

**Knole, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Knole, built as the Archbishop of Canterbury's palace in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, contains 400 years of the Sackville family's history. It was at its most magnificent in the eighteenth century, as the Sackville family continued its steady rise, in terms of wealth, office and title.

The **Gatehouse Tower** has fascinating stories and panoramic views of the estate from the rooftop and is where the colourful and greatly talented Edward (Eddy Sackville-West) 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Sackville (1901-1965) chose to live and work on his writing and music.

The **Conservation Studio**, opened in March 2017, focused first on items from Knole, the aim of the conservators being that anything they treated would not need further attention for 100 years. Pieces have included **Upholstered Chairs**, a **Leather Trunk** used by Lionel Cranfield, 1st Earl of Middlesex whose initials are 'L 1637 M' shown on the top, used to transport papers, letters, books, textiles, and personal items, and ornate picture frames, a **Silver Dish** from the **King's Room**, hallmarked 1662 London, clearly an ornate piece designed to impress and show off its owner's wealth and status, a **Knole Sofa** from the **Venetian Ambassador's Dressing Room**, and from the **Brown Gallery Ribbon framed paintings**, being a set of 44 oval portraits depicting both historical figures and important contemporaries including Henry VIII, Elizabeth I, Jane Seymour, and Thomas Moore, commissioned by Thomas Sackville, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Dorset in 1605 and from the **Reynolds Room or Crimson Drawing Room** the newly conserved **Reynolds portrait of Wang-y-Tong**, his Chinese page-boy.

Charles Sackville, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dorset, was Lord Chamberlain to William III and one of the perks of his office was the disposal of unwanted furniture. The **Brown Gallery** and other **Showrooms** contain the vast collection of **State Chairs, Footstools, Sofas and Beds** belonging to monarchs dating as far back as James I. Underneath many seats are printed the marks HC (for Hampton Court) or WP (for Whitehall Palace) the great Tudor powerhouse that burned down in 1698 and of which the Knole collections contain the last survivors.

The **Cartoon Gallery** houses a set of six large 17<sup>th</sup> century copies of **Raphael's Cartoons**. The originals were painted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, commissioned by Pope Leo X in 1515, as full scale designs for the Vatican's Sistine Chapel, and a **gilt table and candlestands** thought to have been given to Charles, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl, by Louis XIV in 1670-71. Adjoining the Gallery is the **King's Closet** where an elaborate chamberpot was once kept. In France, such rooms were known as *lieux d'aisance* (literally, places of easement) from which the English word 'loo' is derived.

The **King's Room** contains a **Royal State Bed** from Whitehall Palace, a **silver table** bearing a London hallmark for 1680-1, and a **silver toilet set** consisting of a mirror, a pair of large circular bowls, scent jars and boxes of different sizes and shapes, hairbrushes, and a small silver eye-bath.

The **Venetian Ambassador's Dressing Room** contains an X-framed '**Chair of State**', covered in a tissue of silver gilt, red and yellow with a red silk and silver-gilt fringe. It bears the mark HC and date 1661, the **Knole Sofa**, and the **Ambassador's Room** contains a **Royal State Bed** with arms of James II, with **two matching armchairs and six stools**.

**Lord Sackville's Private Garden** features 26 acres of sprawling lawns, a walled garden, and untamed wilderness area and a medieval orchard. Access was through the Orangery.