



Wendy Dallas Andrews
PhD Candidate in Architecture
Faculty of Architecture and History of Art
Queens' College
University of Cambridge

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The Cowtan Order Books, 1824-1938: an analysis of wallpaper and decorating records and their use as historical sources



Fig. 1: Cowtan order for Mrs Massingberd, The Chancery, Lincoln, 1866, annotated, 'The green to be without arsenic.'

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Abstract

This dissertation provides the first comprehensive examination of the Cowtan Order Books at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Cowtan & Sons was an English decorating firm that manufactured and supplied wallpapers to royalty, the aristocracy and the upper and middle classes in Britain and around the world for over a century. Cowtan's twenty-four customer order books, dating from 1824 to 1938, provide an unparalleled record of how domestic, public and commercial buildings were decorated. Thousands of original samples of hand block-printed and machine-printed wallpapers and wallcoverings are pasted into the order books adjacent to customers' names, addresses and dates. The orders illustrate the wide range of patterns, materials and production techniques employed in the decoration of buildings. They also contain information about the quantities of wallpapers ordered for individual rooms which add to understanding of how they were used and who occupied them.

There is no other publicly accessible archive of the scope and scale of the Cowtan Order Books that records the changing tastes and manufacturing innovations in materials used to decorate such an extensive collection of buildings, from parsonages and palaces to country houses, hotels and the Houses of Parliament.

This thesis examines the background to its compilation and through detailed quantitative and qualitative research and analysis shows how the Cowtan Order Books can throw light on a wide range of topics in social, architectural and cultural history, providing an invaluable source for future research.

Statement of Authorship

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University of similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed 80,000 words.

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Notes

Style Guide used

MHRA Style Guide: A Handbook for Authors and Editors, ed. by Brian Richardson (London: Modern Humanities Research Association, 2013).

COB

Footnote abbreviation for ‘Cowtan Order Book’, followed by the number of the order book and the page reference.

Ibid.

Here used in the footnotes to refer to the same book or journal in the footnote immediately preceding it.

Glossary

Caffoy

Silk caffoy is a material composed of wool, linen and silk, as found in the wallhangings at Holkham Hall (chapter 7).

Compo

A mixture of glue-size, whiting, resin and linseed oil set in a cast to create moulded decoration in the nineteenth century. Compo mouldings are specified in numerous Cowtan orders.

Paperstaining

The name given to wallpaper manufacture in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Paperhanging

The name used prior to the 1850s when mechanisation led to the introduction of the name ‘wallpaper’. Paperhanging is also the verb that describes wallpaper installation.

Piece

The common name for a length of wallpaper before ‘roll’ became more widely used. Both measure approximately 22 inches (0.53 metres) wide x 36 feet (11 metres) long.

Selvedge

The term for the long edge of a piece or roll of paper. Printing blocks were narrower than the width of the paper, leaving a selvedge at each side which protected the printed area and left space for printing dots or registration marks.

INTRODUCTION

After many decades out of favour, wallpaper is experiencing a renaissance and is once again considered by designers, architects and the public to be a desirable decorative material.¹

However, the history of wallpaper has tended to be marginalised in the study of historic interiors and decorative wall surfaces, partly because it is often lost as a material, having been replaced over time. There has also long been a stigma attached to wallpaper, attributable to its origin as a material designed to imitate other, more luxurious wallcoverings such as wall-paintings, tapestry hangings, cut velvets or wood panelling. It is, however, increasingly recognised that such a view is short-sighted, for as the National Trust's *Manual of Housekeeping* explains, 'Historic wallpapers are functioning works of decorative art. A bridge between the structure of the building and its interiors, they form a backdrop that brings the visual and historical integrity of a room together.'²

Wallpaper reached the height of its popularity in the nineteenth century, when improvements in design education, new developments in machine-printing and rapid expansion of towns and cities combined to create new markets and manufacturing opportunities for wallpaper designers and manufacturers. While individual designers such as A.W.N. Pugin, William Morris and Owen Jones, and manufacturers such as Crace and Sanderson have been the subject of recent scholarly research, relatively little is known about the English wallpaper firm, Cowtan & Sons, whose order books contain thousands of samples of wallpapers and wallcoverings in a host of colours, patterns and materials.

The purpose of the research presented in this thesis is to reveal what the Cowtan Order Books can tell us about the development of English wallpaper and to explain how this invaluable and too often overlooked source can offer new insights into the decoration and occupation of buildings in the UK and overseas.

¹ For example, see articles about the revival of interest in wallpaper in *The Daily Telegraph*, 08.10.16; *House and Garden*, July 2016; *The Guardian*, 25.04.15; *Country Life*, 16.10.13.

² Mark Sandiford and Phillippa Mapes, 'Wallpaper' in *National Trust Manual of Housekeeping*, ed. by Sarah Staniforth (London: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005), p.248.

The Topic

Decorators in the nineteenth century wielded great influence on the taste and style in which their customers' houses were decorated and furnished. They often acted as the intermediary between the wallpaper manufacturer, the builder or the architect and the property owner. Customers sought their advice and in turn, decorators depended on manufacturers' trade pattern books and showrooms for guidance on the latest materials and designs. Larger firms were often both wallpaper manufacturers and decorators.

The London company Cowtan & Sons was one of the most successful and longest surviving of such firms, trading as wallpaper makers for at least sixty years and as decorators for one hundred and forty-six years, from the origin of the business in 1791 to its closure in 1938. Cowtan & Sons manufactured and supplied wallpapers to thousands of customers in Britain and around the world. The Cowtan & Sons Order Books³ held at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) provide evidence of the substantial range of materials and manufacturing techniques used in the production of wallpapers and wallcoverings. They also reveal technical and practical aspects of the decorator's trade and the skilled craftsmanship employed on a wide range of domestic, public and commercial buildings.

But the greatest significance of the Cowtan Order Books is that they offer an extraordinarily detailed illustration of how British royalty, aristocracy and the upper and middle classes, as well as the wealthy elite of American society and European royalty, decorated their residences for over a century.

The argument of this thesis is that the Cowtan Order Books are an important source of visual and documentary information about the interior decoration and occupation of Victorian and Edwardian buildings; furthermore that detailed interrogation and analysis of their contents provides historians with new and previously unrecorded data and descriptions of how, when and for whom buildings were decorated.

³ London, Victoria and Albert Museum, MS Cowtan Order Books, E.1869-1946, 96.A.1 – 24(ii).

Literature Review

Overview

Although texts on the history of English interiors often refer to wallpaper and wallcoverings in terms of their decorative function or as an expression of taste, and wallpaper is also sometimes discussed in the context of material culture or gender and spatial studies, references to Cowtan & Sons or the Cowtan Order Books are the exception in such publications. The literature devoted exclusively to English wallpaper history is small in comparison to the wealth of material on interiors. Topics addressed by wallpaper historians include developments in wallpaper design and the contributions of individual designers; technological innovations in materials and manufacturing methods; commercial and employment aspects of the trade; marketing methods and purchasing trends; wallpapers within decorative schemes in individual properties; and accounts of debates about ‘good’ or ‘bad’ taste in wallpaper patterns, colours and usage.

References to Cowtan & Sons occur more often in specialist wallpaper histories. For example, the Cowtan Order Books are cited as a valuable source by Gill Saunders in *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration* (2002)⁴ and in her essay on the China trade in wallpaper in *The Papered Wall*, edited by Lesley Hoskins (1995, revised 2010).⁵ In the same publication Christine Woods refers to the quality of Cowtan’s hand block-printed papers in her essay on late nineteenth century papers.⁶ In his survey, *Wallpaper in Ireland* (2014), David Skinner describes how Cowtan orders for Fota House, County Cork, placed between 1828 and 1837, helped to reveal the vibrant colours of the interior in the house’s heyday.⁷

In *Sanderson: the Essence of English Decoration* (2010), Mary Schoeser refers to Arthur Sanderson’s move to Berners Street in 1865 where he numbered among his clients, ‘the pre-eminent decorators, upholsterers and cabinet-makers Messrs Cowtan & Sons Ltd.’ whose premises in Oxford Street were conveniently nearby.⁸ In *Wallpaper: A History* (1982),

⁴ Gill Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration* (London: V&A Publications, 2002).

⁵ Gill Saunders, ‘The China Trade: Oriental Painted Panels’, in *The Papered Wall*, ed. by Lesley Hoskins, 2nd edn (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005), p.42 – 55 (pp 45, 55).

⁶ Christine Woods, Joanne Kosuda Warner and Bernard Jacque, ‘Proliferation: Late 19th-Century Papers, Markets and Manufacturers’, in *The Papered Wall*, ed. by Hoskins, p.150 – 183 (p.166).

⁷ David Skinner, *Wallpaper in Ireland*, (Tralee: Churchill House Press, 2014), p.128.

⁸ Mary Schoeser, *Sanderson: The Essence of English Decoration* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2010), p.17.

Francoise Teynac, Pierre Nolot and Jean-Denis Vivien note that Mawer Cowtan, like his contemporary, John Gregory Crace, complained that wallpaper designers were not held in high regard, as they were in France in the mid nineteenth century.⁹

In earlier works, Alan V. Sugden and John L. Edmondson in the *History of English Wallpaper*¹⁰ (1925) and Eric A. Entwisle in *Wallpapers of the Victorian Era*¹¹ (1964) acknowledge the significant contribution of Cowtan & Sons as both manufacturer and decorator. However, my review of the literature confirms that a study of the complete archive of the Cowtan Order Books has not previously been published.

Wallpaper in Histories of Interiors and Material Culture

Among the many sources on interiors that refer to wallpaper are the *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, edited by Joanna Banham¹²; Jeremy Musson's *English Country House Interiors*, (2011)¹³, Steven Parissien's *Interiors: The Home Since 1700* (2008)¹⁴, James Ayres, *Domestic Interiors: The British Tradition, 1500-1850* (2003),¹⁵ Clive Wainwright,¹⁶ Peter Thornton's *Authentic Décor: the Domestic Interior 1620-1920* (1984)¹⁷ and *English Interiors, 1790-1848: The Quest for Comfort*, by John Cornforth (1978).¹⁸ In *Victorian Things* (1988) Asa Briggs¹⁹ considers wallpaper in the context of nineteenth century consumerism. *The Country House: Material Culture & Consumption* (2016) edited by Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann, includes essays by Emile de Bruijn on the taste for chinoiserie²⁰

⁹ Francoise Teynac, Pierre Nolot and Jean-Denis Vivien, *Wallpaper: A History*, (London, Thames & Hudson, 1982), p.128.

¹⁰ Alan Victor Sugden and John Ludlam Edmondson, *A History of English Wallpaper, 1509-1914* (London: Batsford, 1925.), pp.135, 200.

¹¹ Eric A. Entwisle, *Wallpapers of the Victorian Era*, (Leigh-on-Sea: F. Lewis Publishers, 1964), pp 8 – 12.

¹² *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, ed. by Joanna Banham (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997).

¹³ Jeremy Musson, *English Country House Interiors*, (New York: Rizzoli, 2011).

¹⁴ Stephen Parissien, *Interiors: The Home Since 1700* (London: Laurence King, 2008).

¹⁵ James Ayres, *Domestic Interiors: The British Tradition, 1500-1850*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003).

¹⁶ Clive Wainwright, *The Romantic Interior* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1989).

¹⁷ Peter Thornton, *Authentic Décor: The Domestic Interior 1620-1920*, paperback edn (London: Cassell, 2000).

¹⁸ John Cornforth, *English Interiors, 1790-1848: The Quest for Comfort* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1978).

¹⁹ Asa Briggs, *Victorian Things* (London: Folio Society, 1996).

²⁰ Emile de Bruijn, 'Consuming East Asia: Continuity and Change in the Development of Chinoiserie' in *The Country House: Material Culture & Consumption*, ed. by Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (Swindon: Historic England, 2016), p.95.

and by Helen Clifford on ‘India’ goods,²¹ both of which refer to wallpapers. Examples of bibliographies that offer a range of perspectives on interiors are *The Interiors and Interior Decoration Bibliography* (2013) for the East India Company at Home research project²² and *The Domestic Interiors Database* (2001-2006) published by the AHRC Centre for the Study of the Domestic Interior.²³

One of the most influential writers on domestic interiors at the height of Cowtan’s commercial success was Charles Eastlake. In *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details* (1868)²⁴ he welcomed improvements in wallpaper manufacture, remarking that A.W.N. Pugin had led the way by designing excellent examples for the Houses of Parliament that had inspired other architects to create wallpapers for the houses they built. This in turn inspired wallpaper manufacturers who adopted patterns suggested by qualified and experienced artists, with the result, said Eastlake, that ‘good and well-designed papers may now be had at a very reasonable price.’²⁵

Histories of Wallpaper

The Papered Wall edited by Lesley Hoskins offers a survey of the history of wallpaper from its earliest manifestation in ink-printed small sheets in the late fifteenth century to its contemporary forms and renewed popularity in the early twenty-first century. The fifteen contributors each focus on different geographical locations and periods of wallpaper history, several of which are of particular interest to the doctoral research presented here. Joanna Banham addresses the mid-nineteenth century expansion of the wallpaper trade and the impact of improved design education led by reformers and designers such as Richard Redgrave and Owen Jones.²⁶ Christine Woods describes significant developments in British wallpaper manufacture and distribution, taste and fashion, new products and designers, and

²¹ Helen Clifford, “‘Conquests from North to South’: the Dundas Property Empire, New Wealth Constructing Status and the Role of ‘India’ Goods in the British Country House” in *The Country House: Material Culture & Consumption*, ed. by Stobart and Hann (Swindon: Historic England, 2016).p.123.

²² Kate Smith and Margot Finn, *The Interiors and Interior Decoration Bibliography* <<http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/eicah/files/2013/01/Interiors-Biblio-Final-21.08.14.pdf>> [accessed 9 December 2016]

²³ *The Domestic Interiors Database* <http://csdi.rca.ac.uk/didb/>. [accessed 20 October 2016]

²⁴ Charles Eastlake, *Hints on Household Taste in Furniture, Upholstery and Other Details*, ed. by John Gloag, (New York: Dover, 1969), p.xviii.

²⁵ Eastlake, p.117.

²⁶ Joanna Banham, ‘The English Response: Mechanisation and Design Reform’ in *The Papered Wall*, pp. 132-149.

industrial organisation.²⁷ The early twentieth-century decline in popularity of wallpaper in Britain and America, followed by the post-First World War revival of interest in Victorian wallpaper designs, new materials and artist-designed papers is charted by Mark Turner.²⁸ Gill Saunders mentions Cowtan & Sons in her chapter on the China trade in which she notes that the Cowtan Order Books from the 1830s to 1840s, ‘attest to the remarkable longevity in England of the taste for genuine Chinese papers’.²⁹ Indeed, as study of all the Cowtan Order Books reveals, demand for original Chinese papers continued well into the 1880s.

Gill Saunders’s *Wallpaper in Interior Design* (2002) observes that the physical fragility of wallpaper has often resulted in its loss as material evidence in buildings, added to which, its reputation as an imitative product has led wallpaper to be dismissed as a poor relation of the decorative arts, causing it to be omitted, or mentioned only briefly, in histories of interior design.³⁰ As well as arguing for recognition of wallpaper as an element of the decorated interior that can reveal much about social as well as design history, Saunders offers a guide to the manufacturing processes, innovations in design and materials, paperhanging techniques and changes in levels of public consumption, often citing the Cowtan Order Books.³¹ Cowtan & Sons are mentioned briefly by Brenda Greysmith in her history of the topic, *Wallpaper* (1976).³² *The Catalogue of the Victoria and Albert Museum Wallpaper Collection* by Charles Oman (1929, revised by Jean Hamilton, 1982), provides a summary description of the Cowtan Order Books (see also chapter 5: The Cowtan Order Books Described). The history of wallpaper in the mid-twentieth century is charted by Mark Pinney in ‘British Wallpapers 1945-60’, (1991), when efforts were made to revive the wallpaper manufacturing industry with the Exhibition of Historical and British Wallpapers in 1945 to encourage designers from all disciplines to consider wallpaper as a worthwhile branch of their trade.³³

These studies supersede Alan Victor Sugden and John Ludlum Edmondson’s *English Wallpapers* (1925) which chronicled the development of the English wallpaper industry from

²⁷ Christine Woods, ‘Proliferations: Late 19th-Century Papers, Markets and Manufacturers’ in *The Papered Wall*, pp.150-170.

²⁸ Mark Turner, ‘Unsteady Progress: From the Turn of the Century to the Second World War’ in Hoskins, pp.194-205.

²⁹ Gill Saunders, ‘The China Trade: Oriental Painted Panels’ in Hoskins, p.55.

³⁰ Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*, p.11.

³¹ Ibid., pp.16, 18, 32-33, 53, 61, 70, 75, 93, 115.

³² Brenda Greysmith, *Wallpaper* (London: Cassell & Collier Macmillan, 1976), pp. 75, 81, 128.

³³ Mark Pinney, ‘British Wallpapers 1945-60’, *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society, 1850-present*, 15 (1991), pp.40-44.

the earliest identified paper, the ‘Cambridge Fragment’ of 1509 to early twentieth-century innovations. Sugden and Edmondson were effusive about the practical and aesthetic qualities of wallpaper, arguing that it is, ‘the most universal, as it is the most democratic, of the applied arts’, and presented its then widespread use in domestic interiors as evidence for wallpaper’s intrinsic qualities of cost effectiveness and artistic merit.³⁴ In their chapter on the mill records of forty-one wallpaper manufacturers, Cowtan & Sons is acknowledged as having been one of the most influential and leading firms of the era.

In 1839 John Gregory Crace delivered two lectures (edited a century later by Eric Entwisle and Alan V. Sugden as *The History of Paperhangings*³⁵) to the recently established Royal Institute of British Architects.³⁶ According to Entwisle, J.G. Crace was the first real historian of the art of paperstaining and belonged to, ‘that select company of decorative artists which did so much about the middle of the nineteenth century to improve the standard of English industrial design.’³⁷ Crace & Son, established in 1768, undertook commissions at the Royal Pavilion, the Palace of Westminster and the Great Exhibition of 1851. In his lectures J.G. Crace charted the history of wallcoverings, from medieval tapestries and seventeenth-century ‘stamp leather’ to, ‘the mode now almost universally adopted in this manufacture, the process of block-printing each colour separately to create the finished pattern.’³⁸ Crace told his audience of architects that paperstaining required a high degree of craftsmanship; no doubt he hoped that they would insist upon such craftsmanship in the interior decoration of their buildings. In 1839 J.G. Crace would very likely have known of Mawer Cowtan, who had joined Duppa and Slodden in 1833, and who delivered his own lecture on the state of industry in 1844. When Crace & Son closed in 1899 the firm’s historic printing blocks were acquired by Cowtan & Sons.

These examples are useful general introductions to the history of English wallpaper. Other books and articles have concentrated on specific periods or styles of wallpaper.

³⁴ Sugden and Edmondson, p.1.

³⁵ *The Crace Papers: Two lectures on the History of Paperhangings delivered by John Gregory Crace to the Royal Institute of British Architects on 4th and 18th February 1839*, ed. by A.V. Sugden and E.A. Entwisle (Birmingham: J.G. Hammond & Co., 1939), pp.9-11.

³⁶ The RIBA was founded in 1834 for the advancement of architecture.

³⁷ *The Crace Papers: Two lectures on the History of Paperhangings delivered by John Gregory Crace to the Royal Institute of British Architects on 4th and 18th February 1839*, ed. by A. V. Sugden and E.A. Entwisle (Birmingham: J.G. Hammond & Co. Ltd, 1939), pp.9-11.

³⁸ Sugden and Entwisle, p.34.

Works on Eighteenth-Century Wallpapers including Chinese Papers

In *London wallpapers: their manufacture and use 1690-1840* (2009) Treve Rosoman describes the business and craft of the paperstaining trade and identifies eight hundred London tradesmen connected to wallpaper manufacture, including names, addresses, occupations and dates. Among them is 'James Duppa, Paper hanger and Paper hanging warehouse, 42 Lombard Street & 34 Old Broad Street, 1794-c1804'.³⁹ As chapter 4 of this thesis explains, James Duppa hired Mawer Cowtan as an apprentice in 1833 and eventually the wallpaper firm that began life as 'James Duppa' became 'Cowtan & Sons'.

In "'Neat and Not Too Showey": Words and Wallpaper in Regency England' (2006) Amanda Vickery argues that choosing wallpaper was a feminine pursuit laden with social significance in eighteenth-century England.⁴⁰ Exploring the wallpaper business further, Vickery's investigation of the letterbook of London manufacturer Joseph Trollope examines the decorating tastes of middle-class customers in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.⁴¹ Trollope's letterbook contains descriptions of the patterns and colours chosen by his customers. Vickery observes that since there is no accompanying book of patterns or one-off samples, it is difficult to know precisely what the customers were ordering. The Trollope letterbook offers a glossary of terms but, Vickery adds, 'There is no sample book to rival that of Cowtan twenty years later.'⁴² Coincidentally, much later there would be an association between the two firms when Leslie Cowtan retired and sold his interest in Cowtan & Sons to Trollope & Sons in 1938.

Forty-five country houses owned by the National Trust hold whole sets, fragments or evidence of lost but recorded Chinese wallpapers. These are described by Emile de Bruijn, Andrew Bush and Helen Clifford in *Chinese Wallpaper in National Trust Houses* (2014), a history of the late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century trade in Chinese papers imported by

³⁹ Treve Rosoman, *London Wallpapers: Their Manufacture and Use, 1690-1840*, (London: English Heritage, 2009), p.58.

⁴⁰ Amanda Vickery, "'Neat and Not Too Showey": Words and Wallpaper in Regency England', in *Gender, Taste and Material Culture in Britain and North America in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. by John Styles and Amanda Vickery (New Haven and London: Yale Center for British Art; Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 2006).

⁴¹ Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁴² Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*. p.172

the East India Company.⁴³ As the authors note, little is known about the Chinese workshops that produced papers for the western market, but their distribution is illustrated by a map of Britain and Ireland indicating the locations of 149 properties, including many in private ownership, where Chinese wallpapers remain in situ or are known to have been hung included in the catalogue.⁴⁴ Cowtan & Sons imported and supplied Chinese and English papers to various properties identified in the catalogue including Nostell Priory, Yorkshire, for which Cowtan's Chinese floral paper in the Crimson Bathroom was supplied in 1883, as the catalogue explains.⁴⁵

Works on Nineteenth-Century Wallpapers, Designers and Manufacturers

Eric Entwisle was a dedicated historian of wallpaper and in particular championed nineteenth-century papers at a time when Victorian designs were often dismissed. His works include *The Book of Wallpaper*,⁴⁶ (1954, revised 1970); *A Literary History of Wallpaper* (1960)⁴⁷; and, of particular relevance to an investigation of the Cowtan Order Books, *Wallpapers of the Victorian Era* (1964)⁴⁸, in which the opening chapter is entitled 'Mawer Cowtan and J.G. Crace'. Entwisle pays tribute to the two men who supplied, 'some of the finest paper-hangings ever produced', to the Victorian upper classes. He also praises the 'distinguished decorator' Mawer Cowtan as an influential force in the pursuit of improved standards of industrial design.⁴⁹ Studies of the lives and work of individual wallpaper designers and manufacturers such as Crace & Son⁵⁰, A.W.N. Pugin⁵¹, Owen Jones⁵², William Morris⁵³, Lewis Foreman Day⁵⁴ and Sanderson & Son⁵⁵ also provide a wealth of contextual information against which the work and contribution of Cowtan & Sons may be considered.

⁴³ Emile de Bruijn, Andrew Bush and Helen Clifford, *Chinese Wallpaper in National Trust Houses*, (Swindon: National Trust, 2014).

⁴⁴ de Bruijn, Bush and Clifford, p.11.

⁴⁵ de Bruijn, Bush and Clifford, p.33.

⁴⁶ Eric A. Entwisle, *The Book of Wallpaper*, revised edn (Bath: Kingsmead Reprints, 1970).

⁴⁷ Eric A. Entwisle, *A Literary History of Wallpaper* (London: Batsford, 1960)

⁴⁸ Entwisle, *Wallpapers of the Victorian Era*.

⁴⁹ Entwisle, *Wallpapers of the Victorian Era*, p.8.

⁵⁰ *The Craces: Royal Decorators, 1768-1899*, ed. by Megan Aldrich (London: Murray, 1990).

⁵¹ Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (London: Penguin, 2007).

⁵² Carol A. Hrvol Flores, *Owen Jones: Design, Ornament, Architecture and Theory in an Age of Transition* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007).

⁵³ Rosalind Ormiston and Nicholas Michael Wells, *William Morris: Artist, Craftsman, Pioneer* (London: Flame Tree Publishing, 2010) and Pamela Todd, *William Morris and the Arts and Crafts Home*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005).

⁵⁴ Joan Maria Hansen, *Lewis Foreman Day (1845-1910): Unity in Design and Industry* (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 2007).

⁵⁵ Schoeser.

Works on Early Twentieth-Century Wallpapers

In 1923 Phyllis Ackerman surmised that the ‘horrors’ of Victorian interiors with their, ‘Heavy, muffling drapes with gross patterns, contorted scrolls and leaves in violent chemical dyes on wallpapers and fabrics’, had provoked such strong antipathy in the younger generation that they had moved to the other extreme in favour of plain plastered walls.⁵⁶ As Pinney notes, by the early twentieth century, wallpaper was, ‘all but unknown in the homes of the well-off and the sophisticated’, and was hardly ever seen in the off-white rooms in *Country Life*, ‘nor did it mar the purity of the Modern Movement interiors in the *Architectural Review*’. At the same time wallpaper became ubiquitous in British working class homes, which, ‘merely confirmed the view among many that it was unacceptable socially as it was aesthetically’.⁵⁷

Recent Academic Studies on Wallpaper

Academic studies devoted to wallpaper have been few to date and none has concentrated solely on analysis of the Cowtan Order Books. In Lesley Hoskins’ MSc Geography dissertation (Queen Mary University, 2006) on spatial relationships in the later nineteenth-century elite London home two hundred Cowtan orders dating from 1860 and 1880 are studied to explore how, ‘social, cultural and affective relationships were recursively played out within the home in complex interactions between people, ideas and the material structure and contents of the house.’⁵⁸ Phillippa Mapes’ doctoral thesis (University of Leicester, 2016) concentrates on the business of the English wallpaper trade from 1750 to 1830 and refers to examples in early Cowtan Order Books to illustrate patterns chosen by customers. It also draws on the letterbooks of Cowtan’s originating company, Duppa & Co, when discussing the nature of the trade in the late eighteenth century.⁵⁹

Clare Taylor’s thesis, ‘Figured Paper for Hanging Rooms’ (Open University, 2009)⁶⁰ considers the processes of manufacture, design and consumption of wallpapers for English domestic interiors in the eighteenth century. Taylor notes that in her survey of museum

⁵⁶ Phyllis Ackerman, *Wallpaper: Its History, Design and Use* (London: Heinemann, 1923), p.xv.

⁵⁷ Mark Pinney ‘British Wallpapers 1945-60’, *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850-Present*, 15 (1991), pp.40-44.

⁵⁸ Lesley Hoskins, ‘Making for Home: a Social, Cultural and Affective Geography of the Later 19th-century Elite London House’ (master’s thesis, Queen Mary University of London, 2006).

⁵⁹ Phillippa Mapes, ‘The English Wallpaper Trade, 1750-1830’ (doctoral thesis, University of Leicester, 2016).

⁶⁰ Clare Taylor, ‘“Figured Paper for Hanging Rooms”: The Manufacture, Design and Consumption of Wallpapers for English Domestic Interiors, c.1740-c.1800’ (doctoral thesis, Open University, 2009).

collections of wallpapers, the house from where a wallpaper was hung, or the family who donated it, is often known, ‘but its precise location in that house and the date it may have been hung are far more difficult to pinpoint.’ She adds that there were other difficulties in identifying wallpapers, ‘since remodelling in the recent and distant past often concealed earlier schemes’.⁶¹ As this research hopes to demonstrate, one of the valuable attributes of the Cowtan Order Books is that they often provide otherwise missing information about the wallpapers chosen, the date they were ordered and their location within a property.

A Cowtan Family Memoir

The history of the Cowtan family business was recorded by Janet Linsert, great-granddaughter of Mawer Cowtan, in a short monograph, *The Cowtan Collection* (1997).⁶² A combination of family and business history, it was in part informed by the recollections of Janet’s mother, Mary, who as a young woman at the turn of the twentieth century heard her father Frank Cowtan, second son of Mawer Cowtan, discuss the affairs of Cowtan & Sons. In 1964 the last surviving member of the family to be involved in the firm, Leslie Cowtan, supplied his niece Janet with notes on the business. Janet Linsert said of her research, ‘It was like unravelling a detective story. I was to discover that although others could make contributions, no one knew the whole story.’⁶³ Janet Linsert’s personal memoir of her family’s business was self-published with a limited circulation. It provides a unique insight, and some significant details, about the development and decline of Cowtan & Sons.

Cowtan & Sons in the Literature

As discussed above, Cowtan & Sons’ trade and aspects of the contents of their order books have been mentioned by some authors but work has yet to be published that describes and quantifies the whole collection of the Cowtan Order Books and analyses their collective significance as a source for building, design and social historians. Detailed interrogation of the Cowtan Order Books can therefore be expected to supply new information about the decoration of buildings, individually and by type, and about customers’ tastes and occupation of their houses. The questions that are likely to arise during doctoral study of the Cowtan Order Books are set out in the next section.

⁶¹ Taylor, p.38.

⁶² Janet Linsert, *The Cowtan Collection*, (Kent: self-published, 1997).

⁶³ Linsert. p.11.

Research Questions

From the survey of the literature it is evident that although the Cowtan Order Books are an important source of information about the decoration and habitation of thousands of properties, no detailed investigation of the significance and usefulness of the entire contents of the Cowtan Order Books has yet been undertaken. The substantive part of this thesis begins by addressing questions about the company's origins, its founders and leading figures, and how they developed and grew their business. The thesis seeks to establish Cowtan & Sons' significance as paperstainers and decorators, and considers their response to changing and enduring tastes in their role as purveyors of innovative, as well as traditional, designs and materials in wallcoverings. It considers how the firm compared to its competitors and what caused the business to prosper for more than a century and then fall into decline.

A substantial element of the research for the thesis has been concentrated on Cowtan's customers, in order to identify who they were, where they lived and when and how they decorated their houses. The thesis considers what the Cowtan Order Books can tell us about change and continuity in interior decoration; how rooms were named and used; and developments in the decorating trade. The overarching questions to be addressed by the thesis are what can the Cowtan Order Books tell us about the wallpaper trade, about the houses they decorated and the people who occupied them?

Sources

My principal primary source is the collection of Cowtan & Sons Order Books, held at the Victoria and Albert Museum since their donation by Arthur Leslie Cowtan (1893-1966) in 1946.⁶⁴ Among my other primary sources are a short monograph on the history of the Cowtan family and company⁶⁵; the Duppa & Slodden letterbooks for 1791 to 1822⁶⁶; Cowtan & Sons' accounts books and ledgers for 1881-1938⁶⁷; the texts of lectures delivered by Mawer Cowtan in 1844⁶⁸ and by his son Mawer Mawer Cowtan in 1914⁶⁹; and numerous nineteenth-century publications on the topics of wallpaper manufacture and interior decoration.

⁶⁴ London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Cowtan Order Books, E.1869-1946, 96.A.1-24.

⁶⁵ Linsert, 1997.

⁶⁶ London, National Art Library, Duppa & Slodden Letterbooks, 86.AA.10-14.

⁶⁷ London, London Metropolitan Archives, Cowtan Accounts (B/CWT/001-008).

⁶⁸ Cambridge, Wren Library, 'Lecture read to the Decorative Art Society, 9th October 1844', 251.c.80.5 (8).

⁶⁹ London, National Art Library, Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 'Reminiscences and Changes in Taste in House Decoration from June 1st 1863 to June 1st 1913', 47.W.Box 3 [S].

Structure of Thesis

My thesis is organised into three parts. Part I (chapters 1-3) provides the history and context of the wallpaper trade in which Cowtan & Sons operated. It describes the development of the industry from its origins in Chinese paper-making to its commercial success in Victorian England; it considers the economics of the trade and assesses the factors that influenced taste and choice in wallpapers, particularly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Part II (chapter 4) contains an account of the origins, development and decline of Cowtan & Sons. Part III (chapters 5-10) contains a description of the contents of the Cowtan Order Books and presents the substantive analytical content of the thesis. It examines how the Cowtan Order Books add to our knowledge of the trade in English wallpapers and analyses how they can increase understanding of the history of individual houses and buildings. It considers the evidence that the Cowtan Order Books supply for the use of different designs and materials over time and by different classes and professions of customers. It explains how the Cowtan Order Books illustrate change and continuity in the use and decoration of different rooms within different styles of domestic building; and it considers how the mechanics and day-to-day business of the decorators' trade is illustrated through the pages of the Cowtan Order Books.

Part I

The Origins and Development of Wallpaper

Chapter 1

MANUFACTURING: FROM CHINA TO CHEAPSIDE

Chapter 2

THE ECONOMICS OF WALLPAPER: TRADE AND LABOUR IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Chapter 3

TASTE IN WALLPAPER: ‘VERY MUCH A MATTER OF FASHION’

Chapter 1

MANUFACTURING: FROM CHINA TO CHEAPSIDE

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the context for the examination of the Cowtan orders by tracing the origins of wallpaper back to its roots in Chinese paper-making and to provide a description of the development of the manufacturing processes that preceded the hand block-printed and machine-printed wallpapers sold by Cowtan & Sons.

Chinese Paper-making

Wallpaper manufacture has its origins in the earliest paper-making found in China in the first century A.D.⁷⁰ The Chinese perfected the art of making paper from pulped vegetable matter, using bark from bamboo, mulberry, elm or cotton-tree and occasionally hemp, wheat or rice straw. The canes of plants were soaked in mud and water to soften them, then washed, dried and bleached in the sun. The residual fibres were boiled in large kettles, pulped in mortars and mixed with a glutinous vegetable substance to create a thick, viscous liquor which was transferred to a large vessel placed between two drying stoves with sloping sides covered in smooth stucco.⁷¹ The Chinese paper-maker dipped his mould or sieve, formed of bulrushes cut into narrow strips mounted on a frame, into the vessel and as he raised it a layer of pulped paper ‘stuff’ adhered to the sieve. The frame of the mould was then removed and the sieve pressed against the side of one of the warm stoves, allowing the layer of paper to stick to it and begin drying. Before the paper was completely dry, it was brushed with a rice-based size or varnish which quickly dried to leave a smooth surface on one side of the paper. As each sheet of paper was dried and sized, another worker dipped a second mould into the vessel and repeated the process, using the stove on the opposite side to dry his sheet of paper, so that the dipping, drying, sizing and finishing stages operated in a continuous and efficient action.

⁷⁰ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, ed. by Tsien Tsuen-Hsuein, 3rd edn, 7 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), I, 5.

⁷¹ *Ure's Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures and Mines*, ed. by Robert Hunt, (London: Longmans, Green and Co. 1867), pp. 340-568.

The Chinese produced vast quantities of paper for various purposes; as James Campbell has described, paper was used not only for writing but also for furniture, clothes, umbrellas, fans and armour. In 1393, the Chinese Imperial Court even consumed 720,000 sheets of toilet paper.⁷² However, there is no evidence to suggest that in this period paper was used to decorate Chinese homes, where most room partitions were wooden panels or plastered walls with coloured designs occasionally painted directly onto them.

European visitors mentioned the use of wallpaper in north China from the early seventeenth century, when the Qing⁷³ emperors showed interest in developing the decorative arts, including wallpaper⁷⁴ but not until the late seventeenth century did exquisitely hand-painted Chinese paper begin to arrive in Europe, imported by the East India Companies for the decoration of elite western interiors.⁷⁵ Many of the patterns of imported Chinese wallpapers were similar to those of imported Chinese porcelain, made by the same artist craftsmen who specialised in this style primarily for the foreign trade.⁷⁶ Chinese papers and porcelains became desirable commodities in England and the market for English adaptations, known as Chinoiserie, also proliferated. As Clare Taylor argues, Chinese papers and their English imitations should be seen as two sides of the same industry, ‘where both painters and printers in Canton and London were adept at responding to changes in tastes...’⁷⁷

Early European Paper-making

During the eleventh century, paper-making knowledge and craft advanced westwards along the four thousand mile Silk Road trading route between China and Europe to Baghdad, Egypt, Morocco and Spain, reaching Italy, Germany, and other parts of Europe.⁷⁸ Wood pulp or rags were the preferred raw materials for paper for writing, being much cheaper and more readily available than parchment made from sheep or goatskin, vellum from calfskin, papyrus scrolls and rolls of silk, all of which derived from raw materials that were scarce, expensive or required intensive processing. By the twelfth century, paper mills were operating in Italy and Spain, paper-making knowledge having been introduced by Arab merchants who acquired it in Samarcand, Uzbekistan, to which it had been brought by Chinese prisoners in

⁷² James W. P. Campbell, *The Library: A World History*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013), p.95.

⁷³ Modern western spelling of Ching.

⁷⁴ Needham, p.118.

⁷⁵ Hoskins, *The Papered Wall*, p.42.

⁷⁶ Needham, p.118

⁷⁷ Taylor, p.137.

⁷⁸ Entwisle, *The Book of Wallpaper*, p.23.

