



THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AT HOME, 1757-1857

AUGUST 2012 NEWSLETTER

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AT HOME, 1757-1857, ONE YEAR ON:

The 31st of August 2012 marks the end of the first year of our funding from the Leverhulme Trust: we're now one third of the way into our research programme. This is a good point not only to survey what we've done so far, but also to note who has joined in our endeavours and what we plan to accomplish in the next two years. It is also a timely moment to seek suggestions from project associates for future directions that the project team might pursue: Ellen, Helen, Margot and Kate will be holding a two-day weekend discussion (enlivened by some stately-home-visiting) in Edinburgh in the second week of September to plot our way forward. If you have ideas for how we could improve *The East India Company at Home*, please do be in touch with us in the next week or so.

Case Studies: Researching and writing case studies of relevant houses, persons and objects for the project website is a central part of The East India Company at Home. We're delighted to have been able to post the first two substantial case studies already (Swallowfield in Berkshire and Valentines in Essex), and especially pleased to have already convinced a project associate to produce one of our first case studies. Better yet, Georgina Green, having completed her study of Valentines, has generously offered to produce a second, related case study, focused on Charles Raymond (of Valentine Mansion) and his family. The generosity of project associates—whether local or family historians, archivists, curators or academics—has indeed been one of the most enjoyable aspects of the project team's activities. In 2012-14, this generosity will expand the number of our case studies far beyond what the four of us can accomplish alone. Case studies of houses and objects under way or soon to be undertaken by the four of us, for example, include Aske Hall, Yorkshire and Chinese wallpaper (Helen), Minto House, Roxburghshire and Osterley House, west London (Margot), Englefield House, Berkshire, Warfield Park, Berkshire and Henllys, near Llandovery as well as Ivory Furniture (featuring Montreal Park and Knole) and Armorial Porcelain (featuring Basildon Park) (Kate) and Yair, Selkirkshire (Ellen). This cluster of illustrated texts will be substantially enriched by case studies offered by project affiliates on a wide range of houses, families and material objects. These include Sir John Sykes on the 18th-century Indian seal of Sir Francis Sykes, Stephen McDowall on Chinese and Chinese-style objects and motifs at Shugborough, Staffordshire, Rachael Barnwell on Chinese Chippendale staircases in Wales, Janice Sibthorpe on Sezincote, Gloucestershire, Emile de Bruijn (also working with Helen Clifford on Chinese wallpaper) on 'Oriental' ornamental garden houses, Megan Leyland on Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire and Sarah Longair on an object owned by Tipu Sultan. The project team is eager to work with project associates on other case studies as well. At present, we are relatively weak on the 'persons' or 'families' side of our project, and would also like to source more object-based studies. And we're very keen for contributions on colonial Indian material and domestic culture—from princely palaces to hill station homes and more modest domestic spaces.

Project Associates and Audiences: In the past year, 186 individuals have joined The East India Company at Home as project associates. Associates come from a wide array of fields and bring us an extraordinary range of expertise. Many associates have been researching their family history or their local area's connections to





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the East India Company for years, or indeed decades and in addition to detailed knowledge have access to wonderful caches of private papers, images, ceramics or textiles. Archivists, curators and house-managers have given the project team access to material objects in situ that we only dreamed about at the start of the project—and have generously accompanied us on tours through their collections. As the website is moved to UCL and developed further, we hope to be able to bring findings from these visits to more members of the wider community of project associates through workshops and study days. We are also developing an audience that extends well beyond this circle. The website is now viewed by interested readers from around the world. Although the bulk of visitors over the past 3 months have been from the UK (65 %) and the US (9 %), the website is now viewed as well by readers in India, Australia, Canada, Germany and France. The most popular page of the website has been the ‘Unknown Object’, concerning a Raeburn portrait, which has had 424 unique visitors since May. This large bounce was due to a cultivation of social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook. The house case studies have likewise proved popular with Swallowfield Park and Valentines Mansion gaining 370 and 204 unique views respectively. A large proportion of this traffic was generated by our 186 project associates. In the coming year, we hope to increase the two-way interaction that has proved effective so far.

Workshops and Study Days: Several project associates and interested others participated in our first study day, at the British Library (February 2012) and at our second study day, at Osterley House (May 2012). We’ll be meeting with several more associates in September 2012, in Yorkshire at the North Yorkshire County Record Office and in Edinburgh at the University (History of Art Department and Special Collections). Helen Clifford’s paper on Aske Hall, which she is presenting at the British Association of Local History Conference which is being held in North Yorkshire in conjunction with the Northallerton and District Local History Society in late September, will provide another opportunity for project associates to meet up with the team. We hope that in addition to events such as these, associated researchers will be keen to attend (and perhaps to present material at) our mid-project conference in London in April 2013. Details of the date and venue for this one (or possibly two) day event will be sent to project associates when finalised in the next several weeks.

Last but not least... we would very much like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our Advisory Board (Margaret Makepeace at the British Library, Vicky Coltman at the University of Edinburgh, Sue Stronge at the Victoria and Albert Museum, Keith Sweetmore at the North Yorkshire County Record Office, local historian Marion Moverley and Lowri Ann Rees at the University of Bangor) who have given their time, expertise and enthusiasm so generously over the last year. Their contributions have consistently enriched the project and we are really grateful for their efforts.

