



THE NATIONAL TRUST

NOSTELL PRIORY

Exhibition Guide

27 March - 31 October 2004

MAIDS & MISTRESSES



Celebrating 300 years of Women
and the Yorkshire Country House

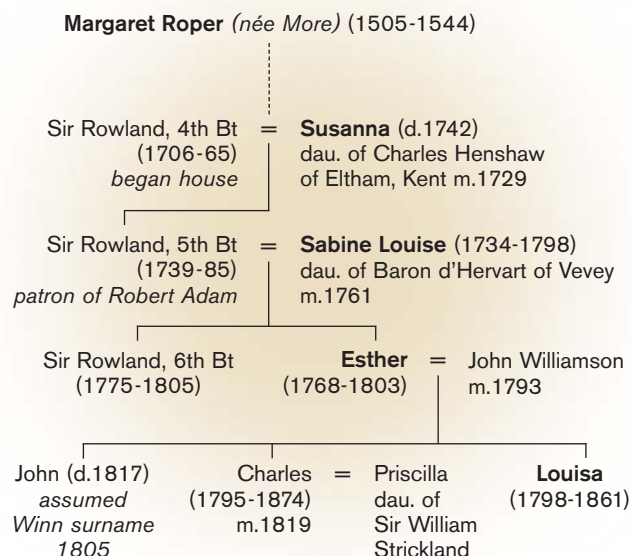
Country houses have traditionally been explained through the lives of their male owners. However, colourful stories of remarkable women are woven throughout their histories, including that of Nostell Priory. From Sabine, Lady Winn, the Swiss wife of the 5th Baronet, who lived as a foreigner in rural Yorkshire; to her daughter, Esther, who eloped to Manchester with a baker from Nostell; to young Irene Parnell, who worked as a scullery maid in the 1930s, many women have left their mark on the house. This tour and exhibition will reveal some of these women's stories through their possessions and papers and the rooms where they lived and worked.

Ladies of the Winn family,
c.1880



BY COURTESY OF THE LORD ST OSWALD

The Winn Family Tree



The Lower Hall

1 Portrait of Sir Thomas More and his Family

by Rowland Lockey, after Hans Holbein, 1592.

This famous painting, over 400 years old, arrived at Nostell in the mid 18th century. It came as an heirloom of Susannah, Lady Winn, wife of the 4th Baronet, who was a descendant of Sir Thomas More's eldest



NTPL/ANDREAS VON EINSIEDEL

daughter, Margaret Roper (third from right in the portrait). It shows Sir Thomas More and his extended family, in a room of their London house, surrounded by their pets, musical instruments and, above all, their books. Most strikingly, it represents More's household as a centre of learning, in which the women participated equally with the men.

*'Then blush ye Men if you neglect to trace
Those heights of learning which the Females Grace.'*

EPIGRAM BY JOHN LELAND, IN PRAISE OF MARGARET ROPER AND HER SISTERS, EARLY 16TH CENTURY.

Sir Thomas More was a leading intellectual at the court of King Henry VIII, who believed in the improving power

of an academic education. Applying his ideals, he set up a small school for his children within his own home. However, he was pioneering in extending the same broad education to his daughters, as to his only son. His eldest daughter, Margaret Roper, shown here holding an open Latin book, was by far the best student of the family. Her translation from Latin into English of a treatise by her father's friend, Erasmus, was published in 1524: she was only the third Englishwoman in history to see her work in print.

You will see a twentieth century representation of Margaret, incised in marble, on the table to the left of this painting (2). It was executed by another talented woman, Mary Gillick in 1934. Gillick worked for the Royal Mint and is best known for designing the head of Elizabeth II used on the 1950s coinage.

3 Portrait of Jeanne Esther, Baronne d'Hervart c.1760.

Jeanne Esther d'Hervart (c.1707-1779) was the mother of Sabine, Lady Winn, the wife of Sir Rowland Winn, 5th Baronet. She settled with her husband, Jacques-Philippe d'Hervart, in the town of Vevey in Switzerland in 1734. Sabine was their only surviving child.

Understandably, it was with great sadness that Jeanne Esther saw her only daughter depart for England in 1762, following her marriage to young Rowland Winn. As it happened, she never saw Sabine again or ever met her grandchildren, Rowland and Esther. The uncertainties of travel in the 18th century made the journey from Switzerland to England too daunting a hurdle. In addition, after the birth of her son in 1775, Sabine lost the will to travel, even to London. When her mother was dying in 1779, she refused to leave her children and made herself ill at the thought of the sea voyage to Switzerland, fearful of being kidnapped by French privateers.