751. The Spanish paper industry was flourishing in 1150, principally in San Felipe in Valencia, while the Italian paper industry was centred on Fabriano in the Marche region. Until a businessman and trader, Ulman Stromer, founded the first German paper mill at Nuremberg in 1390, northern Europe depended on Italy and Spain for the supply of paper. Stromer's paper mill proved profitable and by 1398 it employed seventeen workmen, three women to sort rags, and a bookkeeper. It was the only mill in Germany until a second paper mill was built at Ravensburg in 1407, and further mills were established across Germany between 1408 and 1468.⁷⁹

Early Paper-Making and Paper-Staining in England

The earliest known paper-making mill in England was situated in Hertfordshire and was owned by John Tate. *Ure's Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures and Mines* describes 'a book printed by Caxton, about the year 1490, in which it is said of John Tate, "Which late hathe in England doo make thya paper thynne, That now in our Englyssh thys book is printed inne."' ⁸⁰ In 1588 a German, John Spelman, established a paper mill at Dartford in Kent and subsequently received a knighthood from Elizabeth I who had granted him a licence, 'for the sole gathering of all rags, &c., necessary for the making of such paper.'⁸¹

The earliest identified English wallpaper is believed to date from 1509 and is known as the 'Cambridge Fragment' after its discovery in 1911 during restoration works to the Master's Lodge at Christ's College, Cambridge. Its date and significance are supported by a proclamation issued by Henry VIII found on its reverse side, believed to have been sent to the King's grandmother, Margaret Beaufort.⁸² The Cambridge Fragment was printed by Hugo Goes of Beverley and York in black printers' ink from a carved wooden block measuring 406mm x 280 mm (16 x 11 inches) by the letterpress method then used for printing books.⁸³ The Cambridge Fragment was reconstructed in 1911 by Horace Warner of the wallpaper firm Jeffrey & Co.⁸⁴ 'Dominoterie' or small decorated sheets of paper of this kind were also often used for lining deed boxes or as book covers.

⁷⁹ www.archive.org/details/popularsciencemo421893newy, Nov. 1892 – April 1893, pp.95-100. [accessed 12 June 2016].

⁸⁰ *Ure's Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures and Mines*, p.340.

⁸¹ *Ure's Dictionary of Arts, Manufactures and Mines*, p.341.

⁸² Entwisle, *A Literary History of Wallpaper*, p.11.

⁸³ Duncan Burton, 'Roll up, Roll up', *Wallpaper History Review* (London: Wallpaper History Society, 2001), p.85.

⁸⁴ Sugden and Entwisle, p.50.

Long before the introduction of luxurious handmade wallcoverings in silk and caffoy, a combination of silk, wool and linen, for the aristocracy in the eighteenth century and the advent of machine-made wallpapers produced for the mass market in the nineteenth century, small sheets of printed wallpaper were in decorative use in buildings of higher status in England. These early wallpapers were known as ‘paperhangings’ and the men who made them were ‘paperstainers’. In 1634 Jerome Lanyer was granted a patent for the sum of ten pounds a year for making flock hangings, ‘on linnen, cloath, silk, cotton and leather’.⁸⁵ Flock wallpaper was made from powdered wool scattered on paper. First a design was painted, stencilled or printed onto paper with glue or varnish, then the ‘flock’, or fine wool, was scattered over it, sticking to the varnish and creating the appearance of cut velvet. Trade cards and advertisements show that flock wallpapers were available in England by the late seventeenth century and by the 1730s flock papers that were imitations of damask or velvet were on sale. Robert Dossie's *Handmaid to the Arts* (1758) described in detail the process of printing wallpaper using wooden blocks into which patterns had been carved.⁸⁶ In 1751, Diderot drew meticulous illustrations of the printing process.⁸⁷

Although fibrous vegetable matter was used in early paper-making, nothing proved to be as effective as linen, hemp or cotton rags, including the sweepings of cotton-mills.⁸⁸ Linen rags were considered the best of all. Woollen cloth was not deemed fit for the purpose because beating it did not produce a usable pulp and woollen fibres lent a hairy texture to the surface of the paper. Rags were collected by specialist tradesmen and delivered to paper-making mills. As Rosoman notes, an essential requirement for making paper was fresh water to clean the rags, produce the pulp and power the machinery. Plentiful and reliable sources of clean, unpolluted water were to be found in rivers outside cities, which meant that in the eighteenth century, mills producing large quantities of paper for the London market tended to be situated ‘where the competition for water would be less and the possibility of contamination was lower....’⁸⁹ in places such as Maidstone in Kent, Hertfordshire and High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire.

⁸⁵ George Whiteley Ward, *Common Commodities and Industries: Wallpaper: Its Origin, Development and Manufacture* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, 1922), p.22.

⁸⁶ Robert Dossie, *Handmaid to the Arts* (London: Nourse at the Lamb, 1758).

⁸⁷ Charles Coulston Gillespie, ed., *A Diderot Pictorial Encyclopedia of Trade and Industry: Manufacturing and the Technical Arts in Plates Selected from “L’Encyclopedie, ou Dictionnaire Raisonne des Sciences, des Arts et des Metiers” of Denis Diderot, 1751*, (New York, Dover Publications, 1959).

⁸⁸ *The English Cyclopaedia: A New Dictionary of Universal Knowledge*, ed. by Charles Knight, 26 vols (London: Bradbury and Evans, 1854-1873), VI (1861), p.254.

⁸⁹ Rosoman, p.3.

In England, as in Europe, the early method of paper production followed the Chinese method of one thousand years earlier. Rags were cut into pieces then beaten to a pulp or ‘whole stuff’ which was transferred to a vessel or vat before a team of three workers, the ‘vatman’, the ‘couberman’ and the ‘layerman’ worked together to create the individual sheets of paper. The vatman dipped a large rectangular wooden tray, known as the mould or deckle, with a copper wire lattice base, into the vat and lifted and shook it to leave a thin layer of paper across the base of the mould. The couberman deposited the layer of pulp on a piece of felt or woollen cloth until he had made a pile of sheets, called a post. The layerman then took the sheets from the vat-press, removed the felts and pressed the sheets again and placed them on drying racks or hung them up in the drying room.⁹⁰ Once the paper material was dried the surface was sized with animal glue which gave it a smooth and non-absorbent surface to allow it to receive hand-printed patterns without the ink or paint running. Paper manufacturers made their own size from scraps of hides bought from tanneries.

Today wallpaper is supplied in rolls but in England from the late seventeenth century it was sold in lengths made by gluing individual sheets of hand-made paper together to create a ‘piece’. This production technique was not adopted by French manufacturers for at least another half century. The sheet sizes of handmade paper glued together to make the ‘piece’ or ‘roll’ were ‘the Elephant’ (22.5 x 32 inches or 57.2 x 81.3 centimetres) or the ‘Double Demy’ (22.5 x 35 inches or 57.2 x 89 centimetres). Thirteen Elephants or twelve Double Demy sheets were joined together to produce a roll of approximately 12 yards long. This led to the roll being referred to as a ‘Long Elephant’, or where Double Demy sheets were used, a ‘dozen’. The standard size of a ‘piece’ or roll of wallpaper measured 22 inches wide by 12 yards long and covered an area of seven square yards. This is equivalent to 56 centimetres wide by 11 metres long, and is close to the measurement of a standard roll of wallpaper today, which is 52 centimetres wide by 10.05 metres long.⁹¹

Once formed, the ‘piece’ or roll of paper was placed on a table to be printed with the inked printing block. Printing blocks were narrower than the width of the paper, leaving a selvedge at each side which protected the printed area and left space for printing dots or registration marks. These allowed the paperstainer to position the printing block to ensure there was an exact alignment as he applied successive blocks with the different colours and elements of the

⁹⁰ Rosoman, p.3.

⁹¹ Burton, p.85.

design.⁹² The blocks varied in length according to the size of the pattern and were three and a half to four inches thick. To prevent warping under the constant dampening of paint or ink, they were formed of crossways layers of hard pine or deal wood joined together with strong glue. The face of the block, into which the pattern was carved, was formed of a softer wood, either pear-tree or sycamore.⁹³ Later designs were also formed in brass and tapped into a pattern carved into the block.

English Paperstainers in the Eighteenth Century

English wallpaper production flourished in the eighteenth century. Over eight hundred wallpaper tradesmen were listed in street directories for London from 1690 to 1840, including ‘paperstainers’ (wallpaper manufacturers), ‘paperhangers’ (decorators), and related tradesmen such as paper and rag dealers who supplied the raw materials for the paper manufacturing process.⁹⁴ One of the most successful paperstainers of the 18th century was Thomas Bromwich of Ludgate Hill, London, who produced wallpapers for Horace Walpole at Strawberry Hill, Twickenham in 1754 and was elected Master of the Painter Stainers’ Company in 1761.⁹⁵ His contemporary, John Baptiste Jackson, opened a factory in Battersea in 1746 where he printed wallpaper panels depicting classical scenes in chiaroscuro that were widely admired for their technical and artistic sophistication.⁹⁶

The Eckhardt brothers began wallpaper production in Chelsea in 1786 and were praised by John Gregory Crace of the decorating firm Crace & Son for their paperhangings of ‘such elegance and beauty as far surpassed those of all other countries’.⁹⁷ In the same year, Thomas Sherringham established his paperstaining business and was later hailed as the ‘Wedgwood of Paperstainers’ by Mawer Cowtan of Cowtan & Sons.⁹⁸ At the end of the century, James Duppa opened his paperstaining business in 1791 at 39 Bow Lane in Cheapside. It would become the foundation from which Cowtan & Sons would grow into one of the most successful decorating firms of the nineteenth century.⁹⁹

⁹² Burton, p.85.

⁹³ Entwisle, *Wallpapers of the Victorian era*, p.24.

⁹⁴ Rosoman, p.54.

⁹⁵ Entwisle, *A Literary History of Wallpaper*, p.37.

⁹⁶ Sugden and Entwisle, p.27.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p.30.

⁹⁸ Mawer Cowtan, ‘A Paper upon Paper-hangings’, read to the Decorative Art Society, (October 1844), p.19.

⁹⁹ Sugden and Edmondson, p.200.

Innovations in Machine-made English Paper

At the end of the eighteenth century, whilst employed at a paper mill owned by Francois Didot in Essones, France, a Frenchman, Louis Robert invented a hand operated machine for making continuous lengths of paper of up to twelve feet. In 1799 Robert was awarded eight thousand francs by the French government and a patent for fifteen years for his new paper-making machine. In 1801 Didot, accompanied by an Englishman, John Gamble, travelled to England where they met the London based French brothers Henry and Sealy Fourdrinier. By agreement, the Fourdriniers modified and improved Robert's paper-making machine and secured an English patent in 1801.¹⁰⁰

The machine manufacturer, Hall's of Dartford, Kent, was chosen for the production of the Fourdrinier brothers' paper-making machine, under the direction of Bryan Donkin. In 1803 a prototype of the first printing machine was installed at Frogmore, Hertfordshire, and in 1804 it was set to work at a paper mill at Two Waters in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire. Bryan Donkin & Co. were the chief makers of early English paper machines. In its first ten years of operation the company built thirteen paper machines; in the next ten years, a further twenty-five were in operation; and by 1851, Donkin & Co. had built 191 paper-making machines. More than half were for overseas firms, with Germany being their best customer in Europe.¹⁰¹

By 1805 the Fourdriniers were producing machine made paper in continuous lengths to the width of twenty-two and a half inches and also in rolls twenty-seven feet long and four feet wide. The invention of a machine that produced paper in continuous lengths marked a significant development in English paper manufacture. The Fourdrinier machine replicated the hand-making process. A dilute pulp suspension was poured onto a continuous wire cloth from which water was drained as it travelled along to the press section. There it was transferred to a felt blanket and pressed between rollers then rolled on a reel, cut into sheets and dried in a loft in the same way as hand-made paper.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ *The English Cyclopaedia*, p.255.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p.255.

¹⁰² Banham, in Hoskins, pp.134-135.

Rag Paper

Italy and Germany were the principal suppliers of rags for the English paper-making industry by the 1860s. The rags were imported in bags of about four hundredweights, (0.2 metric tons). At the paper mill the first task, usually undertaken by women, was to sort the rags and cut them into small pieces with a large knife. Threads and seams were removed because if ground with other fibres of cloth they formed specks in the paper. Once cut, the rags were sorted by their quality. The finest linen rags were reserved for the best writing paper, while cotton as well as linen rags were used for printing paper. A good workman could sort and cut about one hundredweight of rags in a day.¹⁰³

It was found that use of chlorine to clean and bleach the rags destroyed the vegetable colours used in printing, so papermakers tried bleaching the rags in alkaline and exposing them to dew and light. When these methods failed to produce a perfectly white paper they resorted to adding a tint of blue to lighten it. After the rags were washed, a revolving cylinder with sharp teeth macerated them for several hours in water until they reduced to a thin pulp.

Unblemished white paper ensured that when colours were applied by printing block or machine, they were true to the intentions of the paperstainer, without their depth, shade or tone being distorted by the inherent colour of the paper.¹⁰⁴

Innovations in Machine-Printed Wallpaper

Once it became possible to produce continuous lengths of paper by machine it was only a matter of time before the opportunity was taken to produce wallpaper by machine more quickly and cheaply than was achievable by hand block-printing. The invention of roller printing in 1840 by Walmsley Preston for the calico and paper printing firm C.H. & E. Potter of Darwen, Lancashire was an important advance in the process of printing continuous lengths of wallpaper.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ *The English Cyclopaedia*, p.255.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p.255.

¹⁰⁵ Banham, in *The Papered Wall*, p.135.

Potters' Printing Machine

Potters' machine adapted the rotary techniques used in calico printing, so that paper drawn over the surface of a large central drum was printed with patterns from a number of engraved metal cylinders around the drum. Each cylinder was positioned above a trough of coloured paint and was kept coated by a continuous cloth belt which also helped to regulate the flow of paint.¹⁰⁶ In the Great Exhibition Jury's Report, J.G. Crace observed that the Potters' machines, 'are now capable of printing 1,000 to 1,500 pieces per day, and the product, although not equal to block printing, yet, at the small price, has to a large extent superseded the cheaper kinds made by hand.'¹⁰⁷ By 1861 Potters' improvements in wallpaper printing meant that they were able to produce patterns with up to fourteen colours from fourteen separate cylinders; the number of colours could be increased to twenty by skilful management of the cylinders.¹⁰⁸ Potters' invention of steam powered cylinder printing was the impetus for an immense increase in the volumes of manufactured paperhangings and the consequent reduction in costs rendered wallpaper more affordable to the general public.

Lincrusta, Anaglypta and Tynecastle

In the second half of the nineteenth century manufacturers invented an array of new, technically advanced wallcoverings. From the 1870s embossed and varnished papers were designed to imitate gilt leather wallhangings that had been popular in the early eighteenth century. 'Lincrusta-Walton', an embossed wallcovering created from oxidized linseed oil, gum, resins and wood-pulp on a canvas backing, similar to linoleum, was developed by Frederick Walton in 1877.¹⁰⁹ Thomas Palmer launched the 'Anaglypta' wallcovering made of cotton fibre pulp, at the Manchester Jubilee Exhibition in 1886, which became one of the most popular embossed wallcoverings, being lighter and easier to install than Lincrusta.¹¹⁰ In 1890 C.P. Huntington of Darwen, Lancashire was awarded a patent for applying "gold, flock, mica, or other materials, by means of a separate cylinder attached to a printing machine" which served to add texture, lustre or pearlised sheen to wallpapers.¹¹¹ 'Tynecastle' was another embossed wallcovering made of canvas material pressed into moulds that became

¹⁰⁶ Banham, in *The Papered Wall*, p.135.

¹⁰⁷ Sugden and Edmondson, p.127.

¹⁰⁸ *The English Cyclopaedia*, p.251.

¹⁰⁹ Woods, in *The Papered Wall*, p.156.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.157.

¹¹¹ Sugden and Edmondson, pp.182-183.

popular at the end of the nineteenth century. It came in many designs and forms and was supplied for a wide range of rooms and buildings by Cowtan & Sons, among others.¹¹²

‘Poisonous’ and Sanitary Wallpapers

Anxiety about ‘poisonous’ wallpapers spread during the nineteenth century. As early as 1832 it was reported that, ‘Paperstainers suffer chiefly from the rubbing and grinding of the paint. When arsenic or white lead is employed they lose appetite and are affected with severe headache. Sickness often results from Prussian blue and arsenic, especially when turpentine is employed.’¹¹³ Scheele’s Green, also known as copper arsenite or acidic copper arsenite, was invented in 1775 by Carl Wilhelm Scheele and had a yellow green pigment that proved popular in wallpapers and paints of the early nineteenth century. Emerald green was an arsenic-based bright green pigment in common use from its discovery in 1814 until its health risks became widely accepted in the 1890s.¹¹⁴

In 1857 a House of Lords committee gathered evidence for the Sale of Poisons Bill and heard from a Doctor Taylor who testified that arsenic caused constriction of the throat, nausea, headache and loss of appetite. He had seen medical cases that demonstrated that, ‘rooms hung with paper coloured with arsenic greens, are very prejudicial to health’, and quoted a working paperhanger who had told him that he, ‘always suffered from inflamed eyes and nose, sickness and giddiness on the days when he was engaged upon green papers’. Another physician appearing before the committee, a Doctor Hinds, had detected a minute trace of arsenic in loaves of bread that had been placed on the shelves of a newly decorated bakery shop where, ‘the paper was brilliant with arsenic-green’.¹¹⁵

However, an article in the *Universal Decorator* journal noted that,

A great deal of alarm having been recently unnecessarily created in the minds of timid persons by a letter appearing in the *Times*, stating that many maladies are to be traced to the poisonous influence of green paperhangings, the Commissioners of the Inland Revenue, having rooms in their new offices covered with paper of that description, have had the matter thoroughly investigated by the chymist, Mr G. Phillips, who has shown that there was no foundation for the statement.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Tynecastle Product Catalogue, 1903.

¹¹³ Entwisle, *A Literary History of Wallpaper*, p.81.

¹¹⁴ Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*, p.130.

¹¹⁵ *The English Cyclopaedia*, p.254.

¹¹⁶ *The Universal Decorator*, ed. Francis Benjamin Thompson, (London: George Vickers, 1858), I, p.63.

Mould emanating from damp starch based wallpaper paste was another hazard; combined with arsenic, mould produces trimethylarsine, a toxic gas.¹¹⁷ Jeffrey & Co. were one of the first manufacturers to respond to growing public concerns about the levels of lead and arsenic in wallpaper pigments. In 1879 they invited Robert E. Alison, an eminent chemist at the Royal Arsenal, Woolwich, to examine their products. He subsequently pronounced them to be entirely free of poisonous substances and from then on Jeffrey & Co.'s wallpapers enjoyed a reputation for health and safety as well as for their artistic qualities. In the mid 1880s the firm produced a range of 'Patent Hygienic Wallpapers' with designs by artists including Walter Crane, William Burges and Bruce Talbert. These were shown at the International Health Exhibition in London 1884 where one critic remarked, "with our walls covered with such papers we can gratify our artistic taste and at the same time may rest assured that we are not slowly being poisoned."¹¹⁸ Sanitary or washable papers with varnished surfaces were also produced. The first was launched in England in the early 1870s by Heywood, Higginbottom & Smith who manufactured a monochrome washable paper in oil colour from copper rollers.¹¹⁹ 'Sanitaries', as they were known, became the popular choice for kitchens, bathrooms, nurseries and passageways that bore heavy usage.

Dramatic growth in the populations and prosperity of British towns and cities in the second half of the nineteenth century fuelled the development of the suburbs, for which new decorating materials were enthusiastically adopted.¹²⁰ Kelly's Directory for 1877 contains eighty-four entries under, 'Paperhanging Manufacturers'.¹²¹ Almost 140,000 new houses were built in London between 1882 and 1892, with similar growth in cities such as Birmingham and Glasgow.¹²² Demographic and economic expansion of this scale fuelled the demand for wallpaper which led to new opportunities for manufacturers such as Cowtan & Sons. The economic growth and the employment conditions in the wallpaper industry in the late nineteenth century are described in the next chapter.

¹¹⁷ Jan Crittenden, 'Decorative but Deadly: A Cautionary Tale' in *Wallpaper History Review* (2008), p.38.

¹¹⁸ Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*, p.131.

¹¹⁹ Woods, in *The Papered Wall*, p.154.

¹²⁰ Kit Wedd, *The Victorian Society Book of the Victorian House*, (London: Aurum, 2002, rev. 2007), p.7.

¹²¹ Woods, in *The Papered Wall*, p.152.

¹²² Schoeser, p.55.

Chapter 2

THE ECONOMICS OF WALLPAPER: TRADE AND LABOUR IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the economics of the wallpaper trade in the nineteenth century, in which Cowtan & Sons operated. While others have addressed aspects of the trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, this chapter collates and presents data on manufacturing volumes and employment conditions from a range of primary and secondary sources.

Manufacturing Volumes

The quantities of wallpaper manufactured in the UK increased dramatically as the industry embraced mechanisation. Although in the 1860s the quality of machine-printed papers was still considered to be inferior to hand block-printed papers, the twin advantages of substantially increased production volumes and lower labour costs placed machines in the ascendancy as far as manufacturers were concerned. In 1862 it was estimated that 16,485,000 pieces of wallpaper were made, of which 14,025,000 were machine-printed and 2,460,000 were block-printed [table 1].¹²³ This compared very favourably to the hand block-printing method, by which a single piece or roll of paper in a six colour design would take about five days to complete.¹²⁴

Mechanisation provided new opportunities for manufacturers around the UK. Whereas in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the trade was largely confined to the south of England, by the mid nineteenth century wallpaper factories were operating across England and Scotland, although London remained the chief manufacturing hub, particularly for hand-printed wallpapers.¹²⁵

¹²³ *Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts, Mechanical and Chemical, Manufactures, Mining and Engineering*, ed. by Charles Tomlinson, (London, Virtue & Co: London, 1866), p.514.

¹²⁴ Rosoman. p.7

¹²⁵ *Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts, Mechanical and Chemical, Manufactures, Mining and Engineering*, p.514.

By 1903, after a century of expansion, the wallpaper trade in London was in the hands of comparatively few firms, some printing by machine only and a few of the older firms hand block-printing only, but most operating both systems.¹²⁶ The wallpaper industry depended on a reliable papermaking sector. In 1839 there were 512 paper mills in England, Scotland and Ireland, each paying an annual license costing four pounds.¹²⁷ By 1859 the number of paper mills had increased to 843, with more than three-quarters of them in England.¹²⁸ The volume of paper produced had increased from seventy-eight million pounds in weight in 1835-1836 to two hundred and eighteen million pounds in 1859 [table 2], while the number of pieces of wallpaper manufactured increased from 250,000 in 1770 to 96 million in 1933 [table 3].

Manufacturing Method	Quantity (Pieces/Rolls)
Machine Printed	14,025,000
Block Printed	2,460,000
Total	16,485,000

Table 1: Volume of Wallpaper Production in the UK in 1862.¹²⁹

Year	Quantity (lbs)
1835 and 1836	78 million
1837 and 1838	91 million
1857	198 million
1858	193 million
1859	218 million

Table 2: Volume of Paper Production in the UK from 1835 to 1859.¹³⁰

An abundant water supply was an essential requirement for paper manufacture and the centres of production for the London market were Kent (where the chalk streams were ideal for paper manufacture), Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire, all of which had plentiful rivers flowing through them.¹³¹ Devon, Lancashire, Yorkshire and Durham, were important paper manufacturing English counties, so too were Edinburgh, Glasgow, the counties of Lanark, Midlothian and Aberdeen in Scotland, and Kildare in Ireland.¹³²

¹²⁶ Charles Booth, *Life and Labour of the People in London, 1890-1900, 2nd Series: Industry*, (London: Macmillan, 1903), pp. 272.

¹²⁷ William Waterston, *Cyclopaedia of Commerce, Mercantile Law, Finance and Commercial Geography* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd and London: Simpkin & Marshall, 1843), p.514.

¹²⁸ *The English Cyclopaedia*, p.258.

¹²⁹ *Cyclopaedia of Useful Arts, Mechanical and Chemical, Manufactures, Mining and Engineering*, p.514.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* p.258.

¹³¹ Rosoman. p.3

¹³² *The English Cyclopaedia*, p.258.

Tax and Foreign Competition

A tax on paper of all kinds was first levied in Great Britain in 1711 and was swiftly followed in 1712 by a new tax on paperhangings, at the rate of one penny per yard, or one shilling per piece, paid in addition to the tax on the paper itself. The tax on paperhangings increased in 1714 to one and a half pence per yard and was raised again in 1787 to one and three quarter pence per yard, or one shilling and nine pence per piece.¹³³ In 1803 the paper tax was fixed at three pence per lb. on first class paper and at one and a half pence per lb. on second class paper.¹³⁴ In 1836 the tax on paperhangings was repealed although the tax on paper remained in place and was imposed at a standard rate of one and half pence per lb. on all classes of paper. Nevertheless, in 1861 the tax on paper remained a burdensome cost for the paperstaining industry,

1 ½ d. is, in many cases, more than as much as the paper-stainer receives for all his expenses, labour, machinery, anxiety, risk, and profit of every kind. He buys a ream of self-coloured or ground-coloured paper, weighing 300 lb, and containing 480 pieces of 12 yards each; he gives for it 5l 15s, of which 1l 19s 4d is for excise duty. He prints and sells it wholesale for 6l 17s 6d or 3 ½ d. per piece; and this price is made up of 1 ¾ d. for paper, 1d. for duty and ¾ d. for colours, tools, labour, machinery, rent, skill, risk and profit.¹³⁵

In 1843 the majority of paper consumed in the UK for all purposes, including paperhangings, was manufactured in the UK and very little British paper was exported abroad. Most paper for export was sent to British colonies and foreign dependencies and printing paper was also sent to America. Between 1857 and 1859, only eight percent of UK paper was exported, while ninety-two percent was used at home.¹³⁶

The reason so little UK paper was exported was that many countries supported their own papermaking industries and imposed heavy duties on foreign imports that were deemed in competition with their home made product. It was also noted in 1843 that, ‘the foreign article, though mostly of low quality, is made at a cheap rate, particularly in Germany, from whence large quantities are shipped to South America and other places’. India imported considerable quantities of Chinese paper for everyday use.¹³⁷ Table 4 shows the quantities of wallpaper produced by Great Britain, France and the USA in 1851.

¹³³ Rosoman. p.7

¹³⁴ *Cyclopaedia of Commerce, Mercantile Law, Finance and Commercial Geography*, p.514.

¹³⁵ *The English Cyclopaedia*, p.254.

¹³⁶ *Cyclopaedia of Commerce, Mercantile Law, Finance and Commercial Geography*, p.515.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.515.

Year	Quantity (Pieces/Rolls)
1770	250,000
1834	1,200,000
1860	19,000,000
1874	32,000,000
1933	c.96,000,000

Table 3: Increase in Volume of Wallpaper Production in England between 1770 and 1933.¹³⁸

Country	Rolls	Value	Avg Price Per Roll
France	6.2 million	£338,000	7d
Great Britain	5.5 million	£400,000	2s. 7d
USA	4 million	£160,000	9 ½ d

Table 4: Volume and Value of Wallpaper Production by Various Countries in 1851.¹³⁹

Other than small quantities of engraving or drawing paper and paperhangings from France, very little was imported to the UK from overseas. In 1861 the UK imported French paperhangings to the value of £14,750, exported to France paperhangings worth £8,036 and exported paperhangings to other countries to a value of £100,000.¹⁴⁰

Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd

By 1905 persistent competition from overseas caused disquiet among elements of the UK wallpaper industry. John Line & Sons Ltd complained in their sales catalogue, ‘We regard with concern the rapidly increasing exportations which German and other manufacturers are making to Great Britain.’ They laid the blame for foreign encroachment firmly at the door of the Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd (WPM), a joint stock company acting on behalf of many UK wallpaper firms, which since 1899 had overseen an increase in UK wallpaper prices that had, according to John Line Ltd, created conditions,

highly favourable to the enterprise of German and other manufacturers.... Evidently the trade has arrived at the judgement that British manufacturers are not now, as formerly, offering to stock-buyers the value for money which they can obtain - strange to say – from manufacturers abroad.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Entwisle, *A Literary History of Wallpaper*, p.165.

¹³⁹ J. B. Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition, 1862* (London: Day, 1863) II, plate 135.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ University of Warwick Modern Records Centre, MSS.424/6/1, Wallpaper Manufacturers Limited, General Manager’s Diaries.

In fact the Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd was acutely aware of the threat from overseas wallpaper firms, reporting that the Advance Trading Company in the City of London was, carrying on behalf of a rich American Syndicate, paper hangings, English width and length, and have stated to a leading London Architect that they intend to wipe the eye of the English combine.¹⁴²

In 1914, just months before the outbreak of the First World War, representatives of the Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd met the Commissioner for New Zealand to discuss the state of the wallpaper trade between their two countries. The Commissioner explained that New Zealand was facing difficult economic circumstances and that a strike by dock workers had also damaged trade. However, Mr J. T. Chasney, Assistant Secretary of the WPM, was unmoved by the excuses for New Zealand not buying British wallpaper,

I pointed out to him that in the early days we had practically “fathered” the wall paper trade in New Zealand and when the men out there were small and struggling, we had assisted them at very little profit to ourselves and we considered that we were entitled to some consideration in their now prosperous days, and we viewed with a certain amount of concern the increase of foreign paper hangings into New Zealand. I also explained that in many cases we provide the novelties in the designs which our competitors simply copied and then dumped on the New Zealand market.¹⁴³

Commercial pressures on the wallpaper industry had provided the impetus for the establishment in 1899 of The Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd (WPM) formed by the amalgamation of some of the best known paperstaining firms, including Arthur Sanderson and Shand Kydd, into a joint stock company.¹⁴⁴ The WPM launched with an investment of four million pounds and it soon controlled ninety-eight percent of the trade.¹⁴⁵ Its branches across the country concentrated mainly on machine printing but also manufactured large quantities of hand-printed wallpaper and a wide range of embossed wallcoverings. The patenting of designs, materials and surface finishes was an important mechanism for protecting the commercial interests of the wallpaper trade, and the WPM took an interest in how the system could best serve its members. In 1905, Mr Chasney of the WPM held a meeting with Mr. Moyle, chief clerk at the Patent Office, to discuss the practicalities of lodging a design patent. They covered matters such as the cost of registration (ten shillings for each design); the best format for presentation of a design (a photograph showing the pattern repeat was preferred but the Patent Office would also accept a print, rather than a

¹⁴² MSS.424/6/1 Warwick

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Sugden and Edmondson, p.188.

¹⁴⁵ Schoeser, p.55

sketch); whether the Patent Office registered any particular style, such as a floral or ornamental style (they did not, just the individual pattern itself); whether the Patent Office would arbitrate on questions of infringement of style of design (they would not, but they would obstruct any pattern which had obviously been copied from one already registered); and finally, whether separate branches of the WPM could register their own designs without processing them through the WPM head office (they could, on condition that their application was made in the form of, for example, ‘The Wall Paper Manufacturers Ltd, The Sanderson & Sons Branch’).¹⁴⁶

Establishing greater British production capacity was a priority for the WPM and some of the factors influencing its acquisition decisions are revealed in its report of a visit to a factory in East London. T. Webb & Co. Ltd of Lower Clapton was described as, ‘a tumbledown, ramshackle place, evidently originally a couple of small cottages, and an additional building at the back’. In his consideration of whether the WPM might buy Webb & Co.’s assets, Mr Chasney judged that, ‘the Stock is not as valuable as they would make out, as there did not appear to be more than about 10,000 pieces, and some few reels of plain paper,’ which he valued at £200. However, he continued,

Leaving out the question of Book Debts, the actual value of the premises is not more than about £800, but Mr Cockshut [another WPM member] thought that, provided we took over the books from Saturday’s date, when the first proposal was made, and sent two of our men over at once to shut down the place, it would be as well to purchase at the prices mentioned, namely £2,000.¹⁴⁷

An inventory of the machinery found by the WPM at Webb’s premises provides details of the equipment, both operational and redundant, held by such a firm at the turn of the twentieth century:

One six Colour Surface machine
 1 two Colour Sanitary [machine]
 1 German Grounding Machine
 3 Hanging-Up Machines
 1 Resin Boiling Pan
 1 Small Pump for Boiler
 Vertical Boiler 9’3” x 4’6”
 1 Horizontal Engine 12’ x 24’
 4 Rolling-Up Frames
 Packing Press
 1 disused old Grounding Machine
 1 disused Two Colour Surface Machine

¹⁴⁶ MSS.424/6/1 Warwick

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

1 White Mill (little value)
1 Polishing Lathe (Very Good)
About 20 Copper Rollers
About 60 Surface Rollers¹⁴⁸

The WPM was determined in its acquisition of smaller wallpaper firms. Although each branch was permitted to produce its own designs and have them patented independently, many wallpaper factories were closed down, jobs were lost, administration was centralised and prices were strictly controlled. Even larger firms such as Jeffrey & Co. who preferred to retain their independence, were persuaded to enter agreements with the WPM, and thus competition in the trade was dramatically reduced.¹⁴⁹ The year 1899 proved to be significant for the wallpaper industry, marking the founding of the WPM and also the year in which Crace & Son closed after trading for 131 years and bequeathed their printing blocks to Cowtan & Sons. Interestingly, Cowtan & Sons did not participate in the WPM, perhaps because they were encouraged by the strength of their trade with North America after opening an office in New York in 1897 and therefore considered their business to be in a more robust position than that of their competitors.

Jobs and Apprenticeships

Charles Booth's survey of the living conditions and occupations of working class Londoners gathered detailed information about aspects of the lives of men, women and children employed in the paperstaining industry at the turn of the twentieth century. Booth observed that the manufacture of paper hangings, 'was one of the few sharply defined industries connected with the paper trade. The factories are distinct, and it is seldom associated with other businesses.'¹⁵⁰ However, despite Booth's assertion, a review of various sources of statistical data on the paper, printing and paperstaining trades reveals that the definitions of these trades and the jobs they encompassed were often not clearly delineated. For example, data on the numbers employed appears to be based on various descriptions of the trades, such as the 'Wallpaper Trade' [table 5]; 'all Printing and Paper Trades' [table 6] and 'Paper Manufacture and Paperstaining' [table 7]. Paper manufacture included the making of envelopes, carton boxes and paper bags and bookbinding.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ MSS.424/6/1 Warwick

¹⁴⁹ Woods, in *The Papered Wall*, p.169.

¹⁵⁰ Booth, p.269.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p.280.

Country	Males	Females	Total
England & Wales	1,556	399	1,955
Scotland	77	38	115
Ireland	96	9	105
Total	1,729	446	2,175

Table 5: Number of Employees in the Wallpaper Trade in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland in 1861.¹⁵²

Nos of Employees	1861	1871	1881	1891
Printing	17,800	23,400	30,000	40,000
Paper Manufacture	4,200	5,500	9,900	14,700
Total	22,000	28,900	39,900	54,700

Table 6: Number of Employees in Printing and Paper Trades in London from 1861 to 1891.¹⁵³

Trade	Females aged 19 years and under	Females aged 20 years and over	Males aged 19 years and under	Males aged 20 to 54 years	Males aged 55 years and over	Total
Paper Manufacturers	242	325	184	505	77	1,333
Paperstainers	36	112	269	516	80	1,013
Total	278	437	453	1,021	157	2,346

Table 7: Number of Employees in Paper Manufacture and Paperstaining in London in 1891.¹⁵⁴

During the nineteenth century the number of workers employed in the wallpaper industry rapidly increased. In 1800 in England there were 150 paperstainers, block-printers or marble-papermakers, all skilled craftsmen who were part of the decorator's trade.¹⁵⁵ By 1861 the numbers engaged in wallpaper manufacture had grown to more than two thousand in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland. However, in London by the end of the century the numbers were in decline, falling from 1,101 in 1881 to 1,013 in 1891.¹⁵⁶ These figures included the wallpaper dealers or salesmen whose numbers had increased by 1891, therefore the proportionate reduction of the number of paperstainers was even greater than the figures suggest. Block printers were the most likely to be less busy or rendered completely redundant because machine-made paperhangings and wallcoverings required far fewer workers.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² Entwisle, *Wallpapers of the Victorian era*, p.28.

¹⁵³ Booth, p.185.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., p.261.

¹⁵⁵ Sugden and Edmondson, p.135

¹⁵⁶ Booth, p.270.

¹⁵⁷ Booth, p.270.

Women and children outnumbered the males in the paper-making and paper-printing trades in London at the end of the nineteenth century; of 13,923, fewer than one in five were adult males.

