



### What is English Baroque?

- An architectural style promoted by Christopher Wren (1632-1723) that developed between the Great Fire (1666) and the Treaty of Utrecht (1713). It is associated with the new freedom of the Restoration following the Cromwell's puritan restrictions and the Great Fire of London provided a blank canvas for architects. In France the repeal of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 revived religious conflict and caused many French Huguenot craftsmen to move to England.
- In total Wren built 52 churches in London of which his most famous is St Paul's Cathedral (1675-1711). Wren met Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) in Paris in August 1665 and Wren's later designs tempered the exuberant articulation of Bernini's and Francesco Borromini's (1599-1667) architecture in Italy with the sober, strict classical architecture of Inigo Jones.
- The first truly Baroque English country house was Chatsworth, started in 1687 and designed by William Talman.
- The culmination of English Baroque came with Sir John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736), **Castle Howard** (1699, flamboyant assemblage of restless masses), **Blenheim Palace** (1705, vast belvederes of massed stone with curious finials), and **Appuldurcombe House**, Isle of Wight (now in ruins). Vanbrugh's final work was Seaton Delaval Hall (1718, unique in its structural audacity). Vanbrugh was a Restoration playwright and the English Baroque is a theatrical creation. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the English Baroque went out of fashion. It was associated with Toryism, the Continent and Popery by the dominant Protestant Whig aristocracy. The Whig Thomas Watson-Wentworth, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess of Rockingham, built a Baroque house in the 1720s but criticism resulted in the huge new Palladian building, Wentworth Woodhouse, we see today. It has the longest façade of any country house in Europe.
- **Baroque houses** had **Baroque interiors** designed by **Antonio Verrio** (c. 1636-1707) who was responsible for introducing Baroque mural painting into England and served the Crown over a thirty-year period.

- **Sir James Thornhill** (1675/6-1734), English painter of historical subjects also worked in the Italian baroque tradition. He was responsible for some large-scale schemes of murals, including the "Painted Hall" at the Royal Hospital, Greenwich, the paintings on the inside of the dome of St Paul's Cathedral, and works at Chatsworth House and Wimpole Hall.
- English Baroque gave way to the careful, rigid Georgian classical period. Country houses were classical in vast estates with copies of classical temples, grottoes, bridges and 'follies'. If Baroque is over-the-top then Georgian classical architecture is understated. Georgian architecture was heavily influenced by Andreas Palladio and the use of the classical orders. Buildings became symbols that expressed a meaning such as a mock temple of Apollo (the Greek god of war) symbolizes war. The first English Palladian architect was Inigo Jones, one hundred years ahead of his time, most notably Queen's House, Greenwich and the banqueting House in Whitehall. Palladianism was taken up by Richard Boyle, Lord Burlington the leading patron of the arts in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.
- The most typical Georgian building was the town house often joined in terraces. This increased the density of housing and created a sense of architectural wholeness for the street. Dividing walls were thick to stop the spread of fire and to hold the chimney stack and they were typically four storeys with the front door accessed by a short flight of stairs. The most important rooms were on the first floor (the *piano nobile*). Windows were almost exclusively sash windows with standardised panes of glass and thin wooden glazing bars. Many were built and designed by the builders such as the Woods (Bath), Dance (Dublin) and the Adams brothers in London.

### Three era-defining events

- **1660: Restoration of the monarchy**
  - Charles II ascends to the throne and a new wave of baroque architecture follows in the aftermath of the Great Fire of London of 1666.
- **1687: Isaac Newton's *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica***
  - The publication of this world-changing book advances science by explaining gravity and the three laws of motion.
- **1694: Birth of the Bank of England**
  - Britain's economic grasp reaches out to the world as London's population tops 500,000. The Bank's first role is to rebuild the Royal Navy.

### References

- <http://www.podtours.co.uk/English-baroque.html>
- Various Wikipedia pages on the English Baroque.



Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680), *The Ecstasy of Saint Theresa*, Church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, Rome

- This chapel and statue is one of the highpoints of the Baroque. The Baroque is described as a style that used exaggerated motion and clear, easily interpreted detail to produce drama, tension, exuberance, and grandeur.
- The chapel was designed by Bernini for the Venetian **Cardinal Federico Cornaro** (1579-1653). It shows a scene from the life of **Saint Teresa of Avila** (1515-1582) who had recently been canonised in 1622. In her autobiography the Carmelite nun describes how angel holding pierced her with a long spear of gold. She writes, 'The pain was so great, that it made me moan; and yet so surpassing was the sweetness of this excessive pain, that I could not wish to be rid of it.' Bernini is attempting to express the facial and bodily equivalent of divine joy and spiritual enlightenment. Some later historians have concentrated on the physical, sensual and 'orgiastic' elements of the work.
- One key adjective used when describing the baroque is '**theatrical**' and this work contains witnesses in boxes as if in a theatre. Either side of the altar there are marble boxes containing members of the Cornaro family as witnesses. The boxes contain life-size high-relief donor portraits of male members such as Cardinal Federico Cornaro and Doge Giovanni I Cornaro. They are shown discussing the event in boxes as if at the theatre.
- **Gian Lorenzo Bernini** (1598-1680) was perhaps the greatest sculptor of the 17th century and an outstanding architect. Bernini created the Baroque style of sculpture and developed it to such an extent that other artists are of only minor importance in a discussion of that style. Bernini's work was shaped by his fervent Roman Catholicism (he attended mass every day and took communion twice a week). He agreed with the recommendations of the **Council of Trent** (1545-63) that the purpose of religious art was to **teach and inspire the faithful** and to serve

as propaganda for the Roman Catholic church. This meant that religious art should always be intelligible and realistic, and serve as an emotional stimulus to piety. Bernini's death marked the end of Italy's artistic hegemony (dominance) in Europe.

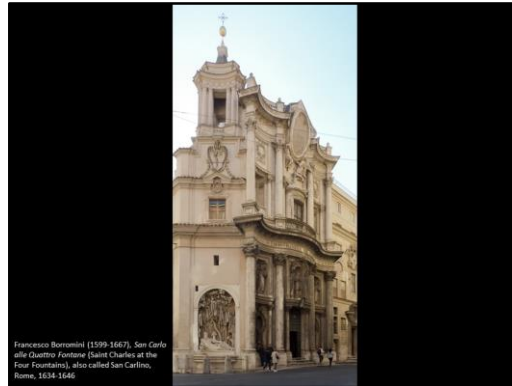
### **What is the Baroque?**

- The Baroque was an artistic style that uses exaggerated motion, bold masses, curved shapes, strong lines and easily interpreted detail to produce drama, emotion, tension and grandeur. It began in Rome about 1600 and spread to the rest of Europe. Little attention is paid to symmetry and proportion unlike the strict, classical Palladian style.
- The word *baroque* is thought to be derived from the Portuguese word 'barroco', Spanish 'barroco', or French 'baroque', all of which refer to a 'rough or imperfect pearl'. The term 'Baroque' was initially used in a derogatory sense, to underline the excesses of its emphasis and ornament. In particular, the term was used to describe its eccentric redundancy and noisy abundance of details, which sharply contrasted the clear and sober rationality of the Renaissance.
- In art history it has become common to describe any art that is full of movement and energy as 'Baroque'. Sir John Boardman, for example, describes the ancient sculpture *Laocoön and his Sons* as 'one of the finest examples of the Hellenistic baroque', and a later phase of Imperial Roman sculpture is also often called 'Baroque'.
- The popularity and success of the Baroque style was encouraged by the Catholic Church, which had decided at the time of the Council of Trent (1545-1563), in response to the Protestant Reformation, that the arts should communicate religious themes in direct and emotional involvement. The new energy and realism of Catholic art and its direct appeal to emotion was one of the tools of the Counter-Reformation.
- The aristocracy also saw the dramatic style of Baroque architecture and art as a means of impressing visitors and expressing triumph, power and control. Baroque palaces are built around an entrance of courts, grand staircases and reception rooms of sequentially increasing opulence.

