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ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN DECORATIVE FEATURES AT HYDE, WINCHESTER

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ABSTRACT

A remarkable group of Elizabethan and Jacobean decorative features has been found at or near Hyde Abbey House, north of Winchester. These items include a large plaster ceiling, painted panelling with a carved frieze, statuary and architectural fragments. Previous historians have suggested that they were salvaged from a nearby mansion called Hyde House, which was demolished in c. 1769. This paper re-examines the evidence for this view and argues that the plaster ceiling must have come from another source. This conclusion must raise doubts as to the provenance of the other items, which could not have been introduced into Hyde Abbey House before c. 1700 and were first recorded in 1809. The possibility is raised that all these items were part of an avant-garde, antiquarian collection put together by the Rev. Dr. Charles Richards, a notable scholar.

INTRODUCTION

The small parish of Hyde lies immediately to the north of the city of Winchester. Its residential area is essentially a northern suburb bisected by Hyde Street (Fig. 1). Although Hyde is probably best known as the site of the former Hyde Abbey, antiquarian interest has also focused on a remarkable group of high-status decorative features, dating to the years around 1600, and found within a very limited area.

All the objects in this group, with one exception, are clearly associated with Hyde Abbey House (Fig. 1/1), whose construction, form and decoration have been thoroughly examined and it cannot date to a time before the very late seventeenth century. Yet a large, first-floor room contains a fine, *ex situ* plaster ceiling, which can be dated stylistically to *c.* 1620 and which appears to have been originally intended for a larger space than it now occupies (NMR 39366). The same room is lined with small-square, oak panelling surmounted by a strapwork frieze. This panelling probably dates to the first half of the seventeenth century. Also *ex situ* was a section of very fine, painted panelling of *c.* 1600, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum.[1] Mr. Philip King, who lived at Hyde Abbey House in the 1930s, found this panelling 'under the stairs'. He reported that, during the occupation of a previous owner, painting on the panelling in the front hall had been stripped by workmen (WWD 1931–38; V. & A., W123–1937). There is still a good deal of panelling in this hall, which matches the panelling in the Victoria and Albert Museum in both the height of the panels and in the mouldings on the rails and stiles (horizontal and vertical battens). Most of the Hyde panels are complete, although a few have been reduced in width, as has the panel at the Museum. Moreover, the Hyde panelling still retains traces of bright red and pale green paint, corresponding to the colours on the Museum panelling. Thus it seems reasonable to assume that the Museum panelling was once an integral part of the panelling now in the hall at Hyde Abbey House.

The garden walls of Hyde Abbey House are built of coursed brick and flint in a style typical of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Various carved stone features, again clearly *ex situ*, have been somewhat crudely inserted into these walls. These features include a doorway, or gateway, created from architectural elements dating to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries, and two double niches, one containing two statues (Fig. 1/2, 3 & 7). Both niches and statues appear to date to the early seventeenth century. Finally, a

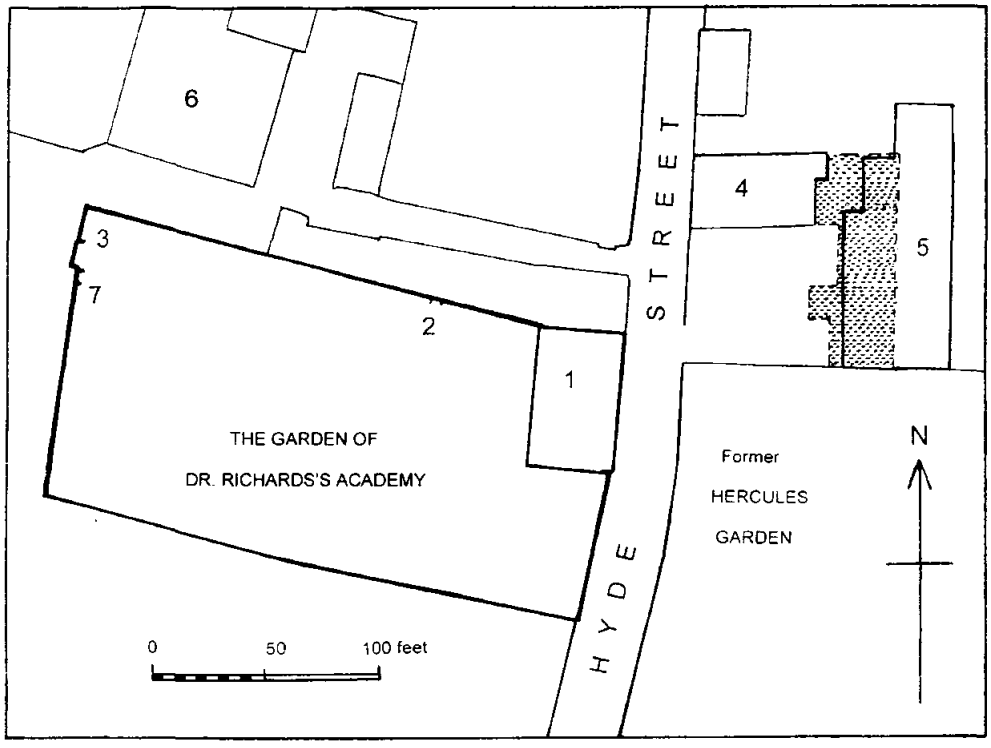


Fig. 1 Part of Hyde Street, Winchester. The garden wall of Dr. Richards's academy is drawn in bold outline. The garden has now been divided between several properties. [based on the 1st edn. 25" Ordnance Survey Map surveyed in 1869]
Key:
1. Hyde Abbey House, formerly Dr. Richards's academy or Hyde Abbey School.
2. Paired niches with statues in architectural surround (Fig. 14).
3. A doorway or gateway composed of ex *situ* architectural elements (Fig. 16).
4. The former service wing of Hyde House, now the Historic Resources Centre.
5. The dotted area represents the approximate site of the former Hyde House, the area within the outline was built as a malthouse in *c.* 1769 and is now part of the Historic Resources Centre.
6. A warehouse, formerly a schoolroom built for Hyde Abbey School in 1795.
7. Paired niches *ex situ* (Fig. 15).

carved stone representing the Sacrifice of Isaac[2] cannot, with certainty, be associated with Hyde Abbey House. Now in the collection of the Winchester Museums Service, its provenance is simply given as 'Hyde Abbey' in a Museum inventory of 1926 (Cottrill 1947, 9; WCMS inventory 1926). Like other items in this group, it probably dates to the early seventeenth century.

Thus a remarkable assemblage of high status, *ex situ* decoration, dating to a limited period *c.* 1600, has been found within a small area in and around Hyde Abbey House. It is hardly surprising that such an assemblage should have excited the curiosity of local historians from 1809, when it was first noted by John Milner, until the present day (Milner 1809 ii, 223). Especially intriguing are two questions of provenance. Who could have collected these objects at Hyde Abbey House at some time after its erection in *c.* 1700 but before1809? This, after all, was a period before the major revival of interest in Elizabethan and Jacobean art and architecture in the 1820s and '30s (Mowl

1993, 196–202). Secondly, where did these decorative features originate? And does the answer to this question throw new light on the decoration of a long-demolished great house in Hampshire?

THE HYDE ABBEY HOUSE COLLECTOR

Firstly, then, at what time between *c.* 1700 and 1809 did the majority of these decorative objects arrive at Hyde Abbey House? It is most unlikely that they were inserted at the time when the house was built, that is *c.* 1700. The garden features have been fitted clumsily into the garden wall, and the large first-floor room, which now houses the Jacobean plaster ceiling, appears to be a product of later alteration and was probably created after the house became a school in *c.* 1760 (Woodward *c.* 1859, 210). It was perhaps used as a schoolroom, or boys' dormitory.