NATIONAL TRUST/G. SWEETMAN

The South Hall

4 **The Apothecary's Counter** supplied by Thomas Chippendale to Sir Rowland Winn, 5th Baronet and his wife, Sabine, in May 1771, at a cost of £19.0.0.



NATIONAL TRUST/ROBERT THRIFT

This mahogany counter was part of the furnishings for a 'Drug Room' or 'Apothecary's Shop', sited in the south-west corner of the stable block. The creation of this room, for the storage and mixing of medicines, was probably inspired by Sabine, Lady Winn, who had a particular interest in herbal remedies.

5 **Oak and Beech Spinning Wheel** 17th or 18th century.

This spinning wheel was acquired as a curiosity by Charles, Sabine's grandson, in the 19th century and probably never used by ladies of the Winn family. However, the occupation of spinning was closely associated with women. In fact, the Artificier's Act of 1563 required that all single English women between the ages of twelve and forty, without other means of support, had to make their living through spinning thread. So common was this employment that the word 'spinster' is still sometimes used to describe an unmarried woman.

South Staircase

6 - 11 **Swiss portraits** early 18th century.

These portraits, which Sabine inherited upon the death of her mother in 1779, represent members of her extended family. Unfortunately, only two of the sitters are identified.

(7-11) were painted by the Swiss society portrait artist, Johann Rudolph Huber the Younger (1668-1748), who practised in Bern, the home town of Jeanne Esther, Baronne d'Hervart.

6 **Portrait of David Weiss** aged 68, Swiss School, 1700.

David Weiss was Sabine's great uncle on her mother's side. He was a professor of theology, known in the Winn family as 'The Swiss Reformer', and is shown here holding a bible to indicate his profession.

7 Portrait said to be of Jacques-Philippe d'Hervart, Baron de St Legier by Johann Rudolph Huber the Younger (1706-1765).

Jacques-Philippe d'Hervart, father of Sabine, came from an eminent Huguenot (French Protestant) banking family. His grandfather, Barthélemy d'Hervart served as Comptroller-General of France (the equivalent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer) under King Louis XIV. Jacques-Phillipe's father fled France in 1685, following the 'Revocation of the Edict of Nantes', which outlawed the French Protestant faith. He eventually settled with his family in Switzerland, where Sabine was born in 1734.

The Top Hall

12 Figured walnut concert piano by Erard of London, 1865, possibly belonging to Mabel (née Forbes), wife of the 2nd Baron St Oswald (Sabine's great-great-grandson).

Pianofortes (the name meaning 'soft' and 'loud' in Italian) became the most popular of musical instruments in the late 18th century, as their subtlety and variation of tone suited the expressive music of the Romantic period. This piano is one of a succession at Nostell acquired for ladies of the Winn family: the earliest arrived in the 1780s and was for Esther, daughter of Sabine and the 5th Baronet.

The Breakfast Room

Created as the Breakfast Room, this was also used as a 'morning room' or informal sitting room by the ladies of the house in the 18th century. The 4th Baronet's unmarried sister, Ann, worked on her account books, on an 'escritoire', or bureau desk, and his granddaughter, Esther, practised on her piano.

13 Silver tea kettle, stand, spirit lamp, tray and tea pot engraved with the Winn eagle crest and coat-of-arms, supplied by three leading English silversmiths to Sir Rowland Winn, 4th Baronet, in the mid-18th century.

In the 18th century, the drinking of tea was particularly associated with gatherings of women, usually in the drawing room after dinner, whilst the gentlemen were drinking port in the dining room. It was prepared by the lady of the house herself, who looked after the leaves in specially designed 'caddies' or 'chests' (nine of which are listed in a Nostell inventory of 1806), boiled the water using a kettle and spirit lamp and brewed the tea in a teapot to her own taste.

In the same period, tea was also extremely expensive: it was imported exclusively from China and taxed heavily by the government at a rate of 5s per pound,

so that it cost up to 18s a pound, almost as much as a gallon of French brandy. Sabine, Lady Winn, often commissioned her husband, the 5th Baronet, to buy tea on his business trips to London. He managed to avoid the excessive duties by purchasing from an unofficial dealer, who sold him '12 pounds

of green tea at 9s/3d a pound, which is as good as that for which one gives 18s the pound in the shops'.