### **Council of Trent (1545-1563)**

- The Council of Trent established at least one direct power through a decree promulgated in the last session to fix a standard for church art and the responsibility for maintaining that standard. "The Holy Council prohibits placing in churches any image inspired by false doctrine that might mislead the simple.... To eliminate all lures of impurity and lasciviousness, images must not be decked in shameless beauty.... To enforce this decision, the Holy Council prohibits setting up in any place or church, no matter what its exemptions, any irregular image unless authorized by the bishop." Veronese was summoned before the Holy Office ten

years later for including irrelevant and undignified objects in a religious painting; Caravaggio also had several pictures rejected by the churches that had ordered them



Francesco Borromini (1599-1667), *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane* (Saint Charles at the Four Fountains), also called San Carlino, Rome, 1634-1646

- The church was designed by the architect Francesco Borromini and it was his first independent commission. It is an iconic masterpiece of Baroque architecture, built as part of a complex of monastic buildings on the Quirinal Hill for the Spanish Trinitarians, an order dedicated to the freeing of Christian slaves. He received the commission in 1634, under the patronage of Cardinal Francesco Barberini, whose palace was across the road.
- Bernini, Borromini and Pietro da Cortona were the three leading Roman Baroque architects. Borromini was a dark, reclusive character. He had a deeper understanding of structures than Bernini and Cortona but his career was constrained by his personality. Unlike Bernini who was a charming courtier and mixed easily with the wealthy patrons who gave him commissions, Borromini was both melancholic and quick in temper which resulted in him withdrawing from certain jobs, and his death was by suicide. His suicide meant that he was never buried in the personal crypt he designed in *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane*.
- Borromini was the son of a stonemason and began his career as a stonemason. He was born Francesco Castelli and later changed his name to his mother's family name perhaps out of respect for Cardinal St. Charles Borromeo.
- His work was idiosyncratic and not as influential as Bernini's architecture. Later critics dismissed Borromini's work but from the late nineteenth century onwards, interest has revived and his architecture is now appreciated for its inventiveness, deep mathematical precision and overall emotional impact. *San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane* was his first major independent commission and the church, cloister and monastic buildings were for the Spanish Trinitarians, a religious order whose mission was to free Christian slaves.

## **Notes**

- The Quattro Fontane (the Four Fountains) is an ensemble of four late Renaissance fountains located at the intersection of Via delle Quattro Fontane and Via del Quirinale in Rome. They were commissioned by Pope Sixtus V and built at the direction of Muzio Mattei, and were installed between 1588 and 1593. The figure we see represents the river Tiber in front of an oak tree and it is the work of Domenico Fontana (1543-1607), an Italian architect. The she wolf representing Rome was a later addition. The other three fountains are the River Aniene (a tributary of the Tiber), the goddess Diana representing Chastity and the goddess Juno representing Strength (but they may also represent rivers).



Michelangelo Merisi (Michael Angelo Merigi or Amerighi) da Caravaggio (1571–1610), *Supper at Emmaus*, 1601, 139 cm × 195 cm, National Gallery  
Caravaggio included himself as the figure on the top left.

- Caravaggio's innovation was a radical naturalism that combined close physical observation with a dramatic, even theatrical, use of chiaroscuro which came to be known as tenebrism (the shift from light to dark with little intermediate value).
- He was jailed on several occasions, vandalized his own apartment, and ultimately had a death sentence pronounced against him by the Pope after killing a young man, possibly unintentionally, on May 29, 1606.
- One published account of him at the time was, 'after a fortnight's work he will swagger about for a month or two with a sword at his side and a servant following him, from one ball-court to the next, ever ready to engage in a fight or an argument, so that it is most awkward to get along with him.' (written by Floris Claes van Dijk, a contemporary in Rome in 1601).
- Caravaggio's painting had an immediate effect on young artists and Caravaggism became the cutting edge trend. Early Caravaggisti include Orazio Gentileschi and Giovanni Baglione. Orazio Gentileschi, despite being considerably older, was the only one of these artists to live much beyond 1620, and ended up as court painter to Charles I of England. His daughter Artemisia Gentileschi was also close to Caravaggio, and one of the most gifted of the movement.

### Notes

- Caravaggio (1571–1610), born and trained in Milan, stands as one of the most original and influential contributors to late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century European painting. Controversially, he not only painted figures, even those of classical or religious themes, in contemporary clothing, or as ordinary living men and women, but his inclusion of the seedier side of life (such as dirty feet) was in marked contrast to the usual trend of the time which was to



idealise the religious or classical figure by treating it with the decorum considered appropriate to its status. His use of light and shadow was emulated by the Caravaggisti, the followers of Caravaggio, such as Orazio Gentileschi(1563–1639), Artemisia Gentileschi (1592-1652/3),[2] Mattia Preti, Carlo Saraceni and Bartolomeo Manfredi.

- Annibale Carracci (1560–1609) came from Bologna where, with his brothers Agostino Carracci (1557–1602) and Ludovico Carracci (1555–1619), he set up an influential studio or academy to train painters.
- Emmaus is a town mentioned in the Gospel of St. Luke where Jesus appeared after his death and resurrection before two of his disciples while they were walking down the road to Emmaus. One of the disciples was Cleopas and the other is unnamed. They do not recognise Jesus on the road but suddenly recognise him when he breaks the bread after they have invited him to supper. Some traditions maintain that Cleopas is the brother of Joseph.



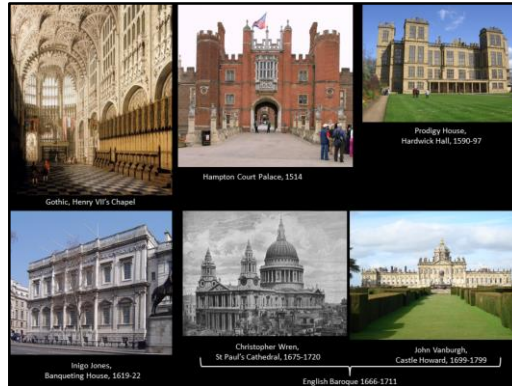
Paolo de Matteis (1662-1728), *The Triumph of the Immaculate*, 1710-17, 160.3 x 252.5 cm, modello for the dome of Gesù Nuovo, Naples, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

- Italian Baroque architecture was mentioned earlier and this is an example of Italian Baroque fresco.
- Two of the leading figures in the emergence of Baroque painting in Italy were Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio and Annibale Carracci.
- This is one example of an interior by Paolo de Matteis who was born in Cilento near Salerno, and died in Naples. Some time before 1683 he launched his career in Rome where he was 'discovered' by the Spanish ambassador who was transferred to Naples taking Matteis with him. In Naples he trained with Francesco di Maria, then with Luca Giordano. Within ten years he was an internationally famous artist. From 1702 to 1705, de' Matteis worked in Paris, Calabria, and Genoa. In Genoa, he painted an *Immaculate Conception with St. Jerome Appearing to St. Sevrino*.
- Matteis developed a delicate, graceful style that broke with the vigour of the Baroque and he was known for his speed and virtuosity.
- *The Triumph of the Immaculate* is a preparatory study for the dome of Gesù Nuovo, Naples. It is full of detail and was like the graphic novel of its day. We descend from the brilliant light and bright colours of heaven to the shadows and drab colours of the earth. The painting is full of drama. We see God at the top with Jesus below him as the central element. God's light is filling heaven and reaching down into the shadows below. The angels bathe in God's light while below them bishops and priests seek guidance from the light. The pope is shown on the right on a cloud but is an insignificant figure. Below is either King Solomon meeting the Queen of Sheba or the Holy Roman Emperor. They are shown partially in shadow but caring for their people and demonstrating their command of earthly matters. At the lowest level Matteis shows workers engaged in earthly activities with their faces turned downwards away from God. The figures are full of motion at all levels,

another element of the baroque, with outstretched arms and exaggerated gestures. The painting enacts the Council of Trent ruling that works of art must engage with the laity, engage with the emotions and be easily understood.