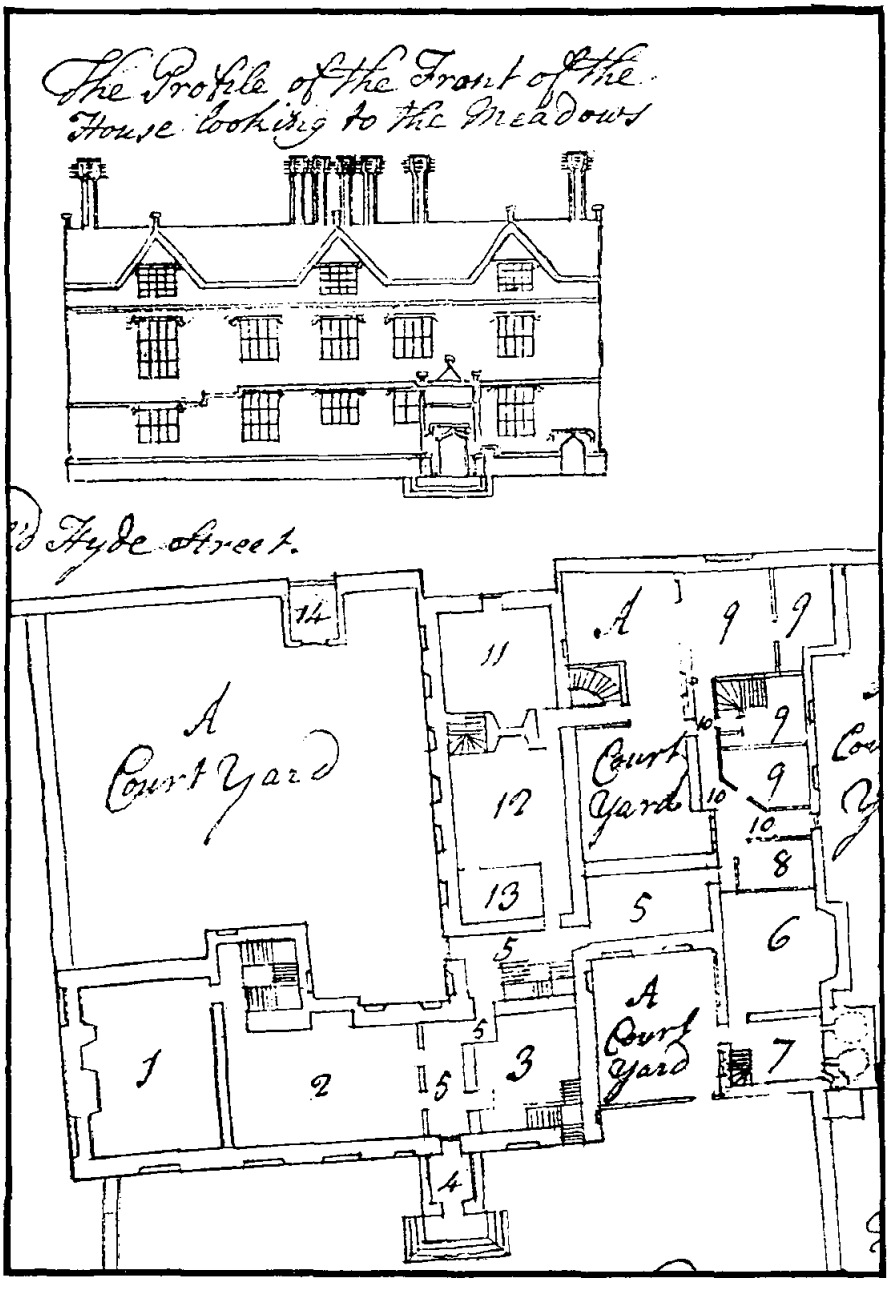
In 1779, Dr. Richards became headmaster and from his time, in particular, the school 'attained very great and deserved celebrity' (Pennell 1909, 102; Woodward *c.* 1859, 32 and 210). Richards was a noted scholar and is said to have made the school 'one of the largest private schools in the kingdom' (Hole 1873, 12). His success and architectural taste are attested by his commissioning Sir John Soane to build a new schoolhouse just outside the garden wall of Hyde Abbey House in 1795 (Fig. 1/ 6; Pevsner and Lloyd 1967, 716). One may wonder whether such architectural taste might have led to an *avant-garde* appreciation of Elizabethan and Jacobean decorative features.

In any case, it is worth noting that the first edition of Milner's history of Winchester (Milner 1798) makes no mention of these features at Hyde Abbey House. But in the second edition, published in 1809, Milner states that 'A considerable way down Hyde-street, on the west side of it, is a very celebrated Grammar-school, under the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Richards. The house and garden contain certain erections and decorations of the reign of Elizabeth or James I' (Milner 1809 ii, 223). While too much should not be made of this addition to Milner's text, the period that elapsed between the two editions of his work was a time when an antiquarian collection such as this might well have been assembled. An ambitious headmaster, whose school was still a recent foundation, might wish to use antique decoration to produce an aura of ancient distinction. Throughout the eighteenth century there had been a continuing, although not widespread, vogue among owners of houses originally built in the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods for antiquarianising decorative features recalling the origins of the house (Worsley 2001, 183–4). The preservation and introduction of original items of this kind to a Georgian house was undoubtedly a much rarer occurrence. Such antiquarian taste, however, must have been bolstered by the Picturesque movement and the endorsement of such figures as Humphry Repton, who had given his approval to the Elizabethan style by the early 1790s, both for its picturesque and antiquarian appeal (Morley 1993, 177).

PROVENANCE

It has often been assumed that these decorative features all came from one house – namely the great Elizabethan, or Jacobean, house built on the east side of Hyde Street and demolished in the late eighteenth century. This great house was called Hyde House (Fig. 1/ 4 & 5) and stood across the road from Hyde Abbey House. Hyde House was occupied by Sir John Paulet, or Pawlett, at his death in 1632 (PRO, PROB 11/162) and it has been claimed that the carved stone gateway, or doorway, in the garden wall of Hyde Abbey House came from 'Pawlett's great house of Hyde' (Carpenter Turner 1980, 127). Elsewhere, it is said that the plasterwork and panelling, now inside Hyde Abbey House, 'are known to have come from Hyde House' (Dick-Read 1997, 46–8). These statements are worthy of serious consideration. They are not, however, substantiated and there is a place for an examination of the documentary evidence for them. Furthermore, given the rarity of this assemblage in a county not rich in decoration of the period, it is time to re-examine its provenance and discuss its importance in a wider context.

Firstly, then, was some or all of the *c.* 1600 decoration associated with Hyde Abbey House (on the west side of Hyde Street) salvaged from the earlier



Key:

1. Great Parlour [and] over it a Dining Room: 31'8" long by 21'10" broad.
2. Great Hall [over the hall and pantry] are three chambers:
The north and middle chambers: 20'0" long by 17'6" broad,
The Southernmost [chamber]: 21'8" long by 20'0" broad.
3. Butler's Pantry
4. The Porch of Stone
5. The Passage by the Skreen of the Hall to the Kitchen & other Offices:
Over it a Closet 8'0" long by 6'0" broad & 3 little Rooms.

Fig. 2 An elevation and plan of Hyde House, Winchester, *c.* 1750. (HRO M/26). (Hampshire Record Office)
This map contains a key giving apparently accurate measurements of the length, breadth and height of each room. Only the measurements for the core rooms (1–5) are given above.