The apprenticeship system at the end of the nineteenth century was less formally structured than in previous decades. Booth observed that in block-printing, the young boy or 'lad' would learn on the job, helping his father who was already established as a paperstainer. The lad might begin with colouring the blanket on which blocks were impressed to take the colour, and would continue with this task until he was sixteen years old. If he demonstrated sufficient aptitude, the employer might then agree to teach him the trade. However, with machine printing there was no systematic method of learning. The lad turned his hand to any tasks that were needed and progress was dependent on his own efforts.¹⁵⁸

Hours and Wages

At the end of the nineteenth century, paperstainers in London worked on average fifty-two to fifty-four hours per week, depending on the volumes of orders passing through the factory. Block printers seldom exceeded forty-eight to fifty hours a week, and except in extremely busy periods, rarely worked a full week. Unsurprisingly, machine printers tended to be employed more regularly than block printers because the demand for machine printed papers was greater. During slack periods a factory would operate for four or five days a week but in busier times up to seventy hours were worked. A legal restriction on overtime for boys prevented block printers from working overtime, even when the opportunity occurred, because they could not operate effectively without the assistance of their printer's boy.¹⁵⁹ Hand block printers were generally paid by the number of pieces or rolls of wallpaper they produced. Their earnings varied from forty to forty-eight shillings per week when trade was in full flow, out of which a fixed sum of five to seven shillings was paid to the printer's boy. If the volume of trade was slow and a block printer's wages fell below a certain sum he could draw on account from the next week's wages, with the amount being deducted from his earnings when a full week was worked. A few block printers were paid by the day to fulfil small orders for short lengths of paper that were required to match an existing paper, curtains or furnishings. In contrast, machine workers were paid by the hour, with those responsible for the machines earning thirty-five to forty shillings and even as much as fifty shillings per

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p.273.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p.272.

week. Men with fewer skills or responsibilities were paid twenty-five to thirty shillings per week.¹⁶⁰

In 1905 the wages of some of the most skilled and experienced employees at Wylie & Lochhead in Glasgow were recorded by the Wallpaper Manufacturers Ltd. The Foreman of the Sanitary [washable] Wallpapers department earned fourteen pounds per month [seventy shillings per week]; a Sanitary Printer earned forty-three shillings per week; the Foreman of Surface Colour Mixing earned sixty shillings per week; a Colour Mixer earned forty-two shillings per week; and a Surface Printer earned forty-five shillings per week.¹⁶¹ Time spent working at the paperstainer's table gave men invaluable experience in combining pigments and they were often subsequently employed as colour mixers. Winter was generally the busiest season for the paperstaining trade. In summer, new patterns were coloured and prepared, ready for the launch to the wholesale trade in late autumn and winter, with the factories then working at full tilt to print the new stocks of wallpapers that would be sold to customers in the spring. This seasonal rhythm to the trade applied to machine made papers but with hand block printed papers the sequence was not so regular as special orders, often unpredictable, formed a large proportion of the work.¹⁶² Most block printers stayed with one paperstaining firm for their whole working life. As boys, they joined the firm where their father worked and often remained for twenty or thirty years. In one firm visited by Booth, no man had been there less than ten years, and in another, three generations were represented.¹⁶³

Paper-making was an altogether less well remunerated trade.¹⁶⁴ At the end of the nineteenth century, the chief raw material in paper manufacture was esparto grass imported from Spain which was prepared by machines operated by women who earned ten shillings for a sixty hour week, working from six am until six pm. Men were employed to beat and mix the fibres with wood pulp and other materials and to operate the machines that transformed the pulp into paper. For these skilled jobs they earned thirty-two shillings per week. Other men reeled, cut and packed the paper, for which they earned twenty-six shillings a week, while general labourers who helped out as required earned eighteen to twenty shillings a week. The paper-making machines operated continuously from Monday morning to Saturday afternoon and

¹⁶⁰ Booth, p.273.

¹⁶¹ MSS.424/6/1 Warwick.

¹⁶² Booth, p.273.

¹⁶³ Booth, p.274.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p.261.

the men worked shifts of twelve hours a day or night in alternating weeks. Breaks of one and a half hours were allowed for breakfast and dinner but the machines could not be left untended and therefore the men ate their meals standing at their machines.¹⁶⁵

Health and Safety

By 1900 concerns about the health hazards of wallpaper had broadened from the customers to the workers in the paperstaining industry. Although arsenic was no longer used in making colours, having been replaced with vegetable pigments, it was recognised that arsenical compounds remained in other products and that various production methods and surface finishes also introduced harmful substances into the factory atmosphere. Bronzing powder was composed of copper, zinc and arsenic and the varnish used with it contained white lead. Flocking made from finely chopped wool or old rags ground to a powder created large amounts of fine dust. Mica crystals that produced the sparkling appearance of glass or broken granite on paper were composed of silicate of magnesia which also caused dust clouds.

Dr Leonard Parry, the editor of *'The Risks and Dangers of Various Occupations and their Prevention'*, warned in a chapter on wallpaper manufacture that,

The dangers which belong to this occupation are several. There is, firstly, the inhalation of particles of solid matter floating in the air; secondly, the risk of arsenical poisoning; thirdly, the danger of lead poisoning; fourthly, the evils arising from working in an overheated atmosphere.¹⁶⁶

Numerous precautions were prescribed to avoid poisoning the paperstainer: he should have no exposed open sores; he must thoroughly scrub his hands with a hard nailbrush, hot water and soap; he should keep his hair, nails and beard short; and he should not eat his food in the room where he worked, to avoid contaminated particles settling on it. He must also wear overalls tightly fitted at the neck and wrists and use a breathing respirator. Finally, 'as many baths as possible should be taken because personal cleanliness is most important in every way.'¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Booth, p.261.

¹⁶⁶ Leonard A. Parry, *The Risks and Dangers of Various Occupations and their Prevention*, (London: Scott, Greenwood, 1900), p.36.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., p.79.

Trades' Unions

The UK's trades' union movement was established in the mid nineteenth century, with peaceful picketing allowed from 1859 and regular Trades Union Congresses from 1868. Union membership across the UK rose from approximately 100,000 in the early 1850s to around one million by 1874.¹⁶⁸ However, in paper manufacture the workers were, Booth noted, 'poorly organised'. Among the 2,459 workers aged twenty years and over, only 220 were members of a trade society. The London Paperstainers' Benevolent Society had 120 members in 1903 and distributed sickness and death benefits but it only represented the block printers; the machine workers had no trade society. Nevertheless, the Society had strong representation, with about eighty percent of block printers signed up as members.

Qualification for membership of the Society required four years' experience on a printing or colouring table. The joining fee ranged from one to five shillings and the subscription was one shilling and four pence per month. Members kept a strict watch on the boys working in the paperstaining factories and only those who were apprenticed were allowed to remain in the trade. A steward was appointed at each factory, to whom unemployed members had to report weekly to receive their benefit payment. The employers kept up-to-date with one another and exchanged business intelligence through their membership of the trade sections of the London Chamber of Commerce and the Printing and Allied Trades' Association, to which many of the larger firms belonged.¹⁶⁹

Booth surveyed the living conditions of Londoners in eighty-seven different occupations, including Paper Manufacturers, Painters and Glaziers, Cabinet Makers, Carpet Makers, Printers and Builders. Near the top of the list for the most overcrowded housing, at eighth position, were Plasterers and Paperhangers. At the bottom of list, and therefore living in the least crowded housing, were the Architects.¹⁷⁰ The comparison of living conditions of those working in the trades and professions illustrates the social and economic disparities that existed between them. Successful negotiation of the economics of the wallpaper trade was important for the reputation and survival of businesses such as Cowtan & Sons. Another factor that shaped the industry was changing fashions in interior decoration and matters of taste in the choice of wallpapers. These are explored in the following chapter.

¹⁶⁸ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/citizenship/struggle_democracy/trade_unionism.htm> [accessed 19 May 2016]

¹⁶⁹ Booth, p.279.

¹⁷⁰ Booth, p.8.

Chapter 3

TASTE IN WALLPAPER: ‘VERY MUCH A MATTER OF FASHION’

The question of what constitutes good taste in interior decoration has often been the subject of debate, as the literature review revealed. Taste in wallpaper has attracted critical comment and divided opinion. As Lesley Hoskins observes, ‘Ever since wallpaper became widely available its status has been questioned: is it background or foreground, art or decoration, vulgar or respectable, a substitute or the real thing?’¹⁷¹ Mawer Cowtan Cowtan reduced it to a simple observation when he informed the Institute of British Decorators in 1914 that during fifty years in the trade he had come to the conclusion that taste was, ‘very much a matter of fashion.’¹⁷² This chapter addresses matters of taste that would have been at the forefront of consideration for firms such as Cowtan & Sons.

Discussions of Taste

In the nineteenth century, while arguments about good and bad taste in wallpaper design caught the public imagination, conventions in the choice and use of wallpapers were soon established.¹⁷³ The most impressive and luxurious papers were reserved for higher status rooms where guests were received and entertained, such as drawing rooms and dining rooms, while the less expensive or ornate papers were assigned to bedrooms, dressing rooms, corridors, nurseries and bathrooms. Cheaper machine-made papers tended to be used for servants’ rooms, although, as the Cowtan Order Books demonstrate, the owners of country mansions and London town houses often selected for their servants’ quarters papers that, if not the most expensive, were attractively patterned and coloured.

¹⁷¹ Hoskins, p.6.

¹⁷² London, National Art Library, MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, *Reminiscences and Changes in Taste in House Decoration*. 47.W.Box 3 [S].

¹⁷³ Saunders, p.16.

As Victorians acquired greater leisure time and wealth to spend in and on their homes, new sources of advice supplied guidance on matters such as choosing appropriate and tasteful colours and patterns. Mechanisation of production had reduced the cost of wallpapers, making them affordable to many levels of society, opening up new markets to which ‘experts’ on the subject of good taste could preach their views. One of the foremost authorities on the subject was Charles Eastlake, who despaired of the public’s lack of discernment in their choices of wallpaper, declaring,

In this, as in every branch of art-manufacture, it is for the shops to lead the way towards reform. The British public are, as a body, utterly incapable of distinguishing good from bad taste¹⁷⁴

Prominent British architects and designers including A.W.N. Pugin, Charles Barry and later William Morris and Owen Jones, championed principles of ‘design reform’ and rejected the use of designs based on any naturalistic imitation, including on wallpapers. As Entwisle noted, Pugin, Jones and Barry were among those who condemned the ‘Philistinism’ of imitation, adding that, ‘the greatest fault attributed to wallpaper, made by hand or machine, was its tendency to contravene the oft-repeated rule of ‘flatness’.¹⁷⁵ Nevertheless, as the Cowtan Order Books reveal, wallpapers decorated with life-like patterns in imitation of everything from roses, ribbons and robins to balustrades, bricks and beetles were in demand in the nineteenth century.

Among those offering advice to anxious prospective purchasers of wallpaper was the American commentator, A.J. Downing, who in 1850 advised that,

All flashy and gaudy patterns should be avoided, all imitations of church windows, magnificent carved work, pinnacles, etc. Those papers which are in the best taste are either flock-papers, made to imitate woven stuffs – such as silk or worsted hangings – or fresco-papers, which give the same effect as if the walls were formed into compartments or panels, with suitable cornices and mouldings.¹⁷⁶

Forthright advice was also given in *The Ladies Realm* magazine by Mrs Haweis in 1897,

The patterns this year run to hugeness, so the greatest care is required to select what will suit each size of room. A pattern which can only be repeated about three times on one wall is apt to remind us of the Scotch tartan which had such a large check that the whole regiment required to be assembled before the proper effect of the pattern could be seen!¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Eastlake, p.117.

¹⁷⁵ Entwisle. *Wallpapers of the Victorian Era*, p.14.

¹⁷⁶ A.J. Downing, *The Architecture of Country Houses*, (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), p.398.

¹⁷⁷ Mrs Haweis, ‘The Home Beautiful’ in *The Ladies Realm, An Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, (London: Hutchinson, May-October 1897) p.588.

Mrs Haweis was equally emphatic on the rules for the decorative style that divided the wall into three separate spaces of frieze, wall and dado, instructing,

*Don't have violent contrasts of colour. Don't have all three spaces varnished. Don't have them of almost equal breadth. Don't have the most voyant colours in the frieze, so as to bring down the height of the walls and faint tints in the dado below. Don't be spotty.*¹⁷⁸

Interior decoration at times had an uneasy relationship with the discipline of architecture. The American author Edith Wharton, 'found that employing an architect to design an interior in the early 1890s was "a somewhat new departure, since the architects of that day looked down on house-decoration as a branch of dress-making, and left the field to the upholsterers..."'¹⁷⁹

While acknowledging the cost effectiveness and easy application of wallpaper, Wharton opposed it on grounds of hygiene and artistic merit, arguing,

It was well for the future of house-decoration when medical science declared itself against the use of wall-papers....it is readily damaged, soon fades, and cannot be cleaned; while from the decorative point of view there can be no comparison between the flat meanderings of wall-paper pattern and the strong architectural lines of any scheme of panelling, however simple.¹⁸⁰

Taste in the choice of wallpaper, or whether to discard it all together, continued to be a contentious topic in the mid twentieth century. A review of the 'Exhibition of Historical and British Wallpapers' in London, designed to revive the wallpaper industry in 1945, noted that the class of people whose houses were featured in *Country Life* had more or less abandoned wallpaper, adding,

Wallpaper was still made and used in great quantities, but not in houses likely to be illustrated in art publications.... It was the patronage of people who had never heard of Shaw, or of Lutyens or Voysey that kept wallpaper alive, of people with a natural healthy taste for the ornamental which no highbrow forms could quell.¹⁸¹

Trade Exhibitions

Magnificent exhibitions of the best examples of industrial design and manufacture were a popular addition to life in nineteenth century Britain and a further source of inspiration for those seeking guidance in matters of interior decoration. The Great Exhibition of 1851, held at Hyde Park, West London, displayed 13,000 exhibits from forty-four countries and attracted over six million visitors. British paperstainers exhibited in the Furniture, Upholstery, Paperhangings, Papier Mache and Japanned Goods Section which occupied 16,000 square

¹⁷⁸ Haweis, p.561.

¹⁷⁹ Ailsa Boyd, 'The Decoration of Houses – the American Homes of Edith Wharton', *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society*, 30 (2006), p.81.

¹⁸⁰ Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman Junior, *The Decoration of Houses*, rev. edn 1997, (New York and London: Norton, 1897), p.45.

¹⁸¹ *The Architect & Building News*, 1 June 1945, p.123, quoted in Saunders, p.25.

feet of ground space and 25,000 square feet of wall space. The exhibition, which was the inspiration of Queen Victoria's Consort, Prince Albert, was celebrated as, 'an important milestone in the progress of wallpaper manufacture..... the first in which the whole world was invited to take part, and in addition it was far and away the biggest effort of the kind yet conceived.'¹⁸² The International Exhibition of 1862 at Kensington, London, hosted 28,000 exhibitors from thirty-six countries representing a range of industries, technologies and the arts.

In the official report of the 1851 Great Exhibition, Richard Redgrave, then Inspector General for Art (later Principal of the Government's Schools of Design) enumerated the many advantages of wallpaper. He declared that wallpaper, 'if designed on good principles' should serve the same purpose as the background to a picture, against which furniture, art, ornaments and indeed, occupants of the room, might best be displayed. A well chosen wallpaper could, 'enrich the general effect and add to magnificence', give light or depth to the character of a room, provide refreshing coolness in the summer or warmth and comfort in the winter; and wallpaper chosen in the right colour might even increase or reduce the perceived size of a room to achieve a desired effect.¹⁸³

However, Redgrave's further recommendation that wallpaper 'must be subdued, flat, and conventionalized' was contradicted eleven years later by J. B. Waring, the author of the report on the 1862 International Exhibition, who feared that such principles might be interpreted too literally by designers, resulting in, 'a littleness and monotony of effect', that was not worthy of admiration. While emphatically not advocating, 'great brilliancy and largeness of pattern in paper-hangings', the 1862 exhibition report nonetheless urged British wallpaper manufacturers not to limit themselves to, 'one method of surface-decoration, and.....one unrelieved series of general mediocrity.'¹⁸⁴ There was clearly concern by 1862 that the previously revered 'flatness' had produced wallpapers of unimaginative design.

¹⁸² Sugden and Edmondson, p.145.

¹⁸³ J.B. Waring, *Masterpieces of Industrial Art & Sculpture at the International Exhibition 1862*, (London: Day, 1863), II.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

Decorators, Designers and Architects

Despite the proliferation of printed advice, wallpaper manufacturers and decorators retained influence on the choices of customers. Guidance on good taste, design and the latest fashions was given when customers visited the decorators' showrooms or when a bespoke service was offered through personal visits to customers' properties. The term 'decorator' was used to describe a range of artist craftsmen possessing skills including paperhanging, gilding, fine plasterwork and painting. Larger firms such as Cowtan & Sons offered a wide range of decorating services, including supplying furniture, carpets and soft furnishings, and were often also known as upholsterers. Sugden and Edmondson referred to the rise of the 'wallpaper middleman or distributor' and added that these trades were, 'a development from the decorator or "decorative artist," and frequently practised a certain amount of block-printing'.¹⁸⁵ The value of the decorator, or upholsterer, in providing a professional eye in matters of interior decoration was remarked upon as early as 1803 by the furniture designer and author Thomas Sheraton,

when any gentleman is so vain and ambitious as to order the furnishing of his house in a style superior to his fortune and rank it will be prudent in an upholsterer, by some gentle hints, to direct his choice to a more moderate plan.¹⁸⁶

'What is Required to Render the Decorator Perfect?' the editor of *The Universal Decorator* (1858) enquired before supplying the answer that he must possess skills and intellectual abilities similar to those of the architect,

After all, the pursuit of the decorator is so closely allied to that of the architect, as almost to require the same education. In the same manner that the latter has to exercise mathematical and geometrical skill in the execution of his projects, how can the decorator be supposed to follow them up with justice without the same intellectual resource?¹⁸⁷

J.G. Crace in 1839 and Mawer Cowtan in 1844 had appealed for greater acknowledgement of the importance of the role of the designer in manufacturing industries.¹⁸⁸ A.W.N. Pugin wrote in *The Builder* magazine in 1845 that the recently established School of Design¹⁸⁹ ought to be the most powerful and effective way of creating a school of national artists who would be, 'not mere imitators of any style, but men imbued with a thorough knowledge of the history, wants, climate, and customs of our country,' and that such men should be able to, 'combine

¹⁸⁵ Sugden and Edmondson, p.135.

¹⁸⁶ Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p.179.

¹⁸⁷ *The Universal Decorator*, ed. Francis Benjamin Thompson, (London: George Vickers, 1858). I. p.146.

¹⁸⁸ Cowtan, 1844; Crace, in Sugden and Entwisle, 1939.

¹⁸⁹ The Government School of Design was established at Somerset House, London in 1837.

all the spirit of the medieval architects and the beauties of the old Christian artists, with the practical improvements of our times.¹⁹⁰

In the period between the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the International Exhibition of 1862, debate continued about the most effective means to ensure that British manufacturers, including wallpaper makers, possessed the requisite artistic and technical skills of the highest standards. F.B. Thompson, editor of *The Universal Decorator*, acknowledged that wallpaper manufacture as a branch of the industrial arts had greatly improved in the previous quarter of a century, asserting that, ‘there is scarcely any one trade in which greater progress is visible’. He acknowledged that the reputation for, ‘good design and tasteful colouring which the continental houses almost monopolised’, was now deservedly shared by English manufacturers who had made the effort to study the, ‘character of each style and the taste of each age’, and had applied those features, ‘with success to the adornment of our walls’.¹⁹¹

However, there was no room for complacency, and the designer must achieve competency in the sciences as well the arts, for,

A designer, we grant, is neither a machine-maker, nor a machine-worker, but he is a machine-user, and therefore, he can never know his business well without some knowledge both of mechanical science, or as we may call it, dynamics, and also of the practical working of machinery. Chymistry may also be studied with advantage.....no science is of more importance to the designer.¹⁹²

Furthermore, the master manufacturers ought to be masters of their art and obtain, ‘sound artistic instruction’, in order to understand how goods designed to the highest standards might be produced. They would then be in a better position to encourage their craftsmen to produce designs, ‘as would be in harmony with the minds of the purchasers, instead of their being disagreeable and painful, as they often are.’¹⁹³ F.B. Thompson concluded ‘bad art’ was being produced daily, as ‘the goods in our shops unfortunately show’. However, he remained optimistic, noting that there had been artistic improvements in manufacturing that, ‘had created an entirely new school of architecture in London’ and that shopkeepers were also now eager to display new products, which must be a sign of progress, since,

We may be assured that, if the shopkeeper found his association with the architect a losing concern, the march of plate-glass and gilt mouldings would long since have been arrested.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰ Paul Atterbury, ed. *A.W.N. Pugin, Master of the Gothic Revival*, (USA: Yale University Press, 1995), p.164.

¹⁹¹ *The Universal Decorator*, p.146.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.146.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.146.

¹⁹⁴ *The Universal Decorator*, p.27.

This view was shared by the wallpaper designer Lewis F. Day, a contemporary of William Morris and Walter Crane and a proponent of the Aesthetic, Arts and Crafts and Art Nouveau design movements, who wrote, 'A designer, whatever his natural gift, is of no practical use until he is at home with the conditions of manufacture.' He expanded this theme, arguing, 'The best work of all cannot be arrived at until artist and manufacturer are convinced that their interest is one'.¹⁹⁵ By the early twentieth century the ambition of Lewis F. Day, and earlier advocates such as Pugin, Crace and Cowtan, for closer collaboration between artist and producer had been accepted and standards of design in interior decoration made great advances.

At the turn of the century, changes in society also influenced taste in home decoration and furnishing. As J.H. Elder-Duncan observed in 1911, a new spirit of democracy was beginning to break down the barrier of 'appearances' and to challenge the notion that, 'the possession of many sitting-rooms is a guarantee of respectability.' He added that people were gradually being persuaded that their homes should be places of comfort adapted to their needs and not mere showrooms for evidence of wealth, designed to excite the envy of acquaintances.¹⁹⁶ However, he sounded a cautious note about the effect of democratisation on interior decoration,

It must be realised that personal taste must have its way, and if that taste is bad, one can only deplore the fact, and trust that education may show better results in the next generation of the same family.¹⁹⁷

The demand for decorators grew in the early twentieth century, as demonstrated by the London Post Office Directory, which in 1913 listed four interior decorators, but by 1925 referred to 122 such firms, half of whom were located in Mayfair or other smart areas of London.¹⁹⁸ Henry Dowling, editor of *A Survey of British Industrial Arts* (1935) argued that the reason so much of the best decorative work of recent years had been produced by the younger school of architects was primarily due to cultural training.¹⁹⁹ He also acknowledged that Britain possessed many more decorating firms than any other country, 'who have within their organisation designers and draughtsmen of competent architectural ability.' He added

¹⁹⁵ Hansen, p.29.

¹⁹⁶ J.H. Elder-Duncan, *The House Beautiful and Useful: Being Practical Suggestions on Furnishing and Decoration*, (London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne: Cassell, 1911), p.16.

¹⁹⁷ Elder-Duncan p.17.

¹⁹⁸ Adrian Tinniswood, *The Long Weekend: Life in the English Country House Between the Wars*, (London: Jonathan Cape, 2016), p.155.

¹⁹⁹ Henry G. Dowling, *A Survey Of British Industrial Arts*, (Benfleet, Essex: Lewis Publishers, 1935), p.34.

that it was quite possible that in the near future, 'the incursion of so many architects into the business of decorating', would lead to clearer definitions of, 'the vocational frontiers of both professions.'²⁰⁰ America perhaps showed the way that Britain might follow where the Institute of Decorators consisted solely of decorators, 'in the widest sense of the term' and architects worked in close collaboration with them, so that, 'Each esteems the other as an ally, and are united in common action against those who pose as interior decorators without possessing the requisite qualifications.'²⁰¹ By the 1930s, the need for professional levels of training and close collaboration between the manufacturer, designer, decorator and architect, in order to maintain high standards of interior decoration, had been recognised and acted upon, which further contributed to the refinement of notions of good taste in the early twentieth century.

Decorators' Manuals

As wallpaper became ever more popular, new manuals were published, such as, 'Workshop Wrinkles for Decorators, Painters, Paperhangers and Others' (1901),²⁰² 'Mechanics Manuals: Paperhangers' Work' (1906);²⁰³ 'Hints for Home Decorators' (1910),²⁰⁴ and 'The House Beautiful and Useful' (1911).²⁰⁵ They gave instruction in the art of decoration and addressed topics such as sanitary wallcoverings; paperhangers' tools; hanging wallpaper; treating damp walls; varnishing wallpapers; and embossed wall coverings. Practical advice was also given in many manuals, such as how to calculate the quantity of paper required to decorate a room.²⁰⁶ The manuals also published plentiful advice on the subject of taste and how to achieve it in any decorative scheme. For example, it was essential that the decorator demonstrated a sound knowledge of the use of colour when selecting wallpapers because, as one editor pointed out, 'nine-tenths of the effect produced result from a knowledge of the

²⁰⁰ Dowling, p.34.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.34.

²⁰² *Workshop Wrinkles for Decorators, Painters, Paperhangers and Others*, ed. William Norman Brown, (London: Scott, Greenwood, 1901).

²⁰³ *Mechanics Manuals: Paperhangers' Work*, ed., Paul N. Hasluck, (London: Cassell, 1906).

²⁰⁴ *Hints for Home Decorators*, (Blackpool: Decorators' Supply Stores, 1910); also Guy Cadogan Rothery, *Decorators' Symbols, Emblems &.*, (London & New York: Trade Papers Publishing, The Painters' Magazine, 1907); Cassell's *House Decoration: A Practical Guide*. ed. Paul N. Hasluck (London: Cassell, 1908); *The Decorators' and Artisans' Handbook*, (Cockermouth: Brash Brothers, 1890); *The Decorators' Diary and Trade Year Book* (London: Trade Papers Publishing, 1916); *Lockwood's Builders, Architects, Contractors' and Engineers' Price Book*, (Crosby, Lockwood & Son,); F. Scott-Mitchell, *Specifications for Decorators' Work*, (Trade Papers Publishing, 1916); R.S. Morrell, *The Scientific Aspects of Artists' and Decorators' Materials* (London: Oxford University Press and H. Milford, 1939)

²⁰⁵ Elder-Duncan, 1911.

²⁰⁶ *Hints for Home Decorators*, p.52. See chapter 7 for further discussion of calculating wallpaper quantities.

laws of harmony and contrast in colour', adding, ominously, 'Very few people possess that degree of taste that might guide them in their selection'.²⁰⁷

In *Workshop Wrinkles*, general truths about the use of colour which, 'ought to be at the finger-ends of everyone who makes, deals in, or decorates with paperhangings', were explained in layman's terms; for example, red diffuses with white, 'with peculiar loveliness and beauty, but it is discordant when standing with orange only'; blue is the most retiring of all colours except purple and black; brown is a, 'sober and sedate colour, grave and solemn, but not dismal'; it also expresses 'strength, stability, solidity, vigour and warmth'; white used as a ground colour in wallpaper, 'sets off charmingly blues, purples, browns, violets, greens, and reds'; while blue grounds work with gold, pink, buff, salmon, light blues, drabs, and yellows; and red ground complements lemon, pale blues, gold, and greens. The best colours to harmonise on a black ground are pink, lemon, drab, gold, greens, light blues, salmon, and purple. However, two shades of the same depth of tone should not be placed side by side, since, 'the effect is very bad, giving out a glimmer not at all pleasing; in fact, the result is anything but artistic'.²⁰⁸

Further principles of good taste were that the walls should be of a warmer and stronger colour than the ceiling, and the dado should be darker than the walls. Scarlet or gold flowers looked best on a black ground, while on an oak-coloured paper delicate shades of apple blossom, azalea or similar blooms had a pleasing effect. More generally, lighter shades of paper made a room more cheerful, while large patterns made a room look much smaller and also wasted paper in matching the pattern. Low rooms should be decorated with a vertical striped paper to make the room look higher than it really was. Subdued tints were recommended to correct the glare of too many windows. Finally, the best effect was produced by having a paper with pattern and colours of a quiet tone, 'such as do not at once strike the eye on entering the room. The paper should relieve and set out the furniture that stands in front of it, not attract attention to it'.²⁰⁹

In 1906 it was considered unwise for the owner or tenant to choose high-priced papers that were very pronounced in colour or design because for only a few shillings per piece well

²⁰⁷ *Workshop Wrinkles for Decorators*, p.82.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.82.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p.89.

designed papers could be bought and easily renewed at little cost, ‘whereas the renewal, as often as is desirable, of the high-priced paper is too costly a proceeding in most cases.’²¹⁰ When it came to the choice of specific wallpapers, decorators and their customers were advised that it was better to visit the showrooms of the manufacturers, ‘where the paper can be inspected in the piece, than to choose from a pattern-book [because] often paper presents a very different effect when the whole of the design is seen, from that which it suggested as seen in the pattern-book’.²¹¹ Trying to visualise a whole room decorated in a particular wallpaper on the basis of a small sample was clearly a challenge in the nineteenth century and remains so today. One of the limitations of the Cowtan Order Books is that each of the samples of wallpaper measures only approximately ten by four centimetres, which provides just a fragment of the whole design for the researcher, although undoubtedly it supplied sufficient information to the experienced Cowtan paperstainers and decorators about the pattern and colour to be used.

Price, Fashion and Lighting

Taste in wallpapers in the nineteenth century was also influenced by practical considerations such as price and technological or design innovations. For some customers, price was the deciding factor in their selection of cheaper wallpapers, especially for the less formal areas of the house. Machine-printed wallpaper cost around sixpence a roll in the mid nineteenth century but only twopence a roll by 1890, rendering it affordable to a wider range of people. Advertisements often referred to wallpapers by their suitability for particular rooms such as parlours, sitting rooms, bedrooms or staircases. An advertisement in Tallis’s *Street Views* in 1839 for the paperstainer J. Thompson of Cheapside claimed that,

Rooms may now be papered for less than they can be stencilled. A good sized room may now be papered for 5/- ; bedroom papers from 1/2 d per yard; parlours in every variety of colour from 1d to 2d; satin papers, 3d; crimson ‘flock’ metal, 3d.²¹²

However, by the end of the century, at the more expensive end of the market a hand-printed wallpaper from a high quality manufacturer such as Jeffrey & Co., who printed papers for William Morris, could cost twenty-five shillings per roll. Among the most expensive were Chinese papers imported from Asia and often hand-painted, or block-printed and finished by hand.

²¹⁰ *Mechanics Manuals: Paperhangers’ Work*, p.12.

²¹¹ *Mechanics Manuals: Paperhangers’ Work*, p.12.

²¹² Entwisle, *A Literary History of Wallpaper*, p.85.

The Cowtan Order Books tended not to include the prices of wallpapers in the earlier volumes, but later orders dating from the 1880s occasionally referred to the price per piece or roll. Table 8 illustrates the wide range of prices charged for wallpapers from the early nineteenth to the early twentieth century.

Year	Room/Type of Paper	Price/Quantity
1839	Bedroom	½ pence per yard
1839	Parlour	1 to 2 pence per yard
1839	Satin finish paper	3 pence per yard
1829	Crimson flock metal	3 pence per yard
1850	Cheapest flock	2 shillings per piece/roll (12 yards)
1850	Machine printed paper	6 pence per piece/roll (12 yards)
1851	Machine printed paper in 23 colours	3 ½ pence per yard
1884	Cowtan: 'Fitzwilliam' paper [for Miss Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Park, Godalming]	22 pieces @ 10 or 11 pence per yard
1884	Cowtan: 'Rivoli Pattern Damask' paper [for the Right Hon Earl Cowper, Wrest Park, Bedfordshire]	14 pieces @ 7 pence per yard (or four pounds and four shillings per piece or roll).
1885	Cowtan: Frieze, 23 yards; Filling, 6 pieces; Dado border, 20 yards; Dado, 3 pieces [for Dr W. H. Longhurst, The Precinct, Music Room, Canterbury]	Frieze, 6 pence per yard Filling, 4 ¼ pence per yard Dado border, 3 ½ pence per yard Dado, 5 pence per yard
1885	Cowtan: Bedroom paper [for Mrs Bonham-Carter, 17 Chesham Street, London SW]	10 pieces @ 2 shillings, 6 pence per piece or roll
1890	Machine printed paper	2 pence per piece or roll
1900	Hand printed paper by Jeffrey & Co.	25 shillings per piece/roll
1903	Cowtan: two floral papers [for J Pierpont Morgan Esq, Dover House, Roehampton]	7 pieces @ 1 shilling and 3 pence per piece or roll
1923	Cowtan: 15 sets (50 sheets) of 'Décor Chinois' on white satin ground [for Her Grace the Duchess of Bedford, Woburn Abbey, Bedfordshire]	£12 per set of Chinese papers

Table 8: A Range of Wallpaper Prices from 1839 to 1923.

In the 1870s a new fashion in wallpapers captured the public's attention and was championed by the writer on interior decoration, Charles Eastlake. The tri-partite wall scheme was judged a welcome alternative to the uniformity of the single wallpaper pattern used from skirting board to ceiling. Eastlake suggested decorating the three parts of the wall with a combination of wallpaper and paint, 'a papered or distempered dado to a height of about three foot, a diaper pattern for the filling and a painted frieze of arabesque ornament.'²¹³ Although by the early 1900s this division of the wall had fallen out of favour, it produced some of the most

²¹³ Clare Latimer, 'The Division of the Wall: The Use of Wallpaper in Decorative Schemes, 1870-1910', *Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850-Present*, 12 (1988), pp.18-25.

interesting wallpaper designs of the nineteenth century from architects and designers, including Brightwen Binyon, Andrew Fingar Brophy, Walter Crane, Lewis F. Day and Bruce J. Talbert.²¹⁴

Developments in lighting technology also influenced taste in interior decoration. From around 1800 candlelight was beginning to be supplemented by oil lamps and the earliest gas lighting.²¹⁵ The chandeliers at Brighton Pavilion in Sussex were fitted for gas in 1818, while Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire was lit chiefly by oil by the 1830s. In 1834 the introduction of colza-oil, a new product derived from rapeseed, provided an efficient fuel that was used extensively in domestic lighting before the advent of coal, gas or kerosene.²¹⁶ By the beginning of the twentieth century, gas had become the most widely used form of domestic lighting, and remained so until the advent of electricity on the National Grid in the mid-1930s.²¹⁷ Wallpapers printed or embossed with metallic paints or finishes were shown to particularly good effect in shimmering candlelight and gaslight, but perhaps the greatest impact on the illumination of wallpaper, as on every other part of a house, was the invention of electric lighting. Cragston in Northumberland was the first house in the world to be lit by hydroelectric power. Water from one of the estate's lakes was used to drive a dynamo which powered an arc lamp installed in 1878. The arc lamp at Cragston was replaced in 1880 by Joseph Swan's incandescent lamps in what Swan considered 'the first proper installation' of electric lighting.²¹⁸ Although Swan invented electric lighting in the UK, it was Thomas Edison who patented it in the USA. Edison's most prestigious customer was John Pierpont Morgan whose home was the first to have electric lighting installed in New York. The brilliance and consistency of electric lighting, and its lack of smoke and soot, meant that lighter, brighter wallpapers could be installed without risk of their becoming dull or dirty within months, as was the case with candle, gas, coal and oil lighting and heating.²¹⁹

²¹⁴ Latimer, pp.18-25.

²¹⁵ Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), p.265.

²¹⁶ Elizabeth Burton, *The Early Victorians at Home*, (London: Arrow, paperback edn, 1974), p.99.

²¹⁷ Maureen Dillon, *Artificial Sunshine: A Social History of Domestic Lighting*, (London: The National Trust, 2002), p.127.

²¹⁸ Ibid. p.19.

²¹⁹ Burton, p.99.

Patents and Innovations

Technical advances in the production of wallpapers and wallcoverings also influenced taste, as customers were presented with an ever greater choice of textures, colours and surface finishes [table 9]. Among the innovations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the development of embossed or raised-surface wall coverings such as Lincrusta-Walton, developed in 1877 and Anaglypta, developed in 1886 [see chapter 1]. Cowtan & Sons supplied many new wallcoverings to their customers in the latter part of the nineteenth century, including products from the Tynecastle company, founded in Edinburgh by William Scott Morton. Tynecastle's 1903 sales brochure described their range of products including Tynecastle Canvas, whose 'distinctive merits are the artistic surface, unequalled colouring qualities, and the soundness and good-working nature of its fabric'.²²⁰

Year	Inventor	Process or Product
1856	Walmsley Preston, Darwen, Lancashire	Damping or moistening before glazing or polishing.
1864	Robert Smith and Jabez Booth, Manchester	Improvements in connection with satin printing.
1865	John Wylie and James Rew, Glasgow	Improving manufacture of stamped golds.
1869	Robert Smith and John Higginbottom, Manchester	Damping or steaming before printing.
1880	John Dunn, Newcastle	Flocking size or glue applied prior to application of sawdust, resulting in a raised material, Lignus Fibrae.
1881	William Cunningham, London	Frosted Golds.
1885	William Scott, Chelsea	Applying mica [crystals] to grounding, preparing the mica by burning in a furnace.
c1885	Hayward & Son, London,	A Patent joint for fillings when stencilled.
1890	C.P. Huntington, Darwen, Lancashire	Applying gold, flock, mica, or other materials, by means of a separate cylinder attached to a printing machine.
1890	John Walker and Harry Carver	"Sanitum" washable wallpapers.
1898	D.W. Yates, Radcliffe, Manchester	Wallpaper with perforated selvages.
1898	G.W. Osborn, London	Overlapping selvages.
1910	Harold Sanderson, London	Embossing.

Table 9: Notable Innovations in Wallpaper Manufacture, 1856-1910.

²²⁰ Tynecastle Product Catalogue, 1903.

Surveying the advances made in wallpaper production, Sugden and Edmondson observed that, ‘All these refinements and technical developments are....probably in the eyes of the consumer, always secondary to the question of design and colour. They have their interest, however, for the expert and technician’. ²²¹ While the choice of designs and colours was undoubtedly an important influence on prevailing tastes in wallpapers, the range of new materials and textures also expanded customers’ horizons for notions of good taste.

