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JAMES WYATT'S ORNAMENTAL DAIRY AT COBHAM HALL, KENT

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Cobham Hall Dairy was designed by James Wyatt in 1794–5 in the Gothic style for the fourth Earl & Countess of Darnley in a landscape by Humphry Repton. It is a rare survival of a late-Georgian ornamental dairy, and is unusually well-documented. It is revealed as an example of integrated collaboration in Georgian building innovation, involving the Wyatt family and their affairs. This article looks in detail at the ingenious treatments employed in its design and construction, notably slate

cladding, rolled copper roofing, sanded paint and plaster fan vaulting. The Cowhouse that accompanied the Dairy completed the grouping as an early example of model dairy design. Ornamental dairies represent architecture for a uniquely feminine sphere, and Cobham Dairy is also set in its wider contemporary context of feminine experience. Stabilised from vandalised decay in the 1980s, it was fully restored by the Landmark Trust in 2019.



Fig. 1a. Cobham Dairy from the northeast in 1969. (*Historic England*)



Fig. 1b. Cobham Dairy in 2020, newly restored by the Landmark Trust. (*Landmark Trust*)

The dairy built at Cobham Hall in Kent from 1795 is an exceptionally well-documented example of the ornamental dairies that sprang up on aristocratic estates across Britain in the eighteenth century. They are among the most decorative and endearing buildings of the Georgian period,¹ but, of the many built, very few survive today and even fewer are unaltered. By the 1980s the Cobham Dairy had fallen into complete dereliction: a common enough fate for such ornamental estate buildings when they outlive their use. The understanding of the building has been enhanced by the opportunity for detailed analysis of its fabric during its restoration, and the detailed case study that emerges reveals much about both constructional ingenuity and female experience in the late eighteenth century (Figs. 1a and 1b).

Conventionally, the popularity of such

ornamental dairies began in England with Queen Mary II's creation of a pleasure dairy in the Water Gallery at Hampton Court Palace in the 1690s, replicating one she had left at Paleis Het Loo in the Netherlands (Fig. 2). There were earlier French precedents. Mary's Hampton Court dairy (now lost) elaborated a dairy and bathing house created in the same watergate in the 1670s by Charles II's mistress, the Duchess of Cleveland. The latter was created in imitation of the *grande laiterie* built at Versailles by Louis XIV for his mistress, Louise de la Vallière, which itself drew on the example set by Catherine de' Medici in the mid sixteenth century.² The fashion continued until well into the nineteenth century, boosted in 1848 by Prince Alfred's personal direction of another royal dairy for Frogmore House at Windsor. Despite this popularity, architectural



Fig. 2. Mary II's 'milk cellar' at Paleis Het Loo in the Netherlands.

historiography on ornamental dairies is relatively sparse and they warrant no more than passing mentions in most architectural accounts.³

Such dairies embody the delights, challenges and contradictions of elite Georgian women's experience, and yet they are based on the embedded experiences of the lower and middling sorts over centuries (Fig. 3). Dairies of all types were traditionally a sphere of women's activities; spaces where delicate and intuitive skills were exercised in the pre-industrial age, overcoming the vagaries of temperature and lack of refrigeration to transform milk into cheese, cream, butter, curds and whey. Not for nothing was Shakespeare's mischievous sprite Puck believed to 'skim milk ... And bootless make the breathless housewife churn.'⁴ Dairy farming grew rapidly after the Restoration, both cause and effect

of the popularity of a new cream – and butter-rich cuisine that generated huge demand from middling and elite households. Formerly regarded as the food of the poor, dairy produce now became fashionable, and by 1750 cows had largely ousted the ewes and goats that had shared milk production in earlier centuries. Most dairy produce was consumed very locally with any surplus sold door to door or at markets in larger towns.⁵

Husbandry and conduct manuals of the time offered advice on how to make butter and cheese and on best practice in the dairy, their content reflecting this change in dietary habits. The title of Richard Bradley's popular *The Country Housewife, and Lady's Director*, first published in 1728 and running to six editions, reflects the growing elite fascination with the bucolic. His chapter on May, 'the busy

month in the Dairy' when calves were newly weaned and milk most plentiful, contains detailed instructions on cheese and butter making and the equipment needed. The 1762 edition consulted was inscribed 'Sarah Eales her Bock [*sic*] 1799', indicating the longevity of such works.⁶ Men's role in dairies was restricted to unskilled work, at least until their contemporary managerial entitlement was reasserted in the large-scale commercial dairies that opened in the later eighteenth century.⁷

Dairies and dairy-making had therefore long been a metaphor for feminine virtue, and many gentlewomen were proficient in dairy management long before the eighteenth century. Here is Richard Braithwaite on his wife in the mid seventeenth century:

'Oft I have seen her from her Dayrey come
 Attended by her maids, and hasting home
 To entertain some Guests of Quality
 Shee would assume a state so modestly
 Sance [without] affectation, as she struck the eye
 With the admiration of the stander-by.'⁸

In the outpouring of national grief following Queen Mary's sudden death in 1694, the eulogy of her virtues drew on these longstanding tropes of idealised feminine conduct ('she was so far from being fond of Dairies, that I once heard her say, That she *could live in a Dairy*').⁹ This royal association further enhanced the identification of dairies as temples of feminine virtue. Treatises on household management and conduct books discussed the symbolic as well as practical aspects of dairying, and



Fig. 3. An early eighteenth-century working dairy in relation to a designed landscape. (Frontispiece, Richard Bradley, *The Country Housewife, and Lady's Director*, London, 1736 edition)

associated well-run dairies with well-domesticated women. Gervase Markham's *The English Housewife* (1615, running to many subsequent editions) used the spotlessly clean dairy as a mirror for a model housewife, idealising perceived feminine attributes relating to dairy work: purity, patience, gentleness, delicacy and charity. Caring for the cows and distributing dairy products to the poor provided further scope for exercising these female qualities. In reality, serious dairying was hard work in at least partly dirty conditions, and it was done by women servants rather than the literate elite for most of the century. The women for whom Markham and others were writing were more likely to play managerial than regular hands-on roles in working ornamental dairies like the Cobham example.¹⁰

This did not prevent the projection of vicarious virtue, however, and recent work from historians of women's history has explored elite women's identification of the ornamental dairy as a site of temperance, feminine productivity and nurture, proposing the dairy as an 'architectural surrogate' for the woman herself. A pleasure dairy was an elegant and refined space, where the mistress of the house held sway and demonstrated her character as well as her discernment in taste and her mastery of dairy making. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's writings advocating a return to the simplicity of a state of nature grew in popularity from the mid-century, helped especially by the success of his novel *Julie, ou La Nouvelle Heloise* (1761). The novel both helped popularise the image of the virtuous dairymaid and, in Saint Prieux's sense of arousal in Julie's dairy, hinted at another stock aspect to the mythology of the dairy, as a scene for amorous encounters.¹¹

Meanwhile, the conviviality of tea drinking and its ubiquity across all classes began to prompt some disillusion with this national beverage, whose excessive consumption was offered as an explanation for an enervated and diminishing population of declining moral fibre, even rendering women barren or unable to breastfeed. As milk came to be seen

as a more healthful and virtuous drink, so pleasure dairies were presented as more virtuous social places than the tea table, that setting for gossip and slander.¹² Moreover, just as the china and porcelain required for the tea table stimulated a category of consumer goods, so too did the growing popularity of the dairy. Josiah Wedgwood, ever the arch-entrepreneur, predicted to a friend as early as 1767 that 'Consumption will be great for dairies' and set about producing specialised ranges of creamware settling pans and cream jugs, prompting a craze among aristocratic women for these desirable luxury items which simultaneously implied virtuous activity (Fig. 4).¹³

The fashion for architect-designed dairies that accelerated in the 1780s was therefore exploiting



Fig. 4. Example of a Wedgwood covered cream vase, c.1790, earthenware (creamware), 37.6 × 33.4 × 27.4 cm. (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne)

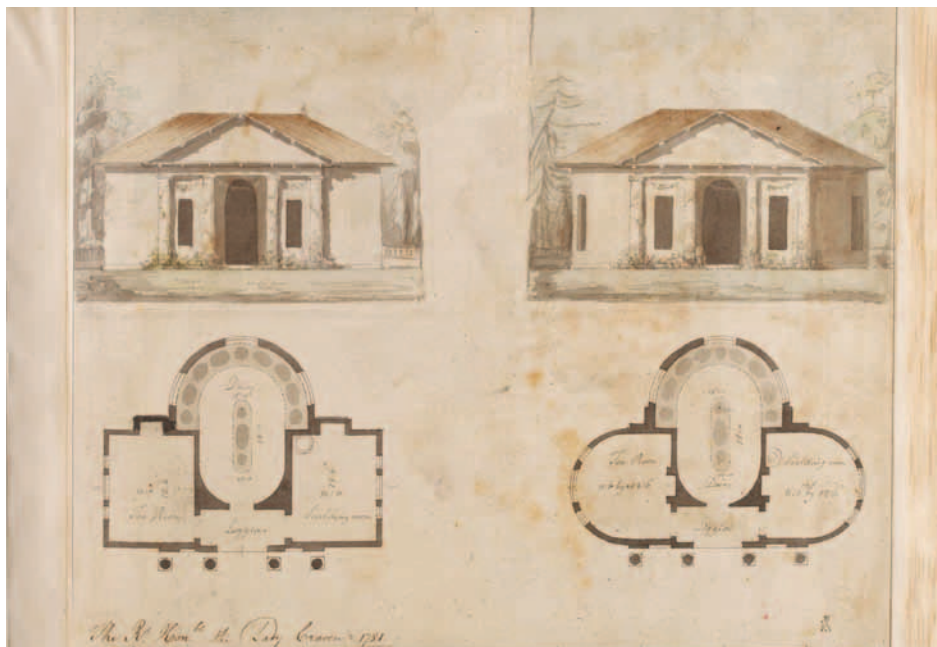


Fig. 5. A design by John Soane for a dairy as primitive hut for Lady Craven, 1781.
(Victoria & Albert Museum)



