

## Hogarth's House

Following lunch in the newly built café at Chiswick House, some departed for the V&A exhibition, leaving a small group to wander through the gardens to Hogarth's House, just beyond the boundary walls – a complete contrast to the Palladian world we had just left.

Hogarth bought the three storey redbrick cottage in 1749 as a refuge from his house off Leicester Square, adding its distinctive wooden bay projecting from the first floor and establishing his studio at the end of the garden. Visitors are always surprised at the peace and calm of this garden shielded only by a high brick wall from the six-lane highway to Heathrow. The garden retains its famous mulberry tree of c. 1670, nursed back to life by experts from Kew after wartime damage.

The story of this house is one of incredible survival. Saved in 1901 by a group of local enthusiasts when it was serving as a chicken house; then suffering from considerable blast damage from a parachute bomb which left one wall supported only by its interior wooden panelling. Finally, on the eve of its re-opening to the public, following an HLF aided restoration in 2009, it suffered a fire caused by faulty wiring; this delayed the reopening by eighteen months. Despite this catalogue of accident and neglect, the house strikes the visitor as entirely authentic, for it retains many original features including panelling, window shutters, fire surrounds and hearths. Treve, one of the trustees of Hogarth's House, pointed out a number of intriguing original details,

including a period bedroom door lock which could be operated from the bed, a conventional glazed china cabinet on the ground floor with shell-shaped interior of the type usually set in a corner, which was intriguingly listed in the 18th-century inventory as a 'buffet'. The house retains none of the original furniture, but in 1901 furniture was made based on the pieces seen in Hogarth's paintings by local Chiswick craftsmen.

A bonus of the visit was a temporary exhibition of the beautiful hand-made wallpapers by the octogenarian Chiswick artist, Marta Armitage, who is currently enjoying a revival of demand in fashionable circles and featuring local scenes such as Chiswick House.

It is intriguing that Hogarth, who despised all that Burlington and his circle stood for, should chose to come and live within sight of the acknowledged centre of what he considered was an effete and shallow world. He had good reason for his grudge, since Burlington had used his sphere of influence to promote William Kent as a painter to the Royal family leaving Hogarth out in the cold. Hogarth got his own back by satirising Lord Burlington's circle in the engraving 'A Man of Taste' which shows the gates of Burlington House labelled as the temple of Taste. Burlington is ascending a ladder with a hod for Alexander Pope who is whitewashing the statue of Kent, flanked by reclining figures of Raphael and Michelangelo. The Duke of Chandos gets splattered in paint as he emerges from his carriage.

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**Fig. 1** Two of the oak chairs made by the Chiswick Art Workers Guild, 1901–04, using Hogarth's prints as a guide