### **References**

- *Getty Museum*
- <https://societysight.wordpress.com/2015/02/11/painting-paolo-de-matteiss-the-triumph-of-the-immaculate/>



Canaletto (1697-1768), *The Interior of Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey*, early 1750s, 77.5 x 66.7 cm, private collection

### A Brief History of English Architecture

- Stonehenge
- Roman villas
- Anglo-Saxon churches, Earls Barton
- **Norman or Romanesque** castles and cathedrals, Tower of London, Norwich Castle, Durham Cathedral
- **Gothic** Early English c. 1180-1275 (Canterbury Cathedral, Westminster Abbey), Decorated style (Lincoln Cathedral, west front of York Minster, the crossing of Ely Cathedral and Exeter Cathedral) consisting of the Geometric (1250-90) and the Curvilinear (1290-1350). The distinction describes the evolution of window tracery from tracery containing circles to a curvilinear design without circles (west front York Minster). The final period was the Perpendicular or Rectilinear (c. 1350-1550) of Gloucester, Winchester Cathedrals, King's College Chapel, Cambridge, Henry VII's chapel Westminster Abbey. The Reformation ended church building in the Gothic style.
- **Vernacular**, moated manor house, Ightham Moat, Wealden hall house, Alfriston Clergy house
- **Tudor palaces**, Hampton Court Palace, Layer Marney Tower
- **Prodigy House** with increasing use of classical elements, annual progresses, Robert Smythson. **Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire**, Montacute House (1598), Nonsuch Palace, Surrey, Burghley House, Lincolnshire, Longleat House, Wiltshire, Hengrave Hall, Suffolk, Compton Wynyates, Warwickshire, Sutton Place, Surrey, East Barsham Manor, Norfolk, Layer Marney Hall, Essex
- **Inigo Jones** innovative Palladian style, the Queens House, the **Banqueting Hall, a clean, symmetrical and simple classical style.**
- The 1600s saw the advance of classicism

- **English Baroque** (1666-1711), St Paul's Cathedral, Castle Howard, an ornate, elaborate, ornamented classical style, see below
- **Georgian**, austere classicism, Italian Palladianism
- Neoclassical – Woburn Abbey, Kedleston Hall
- **Planned approach** – Robert Adam, William Chambers, James Wyatt, John Wood
- Regency
- Victorian fragmentation – Gothic revival and classical

### English Baroque

- English Baroque is a term used to refer to developments in English architecture that were parallel to the evolution of Baroque architecture in continental Europe roughly between the Great Fire of London (1666) and the Treaty of Utrecht (1713).
- Baroque taste, which was influential in mid-17th century France, made little impact in England until some years into the Restoration period.
- **Sir Christopher Wren** led the development of the English Baroque style, which differed from the continental models by clarity of design and subtle taste for classicism. Following the Great Fire of London, Wren rebuilt **fifty two churches**. His most ambitious work was **St Paul's Cathedral** (1675–1711), which can be compared with the most dynamic Baroque churches of Italy and France. The Palladian tradition of Inigo Jones is combined with contemporary continental tastes. Less influential were attempts to combine the Berniniesque style onto British church architecture (e.g., by Thomas Archer in St. John's, Smith Square, 1728). Colen Campbell's influential book *Vitruvius Britannicus* introduced a more symmetrical and classical style. **Colen Campbell** (1676–1729) was a pioneering Scottish architect and architectural writer, credited as a founder of the **Georgian style**. For most of his career, he resided in Italy and England.
- Although Christopher Wren was also active in secular architecture, the first truly Baroque country house in England was built to a design by **William Talman at Chatsworth**, starting in 1687. The **culmination** of Baroque architectural forms comes with **Sir John Vanbrugh** and **Nicholas Hawksmoor**. Each was capable of a fully developed architectural statement, yet they preferred to work in tandem, most notably at **Castle Howard** (1699) and **Blenheim Palace** (1705). Appuldurcombe House, Isle of Wight, now in ruins, but conserved by English Heritage, must also be mentioned.



Cristopher Wren (1632-1723), St Paul's Cathedral

Old St. Paul's Cathedral from the south

Inigo Jones, classical portico, west front, 1630-1666

Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677), Old St Paul's in flames, engraving, 1666

Thomas Wyck, Old St. Paul's Cathedral in ruins, engraving, c. 1673

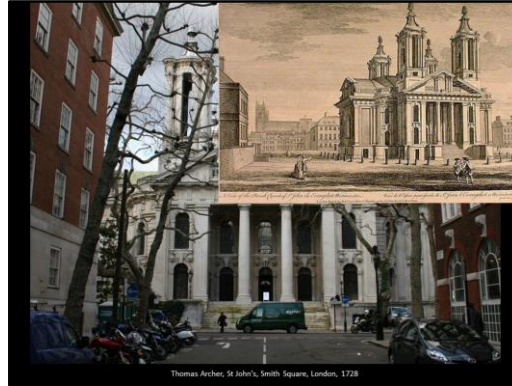
Christopher Wren, final design

St Paul's Cathedral today

- There was a church dedicated to St. Paul on Ludgate Hill from about 600.
- **Old St. Paul's Cathedral was begun in 1087** when a fire destroyed the previous Anglo-Saxon Cathedral and most of London. Work recommenced slowly and was set back by another fire in 1135/6. It was consecrated in 1240 and completed about 1350. The original style was Norman, like Durham Cathedral, with rounded arches and massive columns. It was one of the longest churches in the world and had the highest spire in the world and some of the finest stained glass. The Norman east end was demolished in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and replaced by the latest Gothic style. It was a popular pilgrimage site as it contained the tomb of St. Erkenwald (Bishop of London, 673-695).
- Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries led to the destruction of all its decoration, its shrines and its stained glass. **In 1561 the spire was destroyed by a lightning strike** but repair work was sub-standard and by the early 1600s it was dangerous and in need of repair. It became more secular in use and **'Paul's walk'**, the nave aisle, became the centre of business life and gossip. After the Reformation, St. Paul's Cross in the churchyard became the centre for radical, evangelical preaching.
- Repair work by Inigo Jones included a new portico for the west end but all work was halted by the Civil War. During the Commonwealth period it was defaced, mistreated and **used as a stable** and valuable documents were dispersed and destroyed. There is a story that Cromwell considered giving it to the Jewish

community to turn into a synagogue.

- After the Restoration Christopher Wren was attempting to continue the restoration when it was **destroyed by the Great Fire in 1666**. Wren wanted to rebuild it in a classical style but he was opposed by the clergy and citizens of the city. After the fire Wren warned it was impossible to restore but an attempt was made leading to the collapse of the west end. They called back Wren to rebuild it in a modern style. Demolition began in 1668 but was extremely difficult as the molten lead had bonded all the stones together. Wren had to use the then modern technique of resorting to gunpowder but several workers were killed and switched to battering rams. The new cathedral was started in 1675. Wren's approved 'Warrant design' combined Gothic with his 'better manner of architecture', featuring a portico influenced by Inigo Jones' addition to the old cathedral. However, Wren received permission from the king to make 'ornamental changes' to the submitted design, and over the course of the construction he made significant alterations, including the addition of the famous dome. The Cathedral was declared complete in 1710. Reactions were mixed James Wright (1643–1713) wrote 'Without, within, below, above the eye/ Is filled with unrestrained delight.' But others were less approving, noting its similarity to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome: **'There was an air of Popery about the gilded capitals, the heavy arches ... They were unfamiliar, un-English.'**
- **'Reader, if you seek his memorial, look around you.'** is the English translation of Wren's Latin epitaph. The dome is one of the world's largest, and St Paul's was the capital's tallest building until the 1960s. Wren's tomb is in the crypt with those of the Duke of Wellington and Admiral Lord Nelson. Nelson's black sarcophagus was originally commissioned for Cardinal Wolsey around 1524 before he fell out of favour with Henry VIII.
- Christopher Wren (1632-1723) is the most highly acclaimed of British architects and was responsible for 52 London churches including St. Paul's Cathedral. Educated in Latin and Aristotelian physics at the University of Oxford, Wren was a notable anatomist, astronomer, geometer, and mathematician-physicist, as well as an architect. He was a founder of the Royal Society (president 1680–82), and his scientific work was highly regarded by Isaac Newton and Blaise Pascal.