Part I of this thesis has described the context of the trade in which Cowtan & Sons operated. In Part II, the little known history of the company will be presented. The chief substance of Part II will be previously unexplored information about the content of the Cowtan Order Books, including an analysis of their customers by social status and profession, the use of different wallpapers in different rooms and properties, and what the orders reveal about the use of different patterns and materials over time.

²²¹ Sugden and Edmondson, pp.182-183.

Part II

The History of Cowtan & Sons

Chapter 4

**‘DECORATIONS OF THE HIGHEST CLASS IN EVERY
STYLE OF ART’**

Chapter 4

‘DECORATIONS OF THE HIGHEST CLASS IN EVERY STYLE OF ART’

This chapter provides an account of Cowtan & Sons’ origins and development as paperstainers, manufacturers, decorators and furnishers. Among my sources is a short history of Cowtan & Sons written by a member of the Cowtan family which was self-published in 1997 and has had limited circulation.²²²

Origins and Partnerships

During the course of more than a century the Cowtan family developed their business as paperstainers, decorators and upholsterers to many of the wealthiest and most powerful people in Great Britain and overseas, to whom the firm proudly proclaimed their, ‘decorations of the highest class in every style of art’.²²³ Indeed, their long and impressive list of customers was once described as, ‘reading like an extract from Debrett’.²²⁴ Throughout its history Cowtan & Sons specialised in traditional house decoration in the classical style and was especially renowned for its imported original Chinese and Japanese wallpapers and elaborate papers from France.²²⁵

The origins of Cowtan & Sons lie in the establishment of a small enterprise in the City of London, when in 1791 James Duppa opened a paperhanging warehouse at 39 Bow Lane in Cheapside. Two years later the business moved to 42 Lombard Street and it was probably around this time that Duppa & Co. began manufacturing hand block-printed papers and

²²² I am grateful to Andrew Bush of the National Trust for alerting me to an article entitled ‘The Cowtan Collection’ by Janet Linsert in the 1996/7 *Wallpaper History Review*, p.63. Through this I was able to contact Janet’s surviving sister, Dr June Morgan, who sent me a copy of Janet’s pamphlet and also agreed to meet me in September 2015.

²²³ MS Purdie & Cowtan Sales Brochure, 608.AD.0425.

²²⁴ Entwisle, *Wallpapers of the Victorian Era*, p.8.

²²⁵ Thornton, p.317.

marbled papers.²²⁶ In 1797 Duppa was listed in a trade directory at 34 Old Broad Street, London EC1 and in 1805 they opened a branch at 314 Oxford Street, London W1 to which the whole business transferred in 1808.²²⁷ These premises were renumbered as 309 Oxford Street in 1882 and the firm's printed stationery always referred to the changed numbering thereafter. In 1812 the company name changed to Duppa & Slodden and in 1823 it became Duppa, Slodden & Collins as new business partners joined. In 1833 Mawer Cowtan (1813-1880) entered the firm as an assistant.

In 1838 the business name became Duppa & Collins and remained unchanged until 1862, when, after serving the company for almost thirty years, Mawer Cowtan inherited a legacy that provided him with the means to purchase the partnership with James Purdie of Edinburgh.²²⁸ The name of the firm became Purdie, Cowtan & Co., but from then on the company stationery carried the explanatory wording, 'late Duppa' in acknowledgement of the original founder and also no doubt as a reminder to customers of their longevity in such a competitive trade [fig.2].



Fig. 2: Page from a Cowtan & Sons' accounts book showing the change of Oxford Street numbering of their premises, from 314 to 309, which took place in 1882.

²²⁶ Sugden and Edmondson, p.200.

²²⁷ Sugden and Edmondson, p.200.

²²⁸ Linsert, p.8.

Duppa & Co. (1791 – 1822)

Duppa & Co.'s day, delivery, letter and memorandum books (1791-1822) provide evidence for the day-to-day business of the firm's early trading years.²²⁹ The first entry is dated 6 June 1791 and the last is on 29 November 1822. Unlike the Cowtan Order Books, Duppa's books do not contain samples of wallpapers or other materials, being handwritten manuscripts only. The entries in the Duppa day books and delivery books provide information that bears some similarities, as well as some differences, to that which is found in the Cowtan Order Books about the nature of the work undertaken and the prices charged by the company. An example dated 24 October 1792 for the Reverend John Prince, 'at the Magdalen',²³⁰ provides details of costs of materials, that are not found in the Cowtan orders,

11 pcs Buff Stone Wall	5/- (per piece)	£2-15-0
9 doz Bead Borders to ditto	/9	6/9
Size & Sizing, 11 pcs	/6	5/6
Putting up, 11 pcs (on Staircase)	1/3	13/9
Ditto 9 doz borders	/3	2/3
Paid for Scaffolding	1/6	
[Total]		£4-4-9 ²³¹

Whereas in the Cowtan Order Books the quantity per piece of wallpaper is often given, and the price is occasionally given, the cost of sizing and scaffolding is not, thus the Duppa books provide additional insight into the operation of the firm. The letterbooks also reveal more about the interaction between the company and its customers than can be gleaned from the Cowtan Order Books. An entry in the final Duppa letterbook, dated 1st October 1819, is addressed to the architect John Soane,

Duppa, Slodden & Co, beg respectfully to acquaint Mr Soane, that papering the bedrooms on the second floor & bed & dressing room on the first floor at the new House in the Old Jewry with a paper at 7d per yard & appropriate border at top and bottom, lining & papering the two drawing rooms & small rooms adjoining with sattin paper & flock border, as near as they can calculate, will amount to about £67.²³²

²²⁹ London, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, MS Duppa & Slodden, MSL/1946/2069-2074, 86.AA.9-14.

²³⁰ The church may have been St Mary Magdalen, built by Christopher Wren in 1687, situated on the corner of Old Fish Street and Old Change in the City of London, less than a quarter of a mile from Duppa's paperstaining warehouse in Bow Lane. It was demolished after fire damage in 1893.

²³¹ MS Duppa & Slodden, 86.AA.9.

²³² MS Duppa & Slodden, 86.AA.14.

Soane drew up designs for the National Debt Redemption Office, part of the Bank of England, in Old Jewry, City of London in 1817-18, 1819 and 1823.²³³ There are twenty-one Cowtan orders for the Bank of England, the majority in Books 1 and 2. The first was placed in July 1824, five years after the correspondence in the letterbook, for forty-two pieces of four floral papers with contrasting borders and one architectural paper for the ‘Sitting Room, 1st Bedroom, Middle Bedroom, End Bedroom and Passage’ respectively at W. Kingston’s Apartments at the Bank.²³⁴ In 1826 the National Debt Office placed an order for a simple floral green paper for offices on the first floor.²³⁵ Soane ordered a Cowtan wallpaper for his own home in Lincoln’s Inn Fields in 1828 (see also chapter 6). The letter to Soane in the Duppa letterbook provides evidence for the start of a relationship between Cowtan & Sons and the Bank that would endure up to the final Bank of England order placed in 1922.²³⁶

‘Genuine Paperstainers’

Cowtan & Sons was acknowledged, alongside Crace & Son, as being among those who, ‘exercised a great influence on the type of design used by block printers’.²³⁷ However, although Sugden and Edmondson claimed in 1925 that Cowtan & Sons, ‘did not, so far as records show, hand-print themselves’,²³⁸ there is evidence from Mawer Cowtan Cowtan that they did indeed hand block-print their own wallpapers in the early years,

No.3, Tenterden Street, is a very beautiful example, I think, of the style of the early part of the eighteenth century (quite early in 1700) and upon the garden of this house our premises in Oxford Street was erected in 1848. **Up to that time the ground nearer to the old house was used as a paper factory, in which our paperhangings were printed for years, and which fact shows we were even genuine paperstainers in those days**²³⁹ [*my bold highlighting*]

Mawer Cowtan Cowtan added that when the factory was decommissioned to make way for the new showroom in 1862, their blocks were distributed amongst other firms to continue printing for them.²⁴⁰ He also referred to the firm’s earliest years when it was known as J. Duppa, when a considerable number of wallpapers were designed for the firm, ‘and the blocks cut and used for some years in the style (if I may call it so) of “English Directoire and Empire,”’ although, he added, this style fell out of use towards the latter part of his father’s

²³³ www.collections.soane.org/SCHEME1279 [accessed 17 June 2016]

²³⁴ COB 1, p.36.

²³⁵ COB 1, p.366.

²³⁶ COB 23(i), p.138.

²³⁷ Sugden and Edmondson, p.135.

²³⁸ Ibid., p.135.

²³⁹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S]. p.5.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.5.

early days at Oxford Street (his father joined the firm in 1833).²⁴¹ These comments appear to confirm that the company designed and printed their own wallpapers until 1862.

Even after that date they retained control of the use of their original blocks, according to Sugden and Edmondson.²⁴²

Digby Wyatt's Saloon for Cowtan

In 1862 Mawer Cowtan's business partner James Purdie commissioned the building of a new showroom at 314 Oxford Street to enhance the display of the company's decorative schemes and wares. The architect and scholar Matthew Digby Wyatt (1820-1877) was Secretary of the Great Exhibition of 1851, Surveyor of the East India Company, and Honorary Secretary of the Royal Institute of British Architects from 1855 to 1859. He had also surveyed the exhibits in the great Exhibition of 1851, including the wallpapers.²⁴³ Digby Wyatt was invited by Purdie & Cowtan to design their new Oxford Street building, as Mawer Cowtan's son later explained,

My father's partner in 1860, Mr. Purdie of Edinburgh, had a great ambition to build a saloon in the Italian style.... Sir Digby Wyatt was asked to come in and design and assist us in the decoration of a saloon, which work was completed about 1862²⁴⁴

On completion of the work, Purdie & Cowtan published a new sales brochure in which they invited customers to visit their suite of rooms,

including a magnificent gallery from the designs of M. Digby Wyatt, Esq, richly decorated in the Italian style, which they have just added to their formerly extensive premises, and filled with an entirely new stock of upholstery goods, furniture, and decorations.²⁴⁵

However, Purdie & Cowtan's regard for Digby Wyatt was not shared by an eminent critic almost a century later. In his inaugural lecture as the eleventh Slade Professor of Fine Art at the University of Cambridge in 1950, Nikolaus Pevsner assessed the career of Matthew Digby Wyatt, who in 1869 had been appointed as the first Slade Professor. Pevsner was dismissive of Digby Wyatt's architectural record, noting that although he came from a family

²⁴¹ Ibid., p.8.

²⁴² Sugden and Edmondson, p.200.

²⁴³ *The Industrial Arts of the Nineteenth Century: A Series of Illustrations of the Choicest Specimens at the Great Exhibition*, (London: Day & Son, 1851-1853).

²⁴⁴ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.5.

²⁴⁵ London, National Art Library, MS Purdie & Cowtan Sales Brochure, 608.AD.0425.

that had produced several distinguished architects, ‘the aesthetic quality of his buildings is distressing indeed’.²⁴⁶

The list of Digby Wyatt’s works in the published version of Pevsner’s lecture includes, ‘(b) Other Architectural Work: ‘London:...(v) Oxford Street, offices for Purdey and Cowlan’ (*sic*).²⁴⁷

Cowtan & Sons’ Oxford Street Showroom

From 1808, first as Duppa and eventually as Cowtan & Sons, the firm was located at 314 Oxford Street (renumbered as 309 Oxford Street in 1882), until 1921. The Goad Fire Insurance Map of Oxford Street of 1889 [fig.3] indicates Cowtan & Sons on the south side of the street almost directly opposite ‘Lewis & Co. Draper’s’ which has an area to the rear for ‘Proposed J. Lewis Extension’. The John Lewis drapery shop opened in 1864 at 132 Oxford Street (now numbered 300 Oxford Street), two years after the completion of the Purdie & Cowtan ‘saloon’ designed by Digby Wyatt at 314 Oxford Street. It is not inconceivable that when John Lewis established his drapery business in Oxford Street he hoped to benefit from the proximity of the already well-established Purdie & Cowtan and perhaps to attract their customers across the street. Although no visible trace of Cowtan’s premises, with its saloon designed by Digby Wyatt, survives in Oxford Street today, an 1872 trade card for the firm, by then known as Cowtan & Manooch, illustrates the splendid façade that John Lewis would have gazed upon each day as he opened up for business [fig.4].

²⁴⁶ Nikolaus Pevsner, *Matthew Digby Wyatt, The First Cambridge Slade Professor of Fine Art: An Inaugural Lecture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950), p.2.

²⁴⁷ Pevsner, p.36. It is also interesting to note in the appendix to the lecture, under ‘(c) Designs’ that Digby Wyatt fulfilled a commission for another firm of wallpaper manufacturers, ‘Executed for Messrs Woollam (wall-papers).’



Fig. 4: Advertisement for 'Cowtan & Mannooch' (sic) annotated with the year 1872, showing the front elevation of the showroom at 309 Oxford Street, London.²⁴⁹

²⁴⁹ London, National Art Library, MS Cowtan & Mannooch Advertisement, 608.AD.0425.

Cowtan at the International Exhibition, 1862

The year 1862 was evidently a successful one for Purdie & Cowtan. Not only did they unveil their new showroom on Oxford Street but they were also applauded at the International Exhibition at Kensington for their interior furnishing designs, receiving a prize medal for their, ‘dining-room, and other decorative imitations of woods, and paintings in water-glass, &c., for design and general excellence.’ The official exhibition report stated that, ‘these manufacturers exhibit an excellent *ensemble* of dining-room decoration in the style of the 17th century, of a grave and noble character.’²⁵⁰ Purdie & Cowtan’s principal prize-winning exhibit was a splendid chiffonier, twenty-three feet long, with panels painted in imitation of marble, ebony, walnut, and purple wood, framing exquisite paintings that were, ‘copies of well-known works at Hampton Court, by Mytens, Lely, and Kneller....very cleverly painted by M. Priolo, in the water-glass method.’²⁵¹ The *Art Journal* magazine’s catalogue of the International Exhibition, also singled them out for praise,

Messrs Purdie & Cowtan (successors to the late Duppa & Collins) of Oxford Street, desire to be regarded as house-decorators who raise house-decoration to the level of high Art. They have proposed to themselves no simple enterprize; but their specimen-work speaks well for their capacity to accomplish much, even in the case of so arduous a project as theirs; and we desire both to facilitate their success, and to invite general attention to the capabilities and merits of their system.²⁵²

The period of the partnership between Mawer Cowtan and James Purdie also benefitted from the latter’s connection to the Edinburgh firm of Purdie, Bonnar and Carfrae, as it opened up new markets in the North of England, Scotland and much of Ireland, where they were able to undertake work in competition with other local firms.²⁵³

Mawer Cowtan’s Three Sons

In 1868 Purdie retired and Mawer Cowtan took Mr Manooch into the partnership.²⁵⁴ For the next four years, until Manooch retired, the firm was known as ‘Cowtan & Manooch (late Duppa & Co.)’. Finally, in 1872 the business was renamed Cowtan & Sons when two of Mawer Cowtan’s three sons joined the partnership. The eldest, Mawer Cowtan Cowtan (1848-1920), had joined the firm in 1863, when he was given responsibility for,

²⁵⁰ Waring, II, description of Plate 178.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² *Art Journal*, August 1862, p.8.

²⁵³ MS Purdie & Cowtan Sales Brochure, 608.AD.0425.

²⁵⁴ Stafford, Staffordshire Record Office, MS The Stafford Family Collection, D641/3/P/3/23/168-178. A letter from the architect Charles Alban Buckler to Lord Stafford, dated 1860, confirms that Manooch & Co. sold wallpapers at 15 Great Portland Street, London W1 at least until 1860.

‘the decoration in the left-hand window in Oxford Street, which I have had to arrange since I was fifteen years of age’.²⁵⁵ The second son was Frank Cowtan (1849-1912). In 1881, Mawer Cowtan’s youngest son, Arthur Barnard Cowtan (1865-1934), joined the family firm and the business continued in the name of Cowtan & Sons with the addition of ‘Limited’. In 1921 the leases of the Oxford Street premises were sold and Cowtan & Sons moved to its final destination, 18 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1, with workshops a mile away in Markham Street in Chelsea [fig.5]. The management remained in the hands of Arthur Barnard Cowtan and then his son, Arthur Leslie Cowtan (1893-1966) until it was sold in 1938.²⁵⁶



Fig. 5: Letterheaded paper for Cowtan & Sons after their move to 18 Grosvenor Gardens, London, in 1921.²⁵⁷

Mawer Cowtan Cowtan served as Master of the Painter-Stainer’s Company in 1900, which in 1899 had formed a sister organisation, the Incorporated Institute of British Decorators. His contribution to the furtherance of the wallpaper industry was acknowledged in 1941 in a speech at the Painters’ Hall in the City of London by the Institute of British Decorators’ past president, W.G. Sutherland, who urged the membership to think with gratitude on, ‘the men who have been elected to the presidency in that ancient hall, beginning with Crace and including such names as Scott, Cowtan and Sibthorpe’.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.19.

²⁵⁶ Linsert, p.17.

²⁵⁷ London: London Metropolitan Archive, MS Cowtan Accounts, B/CWT/001-008.

²⁵⁸ W.G. Sutherland, ‘Looking Back on Painters’ Hall’, *A Tribute to Painters Hall 1532 – 1941*, (London: Incorporated Institute of British Decorators, 1941), p.4. Published by the Incorporated Institute of British Decorators after their medieval hall in Trinity Lane, London EC1 was destroyed by fire during a German bombing raid.

The New York Office

Until his death in 1880, the elder Mawer Cowtan was evidently the driving force behind the business. Under his direction his three sons were thoroughly grounded in all the skills required for high class decorative work. They were knowledgeable as artisan craftsmen, able to supervise painters, grainers, gilders, marblers, paperhangers, upholsterers and cabinet-makers to undertake work of the highest quality to the satisfaction of their esteemed and exacting clients. Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, the eldest son, was an accomplished salesman and prided himself on the close and enduring relationships he formed with many important customers.²⁵⁹

The second son, Frank Cowtan, concentrated on managing the company's textiles and upholstery commissions, while the youngest son, Arthur Barnard Cowtan, established the firm's New York office in 1897, which was located in 37 West 57th Street in 1900. In the early 1900s an American agent, W.F. Bordier, was appointed and Cowtan & Sons Incorporated was established in 1920 at 542 Fifth Avenue. In 1930 the New York company name became Cowtan & Tout Inc.²⁶⁰ Cowtan & Tout in New York was bought by Eldo Netto in 1978, which in turn was bought by the Colefax & Fowler Group plc (London) in 1992.²⁶¹ Cowtan & Tout still trades today and its five brands (Cowtan & Tout, Colefax and Fowler, Jane Churchill, Larsen and Manuel Canovas) are sold in its showrooms in the USA, Mexico, Canada, China, Japan, Singapore, Philippines, Australia, France, Italy, Germany and also in London.²⁶²

By Royal Appointment

In 1933, the year before Arthur Cowtan died, he was awarded the OBE by Queen Mary who also bestowed on Cowtan & Sons her Royal Warrant as, 'Decorators and Upholsterers'.²⁶³ In the same year Queen Mary commissioned Cowtan & Sons to restore the Victoria Rooms at Kensington Palace and in 1936 the Queen employed them to redecorate Marlborough House. Promotion of the company's services and skills was chiefly through personal

²⁵⁹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S].

²⁶⁰ Linsert, p.27.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p.27.

²⁶² <<http://cowtan.com/Showrooms/>> [accessed 8 December 2015].

²⁶³ Linsert, p.11.

recommendation. Wealthy individuals who admired the interior decoration schemes of relations, acquaintances and neighbours would write to Cowtan & Sons, prompting one of the three brothers to, 'sally forth in his silk top hat and frock coat'.²⁶⁴ According to his great granddaughter's account, he would take a hansom cab or train in which he travelled first class and dined in style. On arrival at the station he would be met by his hosts' vehicle and transported to their country house or castle, where he would take measurements, note any repairs required to the structure or furnishings and make sketches. He would then suggest that when the family next came up to town for the 'Season' they might visit Cowtan's showrooms where he would have a proposal ready with samples of wallpaper and upholstery fabrics.²⁶⁵

While some of Cowtan's customers may have been confident in their taste in interior decoration, others had to be gently guided in the right direction. Several alternatives for an interior scheme might be proposed, with the one favoured by the Cowtan designer being unveiled last. Discussions could continue during several visits until agreement was reached and the price settled. For a typical commission, Cowtan's craftsmen would include a carpenter, a plasterer, specialist painters, a paperhanger and a cabinet-maker. Ceilings would be lined and distempered, all surfaces would be washed and three to five undercoats of paint applied. Plasterers would repaint, tint or regild cornices which concealed the join of ceiling and walls. Once the preparatory jobs were completed, the woodwork was treated. In bedrooms it might be merely flatted (painted in a 'flat' or matte paint) and the mouldings tinted, while on staircases and landings it might be painted to simulate veined marble. For reception rooms it was often grained to imitate woods such as maple, oak, walnut or chestnut. Once the woodwork was completed the wallpaper was hung. In high status jobs a lining paper was always hung horizontally and once it was deemed perfect, the final paper would be carefully applied.²⁶⁶

Cowtan's renowned imported Chinese wallpapers were mainly used in formal rooms such as drawing rooms and saloons, while bedrooms were often decorated in white ground chintz papers with matching borders. Windows were dressed with curtains and pelmets, valances or festooned drapings, often trimmed with coloured braids and tassels. Customers often also required their existing furniture to be reupholstered to match the new décor. The placing of

²⁶⁴ Linsert, p.13.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., p.13.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., p.16.

each picture and piece of furniture was carefully considered and planned. As Linsert notes, ‘Diplomatic advice might be given on the acquisition of additional antiques or the discard of existing pieces’.²⁶⁷ Clearly, Cowtan & Sons were concerned that the whole effect of the room should do credit to their reputation, thus encouraging further custom from the owners and their guests.

The Third Generation

After Frank Cowtan’s death in 1912 the progression of the business from one generation to the next was disrupted. Frank’s eldest son, Mawer Dougall Cowtan, having briefly worked in the firm, had decided it did not suit him and emigrated to Tasmania. Frank’s second son eventually became an Air Vice Marshall and was not destined for a career in the family trade. During the First World War, Mawer Cowtan’s son, Francis Scott Cowtan was killed at Salonika, Greece. This left Arthur Cowtan’s son, Leslie Cowtan (1893-1966) as the only available male member of that generation. Leslie joined Cowtan & Sons in 1912 and after serving in the First World War, where he won the Military Cross, he returned to the firm in 1919 and eventually took over as managing director. Father and son, Arthur and Leslie, continued to work together until Arthur died in 1934.²⁶⁸ In 1938, at the age of 45, Leslie Cowtan sold his interest in Cowtan & Sons to Trollope & Sons Ltd who operated from West Halkin Street, Belgravia, SW1. Leslie stayed on as managing director for a few years, along with the majority of Cowtan’s foremen and workers. Many of Cowtan’s customers transferred their patronage to Trollope & Sons. In 1946 Leslie Cowtan donated the Cowtan Order Books to the Victoria and Albert Museum in memory of his father, Arthur Barnard Cowtan.

Cowtan’s Contribution to ‘Tasteful’ Decoration

In their role as decorators to many of those at the highest levels of society Cowtan & Sons made a considerable contribution to the development and execution of decorative styles, through their advice to their customers, the quality of their products and their specifications to other manufacturing firms. A sales brochure for the firm in 1862 claimed that, ‘Intending purchasers will find in this Establishment a selection of patterns at once *tasteful, effective,*

²⁶⁷ Linsert, p.16.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p.17.

and original’, and also drew attention to, ‘the importance of choosing Decorations and Furniture at the same time [so that] incongruities in designs or colouring may be avoided.’²⁶⁹

However, their influence went beyond the operation of their day-to-day trade. Both Mawer Cowtan and his son Mawer Cowtan Cowtan were recognised as authoritative voices in matters of design, quality and taste. Both delivered lectures to their fellow businessmen in the wallpaper manufacturing and decorating trades. Each offered their views on the strengths and weaknesses of the industry and addressed matters of design quality and taste.

On 9 October 1844 Mawer Cowtan addressed the Decorative Art Society in its foundation year on the subject of ‘Paperhangings’.²⁷⁰ The Society’s subscribers included eminent representatives of the decorative trades, including the paperstainers William Woollams and Samuel Scott and companies involved in the manufacture of silks, velvets, fringes and carpets, wood carving, brass founding and furniture printing.²⁷¹ In his lecture Mawer Cowtan argued for a ‘higher degree of artistical knowledge being brought to bear upon the designs for this important article of British manufacture.’²⁷² Mawer Cowtan had entered the paperstaining trade eleven years earlier and was critical of British wallpaper manufacturers and the Government for failing to support the industry or to nurture good quality design. He drew attention to the superiority of French design and praised the French for the high esteem in which their designers were held,

they employ (as did our former manufacturers) men who understand the principles of Design and the harmony of coloring, and who make it their study to combine graceful forms with taste and cultivated judgment²⁷³

He also condemned the punitive British tax on wallpaper manufacture that existed throughout the eighteenth century until 1836, saying,

While a heavy tax was laid upon our productions, theirs [in France] were entirely free; while we had to fight our battles singly, and at our own hazard, their Government gave them every encouragement, and the best designs of great and illustrious men were placed continually before their eyes, to improve, and, in fact, *create* a taste.²⁷⁴

²⁶⁹ MS Purdie & Cowtan Sales Brochure, 608.AD.0425.

²⁷⁰ Mawer Cowtan, ‘A Paper upon Paper-hangings’, read to the Decorative Art Society (October 1844).

²⁷¹ The Decorative Art Society was founded in January 1844 to promote ‘a more extensive knowledge of the Decorative Arts, and to encourage enquiry into the true principles of design, its connection with, and subsequent application to manufactures’. Mawer Cowtan was a member of the Decorative Art Society’s committee and served as Honorary Treasurer in 1847.

²⁷² Mawer Cowtan, p.17.

²⁷³ Ibid., p.21.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., p.21.

Mawer Cowtan added that in France, design academies were established, ‘in which every branch of Art was deeply taught’, while in England, ‘our School of Design has been only recently established’, an allusion to the Government School of Design, founded in 1837 at Somerset House, London and forerunner to the South Kensington Museum which opened in 1857 and was renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum in 1899.²⁷⁵ He also complained that, in Britain, lack of investment necessitated that the two separate crafts of designer and block-cutter were combined into one and that inevitably, ‘such men will throw off a number of patterns of inferior quality’, because they have not been educated to produce designs of the highest standards, ‘which result from scientific study and practice’.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, he argued that the designer, ‘on whom the manufacturer depends for his success in trade’, by creating, ‘beautiful forms and elegant combinations’, should be regarded as the most important figure in the business. Instead, it was a shameful fact that in most English firms the designer,

is paid less for his labour than the mechanic who is employed merely to print the pattern after it has been prepared to his hand, who has no necessity for thought, nor any thing but that which is within the power of the common animal strength to effect.²⁷⁷

Mawer Cowtan urged his fellow wallpaper manufacturers to pay the designer a decent wage, and to consider him as a man of talent and genius, ‘to be looked up to as one possessing great and superior abilities....whose refinement of mind ensures him respect and honour wherever he goes.’²⁷⁸ If due attention were given to, ‘the graceful outline and harmony of colouring in the patterns’, argued Mawer Cowtan, then wallpaper, ‘would serve as a vehicle through which to influence, and in some measure to educate, the taste of the nation – inducing a more general appreciation of the fine arts.’²⁷⁹

Seventy years later, his eldest son Mawer Cowtan Cowtan addressed the Incorporated Institute of British Decorators at Painters’ Hall in the City of London.²⁸⁰ His lecture, entitled, ‘Reminiscences and Changes in Taste in House Decoration’, constituted a detailed review of

²⁷⁵ www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/h/history-of-the-vanda-and-the-schools-of-design-study-guide/. Accessed 21 May 2015.

²⁷⁶ Mawer Cowtan, p.22.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p.22.

²⁷⁸ Ibid., p.22.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., p.17.

²⁸⁰ The Institute of British Decorators was founded in 1893 to promote the profession of interior decoration and improve the training and qualification of its members. Founder members included John Diblee Crace (President 1897-1917) and Mawer Cowtan Cowtan (President 1917-1918). It was renamed the British Institute of Interior Design in 1975 and merged with the Chartered Society of Designers in 1988.

the decorative choices of many of Cowtan & Sons' customers during a long trading history.

Cowtan had joined his father's firm in 1863. As he explained, in those days it was,

one of the old-fashioned businesses of the day, one that had been founded in the latter part of the 18th century, and still retained the prejudices of the early Victorian era in the decorative arts, but which prejudices had been considerably broken down by the changes wrought by the first Exhibition in 1851, and of that of 1862.²⁸¹

He expressed pride in the reputation of Cowtan & Sons, reminding his audience of the battalions of superior names among the company's clients, many of whom had remained, 'true friends to us', or were, 'great friends to us,' as demonstrated by their loyalty to the firm's style of decoration and quality of service for generations. Among many examples was Lady Algernon Gordon Lennox whose dining room at Berkeley Square they had decorated in 1910 in Wedgwood grey with a grisaille border, 'This lady is our great friend as I have said before, and has charming taste.' Only recently at the Houses of Parliament, Cowtan & Sons had,

re-papered the Royal Gallery, the Queen's Robing Room, The Bishops' Corridor, and The Moses Room, &c., with Mr Crace's original flock papers, printed from his old blocks, and in most cases in the original colourings;²⁸²

He reminded his audience that most of these designs, 'were the work of Mr. Pugin and Mr. J. Gregory Crace at the time of the erection of the Houses of Parliament', evidence, he argued, that, 'modern taste has not interfered with the honour due to these designs and colourings.'²⁸³ Mawer Cowtan Cowtan also recalled his firm's long record of supplying Chinese wallpapers, observing that at the time of his father's death in 1880, the Chinese papers that they had previously supplied to many customers had completely dropped out of use, although during the last few years,

the fashion has revived again in an extraordinary manner, and people have come to Oxford Street saying they have seen Chinese papers at different houses in the United Kingdom, and we have been able to show them that we had, in most cases, put up these papers in the houses to which they referred, and we have been able to show them the actual entries in our "Picture" Order Books.²⁸⁴

Cowtan's use of the phrase 'Picture Order Books' several times in his lecture is a reminder that Cowtan & Sons utilised their order books not only to document the details of each customer's order, but also to provide a visual record of the papers chosen. This would have proved invaluable when customers made repeat orders, or when they purchased papers long

²⁸¹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.1.

²⁸² Ibid., p.2.

²⁸³ Ibid., p.2.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., p.3.

in advance of when they were to be hung, as the Duke of Westminster did when he ordered Chinese and Japanese wallpapers for his Cheshire seat, Eaton Hall in 1882. The order book states that the papers to be used are the Chinese and Japanese papers ‘supplied by us in 1879’.²⁸⁵

Mawer Cowtan Cowtan also took the opportunity to mount a robust defence against those who criticised the taste for imitation in decoration, declaring,

I am aware that all followers of Ruskin and the younger architects of the day have a great abhorrence of all imitations, but then they have not had to deal with the requirements of the great people in the country, who, if they could not afford marble and real wood, desired to have imitations of them, rather than not have them at all.²⁸⁶

He added that when he had joined the firm in 1863, halls, staircases and vestibules were grained in imitation of marble and that, ‘this fashion had been prevailing for some time, and where people could not afford the painted marble walls we used the marble papers, many of which were beautifully done, and in exceedingly good taste.’ He illustrated his point with one of the grandest mansions in the land, Buckingham Palace, where the, ‘staircases and other parts.....were for years decorated with marbling as in our saloon at Oxford Street, and a great deal was thought of the treatment.’²⁸⁷ Cowtan continued, ‘I submit that there is art, and it requires a great deal of art, in making these imitations of marbles and wood,’ and he concluded his argument by citing the works of the neoclassical artist Sir Alma Tadema (1836-1912), whose ‘very clever imitations of marble [are] shewn in his paintings’.²⁸⁸ In other words, if Cowtan & Sons’ decorative work was tasteful enough for the Royal family, and if painted imitation of marble could be finely executed by one of the country’s most celebrated artists, then there could be no reasonable argument against it, in his opinion.

Cowtan’s Connections to Crace, Trollope and Cole

Cowtan & Sons’ reputation for design and craftsmanship of the highest quality for the most prestigious customers made them the pre-eminent choice for John Diblee Crace when he sought an acquirer for his family firm, Crace & Son. He retired in 1899, bringing his family’s decorating firm to a close after more than a century of distinguished trade. His father John Gregory Crace had formed a profitable partnership with A.W.N. Pugin whose block-printed

²⁸⁵ COB 15, p.475.

²⁸⁶ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.4.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., p.4.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., p.4.

designs for wallpapers were passed to Cowtan & Sons. John Diblee Crace retained a role with the firm for a while and recommended that his clients should have their work carried out by Cowtan & Sons to whom he had transferred his staff and other assets.²⁸⁹ Megan Aldrich has commented that Crace & Son was, ‘undoubtedly the single most important firm of decorators working in Britain in the nineteenth century by virtue, at the very least, of the sheer number of its commissions and their importance.’²⁹⁰ Cowtan & Sons were worthy competitors and successors to Crace & Son in terms of the number of orders and prestige of their client list. Founded in 1768, Crace & Son were celebrated for their work for George IV at the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, while Cowtan fulfilled numerous commissions for members of the British and European Royal families during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In terms of longevity, Crace & Son was in business for 131 years from 1768 to 1899, while Cowtan & Sons originated in the James Duppa firm in 1791 and continued to trade until 1938, a period of 147 years.

The firm to whom Cowtan & Sons was sold in 1938, Trollope, has its own interesting history.²⁹¹ Joseph Trollope set up as a paperhanger in Marylebone, London in 1778 and specialised in supplying exotic wallpapers, especially Chinese painted paper. In 1830 his younger son, George Trollope, became paperhanger to George IV and in 1842 to Queen Victoria. The firm expanded into interior decoration and in 1849 to estate agency, letting and managing property for the Grosvenor Estates. A separate cabinet-making arm of the Trollope firm opened at West Halkin Street, Belgravia, and became known as ‘The Museum of Decorative Arts’. This branch of the company was run by George Robinson who had practiced as an architect in Manchester before becoming Art Director of Trollope’s ‘Museum’. Robinson wrote articles on wallpaper and furniture for the *Art Journal* in the 1880s and was an early member of the Art Workers Guild from 1884. In 1851, the principal Trollope firm became known as George Trollope and Sons and established their reputation through speculative development of land and property in Mayfair. By the end of the nineteenth century the main branches of Trollope were, in order of size, building, estate agency and interior decoration. Cowtan & Sons was absorbed into Trollope interior

²⁸⁹ Linsert, p.16.

²⁹⁰ *The Craces: Royal Decorators 1768-1899*, ed. by Megan Aldrich (Brighton: John Murray, The Royal Pavilion Art Gallery and Museums, 1990), p.ix.

²⁹¹ London: London Metropolitan Archives, MS Trollope and Colls Limited, B/TRL.

decorators at the West Halkin Street Galleries in 1938, while the successor to the building branch of Trollope was Trafalgar House, who acquired the company in 1969.²⁹²

Cowtan & Sons also formed a close association with the wallpaper firm Cole & Son which was established in 1932 by Albert Cole and his son Frank. In 1934 a new company, Old English Wallpapers Ltd, was formed by Albert and Frank Cole in partnership with Leslie Cowtan to purchase Cowtan & Sons' collection of the Crace & Son printing blocks which Cowtan had owned since 1899. Cole & Son acquired the John Perry Ltd wallpaper company in 1941 and in 1947 the historic Crace and Cowtan printing blocks, which together spanned two centuries, were transferred to the John Perry factory in Islington, London. Collectively this became the largest collection of original wood blocks in the trade. Today many of the surviving Crace and Cowtan blocks remain in the ownership of Cole & Son at their premises in Finsbury Park, London [fig.6].²⁹³

The Closure of Cowtan & Sons

Cowtan & Sons might not have closed when it did if Leslie Cowtan had taken up the offer made to him by his niece, and Mawer Cowtan's great-granddaughter, Janet Linsert. In 1934 Janet graduated from the London University Bartlett School of Architecture, having completed a three year Diploma in Interior Design. She proposed to her uncle that she should join Cowtan & Sons with the intention of eventually taking on the management in partnership with her first cousin Evelyn Neresheimer, daughter of Mawer Cowtan Cowtan. Although he had no sons or other male relatives who were willing to take over the business, Leslie declined Janet's offer and four years later he sold to Trollope.²⁹⁴

²⁹² MS Trollope and Colls Limited, B/TRL.

²⁹³ <www.colnestour.org/NewsletterArchives/NewsletterApril2009/HistoricWallpapersandColeSon.aspx> [accessed 29 March 2013]. I am also grateful to Christopher Cole, son of Frank Cole, and to Alan Theobald, former Cole & Son wallpaper printer, for sharing their memories of Cole & Son with me at meetings on 15 November 2013 (Alan Theobald) and 8 January 2014 (Christopher Cole).

²⁹⁴ Linsert, p.18.



**Fig. 6: Printing Blocks formerly owned by Cowtan & Sons, now held by Cole & Son.
Image: Wendy Andrews, with kind permission of Cole & Son.**

It is impossible to know whether Janet and Evelyn would have made a success of running Cowtan & Sons, ensuring its longevity in competition with firms such as Sanderson, which was founded in 1860 and still thrives today. However, as Janet ruefully observed some years later, ‘In those days, female offspring tended to be discounted.’²⁹⁵ Instead, Janet spent four years with Barrett & Sons, a leading painting and decorating firm in Bristol, where she made such a good impression that they offered her a partnership. She turned it down to return to London and joined Sanderson’s sales team before becoming a Flight Officer in the Second World War and eventually joining the British Council where she served the rest of her career.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p.17.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., p.18.

