HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
The manor of Kirby was acquired by Sir Humphrey Stafford in 1541. There had been a medieval village there but this had already been partially cleared and the land enclosed for sheep-rearing by Stafford's time, with only a few dwellings and the church remaining.

Stafford employed a local mason, Thomas Thorpe of Kingscliffe, to design and build him a magnificent new house, incorporating the latest architectural ideas from the Continent. Work began in 1570, but Stafford died in 1575. The new owner, Sir Christopher Hatton, continued to build, and by 1590 the Hall was completed and work on the garden had started. The few remaining houses of Kirby village were finally cleared and the village church was demolished.

Sir Christopher became Lord Chancellor in 1587. He was already building an even grander house at Holdenby, intending it to be fine enough to entertain the Queen. Chancellor Hatton's godson, the second Christopher Hatton, inherited Kirby Hall in 1597, along with his godfather's many debts. He had to sell Holdenby, but work continued at Kirby, with the creation of a fine new garden. King James I was entertained at Kirby in 1612, 1616 and 1619.

Christopher Hatton III inherited in 1619, and an inventory for that date has been found in the Hatton archives. The third Sir Christopher employed Nicholas Stone, the King's Master Mason, who was associated with Inigo Jones, to conduct major alterations in 1638-40. During the Civil Wars (1642 - 1651), Christopher Hatton III supported the unsuccessful Royalist cause, and from 1648 to 1656 he lived in exile in France, leaving his family to manage as best they could.

After his return he spent three inauspicious years as Governor of Guernsey, returning to London in 1665. There he ran up more debts, neglecting Kirby and his impoverished family, until he died in 1670. His son, Christopher Hatton IV, succeeded him as Governor of Guernsey, and until 1680 he, too, was absent from Kirby. Letters from his wife, Frances, left in charge at home, tell of her problems with money, building alterations and staff.

On his return Christopher Hatton IV's main interest was the garden which he remodelled and extended. This was a time of voyage and discovery and new species of plants were acquired from all over the world.

Sadly, Kirby Hall's golden age did not last much beyond Hatton IV's death in 1706. The family fell into financial difficulties again, and in 1810 the house was described as uninhabited. It gradually deteriorat-
ed, until it was taken into care by the Office of Works in 1930. It is now managed by English Heritage. Recent archaeological excavations have revealed new evidence about the original layout of the gardens and lost buildings. Based on this, a garden restoration programme has begun, and there is a related exhibition inside the house.

DESCRIPTION

Kirby Hall was designed to make a grand statement about its owners. From a distance it gives an overall impression of symmetry and order, with matching windows, archways, chimneys, balustrades, gables and parapets. In the Great Garden, with its elaborate cutwork designs, there were originally classical statues and topiary, and a ‘wilderness’ of many varieties of trees stretched south beyond the stream. A canalised brook created a glittering ribbon of water, and to complete the view, avenues of trees led the eye north and east.

The North Front, where guests entered, is approached through the Forecourt. It has a central archway and entrance tower and was originally topped with a lead-covered dome. These features were added by Nicholas Stone from 1638-40 onto a much plainer facade of Thorpe's from the 1570s. Gables with pediment tops and scrolled sides, and balustrades were built, to give a unified appearance. Balconies with iron railings were added and the original windows were altered. Many of these architectural features, characteristic of Stone's work, can be seen as alterations to Thorpe's work in other parts of the building.

The Inner Courtyard was designed to impress, with giant classical pilasters (flat pillars with decorated tops, attached to the wall), which were unique at the time; patterned friezes, one with a wave design and another containing elements of the Stafford coat-of-

arms; and classical vases, once topped by heraldic beasts, above the parapet.

The South Range has massive symmetrical windows, which although typically Elizabethan, had never been seen on such a scale before.

The South Porch, the entrance to the house interior, is highly decorated with columns and scallop shells, which, except for the balcony, is the work of Thorpe.

The North Range has a fashionable loggia, or open arcade, with niches for statues. Thorpe's original

The Hall and grounds.

The Loggia from the courtyard.
design of pilasters and friezes has been interrupted by new windows, balcony and a Roman bust, Stone's work.