The present English tradition of 'afternoon tea', illustrated in this room setting, developed in the 19th century, as the fashionable dinner hour moved from early afternoon to evening. By the 1840s, when dinner was being served at 7.30 or 8.00pm, a light meal of tea and cakes was introduced, especially for ladies, to bridge the gap from lunch.

The Crimson Room

14 Mahogany serpentine clothes press supplied by Thomas Chippendale for Sabine, Lady Winn's apartment in 1767, at a cost of £37.0.0.

In the 18th century, clothes were usually stored flat, in an object called a 'clothes press'. The top half of this clothes press is fitted with shallow sliding shelves, lined with the original marble paper, for Sabine's dresses and mantles. The bottom half has deep drawers, for her linen undergarments.

Hanging space in 'wardrobes' was only introduced in the 1790s, when ladies started to hang their clothes from pegs, using a loop sewn into the back of the garment. The modern coat-hanger system was virtually unknown until the 1880s.



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NITPL/JONATHAN GIBSON

The State Dressing Room

15 Lady's Dressing Table supplied by Thomas Chippendale to Sir Rowland Winn, 5th Baronet, and his wife, Sabine, in April 1771, at a cost of £7.7s.



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This lady's dressing table was supplied for its present location, in the principal guest bedroom. It was to be placed 'in ye middle window', presumably to provide a good working light. The top of the table opens out to provide extra work space, while the interior is fitted with a rising mirror and compartments of various sizes, to hold all the brushes, combs, tonics, oils, essences, powders and cosmetics needed by a lady to prepare her face, teeth and hair in the morning.

Only two glass bottles survive of the original fittings of the dressing table. However, Sabine's accounts refer to 'toilette brushes of white horsehair', 'Gilt toilet Bottles with Gold Caps', 'small neat boxes that lock and hold tincture, tooth powder, tooth brushes and every apparatus for the teeth', 'a fine ivory Patch Box... with an Enamel Painting of Artimeza in a Gold Engrav'd frame' and 'a powder puff'.

The State Dining Room

16 A pair of console tables attributed to Gillow & Co. The bases made from gonzalo alves (a brazilian hardwood), the tops from marble.



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These tables were commissioned by Charles Winn in the 1820s, with the encouragement of his sister, Louisa. The tops are made using specimen marbles, brought back from his Grand Tour in Italy.

'I hope that if you go into Italy you will collect some curiosities, particularly from Herculaneum. Have you any intention of making a collection of marble and lavas? If you meet with any good Italian works, I hope you will buy some...'

LETTER FROM LOUISA WINN, BATH TO HER BROTHER, JOHN, FRANCE, 1816.

John, Charles and Louisa were the children of Esther Williamson, daughter of Sabine. Orphaned by the death of their mother in 1803, they became particularly close. Though separated by school, university and travel, they corresponded regularly and shared each other's interests. Louisa's letters to her brothers on the Grand Tour in France and Italy are particularly poignant, as she would clearly have loved to have been there with them. Closeted at school in Bath, she wistfully reminded them to bring back books and 'curiosities', including 'a collection of lavas and marbles to make two tables for Nostell'.

The Saloon

17 Lady's writing table made of tulipwood and rosewood, supplied by Thomas Chippendale for Sabine, Lady Winn's private apartment in 1766, at a cost of £5.4s.

The front of this writing table is faced as a dummy drawer beneath a writing slide, while the through drawer, opening to the right, contains silver-capped ink bottles. The retractable screen rises to protect the lady's face from the heat of the fire as she writes her letters.



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'Here is the fourth letter that I have written to you since my arrival in this city and I assure you that the most pleasant moment for me is when I take the feather in my hand to give you a sign of life.'

LETTER FROM SIR ROWLAND WINN, LONDON TO HIS WIFE, SABINE, NOSTELL, MAY 1782.

Letter-writing was a life-line to families in the 18th century, who were regularly separated for lengthy periods, and especially to women, who often stayed at home while their husbands, brothers and sons travelled for education, business and pleasure. The Nostell archive contains hundreds of letters in French

between Sabine at Nostell and Sir Rowland in London (where he pursued lawsuits and political contacts), Lincolnshire (where he owned other estates), Bath (where he took the waters to treat his gout) and Switzerland (where he went to settle his mother-in-law's affairs, after her death in 1779). They are very affectionate, addressed to 'My dearest Bibby' (their pet name for each other) and signed with 'friendship, attachment and eternal fidelity'. Fortunately, Nostell was close to one of the major 18th century postal routes, the Great North Road (the present A1), which passes through Ferrybridge, where letters to and from Nostell were collected at the Angel Inn.