Fig. 6. Cobham Hall in the mid nineteenth century. The south elevation looks directly out towards the Dairy. (from J. P. Neale, *The Mansions of England or Picturesque Delineations of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen*, Vol. 1, 1847)



Fig. 7. Portrait of John Bligh, fourth Earl of Darnley (1767–1831), attributed to Thomas Phillips RA. (*Mount Stewart, Co. Down*)

these already emerging patterns of elite female behaviour. The young John Soane, newly returned from his Grand Tour, launched his career designing smaller buildings for landed seats, including two important ornamental working dairies for prominent socialites: for Lady Elizabeth Craven on the banks of the Thames in 1781, and for Lady Elizabeth Hardwicke at Hammels (Hertfordshire) in 1783. In both cases, Soane drew on the idea of the primitive, rustic hut to imply a fabled lineage and natural virtue to the building and the activities performed there (Fig. 5). His patronesses' fame (indeed perhaps notoriety in the case of Lady Craven) added momentum to the trend for such ornaments within the landscape, and most prominent architects had at least one or two in their *oeuvre*.¹⁴

Cobham Dairy, whose construction began

a decade or so later in 1795, drew on a different architectural idiom to project virtue. It stands in the grounds of Cobham Hall, near Rochester in Kent, the seat of the Earls of Darnley until 1957, and today a girls' school (Fig. 6). The Hall owes its external form largely to William Brooke, tenth Lord Cobham (1527–97), the powerful Elizabethan courtier who made the house his principal seat.¹⁵ After family disgrace in the Main and Bye Plots in the early seventeenth century, the Cobham estate descended through a complicated pattern of inheritance and marriage to John Bligh (1687–1728), created first Earl of Darnley in the Irish Peerage in 1725, when King George I revived the ancient earldom for its third creation. The Blighs had done well out of the redistribution of Irish lands under Cromwell: their Irish seat was at Athboy in Co. Meath. The family



Fig. 8 Portrait of Elizabeth Brownlow, Countess of Darnley with her daughter Lady Elizabeth Bligh, c.1795, by John Hoppner. (*Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*)

retained strong Irish links throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and it was the wealth from their Irish lands, connections and marriages that underpinned the development of the neglected and outdated estate they acquired in Kent. The third Earl, who married a wealthy heiress, began the process, but he was far overshadowed both as an improver of house and estate and as a collector by his son, also John Bligh (Fig. 7).¹⁶ It is this fourth Earl who commissioned the Cobham Dairy, presented not as a primitive hut but as a gleaming white, Gothick chapel on the southern boundary of the

home park, to fulfil the multiple roles of lodging for a dairymaid, boundary marker for the park and eye-catcher in the view south from the Hall.

Both James Wyatt and Humphry Repton were involved in the overall improvement of Cobham Hall and its estate. Wyatt's involvement dated back to 1772–3, when he worked on a vestibule in the Hall for the third Earl, and it lasted until Wyatt's death in 1813, one of his longest professional relationships. When the Earl died in 1781, he left very specific instructions in his will for a family mausoleum. Perhaps inspired by the Mausoleum of Cestius that

he saw in Rome on the Grand Tour, he stipulated that a square stone building be built on elevated ground within the estate, with a 'prominent pyramid' and a dry moat. Wyatt was commissioned to fulfil this brief, presumably instructed at least nominally by the dowager Lady Darnley, since the fourth Earl had yet to enter his majority and was still at Eton. Wyatt's design was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1783, and the mausoleum itself was completed in 1786.

The relationship continued with the fourth Earl, who made significant alterations to the house ('the Hab' – or habitation – as he christened it while still at Eton), its surrounding landscape and the wider agricultural estate. The estate accounts reveal a little kingdom of buildings designed for both pleasure and utility. One of the Earl's first acts was to create a menagerie in the grounds, with a leopard, cassowaries, wallabies and other exotic animals.¹⁷ Once he entered his majority in 1790, he commissioned Wyatt to redecorate the Gilt Hall and create a Gothick 'cloister' as an entrance vestibule along the west front with fan-vaulted ceiling and a screen of coloured and painted glass, completed in 1791–3 (Fig. 8).¹⁸ These details were used again in the Dairy.

While Wyatt designed the Dairy, it seems sure that Humphry Repton was also involved in its placing within the landscape and possibly its design concept. The fourth Earl called in Repton to advise on improving the landscape as soon as he entered his majority; it was Repton's first commission on the grand scale, and he worked at Cobham for the next 25 years, deriving particular satisfaction from it.¹⁹ Most of Repton's proposals to integrate the house and grounds were followed through with care, and there seems a hint of professional rivalry with Wyatt in Repton's observations about his young patron in 1790: 'His ideas are very magnificent and they have already been realised by costly specimens of architecture from the designs of James Wyatt. But while such great works are nearly completed, little



Fig. 9. Wyatt's entrance vestibule and screen, Cobham Hall. (Author, with thanks to Cobham Hall School)

or nothing seems to be done for the comfort of the place, and there is much to do. The large rooms and galleries are filled with valuable pictures, yet from want of proper communications, the house is hardly habitable.²⁰ Repton created one of his famous Red Books for the estate in 1790, and much of its mature tree planting dates back to his gentle alterations.²¹ With his son John (later re-named George), Repton also carried out significant external alterations to the Hall in the Tudor style between 1800 and 1820. When he died in 1818, the fourth Earl erected an alcove called Repton's Seat in his pleasure gardens, a tribute

to another partnership lasting more than a quarter of a century. It is therefore sometimes hard to determine the source of inspiration for changes on the estate; the ultimate arbiter was no doubt Lord Darnley himself, whose 'good taste' Repton praised.²²

If it is not known whose was the idea the Dairy was – Repton's, Wyatt's, Lord or Lady Darnley's – there is no doubt that it was conceived for Elizabeth Brownlow, Lady Darnley, youngest daughter of William Brownlow, MP for Co. Armagh, whom the Earl married in 1791 (Fig. 9). It was a happy marriage and they had seven children together, four sons and three daughters, at least six of whom arrived during the 1790s. Their son and heir was born in 1795, and perhaps this event prompted the start of the Dairy's construction (a previous son died a few days after birth).²³

The service buildings around the Hall were clearly considered an eyesore, and Repton initially advised that both Hall and buildings be stucco-washed to provide greater uniformity. Instead, one of the young Earl's first actions was to demolish numerous farm and service buildings around the Hall, and to rebuild the stables and service court, heightening the distinction between the polite and the agricultural around the house. Among these early changes in 1790 was 'Removing the Milking House from Cobham Hall and Rebuilding the same at Lodge Farm.'²⁴ Various other farm buildings were rebuilt elsewhere on the estate and at Lodge Farm, which lies half a mile west of the Dairy site. The farm entrance to the estate was given its own picturesque thatched lodge dating from the same period.

The Dairy at Cobham may seek to channel the Arcadian idioms of rustic simplicity and timeless pastoralism, but it is a highly sophisticated building. With great good fortune, thirteen of Wyatt's designs for the Dairy survive at the Yale Center for British Art in Connecticut, most of them signed: plans, elevations, sections and details, making it the best-documented building at Cobham Hall.²⁵ Several are dated 1794 or 1795, and in them, we can both

see Wyatt trying out different versions of the overall concept for the Earl's approval, and also his detailed working drawings for the builders (Figs. 10–18). No correspondence survives between Lord Darnley and his architect, and nor is it known whether Lady Darnley had direct involvement in the design.

The Cobham Hall example was clearly planned from the outset to be a working dairy, for all its additional role as ornamental eye-catcher and the fine workmanship inside and out. Wyatt's plans include a lodging for a dairymaid, and are explicit about the uses of the various spaces, even if details of the building evolved during construction. The biggest change relates to the south elevation, for which Wyatt proposed options for an integral semi-circular, double-height apse over a flight of stairs leading down to a lower chamber, presumably a cold-store or an ice-house (Figs. 11 & 12). This was a feature shared by other dairies: for example, Kenwood Dairy (1794–6) has such an underground chamber.²⁶ The idea was not acted upon in construction at Cobham: there already was a larger, domed brick icehouse built in 1790 into the terrace of north drive. Lord Darnley instead instructed the construction of a much simpler, detached cellar immediately south of the Dairy. A flint-faced recess is all that remains of this today.

There are a few other surviving dairies that have more highly finished internal decorative treatments than at Cobham,²⁷ but perhaps none demonstrates more clearly the on-site dexterity of the late Georgian craftsmen. Wyatt's conceit was that the Dairy should present itself as a diminutive chapel, the bell in its tiny bell-cote perhaps used to summon the cows for milking, or the ladies for tea, or the servants as a sign that a select tea party had finished. Very few other ornamental dairies took such an explicitly ecclesiastical form; whether this choice reflects the Darnleys' piety or, more likely, a disregard of liturgical niceties in pursuit of pleasing aesthetics, is not recorded.²⁸

The building is north-facing, and is shaded on three side by arcades or mini-cloisters. These



Fig. 10. 'Elevation of a Dairy for the Earl of Darnley.' North elevation. With exception of the form of the bellcote, this version is more or less as built. (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.887)

surround a central double-height chamber with a high vaulted ceiling lit by clerestory windows. The north, south and west arcades were open, although what would otherwise have been the east arcade was enclosed, to provide a tiny bedroom for the dairymaid. This being a room that needed at least some heat (in contrast to the rest of the building), a scullery or scalding room was placed next it in the south-east corner. This had the building's only hearth, with a copper to be used to heat water to help the cream rise in cold weather, as well as for boiling water to disinfect the dairy vessels and the dairymaid's own domestic needs (Fig. 12).