The East and West Ranges were built as lodgings for guests, family members or higher servants. Lower servants would have slept in attic rooms, often sharing, or just on mattresses in the rooms where they worked. The ranges consist of sets of rooms with separate external doorways. Although the floors and roofs have gone it is possible to work out where the room partitions were. The Long Gallery took up the whole upper floor of the West range. In the East Range, two rooms survive but with later alterations, and on the east side, some extra rooms were added behind the Lodgings for toilets.

The Great Hall is to the right after entering the South Porch, and the kitchens and the service wing to the left. In medieval times a household met and dined together in the Great Hall, but this was already changing when Kirby was built.

There would have been a raised wooden dais for the high table at the west end, from which the courtyard could be viewed, as the windows are lower here. At the opposite end are the doors, now blocked, leading to the food preparation areas. Originally, a wooden screen divided these doors from the Great Hall. A procession of servants carrying the food made a grand entrance with much ceremony, sometimes with musicians playing in the gallery above. The present gallery was constructed in 1660. Gradually, the Great Hall was used for formal
occasions only, with the family and their guests eating separately from the servants, in private apartments. The wooden ceiling of the Great Hall, carved with Stafford heraldry, was originally covered with blue canvas and gilding. The door opposite the entrance leads into the Privy Garden.

Leaving the Great Hall one enters the State Rooms, a typical sequence of reception and private rooms which reflect the separation of the lord's family and high status guests from the rest of the household.

The Anteroom and Parlour were originally divided up differently: in the west wall are traces of a fireplace, and the middle window was originally a door into the Great Garden.

The Great Staircase was completed by Sir Christopher Hatton. It led to the main area for entertaining, upstairs in the Great Chamber, Long Gallery and Great Withdrawing Room. Retreating upstairs (where it was also warmer) increased the sense of hierarchy.

The Long Gallery, now fallen down, stretched the whole length of the courtyard. Here the family could take daily exercise when the weather was bad.

The Great Chamber was where family meals were served. The 1619 inventory lists the Great Chamber as containing tapestries showing the story of Hercules, and some virginals (early keyboard instruments). The panelling and fireplace are not original.

The Great Withdrawing Room is reached via an anteroom from the Great Chamber. This was used as another reception room, where guests withdrew from the Great Chamber. According to the 1619 inventory, the Great Withdrawing Room contained a bed and a billiards table.

The Best Bedchamber was more private still, and only available to the most privileged people, and was where King James slept when he visited. Leading off this is a Pallet Chamber, where a personal servant slept on a pallet or mattress.

The Private Staircase leads down to the Great Garden. It gave servants access to the State Rooms. On the ground floor is a closet (toilet) and the two large bay-windowed rooms served as additional bedchambers.

The Great Garden is entered through the doorway at the foot of the private staircase, its symmetry echoing that of the house. It was regarded as a formal area for recreation, an extension of the living space. A huge volume of earth had to be shifted by manual labour to create its level surface and terraces. Further round from the Great Garden are the great semi-circular bays windows of the south face of the house. These are rare in Elizabethan architecture, and archaeologists have found the foundations of other bays facing east and west. They gave a splendid view over the gardens.

The Service Wing is reached by continuing past the outside of the Great Hall towards the south-east of the house. This is where all the domestic buildings were, noticeable for their lack of decoration. The Buttery can be entered by stepping through the ruined walls: the floor is lower here because it is at cellar level, below the Buttery floor. Here, butts of wine and ale, and candles were stored. The doorways, now blocked, to the Great Hall and to the Musicians’ Gallery can be seen in the end wall.

The Small Hall next door, with its fireplace and low ceiling, may have been a cosier, if less grand, cold weather alternative to the Great Hall, or it may have been where staff ate. In the 1619 inventory, the Small Hall contained long tables, benches and a display cabinet. One of the other rooms must have been the Larder, for storing meat. Beyond the parlour is the Pastry, where pastries and pies were made, with a large fireplace containing the remains of two pastry ovens. A door leads into the Kitchen, which has a great fireplace containing a jack for turning the roasting spit.

The hot, noisy Kitchen, with all its cooking smells, and risk of fire, has been built as far as possible from the State Rooms. There must once have been a passage connecting the Kitchen to the Hall, to take food through quickly. A door leads down to the only complete cellar, cool and dark for storage.