Part III

The Cowtan Order Books

Chapter 5

THE COWTAN ORDER BOOKS DESCRIBED

Chapter 6

COWTAN'S COMMISSIONS FOR 'THE GREAT PEOPLE OF THE LAND'

Chapter 7

MANOR HOUSES AND MANSIONS: WHAT THE COWTAN ORDERS REVEAL ABOUT INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS

Chapter 8

COWTAN'S ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC RECORDS OF ROOMS

Chapter 9

COWTAN'S WALLPAPERS FOR THE CLERGY, THE PROFESSIONS AND SERVANTS

Chapter 10

PATTERNS, MATERIALS AND MAKERS: DESIGN AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS ILLUSTRATED BY COWTAN

Chapter 5

THE COWTAN ORDER BOOKS DESCRIBED

This chapter presents material that has not previously been gathered from the Cowtan Order Books, including data on the numbers of UK and overseas orders placed with the company; the numbers of customers; and the counties and countries that received the orders. An account of Cowtan's range of services and the firms with whom they traded is given, and also the titles of many printing block designs that Cowtan employed.

V&A Catalogue Description

The V&A's acquisition and catalogue reference numbers, assigned to each Cowtan Order Book and volume, begin with 'E.1869-1946, 96.A.1' for Book 1 and end with 'E.1869-1946, 96.A. 24 (ii)' for Book 24, part two. The V&A catalogue describes the Cowtan Order Books as,

Twenty-four order books, containing cuttings of wallpapers and other materials for interior decoration; bound in vellum; some books lettered on the spine *Paper-Orders* and dated consecutively 1824 to 1938. Sold by Cowtan & Sons Ltd, formerly of Oxford Street, London . 33 x 25.4 cm (average size of each volume). Given by Mr A. L. Cowtan in memory of his father, Arthur Barnard Cowtan, OBE. E.1862-1885-1946.²⁹⁷

The V&A's online record provides similar information with these additions:

Place of origin	London, England (made)
Date	1836-1841 (made)
Materials & techniques	Book containing cuttings of wallpapers and other materials, mostly colour prints from woodblocks, annotated in ink, and pasted into a volume bound in vellum.
Gallery location	Prints & Drawings Study Room, level C, case 96, shelf A, box 3.
Summary	Cowtan & Son was a decorating firm with premises in Oxford Street, London. They supplied wallpapers to clients across Britain. Each order was recorded by date under the customer's name and address, and small samples of the papers purchased (and in some cases also fabrics and trimmings) were pasted in. These volumes comprise a valuable record of what people were actually buying, and shows that many resisted the changing fashions, and ignored the advice of

²⁹⁷ Charles Oman and Jean Hamilton, *A History and Illustrated Catalogue of the Collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum*, (London: Sotheby Publications, 1929; rev. edn, 1982).

design critics and decorating experts, in favour of the ever-popular bright florals, stripes, 'satins' and trellis patterns.²⁹⁸

Each Cowtan Order Book measures approximately 33cm x 25cm (12 x 10 inches), which is slightly larger than today's standard A4 paper size of 30cm x 21cm (11.5 x 8.25 inches). There are thousands of samples of wallpapers and wallcoverings pasted into the order books; the typical size of each sample is 10cm x by 4cm (4 x 1.5 inches). The original vellum covers are barely visible since the order books were rebound by the V&A with hard covers and unfixed spines in order to conserve the books and to make them easier to handle and store.

Approach to Organising the Data

From the outset of this research it was essential to establish a methodology for quantifying, organising, analysing and interpreting the substantial quantity of information contained within the Cowtan Order Books. There are twenty-four order books, arranged in thirty-two volumes. Books 1 to 16 are single volumes, creating sixteen volumes. Books 17 to 24 each have two volumes organised into parts i and ii, thus also creating sixteen volumes and bringing the total number of Cowtan volumes to thirty-two. The approach taken to quantifying, sampling and organising such a large quantity of data was to create databases of information, based on close study and recording of the twenty-four Cowtan Order Books. The questions addressed and the data gathered are summarised in table 10.

²⁹⁸ <www.vam.ac.uk/collections> [accessed 1 October 2013]

Question	Method and Type of Data Recorded
How many orders does each Cowtan Order Book contain and how many orders are there in total?	There are 27,808 orders in the 15,230 pages of the twenty-four order books, which were counted by hand and recorded for each book. [Appendix I]
What is the date range of each Order Book?	The date range and span in years of each order book was recorded. [Appendix I]
Who were Cowtan's customers?	All 17,865 surnames in the surviving hand-written separate indexes found at the back of twenty-three of the order books were photographed. A database of customer surnames in alphabetical order was then compiled by typing up and amalgamating all of the names from all of the indexes to create the Cowtan Customer Database. This allows a computerised search of any surname to identify whether Cowtan supplied the individual with wallpapers and if so, in which books and on which pages the orders can be found for his or her property or properties. Since creating the Cowtan Customer Database I have frequently used it in my doctoral research and have also conducted occasional searches on behalf of property owners and institutions.
Which English Counties and Countries of the United Kingdom are represented in the orders?	A sample of approximately 3,000 orders from across the twenty-four order books (over ten percent of the total orders) was photographed, transcribed and put into searchable databases, with words and images, organised in date order and by order book. The criteria for selecting the sample was: 1. A range of orders from every book. 2. Orders for properties or customers of historical significance. 3. Orders containing samples of distinctive, unusual or popular wallpapers or wall coverings. The amalgamated Cowtan Order Book Databases are the source of information for answers to a range of questions on the content of the order books including geographical distribution.
Which countries of the world are represented in the orders?	Every individual order directed to an overseas address was photographed and recorded as part of the sampling of orders mentioned above. A list of Countries receiving Cowtan orders is at Appendix II and a map showing the worldwide distribution of the orders is at Appendix III.
What categories of individual titles in society and the professions are represented in the orders?	The titles and professions of Cowtan's customers were drawn from the sample of 2,800 orders mentioned above. [Appendix V]
Which wallpaper patterns, colours and materials can be identified as being in use in different periods from the orders?	Four Cowtan Order Books were sampled for this purpose: Book 1 (1824-1830); Book 6 (1850-1854); Book 16 (1883-1889); Book 23(i) (1919-1925). Orders in these books provided the data on pattern, colour and materials. (see chapter 10).
Which named designers, wallpaper makers, designs and materials can be identified as being in use in different periods from the orders?	Book 1 (1824-1830); Book 6 (1850-1854); Book 16 (1883-1889); and Book 23(i) (1919-1925) were sampled to gather this information. [Appendix VII]

Question	Method and Type of Data Recorded
What names for different rooms in buildings can be identified as being in use in different periods from the orders?	Seven Cowtan Order Books were sampled for this purpose: Book 1 (1824-1830); Book 3 (1836 -1841); Book 10 (1861 -1864); Book 16 (1883-1889); Book 19 ii (1902 -1904); Book 21 ii (1910 -1913); Book 23i (1919-1925). Orders in these books provided the data on room names. The seven books were selected to give a wide time span and also a greater variety of room names to record. [See Appendix VI for Names of Servants' Rooms].

Table 10: Summary of Approach to Quantifying the Cowtan Order Books' Data

Orders and Dates

The Cowtan Order Books contain 27,808 orders which together span 114 years. The first order in Book 1 is dated 21 June 1824; the last order in Book 24(ii) is for March 1938. Each order is handwritten, usually in ink but occasionally with pencil additions, and records the date and the customer's name and address above a sample or samples of the wallpapers or wallcoverings chosen. In some cases other materials such as upholstery textiles, fringes, leathers and even carpet samples are included. Many orders include directions for the method of transport and delivery of the goods from Cowtan's London warehouse to the customer's home or an alternative delivery address. Many specify the rooms in which the papers are to be hung and the quantities of papers ordered for them. Information about price per piece or roll of wallpaper, or per yard of paper borders or textiles, is only occasionally given. Some orders include written or drawn instructions to the decorator about the installation of the papers, the shape and surface finish of mouldings such as skirting boards and architraves, or the choice of paint colours to complement the wallpapers.

The smallest number of orders in any volume is in Book 18(ii) which contains 440 orders spanning the two and a half years from October 1897 to March 1900. The largest number of orders is in Book 1 which contains 1,938 orders spanning the six years from June 1824 to June 1830. Book 1 also has the largest number of pages of any volume at 849 pages, while Book 24(ii) has the fewest, with 224 pages. Cowtan & Sons' most productive periods in terms of numbers of orders were received from 1824 to 1836 when they recorded 3,749 orders and from 1854 to 1864 when they recorded 3,983 orders (appendix IV).

The company's final decade of trading from 1928 to 1938 was its least productive period, with just 1,144 orders recorded. However, since the majority of the orders do not include information about the financial value of the goods purchased, it is not possible to determine solely from the order books whether the company's profitability was commensurate with the volume of orders. For example, there are single orders for individual customers that fill many pages and specify the purchase of dozens of wallpapers. Evidently the value of such orders would have been substantially higher than an order for just one or two wallpapers. Indeed, fewer orders of larger financial value might have placed Cowtan & Sons in a more profitable position than in their earlier decades when they processed larger numbers of orders for generally smaller quantities of wallpapers.

Indexes and Names

All but one of the twenty-four Cowtan Order Books have a separate alphabetical index of customer surnames inserted into a pocket inside the front or back hard covers made by the V&A. Adjacent to each surname in the indexes are page numbers indicating where their order or orders can be found in that volume. Only the index for Book 4 (1841-1845) is missing.

Through a process of photographing, transcribing and amalgamating the contents of the twenty-three surviving indexes, this doctoral research has, for the first time, confirmed that the Cowtan Order Books contain 17,865 separate customer entries and 5,793 separate customer surnames. Since there are 27,808 orders in the Cowtan books, the average number of orders per surname is just under five. In fact, the majority of customers placed fewer than five orders each. The customer names with the largest number of orders are the American banker J.P. Morgan with 183 orders and Viscount Harcourt's family with 101 orders. The firm also sent 102 orders to the American branch of Cowtan in New York. Among the top one hundred customer names in terms of numbers of orders placed are Cavendish; Schroder; Westminster; Buccleuch; Walsingham; Bedford and Churchill. In many cases the surnames represent several generations or branches of an aristocratic family and their orders relate to more than one property in their ownership [table 11].

Top 30 Cowtan Customers	No. of Orders
Morgan J.P.	183
Harcourt	101
Colebrooke	65
Grafton	57
Lothian	57
Ancaster	55
Cavendish	55
Penrhyn	53
Schroder	53
Cowper	48
McIlvane	47
Rosebery	46
Westminster	44
Fitzwilliam	43
Burton	41
Glyn	40
Mirrieles	40
Deichmann	39
Caledon	38
Abercorn	36
Gaskell	35
Powis	35
Ashburnham	34
Buccleuch	34
Ashley	33
American Embassy	32
Galloway	32
Gordon Lennox	32
Noel	32
HM Office of Works	30

Table 11: Cowtan & Sons' Top 30 Customers by Number of Orders Placed.

Gender Balance of Customers

A survey of the 18,156 title entries that appear in my Cowtan customer database reveals that 13,076 (seventy-two percent) are male titles and 5,080 (twenty-eight percent) are female titles. There are 3,736 titles of royalty, aristocracy and nobility. Among this group, seventy percent are males and thirty percent are females. In contrast, among the 10,231 middle-classes titles ie Esq, Mr, Miss and Mrs, sixty-two percent are males and thirty-eight percent are females.

Therefore, gender analysis of the titles indicates that among Cowtan's female customers, middle-class women were more likely to be responsible for ordering wallpapers than women of the aristocracy [appendix V].²⁹⁹

Counties and Countries

Between the founding of James Duppa's paperstaining warehouse in 1791 and the date of the first order book entry in June 1824, the business became firmly established in the higher ranks of the wallpaper manufacturing and decorating trade. By June 1830, which marked the end of the first order book, their extensive client list included many members of the nobility and gentry. While the majority of their business originated in London, Cowtan & Sons enjoyed the patronage of numerous eminent families who commissioned them to decorate their country seats in the English counties, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, as well as their London townhouses. Analysis of the numbers of orders sent to each English county indicates that the firm was particularly successful in attracting custom from Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Kent and Hampshire.

As well as developing a brisk and loyal trade at home, Cowtan & Sons exported goods around the world. The earliest overseas order was placed on 18 February 1825 by 'Major Hollway' for his residence in the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. In fact the order is likely to have been for Major William Holloway who served as head of the Colonial Engineers Department in the Royal Africa Corps and oversaw the building of the Franschoek Pass, South Africa's first engineered mountain road, fifty miles east of Cape Town.³⁰⁰ The Pass was completed in the same year that Major Holloway purchased an architectural paper and a flock paper for his drawing room, a green silk moire paper with matching border for his, 'best bedroom', two floral papers for further bedrooms and another architectural paper. Perhaps these colourful papers, sent all the way from England by a top class London decorating firm, were the Major's reward to himself for a great engineering achievement. The last Cowtan order sent overseas was dated September and October 1937, for Ray Atherton Esq at the USA Legation in Sofia, Bulgaria. Following his appointment as Ambassador to Bulgaria by the

²⁹⁹ Deborah Cohen suggests in *Household Gods: the British and their Possessions* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 2006) that contrary to previous assumptions, the Victorian interior was 'neither chiefly the responsibility, nor even the prerogative of women....Until at least the 1880s, the business of furnishing was almost entirely a man's world.' (pp.89-90). However, the Cowtan Order Books demonstrate that middle-class women in particular were involved in the ordering of wallpapers.

³⁰⁰ <<https://chelseamorning.wordpress.com/tag/royal-africa-corps/>> [accessed 31 May 2016]

United States President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Mr Atherton took up his post in October 1937.³⁰¹ He chose to redecorate the ambassador's residence with two Cowtan wallpapers, a plain pale blue paper made under the Old English Wallpapers brand and a textured, embossed lemon yellow paper by Cole & Son.

Customers in Africa, Australia, China, India, Russia, South America, the USA and many countries in Europe ordered wallpapers and furnishing fabrics from Cowtan & Sons [appendices II and III]. In all, forty-two countries were in receipt of 425 orders from the firm between 1824 and 1938. However, the numbers and geographical distribution of the orders varied over time. From 1824 to 1850, eighteen orders went overseas to fourteen countries, including Canada, New Zealand, Peru and Sierra Leone. Between 1851 and 1880, fifty-four orders were sent to eighteen countries, including Ceylon, the Falkland Islands, Mauritius and the West Indies. From 1881 to 1910, 127 orders were sent to fifteen countries including Brazil, France, Hungary and Turkey. In Cowtan & Son's final three decades of trading from 1911 to 1938, 226 orders were sent to twenty-two countries including Czechoslovakia, Egypt, Germany and Sweden. By far the greatest number of overseas orders was placed by customers in the USA, particularly in the early twentieth century. Many were for wealthy American financiers and industrialists such as John Pierpont Morgan and his son J.P. 'Jack' Morgan, who spent lavishly on the decoration of their houses in the USA, England and Scotland. Although Cowtan's orders declined in number during the First World War and its aftermath, their trade with the USA held steady, having been bolstered from 1900 onwards after they opened a New York office at 37 West 57th Street, New York.³⁰²

Goods and Services

In accounts of the history of wallpaper, Cowtan & Sons is usually described as a firm of wallpaper manufacturers and decorators, which is an accurate description of their trade from the origins of the Duppa paperstaining factory in 1791 to the early decades of the Oxford Street business in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, the company's promotional literature, stationery, order books and accounts illustrate how they diversified as their business flourished. A Purdie & Cowtan sales brochure, issued to celebrate the opening of their new Oxford Street showroom in 1862, drew attention to a range of services namely,

³⁰¹ < http://cn.worldheritage.org/articles/eng/Ray_Atherton > [accessed 3 November 2016]

³⁰² Linsert, p.27.

‘Paper Hangings, Plain House Painting, Decorative Painting, Upholstery, Cabinet Work, House Agency and the supply of Ornamental Bronzes and Clocks.’³⁰³

Under ‘Paper Hangings’ they offered, ‘every meritorious design – English as well as French – and....an immense assortment of private patterns’, including, exclusively, designs by the artist and writer, Owen Jones. Their Plain House Painting was, ‘executed in all its branches in the best and most substantial style, and at moderate prices,’ while their best white enamel paint was guaranteed, ‘to preserve its clearness and brilliancy even when exposed to the impurities of a London atmosphere.’ They also reassured customers from outside the Capital that their, ‘careful and steady workmen are sent to all parts of the country.’ Under Decorative Painting, the firm offered oil, tempera, encaustic, fresco and water-glass painting carried out by, ‘skilful Decorative Artists, native as well as foreign.....thus enabled to undertake on short notice decorations of the highest class in every style of art’.³⁰⁴

After their furnishing displays won awards at the International Exhibition in 1862, Purdie & Cowtan were keen to promote their cabinet work, such as, ‘French Marqueterie and other Furniture from the most celebrated Manufacturers’, that was, ‘elegant and original, and.....guaranteed to be of the best materials and workmanship.’ By this time their merchandise also included upholstery and carpets; they announced that the ‘assortment of Upholstery Goods is complete, and carefully selected’, adding that a large showroom had been set aside for, ‘Carpets, the stock of which is one of the largest and best in London.’ Another addition to the firm’s services by 1862 was estate agency, termed ‘house agency’ in their brochure, for which they undertook valuations and provided listings of furnished and unfurnished houses to rent or for sale. They made a particular point of their convenient position for a house agency business, being near the top of New Bond Street and thus centrally located in the West End.³⁰⁵ Ten years later, in 1872, after Mr Manooch had replaced Mr Purdie in the partnership, an advertisement for Cowtan & Manooch described the firm as Paper Stainers, Decorators & Upholsterers offering, ‘Design and General Excellence.’ The reader’s particular attention was drawn to their, ‘Real Chinese Paperhangings imported direct from Canton’, and to, ‘French Paperhangings and Decorations’, as well as French and

³⁰³ MS Purdie & Cowtan Sales Brochure, 608.AD.0425.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

English silks, satine, cretonnes, chintzes and tapestries.³⁰⁶ A page from a Cowtan & Sons accounts book, giving the date as '18.....' which refers to the change of address from 314 to 309 Oxford Street and therefore post-dates 1882, maintained the description, 'Painters, Decorators & Upholsterers' and referred to, 'Specialities in Paperhangings' and 'House & Estate Agents,' but also added, 'Sanitary Works & Building Alterations,' together with a new service, 'Funerals: Valuations for Probate'.³⁰⁷ This same wording was still in use when Cowtan & Sons provided estimates to the Earl of Leicester for extensive decorating, building, electrical and plumbing works at Holkham Hall in 1909.³⁰⁸

The Cowtan Order Books also provide evidence of the goods and services offered by the company, and illustrate how their range expanded as the business grew. Supply of paperhangings and associated decorative works always remained at the core of the business but by the 1860s a wide range of furniture, upholstery and furnishings were also in demand. In 1862, for example, E. Bickerton Evans Esq of Whitbourne, Worcester, ordered a set of, 'Spanish mahogany dining tables of 5ft 6 wide, 20 feet long with extending screw', and a, 'Spanish Mahogany sideboard on pedestals, Silvered plate between and ditto on top, Grecian design'. To this he added a matching wine cooler and an 'occasional table 5 feet long on standards, to form [a] rising dinner waggon, and a butler's tray and lamp stand.'³⁰⁹

In 1862, John Brooke Esq of Westbourne Crescent ordered a 'Brussels Crimson Tuft' carpet; curtains in green china silk damask for his drawing room and, 'Enamelled white and gold dwarf bookcases, 2 Chimney glasses, 1 Pier glass and table and an Oval centre table,' with the furniture all to be in walnut.³¹⁰ In October of the same year, Mrs Levett Prinsep of Kingsweare, Devon ordered an, 'iron French bedstead with white brass mountings with a thick hair mattress, bolster & pillows.'³¹¹ The company's upholstery skills were employed in a rather unusual commission by the Earl of Clanwilliam at Belgrave Square to incorporate the fabric of two ball gowns that had belonged to his late mother into items of furniture. A Cowtan order for 1891 records that material from a gown 'worn by Lady Clanwilliam at Queen Adelaide's Drawing Room' in 1835 was to be used to reupholster five oak back armchairs with gilt frames. In addition, a four-panel Louis XV screen, with carved gilt frames

³⁰⁶ MS Cowtan & Mannooch Advertisement, 608.AD.0425.

³⁰⁷ London, London Metropolitan Archives, MS Cowtan & Sons Sales Receipt, 608.AD.0425.

³⁰⁸ Holkham, Holkham Archive, MS Holkham, Estimate from Cowtan & Sons, 1909.

³⁰⁹ COB 10, pp.273-274.

³¹⁰ COB 10, pp.185-190.

³¹¹ COB 10, p.372.

and backs fluted in rich red plain silk, was to be upholstered with material from the gown worn by Lady Clanwilliam on 6 June 1845, ‘at the Ball at Buckingham Palace representing George the 2nd Court.’³¹² More prosaically, by the 1880s Cowtan & Sons was routinely undertaking plumbing and sanitary works in tandem with interior decorations, as the specification for Dr Seymour J. Sharkey at 22 Harley Street, London illustrates, ‘Alterations, Hot Water, Sanitary and Decorating works as per estimate’.³¹³ As electricity increasingly came into general use, electrical works were added to their repertoire of services. In 1895 Cowtan & Sons supplied, ‘Electric lighting works & upholstery etc’ to His Excellency the Count de Casa Valencia at the Spanish Embassy in Grosvenor Gardens, London SW and in 1905 they installed electric lighting at the German Catholic Church of St Boniface in Union Street, Whitechapel.³¹⁴

The varied nature of the firm’s building works is illustrated by two orders from Book 16. Baron Schroder’s conservatory was converted into a hall and decorated with stags’ antlers mounted in panels of ‘ivory and color leather paper’ at The Dell, Englefield Green, Surrey in 1887.³¹⁵ Mrs Weldon’s drawing room was remodelled by ‘taking in’ the library at Morden Hill, Lewisham in 1889. The new rooms were to be, ‘papered & painted & upholstered ensuite with the old drawing room’ with ‘the Raphael decoration on grey forming each dado in panel with gilt mouldings.’³¹⁶ An order placed in 1910 by His Majesty’s Office of Works describes in detail the restoration works undertaken at the Houses of Parliament for the Peers’ Lobby in the House of Lords, where Cowtan & Sons was contracted to:

Erect the necessary scaffolding for cleaning the decorated panels and ribs to ceiling, and revive same with clear size and flat varnish. All the decorated and gilded wall panels and corbels to be clear sized. The carved stonework in spandrills and moldings which are decorated and fielded to be cleaned and the colors revived and all to be clear sized. The whole of the surfaces, except the decorated parts of the stonework, from floor to ceiling to have the natural face of the stone exposed by scrubbing etc. After the stonework has been treated in this way, and thoro’ly cleaned, it is to have three dressings of “Baryta” water³¹⁷ which will be provided by the Office of Works.³¹⁸

³¹² COB 17(i), p.280.

³¹³ COB 18(i), p.97.

³¹⁴ COB 20(i), p.77.

³¹⁵ COB 16, p.441.

³¹⁶ COB 16, p.595.

³¹⁷ <<https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/conservation-bulletin-45/cb45p33-35.pdf/> [accessed 24 April 2016]. According to the *Conservation Bulletin* (London: English Heritage, 45 (Spring 2004), p.33, at Westminster Abbey in the 1860s, Sir George Gilbert Scott used a solution of shellac in ‘spirits of wine’ (ethanol) on the interior of Westminster Abbey, squirted into the stone. Scott observed that it was not effective on the exterior in areas of driving rain, and he and subsequent surveyors used waxes on the interior instead. He also permitted a Professor Church to experiment with wall paintings and

Cowtan & Sons' accounts also reveal how the firm's range of work had broadened by the early twentieth century. After a gale in January 1920 they repaired the roof at 29 The Grove, The Boltons, London SW for Mr A. P. Marshall, for the sum of £1-18-0 which included the cost of fastening down loose slates, fixing new slates with lead strips and nails, and the men's time. Between December 1919 and January 1920, the firm carried out an insurance valuation for Sir Eric Hambro, Chairman of Hambros Bank, at Norwich House, Norfolk Street, London. During six days they made an inventory of Sir Eric's household furniture, pictures, china, glass, silver plate, linen and general effects, on which they delivered a valuation of £37,419-16-6 and charged a fee of £189-3-5. In August 1920 they presented an invoice for the sum of £139-12-3 to J.P. Morgan for rewiring the women gardeners' quarters at his property, Wall Hall, Aldenham, Hertfordshire.³¹⁹

Of course, while undertaking this diverse range of contracts, Cowtan & Sons continued to maintain their high quality decorating service, for example supplying a private design 'Primrose' wallpaper to George V at Buckingham Palace in November 1920.³²⁰

Suppliers and Purchasers

Like most in the decorating trade, Cowtan & Sons conducted business with dozens of companies and individual craftsmen, from paperstainers and plasterers to upholsterers and architects. The wallpaper and decorating sector was a crowded field in the nineteenth century. Firms who were competitors also often traded with one another, for example by supplying or purchasing one another's block or machine-printed papers. The Cowtan Order Books provide evidence of the many firms with whom Cowtan & Sons traded, either as purchasers or as suppliers of goods and services. From at least 1862 the company outsourced their wallpaper-printing after their paperstaining factory was demolished to make way for their new showroom in Oxford Street.³²¹

Among the designers, craftsmen and manufacturers whose papers are specified in the Cowtan orders are Crace & Son, founded in 1768 and whose blocks and customer lists were acquired

Reigate stone conservation at Westminster Abbey Chapter House by using 'baryta water', an early experiment with barium hydroxide solution.

³¹⁸ COB 21(i), p.150.

³¹⁹ MS Cowtan Accounts (B/CWT/001-008).

³²⁰ COB 23(i), p.31.

³²¹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.5.

by Cowtan & Sons in 1899; William Woollams, founded in 1835, who printed papers for J.G. Crace; Scott, Cuthbertson & Co., founded in 1846, who took over the Eckhardt brothers' wallpaper factory in Chelsea; Sanderson & Sons, established in 1860, whose designers included A.F. Brophy, Christopher Dresser, George Halte, the Silver Studio and C.F.A. Voysey;³²² Morris & Co. founded by William Morris in 1861 (Sanderson acquired Morris's wallpaper business including their patterns, blocks and company trademark in 1940);³²³ Jeffrey & Co. founded in 1864, printers of designs by William Morris, Owen Jones and Walter Crane among others; and John Perry Ltd, founded in 1875 and acquired by Cole & Son in 1941, who had themselves acquired Cowtan & Son's historic printing blocks in 1938. Other successful firms of the era, with whom Cowtan might have competed, included Watts and Co. founded by Bodley, Garner and Scott in 1874; the Silver Studio, who designed for Liberty and Sanderson, founded in 1880; Essex & Co., who produced the designs of C.F.A. Voysey, founded in 1887; and Shand Kydd founded in 1891.

Cowtan orders frequently refer to particular wallpapers or textiles by their manufacturer's or supplier's initials, such as 'W.W.' for William Woollams, 'S.C. & Co.' for Scott, Cuthbertson & Co. and 'A.S. & Co.' for Arthur Sanderson & Co. Almost two hundred names in the orders are appended with 'Messrs.', '& Co.', or 'Ltd.' thus indicating a business customer. They include retailers such as Harrods and Harvey Nichols; furniture makers such as Gillow and Maple; and many firms for whom Cowtan undertook decorating work, such as Savoy Hotels Ltd, Great Eastern Railway and General Accident Insurance Ltd.

The sources of Cowtan & Son's many imported Chinese and Japanese wallpapers are regrettably not recorded in the order books, but manufacturers of high quality French papers supplied by Cowtan, such as Zuber, Desfosse & Karth, and Balin are mentioned in several orders. Zuber, founded in 1797, was renowned for depictions of grand panoramic scenes from history designed to encircle a whole room. Desfosse & Karth created scenic or panorama papers of high artistic quality in the late nineteenth century. Balin, founded in 1863, was renowned for producing ornate embossed leather effect wallcoverings.³²⁴

Purdie & Cowtan's sales brochure of 1862 announced that their new showroom held, '....an immense assortment of private patterns, including the original designs of Mr Owen Jones (of

³²² Schoeser, p.23.

³²³ Ibid., p.39.

³²⁴ Woods, in *The Papered Wall*, p.157.

which Purdie & Cowtan are Sole Proprietors)³²⁵ Three years earlier, another wallpaper manufacturer, John Trumble & Company had announced that they were the ‘Sole Manufacturers of Mr. Owen Jones’s New Designs for 1859’.³²⁶ Cowtan & Sons bought stock from Trumble & Co. and it is possible that Owen Jones’ designs were among them. In the *Grammar of Ornament* (1856), Owen Jones articulated thirty-seven ‘propositions’ or rules for good design, favouring geometrical, abstract patterns and motifs that were in contrast to the floral and classical papers popular at that time.³²⁷ Mawer Cowtan Cowtan referred to having supplied papers designed by Owen Jones to the Marquis of Ailesbury in 1873 at Savernake Forest, Wiltshire, but added, ‘this is the only entry I can find for these papers at this time.’³²⁸ There is also a reference to Owen Jones in an entry, dated 24 June 1861, in the back pages of Cowtan Order Book 10, which records a list of block titles with print numbers for each, including, ‘All Owen Jones patterns as in bound books.’³²⁹ Jones is known to have designed papers for other wallpaper manufacturers such as Jeffrey & Co. and Townsend and Parker & Co. but these few references to his designs give limited insight into the duration or depth of the association between Owen Jones and Cowtan & Sons.³³⁰

Two firms with whom Cowtan & Sons negotiated exclusive business arrangements in 1862 were the French bronze ornament makers, Gautier and the German lighting manufacturer, Herr Pohl. Under the heading, ‘Ornamental bronzes, clocks, &c.,’ they announced that,

Messrs. Gautier, of Paris, who have received First-Class Medals at every Exhibition, when their works have been put in competition, have appointed Purdie & Cowtan their *sole Agents in this country*³³¹

Gautier’s bronzes, they claimed, ‘have no superior in design and workmanship’ but at the same time, ‘in price they are much more moderate than those of many of the other Parisian manufacturers.’ The brochure’s further enticement was that Gautier’s works, ‘can never become commonplace,’ because they were only sold direct from Gautier or from Purdie & Cowtan, ‘*the prices in Paris and London being identical.*’ The firm was also granted ‘Sole Agency in Great Britain’ by Herr Pohl of Berlin, for his bronze electro-plate goods, many of

³²⁵ MS Purdie & Cowtan Sales Brochure, 608.AD.0425.

³²⁶ Hrvol Flores, p.167.

³²⁷ Owen Jones, *The Grammar of Ornament*, (London: Herbert Press, 2008)

³²⁸ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.15.

³²⁹ COB 10, p.674.

³³⁰ Hrvol Flores, p.165.

³³¹ MS Purdie & Cowtan Sales Brochure, 608.AD.0425.

which were adapted for lighting and all of which, said Purdie & Cowtan, were, ‘highly ornamental, and the prices are surprisingly low.’³³²

Printing Block Titles

Cowtan & Sons were renowned for their luxurious hand-printed wallpapers. From their earliest years as paperstainers under the name of Duppa, and then as Duppa, Slodden & Collins, they gained a reputation for beautifully crafted and executed block-printed papers. In 1899 they acquired the Crace printing blocks, including designs by A.W.N. Pugin, and in 1938, Cole & Son acquired many of Cowtan’s historic blocks, including the Crace designs. As Mawer Cowtan Cowtan recalled, many new designs were block-cut for the firm in early 1800 in the style he described as ‘English Directoire and Empire’ which alludes to the style that flourished in England between 1800 and 1815 and took its name from the the First French Empire under Napoleon. Some years later, Mawer Cowtan Cowtan revived these old designs with the assistance of Frederic Aumonier, nephew of William Woollams, who had taken over the running of that business in 1876. The reissued designs were a resounding success which prompted Mawer Cowtan Cowtan to rename the blocks after the customers for whom they were printed. In his 1914 lecture he drew attention to twenty of the most notable designs, and the eminent customers after whom they were named, including,

Westminster for the Duke of Westminster, at Eaton Hall, Cliveden and Grosvenor House; *Fitzwilliam* for Earl Fitzwilliam, Grosvenor Square, Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire, and Coollattin, Ireland; *Ormonde* for the Marquis of Ormonde, Grosvenor Street and Kilkenny Castle, Ireland; *Lothian* for the Marquis of Lothian, Grosvenor Square, and Monteviot, Jedburgh, and New Battle Abbey, Dalkeith; *Houghton* for Lord Houghton, afterwards the Marquis of Crewe.³³³

Block designs, block titles and the blocks themselves were valuable assets for manufacturers. Naming particular block designs after those for whom they were commissioned or revived bestowed honour of a kind upon the customer, and ensured, or at least encouraged, continued loyalty to Cowtan & Sons. Many of their own designs and block titles are referred to in the Cowtan Order Books, as well as named designs from other firms [appendix VII].

Under a heading ‘List of Blocks’ at the back of Cowtan Order Book 10, which holds orders from 1861 to 1864, is a list of sixty block titles and print numbers. The names are largely descriptive such as Fuchsia Stripe; Hummingbirds; Rose and Lace; Sweet Pea; Lily Chintz;

³³² Ibid.

³³³ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.8.

Renaissance Rosette & Trellis and Gothic Damask. However, proper nouns also appear among the titles, such as Queens Chintz, Archbishop of York, Noels Cornwall Marble, Gurney Stripe, Duppas Fleur de Lys, Lord Falmouth (flock & gold), Bhurtpore and Vatican Scroll Border. The combined list of blocks from Mawer Cowtan Cowtan's 1914 lecture and Order Book 10 adds up to eighty-two block titles, including Mawer Cowtan Cowtan's favourite paper, the Clandon, which was supplied to the Viceroy of India at Simla in 1881.³³⁴ Many more blocks were made and used by Cowtan & Sons, and when their blocks were amalgamated with those of Crace & Son in 1899, it created the largest collection of historic English blocks in the country. Many of these blocks remain in the ownership of Cole & Son, although an inventory describing the condition of that company's historic blocks reveals that a substantial proportion now fall into the category of 'not useable', which is unsurprising given that many of them are almost two hundred years old.³³⁵

In chapter 6 the Cowtan orders for Royalty and the Aristocracy, as well as other notable institutions and individuals, are discussed.

³³⁴ Ibid., p.25 and COB 15, p.350.

³³⁵ MS Cole & Son, List of titles of historic printing blocks kindly supplied to me by Simon Glendenning, Managing Director, Cole & Son, November 2013.

Chapter 6

COWTAN'S COMMISSIONS FOR 'THE GREAT PEOPLE OF THE LAND'

One notable feature of the Cowtan Order Books is the elevated social status of many of their customers. 'The great people of the land', as Mawer Cowtan Cowtan described them³³⁶ are represented by the royalty, aristocracy, politicians, bishops, judges, industrialists, philanthropists, artists and scholars recorded in the order books. A search of the 18,156 title entries that appear in the Cowtan customer database compiled for this thesis (made possible by transcribing and compiling the twenty-three separate indexes in the Cowtan Order Books) reveals that an extraordinary twenty percent belong to royalty, titled aristocracy and nobility [appendix V]. To this may be added the great institutions of the land.

This chapter surveys Cowtan's customers in the higher levels of society and examines how and when they decorated their properties. Motivations for redecoration are not evident in the orders but in certain cases the date coincides with a change of circumstance, suggesting that a marriage, birth of an heir, new appointment or overseas posting might have been the stimulus. In other cases, where an order coincides with a turbulent event in the life of the customer or the nation, interior decoration may have offered a distraction. Further research would be required to establish the motives for redecoration in individual cases but the Cowtan orders provide insight into the timing and nature of decisions made. They also illustrate in precise detail how the upper classes decorated their properties for over a century.

³³⁶ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.1.

Royalty

Members of royal families of the United Kingdom and Europe were customers of Cowtan & Sons. All the royal orders were placed between 1875 and 1936, with the exception of one in 1842 for His Highness Prince Lichtenstein of Vienna for a set of Chinese paperhangings, ‘with figures on pale green’, purchased soon after the birth of his first son and heir Prince Alfred Louis.³³⁷ The last royal order was for Queen Mary at Marlborough House, London in November 1936 just before the abdication of her son, Edward VIII.³³⁸ Whether by design or coincidence the timing of each of these orders, like many others in the Cowtan Order Books, occurred at significant moments in the lives of the customer.

Royal females placed orders with Cowtan marginally more often than royal males. The titles of Queen, Princess and Empress appear twelve times, while King, Prince and Emperor appear nine times, which suggests that royal females were equally involved in decisions about the decoration of their palaces. Royal patronage undoubtedly burnished Cowtan & Sons’ reputation. The regular occurrence of royal orders from 1875 onwards underlines the strength of the firm’s position as highly esteemed decorator to upper class society in the final quarter of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century.