An early pattern book, *The Country Gentleman's Architect* (1807) describes the functioning of a working dairy in some detail. While Cobham Dairy is an ornamental and working dairy combined,

and any evidence for the ventilation louvres or steam heating recommended by the author has disappeared, other aspects of his instructions do help us imagine how Cobham Dairy was used:

'The Scalding Room ... to be on the south side of the dairy ... the sides and ceiling of the dairy should be carefully plastered, filling up every crack; the floor may be paved with stone or with ten-inch tiles, neatly jointed, and having a proper slope with a quick current ...'

'The Churning-Room requires a thorough draft of air in summer, but in winter the churning may be done in the scalding-room for the sake of warmth. The side and ceiling of this room should be carefully plastered ... The floor should be paved with stone or ten-inch tiles.'

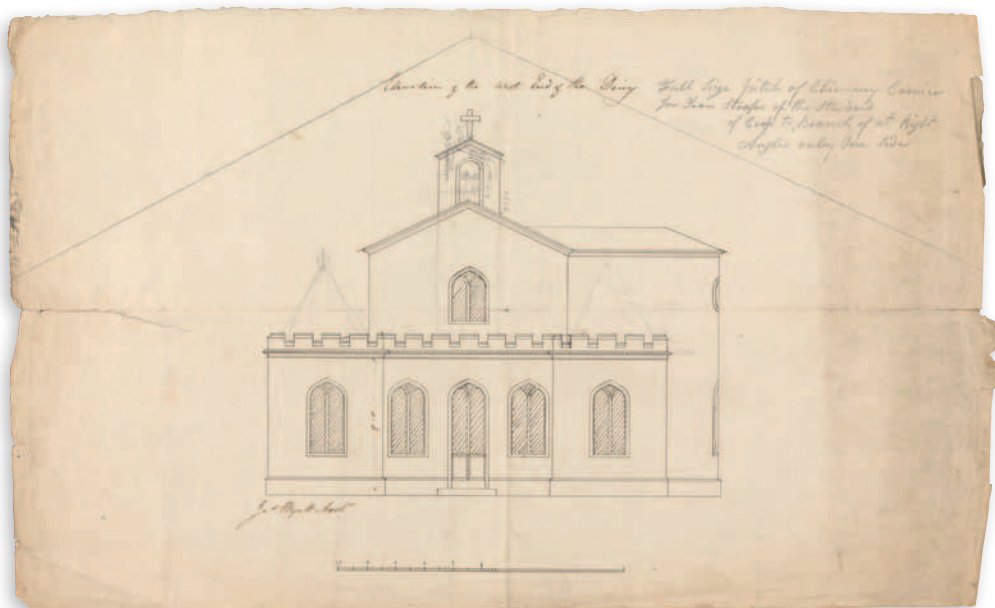


Fig. 11. 'Elevation of the West End of the Dairy.' At this stage a full-height 'apse' is proposed to the rear (unexecuted). The first suggestions of the pyramidal corner roofs are lightly sketched in pencil. (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.798)

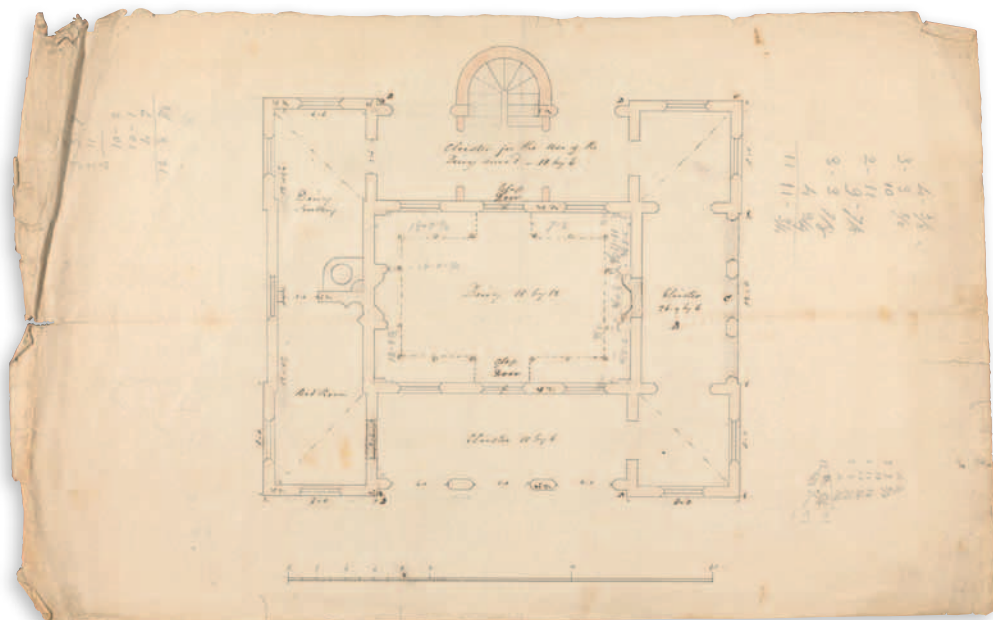


Fig. 12. Detailed floor plan of the Dairy, showing room functions, features and measurements. The steps to the cellar are also shown. (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.797)



Fig. 13. Sketch of the Dairy from the north-west, c.1830. The patented roofing is clearly shown, although the drawing is inaccurate in form of the side roofs. (Private collection)

‘The Scalding Room should be on the south side of the dairy, and should have an outer door, by which the coolers may be carried out for the purpose of being set in the sun as soon as scalded, which dries and sweetens them; but in the case of wet or cold weather, a fire must be lighted to dry them before they can be returned to the dairy. In this room is a large copper, nearly over which is placed a ventilator, that steam may not hover about, but instantly ascend ...’

‘A pump to furnish water for filling the copper and washing the dairy, must be fixed as convenient, and water must be conveyed by pipes to the churning-room.’

‘The Store-Room is on a level with the dairy, if used for butter; if for cheese it should be sunk sufficiently low to admit a cheese room over it.’

‘The lower room should be paved, and the walls and ceilings plastered; it should have no window, and the door should be made to fit close.’

‘When the cheese has lain in the upper room, and heated, in due season, it should be brought down and laid on the floor of the lower room to mellow.’²⁹

In the Cobham example, the flue of the scalding room’s hearth was disguised by the bellcote. A brick-vaulted space was discovered beneath the dairymaid’s bedroom floor during the restoration works, perhaps another concession to her comfort in not laying the floor directly onto cold beaten earth as in the rest of the building. All four corners of the building were capped by square pyramidal roofs with iron finials, and the juncture between roof slopes and arcades was unified by a wooden castellated parapet.

The earliest documentary evidence for the built Dairy is a well-finished little sketch, thought to date from c.1830 (Fig. 13).³⁰ It raises some questions. It is unclear whether the building ever had the iron cross finials sketched by Wyatt; they had gone by 1969, when the Dairy was photographed in dereliction by the National Monuments Record. In the 1980s, the roof was entirely renewed during shell repairs carried out by the architect John Sell with assistance from a working party assembled by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.³¹ It is also hard to make out the treatment of the little bell-cote on

this drawing, for which Wyatt drew one option for castellated trim with a cross.³² Finally, the sketch is ambiguous with regard to the form of the roof, showing a hipped roof running the length of the east and west ranges, instead of the pyramidal corner roofs shown on Wyatt's drawings and early photographs. This discrepancy: while it can be attributed to artistic licence, the anonymous sketcher very accurately depicts a patent slate roofing.

The Wyatt family was intimately connected with the slate industry. From 1786, James Wyatt's brother Benjamin was the chief Agent for Richard Pennant, Lord Penrhyn, whose estates in north-west Wales contained the enormous slate deposits that transformed the nation's roofs in the railway age. Quarried since at least the sixteenth century, from the 1770s, Lord Penrhyn made a determined effort to exploit these resources, turning the mountainsides into dreamlike landscapes of galleries cut into the mountainsides.³³ He gave the Wyatts preferential supply ahead of the Liverpool merchants, and James Wyatt and his brothers Samuel and Benjamin all made extensive and innovative use of Penrhyn slate in their buildings. Samuel used slate for every possible use: flashings, copings, sills, shelves, balconies,

skirting boards, cisterns, lavatory seats and dry lining as well as roofs and wall cladding.³⁴ James was generally much more restrained in its use, which makes Cobham Dairy unusual among his works for his reliance upon it.

Patent slate was a short-lived roofing technique whose invention is sometimes attributed to Samuel Wyatt and his clerk of works at Soho House, William Hollins, who also used the term rather loosely about their (unpatented) slate cladding for walls. Patent slates for roofing were certainly being manufactured at Penhryn by 1788.³⁵ However, whether Samuel Wyatt and Hollins came up with the idea independently or not, the roofing technique can be more firmly dated by the patent issued in September 1772 to Charles Rawlinson of Lostwithiel in Cornwall.³⁶ Rawlinson adapted a vernacular treatment more commonly used on walls in the southwest for a roofing method for 'covering any kind or form of building with slate ... that ... cannot be rifled by wind, or hurt by frost, hail or snow, or admit any water penetrating from the strongest rain.' The technique involved roofing with fewer slates by butting the side edges against each other (rather than overlapping). The slates were bedded onto



Fig. 14. Detail of surviving patented roofing on the lodges on Burlington Gardens, Mayfair, that lead into Albany. (Author)

putty and then nailed in place, and the perpendicular joints then covered with slate slips also bedded in putty. James Wyatt too was clearly considered something of an expert in patent slate roofing; in July 1788 his services were recommended by the Duke of Richmond to carry out the roofing of a carriage storage house on Maker Heights in Plymouth.³⁷ Patent slate roofing often failed, and not surprisingly very few examples survive. One that does can be seen in the roofs of two little lodges at the back of Albany on Burlington Gardens, behind the Royal Academy (Fig. 14).³⁸ At the Dairy, any such application of the technique was later superseded, and we have only the little sketch of 1830 as evidence that it once existed.