There was at least one more floor over the Buttery and Small Hall. These contained modestly furnished servants’ chambers. Christopher Hatton III added the South-east staircase with a fine stucco ceiling, and ornamental niches.

The inventory of 1619 mentions more domestic buildings: a Boulting House, where flour was sifted, or boulted, through a cloth; a Bakehouse; a Dairy, where butter and cheese were made; a Scullery where utensils were kept and cleaned; a Laundry, normally built well away from the main building, with access to a drying ground; and a Brewhouse. These may account for some of the extra building remains partly visible on the south and east of the building. Other rooms mentioned in the 1619 inventory include a Schoolhouse and a Nursery, but, unusually, no chapel. No trace of these remain.

Grounds

In the far south-east corner of the grounds is an ornamental three-arched bridge. The stream, diverted and widened in the 1690s, has the remains of a stone dam and sluice to control the water level, hidden now by large trees. In the field are the slight mounds that are all that remains of the abandoned dwellings of Kirby village. The Wilderness, which once extended the length of the field over the stream south of the Great Garden, has gone, but the Mount, site of the demolished church and destroyed graveyard, remains just south of the garden. Archaeologists discovered quantities of re-buried human bones near here.
DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

Inventory

Extracts from the 1619 inventory give a good picture of what a house like Kirby was like when lived in and also of the differences between family and servants' accommodation.

Spellings and punctuation have been modernised.

In the closet (toilet): one close-stool (commode); one pewter stool pan (to fit under the hole in the seat of the stool); and one pewter chamber pot.

In the highest lodging over the Little Hall three livery bedsteads (for the use of servants); three mats; three featherbeds and bolsters; three blankets; three verdure (green) coverlids (bedcovers) one of them old and torn; one old cupboard of boards; one old table standing on two trestles; one halberd (weapon).

In the Great Withdrawing Chamber: one Turkey carpet with a white ground 3 and a half yards long and 3 yards broad; one large wainscott drawing table with a frame; one folding table of walnut, folded at both ends; one couch bedsted, gilded; one canopy of white taffeta starred with purple and gold; three white cushions of cloth of silver starred with gold; two cushions of embroidered crimson satin; one high chair and two stools of cloth of silver; one foot carpet of Turkey work 6 yards long; two long cushions suitable to the chair; one low stool of cloth of silver; one billiard table lined with green cloth; four balls, porch pin and two billiard sticks of ivory; one frame for a screen; one screen cloth of mingled coloured taffeta, red, white and yellow; two curtains of red say in the windows and three curtain rods; two great curtain rods for hangings; two window pieces of tapestry 3 and three quarters yards each; seven pieces of hangings of tapestry work; one pair of brass fireirons; one fire shovel, tongs and bellows.

Northampton Record Office Finch Hatton Papers FH1277

Letters

Excerpts from letters from Lady Frances Hatton to her husband, Sir Christopher Hatton IV, in Guernsey, between 1676 and 1678.

...Now my deare to give you an account of your Business the roomes are all plastered and on Monday the glasures [glaziers] have almost done and the chimneypiece is up in the drawing room and other one is bespoke, but not one farthing under 13 pound.

...I have been searching for that paper [ie plan?] of the raile for the stairs but I can see nothing like it, it makes me wild that I cannot find it.

British Library: Additional MS 29571,f447 and Additional MS 29571,f62

Kirby, March the 31th, 1677

My deare lord
I hope you have received all my letters this week .. I am glad that you design to come. Pray be sure to send me word wheathere you will be here by dinner or not. One of your best coach horses has been like to dye; but wee hope the danger is past. I hope he will doe well but they say I must not venter him in the coach so farr a great whill. But one of the cart horses will doe in the coach very well.

Poor little Susana is very ill about her teeth. I hope in God they will not be long before they be cut ... I thought there had been enough wine in the house but there is none left. But there is 14 bottles of Renish and all the sherie sack that was, but noe other; so now you may the better gess what you must send down .. My lord, I should be very glad you would bring some chocolate along with you. My daughter Nany is very well, and was yesterday at the Lord Brudnal's... Pray, deare, let Smith buy a Wesfaily ham and two or three neats [ox] tongues... I return you many thanks for the oysters. I can write noe more, tomorrow being sacrament day. But for God's sake, make haste down, for I am weary of my life.