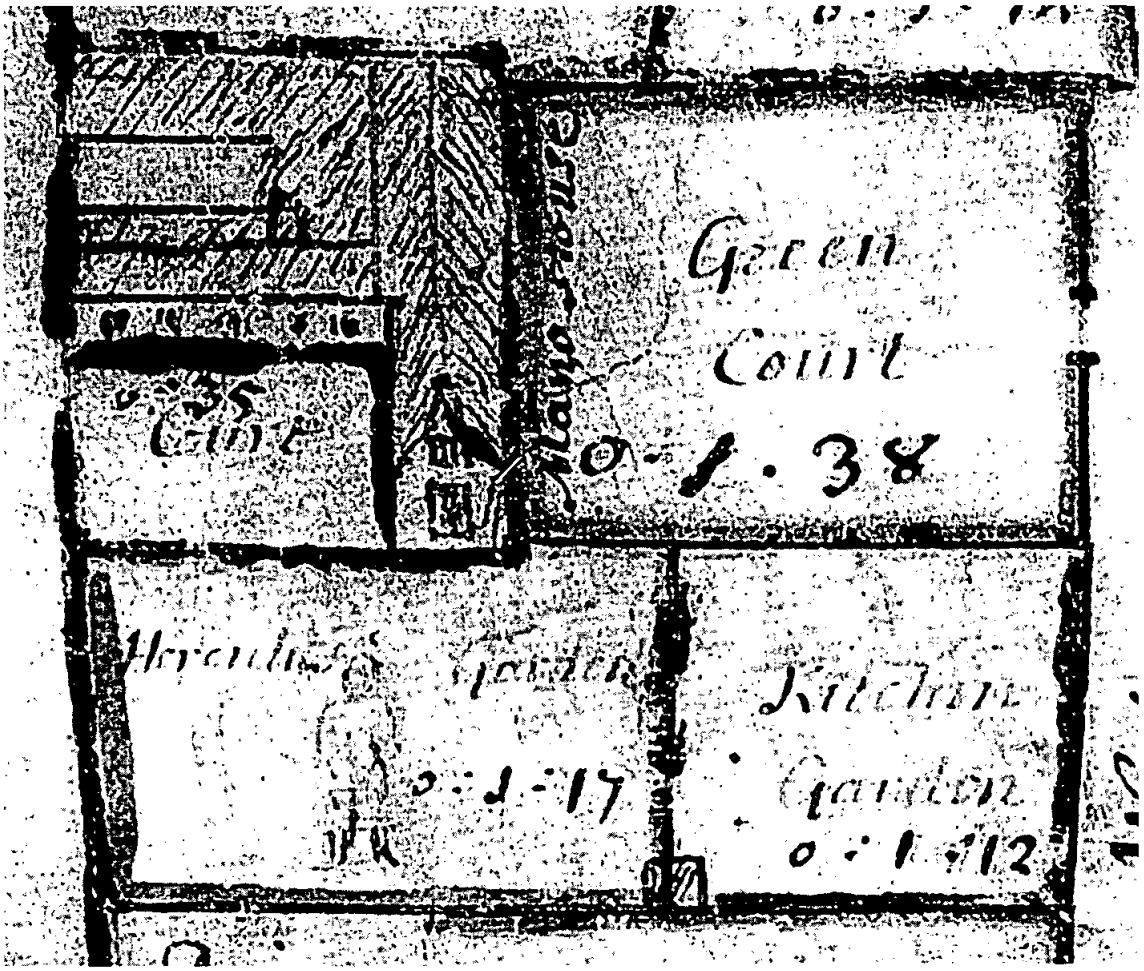


Fig. 3 Detail of a survey plan of Hyde House and its gardens c. 1767. The house is at top left and the Hercules' Garden at bottom left, containing a sketch of the statue of Hercules. (HRO M/22) © Hampshire Record Office

Hyde House (on the east side of Hyde Street) after its demolition? The east side of Hyde Street was once largely occupied by Hyde Abbey precinct. After the Dissolution, most of the Abbey buildings were rapidly cleared (VCH Hants ii, 121) but a house had been built within the former precinct and near Hyde Street by the year 1590 (Keene 1985, 952). This was probably the same house that Sir John Paulet referred to as 'my dwelling house in Hyde Street' in his will of 1632 (PRO PROB 11/162), and that was described by a Dutch traveller to Winchester in the early 1660s as 'squire Paulet's house' (Exwood and Lehmann 1993, 135).

Hyde House appears in Godson's map of Winchester published in 1753 (HRO. W/F5/1). It also appears in great detail in a map of a similar date on which the house is illustrated as a gentleman's mansion house, built in the style of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, and set in extensive gardens and grounds (Fig. 2). A key appended to the map gives the dimensions of all

the rooms in the mansion (HRO. M26). The information given in this key raises serious doubt as to whether all the decorative items now at Hyde Abbey House could have originated in the old Hyde House (see below). Immediately to the south of the mansion, there was a garden in which was 'A fine Statue in Stone Standing on a Pedastall representing Hercules'.

The Duke of Bedford was in possession of 'the Great Old Mansion House' by 1736 (HRO 149M89/R4/6072) but sold it to a Mr Knight in 1767 (HRO 13M85W/30). A map from about that date shows the old house still standing (HRO M/22) and includes a sketch of Hercules in his garden (Fig. 3), but another plan drawn up for Mr Knight in 1769 shows a newly-erected malthouse on the site of the old house (HRO 13M85W/32). A lease of 1799 refers to a malthouse where the house called Hyde Abbey lately stood and to 'Hyde Garden, being a walled garden lately sold to ... Rev. Charles Richards' (HRO 13M85W/34). The demolished house, then called 'Hyde Abbey', is clearly the old Hyde House, and it was in the garden near Hyde Street that the statue of Hercules is shown in the mid-eighteenth-century maps.

Thus the view that decorative items from the present Hyde Abbey House were removed from the demolished Hyde House has a degree of plausibility. Although the fine statue of Hercules has been lost, its former existence may imply that there was other statuary in the house and garden. And given that Richards purchased part of the garden, it is quite possible that he would have transferred some of these objects to the garden wall of his school across the road. This very proximity has also lent plausibility to the assumption that panelling and a plaster ceiling from Hyde House was salvaged and reused in Richards's Hyde Abbey House. If this were so, then we would have a fascinating glimpse of the interior and garden decoration of a great house in Winchester *c.* 1600.

However, a degree of caution is necessary. The statue of Hercules is the only statue shown on the mid-eighteenth-century maps of Hyde House and might thus have been especially desirable to an antiquarian bent on acquiring ancient, decorative items. Indeed, as the purchaser of Hyde garden, Dr. Richards may incidentally have bought the statue. And yet there is no record of the statue of Hercules in the garden of Richards's school at Hyde Abbey House, where other statues and architectural antiquities still remain. Nor has written evidence for a transfer of decorative objects been found among the papers either of the Dukes of Bedford or of the Knight family who between them owned Hyde House during the eighteenth century. Nor do relevant documents belonging to Dr. Richards's academy appear to survive. In any case, while the old Hyde House was demolished in *c.* 1769, the decorations at Hyde Abbey House are not noted until 1809. Moreover, other great houses of the Elizabethan and Jacobean period were demolished during the late eighteenth century in Hampshire. Titchfield Abbey, pulled down in 1781, is a notable example (VCH Hants iii, 211, 214). There is also the possibility that, although some of the decorative objects may have come from Hyde House, others may not. This possibility is particularly evident in the case of the plaster ceiling.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ATTITUDES TO TUDOR/JACOBEAN PLASTERWORK

Although one might have assumed that early decorative plasterwork would only have survived in those houses which were largely neglected in subsequent centuries, and that interior refurbishments would have removed old-fashioned schemes of decoration, this was not universally the case. Even in the eighteenth century, when the taste of owners was very different from that of their seventeenth-century predecessors, there is considerable evidence that they did not want to destroy all evidence of earlier decoration, motivated by a variety of reasons. For example, the long gallery ceiling at Charlton Park, Wiltshire was retained when the rest of the house was rebuilt for the Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire in the 1770s. This is a splendid piece of plasterwork, with a hand-modelled frieze, and the retention of the gallery, with its plasterwork and panelling intact, suggests a degree of nostalgia on the part of its owner. Similarly, at Blickling Hall, Norfolk, in 1765 the Earl of Buckingham recorded his regrets that the remodelling of the staircase necessitated the removal of the figures of the Nine Worthies, which had origi-

Fig. 4 View of first-floor room of Hyde Abbey House (photograph John Crook © Winchester Museums Service)

nally surrounded the hall. A fondness for the historic interior of the family home might also be accompanied by a desire to perpetuate historic associations, especially of connections with royalty or aristocracy. This led the eighteenth-century owner of West Horsley Place, Surrey, to retain half of the ceiling of the great chamber and have a drawing made of the whole design, despite the fact that this early ceiling of 1547 hardly represented a high point in the history of plasterwork. The heraldic badges which decorated the ceiling did, however, record the ownership of the house by Sir Anthony Browne, Master of the Horse to Henry VIII, who married Lady Elizabeth Fitzgerald, daughter of the 9th Earl of Kildare, and it was this aspect of the plasterwork which ensured its survival.