The Dairy is constructed out of rough brickwork on a Portland stone plinth, but was always intended by Wyatt to present a much more refined appearance: its external brickwork was covered by slate cladding, painted to imitate finely dressed stone. Such slate cladding (different from patent slate in being butt-jointed without vertical external slips) was a similarly short-lived innovation from the Wyatt stable. If well-maintained, such cladding could last well, and indeed did so on the sheltered west elevation at Cobham Dairy, despite years of neglect. A photograph taken in 1969 shows that Wyatt's wall cladding was then still holding up well, even though the Dairy had had little or no maintenance since the very early twentieth century (Fig. 1). There were no signs of the bowing from nail sickness or batten failure often suffered by mathematical tile cladding. In the event, it was less damp and decay that led to the Dairy's near demise than vandalism. The area of original cladding on the west elevation was conserved in situ during the restoration.

The slates on the Dairy were about 15mm thick, sawn rather than riven and passed through a dressing machine to ensure a flat finish. They were then bedded on oil mastic smeared onto the brickwork between underlying slate ribs, to ensure a smooth finish. Both slips and slates were nailed



Fig. 15. Slate slips around a window architrave at Cobham Dairy before restoration, showing the bedding and fixing methods. (Author)

into the brickwork with cast iron nails, the nail holes then filled with putty for a smooth finish. Curved slips were individually shaped for the reveals of the pointed cloister windows and fixed in the same way (Fig. 15). Analysis has shown that the Cobham cladding in fact included a mixture of Ffestiniog and Penrhyn slate, the colour variation being immaterial since it was to be painted. It is not known whether this variation was primary or relates to later repairs, as all the slates except for the sound west gable area were removed for storage in the 1980s without numbering. There were functional as well as aesthetic advantages in cladding a dairy:



Fig. 16. Soho House, Harmondsworth in Birmingham. This principal elevation is entirely faced in slate, finished in sanded paint. (*Author*)

as well as providing a weather shield against frost and rain, such cladding also helped keep a dairy cool.³⁹ The carefully fixed, butt-jointed slates were then painted in sanded oil paint in imitation of finely dressed stone, the treatment perhaps an echo of Repton's earlier advice (not acted upon) to unify the Elizabethan brick Hall and its service buildings with a stucco wash.⁴⁰ Built in 1795–6, Cobham Dairy is therefore a rare prototype for the technique in the work of James Wyatt, who adopted it with less enthusiasm than his brothers.

Samuel Wyatt pioneered such slate casing on Lady Penryhn's palatial Poultry House at Winnington in Cheshire (c.1782–5, demolished) and many of Lord Penrhyn's own estate buildings were given this treatment by one or other of the Wyatts. Around 1800, Benjamin Wyatt used slate cladding extensively at the dairy he built for Lady Penryhn

at Penisarnant, a more workaday design that might be mistaken for a two-storey house but for the slate-roofed veranda that shades its windows on all sides.⁴¹ Two other notable examples of Samuel's work from the same years deserve mention here: an elevation at Soho House in Birmingham (1796), and a chance survival behind a parapet at Thomas Anson's seat, Shugborough Hall in the Wyatts' home county of Staffordshire (1798).

Soho House in Birmingham, home of the industrialist Matthew Boulton, was built by Benjamin Wyatt, father of James and his brothers, in the 1760s (Fig. 16). Boulton and the Wyatts' close collaboration on many of their ideas is well known, and Samuel Wyatt worked on additions to the house for Boulton from 1789. In 1796 James Wyatt was brought in to redesign its principal front, but his involvement in this instance was not a success.

The cement chosen for the façade failed, and in 1798 Boulton brought in Samuel to complete the work, and he elected to use slate cladding on the house.⁴² The elevation is still faced with painted slate, well-maintained and in impeccable condition. Unless scrutinised very closely, it is impossible to tell that it is not stone, or render lined out to look like ashlar. The Boulton archive holds evidence of the small refinements needed to perfect a technique that could prove durable for two centuries, and it also sheds light on the other surviving example of slate cladding, Samuel Wyatt's transformation of Shugborough Hall in the 1790s. Samuel enlarged and transformed the Hall inside and out, adding a new, octostyle, Ionic portico. With remarkable confidence, he persuaded his client to allow the entire mansion to be clad in slate, including even the simple tree trunks that support this portico as ten giant Doric columns. The whole was then unified in a sanded paint finish. The cladding soon failed at such a large scale (and Shugborough is rendered today).⁴³ Only a small forgotten portion remains, on the reverse of the parapet above the portico.⁴⁴

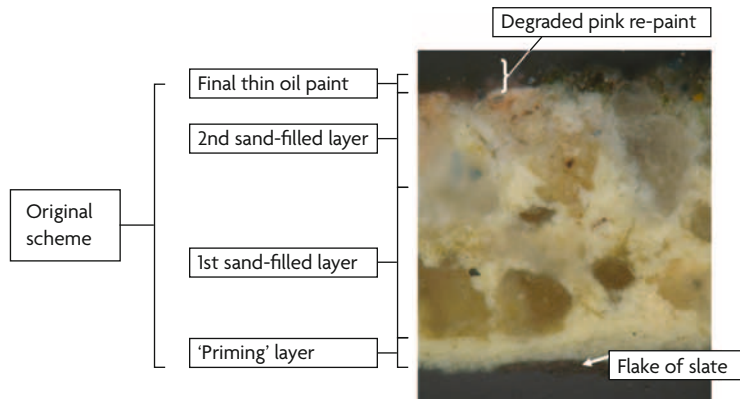
Matthew Boulton's builder, William Hollins, in the midst of rescuing James Wyatt's botched work at Soho House, went to inspect the finished work at Shugborough in July 1798, and reported back to Boulton (whose implied nervousness is palpable) with some sensible observations:

'When I was at Esquire Ansons I took particuler notice of the slating, which looks very well, but there are blemishes in it, which may be prevented in yours, that is in topping the Nail holes. I observe the general mode is to fill the holes with Putty, which not only takes a considerable time in drying, but sinks from the surface, so that they may be seen when painted and sanded.'⁴⁵

Hollins's painstaking solution was to recommend that small slate plugs be made to exactly the same size as the fixing holes bored into each slate, to be fixed with stiff white lead and oil. On the surviving evidence, this method worked extremely well at Soho House. At Cobham, putty was used to fill the fixing holes – the Dairy was already built by the time Hollins was reporting back.

Specialist paint analysis of the surviving cladding at the Dairy revealed that it too had been finished with a stone-coloured sanded paint. After a primer of lead white oil paint, two coats of oil paint lightly coloured with ochre and mixed with sand were applied. The first coat had very fine sand mixed into the paint. The second coat held slightly coarser sand that seemed to have been dredged or blown onto the wet paint, since particles protruded.⁴⁶ (Fig. 17) Exactly the same treatment was used at Soho House and Shugborough Hall.⁴⁷ Such sanded finishes were not new, long predating the late eighteenth-century desire to avoid large expanses of monotonous

Fig. 17. Paint section from a fragment of window reveal showing the embedded sand. (Catherine Hassall *Paint Analysis*)



stucco. They were originally employed for their functional role as weatherproofing rather than an intention to deceive as stonework. As early as 1703, Richard Neve drew attention to a Dutch practice of strewing sand and ground cockleshells onto the mix of pitch and tar applied to external timber. By the 1730s, Alexander Emerton, a London colourman and paint manufacturer, was recommending sifting in sea sand when 'painting and covering Weather-boarded House Tops, instead of Lead, Stone, or Tyling'. He optimistically recommended that this approach alone would 'keep out the Weather many years longer than any Covering whatsoever, without repair', and he also recommended using the same sanded finish on any architectural elements or objects intended to imitate Portland stone, 'which will not only deceive the Eye but the Hand likewise, and be as durable as Stone.'⁴⁸ At Cobham Dairy, as indeed at Soho House and Shugborough Hall,

a sanded finish was applied everywhere externally, even across timber window frames. At the Dairy, it was even found on a surviving internal doorcase. Everything was intended to read as stone.

Another intriguing sign of Wyatt family collaboration at the Dairy is a large payment at the end of December 1798 to Charles Wyatt, £55 12s 0d for 'Tinned Copper had in 1796 for covering the New Dairy.'⁴⁹ This payment for copper roofing, which relates to the flat roofs of the cloisters, neatly marks the probable completion of the external envelope. Charles was James Wyatt's cousin and brother-in-law. After apprenticeship to Matthew Boulton, he set up a manufactory in Birmingham to make rolled copper sheeting for roofing, useful for such awkward spots as the flat roofs of the Dairy cloisters.⁵⁰

Internally, the Dairy's design followed the form recommended in the building manuals of the day for a high vaulted ceiling, and small or few windows

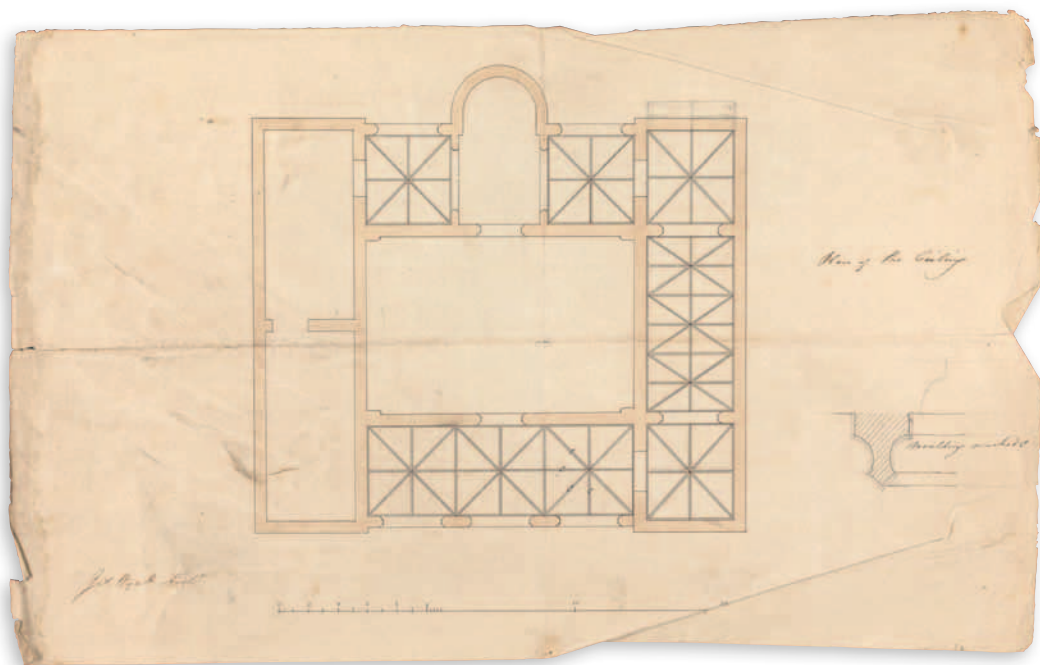


Fig. 18. Layout for cloister ceilings, with section for the rib mouldings. (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.834)