Thomas Archer (1668-1743), St John's, Smith Square, London, 1728

- **St John's, Smith Square, is a former church** in the centre of Smith Square, Westminster, London. Sold to a charitable Trust as a ruin following firebombing in the Second World War, it was restored as a concert hall.
- This grade I listed church was designed by **Thomas Archer** and was completed in **1728**. It is regarded as **one of the finest works of English Baroque architecture**, and features four corner towers and monumental broken pediments. It is often referred to as '**Queen Anne's Footstool**' because as legend has it, when Archer was designing the church he asked the Queen what she wanted it to look like. She kicked over her footstool and said 'Like that!', giving rise to the building's four corner towers.

### Notes

- In 1710, the long period of Whig domination of British politics ended as the Tories swept to power under the rallying cry of "The Church in Danger". Under the Tories' plan to strengthen the position of the Anglican Church and in the face of widespread damage to church buildings after a storm in November 1710, Parliament concluded that 50 new churches would be necessary in the cities of London and Westminster. An Act of Parliament in 1711 levied a tax on coal imports into the Port of London to fund the scheme and appointed a commission to oversee the project. Archer was appointed to this commission alongside, amongst others, Hawksmoor, Vanburgh and Wren. The site for St. John's was acquired from Henry Smith (who was also Treasurer to the Commissioners) in June 1713 for £700 and building commenced immediately. However, work proceeded slowly and the church was finally completed and consecrated in 1728. In total, the building had cost £40,875.
- St John's famous nickname 'Queen Anne's Footstool' was coined early in its history. According to legend, Archer consulted the ailing Queen Anne about his



designs for the new church. The Queen, not noted for her interest in architecture, petulantly kicked over her footstool, pointed at its upturned shape and snapped "Like that!" The towers were, in fact, added to stabilise the building against subsidence.

- The architectural style of St John's, Smith Square has always provoked a reaction in the viewer, not always complimentary. An 18th-century commentator thought the new church "singular, not to say whimsical" and, later, Charles **Dickens**, in *Our Mutual Friend*, described it as appearing to be "**some petrified monster, frightful and gigantic, on its back with its legs in the air**". However today **St John's is regarded as one of the masterpieces of English Baroque architecture.**
- The building was designed by Thomas Archer (1668-1743). We know that his family were country gentry, but nothing is known about his architectural training. After the usual education for a cultivated young gentleman - three years at Oxford followed by the Grand Tour of Europe - he made his way as a courtier being appointed to the post of Groom Porter by Queen Anne in 1705. As such, he was responsible for licensing all gambling at court (including tennis, dice and billiards). He retained this post for the rest of his life under her successors George I and George II and, in addition, acquired the sinecure of Comptroller of Customs of Newcastle in 1715. Not surprisingly, he became a wealthy man and on his death he left a legacy of £100,000 to his nephew in addition to property in London, Hampshire and Warwickshire. Possibly as a result of this wealth and the distractions of Court life, his architectural output was small - including some work at Chatsworth; Roehampton House (part of Queen Mary's Hospital, until converted to flats in 2009-13); St Philip's Church, Birmingham (now the Cathedral) and St Paul's Church, Deptford. However, the idiosyncratic personal style, which is the hallmark of St John's, distinguishes all of his work. While his contemporaries included Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor, Archer's style owes most to the Italian influences he experienced on his Grand Tour, primarily that of Borromini.



Christopher Wren and William Talman, Hampton Court, south facade

- Soon after their accession to the English throne, King William III (reigned 1689-1702) and Queen Mary II (reigned 1689-94) commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to rebuild Hampton Court.
- Wren's original plan was to demolish the entire Tudor palace, except for the Great Hall. Neither the time nor the money proved available for this ambitious undertaking. Wren had to be content with rebuilding the king's and queen's main apartments on the south and east sides of the palace, on the site of the old Tudor lodgings.
- Work began in May 1689. William wanted rapid results, but in December, because of the excessive speed of building and the poor quality of the mortar used, a large section of the south range collapsed, killing two workmen and injuring eleven.
- William was devastated in late 1694 when Mary died. Work stopped, leaving the new buildings as an empty brick shell with bare walls and floors.
- As Whitehall Palace burned down in 1698, William stepped up his efforts to finish the new palace. Instead of accepting Wren's estimate for finishing the work, however, the king appointed Wren's deputy, William Talman, who had offered a lower price, eventually finished William's new King's Apartments under budget.
- Wren and Talman completely transformed the east and south facades of Hampton Court, replacing Tudor towers and chimneys with the grand and elegant baroque exteriors that dominate the Formal Gardens today.
- Inside, Grinling Gibbons carved elegant fireplaces and architectural mouldings and Antonio Verrio painted triumphant and colourful ceilings.
- Outside, the gardens were also dug up and re-landscaped. They were filled with new plants, including Queen Mary's own collection of exotic plants from around the world, and bordered by gilded wrought-iron screens by Jean Tijou, and a new Banqueting House by the river, again decorated by Verrio.
- Ironically, the King who did more than any other to shape Hampton Court as it is

today did not live to enjoy his new palace.

- William died at Kensington Palace from complications after a bad fall from his horse in Hampton Court Park in 1702.
- During his reign he spent £131,000 on the palace.
- Grinling Gibbons (1648-1721) was a Dutch-British sculptor and wood carver known for his work at Windsor Castle, Hampton Court, St. Paul's cathedral, Petworth House and many other country houses. He was born and educated in Holland of English parents. Most of his work is lime wood decorative surrounds but he also produced furniture and worked in stone. By the time he was established he had a large workshop. Gibbons rented a cottage from John Evelyn, the diarist, and one Evelyn saw him carving and immediately introduced him to Christopher Wren and King Charles II who gave him his first commission in the dining room of Windsor Castle.



Christopher Wren's great scheme, drawn by Nicholas Hawksmoor, 1689  
Aerial view of Hampton Court, Bushy Park and Home Park today indication the grand scheme.

- This is the earliest and most important drawing of Christopher Wren's grand scheme to create the grandest Baroque palace in Europe, although it was only partly implemented.
- Imagine the road relocated and the whole area one grand palace. The scheme extended over the river and Wren planned a large lodge in the middle of what is now suburban Thames Ditton near what is now the Kingston-by-pass..

### **Notes**

- Charles I had already constructed the Longford River to take water from the Coln at Colnbrook, around the west and then the south of what is now Heathrow airport, through Bushy Park to the Palace grounds.
- A *trianon* (a retreat) in Thames Ditton was part of the scheme. It would have been a large lodge between what is now Surbiton station and the Kingston by-pass.



Hampton Court Palace today showing the Tudor and Baroque elements fused together

- We can clearly see how the two palaces were fused together.
- Fountain Court replaced a courtyard in Henry VIII's Palace called Cloister Green Court.