British Royalty at Home and Abroad

Queen Victoria’s children, grandchildren and their spouses were customers of Cowtan & Sons. In 1875 the Princess of Wales, later to become Queen Alexandra as consort to Edward VII, ordered a gold embossed paper, ‘for 2 panels for painting upon’, at their London residence, Marlborough House.³³⁹ Cowtan & Sons were introduced to Princess Louise, Queen Victoria’s sixth child, through their work for her sister, Princess Alice, later the Grand Duchess of Hesse.³⁴⁰ Princess Louise ordered five wallpapers including one gold paper with a leaf design for covering, ‘a black fire screen on both sides’, at Kensington Palace in 1875 [fig.7]. Four years later Princess Louise returned to Cowtan & Sons, this time for papers for her private apartments at Government House, Rideau Hall, Ottawa, after her husband, the Marquess of Lorne, had been appointed Governor General of Canada. Perhaps to remind her of home or simply because their design and colours appealed to her, the Princess chose

³³⁷ COB 4, p.244.

³³⁸ COB 24(ii), pp. 507-508.

³³⁹ COB 14, p.147.

³⁴⁰ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.20.

similar leaf pattern designs for her residence in Ottawa to those she had chosen for Kensington Palace [fig.8]. The Ottawa order also included, ‘16 yards Butterfly frieze border without gold’ and ‘a set of real Chinese papers on lemon ground, birds, trees etc.’ In 1881 the Princess ordered papers for another Canadian royal residence, the Citadel in Quebec, for which she chose eighteen pieces of a cream and pale green paper for the drawing room and seventy pieces of the Wedderburn damask paper for the ballroom.³⁴¹



Fig. 7: Cowtan order for Princess Louise, Kensington Palace, 1875, for papers for covering screens and for borders.³⁴²

³⁴¹ COB 15, p.335. Cowtan & Sons had first printed this wallpaper for a Captain Wedderburn,

³⁴² COB 14, p.65.



Fig. 8: Cowtan order for Princess Louise, Government House, Ottawa, 1879, for wallpapers for Her Royal Highness' Private Apartment.³⁴³

Sandringham House in Norfolk was supplied by Cowtan & Sons in 1879 when the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, ordered, 'A set of real Japanese paperhangings, flowers, birds on white ground'.³⁴⁴ As Mawer Cowtan Cowtan noted, 'At this time we received from Japan a large number of sets of paperhangings in the style of the Chinese'.³⁴⁵ In 1892, the Duke of York, later George V, ordered seventeen pieces of a crimson paper overprinted with gold for his boudoir at St James' Palace [fig.9]. The Duke also ordered twelve pieces of a white floral paper for the drawing room at York Cottage at Sandringham in 1905.³⁴⁶ George V and Queen Mary's patronage of Cowtan & Sons is illustrated by further orders, for example, one for the King in 1920 for twenty-two pieces of a white paper patterned in, 'Own private design, The Primrose, for His Majesty's Study', at Buckingham Palace [fig.10].

³⁴³ COB 15, p.1.

³⁴⁴ COB 15. P.54.

³⁴⁵ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.23.

³⁴⁶ COB 20(i), p.43.



Fig. 9: Cowtan order for the Duke of York, St James' Palace, 1892, for crimson paper overprinted with gold for His Royal Highness' boudoir.³⁴⁷

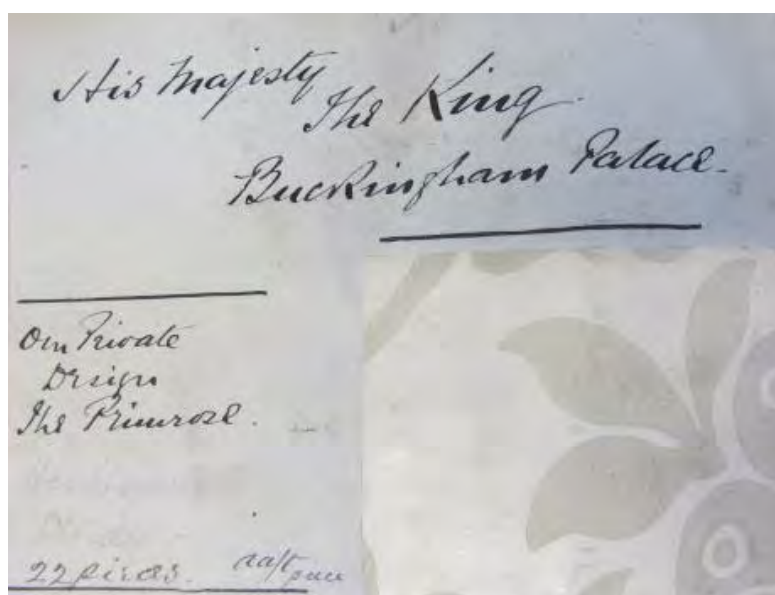


Fig. 10: Cowtan order for His Majesty the King, Buckingham Palace, 1920, for 'Own private design, The Primrose, for His Majesty's Study'.³⁴⁸

Queen Mary placed an order for Buckingham Palace in 1932, for, '4 Chinese Panels, Hand Painted on silk. Framed & Glazed'.³⁴⁹ As her son Edward VIII's abdication crisis loomed in 1936, Queen Mary ordered a substantial quantity of upholstery fabrics and curtains for the Large Drawing Room and Green Drawing Room at Marlborough House.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ COB 17(ii), p.375.

³⁴⁸ COB 23(i), p.31.

³⁴⁹ COB 24(i), p.280.

³⁵⁰ COB 24(ii), pp.507-508.

The Cowtan orders for British Royalty at home and abroad demonstrate how successful the firm was in securing and nurturing royal patronage. The royal preference for luxurious Chinese paperhangings and damasks, white and gold wallpapers, as well as for floral and foliate patterns, often edged with gold, is also apparent in the Cowtan orders. Similar taste in wallpapers is evident in orders for members of foreign royal families, although the firm also introduced papers in the style of William Morris to at least one European palace.³⁵¹

Foreign Royalty Overseas and in Britain

Members of various European royal dynasties, often with family connections to the British monarchy, placed orders with Cowtan & Sons. In 1875, Princess Louis of Hesse (Queen Victoria's daughter Princess Alice), ordered wallpapers and upholstery fabrics for Hesse Darmstadt, home of her husband, Prince Louis, heir to the Grand Duchy of Hesse in Germany.³⁵² Mawer Cowtan Cowtan later recalled that Lady Fitzhardinge had introduced him to Princess Louis in June 1875 and that had led to substantial commissions, with, 'both the Grand Duke and H.R. Highness coming to Oxford Street, and afterwards her son also'. Mawer Cowtan Cowtan added that he, 'brought into use at the Palace at Darmstadt the so-called "Morris" style of papers' and also, 'mounted up some very beautiful tapestry borders, which were given to H.R. Highness by Queen Victoria.'³⁵³

In June 1877, Princess Louis was elevated to Her Royal Highness the Grand Duchess of Hesse and in December that year ordered sixteen pieces of a sumptuous embossed pink and gold floral pattern paper on dark green ground for the New Palace at Hesse Darmstadt.³⁵⁴ In March 1878 the Grand Duchess ordered a further twenty-nine pieces of two different floral papers for the New Palace, but died later that year. The Grand Duke of Hesse remained loyal to Cowtan & Sons and in 1891 he reordered one of his wife's chosen wallpapers, as noted on the order, 'same as supplied in 1875'[fig.11].

³⁵¹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.2.

³⁵² COB 14, pp. 55-56, 381, 435, 468.

³⁵³ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.20.

³⁵⁴ COB 14, p.435.



Fig. 11: Cowtan order for the Grand Duke of Hesse, New Palace, Hesse Darmstadt, 1891.³⁵⁵

Cowtan & Sons also attracted custom from members of foreign royalty in the UK and abroad, some of whom settled in Britain following exile from their home country. These orders are chiefly for furnishing fabrics and carpets rather than for wallpapers, perhaps indicative of the transient nature of their lives. In 1896 the last German Emperor and keen sailor, Wilhelm II participated in the Cowes Week races on the Isle of Wight³⁵⁶ and ordered, ‘fine Oriental and Wilton pile carpets’, for his imperial yacht, the ‘Meteor’.³⁵⁷ The last French Empress, Eugenie, placed several orders between 1902 and 1909 for Farnborough Hill, Hampshire, her home after the death of her husband Napoleon III. Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and the Tsarina Alexandra visited Farnborough Hill in 1909, the same year in which Empress Eugenie purchased 120 yards of crimson silk damask, conceivably for the purpose of redecoration in their honour.³⁵⁸ In 1913 Prince Andrew of Greece (husband of Princess Alice, granddaughter of Princess Louis, the Grand Duchess of Hesse) ordered two boldly patterned floral furnishing fabrics for the Royal Palace at Athens.³⁵⁹ Princess Vera of Russia purchased fabric from Cowtan & Sons for her residence in exile, Queen’s Gate Place Mews, London in 1927.³⁶⁰ In 1934, the last Queen of Romania, Queen Marie, widow of King Ferdinand I, ordered seventy-six and a half yards of floral print fabric for the Palatul Cotroceni in Bucharest.³⁶¹

³⁵⁵ COB 17(i). p.215.

³⁵⁶ Blaine Taylor, *Kaiser Bill!*, (UK and USA: Fontheill Media, 2014), p. 21 and <<http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/126176.html>> [accessed 7 January 2017]. Royal Museums Greenwich, ‘On board Kaiser Wilhelm II’s yacht ‘Meteor’ during the Queen’s Cup race at Cowes, 1893’, drawing by William Wyllie.

³⁵⁷ COB 18(i), p.173.

³⁵⁸ COB 20(ii), p.622.

³⁵⁹ COB 22(i), p.33.

³⁶⁰ COB 23(ii), p.547.

³⁶¹ COB 24(ii) p.405.

Viewed together, Cowtan & Sons' royal orders illustrate how the firm often received commissions through recommendation from related or otherwise connected members of British and European royal families.

The Aristocracy

All ranks of British aristocracy and the peerage appear in the Cowtan Order Books; of the 18,156 titles in the indexes to the books, 3,736 are aristocratic such as Duke, Marquess, Viscount, Earl, Baron, Count or Lord. Orders for the aristocracy are present in every book, from 1824 when Lord Killmorey at Mourne Park, Ireland ordered seventeen pieces of a pink floral pattern paper on a blue ground;³⁶² to Earl de Grey who ordered Chinese, flock and floral papers for Wrest Park, Bedfordshire between 1838 and 1851;³⁶³ and Viscount Dalmeny who chose an architectural wallpaper for Bletchley Grange in Buckinghamshire in 1914.³⁶⁴

Fifty-four percent (2,545) of the aristocratic titles are male and forty-six percent (1,161) are female. Examples of Cowtan's aristocratic female customers include the Countess of Westmorland who ordered pink floral patterned paper on a dark brown ground for her boudoir at Apthorpe, Northamptonshire in 1875;³⁶⁵ Lady Frederick Cavendish who ordered 'The Stafford' damask paper in crimson for two drawing rooms at 21 Carlton House Terrace, London in 1895; and Lady Hartington who ordered eleven pieces of a clouded blue paper made under Cowtan's Old English Wallpapers imprint for Churchdale Hall at Chatsworth, Derbyshire in 1935.

Chinese Papers for the Aristocracy

Cowtan & Sons' aristocratic customers often chose the most luxurious and expensive wallpapers. The firm's high quality imported hand-painted and hand-printed Chinese papers remained desirable in the first half of the nineteenth century, even though by then the fashion for Chinese decoration had begun to wane.³⁶⁶ Orders for the Honourable George Cavendish for a, 'set of Chinese paperhangings' at 13 Hanover Square, London in 1828 [fig.12] and for the Duke of Northumberland for, '2 sets of Chinese paper on green' and a, 'mock Indian paper to match', at Alnwick Castle in 1837 [fig.13] display identical samples of Chinese

³⁶² COB 1, p.7.

³⁶³ COB 3, pp. 321, 331, 335, 424, 522 and COB 6, p.172.

³⁶⁴ COB 22(i), p.111.

³⁶⁵ COB 14, p.78.

³⁶⁶ Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*, p.67.

papers and illustrate their popularity among Cowtan's wealthiest customers. Another example is found in an order for the Duke of Rutland at Belvoir Castle, Leicestershire in 1829 which specifies 'a set of India paper No.1 on green'.³⁶⁷



Fig. 12: Cowtan order for the Honourable George Cavendish, 13 Hanover Square, London, 1828, for 'a set of Chinese paperhangings'.³⁶⁸



Fig. 13: Cowtan order for the Duke of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle, 1837, for '2 sets of Chinese paper on green' and a 'mock Indian pattern to match'.³⁶⁹

The Cavendish and Percy orders for Chinese papers are unusual in having samples attached. Often, a narrative description of the colour and pattern, such as, 'Chinese paper with figures on dark grey', for Earl de Grey at Wrest Park in 1839³⁷⁰ or, 'A set of 8 very fine old Chinese panels on black ground painted with figures illustrating Chinese life' for Robert Bacon Esq, Long Island, New York in 1912,³⁷¹ is given in the Cowtan order but no sample is included. The most plausible explanation is that the Chinese papers were expensive, therefore to cut out a sample measuring 10cm x by 4cm (4 x 1.5 inches) to paste into the order book would have been extravagant. Furthermore, as Chinese papers were often produced by a combination of block-printed and hand-painted methods,³⁷² in many cases a sample would have been

³⁶⁷ COB 1, p.721.

³⁶⁸ COB 3, p.424.

³⁶⁹ COB 3, p.114.

³⁷⁰ COB 3, p.355.

³⁷¹ COB 21(ii), p.505.

³⁷² de Bruijn, Bush and Clifford, pp.4-5.

indicative, rather than an accurate reproduction of the paper ordered, as was the case with hand-block-printed and machine-printed paper samples. As noted in chapter 4, the order books were used by Cowtan as a record of wallpapers sent to each property and therefore accuracy in the design and colour of the sample was usually a prerequisite.

Several sets of Chinese wallpapers were ordered from Cowtan & Sons by the sixth Earl Fitzwilliam for Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire in 1868. One set was decorated with, ‘trees etched with silver on green ground’, and another, ‘with coloured trees and extra finish on white ground.’ Imitation bamboo was often specified as a border for Cowtan’s Chinese papers. All the Wentworth Woodhouse papers were to be bordered with, ‘mouldings in imitation bamboo – colored in various ways to suit the different Chinese papers for the various rooms.’³⁷³ In 1874 the Duke of Westminster ordered, ‘Two sets of fine Chinese paper hangings on green ground, bamboo trees, flowers, birds, etched with gold’, and one set each in the same design but on a pink ground and a rich apricot ground at the cost of, ‘25 guineas per set’, for Eaton Hall, Cheshire.³⁷⁴ Five years later he ordered ‘a set of real Japanese paper-hangings, flowers, birds’ on a grey blue ground, with thirty sheets in one set for Grosvenor House, London.³⁷⁵

As the Cowtan Order Book illustrates, the large quantity of paperhangings that Cowtan & Sons imported from Japan in 1879 was also installed at Sandringham, with the orders for both Grosvenor House and Sandringham being only one page apart and both referring to, ‘real Japanese paper-hangings’.³⁷⁶ The Duke of Westminster also repeated his order for Japanese papers in 1882 [fig.14].

³⁷³ COB 12, p.230.

³⁷⁴ COB 13, p.563.

³⁷⁵ COB 15, p.56.

³⁷⁶ COB 15, p.54 and p.56.



Fig. 14: Cowtan order for the Duke of Westminster, Eaton Hall, Cheshire, 1882, for papers for the Japanese Rooms.³⁷⁷

Cowtan & Sons continued to supply Chinese style wallhangings in the early twentieth century, as an order for the Duchess of Bedford for, '5 sets (50 sheets) of "Décor Chinois", on white satin ground', for Woburn Abbey illustrates.³⁷⁸ The price paid by the Duchess in 1923 was, '£12 per set', less than half the price of, '25 guineas (or £26 1s) per set', paid by the Duke of Westminster in 1874, almost fifty years earlier. The difference in price may be attributed to one of several factors, such as that the papers for Eaton Hall were of a superior quality to those for Woburn Abbey; or that the production, transportation and market for Chinese papers had developed to such an extent by the 1920s that the costs to the decorator and customer had reduced; or that the price of 'Décor Chinois' from France in the early twentieth century when Chinoiserie was once again back in vogue,³⁷⁹ was much less than the price of original Chinese papers imported by Cowtan.

³⁷⁷ COB 15, p.475.

³⁷⁸ COB 23(i), p.218.

³⁷⁹ Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*, p.73.

Turning to the terminology employed by Cowtan & Sons for their papers of Chinese origin or style, study of the orders reveals a degree of ambiguity. Cowtan prided themselves on their 'real Chinese' and 'real Japanese' paperhangings and asserted in their sales literature that they stocked papers, 'imported direct from Canton'.³⁸⁰ However, the order books illustrate the company's apparently interchangeable use of terms such as 'Chinese', 'Japanese' and 'Indian' and therefore the geographical source for individual papers cannot always be assumed. There is also apparently no distinction made in the Cowtan orders between original Chinese papers and imitation Chinoiserie papers from Europe.

As David Beevers has noted, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries there was less concern about differentiation between Chinese objects and their Western interpretations than today. Indeed, the term 'Chinoiserie' as a description of goods depicting, 'a European fantasy vision of China and the east (including India, Persia and Japan)', only appeared in dictionaries in 1883.³⁸¹ In his 1914 lecture to the Institute of British Decorators, Mawer Cowtan recalled the many original Chinese papers the firm had supplied to aristocratic customers and although he did not use the term there is evidence from the orders that they also sold Chinoiserie papers.

It should also be noted that from the 1880s Cowtan supplied embossed and lacquered leather-effect papers widely known as 'Japanese' papers that were imported by British firms such as Rottmann, Strome & Co.³⁸² These papers are occasionally also annotated as 'Japanese' in the Cowtan orders. The use of the terms 'Chinese' and 'Japanese' by Cowtan can be understood in relation to accompanying paper samples, where they exist, to ascertain the type of paper intended. For example, orders for the Duke of Westminster in 1882 and Colonel H. P. Ewart in 1883 both refer to 'Japanese' papers but the samples show a Chinese style paper in the former and a leather-effect paper in the latter.

Given the ambiguities in Cowtan's use of nomenclature, the geographical as well as manufacturing origins of the papers they describe as 'Chinese', 'Japanese' or 'Indian' might

³⁸⁰ London, National Art Library, MS Cowtan & Mannooch Advertisement, 608.AD.0425.

³⁸¹ David Beevers, *Chinese Whispers: Chinoiserie in Britain*, ed. by David Beevers, (Brighton & Hove: The Royal Pavilion & Museums, 2008), pp.13-26.

³⁸² Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*, pp.123-124.

merit further investigation as a contribution to wider contemporary scholarly research on wallpapers from Asia.³⁸³

Florals, Flocks and Tapestries for the Aristocracy and Nobility

Chinese papers were evidently highly prized by the aristocracy but, like royalty, they also favoured other traditional and luxurious wallcoverings. In 1841 the Duke of Marlborough ordered thirty-four pieces of two wallpapers, ‘glazed and silked [for the] Blue room, Bedroom & Dressing room adjoining’, at Blenheim Palace, Woodstock.³⁸⁴ In the following year, the Marquis of Abercorn ordered several floral papers overprinted on white and gold for the Priory at Stanmore [fig.15]. In 1875 the Duke of Westminster ordered an embossed tapestry pattern paper in dark olive green and red for, ‘No.1 West Bedroom in Main Building’, to be enhanced with, ‘ebonised mouldings’, and 176 pieces of a pale blue foliate design paper for the, ‘West Attics and Tower rooms’.³⁸⁵



Fig. 15: Cowtan order for the Marquis of Abercorn, The Priory, Stanmore, 1842, for wallpapers for Bedroom and Dressing Room.³⁸⁶

³⁸³ See Emile de Bruijn, ‘Consuming East Asia: Continuity and Change in the Development of Chinoiserie’ in *The Country House: Material Culture & Consumption*, ed. by Jon Stobart and Andrew Hann (Swindon: Historic England, 2016) pp.95-104; also Clare Taylor, ‘Chinese papers and English imitations in eighteenth-century Britain’, in Stavelow-Hidemark, E. (ed.) *New Discoveries, New Research : Papers from the international wallpaper conference at the Nordiska Museet, Stockholm, 2007* (Stockholm: The Nordiska Museet, 2009) pp.36-53.

³⁸⁴ COB 4, p.88.

³⁸⁵ COB 14, p.114.

³⁸⁶ COB 4, p.186.

It is not uncommon to find repeat Cowtan orders for the same pattern wallpaper to be used in different residences belonging to the same owner and over long periods of time. Among four papers ordered by Earl Spencer in 1878 for Althorp Park, Northamptonshire was a scarlet leaf pattern named ‘Laurel’, of which, ‘800 feet net’, (equivalent to twenty-two pieces or rolls, measuring thirty-six feet long) was required in a, ‘wide width (30 inches)’ [fig.16]. The Earl evidently favoured this particular paper because five years later he ordered the same ‘Laurel’ paper for Spencer House, St James’ Place, London [fig.17].



Fig. 16: Cowtan order for Earl Spencer, Althorp Park, Northamptonshire, 1878, for ‘Laurel’ wallpaper.³⁸⁷



Fig. 17: Cowtan order for Earl Spencer, Spencer House, St James’ Place, 1883, for ‘Laurel’ wallpaper.³⁸⁸

Although flock papers declined in popularity during the nineteenth century the Cowtan Order Books reveal that the aristocracy continued to purchase them late in the century. Sir Henry Bedingfeld ordered two flock papers for the Library, Hall and Staircase at Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk in 1875 [fig.18]; and in 1879 the Duke of Devonshire ordered fifteen pieces of a burgundy red flock and gold embossed patterned paper for his Irish seat, Lismore Castle [fig.19]. The colours and patterns of the papers for Oxburgh Hall and Lismore Castle reflect their owners’ preference for Gothic motifs. Oxburgh Hall has been the home of the Bedingfeld family since 1482 and was re-Gothicised by the sixth and seventh Baronets from

³⁸⁷ COB 14, p.543.

³⁸⁸ COB 16, p.26.

the 1830s to 1870s; the Cowtan wallpapers for Oxburgh contributed to the restoration of the Gothic interior (see chapter 7). Lismore Castle has been owned by the Dukes of Devonshire since 1753 and was largely rebuilt from 1840 to 1858 by the sixth Duke who engaged A.W.N. Pugin to remodel the interiors.³⁸⁹ By August 1879, the date of the Cowtan order, the seventh Duke evidently felt it was time to renew the wallpaper at Lismore, but still in the Gothic style.

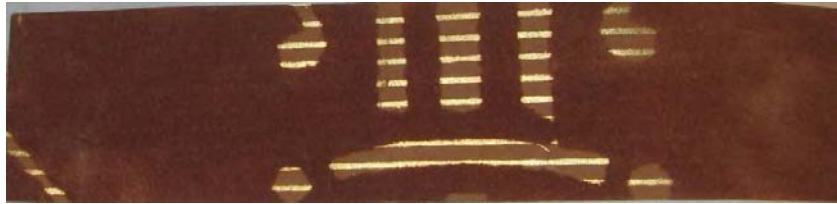


Fig. 18: Cowtan order for Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk, 1875, for flock papers for the Library and the Hall and Staircase.³⁹⁰

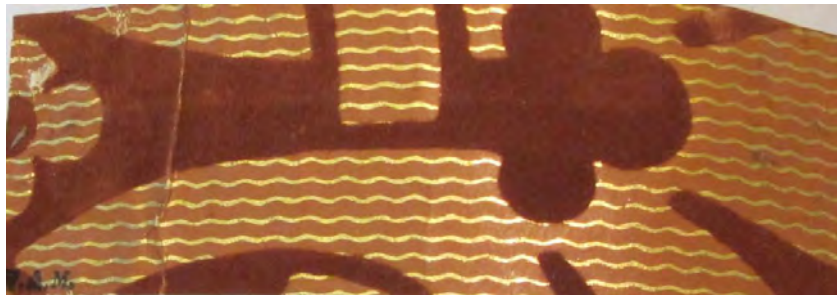


Fig. 19: Cowtan order for the Duke of Devonshire, Lismore Castle, County Waterford, 1879, for red flock and gold embossed paper.³⁹¹

Prime Ministers, Bishops and Judges

The highest levels of the state, church and judiciary, including four British Prime Ministers, two Archbishops, six Bishops and two Law Lords were customers of Cowtan & Sons, as the following examples illustrate.

Prime Ministers and their Families

In 1834 Viscount Palmerston, then Foreign Secretary and later Prime Minister, ordered twenty pieces of a green and red floral paper and eleven pieces of a similarly patterned paper on white ground, together with three other bright floral papers and matching borders for his country home, Broadlands in Hampshire [fig.20]. Two years later, he ordered a flock paper in

³⁸⁹ < <http://www.lismorecastle.com/brief-history>.> [accessed 29 December 2016].

³⁹⁰ COB 14, p.138.

³⁹¹ COB 15, p.93.

two shades of green for his dining room at Stanhope Street, Mayfair.³⁹² In 1864, as he approached the end of his Prime Ministerial career, he ordered a turquoise and pale blue paper for his London home, Cambridge House in Piccadilly.³⁹³



Fig. 20: Cowtan order for Viscount Palmerston, Broadlands, Hampshire, 1834, for five floral papers with borders.³⁹⁴

Members of the Churchill family were longstanding customers of Cowtan & Sons; orders in their name appear in twelve books ranging from Books 1 to 23. Among the later Churchill orders is one for the Right Honourable Lord Churchill in 1897 for a floral paper in pinks and greens at 6 Herbert Crescent, London.³⁹⁵ In 1915 Cowtan supplied Winston Churchill's mother, Lady Randolph Churchill, with three floral papers for the sitting room, kitchen and bedroom of the garage mews at 25 Cock Yard, to the rear of her home at 72 Brook Street [fig.21]. The mews garage is likely to have served as staff accommodation for which the brightly coloured machine-printed papers would have been appropriate.

³⁹² COB 3, p.32.

³⁹³ COB 11, p.282.

³⁹⁴ COB 2, p.520.

³⁹⁵ COB 18(ii), p.357.

Lady Churchill returned to Cowtan & Sons in 1916, this time for a more sophisticated architectural design in a heavier weight paper for the Brook Street house itself [fig.22]. The contrast in the quality and patterns of the papers ordered for Lady Churchill's main house and servants' quarters is typical of the Cowtan orders, where finer papers were ordered for principal apartments and cheaper papers were ordered for family bedrooms and servants' accommodation.



Fig. 21: Cowtan order for Lady Randolph Churchill, 25 Cock Yard, London, 1915, for papers for the Bedroom, Kitchen and Sitting Room in Garage.³⁹⁶



Fig. 22: Cowtan order for Lady Randolph Churchill, 72 Brook Street, London, 1916.³⁹⁷

³⁹⁶ COB 22(i), p.214.

³⁹⁷ COB 22(ii), p.400.

During the early decades of the twentieth century Cowtan & Sons were regularly called upon by His Majesty's Office of Works to carry out decorative works at the Houses of Parliament. It seems likely that the quality of the firm's work at Westminster attracted the attention of government ministers and MPs, many of whom were customers of Cowtan. In 1916, Mrs Asquith, wife of Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, ordered thirty yards of a floral furnishing fabric, at a cost of three shillings per yard, to be sent to 10 Downing Street for use at their home at Sutton Courtney, Oxfordshire.³⁹⁸ After resigning as Prime Minister, David Lloyd George ordered a deep red brocade fabric from Cowtan & Sons in 1923 for, 'window curtains, bed curtains & bedspread',³⁹⁹ for his country house, Bron-y-de in Churt, Surrey.

Prelates, Bishops and Deans

Senior ranks of the Church of England also purchased Cowtan's wallpapers. The earliest significant clerical order was for the Dean of Windsor, Henry Hobart, who ordered six pieces of a silk moirée effect crimson paper with a matching border in 1824.⁴⁰⁰ In 1825 the Lord Primate of Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh ordered twenty-six pieces of a royal blue paper with grey floral decoration and fourteen dozen matching borders for the Archbishop's Palace.⁴⁰¹ Another Archbishop of Armagh ordered a flamboyant paper in 1905, specifying, 'this border with bows to be painted in mauve like chintz.'⁴⁰²

Anglican Bishops overseas also ordered papers from Cowtan & Sons and those in tropical climates tended to choose brightly coloured papers that would have been shown to good effect in their sunlit environment. For example, in 1841 two floral patterned papers were dispatched to Kingston, Jamaica for the first Anglican Bishop of Jamaica, Christopher Lipscomb [fig.23]. The first Anglican Lord Bishop of New Zealand, George Selwyn, ordered twenty-two pieces of a pale white fleur-de-lys patterned paper in 1864.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁸ COB 22(ii), p.344.

³⁹⁹ COB 23(i), p.166.

⁴⁰⁰ COB 1, p.62.

⁴⁰¹ COB 1, p.123.

⁴⁰² COB 20(i), p.29.

⁴⁰³ COB 11, p.290.



Fig. 23: Cowtan order for the first Anglican Bishop of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica, 1841.⁴⁰⁴

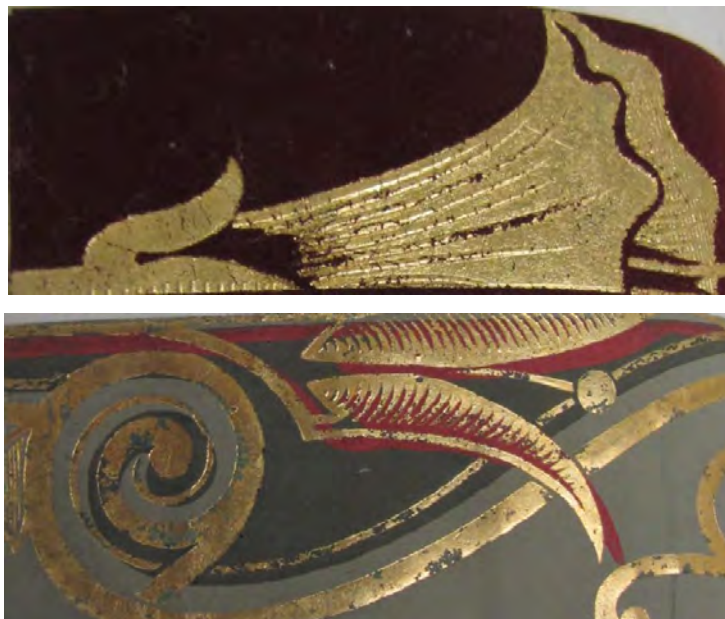


Fig. 24: Cowtan order for the Lord Bishop of Rochester, Danbury Palace, Chelmsford, Essex, 1867.⁴⁰⁵



Fig. 25: Cowtan order for the Lord Bishop of Ely, Bishop's Palace, 1886.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁴ COB 3, p.659.

⁴⁰⁵ COB 12, p.95.

⁴⁰⁶ COB 16, p.372.

In England, the cooler climate and gloomier light influenced the choice of papers for episcopal residences, with darker colours or occasionally patterns edged with gold often chosen. The Lord Bishop of Rochester ordered nine wallpapers embellished with finely printed gold designs on dark flocks and pale grounds for Danbury Palace, Chelmsford, Essex in 1867 [fig.24]. The Dean of Norwich, ordered four flock papers in tones of brown and deep red for the Deanery in 1883.⁴⁰⁷ His neighbour, the Lord Bishop of Ely, ordered five damask wallpapers in blue, green, grey and ochre for his drawing room, study and staircase for the Bishop's Palace in 1886.⁴⁰⁸ Later the same year he placed a further order with Cowtan & Sons for a heavily embossed leather effect paper in cream and brown with the prominent head of an eagle incorporated into the design, to form a frieze for the dining room at the Bishop's Palace [fig.25].

However, in contrast, two wallpapers ordered by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Campbell Tait, for Lambeth Palace in 1877, one decorated with trees and the figures of children and the other with ribbons, appear to be papers designed for a nursery [fig.26]. The order notes that the papers are, 'for Miss Tait', presumably the Archbishop's daughter, which might explain their whimsical design and light colouring.



Fig. 26: Cowtan order for His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, 1877, for two papers 'for Miss Tait'.⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁷ COB 15, p.550.

⁴⁰⁸ COB 16, p.289.

⁴⁰⁹ COB 14, p.340.

Judges

The judiciary appear in the Cowtan Order Books less often than other members of the establishment, which suggests either that they shunned wallpaper or that they patronised firms other than Cowtan. The Master of the Rolls, Baron John Romilly, ordered a paper decorated with a pale grey leaf pattern edged with gold to be hung in panels in three drawing rooms at 6 Hyde Park Terrace in 1852 [fig.27]. Similarly, for the decoration of his drawing rooms at 47 Wimpole Street in 1875, the Lord Justice of Appeal, Sir William Milbourne James, ordered a paper embellished with gold. A pale grey moirée paper with fine gold zigzag pattern was framed with gilt moulding, the woodwork to be white and gold and the ‘Adams’ ceiling in grey [fig.28]. Though over twenty years apart, the two orders reflect a similarly restrained taste in wallcoverings, apparently in keeping with the status of their purchasers.



Fig. 27: Cowtan order for The Master of the Rolls, 6 Hyde Park Terrace, 1852, for paper in panels in three drawing rooms.⁴¹⁰



Fig. 28: Cowtan order for the Lord Justice of Appeal, 47 Wimpole Street, 1875, for paper in panels with gilt moulding for the drawing room.⁴¹¹

⁴¹⁰ COB 6, p.423.

⁴¹¹ COB 14, p.93.

The Arts and Academia

Distinguished names from the arts, architecture and academia were among Cowtan & Sons' customers. Among the individuals were the architect John Soane and the artist Augustus John. The institutions included the Royal Society of Arts, the National Gallery, the Royal Academy of Music and twelve Oxbridge colleges.

Artists and Architects

Architects are occasionally referred to in the Cowtan orders in their role as overseer of interior remodelling and redecoration works. However, the most notable architect among Cowtan's customers is not identified by his profession. John Soane ordered two pieces of a foliate design paper for his townhouse at 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1828, three years after his completion of remodelling works there [fig.29].

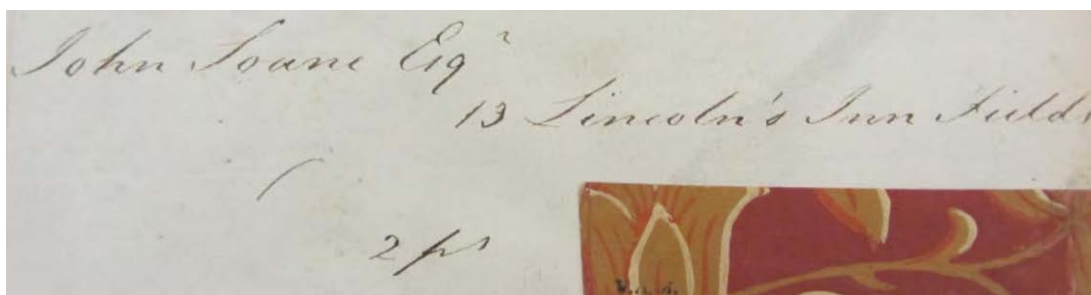


Fig. 29: Cowtan order for John Soane, 13 Lincoln's Inn Fields, 1828.⁴¹²

Cowtan & Sons attracted the custom of artistic and bohemian society during the early decades of the twentieth century. Leo Schuster, patron of the arts, ordered a white fabric printed with a golden rope design for curtains and valances for his dining room at 22 Old Queen Street, London in 1909;⁴¹³ two years later he ordered upholstery fabric in a bold pattern in pink and green for a 'conversation sofa.'⁴¹⁴ The artist Augustus John ordered thirty-two pieces of a bronze embossed herringbone patterned wallcovering for his home at 28 Mallord Street, Chelsea in 1923.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹² COB 1, p.559.

⁴¹³ COB 21(i). p.59.

⁴¹⁴ COB 21(ii), p.451

⁴¹⁵ COB 23(i). p. 220 and p. 226.

Galleries

Between 1900 and 1909 Cowtan & Sons were engaged by His Majesty's Office of Works on several occasions for interior decoration at the National Gallery at Trafalgar Square. Their first commission in 1900 was for, 'No.7 Gallery to be cleaned and painted & walls hung with 'Tynecastle Canvas No.1027' [fig.30]. Further work for several London galleries followed; in 1901 the firm was employed by the Far East Art Gallery at 95 New Bond Street to, 'supply and put up the hand painted decoration after the Eldorado.'⁴¹⁶ Created by the French company Zuber in 1849, 'Eldorado' was a wallpaper showing botanical and geographical scenes from Europe, Africa, America and Asia. It was printed using over 1,500 blocks and one hundred and twenty colours. The only surviving complete 'Eldorado' scheme in the UK is at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire.⁴¹⁷

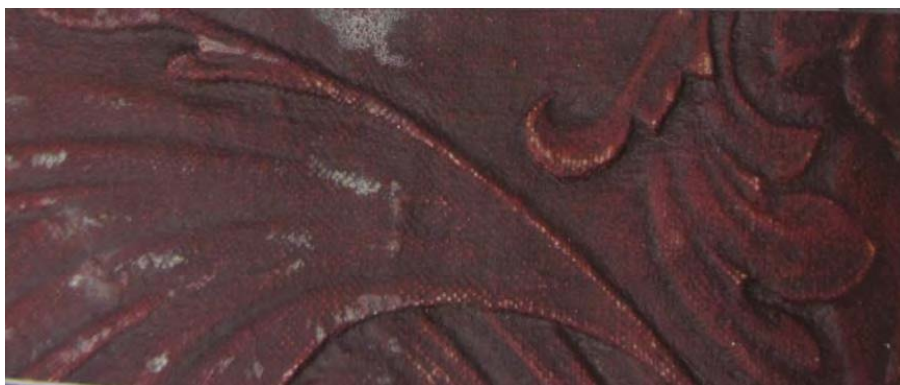


Fig. 30: Cowtan order for His Majesty's Office of Works, the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, 1900, for No.7 Gallery to be cleaned and painted & walls hung with 'Tynecastle Canvas No.1027'.⁴¹⁸

Cowtan & Sons returned to the National Gallery in 1903, where they undertook decorative works, including the installation of more Tynecastle canvas no.1027, in the Octagon Room and gallery numbers four, eleven and fifteen.⁴¹⁹ Their work at the National Gallery was evidently admired, for later that year the firm supplied Tynecastle to Royal Holloway College in Englefield Green, Surrey for the college's picture gallery, with the direction, 'Walls, large design and same colouring as at the National Gallery Trafalgar Square' [fig.31].