18 Single action harp finished in black lacquer with ornamentation in gilt gesso (moulded plasterwork) and applied transfer, by Barry of London, early 19th century.

Harp were particularly associated with women musicians, as their playing required graceful, feminine movements and was thought to show off the female figure to great advantage. This harp, which is decorated with female musicians beside the base of the bridge, was probably purchased by John Winn for his younger sister, Louisa, c.1814.



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'...I have not the slightest objection to your beginning the harp provided Mrs Hill [Louisa's governess] is of the same opinion, ...if you will write to Mrs Watson immediately, you will get an answer before the Harp Mistress leaves town...'

LETTER FROM JOHN WINN, LONDON TO HIS SISTER, LOUISA, BATH, 1814.

The harp was Louisa's favourite instrument. She specially requested John to acquire for her some 'real Roman harp strings', made of the finest natural gut, whilst he was on the Grand Tour in Italy in 1816.

19 Harpsichord by Jacob Kirckman, veneered in burr walnut and richly marquetryed with holly and other fruit woods, supplied to Sabine, Lady Winn, in 1767 at a cost of £91.10.0.



NATIONAL TRUST/ROBERT THRIFT

'[My guests] arrived with four very gray and fat coach horses and the skinniest of daughters. The poor girl threatens consumption furiously... [however] she is agreeable, speaks French well and plays on the harpsichord. She finds mine excellent'.

LETTER FROM SABINE, LADY WINN, NOSTELL TO SIR ROWLAND WINN, 5TH BARONET, 1776.

Harpsichords are descended from 'Virginals', 16th century key-board instruments, so-named because they were usually played by wealthy young woman for the entertainment of family and friends. This extremely handsome harpsichord, made by one of the two most celebrated harpsichord makers in 18th century England, was purchased by Sir Rowland Winn for his wife, Sabine, and is recorded in her private sitting room (the present Small Dining Room) in 1818.

The Tapestry Room

20 Ebony, marble and marquetry cabinet-on-stand attributed to Pierre Gole, the stand supported on 6 moorish figures. French, late 17th Century and later.

This exceptionally fine cabinet attributed to one of the greatest cabinet makers of the 17th century, is an heirloom of Sabine, Lady Winn.

It was transported to Nostell from Switzerland in 1781, following the death of Sabine's mother. Said to represent the temple of Soloman in Jerusalem, it is fitted with 24 drawers inset with marble panels imitating landscapes and buildings.



NTPL/ANDREW VON EINSIEDEL

The Library

21 Sir Rowland Winn, 5th Baronet, and his wife, Sabine, in the Library at Nostell by Hugh Douglas Hamilton, 1767.

'Her appearance and manner...was singularly captivating, for she was very beautiful, and had a great deal of vivacity. When I first saw her, she was habited in a close vestment of pink satin, the colour not more delicate than her own fine complexion...'

DESCRIPTION OF SABINE FROM 'THE MEMOIRS OF MRS CATHERINE CAPPE', PUBLISHED 1822.

This 'conversation piece' painting shows Sir Rowland Winn, 5th Baronet and his wife, Sabine (wearing a 'vestment of pink satin') standing in an idealised version of the Library at Nostell. The bust on the pedestal, of Venus, Roman Goddess of Love and the chalk sketch of the same bust (whose features have been slightly altered to reflect Sabine's), symbolise the beauty of the 5th Baronet's wife and his love for her. You will see that two very similar 18th century plaster busts of Venus survive on top of the bookcases.



NTPL/JOHN HAMMOND

22 Mahogany drawing table possibly supplied by Thomas Chippendale, to the 5th Baronet c.1770.

This drawing table has a hinged easel top, with a baize-lined flap to provide extra work surface and drawers and compartments in which to store artists' materials. It is just the kind of table that Esther Winn (1770-1803), daughter of the 5th Baronet, might have used whilst she was learning to draw in the 1770s and 80s.

'I sent a set of new colours to Miss Winn with some fine pencils...[advising her] to set about copying some of those birds of which she is provided with sketches...'