All these examples, and many others which could be cited, survive *in situ*; there is very little evidence of the preservation of plasterwork from one house and its reinsertion in another before the twentieth century. In 1920 an early eighteenth-century house in Wanstead, Essex (now Greater London) contained several interior features of Jacobean date, including a ceiling moved wholesale from an unidentified London house; but the date of this transfer is not known. Thus, the preservation of the ceiling in the first-floor room at

Fig. 5 Detail of plaster ceiling showing ribs and repetitive ornament

Hyde Abbey House is highly unusual, assuming that it was one of the 'decorations of the reign of Elizabeth or James I' which Milner observed in the house before 1809 (Gapper, 1998).

THE HYDE ABBEY HOUSE CEILING

It has already been remarked that the ceiling on the first-floor of Hyde Abbey House (Fig. 4) can be dated stylistically to *c.* 1620, whereas Hyde Abbey House itself cannot have been built before the late seventeenth century. The ceiling has suffered many vicissitudes, both before its insertion into the room and subsequently.[3] The ceiling has been trimmed along its length in such an unsympathetic manner that it is no longer centred in the space available, and the roundels along the window-wall have been crudely truncated. This damage may, of course, have been inflicted when the ceiling was removed from its original home. It would seem odd if it had been rescued intact and then carved up so crudely as to damage some of the figurative roundels in order to fit its new setting. The later insertion of a staircase into the room (creating a small room beyond the staircase) caused further losses to the plasterwork and the interruption of the overall scheme.

Whenever it was that the various instances of damage to the ceiling occurred, it remains possible to reconstruct the overall scheme which was followed in the decoration of the ceiling, since ceilings of this date were almost invariably designed to fit the space available and were usually symmetrical in their layout. A rather unusual design of quatrefoils and trefoils has been created using strips of broad, flat strapwork, curved to produce the shape of the letter 'x'. At the four corners of

Fig. 6 Detail of plaster ceiling with peacock

each section the end of the strap is wound into a tightly-scrolled cone, lending a greater sense of three-dimensionality to the strapwork. The design is laid out with a strong diagonal emphasis, giving it the appearance of greater complexity than is usual in contemporary ceilings, which were frequently laid out on a rectilinear grid. Strapwork did not appear in plasterwork in England until the early seventeenth century, and did not become common until the second decade of the century.

Set into this overall scheme are roundels with decorative diagonal projections, typical of the ornament derived from Flemish engravings imported into England from the mid-sixteenth century onwards. These projections are of two sizes, designed to fit the differently-shaped fields created by the layout of the strapwork. This greatly reduces the sense of repetition in the ceiling as a whole. A thin, incised line runs around the edge of these otherwise plain roundels, distinguishing them from the strapwork by which they are surrounded. Moulds would have been used to provide the swags of fruit and the hops or berries, which are threaded, somewhat unconvincingly, through the circular holes in the alternating projections. The small birds with outstretched wings, which perch on the curving bands of strapwork would have been produced in the same way (Fig. 5). Most of the rest of the birds, beasts and human figures which decorate the ceiling appear to have been hand-modelled, and would have been copied from the vast array of engraved sources available to artisans of the period (Fig. 6).

The depredations suffered by the ceiling over the years have resulted in the misreading of the iconography of two of the female figures (Dick-Read 1997). Their attributes identify them as personifications of Touch and Hearing, two of the Five Senses. The musical instrument and the sharp-eared stag were traditionally associated with Hearing (Fig. 7), and Touch frequently holds up a hand to feel the sharp peck of a bird's beak. Examples can be seen at Boston Manor House, Brentford (1623) and Kew Palace, Surrey (*c.* 1630). It seems likely that the roundel containing Hearing was at the centre of the ceiling, surrounded by the other four Senses, only one of which survives; the three empty roundels would have contained female figures representing Sight, Smell and Taste. This was a common format in the early seventeenth century for similar sets of personifications on ceilings, such as the Four Seasons or Elements, and the Five Senses were laid out in this fashion at Kew Palace.

The remaining roundels at either end of the centre-line contain a mermaid and a double-headed eagle (Fig. 8). Without knowing the original patron of the ceiling it is difficult to be certain whether they were of any particular significance, but research has tended to show that it was only in the greater houses that an iconographical scheme was sometimes worked out, dictating the choice of motifs. In most houses the selection seems to have been fairly random, and this may well have been the case in this instance. The double-headed eagle is a rather unusual motif which may have been heraldic in

Fig. 7 Detail of plaster ceiling with figure of Hearing

origin; cast from a variety of moulds, it appeared over a long period in other houses in Hampshire (Grove Place, Nursling and Polhampton near Overton) and in Dorset (Fiddleford Manor).

Some of the remaining fields contain birds and animals which suggest how some of the, now, blank panels may also have been filled. The two parrots at the outer corners of the ceiling presumably lost their counterparts when the opposite edge of the ceiling was trimmed to fit the present room, and the peacock has apparently lost the 'partner' he must have had to match the pairing of swan and goat. The vague outline of an animal can be made out in one of the quatrefoil fields, whose horn survives *in situ*, suggesting that it may have been a rhinoceros or unicorn.

As was so often the case at this period, the plasterer was able to model animals and birds with greater success than the human figure. Artisans such as plasterers were not taught to draw as part of their training, and as a result their handling of the human figure remained rather clumsy. The figure of Hearing has splendidly beefy shoulders and hands, while her feet are tiny. Nevertheless, the plasterer had the confidence to show her feet projecting forwards beyond the framing circle, and the heads of both Senses look as though they are finely detailed beneath the paint layers now masking them. Their flowing classical drapery is handled with energy if not finesse, and the stag looks up at Hearing with a humorously quizzical turn of the head. It appears that the head of the bird alongside Touch is modelled from the same source as that of the double-headed eagle.

The most immediately striking feature of this ceiling is the conical scroll, terminating the short pieces of strapwork. This scroll is only rarely found in other surviving examples. The most relevant of these may be Bramshill House, Hampshire, where a similar feature is to be found on the ceiling of the first-floor withdrawing chamber, known as the library since the nineteenth century (Fig. 9). There the whorls are even deeper, and are used to decorate strapwork, which is also incised with a thin line around its outer edges. This is not to suggest that the ceilings were by the same hand, since the strapwork at Bramshill was also modelled around the whorls, creating an even greater sense of depth. Bramshill's plasterwork was probably completed for Lord Zouche between 1615 and 1620, when the house was visited by King James I. It is quite likely that the influence of Bramshill was subsequently felt in houses of somewhat lower status in the surrounding countryside. It is even possible that one of the journeymen who worked with the master plasterer at Bramshill remained in Hampshire and was commissioned to carry out work which still bears the imprint of the master who trained him.