(Susana was their daughter.)

Thomson, E M, Correspondence of the Finch Hatton Family, Camden Society, 23, 1897

The 1619 inventory was found among the Finch Hatton archives and has no title linking it directly to Kirby Hall. However, by a process of elimination, it is thought that it is most likely that it does refer to Kirby, and in the event of it not doing so, it still gives a very clear picture of how a mansion of this status would have appeared.

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EDUCATIONAL APPROACHES

Simple recording tasks will develop observation and practical skills and will help to familiarise pupils with the layout, style and evolution of the building. Here are some suggestions:

- before the visit, familiarise pupils with basic architectural terms, and examples of the styles of both Thorpe and Stone (see above and below). After an *I Spy* exercise on site, pupils can plot on a ground plan of Kirby Hall where the different styles have been noticed.

- choose an external facade, and provide each pupil with a sheet of paper with just the ground, floor and roof levels marked on as reference points. Allocate one section of the facade to each pupil to draw. Later their drawings can be joined together to make a complete record of that part of the building.

- choose one feature, such as a window, door, gable, and ask pupils to make make a detailed drawing, measured if possible or estimated. Squared paper can be used to give an accurate scale. Encourage your pupils to notice and record alterations, for instance where windows have been remodelled or blocked.

- provide pupils with a plan of the East or West Lodgings (from the main plan) with the internal partitions blocked out. Ask them to mark in where they think the partition walls may have been, bearing in mind the positions of fireplaces, windows, and any other clues from the standing walls, lighting and access. The inventory establishes that the ground floor rooms in the West Lodgings included "my lord's chamber and pallet chamber" and "my lady's chamber, pallet chamber, closet and bathing chamber".

- use enlarged photocopies of the elevation drawing of the West Front (see page 7) and block small areas out. Ask pupils to locate and draw in the missing parts.

How did the house work?

Kirby Hall is a building that had to work as well as impress. Before the visit, ask pupils to think about all the different activities that might take place and make a list of what is required. This could be done by dividing the house in two sections: the main house and the living quarters. The main house includes the public rooms, such as the hall and the state rooms, which are used for entertaining. The living quarters include the private rooms, such as the bedrooms and servants' quarters, which are used for daily living. The inventory establishes that some rooms in the West Lodgings included "my lord's chamber and pallet chamber" and "my lady's chamber, pallet chamber, closet and bathing chamber".

"Kirby Hall is a building that had to work as well as impress."
place in a self-contained community, such as eating, sleeping, washing and going to the lavatory, food preparation, doing the laundry, or entertaining guests. Who did what, and would they need specialised rooms? Make a list of the different rooms needed and of the different clues one might expect to indicate function, like size and height, levels of ornamentation and heating, position, and features like ovens. On site let pupils try to sort out for themselves what the rooms may have been used for. This is a good opportunity to alert pupils to the fact that some buildings are missing, like the Laundry, or the Bakehouse, and that different sorts of evidence, physical, documentary (like the inventory) and pictorial are often needed to gain a complete picture.

Interpreting the past
On site there are artist's impressions of the state rooms, based on the 1619 inventory. Pupils can create their own versions of what rooms looked like using both the inventory extracts and reference books on furnishings. At Kirby, they can measure, sketch or photograph the rooms, and in class add furniture and figures from reference books. Comparing their own pictures with the artist's impression of the Withdrawing Room can be used as an introduction to examining how interpretations of the past can differ. Their pictures may have the furniture in different places, and if they have chosen to introduce figures, these may colour how the interpretation is viewed - sad-looking servants or happy, rich aristocrats will subtly influence the viewer's feelings.