LETTER FROM JAMES BOLTON TO SIR ROWLAND WINN, 5TH BARONET, 1782.

Esther was tutored by a specialist drawing master, James Bolton of Halifax, a self-taught botanical artist and naturalist, who published several pioneering illustrated books on natural history. Esther was an

eager pupil, regularly sending 'pretty drawings' to her grandmother, the Baronne d'Hervart in Switzerland, which she framed and hung next to a portrait of her granddaughter, in her 'Cabinet' at her home in Vevey. The watercolour drawing on the table was painted by one of Esther's Strickland cousins, possibly either Charlotte or Juliana, both of whom developed into accomplished botanical illustrators.

The Billiard Room

Books

'...You were so kind as to say that you would bring me some Italian books, if I sent you a list of any I knew, I have accordingly sent you a long list, but beg you will not think me unreasonable and imposing on your generosity as I have merely sent the names of so many that you might chuse ...they are as follows, namely Petrarch's works, Ariost ...L'Inferno de Dante, Il Pastor Fido di Guarini, Bentivoglio's... and Davila's works are I believe interesting...'

LETTER FROM LOUISA WINN, BATH TO JOHN WINN, NAPLES, 1816.



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ROBERT THRIFT

A substantial proportion of the books at Nostell were either owned by or brought to the collection by female members of the family. There are seventeenth century history books belonging to Katherine and Elizabeth Roper, descendants of Margaret Roper and early Swiss books, belonging to the family of Sabine, Lady Winn, many of which are probably unique outside Switzerland. Also, eighteenth century herbals and medical dictionaries, purchased by Sabine herself, and Italian works, acquired by John Winn on the Grand Tour, for his sister Louisa. A selection of these books are displayed in the Museum Room on the ground floor.

23 A set of 10 mahogany arm chairs supplied by Thomas Chippendale for Sabine, Lady Winn's Blue Dressing Room (the present Small Dining Room) in 1767, at a cost of £32.10s.

These armchairs, designed by Chippendale in the fashionable French style, were originally 'stuff'd and cover'd in blue Morine & brass nail'd' to match the decoration of Lady Winn's dressing room. They were moved into the Billiard Room in the 19th century, when they were recovered in more masculine red leather.



NATIONAL TRUST/
ROBERT THRIFT

The North Landing

24 Breakfront library bookcase

with Gothic tracery in the doors, originally one of four, supplied by Thomas Chippendale for Sir Rowland Winn, 5th Baronet's London house, c.1770.



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It has been suggested that this bookcase, and its three missing partners, were adapted to serve as bird cages in the late 18th century, listed as four 'Large Mahogany Aviaries of Gothic Design with brass Wire fronts, drawers, Slides and partitions in 3 parts' in an inventory of 1806. It is certainly true that Sabine kept numerous birds and animals at Nostell for her children to play with, some in the house, and some in the 'Menagerie House' in the garden.

'Madame Le Picq (the governess) and my little girl are taking particular care of the birds in your room who are all full of health and appetite.

Not one of them has died. The Myna bird eats like a wolf and has a liberty of stomach that is not gracious to see. Peggy and the other birds are more decent. The very small ones are not so bald. My two are most happy with me. I don't let them want for anything'.

LETTER FROM SABINE, LADY WINN TO HER HUSBAND, THE 5TH BARONET, JULY 1776.

Sabine's collection included a troublesome Myna bird (which regurgitated its food), ducks, 'male and female boobies [sea-birds] of Siberia', a monkey (for which Chippendale supplied a 'mahogany house' in 1767), 'big tree frogs', goldfish and a miniature horse and 'cow buffalo', all bought by Sir Rowland on his trips to London. In the next generation, Sabine's granddaughter, Louisa, kept her own little 'menagere', comprising a squirrel, a robin and various other small birds, which she took away with her to boarding school in Bath and referred to as her 'family'. According to her brother, John, she was fast becoming 'a formidable rival to Mr Polito of Exeter Change', the owner of a famous early 19th century travelling zoo.

The Drawing Room

This room was created as Sabine's bedchamber in the 1760s, which she shared with her husband, the 5th Baronet. Together with the adjacent Blue Dressing Room (the present Small Dining Room), it comprised

her private apartment. Both rooms have matching pier glasses by Thomas Chippendale.

