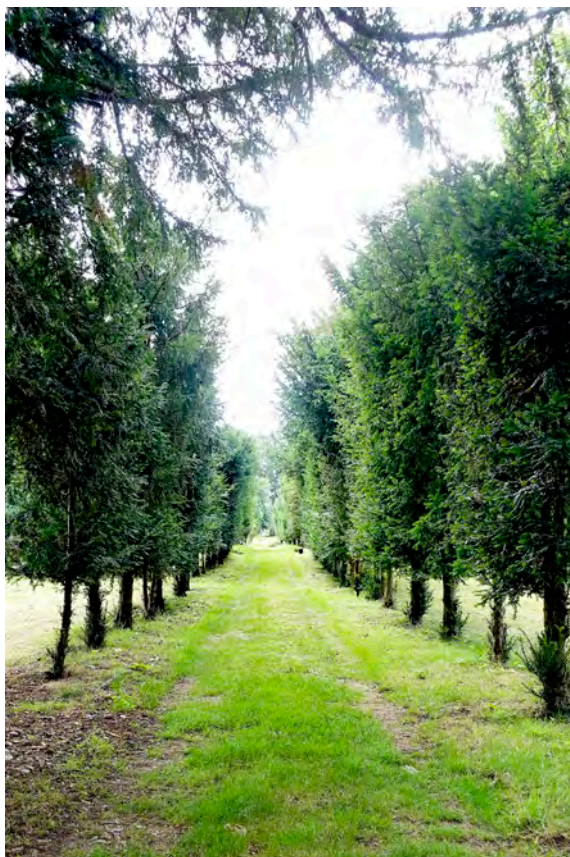
I started this work on my own, but have been joined by Jeremy and Tim, which has made the work easier and much more convivial. Lately we have also had the opportunity to do some bricklaying, helping Brian Wackett with restoration work on the Walled Garden wall, which must be about 500m long - probably more work to do here if Brian will have us back.

This is in addition to working in the Mansion Team on Sundays. There has been quite a wide variety of work, from cleaning bricks in the cellar like a convict gang, to cleaning debris off the roofs, to moving all the contents of Roy's great museum of horticultural implements and machinery so that the stables can be painted and upgraded. Within this team we are able to wander the vast spaces of the mansion from cellars to attics, see how the mansion was originally built and be a part of the great work to restore and renew it.

I have really enjoyed working with both teams. In the Walled Garden, there is a spirit of cooperation, and also a great tradition of tea breaks and lunch breaks. In the Mansion Team, we seem to have a lot of interests in common, and many an unpleasant or dirty job has been made almost enjoyable by being able to share in the discomforts. I have also enjoyed the open days – meeting all the members of the public who are as impressed and interested as I was when I first visited.

For me, the chance to volunteer at Copped Hall came along at just the right time. The work has been a refreshing contrast to my working life and has tapped into interests, enabling me to develop skills which I was not able to use in my career. Most of all, I have been able to join a wonderful community and be part of an exciting, hopefully very long lasting project.

Oliver Mason



KING HENRY'S WALK
REPLANTED BY VOLUNTEERS 1998