Jean Tijou Gates, Hampton Court, c.1689

- Jean Tijou was a French Huguenot ironworker. He is known solely through his work in England, where he worked on several of the key English Baroque buildings. He arrived in England in c.1689 and enjoyed the patronage of William and Mary for whom he made gates and railings for Hampton Court Palace.
- He produced the screens and grilles of St. Paul's Cathedral for Sir Christopher Wren, and worked at country houses such as Easton Neston, Burghley and Chatsworth. At Chatsworth his surviving works include the balustrade of the upper flight of the grand staircase and the set of gates known as the Golden Gates, which were moved to their present location at the north entrance to the park in the 19th century. Tijou published his New Book of Drawings in 1693 and continued to work in England until around 1711.



Antonio Verrio (c.1636-1707), King's Staircase, Hampton Court

- Verrio was born in Lecce ('lech-ay') in the heel of Italy. He trained in Italy and moved to Toulouse when he was 29 and then to Paris five years later. In 1672, when he was 36 he moved to London on the recommendation of the English Ambassador in Paris and worked on a number of aristocratic houses including Ham House. He quickly acquired the patronage of Charles II and was engaged to paint 20 ceilings and three staircases at Windsor Castle (only three ceilings survive). He was not retained by William II and worked at Burghley House and Chatsworth. William finally overrode the Test Act and employed him to paint Hampton Court Palace. On William's death in 1702 he continued to work for Queen Anne and his last commission was the Queen's Drawing Room. He retired on a pension of £200 a year and lodgings at Hampton Court. Verrio introduced Baroque mural painting into England and influenced painters such as James Lighthill.
- Verrio painted five rooms in William III's Apartments at Hampton Court as well as the King's Staircase, the Kings Great Bedchamber, the Banqueting House, the King's Little Bedchamber and the Queen's Drawing Room.



Antonio Verrio (c. 1636-1707), *ceiling, King's Stairs, Hampton Court Palace*, c. 1700

- The **King's Staircase is probably the most elaborate example of Verrio's work.** In the scheme for the staircase Verrio showed William III in triumphal mode, dominating a group of Roman emperors who represent the King's Catholic enemies, as well as a banquet of the Gods denoting the peace and plenty William had brought.
- In later years some of the scenes Verrio painted inside Hampton Court's Banqueting House were regarded as being indecent and one hundred years ago an occupant of the palace apartments asked that they be painted over. Luckily this request wasn't obliged, but instead large pieces of furniture were placed in front of the naked nymphs.

### **Notes**

The balustrade of the King's Stairs at Hampton Court Palace was created by Jean Tijou. Tijou arrived in England with William III and Mary II and was active in England from about 1688-1712. He designed the golden gates at the river end of the Privy Garden which were installed in 1701 and are currently being restored.





Christopher Wren, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich, London, 1696-1712

- The centrepiece of 'Maritime Greenwich', described by Unesco as the '**finest and most dramatically sited architectural and landscape ensemble in the British Isles**'. Beginning in 1696, Wren and Hawksmoor worked for nothing on what was originally a hospital for sailors, succeeded by John Vanbrugh and others, until 1752. Queen Mary had the plans modified and the buildings split up when she realised they would block her view of the Thames from Queen's House. For the best overview, head for the opposite bank, on the Isle of Dogs.
- Designed by Sir Christopher Wren and built between 1696 and 1712, designed to serve as the Greenwich Hospital, a home for disabled sailors which had closed in 1869. The site of the former hospital had once been occupied by the medieval Palace of Placentia, or "Palace at Greenwich", begun by Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, in 1428.



Design by Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor, painting by James Thornhill, The Painted Hall, Old Royal Naval College, 1698-1708

- The Painted Hall is often described as the ‘finest dining hall in Europe’. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren and Nicholas Hawksmoor, it was originally intended as an eating space for the naval veterans who lived here at the Royal Hospital for Seamen. Its exuberant wall and ceiling decorations are by Sir James Thornhill and pay tribute to British maritime power.
- The Painted Hall sits within the King William Court. Wren submitted designs in 1698 and the roof and dome were in place five years later. When in 1708 James Thornhill began decorating the interior, he was instructed to include many references to the importance of the navy in Britain’s fortunes.
- His ‘great and laborious undertaking’ was completed after 19 years, by which time the Painted Hall was felt to be far too grand for its original purpose. Respectable visitors were allowed admittance, after paying a small fee, and the residents of the Royal Hospital – Greenwich Pensioners – acted as tour guides.
- Thornhill was paid only £3 per square yard (about one square metre) for the ceiling, and just £1 per square yard for the walls. However, he did receive a knighthood in 1720 and his legacy is the finest painted architectural interior by an English artist.
- **Key facts**
  - In 1806, 3 months after the Battle of Trafalgar the previous October, the body of Horatio Nelson was brought to lie in state in the Painted Hall.
  - Between 1824 and 1936, it was known as the National Gallery of Naval Art, with over 300 naval-themed paintings on display.
  - In 1939, it was used for dining (including breakfast) by the officers of the Royal Naval College.

## Notes

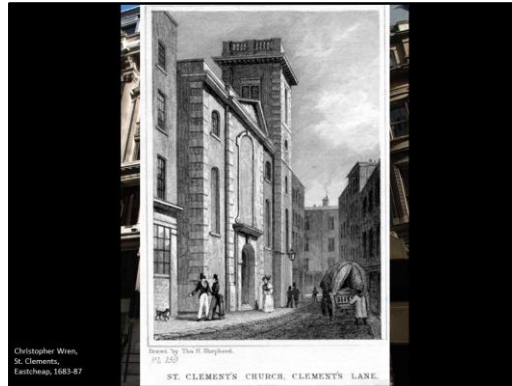
- **James Thornhill**, who also painted the interior of the dome in St Paul's Cathedral, began his commission to decorate the Painted Hall in 1708. He was instructed to include as many references as possible to the importance of the navy in Britain's fortunes. He shows his remarkable skill in the use of trompe l'oeil painting throughout, and makes full use of perspective. He painted directly on to dry plaster, working on what must have been rather precarious scaffolding. For his 'great and laborious undertaking', Thornhill was paid just £3 per square yard (approximately one square metre) for the ceiling and £1 per square yard for the walls. The result, after 19 years of labour, is the finest painted architectural interior by an English artist, and Thornhill was knighted in 1720.
- **The vestibule.** If you look up into the cupola you will see a personification of the four winds, and lower down the monograms of the members of the royal family most involved with the building of the Royal Hospital for Seamen; William and Mary, Anne and George. Plaques show donations made by benefactors towards the cost of the buildings.
- **The lower hall.** In the main central oval, Thornhill concentrates on showing the triumph of Peace and Liberty over the forces of Tyranny. He creates a complex mix of contemporary and classical history, ancient Greek mythology, Christian allegory and traditional symbolism. Enthroned in heaven are King William and Queen Mary. Above, the sun god Apollo sheds his light, while Peace, with her doves and lambs, hands an olive branch to William. He in turn hands the red cap of liberty to the kneeling figure of Europe. Below William's foot, clutching a broken sword, is the defeated French ruler, Louis XIV. To the left, the Spirit of Architecture holds Wren's design for this building, while Time bears up the naked figure of Truth. At the bottom of the oval, the goddess Minerva/Athena and Hercules/Heracles hurl the Vices out of this vision of heaven. Signs of the zodiac and the four seasons are positioned around the edge of the oval, signifying the passing of time.
- **Signs and symbols.** There are ships at either end of the lower hall, with a captured Spanish galleon, full of booty, at the east, while to the west the Blenheim, a British man of war, has gun ports open ready for action. A recurring motif is one of astronomy and its importance to navigation. At the east end of the hall are famous astronomers: Sir John Flamsteed (the first Astronomer Royal) and his assistant, Thomas Weston, Copernicus and Tycho Brahe, while at the west end figures from the ancient world, including Archimedes, represent navigation and geography.
- **The upper hall.** The upper hall is reached through the arch carrying Hawksmoor's beautifully designed Royal Arms and gilded signs of the Zodiac. Thornhill's paintings here reflect Britain's triumph as a maritime power. The central ceiling panel shows Victory saluting Queen Anne and her husband George of Denmark. The four corners of the world (Australasia had yet to be encountered by Europeans) look inwards.
- **The west wall.** Here Thornhill shows Britain's new royal family from Hanover in Germany. George I is surrounded by his children and grandchildren. The distinctive

dome of Wren's St Paul's Cathedral looms large in the background. Thornhill himself appears in the bottom righthand corner with his paintbrushes and palette. Although the composition of this wall was certainly by Thornhill, it was probably painted by his highly skilled assistant Dietrich André.