The walls of the bedroom were hung with 'India paper' (hand-painted Chinese wall paper) and the four poster bed and windows with printed cotton drapes. It remained as the principal family bedroom until the 1980s, when it was redecorated by Denise, Lady St Oswald, wife of the 5th Baron, as a drawing room.

25 Still life with fruit and flowers on a marble ledge James Hewlett (flourished 1799-1836).

Oil on panel.

26 - 28 Still lifes with fruit and flowers James Hewlett (flourished 1799-1836). Watercolour on paper.

These 4 paintings, (25-28), were bequeathed to Charles Winn's eldest daughter, Emma, by her former governess, Miss Hill, who went on to marry the artist, James Hewlett.

'...I do not think that I am getting on well with any of my masters at present except Mr Hewlett and I succeed tolerably well with him at least he appears very well pleased with me...'

LETTER FROM LOUISA WINN, BATH, TO HER BROTHER, JOHN, NAPLES, 1817.

Miss Hill originally served as governess to Charles' sister, Louisa, in the 1810s, during which time she founded a small school for young ladies in Bath. It was here that she first met Hewlett, a specialist flower painter, who visited the school to tutor the girls in art and botany.



NATIONAL TRUST/ROBERT THRIFT

29 A spray of flowers by an amateur early 19th century artist possibly Louisa Winn. Watercolour on paper.

30 The Artist hesitating between the Arts of Music and Painting by Angelica Kauffman (1740-1807). After 1781. Acquired by the 2nd Baron St Oswald in 1908, from the collection of Mrs Strickland at Cokethorpe.

Angelica Kauffman was one of the most significant artists of the 18th century, one of the only two founding female members of the Royal Academy of Art and the last woman to be admitted to the Academy until 1922. The daughter of a minor Swiss painter, she settled in London in 1766, where she practised as an artist for

the next 15 years. In 1781, she married the Italian artist, Antonio Zucchi, who worked with Robert Adam at Nostell Priory, and moved with him to Rome.

'I was greatly pleased to learn...that the few prints presented to Lady Winn meet with so kind a reception. Angelica, who painted the originals, is not less sensible of the honour confer'd upon her, and joins me in presenting her best respects to Sir Rowland and Lady Winn'.

LETTER FROM ANTONIO ZUCCHI TO SIR ROWLAND WINN, 5TH BARONET, 16TH JUNE 1781.

This famous self-portrait represents Angelica's real-life decision to pursue a career in painting, which was traditionally a male-dominated field, rather than in opera singing, as her friends advised. In the painting, the figure of Music, sitting at the base of the column, tempts Angelica to stay with her in the flat pastures. However, the figure of Painting urges her to follow her dreams, though she knows the journey will be much more difficult: she points to the far distant Temple of Fame, just visible across ranges of rocky mountains. By 1781, Angelica's artistic endeavours had already been rewarded with fame and recognition, exceptional for a female artist in the 18th century.



NTPL/JOHN HAMMOND

The Little Dining Room

This room was created as Sabine's Blue Dressing Room, by Robert Adam in the 1760s. It served as her private sitting room, where she entertained close friends and morning visitors. The term 'dressing room' looks back to the late 17th and early 18th centuries, when it was customary to receive visitors during the lengthy morning toilette. By the late 18th century, 'dressing' was a more private activity: in 1776, Sabine commissioned Robert Adam to create smaller 'Dressing' and 'Powdering' rooms in the new north east wing.

The Blue Dressing Room was furnished with ten mahogany arm chairs (now in the Billiard Room), covered with blue morine (a watered woollen fabric) and a mahogany bureau bookcase. Its walls were decorated with 'verditure' (blue/green) paper and densely hung with 41 paintings, whose gilt frames were specially

designed by Thomas Chippendale. The paintings in the ceiling by Antonio Zucchi, which survive today, represent the feminine theme of love, with the central panel showing Cupid and Venus, Roman God and Goddess of Love.

31 - 36 Angelica & Medoro, set of six paintings by Antonio Zucchi (1726-1795), c.1772.

These paintings were intended for their present location, over the doors in Lady Winn's 'Blue Dressing Room' and their frames are six of the 41 designed by Thomas Chippendale.

They represent the story of the Italian lovers, Angelica and Medoro & Medoro's rival Orlando or 'Rowland', in Ariosto's poem 'Orlando Furioso'. The subject matter was selected by the artist, Zucchi, endeavouring '...to

chuse objects agreeable to her Ladyship's taste', possibly in compliment to Sir Rowland love for Sabine.