The ceiling at Hyde Abbey House was certainly the work of a plasterer of more than average competence. Hand-modelling was not a skill developed by the majority of plasterers of the early seven-

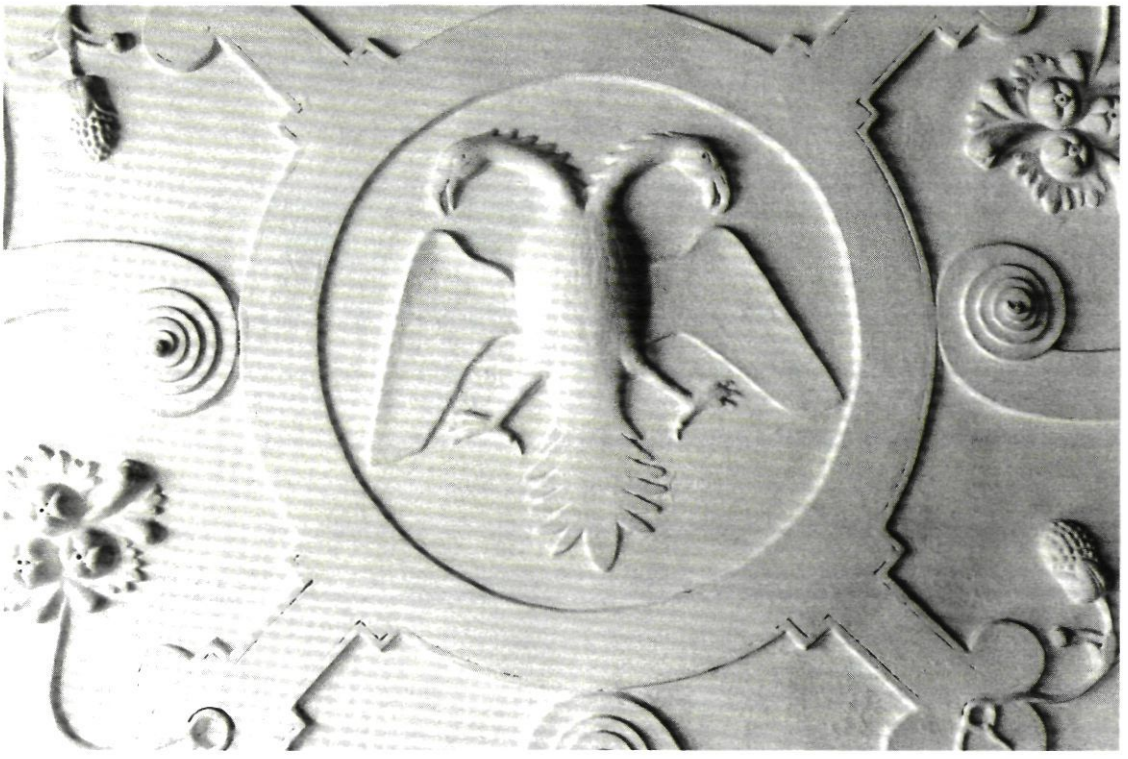


Fig. 8 Detail of plaster ceiling with double-headed eagle

teenth century; but he was not among the very top-most rank. Inventiveness is clearly present in the elaborate layout of the ceiling design, but the figures exhibit a robust, slightly ungainly charm rather than elegance, and the strapwork itself is extremely flat, which prevents the ceiling from reaching the height of sophistication attained by some contemporary plasterwork.

The oak panelling and strapwork frieze (Figs. 4 & 10) are of a type found commonly in the early seventeenth century. The small rectangular panels are typical of the period, as is the strapwork carving of the frieze, with its raised oval 'jewel' motifs, alternating with daisy-like flowers.

It is, of course, impossible to tell whether it originally came from the same room as the ceiling, and the adjustments made necessary by the alterations to the present room make it equally impossible to determine the original extent of the panelling.

HYDE HOUSE AS A POSSIBLE PROVENANCE FOR THE CEILING

Hyde House belonged to Sir John Paulet in the 1620s (his will was proved in 1632), but there is nothing in the decoration of the ceiling which alludes to the heraldry of the Paulets, or which might have connected the ceiling with that family. The small birds in the corners of the quatrefoils, where one would usually encounter floral sprays, are not the heraldic falcons on the coat-of-arms of the Paulet family.[4]

An attempt has been made to reconstruct the layout of the ceiling in the measured drawing shown in Fig. 11. This reconstruction is based on research which shows that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century decorative plasterwork ceilings were almost invariably designed to fit the rooms for which they were intended, and, as far as was

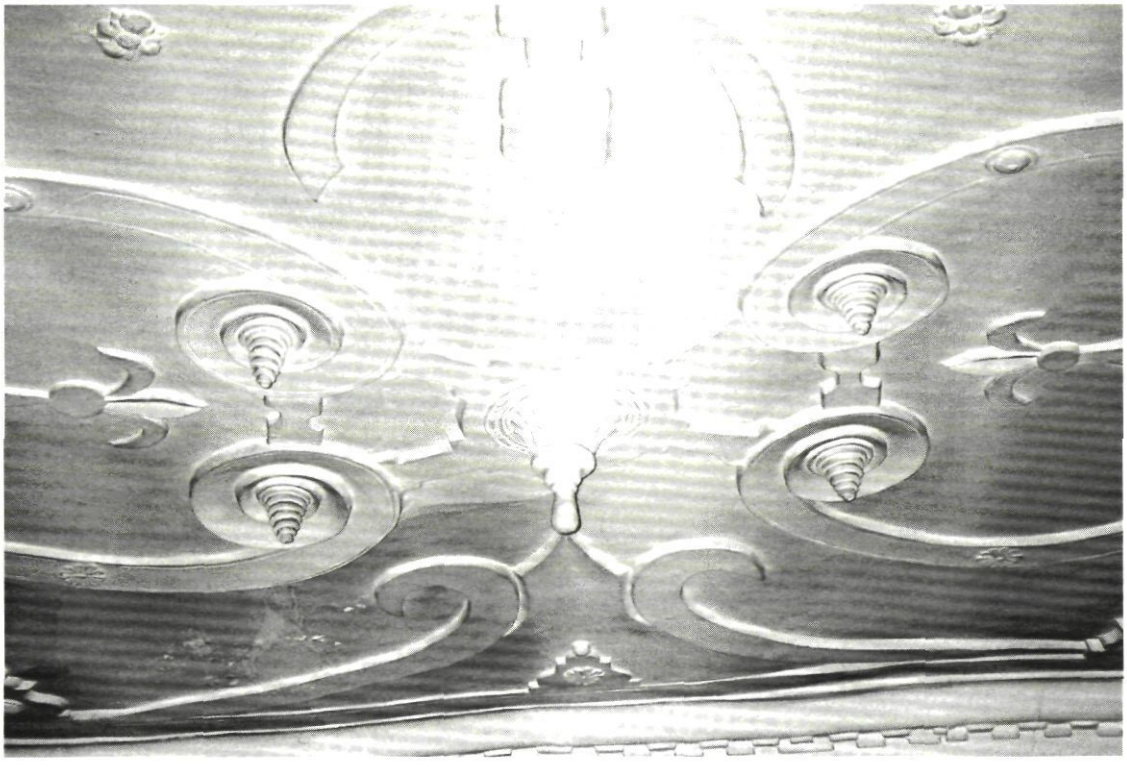


Fig. 9 Detail of ceiling of withdrawing chamber of Bramshill House

possible, were symmetrical about both horizontal and vertical axes (Gapper 1998). On this basis it can be deduced from the scale-drawing that the original ceiling must have been at least 23′9″ wide and 42′6″ long. It remains to be considered where in Hyde House this ceiling could have been located. Using the eighteenth-century plan of the house, together with the descriptions and measurements of the rooms on the upper floors (Fig. 2), an approximate outline of the layout of all three floors of the house at this date becomes possible (ignoring the widths of the partition walls).

