

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY AT HOME, 1757-1857

MARCH 2012 NEWSLETTER

Swallowfield Park

British Library Study Day: On 2 March, the team hosted a short study day for a small number of Project Associates at the British Library in London. The meeting allowed a broad range of affiliates—family historians, curators, librarians, academics and others—to discuss how far the project has come, where we are going and the methodologies we are employing. As part of the Study Day we split into small groups and discussed the questions raised by particular objects, many of which had been kindly brought by Associates. (The photo shows one group grappling with how best to analyse a box of ceramic shards from an East Indiaman that sank before reaching British shores—supplied by Georgina Greene—and a painting of a Hong in Canton—supplied by Patrick Conner). Much discussion followed and the project team gained a range of new insights into how they might approach and think about the objects in our project. A very enjoyable and useful day! Many thanks to those who participated and to Margaret Makepeace and Sophie Arp at the BL for helping us organise the event.



At the British Library

Conference Papers Delivered: On March 9, Ellen gave a paper entitled 'At Home in the Global: Setting up House in Colonial India, 1770-1850' at the University of Warwick as part of the Warwick-LSE-Columbia Postgraduate Workshop on International and Global History. On 21 March, Ellen gave a paper entitled 'At Home in Empire: Three Generations of the Pringle Family in Colonial India' at the Economic and Social History Society of Scotland's conference on Scotland and the Indian Subcontinent.

First Case Study Online: On 14 March, the first project case study of a country house went online to the public. The Swallowfield Park Case Study explores how the country house can be understood through the various processes that shaped its domestic space. To learn more about the case study (or to provide feedback and comments for its next edition) go to <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/ghcc/research/eicah/houses/swallowfieldpark/>. We have begun commissioning our first case studies of objects and families to complement the Swallowfield case study and other country house studies in development. If you are interested in contributing, please get in touch.

East India Company at Home in the US: From 19-24 March, Kate visited Salem, Massachusetts to carry out research at the Peabody Essex Museum (www.pem.org). A group of Salem captains and supercargoes who

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had sailed beyond either the Cape of Good Hope or Cape Horn established The East India Marine Society in 1799. One purpose of the society was to encourage members to bring back unusual objects to Salem to form a cabinet of curiosity. In 1825 the society moved into its own building, East India Marine Hall, which remains as part of the Peabody today. As a result of these early beginnings the Peabody Essex Museum contains a rich and diverse collection of objects from the northwest coast of America, Asia, Africa, Oceania, India and elsewhere. While at the museum Kate saw some wonderful objects that are very relevant to project, including a c.1760 armchair presented to Lady Harland by Muhammad Ali Khan Walajah and the Strathallan Castle Wallpaper. During the week, Kate also attended the Material Worlds Symposium and the Material Culture of the Americas in a Global Age workshop.

Newsletter and Website: You might notice that we have changed the usual layout of the newsletter to include an image of an object and a person. We hope to add a new feature to the website next month—Unknown Objects—showcasing a relevant object about which information is needed. Let us know what you think...



'Sir Henry Russell, 1st Baronet (1751-1836)', George Chinnery, engraved by Samuel William Reynolds, Mezzotint [As shown in the Swallowfield Case Study] Crown Copyright: UK Government Art Collection



Patrick Conner at the British Library study day holding a painting by a Chinese artist, c.1815
The hongs of Canton (Guangzhou)
Oil on metal alloy, 4 ½ x 5 ¾ ins
Martyn Gregory Gallery, London