- **South and north walls.** The south wall to your left shows William of Orange arriving in Torbay in 1688, to take the position of joint monarch with his wife Mary. On the north wall, we see George I arriving at Greenwich to claim the throne in 1714.
- **Nelson and the Painted Hall.** Three months after the battle of Trafalgar, 21 October 1805, Nelson's body was brought back to Greenwich and taken to the Painted Hall to lie in state. During three days in January, over 30,000 members of the public came to pay their respects to the great naval hero. On 8 January, his body was then taken by river to the Admiralty for the state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral. A plaque marks the spot where his body lay. The Nelson Room, to the left of the upper hall, contains a short exhibition about Nelson and his connection to Greenwich which includes a life-size replica of the statue on top of Nelson's column in Trafalgar Square.

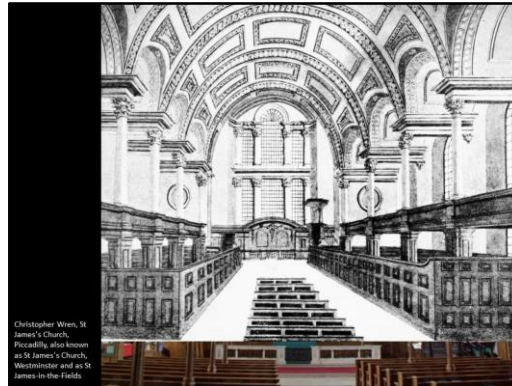
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Marketing literature and website, 'Painted Hall' Old Royal Naval College



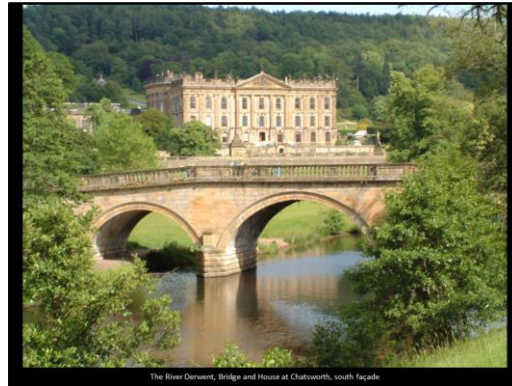
### Christopher Wren, St. Clements, Eastcheap, 1683-87

- I will consider just two of the 50 odd churches Wren designed in London. Many of his churches were destroyed in the Blitz or demolished in 1860 when the number of City churches was reduced.
- The first is a City church, St. Clements in Clement's Lane just off King William Street and close to London Bridge. Clement was a disciple of St Peter the Apostle and was ordained as Bishop of Rome in the year 93 AD. By legend, Clement was martyred by being tied to an anchor and thrown into the Black Sea, which led to his adoption as a patron saint of sailors. Its dedication to the patron saint of sailors and its location near the port of London indicates it may have originally been a Roman building and Roman remains have been found at a depth of 12-15 feet. The church is possibly mentioned in a charter by William the Conqueror in 1067.
- It was destroyed in the Great Fire of London and is only 150 metres from Thomas Farriner's bakery in Pudding Lane where the fire started. The fire consumed 13,200 houses and 87 parish churches and displaced 70-80,000 people partly because of Thomas Bloodworth, the Lord Mayor of London, delayed creating fire breaks. Rumours spread that the fire was started by foreigners, focused on the French and Dutch, and later Catholics. A simple-minded French watchmaker, Robert Hubert, claimed he started the fire and was hanged at Tyburn but it was later discovered he was on board a ship in the North Sea when the fire started.
- Eastcheap was one of the main streets of medieval London. The word 'cheap' derives from the Saxon word for market and Eastcheap was so named to distinguish it from Westcheap, later to become Cheapside.
- St Clement Eastcheap considers itself to be the church referred to in the nursery rhyme that begins "Oranges and lemons / Say the bells of St Clement's". It should be noted that the only other church dedicated to St Clement, St Clement Danes Church, Westminster, also considers itself to be the church and its bells ring out the traditional tune of the nursery rhyme three times a day.



Christopher Wren, St James's Church, Piccadilly, also known as St James's Church, Westminster and as St James-in-the-Fields

- Wren designed four churches outside the City, St. Anne's Church, Soho, St. Clement Danes, Westminster, the Chapel of the Royal Hospital Chelsea and St. James's Church, Piccadilly.
- In 1662, Henry Jermyn, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of St. Albans was granted this land for residential development on the outskirts of London and he set aside land for a parish church. Wren was appointed in 1672 and the church was consecrated in 1684. In 1685 the parish of St. James was created for the church. Mary Beale, one of the first professional women artists, was buried in the church in 1699. William Blake was baptised in the church in 1757. It was severely damaged in WWII.
- St. James's Church, Piccadilly is red brick with Portland stone dressing. The church's interior has galleries on three sides supported by square pillars, and the nave has a barrel vault supported by Corinthian columns. The carved marble font and limewood reredos are both notable examples of the work of Grinling Gibbons.



The River Derwent, Bridge and House at Chatsworth, south façade

- Architects **William Talman (1650-1719)**, Thomas Archer (1668-1743), Jeffry Wyattville, Joseph Paxton, James Paine

### Chatsworth House, Derbyshire

- Chatsworth is the seat of the Duke of Devonshire and has been home to the Cavendish family since 1549.
- On the east bank of the river Derwent, the grand 126-room Chatsworth looks across to the hills that fringe the Wye valley, and is the work of baroque architects William Talman and Thomas Archer, as well as the later Jeffry Wyattville. The only surviving facade is Talman's eastern side, though a rich suite of baroque state rooms stretches across the south front. Archer's work can be seen in the Cascade House, a temple at the top of a water feature in the grounds.
- The original Tudor mansion was built by Bess of Hardwick (c. 1527-1608) in the 1560s. It was one of her three properties at Chatsworth, Hardwick and Chelsea.
- The south and east fronts were rebuilt under the order of **William Talman** and were complete by **1696** for William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Devonshire. The 1st Duke's Chatsworth was a key building in the development of **English Baroque** architecture.
- According to the architectural historian Sir John Summerson, "It inaugurates an artistic revolution which is the counterpart of the political revolution in which the Earl was so prominent a leader."
- The design of the **south front was revolutionary** for an English house, with no attics or hipped roof, but instead two main stories supported by a rusticated basement. The facade is dramatic and sculptural with ionic pilasters and a heavy entablature and balustrade. The existing heavy and angular stone stairs from the first floor down to the garden are a 19th-century replacement of an elegant curved double staircase.
- William Talman was an English architect and landscape designer. He was a pupil of

Christopher Wren and from 1689 became Comptroller of the King's Works. He worked with Wren on the rebuilding of Hampton Court Palace and its gardens and by proposing a cheaper interior decoration scheme won a commission that Wren expected to receive. His principal work is Chatsworth House, considered to be the first baroque private house in Britain and he may have been the architect of St. Anne's Church, Soho. Talman was viewed by many as surly, rude and difficult to get on with. One of those who felt so was Charles Howard, 3rd Earl of Carlisle, who thus chose John Vanbrugh, not Talman as his architect for Castle Howard (Vanbrugh had also been Talman's replacement as Comptroller of the Royal Works in May 1702.)