and doors to prevent overheating from sunlight or contamination by dust. Wyatt's ecclesiastical theme was of course perfectly suited to such constraints, and the inclusion of upper clerestory windows into the design admits light without direct sunlight, while the cloisters shade the ground floor windows. A castellated plaster string course ran around the chamber at high level, mirroring that of the external parapet. The pretence of stonework was continued inside the central chamber and the arcades, this time calling on the skills of the *stuccadori* or master plasterers. The arcades and the interior, walls as well as ceilings, were entirely plastered out, with fan-vaulted ceilings whose ribs sprang from corbels disguised as clusters of oak leaves (as specified by Wyatt in his drawings) that met in similarly ornate ceiling bosses. Areas of this work survived to guide the 2019 restoration.

Payments made between 1800 and 1809 to

Francis Bernasconi (1762–1841) for work at Cobham Hall to a value of £1,556 raise a very plausible association between the plastering of the Dairy and one of the most sought-after *stuccadori* of the day, who worked extensively for the Wyatts.⁵¹ Gothic fan-vaults were close to being a lost craft skill by the mid eighteenth century. The revival of the Gothic idiom required the re-learning of both the plastering technique and the setting out of such vaulting, more challenging than that required by the more rigidly compartmentalised Adamesque treatments. The setting out must have challenged the Cobham estate carpenters as much as the plasterers, and Wyatt provided a detailed layout for the ceilings in the Dairy. (Fig. 18)

Long acknowledged as the best master plasterers, Italian *stuccadori* travelled the country to work on the great building projects of the day.⁵² Francis Bernasconi was the son of Italian immigrant Bernato

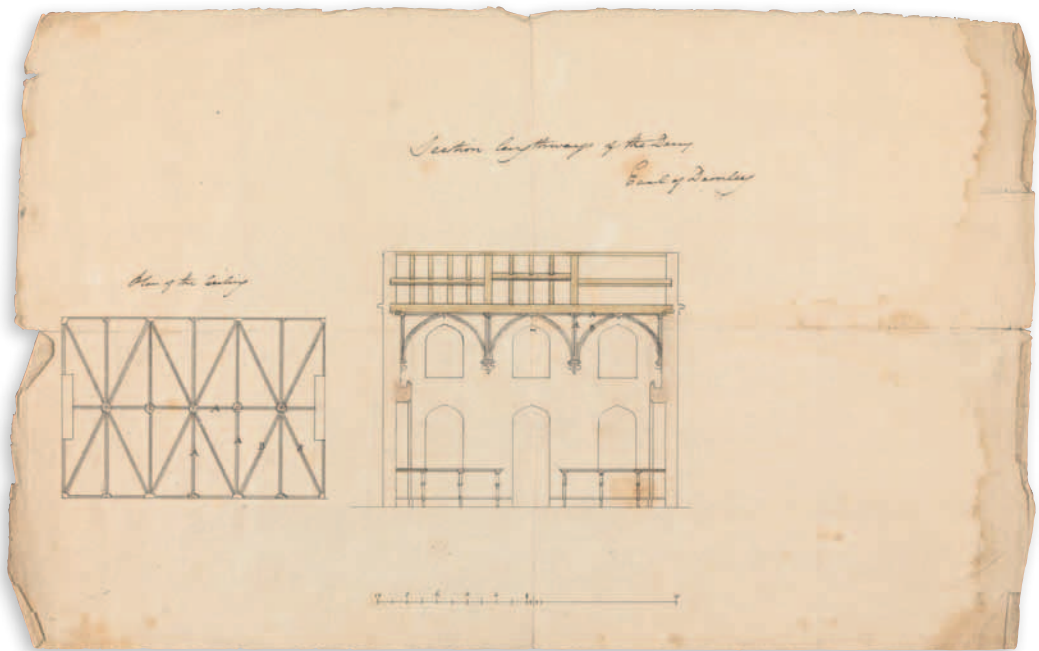


Fig. 19. Longitudinal section with layout for the ceiling of the central chamber. Note too the marble shelves. (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.796)



Fig. 20. The ceiling of Balliol College, Oxford, executed in 1794 by Bernato Bernasconi for James Wyatt. (Author, by kind permission of *The Master and Fellows of Balliol College, Oxford*)

Bernasconi (fl.1770–1820).⁵³ Both were employed extensively by Wyatt, most notably at Ashridge Park in Herefordshire, Westminster Abbey and Windsor Castle. Wyatt first employed Bernato at Lichfield Cathedral from 1787, where the architect took careful casts of the medieval masons' stone bosses and rib mouldings in the lierne-vaulted ceilings and the Bernascone proved adept at their reproduction. From there, they transferred to Oxford where Wyatt was working at several colleges during the early 1790s. The ceilings in New College Chapel (1788–94), Magdalen College Chapel (1791–2) and the Library at Balliol College (1794) were all theirs, the last of them the only one not later swept away by the zeal of later ecclesiologists (Fig. 20).⁵⁴ Several of the bosses in Balliol Library bear a striking resemblance to those in the vaulted ceilings in Wyatt's entrance cloister at Cobham Hall relating to Francis Bernasconi's period of work on Cobham Hall from 1800. The Bernascone kept the moulds, reusing

them frequently from the 1780s to the 1830s.⁵⁵ The deceptively simple quadripartite vaulted ceilings at Cobham Dairy were an entirely characteristic motif of Wyatt's influential Gothick style, now so familiar that it is easy to overlook their novelty at the time.

The lobby ceiling at Cobham Hall and the Dairy ceilings share the same leaf-cluster corbels as springing for the ribs, for which Wyatt's Dairy drawings survive (Fig. 21). It seems highly likely that Francis Bernasconi was also responsible for the decorative plastering at the Dairy. His involvement at the Dairy emphasises that, though it also housed the dairymaid, it was conceived as a building of considerable distinction, to be decorated to the same standard as the Hall. The date of payment to Bernasconi (in arrears, as was usual) also fits with a last payment in the estate accounts, for 'sundry payments to Stone Masons & Bricklayers at the Dairy, the Lodge at Brewer's gate, the House at the Warren Gate &c £147:19:8½' on 12th April 1800.⁵⁶

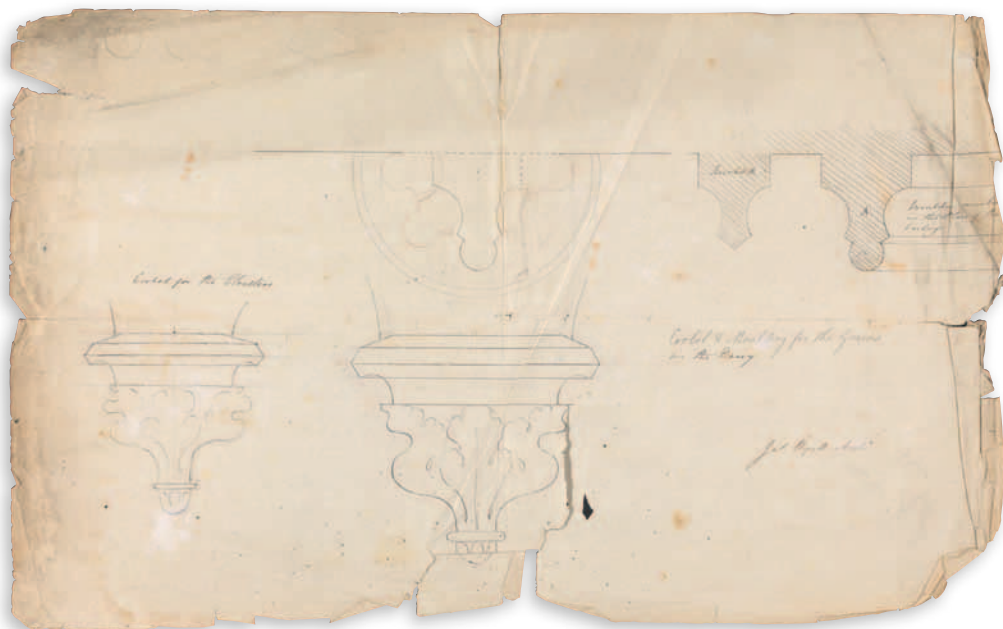


Fig. 21. 'Corbels and moulding for the groins in the Dairy'. Signed drawing by Wyatt. (Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.800)

Since the heat of direct sunlight was to be avoided, the windows in pleasure dairies were typically closely leaded, often including coloured glass. Working dairies might omit glass altogether, in favour of wire and shutters, opened only according to the passage of the sun. An entry in the accounts in mid-1812 for 'Wire Work for the Dairy Windows' suggests that Cobham Hall Dairy combined both approaches. Some of this wire was still *in situ* in the mid twentieth century, being visible in a 1969 NMR photograph.⁵⁷ There was oral evidence for red, blue and yellow glass surviving in the windows at the Dairy in the mid twentieth century, and this tallied well with Wyatt's use of coloured slips in the windows and screen of his entrance lobby in the Hall. The screen in the Hall (Fig. 9) also holds an elaborate, painted representation of the fourth Earl's armorial bearings. A chance entry in the accounts for 1798 indicates that the Dairy was given a similar treatment: the Housekeeper Isabella Rich was

reimbursed £1 1s 18d 'for boarding Mr Warren when painting the Coats of Arms &c on the Windows at the new Dairy.'⁵⁸ Like the slaters, Mr Warren may also have been paid directly by Wyatt. Glass painting was another skill revived within the Wyatt-Boulton orbit in the 1780s, by Francis Eginton and his second wife, Samuel Wyatt's sister Maria.⁵⁹