The layout and overall style of the ceiling are of a kind that one would generally expect to find in one of the most important state rooms of an early seventeenth-century house – the great chamber, the withdrawing chamber or, perhaps, the gallery. The hall, too, is a possible site, but it would have been most unusual for a hall ceiling to be so elaborately decorated at this date. The gallery on the second-floor is difficult to relate to the rest of the plan, as the description states that it was only 12′ wide, which would mean that it could not have housed the ceiling. It remains to consider where, in the early seventeenth century, the great chamber would have been situated. It might have occupied the same space as the eighteenth-century dining room (21′10″ × 31′8″) or it could have occupied the area above the hall. Although this area was divided into three chambers when the survey was drawn, it may have been an undivided, first-floor chamber in the early seventeenth century. However, even if there were such an undivided space at that time, it would have been only 20′ wide: too narrow a space for the plaster ceiling as reconstructed.

Thus, assuming that the measurements of Hyde House on the eighteenth-century plan are accurate (Fig. 2) and given that the Hyde Abbey

Fig. 10 Strapwork frieze in first-floor room of Hyde Abbey House

House ceiling must originally have been at least 23′9″ wide and 42′6″ long, there is no way that the latter could have fitted in to the former. It must, therefore, be concluded that it is not possible for the ceiling to have been transferred from Hyde House when it was demolished in the eighteenth century.

PORTION OF PAINTED PANELLING

The portion of panelling found at Hyde Abbey House and now in the Victoria & Albert Museum (Fig. 12) consists of eight panels set out in two vertical rows, separated by stiles and rails. It demonstrates two of the types of painted decoration that were extremely popular in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Most interior surfaces, whether of wood, brick or stone, had paint applied to them, not just for colour, but in order to make them look more opulent. Marbling could make stone look like marble and graining could give the appearance of a costlier wood. The stiles and rails separating the rectangular panels have been grained with red and greenish-gold paint in this way.

In addition, the six upper fields of the panels are painted bright red and decorated with dainty, symmetrical designs painted in greenish-gold outline, composed of vases, flowers, foliage, birds, winged putti and satyrs, in the manner of the Flemish artist and print-maker, Cornelis Bos. Inspired by the discovery of classical Roman decoration during excavations in Renaissance Italy, this kind of ornament became known as 'grotesque work' and was

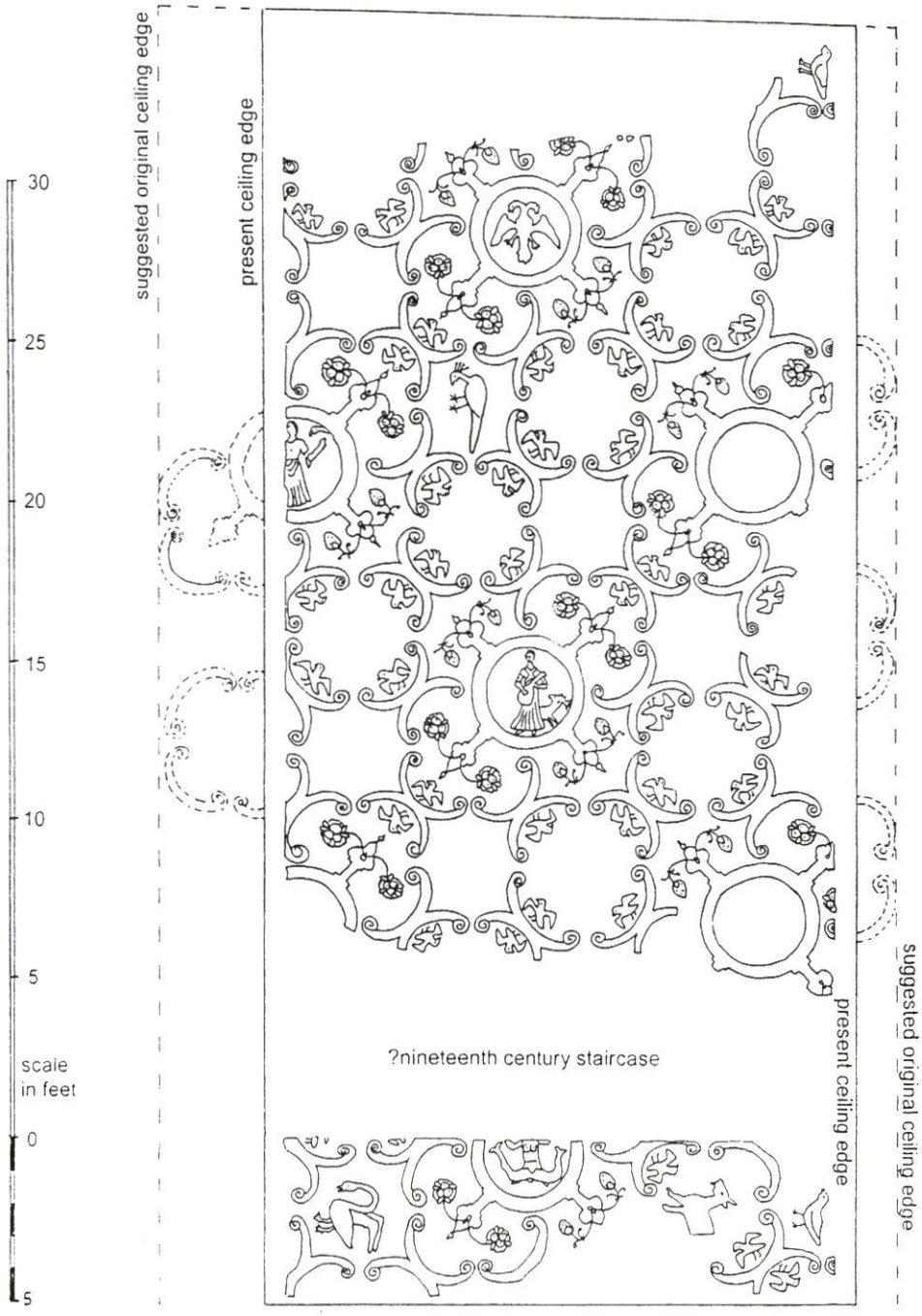


Fig. 11 A measured sketch of an *ex situ* ceiling at Hyde Abbey House, Winchester. The area of the present ceiling is 18′3″ × 40′9″. The minimum suggested area of the original ceiling is 23′9″ × 42′6″