⁴¹⁶ COB 19(i), p.264.

⁴¹⁷ <<http://blog.english-heritage.org.uk/beautiful-wallpapers/>> [accessed 30 October 2016]

⁴¹⁸ COB 19(i), p.67.

⁴¹⁹ COB 19(ii), p.415.

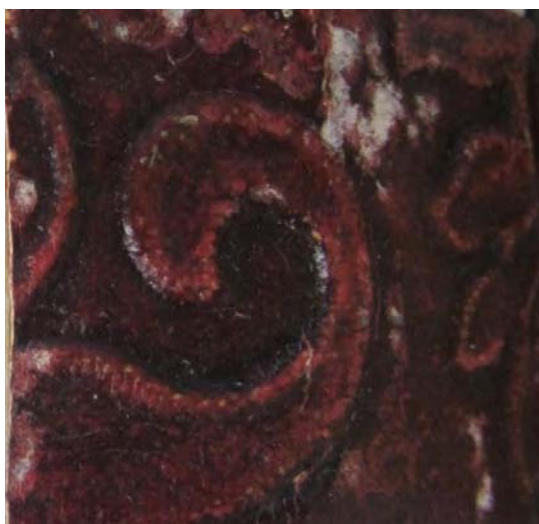


Fig. 31: Cowtan order for Royal Holloway College, Englefield Green, Surrey, 1903, for Tynecastle No. 1029 for the Picture Gallery, ‘same colouring as at the National Gallery, Trafalgar Square’.⁴²⁰

In 1905 Cowtan supplied a dark green flock paper to the National Portrait Gallery.⁴²¹

Seventy-two yards of Tynecastle canvas was sent to the British Art Gallery (now the Tate Gallery) in 1907.⁴²² The National Gallery again called on Cowtan & Sons in 1909, this time to supply two pieces of ‘Anaglypta’ wallpaper for ‘No.6 Room’ to be ‘Decorated to special color’ [fig.32].

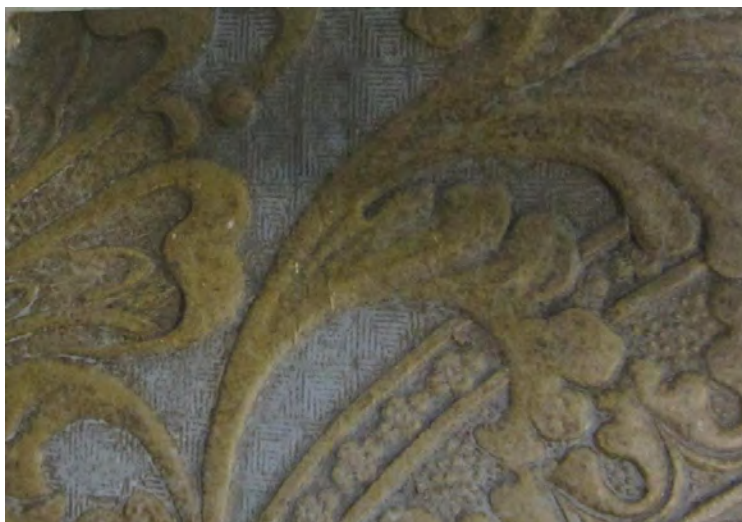


Fig. 32: Cowtan order for His Majesty’s Office of Works, the National Gallery, 1909, for two pieces of Anaglypta wallpaper for No.6 Room to be ‘Decorated to special color.’⁴²³

⁴²⁰ COB 19(ii), p.449.

⁴²¹ COB 20(i), p.111.

⁴²² COB 20(ii), p.415.

⁴²³ COB 21(i), p.90.

Arts Societies, Academies and Clubs

In 1907 the Committee of the Royal Society of Arts commissioned Cowtan & Sons to carry out decorative works to the meeting rooms, vestibules, library and staircase of its premises in John Street in the Adelphi district of London, under the direction of the architect, Maurice E. Webb, of 19 Queen Anne's Street.⁴²⁴ The adjacent order in the Cowtan book reveals that simultaneously the firm undertook decorative works under the supervision of the same architect for the Committee of the Conservative Club in St James' Street just a short distance from the Royal Society of Arts, which suggests that both orders may have come to Cowtan & Sons through the recommendation or referral of Mr Webb.⁴²⁵

In 1909,⁴²⁶ the Royal Academy of Music ordered a floral wallpaper in shades of pink and russet for a room at the top of its premises in Tenterden Street, off Hanover Square, London. As the Goad Fire Insurance Map of Oxford Street for 1889 [see chapter 4] shows, the Academy was situated to the rear of Cowtan & Sons' Oxford Street premises, which must have proved convenient for Cowtan's decorators.



Fig. 33: Cowtan order for the Executive Committee of the Early Victorian Exhibition, Melbourne, Australia, 1934.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ COB 20(ii), p.409.

⁴²⁵ COB 20(ii), p.410.

⁴²⁶ COB 21(i), p.105.

⁴²⁷ COB 24(ii), pp.397-398.

Cowtan & Sons' work for galleries and exhibition venues continued in the final decade of the company's trading. In 1933 the Chelsea Arts Club in Church Street, London ordered three floral fabrics for curtains for bedrooms and the steward's room.⁴²⁸ In 1934 the firm supplied the, 'Primrose design double flock paper for painting', to the Wallace Collection⁴²⁹ and in the same year they sent a substantial quantity of wallpapers, including the 'Russell Tuft' and fabrics to the Executive Committee of the Early Victorian Exhibition in Melbourne, Australia [fig.33].

Academia

Fellows of Cambridge and Oxford Colleges and aristocratic students are represented in the Cowtan Order Books. In December 1849 Lord Annesley, then aged nineteen, ordered thirteen pieces of a fine gold filigree pattern paper on pale blue-green ground for his rooms at Trinity College, Cambridge [fig.34]. Two months later his fellow Trinitarian, Sir John Ramsden, also aged nineteen, ordered a paper of similar design for his sitting room. Although the sample for Sir John shows the pattern on a white ground, a pencil note has been added across it, 'on pale green' [fig.35]. It is conceivable that the two young men were acquainted and that Sir John admired Lord Annesley's wallpaper and therefore chose a similar gold pattern on a similar pale blue-green ground.⁴³⁰

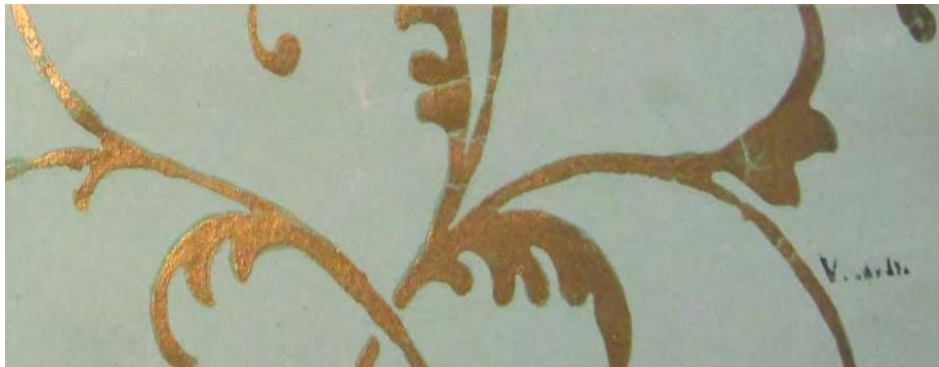


Fig. 34: Cowtan order for Lord Annesley, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1849, for thirteen pieces of wallpaper.⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ COB 24(ii), p.364.

⁴²⁹ COB 24(ii), p.390

⁴³⁰ See also Jane Hamlett, *Material Relations* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010) for discussion of the decoration of the rooms of male university students in the late nineteenth century.

⁴³¹ COB 5, p.676.



Fig. 35: Cowtan order for Sir John Ramsden, Bart, Trinity College, Cambridge, 1850, for twenty pieces of a white and gold paper for a sitting room, with the note 'on pale green'.⁴³²

The Reverend Richard Harrington, Principal of Brazenose College, Oxford also selected a wallpaper with gold decoration for his drawing room in 1842 [fig.36]. However, unlike the papers chosen by the Trinity students, his was decorated with brightly coloured flowers edged with gold. The Reverend ordered twenty-two pieces of wallpaper, enough for a room measuring approximately twenty-eight feet by eighteen feet and fifteen feet high. This is a similar quantity as ordered by Sir John Ramsden at Trinity, suggesting that the room of the Principal of Brazenose College was of comparable size to the room of the student Sir John Ramsden. In contrast, Lord Annesley at Trinity College ordered thirteen pieces of wallpaper, enough for a room measuring approximately twenty feet by fourteen feet and twelve feet high, and therefore of more modest size. The significance of the quantities of wallpapers specified in the Cowtan orders for understanding the dimensions and remodelling of rooms is examined in greater detail in chapter 7.



Fig. 36: Cowtan order for the Reverend Principal of Brazenose College, Oxford, 1842, for twenty pieces of wallpaper for his drawing room.⁴³³

⁴³² COB 5, p.694.

⁴³³ COB 4, p.238.

Several distinguished members of the University of Cambridge placed orders with Cowtan & Sons in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1885, Professor George Darwin, son of the naturalist Charles Darwin, and father of the artist Gwen Raverat, ordered an embossed cream paper for Newnham Grange in Cambridge. In 1893 Cowtan supplied wallpapers for bedrooms at Newnham Grange including a yellow damask and a floral paper in blue, green and pink for the ‘Pink Bedroom’ [fig.37]. Lady Darwin again turned to Cowtan & Sons for a green wallpaper with cross-hatch pattern in 1908.⁴³⁴

Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge purchased thirteen pieces of Cowtan & Sons’ Rosebery design wallpaper at the price of ten shillings per piece in 1910 [fig.38]. Papers were also ordered by members of College staff. A dark green paper decorated with a brilliant red and gold bird pattern was ordered for Christ’s College, Cambridge in 1912, with no name or room attached, but it was likely to have been for one of the College’s communal rooms [fig.39]. Likewise, in 1929 the Bursar of King’s College, Cambridge, purchased thirty sheets of Cowtan’s ‘Bhurtpore’ design wallpaper at the price of sixteen shillings for the college’s new Card Room.⁴³⁵



Fig. 37: Cowtan order for Mrs George Darwin, Newnham Grange, Cambridge, 1893, for bedroom wallpapers.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ COB 20(ii), p.535.

⁴³⁵ COB 24(i), p.40.

⁴³⁶ COB 17(ii), p.413.



Fig. 38: Cowtan order for Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, 1910, for 'Rosebery' design wallpaper and herringbone twill furnishing fabric.⁴³⁷



Fig. 39: Cowtan order for Christ's College Cambridge, 1912.⁴³⁸

Celebrated Women

Cowtan orders for female customers appear more frequently in the later Cowtan Order Books. The horticulturalist and garden designer Gertrude Jekyll is renowned for her collaborations with the architect Edwin Lutyens who designed her Arts and Crafts home, Munstead Wood in Surrey in 1896. Prior to this, Gertrude Jekyll lived with her mother at Munstead House, for which in 1880 she ordered a substantial quantity of 137 pieces of five different wallpapers [fig.40]. Two of the papers were in shades of pale blue and were supplied by 'W.W.', likely to have been William Woollams; two were in shades of red, one

⁴³⁷ COB 21(i), p.238.

⁴³⁸ COB 21(ii), p.470.

being the 'Laurel' design (this design was also favoured by Earl Spencer, see 'Aristocracy' above) and the other was Cowtan's 'Wedderburn' design, printed by Woollams. Gertrude Jekyll was already familiar with Cowtan & Sons as Mawer Cowtan Cowtan later recalled,

Miss Jekyll was entrusted by the Duke [of Westminster] with the upholstery work of the great house [Eaton Hall, during its rebuilding from 1870-1882], and having seen a great deal of my brother, the late Mr. Frank Cowtan, in other matters, she placed the whole of this upholstery work in his hands, with the Duke's approval, and it certainly was one of the most interesting, if I may so call it, upholstery matters that our business has known...⁴³⁹

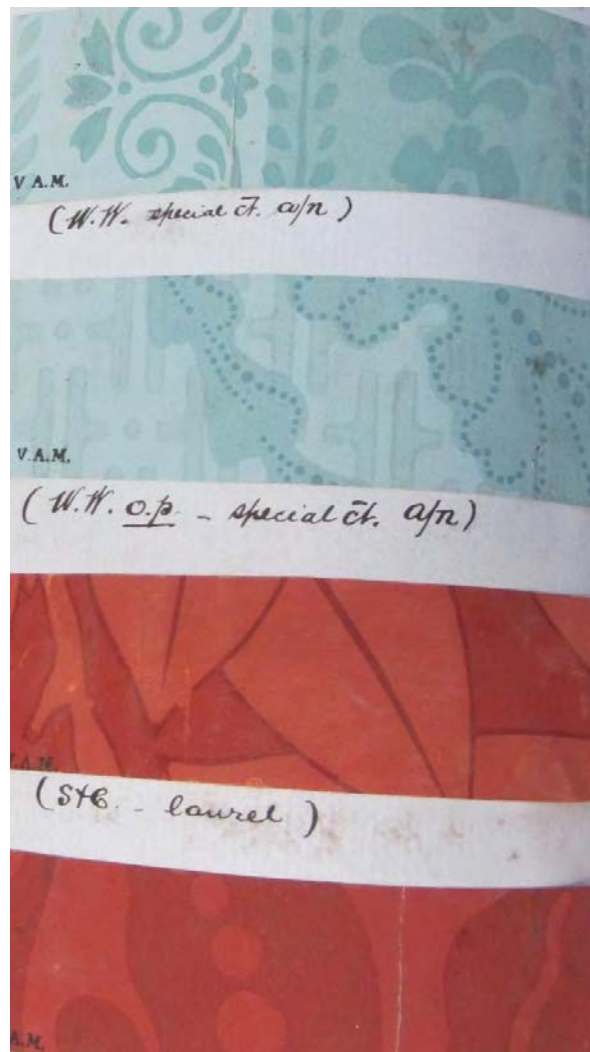


Fig. 40: Cowtan order for Gertrude Jekyll, Munstead House, Surrey, 1880, for 137 pieces of five different wallpapers.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.7.

⁴⁴⁰ COB 15, p.171.

Other notable female customers of Cowtan were the suffragist Dorothea Beale, Principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College, for which, in 1893, she ordered a private design paper with a geometric pattern in blue edged with brown on a white ground.⁴⁴¹ The Australian soprano Dame Nellie Melba employed French craftsmen to remodel her London home, 30 Great Cumberland Place, in the style of Versailles⁴⁴² and in 1908 she ordered fifteen yards of 'brocatelle' jacquard fabric, at the price of forty-three shillings, with the instruction 'This length made to special shades of green and cream'.⁴⁴³

In 1901 Lady Sackville-West, mother of the writer Vita Sackville-West, purchased wallpapers from Cowtan & Sons for the family home, Knole at Sevenoaks, Kent, where Vita lived until she married in 1913.⁴⁴⁴ They included, 'real Chinese hand-painted paperhanging decoration on grey ground', for a bedroom, the, 'Cupid & Psyche decoration in grisaille treatment', for Lady Sackville's Boudoir, a grisaille border for Bishop Cranmer's Room and a butterfly pattern paper for the Schoolroom.⁴⁴⁵ Further orders for Knole included an architectural wallpaper in 1905 and 'Real Chinese' paper for Lady Sackville's sitting room in 1909.⁴⁴⁶ Lady Sackville also placed a substantial order in 1911 for eleven wallpapers and twenty-one fabrics [fig.41]. The Cowtan order records, 'Short lengths of the following papers and materials supplied for her Ladyship's own use', which suggests that these were not for decorating whole rooms but for other purposes such as decorative crafts.

Another member of the Bloomsbury Group to which Vita Sackville-West famously belonged was the arts patron Lady Ottoline Morrell, who ordered crimson fabric from Cowtan & Sons for her home at 44 Bedford Square in 1911.⁴⁴⁷ Cowtan & Sons' reputation also reached the world of theatre. In 1906 the French actress Gabrielle Rejane, owner of the Théâtre Rejane, later the Théâtre de Paris, ordered thirty pieces of a lilac paper with white ribbon pattern, and 136 yards of a pink, burgundy and grey lace and ribbon patterned border for use in her theatre.⁴⁴⁸

⁴⁴¹ COB 17(ii), p.485.

⁴⁴² < <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/melba-dame-nellie-7551> > Australian Dictionary of Biography, [accessed 14 August 2016].

⁴⁴³ COB 20(ii), p.583 and p.598.

⁴⁴⁴ COB 20(i), p.77.

⁴⁴⁵ COB 19i, p.166.

⁴⁴⁶ COB 21(i), p.123.

⁴⁴⁷ COB 21(ii), p.435.

⁴⁴⁸ COB 20(i), p.319.



Fig. 41: Cowtan order for Lady Sackville, Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent, 1911. ⁴⁴⁹

Parliament, Public Institutions and Charities

When Cowtan & Sons acquired Crace & Son in 1899 they not only took ownership of the venerable firm's collection of historic printing blocks but also secured introductions to prestigious clients whom Crace had served for generations.

Pugin and Crace Papers for the Houses of Parliament

John Gregory Crace had collaborated with A.W.N. Pugin on the interior decoration of the Houses of Parliament from 1847 and Crace had supplied flock wallpapers made to Pugin's designs.⁴⁵⁰ The first Cowtan & Sons' commission for the Houses of Parliament was recorded on 14 August 1903, by order of the Chief Commissioner of Works, Lord Windsor, under the direction of J.B. Westcott, Surveyor to His Majesty's Office of Works. It included a sample of a heavily embossed and moulded dark green wallcovering, the, 'Rose and Shamrock

⁴⁴⁹ COB 21(ii), pp.379-382.

⁴⁵⁰ Hill, p.384.

design as used in Coronation Avenue, Westminster Abbey', together with the specification for decorative works to be carried out in St Stephen's Hall, the Princes' Chamber, the Royal Gallery and the Peers' Lobby [fig.42].



Fig. 42: Cowtan order for the Chief Commissioner of Works, Houses of Parliament, 1903, for 'Rose and Shamrock design as used in Coronation Avenue, Westminster Abbey'.⁴⁵¹

During the next thirty years, forty-eight orders for the Houses of Parliament were fulfilled by Cowtan & Sons, often for Pugin or Crace designs. In 1905, several orders for Crace papers in the quantities of eight pieces of 'Crace 115', ten pieces of 'Crace No.113' for the Law Lords Room and thirty pieces of 'Crace No.113' were supplied.⁴⁵² In 1907 ten pieces of 'Crace 113', a red and green paper on cream ground, at the cost of twelve shillings per piece, and thirty-one pieces of another Crace paper to be double-flocked, at the cost of eleven shillings per piece, were ordered.⁴⁵³ In 1911 Cowtan & Sons supplied twelve pieces of a dark red flock and gold embossed paper for the Queen's Robing Room in the House of Lords with the instruction, 'to special colouring, Crace design' [fig.43].

⁴⁵¹ COB 19(ii), p.450.

⁴⁵² COB 20(i), pp.142, 144, 177.

⁴⁵³ COB 20(ii), p.415.

An order in 1912 for seventeen pieces of a green and red flock paper with gold embossing for the Royal Gallery, the Norman Staircase and the Lord Chancellor's Rooms specified, 'Pugin design paper as per estimate. 3 times flocked. Cutting new block for this – with alteration of V. to G.'⁴⁵⁴ The note on the Cowtan order suggests that these rooms were not redecorated in the period between the death of Queen Victoria and the accession of George V, perhaps because during the intervening reign of Edward VII from 1901 to 1910 the wallpaper previously hung by Crace remained in good condition. In 1913 Cowtan & Sons were engaged to hang another design by Pugin, a dark red flock and embossed gold paper, in the Bishop's Corridor [fig.44] and the 'Gothic Lion & Rose' flock paper for the Moses Room in the House of Lords.⁴⁵⁵ Cowtan continued to supply wallpapers to the Houses of Parliament during the early years of the First World War. For example, twenty-three pieces of, 'Pugin design Crimson & gold flock paper' at twenty-seven shillings per piece were ordered for the Ladies Gallery overlooking the House of Commons in 1915.⁴⁵⁶



Fig. 43: Cowtan order for H.M. Office of Works, for the Queen's Robing Room, House of Lords, 1911, for a 'special colouring Crace design' flock paper.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵⁴ COB 21(ii), p.535.

⁴⁵⁵ COB 22(ii), p.49.

⁴⁵⁶ COB 22(i), p.189.

⁴⁵⁷ COB 21(ii), p.305.



Fig. 44: Cowtan order for H.M. Office of Works, for the Bishop's Corridor, House of Lords, 1913, for a 'Pugin design' flock paper.⁴⁵⁸

Military Colleges and Prisons

Senior officials running important institutions ordered wallpapers from Cowtan. Soon after General Sir George Scovell was appointed Governor of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst, Berkshire in 1837 he ordered two pale green floral papers from Cowtan & Sons, with matching twisted rope pattern border, for his accommodation at the college [fig.45]. In 1843 the Governor of Millbank Prison, which occupied the present site of the Tate Britain Gallery in Pimlico, London, ordered five wallpapers in shades of grey and cream on a pale ground for his apartments at the prison [fig.46]



Fig. 45: Cowtan order for the Governor of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, Berkshire, 1838.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁸ COB 22(i), p.32.



Fig. 46: Cowtan order for the Governor of Millbank Prison, Pimlico, 1843, for papers for Drawing Room, Dining Room, Breakfast Room, Book Room, Bed & Dressing Room.⁴⁶⁰

Charities and Hospitals

Various charitable institutions were supplied by Cowtan & Sons. The papers chosen were generally modest in design in keeping with their charitable or benevolent mission, as exemplified by a simple pattern wallpaper with matching border for St George's School of Industry, Belgrave Street, Pimlico⁴⁶¹ in 1824 [fig.47] and three wallpapers, two with small repeat patterns and matching borders for the Church Missionary Institution, Islington in 1827 [fig.48].



Fig. 47: Cowtan order for St George's School of Industry, Belgrave Street, Pimlico, 1824.⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁹ COB 3, p.191.

⁴⁶⁰ COB 4, p.360.

⁴⁶¹ <<http://www.hiddenlives.org.uk/articles/raggedschool.html>> [accessed 6 January 2017]. Like Ragged Schools, Industrial Schools were run on a voluntary basis and provided education for vagrant or homeless children aged 7-14 years old who had appeared before the courts.

⁴⁶² COB 1, p.53.



Fig. 48: Cowtan order for the Church Missionary Institution, Islington, 1827, for papers for Students' Rooms, Attics and Tutor's Sitting Room.⁴⁶³

Cowtan & Sons received several orders from charities and hospitals in the early twentieth century. The firm undertook decorative works to the chapel of the Cancer Hospital (now the Royal Marsden Hospital) in Fulham Road, London in 1900 under the direction of the architect Alexander Graham.⁴⁶⁴ In 1902 the Society for the Promotion of Female Welfare at Devonshire Street, London, ordered a brightly coloured floral wallpaper [fig.49]. The Committee of the Cripples' Home for Girls at Northumberland House in Marylebone Road, London ordered a paper with a red tulip pattern overprinted on a red finely printed ground for the Secretary's Office in 1903.⁴⁶⁵ The Foundling Hospital in Guildford Street, London ordered a pale cream wallpaper with pale blue and green floral pattern in 1909 [fig.50].



Fig. 49: Cowtan order for the Society for the Promotion of Female Welfare, Devonshire Street, London, 1902.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ COB 1, p.487.

⁴⁶⁴ COB 19(i), p.80.

⁴⁶⁵ COB 19(ii), p.508.

⁴⁶⁶ COB 19(ii), p.308.

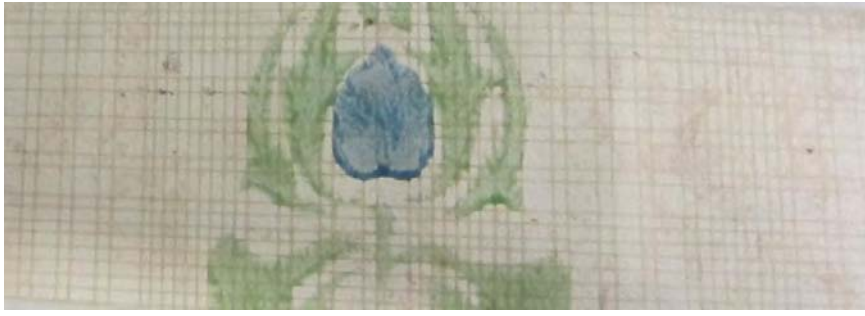


Fig. 50: Cowtan order for the Foundling Hospital, Guildford Street, London, 1909.⁴⁶⁷

In May 1915, two months before opening for the rehabilitation of officers who had lost limbs during the First World War, Queen Mary's Convalescent Auxiliary Hospital at Dover House, Roehampton placed an order with Cowtan & Sons for several wallpapers in bright colours and patterns for Bedrooms and a Smoking Room [fig.51]. Dover House which, like its neighbour Roehampton House, was affiliated to the King George Hospital in London, belonged to J. P. Morgan Junior, who donated his home for the duration of the War.⁴⁶⁸



Fig. 51: Cowtan order for Queen Mary's Convalescent Auxiliary Hospital, Dover House, Roehampton, 1915, for wallpapers for bedrooms and a smoking room.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁷ COB 21(i), p.72.

⁴⁶⁸ <<http://ezitis.myzen.co.uk/doverhouse.html> Lost Hospitals of London.> [accessed 15 November 2016].

⁴⁶⁹ COB 22(i), pp.235-237.

Banking and Business

Few business organisations feature in the Cowtan Order Books until the final quarter of the nineteenth century when prominent figures from the worlds of banking and business appear for the first time. There is a more commercial aspect to the Cowtan customer list by the early twentieth century, partly as a result of business owners employing Cowtan to decorate their houses. The firm's decoration of the houses of American banker John Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan and his son Jack (J.P.) Morgan Junior in the UK and the USA is discussed in chapter 8.

Bankers at Home

The Anglo-German merchant banker Baron Henry Schroder and his nephew and heir Baron Bruno Schroder between them placed fifty-three orders with Cowtan & Sons, including one in 1876 for eight pieces of a stamped leather effect paper in gold, red and green, 'with black mouldings' for the dining room and seven pieces of a flock paper for the ceiling, 'to be finished in paint', at The Dell at Englefield Green, Surrey [fig.52].



Fig. 52: Cowtan order for Baron Henry Schroder, The Dell, Englefield Green, Surrey, 1876, for a stamped leather effect paper 'with black mouldings' for the dining room and a flock paper for the ceiling, 'to be finished in paint'.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁷⁰ COB 14, pp.157-158.

Mawer Cowtan Cowtan later recalled that in 1880 he had supplied Baron Henry Schroder at Bicester Hall, Oxfordshire with a set of 30 sheets of sepia paperhangings depicting the Four Seasons, that looked like old engravings and that he believed were over 100 years old.⁴⁷¹

Baron Bruno Schroder also ordered several plain and floral Sanderson wallpapers from Cowtan for Servants' rooms in his London home, 35 Park Street in 1909 and 1921.⁴⁷²

From 1883 to 1887 Hermann de Stern, a German-born British banker and head of Stern Brothers investment bank, owned Strawberry Hill House, the gothic castle built by Horace Walpole in Twickenham, south west London.⁴⁷³ Although Baron de Stern did not take up residence at Strawberry Hill,⁴⁷⁴ in 1885 he engaged Cowtan & Sons for painting, papering and carpentry works. For the Glass Room he ordered a paper patterned with grey and brown leaves and stems on a pale blue ground, while for the Beauty Room he chose a red and green floral tapestry effect paper on a cream ground [fig.53] A ground floor plan for Strawberry Hill of 1781 shows the Beauty Room adjacent to the Little Parlour and the Library.⁴⁷⁵ The Glass Room is not indicated on either the ground floor or principal first floor, so the Cowtan order must refer to a later renaming of an earlier room or part of a room.

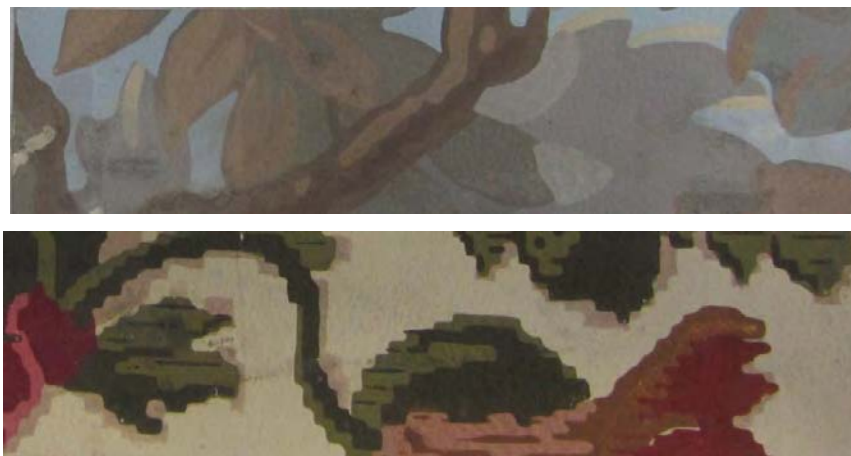


Fig. 53: Cowtan order for Baron de Stern, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, 1885, for wallpapers for the Glass Room and the Beauty Room.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷¹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.24.

⁴⁷² COB 21(i), p.78 and COB 23(i), p.62.

⁴⁷³ John Iddon, *Strawberry Hill & Horace Walpole*, (London: Scala, 2011.), p.38.

⁴⁷⁴ <<http://www.conlab.org/pages/StrawHillIndex/Occupants/OccHermStern.html>> Architectural Conservation Laboratory, University of Pennsylvania School of Design. [accessed 28 June 2016]

⁴⁷⁵ Iddon, p.8.

⁴⁷⁶ COB 16, p.206.

Cowtan & Sons' work at Strawberry Hill is further supported by evidence found in a small cupboard in what is now the Yellow Room which contains fragments of Cowtan & Sons' 'hummingbird' design wallpaper. A handwritten note displayed in the cupboard is believed to have been left by the decorators and reads, 'This room was papered by Cowtan & Sons, 309 Oxford Street, London. June 10th 1885', which corresponds to the date written on the Cowtan order for Strawberry Hill, 'June 1885'.

As well as providing an insight into the decorative taste of its banker owner, the Strawberry Hill order is an example of how the Cowtan books can provide new information about historic names of rooms that may have been renamed or remodelled. Chapter 7 considers further this aspect of the order books.

Business Premises

By the end of the nineteenth century, orders for business and commercial premises occur more frequently in the Cowtan Order Books. The North British Mercantile Insurance company commissioned a ceiling decoration from Cowtan & Sons for their office in Threadneedle Street in 1896⁴⁷⁷ and in 1897 they ordered a private design Tynecastle wall covering for the Board Room, in addition to a mahogany panelled dado and a new chimney piece and overmantle [fig.54]. Cowtan also supplied an asbestos ceiling, in the Elizabethan design, for the insurance company's Life office, with the walls covered in alabaster with a marble frieze⁴⁷⁸ and decoration of their Directors' rooms in the, 'Chirk Castle Tudor Pattern flock, 4 times flocked, painted'.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ COB 18(i), p.210.

⁴⁷⁸ COB 18(i), p.240.

⁴⁷⁹ COB 18(i), p.284.

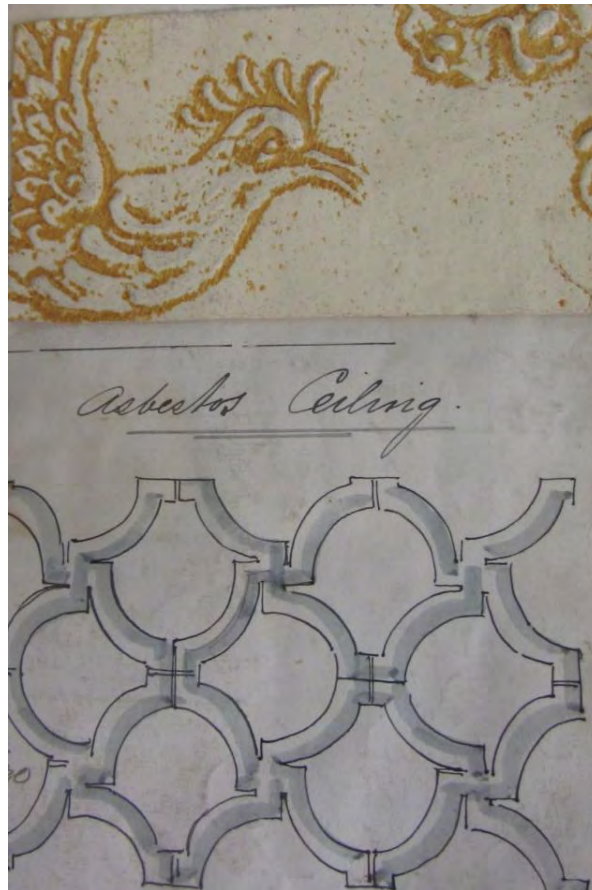


Fig. 54: Cowtan order for the North British Mercantile Insurance company, Threadneedle Street, London, 1897, for a private design Tynecastle wallcovering for the Board Room and ‘asbestos ceiling’ decoration in the Elizabethan design.⁴⁸⁰

In 1901 the General Accident Assurance Company of Tay Street, Perth, ordered a plain flock wallpaper for their grand staircase.⁴⁸¹ In 1902 the Burlington Carriage Company at 315-317 Oxford Street, a near neighbour to Cowtan & Sons at 309 Oxford Street ordered red silk damask for the upholstery of the interior of the State Coach for India.⁴⁸² The trade body for the wallpaper industry, the Worshipful Company of Painter-Stainers commissioned Cowtan & Sons to supply a five-fold screen covered with a bronze embossed leather paper for the Painters’ Hall in the City of London in 1911.⁴⁸³ The management of the Canon Street Railway Station Hotel in the City of London, ordered a substantial quantity of wallpapers, filling five pages of the Cowtan Order Book, for reception rooms and guest bedrooms in 1912 [fig.55].

⁴⁸⁰ COB 18(i), p.240.

⁴⁸¹ COB 19(i), p.145.

⁴⁸² COB 19(ii), p.398.

⁴⁸³ COB 21(i), p.323.



Fig. 55: Cowtan order for the Canon Street Hotel, City of London, 1912, for wallpapers for Reception Rooms and Guest Bedrooms.⁴⁸⁴

Commercial orders to Cowtan & Sons all but disappeared during the years of the First World War and its aftermath. However, in 1929 the firm was engaged by the British Metal Corporation at Princes House, Gresham Street in the City of London to install pine panelling in the Board Room, Captain Lyttleton's Room and Sir C. Budd's Room, each with, 'special finish & metal work'.⁴⁸⁵ In 1930 the film production studio Archibald Nettlefold Productions, in Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, which later became the Walton Studios, ordered seven pieces of the 'Empire Star' wallpaper in green on cream at the cost of seven shillings and sixpence per yard.⁴⁸⁶

Although the majority of Cowtan & Sons' overseas orders were for foreign royalty or British embassy staff, orders for individuals working for overseas companies also began to appear at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1894 Frank Lowry Esq ordered a dark green heavy weave fabric for his drawing room curtains to be sent to the Gold Fields South Africa

⁴⁸⁴ COB 21(ii), pp.558-562.

⁴⁸⁵ COB 24(i), p.95.

⁴⁸⁶ COB 24(i), p.196 and p.213.

Company in Johannesburg.⁴⁸⁷ In October the same year, H. Smith Esq ordered three pieces of a yellow damask paper, addressed to him at the Burla Indigo Factory⁴⁸⁸ in Aligarh, North West Province, India [fig.56]. Frederic Tyson Esq of the Standard Oil Company of New York ordered fifty-six and a half yards of a floral furnishing fabric to be sent to him at the Union Building in Hong Kong, China in 1924.⁴⁸⁹



Fig. 56: Cowtan order for H. Smith Esq at the Burla Indigo Factory in Aligarh, North West Province, India, 1894, for a yellow damask wallpaper.⁴⁹⁰

British Embassies Overseas

British ambassadors and diplomats around the world and overseas ambassadors posted to Britain provided a steady stream of business for Cowtan & Sons for more than one hundred years. The dates of these orders often followed the appointment or promotion of the recipient. As the following examples illustrate, British ambassadorial taste in decoration mirrored aristocratic taste at home in the UK, with flocks, white and gold and damasks often being selected.