The documents suggest that the floor of the central chamber was originally laid in brick paviers, but the floor that survived was a decorative one, of pale stone lozenges interlaced with a lattice of narrower tiles in a contrasting dark red sandstone.⁶⁰ A plinth ran around the edge of the room, above which a shelf of Carrara marble on cast iron legs was fixed to the wall, for settling pans, jugs and other vessels needed for dairy making. Three alcoves on each side wall perhaps provided further storage or display space. In the centre of the room there was evidence for the base of a stone pan stand, with a drain beneath the floor to allow water to drain

away.⁶¹ Such pan stands were typically octagonal, a font-like structure here playing to the artifice of chapel-as-dairy. Such central stands were a common feature in dairies, sometimes incorporating a basin for cold or warm water to help the dairy process.⁶² No evidence has yet come to light for the moveable contents in the Dairy, which were not itemised in the inventory drawn up after the death of the fourth Earl in 1841. We can only look to other known examples of ornamental working dairies and follow the market trends for the likes of Wedgwood's wares to inform this. The original water supply is also an unanswered question at the Dairy, where a water source is no longer evident, nor is there any trace of a well. A pond or pool in the declivity in the grounds to the northwest that later became a swimming pool was presumably fed by a spring that once rose and flowed close to the building.⁶³

Lord Darnley retained an experienced team of carpenters and builders to construct and maintain his estate buildings, bringing in specialist craftsmen only where needed. His meticulous agent in these years, Mr W. Stevenson – perhaps a personal friend, since he joined the estate soon after the 4th Earl achieved his majority – made sure that the annual accounts were recorded in a neat copperplate hand in marbled hard-backed ledgers. These records allow the chronology of construction of the Dairy to be followed, as well as the names of those who worked on it.

Some of the brickwork for which John Patteson was paid from June 1795 to February 1798 seems likely to relate to work on the Dairy, and on 23rd September 1796 there is a payment to 'John Till and other carpenters' that explicitly includes 'working at the new Dairy' over the previous two months.⁶⁴ A further £24 4s 8d follows to the same team in November 'for Work done at the new dairy, the new Office &c.' In 1797, 39 oak saplings were used for a new fence between 'the Stable Yard Gate and the New Dairy'. Payments to the craftsmen are typically paid in arrears over the past quarter or even longer,

raising the question of their cash-flow in the interim. John Patteson the carpenter did not receive payment until 1 November 1798 'for Bricklayers ... for 18¾ Loads of Lime to the new Dairy in 1795 & 1796 at 9s a Load'.⁶⁵ On 19 November 1798 we find payment to 'Robert Hills for the Carriage of 3 Loads of Stones from Gravesend in May last for paving the new Dairy at 12/6d a Load' (although as above, this seems not to have been laid at the Dairy).⁶⁶ There are no explicit references relating to payment of slaters who carried out the exacting job of cutting and fixing the patented roof or the slate cladding. These were skilled jobs unlikely to have been within the capabilities of even an otherwise experienced estate team. At Soho House, Samuel Wyatt sent William Jarrard from London to supervise the slate casing ('a very blunt fellow ... [with] a great deal of common sense and ingenuity').⁶⁷ Similarly, estate accounts for work done for Thomas Coke at Holkham in the 1780s show that both slaters and Bernasconi were employed and paid direct by Samuel.⁶⁸ A similar arrangement is likely at Cobham.

Like any working dairy, it made sense for the source of milk to be nearby, and to this end a Cowhouse was built in 1798 to the south-east of the Dairy, straddling the fence between the pleasure grounds and the surrounding deer park. While there was probably a larger working cow barn elsewhere on the estate – possibly at Lodge Farm although no dairymaids are recorded amongst the farm workers there – a few prized or especially pretty cows were no doubt selected to service the Dairy. It is unclear whether Wyatt designed the Cowhouse, or whether Humphry Repton's crucial role in the placing and form of the estate buildings extended as far as designing this cow byre, which was built in a suitably rustic style for its humble use, with gnarled wooden tree trunks in lieu of columns and a thatched roof. A careful record of the building survives, drawn by Repton's son George (1786–1858), who trained with the architect John Nash and became his chief assistant. Nash promoted the young George Repton

as a specialist in cottages and estate buildings, and George created an album of pen and ink drawings known as his Pavilion Notebook, done on paper watermarked '1798'.⁶⁹ Among these drawings are the plan, elevation and section of the Cowhouse.⁷⁰ The little milking parlour allowed up to nine cattle to be milked, and perhaps stalled, conveniently close to the Dairy, minimising the distance the dairymaid had to carry her heavy milk pails. The improving fourth Earl had a keen eye for livestock, and individual breeds are listed in the Account Books; more romantically, keeping cows so near the main house contributed to the fashionable pastoral idiom in the home park. The Cowhouse had three bays. Four tree trunks supported an open colonnade, and at each end there was a shelter made of stave walls, with projecting gable ends that overlooked the deer park through suitably arched windows. The whole was thatched, and about 7.6 metres long, by 5.6 metres deep. The rough trunks that faced it would have merged with the paling that ran around the southern boundary of the pleasure garden, all contributing to the ancient air of the scene.

Internally, a pebble-paved feeding passage ran along the north side of the shed, that allowed the dairymaid to hoist hay into a brick feeding trough running along the middle. Fodder came from a hay rick, placed to the north-west of the Cowhouse on the Hall side (the Cowhouse faced south). The Cowhouse's floor was made of clinkers, with a cement-lined gutter to drain the slurry along its length. This careful attention to the details of best (and indeed to long-held traditional) practice emphasises that for all their picturesque qualities, the Dairy, its cold larder and Cowhouse as an ensemble were model structures, of the kind that became increasingly fashionable through the patterns books of the nineteenth century. There was everything required to make and store butter, cheese, cream and the other perishable delicacies.⁷¹

There are several references to the building of the Cowhouse in the estate accounts. In 1798, 68 oaks were felled for alterations to Cobham Hall and 'for building a new Cow House'.⁷² Between April and June the same year, John Till the Carpenter was working at 'at the new Cow House near the Dairy'.⁷³



Fig. 22. The Cowhouse: 'A Picturesque Summerhouse which was originally a Shelter for Cattle.'
(*The Country Home*, 1911)

In November, Robert Hills was paid £12 11s 8d for '968 Bolts of Re[e]d' for thatching the new Cow House'. He was also paid for the actual thatching work, at 6s per square, to cover the roof of some fifteen square metres, with additional sums for spun yarn and beer.⁷⁴ A photograph of 1911 shows the byre transformed into a summerhouse, the pointed windows boarded up and doors cut into the stave walls beneath (Fig. 22).⁷⁵ The western shelter and colonnade were still there in the early 1960s, but only some of the eastern shelter. By 1984, only the south-eastern corner remained, and today, nothing is left of the Cowhouse, although the floor and foundations perhaps lie below the surface.

And what of the women who spent time in the Dairy? It is frustrating that no references to its polite use have yet been found among the surviving Darnley papers. This is not unusual; it is a puzzle that so few accounts of elite women's use of their pleasure dairies survive in contemporary letters and descriptions.⁷⁶ The payments to employees at the Hall in these years do, however, yield the names of the first dairymaids. Only one name is recorded in a given year, implying that these women were indeed the resident dairymaids; the detailed accounts for Lodge Farm include cows and calves, but no dairy produce or dairymaids, suggesting that this was primarily a beef herd. In 1796, Sarah Hemmings appears as Dairymaid, and was paid 'A Year's wages' of £8 plus board wages each quarter for £11 5s 0d, to a total of £19 5s 0d. This was a little more than the kitchen-maid Jane Davis at £15 14s 6d, and laundry-maids Ann Crocker at £17 5s 2d and Betty Box at £14 14s 0d, and a lot less than Elizabeth Hutchins, the Housekeeper, at £51 10s 0d. Sarah Hemmings earned about the same as Luke Graham, the footman, one of several servants for whom Lord Darnley paid tax each year in order to be permitted to powder his wig.⁷⁷

Sarah was still there in 1798, but by then her year's wages and board wages had risen to £24, perhaps reflecting a 'promotion' to residency at the

newly completed Dairy – where additional heating and sustenance would have been required beyond the umbrella provision in the Hall.⁷⁸ However, by 1800 Sarah Heming [*sic*] has apparently been demoted to House Maid, paid just £16 2s 0d.⁷⁹ Ann Parsons had replaced Sarah as Dairymaid, arriving late in 1799: she was paid for three weeks and one day on 31 December 1799, 'as well as Coach hire from Feversham [*sic*] to Cobham Hall 6s 6d'.⁸⁰ A skilled dairymaid was an essential and valued employee who was worth importing, poaching or borrowing from elsewhere, as Elizabeth Shackleton's papers from Alkincoats in Lancashire reveal.⁸¹ Ann Parsons received twelve guineas wages plus £12 15s 0d board wages, totalling £25 7s 0d. The Dairy made money for the estate too. In 1827, for example, external sales of milk and butter contributed nearly £27 for the year, thus neatly covering the cost of the dairymaid's wages and board.⁸² These sales represent considerable quantities of product. In 1776 Mrs Shackleton of Alkincoats earned £14 9s 4d. from the sale of 496 lb. of butter at 7d. a pound.⁸³ Even allowing for the inflation of the Napoleonic period, Cobham too was clearly producing large quantities of butter in the 1820s.