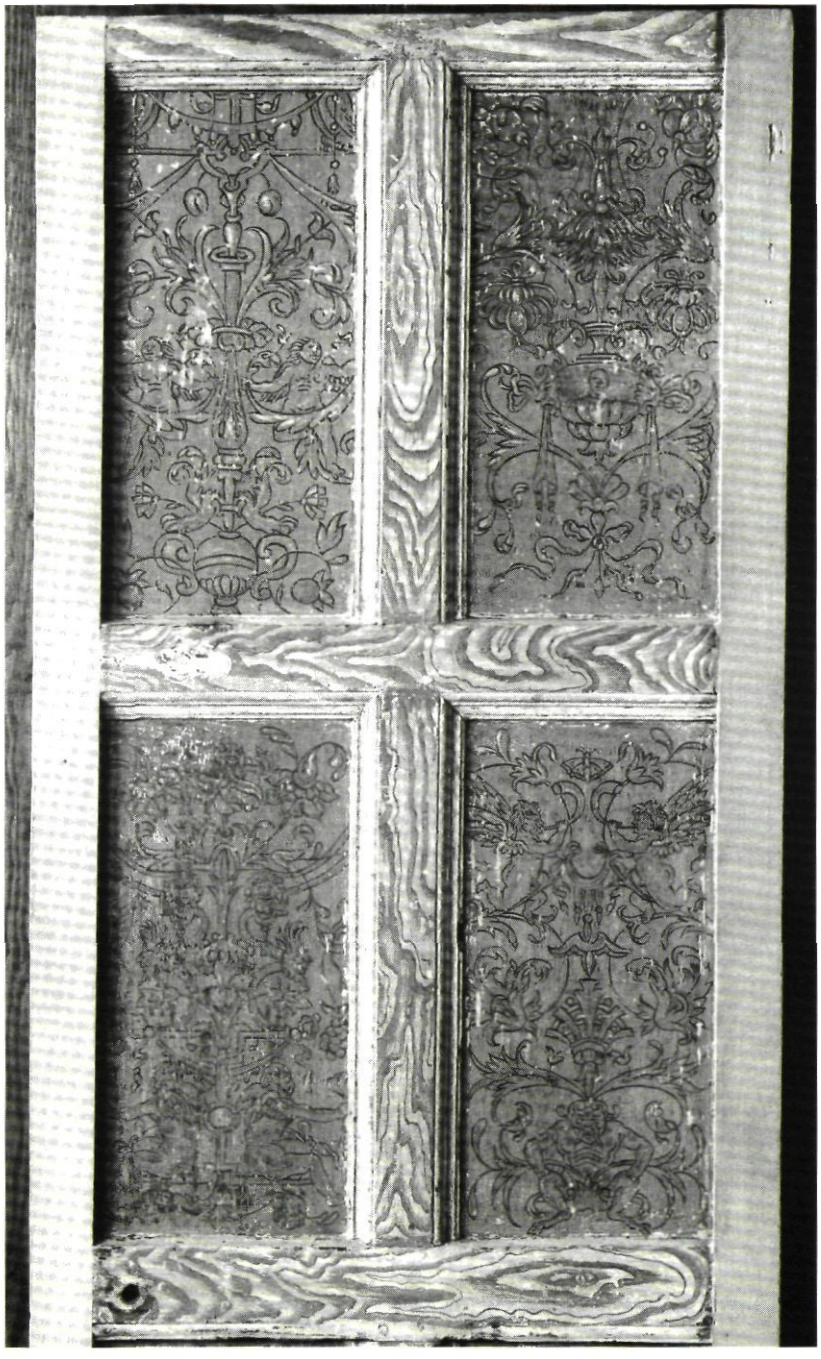


Fig. 12 Top section of portion of panelling found at Hyde Abbey House (Victoria & Albert Museum © V & A Picture Library)

popular throughout Europe. In sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century building accounts it is described in England as 'antick', and was applied both internally and externally. Two complete plastered walls decorated in this way survive *in situ* at The Ancient House, Ipswich, Suffolk, dated to *c.* 1600. The style was, however, popular over several decades, and it is not possible to date the example from Hyde Abbey House very precisely.

When the panel was donated to the Victoria & Albert Museum in 1937 the donor, Mr Philip King, described it as a door he found under the staircase at Hyde Abbey House. Although the panel has a hole for a door handle, it is unlikely that this was its original function.

It remains to be considered whether this single section was originally part of the panelling which survives in the ground-floor hall at the bottom of the staircase in Hyde Abbey House, and whether either or both could have come from Hyde House. Stylistically, both items of panelling are of Elizabethan or Jacobean date and clearly pre-date the building of Hyde Abbey House.

Examination of the panelling still *in situ* shows that some parts of it have been cut down to fit the available space. Most of the panels have mouldings around the top and both side edges, but in one place a section of eight panels has been trimmed at the sides, so that the mouldings only survive on the top and inner side edges of the panels. This would also appear to be what has happened to the V & A section as some parts of the symmetrical design have clearly been truncated at a later date. These truncated sections of panelling appear to be the same size.

Traces of red and yellowish paint in the wooden grain of the Hyde Abbey House panelling are still visible to the naked eye. These traces are all that remain of the decorative painting which existed in 1930 but which was cleaned off by workmen. It is not, therefore, possible to be certain that the V & A panel represents a portion of the whole decorative scheme that existed on the Hyde Abbey House panelling, but it remains a possibility. From the point-of-view of date, all this panelling could have been made for Hyde House and removed to its new home when Hyde House was demolished.

THE 'SACRIFICE OF ISAAC' PANEL

The stone relief (Fig. 13) depicting the moment when the angel arrests Abraham's sword as he is about to sacrifice his son, Isaac, is a version of one of the most popular biblical scenes in the early seventeenth century. At a period when the status of religious imagery was still a matter of hot debate, it was rare for New Testament scenes to appear in peoples' homes. It was much safer to stick to Old Testament stories, and thus avoid any implication of idolatry. The 'Sacrifice of Isaac' was regarded as prefiguring Christ's sacrifice in the New Testament, and its popularity meant that it has survived in various forms – including wood carving, plasterwork, embroidery and stone carving.

The subject was equally popular among Northern European engravers, and their illustrations of the story provided models for English artisans to copy. The stone relief found in Hyde Street is based on an engraving of *c.* 1600 by Egbert van Panderen, after a drawing by Pieter de Iode (Wells- Cole 1997). This provides a *terminus post quem*, but it is impossible to be more precise than to suggest a date in the first half of the seventeenth century.

It would appear that the panel has been cut to an oval at some later date. The cloud in the sky, the smoke rising from the altar and the thicket entangling the ram have all been truncated, and it is most likely that the panel was originally rectangular. It may well have provided the centrepiece for a stone overmantel.

PAIRED NICHES IN THE GARDEN WALL

The two examples of paired niches that are to be found set into the garden wall of Hyde Abbey House are clearly unrelated. They are entirely different in style and present very different problems of dating and interpretation. It is apparent from photographic records taken at different periods that both sets of niches have undergone 'rebuilding' since reaching the garden of Hyde Abbey House, and it is difficult to be certain how they were originally constructed. The pair of niches beneath a pediment, containing statues of female figures will be considered first (Fig. 14).

Fig. 13 Stone panel illustrating Sacrifice of Isaac (1.02 × 0.68 m) (photograph John Crook © Winchester Museums Service)

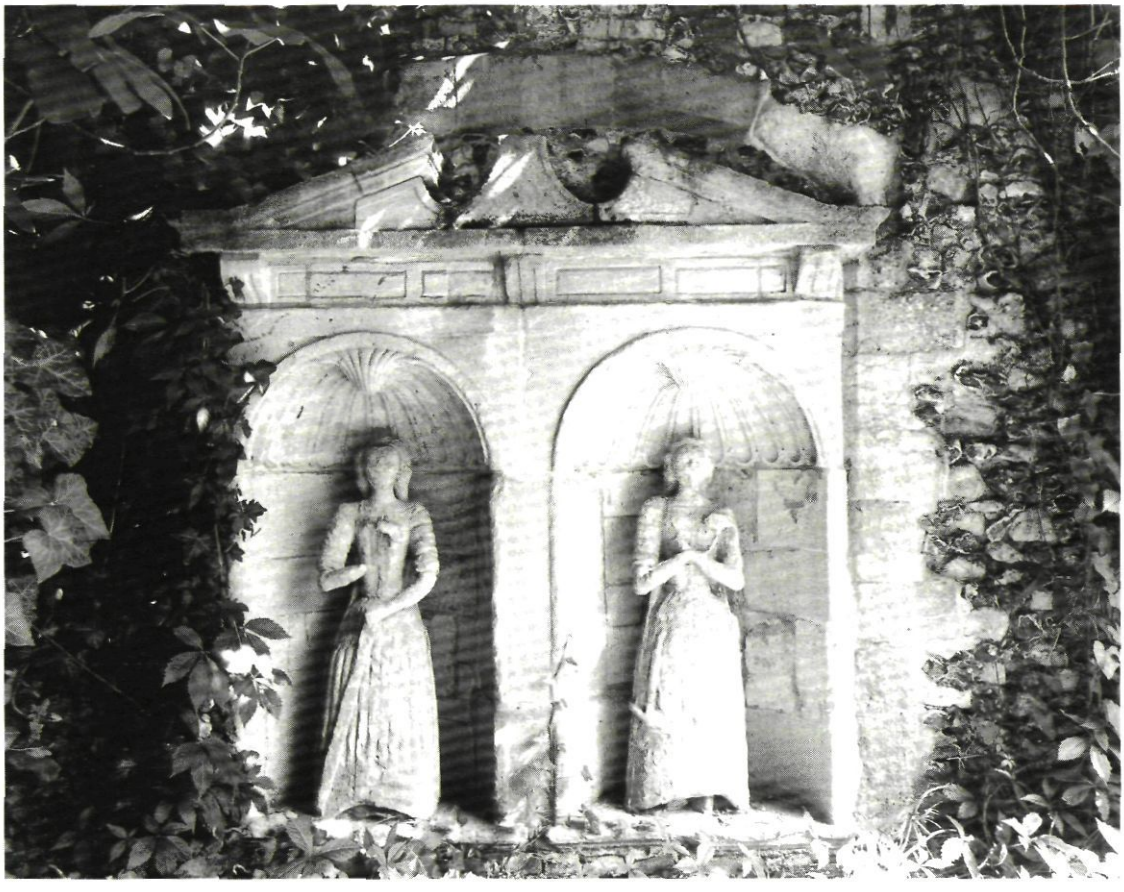


Fig. 14 Paired niches with statues in architectural surround (1.93 × 1.67 m) (photograph John Crook © Winchester Museums Service)