A moment in history
Choose an actual event in the history of Kirby Hall, such as preparing for James I's visit in 1619. Get pupils to research the menu for a meal and its preparation, the ceremony attendant on feasts, and the music and instruments played (a tape would be useful). Identify on site the rooms which would have been used and follow the route from the Great Hall to the Best Bedroom. Or take as a storyline the final demolition of Kirby Church, probably in the 1580s when the gardens were being remodelled. Many local people were hired as labourers, who probably originally came from Kirby village, already destroyed. There may have been resentment about this, and a reluctance to destroy their church, and horror at digging up and carting away the buried bones of their ancestors in the old churchyard. Alternatively, they may have been glad of the extra work and pay. Either way, they had no power to go against the wishes of Lord Hatton. For either event groups could explore the tasks, attitudes and roles of the different characters who might be involved. Plan a drama with episodes taking place in different parts of the site. Then improvise and record the role play, or create and photograph tableaux (get pupils to think about body language) for each stage of the story.

English
Allow pupils to respond to the atmosphere of Kirby Hall with their own writing about how they feel about the place. Firstly, get them to build up a collection of descriptive words by finding six words each for what they can see, hear, what surfaces feel like, and how the building makes them personally feel. They can use these as a framework for writing a story, poem or diary entry. Read extracts from the letters in the Documentary Sources section to pupils before the visit. Ask pupils to choose a character, such as Lord or Lady Hatton, or one of their children; a recipient, perhaps Sir Charles, Lord Hatton's brother who lived in London, and write their own letter. Use the site visit to collect descriptions of the rooms and buildings which they can incorporate into the letter along with reference to an event such as Baby Susana Hatton cutting her teeth, or major alterations to the gardens in the 1680s and 1690.
Art
Pupils can look out for repeating architectural shapes: the South Porch is a good example. They can make detailed sketches, and back in class cut potato or lino prints from their drawings and use them to create their own architectural facades. Alternatively they can compile a catalogue of architectural details: it was from just such a catalogue that Thorpe copied many of the features at Kirby, like the cherubs on the arch pilasters of the North Range.

Mathematics
Make a measured drawing of the inner ground plan of the courtyard, by pacing, using a click wheel, or making a sketch plan. This is not as easy as it looks, as the courtyard is not rectangular. Plot in the positions of doorways and arches.

Science
Pupils can carry out a materials survey at Kirby using the following checklist: name; description; natural or manufactured; where used; why used; modern or old. They can think about what materials are missing from some of the building and why, such as doors, floors, glass and plaster.

Making a Visit
Opening hours
1 April - 1 November: daily 10am - 6pm (6pm/dusk in Oct).
2 November - 31 March Sat - Sun, 10am - 4pm. Closed 1pm - 2pm in winter.

Booking procedure
By booking form from Education Bookings, English Heritage, Hazlerigg House, 33 Marefair, Northampton NN1 1SR.
Tel: 01604 730325.
Educational visits are free if booked at least fourteen days in advance. Maximum numbers: 100, with an adult to pupil ratio of 1:15. A preparatory visit is advisable, and a free entry permit will be sent when the booking is confirmed.

How to get there
Kirby Hall lies off the A43, north of the A427 Market Harborough to Peterborough Road, 3 miles west of Deene. It is signposted on the A43 and there is another sign above the access drive.

Facilities
Parking: on site.
Access for disabled visitors: on the ground floor only.
Toilets: on site with wheelchair access.
Shop: small groups (max 10) please
Picnics: on site.

Bibliography and Resources

Video: The Past Replayed, English Heritage, 1988, 38 mins. Features a living history project with special schools, set in 1590 at Kirby. All English Heritage resources are available from: English Heritage, PO Box 229, Northampton NN6 9RY.

Northamptonshire Heritage Education Service
By permission of English Heritage, Northamptonshire Heritage Education Service offers conducted field work for school groups, taking in the deserted medieval earthworks of Kirby village, and developing skills of field recording, observation, mapwork and artefact handling. This is not a free service. For prices and booking details contact: The Education Officer, Northamptonshire Heritage, PO Box 287, 27 Guildhall Road, Northampton NN1 1BD Tel: 01604 237244.

Northamptonshire Record Office
Holds much material relating to Kirby Hall, including the 1619 inventory. Individual teachers welcome to visit anytime, and group visits can be arranged with the Archivists. Ring 01604 762129 for information on education service and opening times or write to The Archivist, NRO, Wootton Hall Park, Northampton. NN4 8BQ