So life at the Dairy rolled by, with the cows lowing in the nearby Cowhouse, and the daily routine of morning and evening milking, the rhythm set in between by the churning and beating of butter, the making of cheese and the skimming of cream, attended by ever-scrupulous attention to hygiene within the cool walls. Its proximity to, and visibility from, the main house, and its eminent designer in James Wyatt, all indicate that it was no mere utilitarian outbuilding. It was built as much as a recreational garden building, a spot perhaps for tea parties at which Lady Darnley might display some of her fine china and porcelain in its alcoves. Here too she and her daughters might try their hands at cheese and butter making, alongside the professional dairymaid who lodged in the same building, and supplied the Hall with its butter and cheese.



Fig. 23. Interior of the Dairy after restoration. (*Landmark Trust*)

Now fully restored and converted for holiday use by the Landmark Trust (Fig. 23), Cobham Dairy has found a new recreational use to ensure its long-term survival.⁸⁴ Above all, the Dairy emerges as a prototype for the Wyatt family's innovative building techniques. Arch-designer James provided the design in the fashionable Gothic idiom, its detailing based on knowledge honed on the fabric of the country's great cathedrals and palaces. Like his brother Samuel, he was already adept in the use of patent slate roofing of apparent Cornish origin. The use and execution of sanded slate cladding probably originated with the more practical contractor-architect Samuel, as both brothers exploited their family connection with the Penrhyn deposits through their brother Benjamin's employment by Richard Pennant, Lord Penrhyn. Such cladding's use on the Dairy may well have been a conscious trial on a small scale, before its more ambitious use at Soho House and Shugborough. Finally, the use of rolled copper sheet roofing promoted their cousin Charles's Birmingham business. The documentary sources and fabric analysis thus confirm Cobham Dairy as a prime example of integrated collaboration by the Wyatt family, that great architectural dynasty of the age.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the unpublished research done on Cobham Dairy in the early 2000s by English Heritage, led by Roger Bowdler (English Heritage Historical Analysis and Research Team, 'Cobham Hall Estate: Part 2: The Gardens and Inner Grounds', *Reports and Papers*, 73), which provided a useful introduction to the Dairy and the Cobham estate. I thank Ian Bristow for generously sharing his unpublished work on the sanded paint at Soho House and the Shugborough portico, Richard Hewlings for his suggestion on patent slate roofing, Cindy O'Halloran at the Medway Archives & Local Studies Centre for her advice on the Darnley Collection,

and the library staff of Balliol College, Oxford, the Trustees of Cobham Hall School and of Soho House in Birmingham for their help and insights.

I would especially like to thank my anonymous reviewer, for prompting me to think more deeply about the Wyatt family connections revealed by the Dairy.

ENDNOTES

- 1 A dairy was the place where dairy products were made, a skilled process requiring the strictest cleanliness, and is not to be confused with a milking parlour or milking or cow house, where the beasts were milked. Careful distinction is made here between dairies that were working (fully producing); ornamental (also or only built as adornments to a designed landscape), and pleasure (built to assimilate the perceived virtues of working dairies while functioning as places for the display of porcelain and for conversation, rather than fully functioning). The categories can of course overlap.
- 2 S. Thurley, *Hampton Court: A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven, 2003), pp. 172–74; also H. M. Colvin *et al*, *The History of the King's Works*, Vol. 5, 1660–1782 (London, 1976), pp. 157–67. Mary II's dairy seems to have been exclusively a pleasure dairy, its rich furnishings suggesting it was a retreat for the queen, and a setting for her collection of Delftware, porcelain and portraits. For French dairies, see: M. Martin, *Dairy Queens: The Politics of Pastoral Architecture from Catherine De' Medici to Marie-Antoinette* (Cambridge, Mass. & London, 2011).
- 3 The best general account remains Chapter XI on dairies in J. M. Robinson, *Georgian Model Farms: A Study of Decorative and Model Farm Buildings in the Age of Improvement, 1700–1846* (Oxford, 1983). R. Hewlings, 'The Dairy at Kenwood', *English Heritage Historical Review*, 8 (2013) gives a detailed account of Lady Mansfield's dairy, attributed to George Saunders and built c.1795, around the same time as Cobham Dairy.
- 4 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act II, scene 2.
- 5 V. Avery & M. Calaresu, *Feast & Fast: The Art of Food in Europe, 1500–1800* (London, 2019), p. 38.

- 6 Richard. Bradley, *The Country Housewife, and Lady's Director, for Every Month of the Year. ... Containing the Whole Art of Cookery, ...* (London & York, 1762), pp. 35–45.
- 7 A. Laurence, *Women in England, 1500–1760: A Social History* (London, 1995) p. 118.
- 8 A. Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1982), p. 53
- 9 King William's *The Royal Diary*, 3rd ed. (London, 1705), pp. 3–4, quoted in M. Martin, 'Interiors and Interiority in the Ornamental Dairy Tradition', *Eighteenth Century Fiction*, 20/3 (2008). This article is an important analysis of dairies, arguing that 'Dairies offer a unique and compelling means for observing how eighteenth-century women responded to normative views of female identity and behaviour'.
- 10 Martin, 'Interiors and Interiority', *Eighteenth Century Fiction* 20/3 (2008), p. 258.
- 11 Rousseau's philosophical novel *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*, one of the most important fictional works of the eighteenth century, first published in 1761, is framed around letters between a dairymaid living at the foot of the Alps and her lover.
- 12 Martin 'Interiors and Interiority'; E. Newport, 'The Fictility of Porcelain: Making and Shaping Meaning in Lady Dorothea Banks's "Dairy Book"', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction*, 31/1 (2018); A. Leis, 'A Little Old China Mad': Lady Dorothea Banks (1758–1828) and Her Dairy at Spring Grove', *Journal for Eighteenth-century Studies*, 40/2 (2017). On the 'evils' of tea, see J. Hanway, *A Journal of Eight Days Journey from Portsmouth to Kingston Upon Thames, with Miscellaneous Thoughts, Moral and Religious, in a Series of Letters: To Which Is Added, an Essay on Tea* (London, 1756), p. 219 ff.: 'Suppose we still retain our porcelain cups, and our sipping. I will leave you with this indulgence ... Let me seriously recommend you to exert yourself, and make experiments, on the virtues and flavours of our own herbs, [and] the various uses of milk.'
- 13 Quoted by A. Kelly, *Decorative Wedgwood in Architecture and Furniture* (London, 1965), p. 119.
- 14 *Dairy Design for Lady Craven*, Victoria & Albert Museum Prints & Drawings Collection, <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O186508/dairy-design-for-lady-craven-architectural-drawing-soane-john-sir/>; and *Dairy ... for Mrs Yorke, Hamels Park, Hertfordshire, 1783*, Sir John Soane's Museum Collection Online http://collections.soane.org/drawings?ci_search_type=ARCI&mi_search_type=adv&sort=7&tn=Drawings&t=SCHEME458. It seems the two commissions were linked. See also Martin, 'Interiors and Interiority', pp. 377–83.
- 15 See J. Cornforth, 'Cobham Hall, Kent', *Country Life*, 173, nos. 4462–4 (1983); R. Bowdler, 'Cobham Hall Kent', *Country Life*, 199, no. 14 (2005).
- 16 See E. Wingfield-Stratford, *The Lords of Cobham Hall* (London, 1959).
- 17 Bowdler, 'Cobham Hall Kent', *Country Life*, 199, no. 14 (2005). The Darnley Papers are held at Medway Archives & Local Studies Centre (MALC) under U565. The 4th Earl's estate accounts were meticulously kept by the estate steward, W. Stevenson.
- 18 J.M. Robinson, *James Wyatt (1746–1813): Architect to George III* (New Haven & London, 2012), pp. 179, 328. Robinson is silent on Cobham Dairy, which was still derelict in 2012. Completed in 1786, the Darnley Mausoleum's construction was overseen by George Dance the Younger, and Wyatt's original design underwent slight modifications in the process. Before his death in 1781, the third Earl had fallen out with the Bishop of Rochester, and for reasons unclear the mausoleum was never consecrated. The Earl's remains were temporarily interred in St Mary's, Cobham, where they remain to this day. The mausoleum was restored in 2013 and is now in the care of the National Trust.
- 19 'Whether we consider its extent, its magnificence, or its comfort, there are few place which can vie with Cobham ... and none where so much has been done, both to the house and grounds under my direction, for so long a series of years.' Humphry Repton and John Claudius Loudon, *The Landscape Gardening and Landscape Architecture of ... Humphry Repton* (London, 1840), p. 418.
- 20 Quoted by Bowdler, 'Cobham Hall Kent', *Country Life*, 199, no. 14 (2005).
- 21 Repton & Loudon, *Landscape Gardening of ... Humphry Repton* p. 421.
- 22 *Ibid.*
- 23 Martin, 'Interiors and Interiority', suggests that Soane's dairy for Lady Hardwicke at Hammels in 1783 was probably as an anniversary gift from her