Shell-headed niches are one of the most widespread and persistent manifestations of the adoption by English patrons and builders of Italian Renaissance motifs in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Shell-headed niches with seats, within architectural surrounds, were added to the ground-floor entrance façade of Wardour Old Castle, Wiltshire, as part of the modernisation of the Castle carried out by Matthew Arundell in the 1570s. Similarly, at Montacute House, Somerset (*c.* 1600), at ground level, pairs of shell-headed niches appear to have provided somewhere to sit facing the terrace and forecourt in front of the house. Taller, single shell-headed niches were inserted between the windows of the second storey of the east façade to house figures of the Nine Worthies. The shell motifs at Hyde Abbey House are of an identical pattern to those at Montacute, but all the niches at Montacute are flush with the wall plane and there is no architectural surround as at Hyde Abbey House and Wardour Old Castle.

Although it is evident from past photographs that the niches at Hyde have undergone rebuilding at some date, the panelled frieze with console brackets and the broken pediment appear to belong together. Stylistically, they can be dated to the seventeenth century, rather than the sixteenth.

Standing within the niches are figures of two of the three Theological Virtues – Faith, carrying the remains of a cross, and Hope, with her anchor wrapped round her skirt. Weathering has left the statues badly dilapidated, but it is evident that they are dressed in contemporary costume, again of seventeenth- rather than sixteenth-century date. Viewed from the side, the figures present a very flat rear profile, suggesting that they were always intended to stand inside niches, rather than to be viewed in the round.

It is no longer possible to distinguish how this pair of pedimented niches was originally displayed. They might have been set into a garden wall, as they are now, or have been a free-standing garden feature.

The second pair of niches (Fig. 15) is altogether more problematical. They are set in the garden wall above a raised flowerbed and they are now very damaged. The flat shell semi-circles look as though they are of similar design to the cresting over the gateway (see below), but are set deeply into their surrounds. The semi-circular soffits of the arches in front of them are carved with small decorative roundels and rectangular panels. One of the roundels appears to contain a cross, but the remainder are too dilapidated to read.

DOORWAY OR GATEWAY IN WALL

Set into the rear wall of the garden of Dr. Richards' Academy is a gateway (Fig. 16) whose opening is now bricked up. On the garden side the bottom of the doorway is still at ground level, but on the other side of the wall the present street level is much higher, and only half of the square-headed opening is visible, also bricked up. A timber lintel spans the opening.

Photographs taken in the 1930s show that a wooden door was set into the stone opening with its four-centred head, with Tudor roses carved in each of the spandrels. This might suggest a sixteenth-century date for the doorway, but such decoration persisted even after the Stuarts succeeded to the throne of England. The sketch of Hyde House (Fig. 2) shows just such a doorway at the main entrance to the house, and it may have been moved to his garden by Dr. Richards.

Above the stone gateway a decorative pattern has been created of flint squares set between blocks of stone, and stone quoins surround the gateway on both sides of the wall. Above a row of plain stone, the flint coursing continues for some feet to the level of the top of the garden wall. Projecting above the level of the wall rises a piece of decorative cresting which might be of Elizabethan or Jacobean date, and which may or may not be connected with the gateway beneath. The semi-circular shell motif is topped by an obelisk on a base; no doubt the two bases flanking the shell would also have supported obelisks, but these are now missing. A band of plain ashlar separates these features from a base strangely adorned with dentils along its straight top edge and volutes at the sides, scrolling upwards rather than in the more customary downwards direction. At the centre of this panel is a hollow square motif with square projections at the corners and semi-circular ones at the centre of each side. To either side are hollow circles with large square 'teeth' around the outer circumference and smaller ones on the inner edge. The stone of the three elements of this cresting appears to come from the same source, but it is, of course, possible that the separate pieces were combined when they were set in position on top of the wall above the gateway.

Such cresting might have been found on the top of a frontispiece to a house façade, or on an entrance gateway, or even the top of a wall. There is no evidence to suggest that such cresting featured in the architecture of Hyde House. The mid-eighteenth-century drawing of the elevation of the house shows only straight-sided gables over the dormers and entrance porch. It is possible that cresting featured on the garden walls or on the banqueting house in the garden which is mentioned, but such speculations cannot be substantiated.

CONCLUSION

It has long been held that the decorative items associated with the present Hyde Abbey House originated in the demolished Hyde House. When the research for this paper was first proposed, it was envisaged that it would demonstrate the truth of this view. It has thus been surprising to conclude that, in the case of at least one important

Fig. 15 Paired niches *ex situ* (1.32 × 1.76 m) (photograph John Crook © Winchester Museums Service)

decorative item, this view is almost certainly false. And such a conclusion must cast doubt on the provenance of the other items. Thus the historians of other great houses of the Elizabethan and Jacobean era are challenged to search for possible evidence for the transportation of decorative items to Winchester in the period before 1809.

This paper is also relevant to students of the revival of interest in Elizabethan and Jacobean art and architecture that flowered in the early nineteenth century. In 1809, Milner was the first to record the antiquarian collection at Hyde Abbey House; a collection that reveals how some members of Winchester society were alive to the very latest trends in artistic and architectural taste. Pugin commended Milner as an early champion of a scholarly appreciation of Gothic architecture (Pugin 1838, *x*). Milner must have known Richards and it is attractive to imagine them at the hub of the cultural life of the day in Winchester; the one a scholar of the Gothic revival and the other, perhaps, with an advanced appreciation of Elizabethan and Jacobean art and architecture.

NOTES

1) This painted panel is now on display in the British Galleries at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London.

Fig. 16 A doorway or gateway composed of *ex situ* architectural elements (6.66 × 2.45 m)

2) This stone is in the Winchester Museums Service collection (accession no. WINCM:ARCH 3156) and is on display at the Historic Resources Centre.

3) It is probable that the ceiling may have been cut into sections before its removal from its original site and re-assembly in Hyde Abbey House, and it might be supposed that some evidence of this would be visible on the ceiling. However, it is recorded that when the building at 17 Fleet Street, London was conserved between 1898 and 1906, the ceiling was taken down in sections so that it could be restored at the South Kensington Museum (now the V & A). There are no marks on the surface of this ceiling to indicate that this operation was undertaken; the only visual evidence occurs on the back of the ceiling, when viewed from beneath the floorboards of the room above. It has not been possible to undertake such an investigation at Hyde Abbey House.

4) The crest of the Paulets, Marquesses of Winchester, was, in heraldic terms 'a falcon with wings displayed or, ducally gorged gules', which was also one of their heraldic badges. However, the ceiling is unlikely to be heraldic because birds other than falcons are represented and it is thus more likely that these are derived from pattern books. In any case, the birds are not unambiguously falcons, as heraldic falcons should have bells on their legs. Moreover, the Paulet falcon should have a coronet around its throat. The suggestion that the birds on the ceiling at Hyde Abbey House lack coronets to indicate that Sir John Paulet was illegitimate cannot be endorsed. (pers. comm. Mr R. Yorke and Dr. M. Siddons.)

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