### **References**

- Photograph copyright Rob Bendall, 2002





Chatsworth House, north façade

- **Thomas Archer** (1668-1743). The **west and north fronts** may have been the work of Thomas Archer, possibly in collaboration with the Duke himself.
- The 4th Earl of Devonshire, who was to become the **1st Duke in 1694** for helping to put William of Orange on the English throne, was an advanced Whig and was **forced to retire** to Chatsworth during the reign of King **James II**. This called for a **rebuilding** of the house, which **began in 1687**. Cavendish initially planned to reconstruct only the south wing with the State Apartments, so he decided to retain the Elizabethan courtyard plan, despite the fact that this layout was becoming increasingly unfashionable. He enjoyed building and reconstructed the East Front, that included the Painted Hall and Long Gallery, followed by the rebuilding of the West Front from 1699 to 1702. **The North Front was completed in 1707** just before the Duke died. The 1st Duke also had large parterre gardens designed by George London and Henry Wise, who was later appointed by Queen Anne to the post of Royal Gardner at Kensington Palace.
- Thomas Archer was a Baroque English architect now overshadowed by John Vanbrugh and Nicholas Hawksmoor. As we have seen he was architect for St. John's Church, Westminster and also St. Philip, Birmingham (now Birmingham Cathedral) both of which the famous architectural historian John Summerson described as representing 'the most advanced Baroque style ever attempted in England'.



Antonio Verrio, *Doubting Thomas*, Chatsworth House, 1690

### Louis Laguerre (1663-1721)

- This painting on the **chapel ceiling** shows *Christ in Glory* by **Louis Laguerre**. Laguerre was trained in Paris under Charles Le Brun and came to England in 1683. He first worked with Verrio and then on his own. He rivalled James Thornhill in the field of history painting. His wall paintings can be found in Blenheim Palace, Marlborough House, Petworth House, Burghley House, Fetcham Park House and Chatsworth House.

### Jean Tijou (active 1688-1712)

- Tijou, the ironworker at Hampton Court, whose daughter was the wife of Laguerre, made the iron balustrades and was paid £528. He also made the screens and grilles for St. Paul's Cathedral.

### Antonio Verrio (c. 1636-1707)

- Laguerre and Ricard were engaged in January 1689 possibly by Antonio Verrio, prior to him arriving in November 1690. The altarpiece painting at Chatsworth of *The Incredulity of Thomas* is regarded as one of Verrio's masterpieces. The chapel at Chatsworth is one of the best preserved baroque rooms in the house. By September 1692 Verrio had finished the great chamber, staircase and altarpiece. He was paid £469. Verrio employed a Monsieur Huyd, Mr. Highmore (serjeant painter to William III) and a painter called Price.

### Damien Hirst

- **Damien Hirst's** eight-foot tall bronze sculpture '**Saint Bartholomew, Exquisite Pain**' was on loan to Chatsworth from 2009, positioned within the magnificent alabaster altarpiece of Chatsworth's chapel. Above it the carved figures of 'Faith' and 'Justice' can be seen flanking Antonio Verrio's painting of *The Incredulity of*

*Thomas* (1694).

**James Thornhill** (1675/6-1734)

- James Thornhill was also employed but probably later and he painted *Fall of Phaeton* on the back staircase, the *Rape of the Sabines* and *Perseus and Andromeda* in an antechamber to the Duke's dressing room



## Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire

### John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661-1736)

- Winston Churchill's family seat was begun by John Vanbrugh in 1705 and completed almost two decades later by Nicholas Hawksmoor. Much of the bill was footed by the state, in honour of the Duke of Marlborough's wartime victories. **Vanbrugh was sacked mid-build**, but Blenheim's combination of severity and magnificence is a monument to a great architect as well as a great soldier.
- Vanbrugh had many arguments with the Duchess who wanted the Palace to be a comfortable country house for her family, *I made Mr. Vanbrugh my enemy by the constant disputes I had with him to prevent his extravagance* As a result of these arguments Vanbrugh resigned before the palace was completed in November 1716. He wrote, *You have your end Madam, for I will never trouble you more Unless the Duke of Marlborough recovers so far, to shelter me from such intolerable Treatment.*
- "Capability" Brown landscaped the grounds.
- **Blenheim Palace** is a monumental country house situated in Woodstock, Oxfordshire, England. It is the principal residence of the dukes of Marlborough, and the only non-royal non-episcopal country house in England to hold the title of palace. The palace, one of England's largest houses, was built between 1705 and circa 1722.
- The building of the palace was originally intended to be a **reward to John Churchill**, 1st Duke of Marlborough, from a grateful nation for the duke's **military triumphs** against the French and Bavarians during the **War of the Spanish Succession**, culminating in the **1704 Battle of Blenheim**. However, soon after its construction began, the palace was to become the subject of **political infighting**; this led to Marlborough's exile, the fall from power of his duchess, and lasting **damage to the reputation** of the architect Sir **John Vanbrugh**.
- Designed in the rare, and short-lived, **English Baroque style**, architectural

appreciation of the palace is as divided today as it was in the 1720s. It is unique in its combined usage as a family home, mausoleum and national monument. The palace is also notable as the birthplace and ancestral home of Sir **Winston Churchill**.

- Following the palace's completion, it became the home of the Churchill, later **Spencer-Churchill**, family for the **next 300 years**, and various members of the family have in that period wrought changes, in the interiors, park and gardens. At the end of the 19th century, the palace was **saved from ruin** by funds gained from the **9th Duke** of Marlborough's **marriage** to American railroad heiress **Consuelo Vanderbilt**.
- **(Click)** The pediment over the south portico is a complete break from the convention. The flat top is decorated by a trophy bearing the marble bust of Louis XIV looted by Marlborough from Tournai in 1709, weighing 30 tons. The positioning of the bust was an innovative new design in the decoration of a pediment.

#### **Architects of the age: Nicholas Hawksmoor and John Vanbrugh**

- Both pupils of Christopher Wren, Hawksmoor (1661-1736) and Vanbrugh (1664-1726) were the hugely imaginative masters of the English baroque, a theatrical style adopted from Catholic Italy and France and transformed, and disciplined, in Protestant England. Hawksmoor and Vanbrugh (pictured) worked together on some of our finest monumental buildings, notably Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire, and Castle Howard, Yorkshire.
- **Vanbrugh**, born in Chester, led a dashing life. A dramatist – who wrote *The Provok'd Wife* while a prisoner in the Bastille, he was also a soldier, famous wit and man about town. His Seaton Delaval, recently saved for the nation, is a wonder. John Soane, one of England's most inventive architects, described "Van" as the "Shakespeare of architecture". He was a radical throughout his life and was a Whig and part of the scheme to remove James II, put William III on the throne and restore parliamentary democracy. His sexually explicit plays defended the rights of women in marriage and offended many sections of society. He was a member of the Kit-Kat Club which presented itself as a drinking club for wits but recently some historians believe it was the secret organisation that was the active force behind the Glorious Revolution.
- **Hawksmoor**, by contrast, was an altogether darker and more intense talent. Born in humble circumstances in Nottinghamshire, Hawksmoor's work with Wren at St Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Naval College, Greenwich, is outstanding. But his solo work – Easton Neston House (1682-1702), five London churches, notably Christ Church, Spitalfields (1714-29) and the circular Mausoleum at Castle Howard

(1729-42), are laws to themselves; the work of true genius.

### **The War of the Spanish Succession**

- The War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) was a major European conflict of the early 18th century, triggered by the death in 1700 of the last Habsburg King of Spain, the infirm and childless Charles II. In his will he gave the crown to the French prince Philip of Anjou. It was the first world war of modern times with theatres of war in Spain, Italy, Germany, Holland, and at sea. The English, the Dutch and the Austrians formally declared war in May 1702. By the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and of the Treaty of Rastatt (1714) the Spanish empire was partitioned between the major and minor powers.