- husband. Ornamental dairies were often presented to wives to mark such occasions.
- 24 MALSC, U565/Agb.
- 25 Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.796. In addition to those reproduced here, the drawings include full-scale profiles for cornices, battlement and window mouldings.
- 26 Hewlings, 'Dairy at Kenwood'. The Kenwood Dairy was also a working as well as ornamental dairy.
- 27 A fine example of a surviving dairy interior is at Endsleigh (c.1814), designed by Jeffry Wyattville for Georgiana, Duchess of Bedford. Here, Pond Cottage alongside provided more substantial accommodation with stabling for six cows in a rustic byre alongside. The Endsleigh Dairy walls are still covered with glazed tiles with an ivy motif very similar to Wedgwood's Queen's Ware design; the stained glass survives in the leaded windows, and so too the original central panstand and marble shelf running round the walls. Both buildings are now in the care of the Landmark Trust.
- 28 Another example of a 'chapel dairy' is the 'Gothic dairy in the form of a chapel, Sezincote, Moreton-in-Marsh' by Daniell Thorne, 1802: see for example the designs at RIBA, 37220 / <https://www.architecture.com/image-library/RIBApix/image-information/poster/designs-for-a-gothic-dairy-in-the-form-of-a-chapel-sezincote-moretoninmarsh/posterid/RIBA37220.html>
- 29 Robert Lugar, *The country gentleman's architect; containing a variety of designs for farm houses and farm yards* (1807), pp. 14–15.
- 30 It seems that reproduction of this sketch originates from a slide in the Cobham Hall archive.
- 31 A handful of photos form the only surviving record of these works.
- 32 Landmark's restoration reflects the physical evidence as found in the 21st century: see C. Stanford, *Cobham Dairy History Album* (Landmark Trust, 2020, <https://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/Search-and-Book/properties/Cobham-Dairy-27098/#History> [accessed 8 Mar 2020])
- 33 Robinson, *James Wyatt*, pp. 207–8.
- 34 J. Robinson, 'Samuel Wyatt, Architect' (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 1974), p. 91.
- James, however, came up with perhaps the most imaginative use of Penrhyn slate, as the 'flames' rising from the apex of the dome of the Lodge at Dodington Park, Gloucestershire (1794): Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 287.
- 35 D. Gwyn, *Welsh Slate: Archaeology and History of an Industry* (Aberystwyth, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments in Wales, 2015), p. 44; T. Hughes, 'Patent Slating', *Building Conservation Directory* (2020), pp. 75–77.
- 36 British Library, General Collection, 1651/474.
- 37 D. Evans, 'The Redoubts on Maker Heights, Cornwall', *Georgian Group Journal*, 9 (1999). Wyatt was Architect to the Ordnance. My thanks to Richard Hewlings for this reference to patent slate roofing.
- 38 Stone Roofing Association http://www.stoneroof.org.uk/historic/Historic_Roofs/Patent_slating.html [Accessed 01 Mar 2020]; Robinson (2012), p. 208. Albany was originally built by William Chambers as Melbourne House in 1771–6, and was converted to apartments by Henry Holland in 1802–3.
- 39 Other Georgian architects also experimented with external claddings on dairies. In 1799, Soane used mathematical tiles to simulate white brick in a simple dairy design for Henry Peters at Betchworth Castle in Surrey. So-called 'mathematical tiling' involved carefully hanging fired tiles with a lip along the top edge from battens over rougher brickwork, to imitate very finely jointed work: P. Dean, *Sir John Soane and the Country Estate* (Aldershot & Brookfield, 1999), p. 34; Sir John Soane's Museum, SM65/1/15 (Designs for a dairy for H. Peters, 1798–99: Plan, July 1798).
- 40 MALSC, U565; and U565/Agb (Humphry Repton, *The Red Book for Cobham, Kent*, 1790), p. 38.
- 41 This building, visible from the road and often mentioned by early travel writers, survives today. See <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/300004139-plas-penisarnant-llanllechid>.
- 42 Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 307. The project soured relations between Boulton and James Wyatt for good, after years of close collaboration.
- 43 Christopher Hussey, 'Shugborough, Staffordshire-I', *Country Life*, 25 Feb.1954; Historic England listing entry <https://>

- historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001167. Shugborough had extensive pleasure grounds and also had its ornamental dairy formed in 1803 by Samuel Wyatt's fitting out for this use of the ground floor of James 'Athenian' Stuart's pioneering Tower of the Four Winds, a two-storey octagonal tower completed in 1765.
- 44 My thanks to Ian Bristow for drawing my attention to this survival at Shugborough and for sharing his unpublished analysis of its sanded paint finish, done for Staffordshire County Council in 1995.
- 45 Soho House, Boulton Collection, Incoming Corr., Box H, no. 267.
- 46 C. Hassall, *The Dairy, Cobham Hall Kent*, Report no. B779 (February 2017), unpublished, commissioned by the Landmark Trust.
- 47 I. Bristow, unpublished reports: *Portico of Shugborough House, Staffordshire* (C.117, 1995) and *Exterior of Soho House, Handsworth, Birmingham* (C.124.A, 1993). A further building partially slate clad with a similar sanded finish analysed by Bristow is The Shire Hall in Stafford (1795–99) by John Harvey (C.61, 1995).
- 48 Richard Neve, *The City and Countrey Purchaser, and Builder's Dictionary [Electronic Resource]: Or, the Compleat Builder's Guide. ... By T. N. Philomath* (London, 1703); I. Bristow, 'Two Exterior Treatments to Imitate Stone During the Eighteenth & Early Nineteenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Association for Studies in the Conservation of Historic Buildings*, 4 (1979). Emerton took out a patent 'For coating or painting the timbers of ships or buildings' that involved sanding paint in 1737, No. 557 (*English Patents of Inventions, Specifications: 1870, 114 – 182*. H.M. Stationery Office, 1857 : <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=HO8-FZaHexIC>).
- 49 MALSC, U565/A17a, 49.
- 50 Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 134. In 1796, Charles became one of the partners of Parker Wyatt & Co making cement on the Isle of Sheppey. This was much used by Wyatt cousinage, and was used by Boulton at Soho House in 1798 – perhaps the render that failed and led to the adoption of the slate cladding.
- 51 R. Gunnis, *Dictionary of British Sculptors, 1660–1851* (London, 1964), p. 51; MALSC, U565/A19a.
- 52 Their networks, including those of the Bernasconi family, have been traced in C. Casey, *Making Magnificence : Architects, Stuccatori and the Eighteenth-Century Interior* (New Haven and London, 2017).
- 53 See the entry for Francis Bernasconi in *A Biographical Dictionary of Sculptors in Britain, 1660–1851*, online resource: http://gunnis.henrymoore.org/henrymoore/sculptor/browserecord.php?action=browse&-recid=199&from_list=true&x=0 [accessed 7 Mar 2020].
- 54 John Frew, 'Gothic in Transition', *Burlington Magazine*, 126, No. 980 (Nov. 1984).
- 55 Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 226.
- 56 MALSC, U565/A19a, 48.
- 57 Bowdler, *Country Life*, 199, no. 14 (2005); Stanford, <https://www.landmarktrust.org.uk/Search-and-Book/properties/Cobham-Dairy-27098/#History>.
- 58 MALSC, U565/17a, 66.
- 59 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2095/10.1093/ref:odnb/8596> [Accessed 27 March 2020]. According to Robinson, *James Wyatt*, p. 178, the coloured glass in the Darnley Mausoleum at Cobham was 'no doubt' by Eginton, who also pioneered so-called 'mechanical painting' to replicate works of art onto canvas and glass.
- 60 A later estate surveyor, W. Ansell, wrote a condition survey of the Dairy dated 10 March 1879, and this recorded that 'the present floor is formed with ordinary paving bricks, and it is almost impossible to form a floor perfectly even with bricks, which is necessary in a dairy, the present floor requires taking up, and a bed of concrete formed, and repared [*sic*] with white paving tiles about 1ft each tile': MALSC U565/A391. The Dairy was in a state of dereliction at this point and a late nineteenth-century refurbishment seems likely.
- 61 Ansell also refers to the pan stand: 'The top of the pan stand is formed with stone, and is very rough and uneven for that purpose, a slate top would be more suitable as it is easily and quickly cleaned, and would not absorb the moisture:' *Ibid*.
- 62 In the Endsleigh Dairy, the central table is similarly set above a drain, and the perimeter wall shelves are functional shallow slate sinks rather than a marble shelf.

- 63 Endsleigh Dairy is well provided for by the natural streams that flow through the renowned Picturesque landscape there, also designed by Repton.
- 64 MALSC, U565/417a/49 and U565.A15a/45.
- 65 MALSC, U565/A17a, 45.
- 66 MALSC, U565/A17a, 69. In 1879, W.A. Ansell, the estate surveyor, reported that the floor was made of 'ordinary paving bricks', so it is unclear whether the stone was laid. As found in the 1980s, the floor was decoratively laid in Portland lozenges banded with a red sandstone: MALSC, U565/A391.
- 67 Samuel Wyatt to Matthew Boulton, 17 June 1798, quoted in Robinson, 'Samuel Wyatt, Architect' (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, p. 120–1.
- 68 Robinson, 'Samuel Wyatt', p. 275.
- 69 N. Temple (ed.), *George Repton's Pavilion Notebook: A Catalogue Raisonné*. (Aldershot, 1993), pp. 16–17.
- 70 *Ibid*, pp. 230–232 (PNB74, floorplan; PNB75, elevation; PNB76, section). The notebook is preserved in the Royal Pavilion Art Gallery and Museum, Brighton.
- 71 See for example Bradley, *Country Housewife, and Lady's Director*, for a detailed account of eighteenth-century dairying practice.
- 72 MALSC, U565/A17a, 25.
- 73 MALSC, U565/A17a, 48.
- 74 MALSC, U565/A17a, 49.
- 75 *The Country Home*, May 1911, p. 65.
- 76 This dearth of evidence makes the occasional survival like Lady Dorothea Banks's 'Dairy Book' especially valuable but not necessarily representative of all ornamental dairy use. See A. Leis, 'Little Old China Mad', *Journal for Eighteenth-century Studies* 40/2 (2017); also E. Newport, 'The Fictility of Porcelain: Making and Shaping Meaning in Lady Dorothea Banks's "Dairy Book"', *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 31/1 (2018).
- 77 MALSC, U565/A15a, 59.
- 78 MALSC, U565/A17a, 59.
- 79 MALSC, U565/A19a, 60, 59.
- 80 MALSC, U565 A18b/58.
- 81 Bringing in extra labour could also cause tensions if trespassing on another's specialism. In 1779, Mrs Shackleton: 'sent for Nancy Crooke to make the Butter. She denied me, said she was Busy & did not like to do it as the Maid might take it amiss – at last she came, very saucy and Sulky': A. Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter: Women's Lives in Georgian England* (New Haven & London, 1998), pp. 138–9.
- 82 Bowdler, *Country Life*, 199, no. 14 (2005), p. 86.
- 83 Vickery, *The Gentleman's Daughter*, p. 152, n.16.
- 84 For pictures of Cobham Dairy after restoration, see www.landmarktrust.org.uk.