NTPL/JOHN HAMMOND

The Museum Room

37 Baby House early 18th century.

'...in a Closet upstairs is a Remarkable Curiosity in its Way. Viz a Compleat Babee House, divided into 3 rooms on a floor each of which thoroughly furnish'd. Tis said ye whole cost £300...'

EXTRACT FROM THE DIARY OF LADY WENTWORTH, WHO VISITED NOSTELL PRIORY IN 1753.

This dolls' house or 'Baby House' was commissioned by Susannah, Lady Winn, and her sister, Miss Henshaw about 1740, at the same time as the 4th Baronet was building the present Nostell Priory. The two projects had much in common, as the fittings and furnishings of the Baby House were executed by professional craftsmen, with the same skill, accuracy and attention to detail as those in the main house.



NTPL/ANDREAS VON EISEDEL

The Baby House was conceived as an expensive 'curiosity' for adults, rather than a toy for children. It derives from a tradition of model making, which originated in Holland in the 16th century. Here, the wives of successful merchants created perfect miniature interiors, enclosed within beautifully crafted cabinets, as symbols of their wealth and social status. Though created for grown-ups, Susannah's Baby House proved irresistible to children. In the 19th century, Charles Winn's daughters, Annie and Emma were allowed to play with it on special occasions, and the family doctor, Mr Wright recalled with pleasure that his daughters, Phoebe and Lucy were invited to '*spend a happy afternoon over the big Doll's House...on the occasion of Emma's birthday*'. A portrait of Annie and Emma (38) hangs next to the Baby House in the Museum Room. In the 1980s, Denise, the Dowager Lady St Oswald, used some of the patterns in the Baby House as inspiration for redecorating the private family rooms.

39 Set of engravings painted & enriched with silks given to Sabine Winn in the 1760s.

These French engravings were given to Sabine by her husband, Mr Rowland Winn, during the early years of their marriage. They represent scenes from bawdy poetic tales by the 17th century French author, Jean de la Fontaine, describing marital misdemeanours and love affairs. Published as 'Contes et Nouvelles en vers' (Tales and News in verse), the last edition was banned by the French authorities as being too risqué.



The engravings are watercolour painted and enriched with coloured silks and embroideries, probably by Sabine. The costumes of the characters have been cut out, leaving only fine black outlines and filled with coloured silks, glued to the back of the print. Details, such as buttoning, are hand embroidered. This unusual work may have been inspired by contemporary fashion plates, which were sometimes embellished with samples of fabric, to bring the clothes to life.

WITH MANY THANKS TO PROFESSOR CHRISTOPHER TODD, FOR HIS WORK ON THE PAPERS OF SABINE, LADY WINN.

At Nostell, there are very few objects within the collection relating to female servants. However, some of their stories are told in the exhibition panels in the Servants' Hall, North Hall and Kitchen. Particularly poignant are the memories of Irene Parnell (pictured) who worked as a scullery maid at Nostell in the 1930s, as a young girl of fourteen.



BY COURTESY OF IRENE PARNELL

MAIDS & MISTRESSES

A series of interlinked exhibitions in seven of Yorkshire's greatest country houses during 2004, highlighting the lives and achievements of their female occupants over the last 300 years.

Participating Houses

1 Brodsworth Hall & Gardens

Brodsworth Hall, Doncaster DN5 7XJ
Tel 01302 722598

2 Burton Constable Hall

Burton Constable, Skirlaugh
Nr. Hull, East Yorks HU11 4LN
Tel 01964 562400

3 Castle Howard

Castle Howard, York YO60 7DA
Tel 01653 648333

4 Harewood House

Harewood House, Harewood, Leeds LS17 9LQ
Tel 0113 218 1010

5 Lotherton Hall

Lotherton Lane, Aberford, Leeds LS25 3EB
Tel 0113 281 3259

6 Nostell Priory

Doncaster Road, Nostell, Wakefield
West Yorkshire WF4 1QE
Tel 01924 863892

7 Temple Newsam

Temple Newsam Road, Leeds LS15 0AE
Tel 0113 264 7321



Pioneered through **The Yorkshire Country House Partnership**, a collaborative research venture between the country houses of Yorkshire and the University of York, and generously supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, through the 'Your Heritage' scheme.