### Blenheim Palace, Hall

- There are staircases of various sizes and grandeur in the central block, but none are designed on the same scale of magnificence as the palace. James Thornhill painted the ceiling of the hall in 1716. It depicts Marlborough kneeling to Britannia and proffering a map of the Battle of Blenheim. The Duke is dressed as Mars and Britannia represents Queen Anne. Directly above the Duke is Fame surrounded by angels and the horse with the surrounding figures represent the countries of Europe. Below are the weapons and soldiers of war. The hall is 67 ft (20 m) high, and remarkable chiefly for its size and for its stone carvings by Gibbons, yet in spite of its immense size it is merely a vast ante-room to the saloon.

### Saloon

- The saloon was also to have been painted by Thornhill, but the Duchess suspected him of overcharging, so the commission was given to Louis Laguerre. This room is an example of three-dimensional painting, or *trompe l'œil*, "trick-the-eye", a fashionable painting technique at the time. The Peace Treaty of Utrecht was about to be signed, so all the elements in the painting represent the coming of peace. The domed ceiling is an allegorical representation of Peace: John Churchill is in the chariot, he holds a zigzag thunderbolt of war, and the woman who holds back his arm represents Peace. The walls depict all the nations of the world who have come together peacefully. Laguerre also included a self-portrait placing himself next to Dean Jones, chaplain to the 1st Duke, another enemy of the Duchess, although she tolerated him in the household because he could play a good hand at cards. To the right of the doorway leading into the first stateroom, Laguerre included the French spies, said to have big ears and eyes because they may still be spying. Of the four marble door-cases in the room displaying the Duke's crest as a prince of the Holy Roman Empire, only one is by Gibbons, the other three were copied indistinguishably by the Duchess's cheaper craftsmen.

### **The Library**

- The third remarkable room is the long library designed by **Christopher Wren**, (H), 180 ft (55 m) long, which was intended as a picture gallery. The ceiling has saucer domes, which were to have been painted by Thornhill, had the Duchess not upset him. The palace, and in particular this room, was furnished with the many valuable artefacts the Duke had been given, or sequestered as the spoils of war, including a fine art collection. Here in the library, rewriting history in her own indomitable style, the Duchess set up a larger than life statue of Queen Anne, its base recording their friendship.

### **References**

Photograph of ceiling, Ian Forbes





**John Vanbrugh (1664-1726) and Nicholas Hawksmoor (c. 1661-1736), Castle Howard, North Yorkshire**

- The 145-room Castle Howard was **John Vanbrugh's first commission** as an architect, exuberantly decorated with coronets, cherubs, urns, a dome and a temple of the Four Winds. Begun in 1699 under the third Earl of Carlisle, it was not completed until 1811, by which time the Carlises were throwing much of Vanbrugh's masterplans out of the window. The structure was still impressive enough to feature in the TV series *Brideshead Revisited*, as the lost home of the aristocratic Marchmains.
- Castle Howard is a stately home in North Yorkshire, England, 15 miles (24 km) north of York. It is a private residence, the home of the Carlisle branch of the Howard family for more than 300 years.
- Castle Howard is not a true castle, but this term is also used for English country houses erected on the site of a former military castle.
- It is familiar to television and film audiences as the fictional "Brideshead", both in Granada Television's 1981 adaptation of Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*
- Building of Castle Howard began in 1699 and took over 100 years to complete to a design by Sir John Vanbrugh for the 3rd Earl of Carlisle. The site was that of the ruined Henderskelfe Castle, which had come into the Howard family in 1566 through the marriage to Lord Dacre's widow of Thomas, 4th Duke of Norfolk.
- A large part of the house was destroyed by a fire which broke out on 9 November 1940. The dome, the central hall, the dining room and the state rooms on the east side were entirely destroyed. Paintings depicting the Fall of Phaeton by Antonio Pellegrini were also damaged. In total, twenty pictures (including two Tintoretto's and several valuable mirrors) were lost. In 1960–61 the dome was rebuilt and in the following couple of years, Pellegrini's Fall of Phaeton was recreated on the

underside of the dome. The East Wing remains a shell, although it has been restored externally. Castle Howard is one of the largest country houses in England, with a total of 145 rooms.



### John Vanburgh, Castle Howard, Temple of the Four Winds, 1725-8

- At Castle Howard, unlike Versailles, the house is incorporated in the landscape rather than dominating it. At Versailles the landscape was altered by massive earth-moving works, at Castle Howard the rolling slopes of the countryside were maintained.
- The *genius loci* or 'spirit of the place' is valued at Castle Howard not subjugated. The Temple of the Four Winds is located on a hilltop to remind the visitor that here winds blowing off the North Sea meet those blowing from the Atlantic. Wray Wood, an ancient medieval wood, was retained. The design was conceived to retain the personality of the place. At Versailles, the Sun King, transformed a marsh into a garden to show that absolute monarchy could change a cesspit into paradise.
- Death appears in the landscape at Castle Howard in the form of a mausoleum to celebrate the ancestry of an ancient family. Vanburgh did the same at Blenheim Palace when he conserved the Gothic ruins of old Woodstock Manor. Why? The power in France lay with the absolute monarch. In England it lay with the aristocracy that ran the House of Lords and through younger sons the House of Commons. The Irish-born philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797) defined the English country houses as 'records of the constitution'. The country house reflected the history of the nation as cultural life spread out from the court into the great houses of the aristocracy.
- Two major garden buildings are set into this landscape: the Temple of the Four Winds at the end of the garden, and the Mausoleum in the park. There is also a lake on either side of the house. There is an arboretum called Ray Wood, and the walled garden contains decorative rose and flower gardens. Further buildings outside the preserved gardens include the ruined Pyramid currently undergoing restoration, an Obelisk and several follies and eye catchers in the form of fortifications.

- References
- Martin Calder, *Experiencing the garden in the Eighteenth Century* (p.66-68)



**Nicholas Hawksmoor (c. 1661-1736), Mausoleum, 1729, Castle Howard**

- The Mausoleum rises 90 feet into the air and is supported by a colonnade of 20 pillars. Designed by Nicholas Hawksmoor, it is **one of the finest free-standing mausoleums in northern Europe**.
- Building began in 1729 but was not completed until after the deaths of both Hawksmoor and the 3rd Earl, who was originally buried in the local parish church and re-interred in the mausoleum six years later.
- Still the private burial place of the Howard family and nearly one mile from the house, the Mausoleum is not accessible during a visit. However, it is easy to see from the waterfall at Temple Basin and the curatorial team does lead special visits for the public.



John Vanburgh (1664-1726), Seaton Delaval from north, 1718-1728

### The End of a (Brief) Era

- John Vanbrugh's last country house, and for many his finest work. Both Vanbrugh and the owner, Admiral George Delaval had died by the time it was finished in 1728.
- It was built for **Admiral George Delaval** (c. 1667-1723) a successful diplomat and naval officer who although he was left only £100 by his father died a rich man. The grounds house a mausoleum for a Admiral George Delaval who supposedly died either from falling from his horse or after being kicked in a "vital organ" by a laundry maid.
- The interior still bears the marks of a fire in 1822, supposedly caused by jackdaws nesting in the chimneys, but the exteriors remain a **perfect example of English baroque**.
- Seaton Delaval Hall is a Grade I listed country house in Northumberland, England. It is near the coast just north of Newcastle upon Tyne. Located between Seaton Sluice and Seaton Delaval, it was designed by Sir John Vanbrugh in 1718 for Admiral George Delaval and is now owned by the National Trust.
- Since completion of the house in 1728, it has had an unfortunate history. Neither architect nor patron lived to see its completion; it then passed through a succession of heirs, being lived in only intermittently. Most damagingly of all, in 1822 the central block was gutted by fire, and has remained an empty shell ever since.



NEXT WEEK:

HOGARTH, HIS LIFE  
AND SOCIETY

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