Flock Papers for Berlin, the Falkland Islands and India

The earliest overseas diplomatic order was for Lord William Russell, His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Berlin who ordered ten wallpapers in 1836, including a red flock paper with, 'gold moulding top & bottom', for the Drawing Room at the embassy [fig.57]. Half a century later in 1889 Sir Edward Malet took up the Ambassador's post in Berlin and also ordered a

⁴⁸⁷ COB 17(ii), p.511.

⁴⁸⁸ 'Burla' is probably a misspelling of 'Birla'. The multinational Aditya Birla Group in Mumbai, India was founded by Seth Shiv Narayan Birla in 1857 and still operates in 40 countries. I am grateful to Shachi Amdekar, PhD candidate, Centre of Development Studies, University of Cambridge, for suggesting the Birla association for this order.

⁴⁸⁹ COB 23(i), p.304.

⁴⁹⁰ COB 17(ii) p.594.

flock paper for the drawing room; however, this time it was to be used as a border around, ‘Real Japanese paper’.⁴⁹¹ Flock paper was also the choice of the Governor of the Falkland Islands in 1851 when Cowtan & Sons sent twelve pieces of a red flock paper to Government House [fig.58].



Fig. 57: Cowtan order for Lord William Russell, His Britannic Majesty’s Minister, Berlin, 1836, for red flock paper with ‘gold moulding top & bottom’ for the Drawing Room.⁴⁹²



Fig. 58: Cowtan order for Government House, Falkland Islands, 1851, for a red flock paper to be hung with gold moulding.⁴⁹³



Fig. 59: Cowtan order for the Viceroy of India, Government House, Simla, 1881, for flock wallpapers for the Writing Room.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹¹ COB 17(i), p.67.

⁴⁹² COB 2, p.648.

⁴⁹³ COB 6, p.302.

⁴⁹⁴ COB 15. p.350.

The Marquess of Ripon was appointed Viceroy of India in 1880 and the following year he ordered three dark green flock wallpapers for the writing room at his official residence, Government House in Simla [fig.59]. This order was later recalled in Mawer Cowtan Cowtan's 1914 lecture to the Institute of Decorators, when he spoke of supplying the Viceroy of India with, 'papers and dadoes for Simla in typical colourings of the day'.⁴⁹⁵

White and Gold Papers for America, Ceylon, Mauritius, India, Russia and Norway

White and gold papers were also favoured by British diplomats abroad. The British Consul in Savannah, Georgia, Edmund Molyneux ordered two wallpapers patterned with gold scrolls on a white ground in 1852 [fig.60]. General George Darley Lardner was appointed Deputy Commissary General in Columbo, Ceylon in 1862⁴⁹⁶ and later that year ordered twenty-three pieces of a white and cream paper and eight dozen borders to match.⁴⁹⁷ The Governor of Mauritius Sir Henry Barkly ordered a white moirée effect paper decorated with gold for his drawing room and a lilac paper with matching border for his dining room in 1868 [fig.61]. In 1894 the Earl of Elgin was appointed Governor General of India and in the same year ordered five hundred yards (forty-two pieces) of a white and gold paper from Cowtan & Sons for the Viceregal Lodge [fig.62].⁴⁹⁸



Fig. 60: Cowtan order for Edmund Molyneux, British Consul, Savannah, Georgia, USA, 1852, for two wallpapers patterned with gold on a white ground.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁵ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.25.

⁴⁹⁶ <<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/22645/page/3583/data.pdf>> London Gazette, July 18th, 1862, p.3583. [accessed 30 September 2016]

⁴⁹⁷ COB 10. p.389.

⁴⁹⁸ COB 17(ii). p.581.

⁴⁹⁹ COB 6, p.317.



Fig. 61: Cowtan order for Sir Henry Barkly, Governor of Mauritius, 1868, for a white and gold paper for the Drawing Room and a lilac paper with matching border for the Dining Room.⁵⁰⁰



Fig. 62: Cowtan order for the Earl of Elgin, Governor General of India, Viceregal Lodge, Simla, 1894, for five hundred yards (forty-two pieces) of a white and gold paper.⁵⁰¹

After Sir George Buchanan was appointed British Ambassador to Russia in 1910 Cowtan & Sons sent forty pieces of a white silk moirée effect paper at the price of five shillings per piece to the British Embassy in St Petersburg [fig.63]. Sir Mansfeldt de Cardonnel Findlay was appointed British Ambassador in Christiana, now Oslo, in Norway in 1911 and ordered a broad striped wallpaper in two shades of white at the price of three shillings and sixpence per piece for his drawing room [fig.64]. The price per piece of wallpaper is not usually recorded in the orders for overseas embassies but the examples of the papers sent to St Petersburg (five shillings per piece) and Christiana (three shillings and sixpence per piece) suggest that the papers were of similar quality.

⁵⁰⁰ COB 12, p.218.

⁵⁰¹ COB 17(ii). p.581.



Fig. 63: Cowtan order for Sir George Buchanan, British Embassy, St Petersburg, 1910, for white silk moirée wallpaper.⁵⁰²

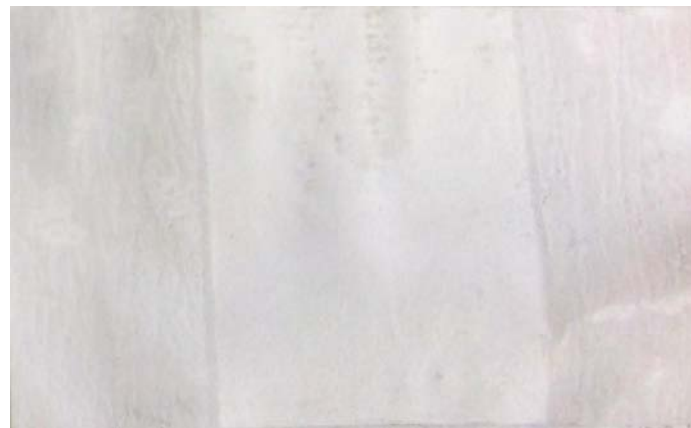


Fig. 64: Cowtan order for Sir Mansfeldt de Cardonnell Findlay, British Legation, Christiana, Norway, 1911, for wallpaper for the Drawing Room.⁵⁰³

Damask Papers for Australia and Turkey

Damask papers were also popular with British ambassadors overseas. The Earl of Kintore was appointed Governor of South Australia in 1889; two years later he ordered forty-two pieces of a ribbed pale green damask pattern wallpaper for his residence, Government House in Adelaide [fig.65]. In 1893, a year after his appointment as British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Sir Philip Currie ordered the ‘Clarendon’ design damask wallpaper in bright yellow from Cowtan & Sons for the British Embassy in Constantinople [fig.66]. Two years later, Sir Philip placed a further order for the embassy, this time for a, ‘set of real Chinese paperhangings on white talc ground, rocks, foliage etc.’⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰² COB 20(i), p.289.

⁵⁰³ COB 21(ii), p.310.

⁵⁰⁴ COB 18(i), p.19.



Fig. 65: Cowtan order for the Earl of Kintore, Government House, Adelaide, Australia, 1891.⁵⁰⁵



Fig. 66: Cowtan order for Sir Philip Currie, British Embassy, Constantinople, 1893, for ‘Clarendon’ design wallpaper.⁵⁰⁶

The Chinese papers at the British Embassy in Constantinople appear to have been placed in readiness for modification in 1912 when an order for Sir Louis du Pan Mallet, by then the British Ambassador to Turkey ordered, ‘17 sheets about 4ft x 4ft tops of Chinese paper hangings’, at the cost of ten shillings each, to be sent to the Foreign Office’ with the instruction, ‘Hold in reserve’.⁵⁰⁷

Foreign Embassies in London

Cowtan orders for foreign diplomats at their official residences in London first appear in 1870 when the Portuguese Ambassador, the Duke de Saldanha, ordered three wallpapers, a lilac paper decorated with fine gold flowers, a plain lilac paper and a red flock for his drawing room at the embassy in Gloucester Place, Portman Square, London [fig.67]. In 1895 the Count de Casa Valencia employed Cowtan & Sons to carry out, ‘Electric lighting works & upholstery etc’, at the Spanish Embassy in Grosvenor Gardens, London.⁵⁰⁸ Yellow striped wallpaper with a floral border was ordered from Cowtan and Sons for the sitting room of the

⁵⁰⁵ COB 17(i), p.279.

⁵⁰⁶ COB 17(ii), p.582.

⁵⁰⁷ COB 21(ii), p.533.

⁵⁰⁸ COB 18(i), p.109.

Imperial Marquis at the Italian Embassy in Grosvenor Square, London in 1910.⁵⁰⁹ The same order also specified a floral paper for the Imperial Marquis' bedroom and a tile pattern sanitary paper for his bathroom. The following year Cowtan supplied two further wallpapers to the Italian Embassy; ten pieces of a striped ground paper with flowers over-printed for Prince Colonna's room and a floral paper for a guest's room [fig.68].



Fig. 67: Cowtan order for His Excellency the Duke de Saldanha, Portuguese Embassy, Gloucester Place, London, 1870, for wallpapers for the Drawing Room.⁵¹⁰



Fig. 68: Cowtan order for His Excellency the Marquis Imperial, Italian Embassy, 20 Grosvenor Square, 1911, for wallpaper for Prince Colonna's room.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ COB 21(i), p.263.

⁵¹⁰ COB 12, p.531.

⁵¹¹ COB 21(ii), p.315.

The Royal Italian Government again ordered several wallpapers from Cowtan in 1916, including a red and gold paper made by Jeffrey & Co. for, 'Large and Small Rooms over Garage' at Providence Court, close to the embassy in Grosvenor Square.⁵¹² Further orders were placed by the Italian Embassy in 1919 and 1920 for several floral and plain papers.⁵¹³ In August 1912 the German Embassy in Carlton House Terrace placed an extensive order with Cowtan & Sons, covering six pages of the order book and specifying numerous wallpapers and furnishing fabrics, including a white and grey damask paper for a Reception Room [fig.69].



Fig. 69: Cowtan order for the German Embassy, Carlton House Terrace, London, 1912, for wallpaper for a Reception Room.⁵¹⁴

Cowtan also supplied the American Embassy at 14 Princes Gate, London, which had formerly belonged to J.P. Morgan and was donated to the American Government by J.P. Morgan Junior in 1919.⁵¹⁵ In 1930 the firm supplied eighteen pieces of ceiling paper to the American Embassy.⁵¹⁶ The American industrialist and philanthropist, Andrew Mellon, was appointed US Ambassador to the UK and in 1932 ordered a brown woven wallcovering from Cowtan & Sons for his library at the Embassy [fig.70].

⁵¹² COB 22(ii), pp.353-354.

⁵¹³ COB 23(i), pp 8 and 23.

⁵¹⁴ COB 21(ii), pp. 546-551.

⁵¹⁵ Jean Strouse, *Morgan: American Financier*, (London: Harvill, 1999), p.688.

⁵¹⁶ COB 24(i), p.206.



Fig. 70: Cowtan order for His Excellency the American Ambassador, the Hon. Andrew Mellon, 14 Princes Gate, London, 1932, for a wallcovering for the Library.⁵¹⁷



Fig. 71: Cowtan order for His Excellency the Portuguese Ambassador, 11 Belgrave Square, 1934, for two metallic wallpapers by Sanderson for the Boudoir at the Embassy.⁵¹⁸

Sixty-four years after placing its first order with Cowtan & Sons, in 1934 the Portuguese Embassy, by then relocated to Belgrave Square, selected two metallic wallpapers by Sanderson from Cowtan for the boudoir at the Embassy [fig.71]. The later orders for the American and Portuguese embassies are examples of the innovative textures and finishes in wallcoverings supplied by Cowtan in the early twentieth century.

⁵¹⁷ COB 24 (ii), p.292.

⁵¹⁸ COB 23(ii), p.388.

American Society

In 1897 Cowtan & Sons established a sales office in New York, which evidently was a shrewd commercial decision because from then on they attracted regular custom from wealthy Americans. This was particularly the case during the years of the First World War when there was a rush of American orders. Of the 501 orders in Cowtan Book 22(ii), from December 1915 to July 1918, thirty-five percent of the orders were for customers in the USA, particularly New York. Cowtan was clearly viewed as a luxury company and its customers included the richest society in New York. The strength of Cowtan's New York operation is also demonstrated by the fact that their American arm, Cowtan & Tout, which was established in New York in 1930, was the destination for many Cowtan orders from London. For example, in 1930 Cowtan & Tout ordered from the London office sixty pieces of the Rosebery design paper in silver on peach; twenty-five sheets of hand painted 'Hunting Scenes' design and fifteen pieces of green ground, floral design wallpaper.⁵¹⁹

Americans in Britain

The industrialist and financier John Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan and his son Jack (J.P. Morgan Junior), were the most prolific patrons of Cowtan & Sons, placing over 180 orders for their properties in the UK and the USA between 1898 and 1937. William Waldorf Astor, the American businessman, publisher and philanthropist gave his estate, Cliveden in Maidenhead, Berkshire as a wedding present to his eldest son Waldorf Astor and new daughter-in-law Nancy Langhorne in 1906. He also paid for decorative works in 1907, when a Cowtan & Sons order was addressed to the elder Waldorf Astor at Cliveden for a plain wallpaper in lilac and a complementary architectural pattern border for the, 'Inchiquin Bedroom and Dressing room' [fig.72].

⁵¹⁹ COB 24(i), p.165.

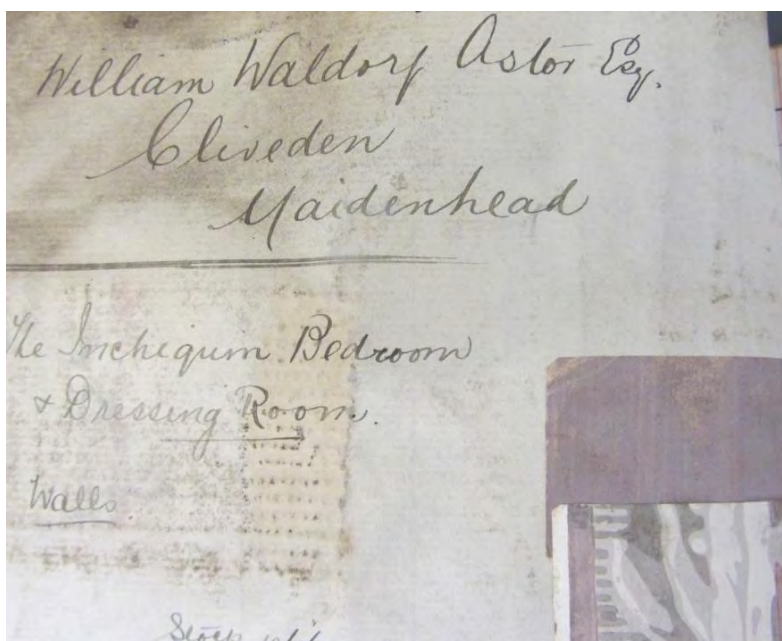


Fig. 72: Cowtan order for Waldorf Astor, Cliveden, Maidenhead, 1907, for wallpapers for the Inchiquin Bedroom and Dressing Room.⁵²⁰

Chinese and Sepia Papers for New York

Like British Aristocracy, the wealthiest Americans coveted Chinese wallpapers, which were once again in fashion in the early twentieth century. In 1911 the American diplomat Henry White ordered Chinese wallpaper with a gilt border for his house at 1624 Crescent Place, Washington D.C. [fig.73]. Mrs Peter Cooper Hewitt, wife of the American electrical engineer and inventor whose family founded the Cooper Hewitt Museum, ordered a, ‘set of very fine old blue and white Chinese paper’, for 11 Lexington Avenue, New York in 1914.⁵²¹ Mrs Archer Huntington, wife of Archer Milton Huntington, benefactor of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, ordered, ‘fine hand painted Chinese decoration on white ground’, for their residence, ‘Pleasance’, at Pelham Bay Park, New York in 1915.⁵²²

Hand-painted Chinese wallpaper on a mauve ground was ordered by the businessman Richard Howe for the Ladies Dressing Room at his mansion at Jericho, Long Island in 1915.⁵²³ In the same year, the committee of the women-only Colony Club at 62nd Street and Park Avenue, New York ordered, ‘real old Chinese decorations’, as well as the ‘Primrose’

⁵²⁰ COB 20(ii), p.367.

⁵²¹ COB 22(i), p.151.

⁵²² COB 22(i), p.202.

⁵²³ COB 22(i), p.219.

wallpaper from Cowtan & Sons.⁵²⁴ The former American Ambassador to the UK, Senator John W. Davis placed an order with Cowtan & Sons in 1927 for his home at 1107 Fifth Avenue, New York specifying, ‘the special paper decoration “Old London” in sepia – including some panels painted in by hand to complete the decoration.’⁵²⁵



Fig. 73: Cowtan order for The Hon. Henry White, 1624 Crescent Place, Washington DC, 1911, for Chinese wallpaper.⁵²⁶

Beyond New York

Although the great majority of American orders were destined for New York, Cowtan’s reputation reached far across the United States. In 1910 Mrs W. Greer Campbell ordered a woven mulberry leaf patterned fabric and leather for covering furniture at the Mulholland, Long Beach, California.⁵²⁷ In 1915, Baroness von Ketteler, widow of the German Minister Clemens von Ketteler and daughter of Henry Ledyard, president of the Michigan Central Railroad, ordered a basket weave embossed wallpaper in beige and grey for Grosse Point Farm, Detroit, Michigan. Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, who married into the Rockefeller banking family and designed the Federal Reserve System, placed an order with Cowtan & Sons in 1915 for, ‘Special brown cowhides supplied for 24 chairs, some specially printed with the ‘Wedderburn’ design,’ for use in his dining room at Warwick, Rhode Island, USA.⁵²⁸ Senator Aldrich’s order is an unusual example of a Cowtan order in which a wallpaper design was transferred to leather for upholstery.

⁵²⁴ COB 22(i), p.234.

⁵²⁵ COB 23(ii), p.536.

⁵²⁶ COB 21(ii), p.432.

⁵²⁷ COB 21(i), p.244.

⁵²⁸ COB 22(i), p.201.

It has long been understood that Cowtan & Sons were decorators to those at the highest levels of society but interrogation of all the company's order books has revealed just how far into the British establishment and parts of European and American upper class society they reached.

This survey of orders for 'the great people of the land' has also revealed how those groups tended to conform to traditional styles in their choice of wallpapers with only limited use of innovative designs and materials. The orders also demonstrate how accomplished Cowtan & Sons were at retaining the loyalty of their most prestigious customers once they had won their confidence. Personal recommendation was clearly a powerful driver for the business with many orders being placed by relations and associates of Cowtan's existing customers.

Having examined what the Cowtan orders tell us about the decorations of the wealthiest people in society, in the next chapter the order books' insights into buildings is considered.

Chapter 7

MANOR HOUSES AND MANSIONS: WHAT THE COWTAN ORDERS REVEAL ABOUT INDIVIDUAL BUILDINGS

Hidden decorative histories of thousands of properties are held within the Cowtan Order Books. The annotated wallpaper samples provide records of when and how a range of buildings and individual rooms within them were decorated. In many cases, no visible in situ evidence of the wallpaper, or archival record of its ever having been purchased and hung, has survived in the house or local archives.⁵²⁹ In such circumstances the Cowtan Order Books may provide the only evidence. The room names in the orders can also potentially clarify earlier floor plans that have been lost through structural alteration or demolition and where no other record exists.

This chapter considers how the Cowtan Order Books can add to our understanding of the structural and occupational history of buildings of different periods and styles through the examination of three case studies. The examples chosen are Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk; Insole Court, Cardiff; and Holkham Hall, Norfolk. Each demonstrates how different aspects of the order books' contents may be employed in the study of buildings.

⁵²⁹ The Cowtan orders also provide valuable evidence for interiors of houses that have been demolished. As John Martin Robinson noted in 2001, in the twentieth century more than one third of landed estates were sold off. John Martin Robinson, *Felling the Ancient Oaks, How England Lost its Great Country Estates* (London: Aurum, 2001), p.9.

Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk: using Cowtan Wallpaper Quantities to reconsider the 19th Century Redecorations

A search of the Cowtan Order Books in 2013 by Allyson McDermott for the National Trust for England, Wales and Northern Ireland revealed that of the three hundred historic houses currently owned and managed by the Trust, sixty-three were decorated by Cowtan & Sons.⁵³⁰ Among such properties were Crom Castle, Northern Ireland; Penrhyn Castle, Wales; Cragston, Northumberland; Nostell Priory, Yorkshire; Clandon Park, Surrey; Cotehele, Cornwall; and Wimpole Hall, Cambridgeshire.

Oxburgh Hall [fig. 74], also owned by the National Trust, was decorated by Cowtan & Sons. The account of its building history has recently been augmented by evidence found in the Cowtan Order Books, as the next section explains.



Fig. 74: Oxburgh Hall, view of the East range. Image: Wendy Andrews, 2013, with kind permission of the National Trust.

⁵³⁰ I am grateful to Andrew Bush, Paper Conservation Advisor at the National Trust, for sharing a list of the NT properties mentioned in the Cowtan Order Books that was compiled by the wallpaper maker and conservator Allyson McDermott in 2013.

The Bedingfelds at Oxburgh Hall

Oxburgh Hall is a Grade I listed moated manor house built for Sir Edmund Bedingfeld in c.1482. As a noble Catholic family, the Bedingfelds suffered financial penalties during the Reformation and the Civil War and as a consequence repairs or enhancements to the fabric of Oxburgh Hall were limited. However, the Bedingfelds' fortunes had improved by 1775 when the 4th Baronet employed the architect John Tasker to modernise and remodel Oxburgh in the classical style.⁵³¹ Fifty years later the 6th Baronet, Sir Henry Bedingfeld (1800-1862), married a Catholic heiress, Margaret Paston, whose wealth allowed him to restore the Tudor character of Oxburgh Hall. In 1830 the 6th Baronet employed the Catholic architect John Chessell Buckler (1793-1894) to undertake the re-Gothicisation of the Hall, including the insertion of stone mullioned windows and moulded brick chimneys and infilling the cloisters.⁵³² Chessell Buckler continued these works, assisted by his son, Charles Alban Buckler (1825-1905) into the 1860s.⁵³³ [Figs. 75 and 76 show first and second floor plans of Oxburgh Hall].

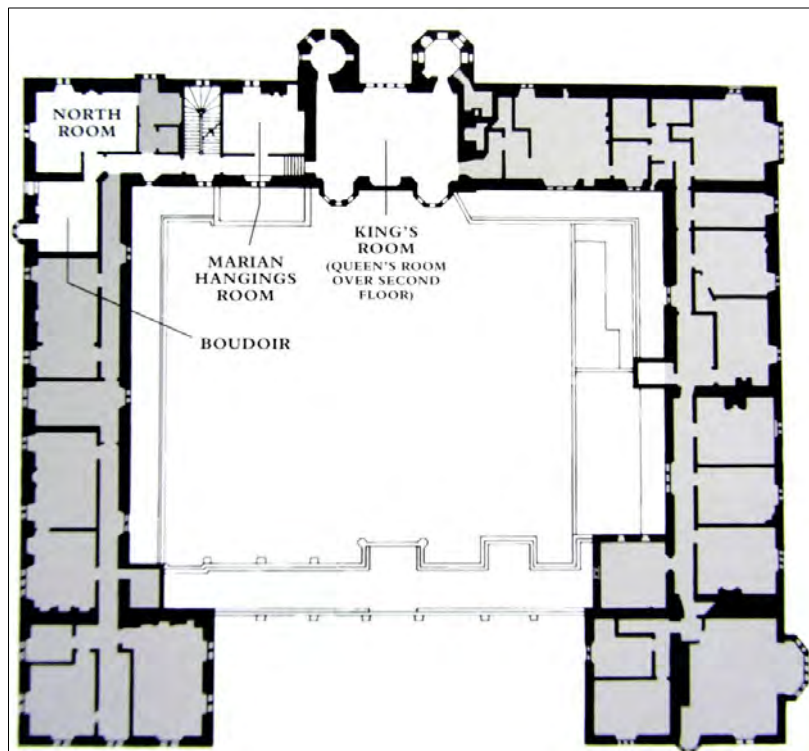


Fig. 75: Oxburgh Hall First Floor Plan. Source: National Trust.⁵³⁴

⁵³¹ Adam Menuge, *Oxburgh Hall Historic Buildings Report* (York: English Heritage, 2006), p.161 and pp.101-113.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, p.127.

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, p.114.

⁵³⁴ Oliver Garnett, *Oxburgh Hall*, (Swindon: The National Trust, 2000), inside front cover.

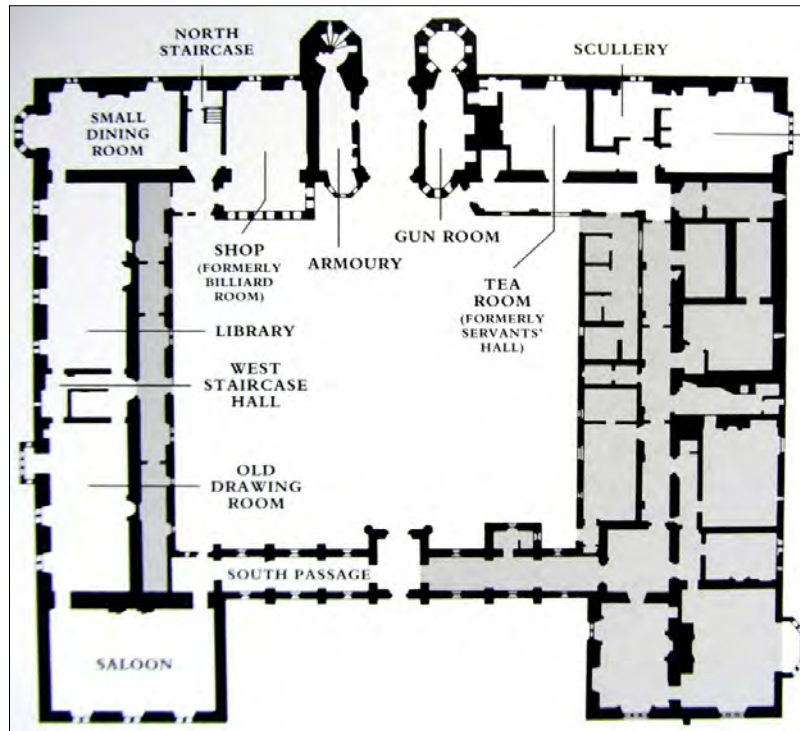


Fig. 76: Oxburgh Hall Ground Floor Plan. Source: National Trust.

Cowtan, Crace and Oxburgh Hall

In 2006 the National Trust commissioned an investigation into the building history of Oxburgh Hall.⁵³⁵ In the conclusion to his report Dr Adam Menuge suggested that the internal finishes, which had not been within the scope of the research, would warrant further investigation.⁵³⁶ In 2011 the National Trust established a research project to determine the provenance of wallpapers hung in the principal rooms at Oxburgh and of a substantial collection of wallpaper samples that had been stored for many years in the attic of the Hall. The National Trust had long understood that the decorating firm Crace & Son had played a part in the internal remodelling of Oxburgh Hall in the 1860s, notably in the Drawing Room where a Gothic ceiling of moulded timber ribs interspersed with heraldic and floral decorations was installed,⁵³⁷ and the Saloon where a red ogival pattern flock wallpaper in a design by A.W.N. Pugin was hung.⁵³⁸ However, no archival evidence linking Crace & Son with Oxburgh Hall had previously been discovered.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Ibid., p.161.

⁵³⁷ Ibid., pp.148-149.

⁵³⁸ Wendy Andrews, 'The Oxburgh Hall Wallpapers' (unpublished masters thesis, University of Cambridge, 2013), p.129. A copy of the Pugin paper made in the 1990s now hangs in the Saloon.

The author of this thesis contributed to the National Trust's research on the Oxburgh Hall wallpapers during her masters degree work placement in 2013.⁵³⁹ Her search of the Crace accounts yielded evidence that Crace & Son had worked for Sir Henry Bedingfeld at Oxburgh Hall some twenty years later than the firm's previously recognised involvement there in the 1860s. According to the company's accounts, in 1883 Sir Henry Bedingfeld owed Crace & Son £203 4s. 10d.⁵⁴⁰ While no information is given about the goods or services purchased, this would have been a substantial sum in 1883, equivalent to approximately eighteen thousand pounds today. The Crace accounts also reveal that the firm was engaged in trade with Cowtan & Sons in 1873; under 'credits due' and 'trade debts' sums are entered for Cowtan & Manooch.⁵⁴¹ Although Cowtan & Manooch became Cowtan & Sons in 1872, the Crace accounts still referred to the company by its former name in 1873.

The confirmation of the connection between Crace and the Bedingfelds led to discovery of the association between Crace and Cowtan⁵⁴² which in turn led to discovery of Cowtan's work at Oxburgh Hall. A search of the twenty-four Cowtan Order Books revealed that the Bedingfelds had purchased six different wallpapers from Cowtan & Sons in 1831, 1838, 1875, 1880 and 1905.⁵⁴³ Further examination of the quantities of wallpapers ordered from Cowtan & Sons has provided new insights into the decorative schemes undertaken at Oxburgh Hall, as the following sections explain.

How to Calculate Quantities of Wallpaper Required

The method of calculating the quantity of paper required is more complex than simply calculating the square footage of the room and dividing it by the square footage of a roll of wallpaper. It is not only a question of the surface area to be covered, account must also be taken of the voids created by doors, windows and fireplaces. The height and width of the room may necessitate additional rolls of wallpaper. For example, out of one roll of wallpaper, which measures thirty-six feet long, a room with a height of twelve feet from picture rail to

⁵³⁹ Andrews, 2013.

⁵⁴⁰ London, National Archive of Art & Design, Victoria and Albert Museum, MS Crace Family Archive, AAD/2001/6/2.

⁵⁴¹ MS Crace Family Archive, AAD/2001/6/2.

⁵⁴² Oman and Hamilton. 1982, p.67.

⁵⁴³ The confirmation of Cowtan & Sons as a supplier of wallpapers to Oxburgh Hall was new information that the National Trust was able to add to its catalogue for the Hall.

skirting will take three drops, each measuring twelve feet. However, a room measuring fourteen feet high will only take two drops out of one roll, leaving eight feet of unused paper. Of course, the remaining eight feet might be used for smaller drops such as above or below windows, but its usage cannot be guaranteed. Another factor to consider is the measurement of the pattern repeat. A small scale pattern requires less paper than a large scale pattern. Most decorators' manuals provide charts with approximate quantities of wallpaper required for rooms of different dimensions [table 12]. Some advise that the dimensions of doors, windows and mantelpieces should be deducted for accuracy, while others advise that no such deductions should be made. However, all allow a generous number of rolls for each size of room, to ensure that ample paper is ordered. Once a quantity of wallpaper has been ordered, it is not desirable to order additional rolls because these may have been printed in a different print run and despite the best endeavours of the wallpaper manufacturer, an exact colour match cannot be guaranteed.

MEASUREMENT IN FEET ROUND THE WALLS.	HEIGHT OF ROOM IN FEET FROM SKIRTING TO CORNICE.									
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	NUMBER OF PIECES REQUIRED.									
32	4	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	8
36	4	5	5	6	6	7	7	8	9	9
40	4	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	9	10
44	5	5	6	7	8	8	9	10	10	11
48	5	6	7	7	8	9	10	10	11	12
52	6	6	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	13
56	6	7	8	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
60	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
64	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
68	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	15	16	17
72	7	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	17	18
76	8	9	10	11	13	14	15	16	17	19
80	8	9	11	11	13	15	16	17	18	20
84	9	10	11	12	14	15	17	18	19	21
88	9	10	12	12	14	16	17	19	20	22
92	9	11	12	13	15	17	18	19	21	22
96	10	11	13	13	16	17	18	19	21	22
100	10	12	13	15	16	18	20	21	24	24

Table 12: Chart showing number of 'pieces' or rolls of wallpaper required to decorate rooms of various dimensions. Source: *House Beautiful & Useful*, 1911.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴⁴ Elder-Duncan, p.80.

Reappraisal of how the North Bedroom and Boudoir were decorated in the early 1830s

The first Cowtan order for Oxburgh Hall, in 1831, is for ten pieces of a paper of trompe l'oeil plasterwork pattern on a dark red ground [fig.77]. The same Cowtan wallpaper still hangs on the walls of the small corridor that links the North Bedroom and the Boudoir [fig.78].



Fig. 77: Cowtan order for Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Oxburgh Hall, Stoke Ferry, Norfolk, 1831.⁵⁴⁵



Fig. 78: Quatrefoil wallpaper on the walls of the North Bedroom Corridor, Oxburgh Hall, supplied by Cowtan & Sons in 1831. Image: Wendy Andrews, 2013.

⁵⁴⁵ COB 2, p.115.

Analysis of the layers of wallpaper in the Boudoir and the North Bedroom has indicated that the quatrefoil paper might have been hung in both rooms, as well as in the corridor that links them, creating a complete decorative scheme.⁵⁴⁶ Support for the use of the Cowtan quatrefoil paper in the Boudoir is further presented by the decoration of its ceiling in quatrefoil patterned plasterwork which remains in situ today and is likely to have been installed at the same time, to complement Cowtan's wallpaper [fig.79].



**Fig. 79: Tudor Rose and Portcullis Plasterwork Ceiling in the Boudoir, Oxburgh Hall.
Image: Wendy Andrews, 2014.**

However, the quantity of wallpaper specified in the Cowtan order, ten pieces, offers a new perspective on the decorative scheme when considered in relation to the dimensions of each room. The Boudoir measures fifteen feet six inches by thirteen feet three inches and nine feet nine inches high. Allowing for its two windows, door and mantelpiece, the amount of wallpaper required for the Boudoir would have been approximately seven pieces. The adjacent North Bedroom Corridor is a small space which would only have required one to two pieces of wallpaper, so together the Boudoir and North Bedroom Corridor would have required approximately nine pieces of wallpaper, meaning that the Cowtan order for ten pieces would have been sufficient for this purpose. Alternatively, the Cowtan order would have been enough to decorate the North Bedroom plus the North Bedroom Corridor. The North Bedroom measures twenty-two feet by seventeen feet nine inches and nine feet nine

⁵⁴⁶ Allyson McDermott, *Investigation into the use of Wallpapers at Oxburgh Hall*, (unpublished report commissioned by the National Trust, 2013).

inches feet high. Allowing for the wainscotting all around the room, two windows, two doors, the mantelpiece and overmantel, and the fixed full height carved wooden bed canopy, the amount of wallpaper required for the North Bedroom would have been six pieces, so the North Bedroom and North Bedroom Corridor would have required approximately eight pieces altogether. Therefore the ten pieces of wallpaper in the Cowtan order would have been sufficient to decorate *either* the Boudoir and the North Bedroom Corridor (nine pieces) *or* the North Bedroom and the North Bedroom Corridor (eight pieces) but it would not have been enough to decorate both of the rooms and the corridor (seventeen pieces). There is no other Cowtan order for the quatrefoil paper and therefore it appears that the ten pieces sent to Oxburgh Hall in June 1831 was the sum total of that paper ordered by the Bedingfelds from Cowtan.

A fragment of another paper can be glimpsed beneath the overmantel in the North Bedroom⁵⁴⁷ [fig.80]. It was not supplied by Cowtan but a sample is held in the Oxburgh Hall archive and is catalogued by the National Trust as being possibly by Crace & Son, c.1840 [fig.81]. Sample analysis by the National Trust suggests that it may have been hung during a redecoration of the North Bedroom between 1840 and 1850.⁵⁴⁸ The baroque design of this paper is very different to the medieval pattern of the Cowtan paper, and since it is estimated to date from around ten years after the Cowtan order, it is unlikely to have been hung at the same time.

The quantity of medieval quatrefoil wallpaper in the Cowtan order and the fact that there is no other Cowtan order for the same wallpaper sent to Oxburgh Hall argues the case that these two rooms cannot have been decorated as a suite with the same wallpaper from Cowtan & Sons in 1831. The question of which paper was hung in the North Bedroom in 1831 remains unresolved and might only be answered by further analysis of the layers of the wallpapers.

⁵⁴⁷ My thanks to Anna Forrest, Curator at the National Trust, for bringing this discovery to my attention.

⁵⁴⁸ McDermott.



Fig. 80: Fragment of Baroque floral wallpaper, North Bedroom, Oxburgh Hall, beneath overmantel. Image: Wendy Andrews, 2014.



Fig. 81: Baroque floral wallpaper sample, red and black on gold and cream ground, in Oxburgh Hall Archive, catalogued by the National Trust as ‘possibly by Crace c.1840’.⁵⁴⁹

Additional evidence for the wallpaper hung in the Drawing Room in the late 1830s

The second Cowtan order for Oxburgh Hall, placed in March 1838, is for a paper patterned with cream coloured baroque style leaves against a red ground [fig.82]. The design is similar to a paper made by Samuel Scott, later Scott Cuthbertson & Co. [fig.83]⁵⁵⁰ who printed Pugin’s wallpaper designs for Crace & Son at the Houses of Parliament. There is no room specified in the order but the sample’s close resemblance to the pattern of the Drawing Room wallpaper in a watercolour (fig.84), painted in the early 1850s by Matilda Bedingfeld, daughter of the 6th Baronet, has encouraged the suggestion that it might have been used in the Drawing Room. Matilda Bedingfeld’s original watercolour is regrettably lost and no

⁵⁴⁹ Norfolk, Oxburgh Hall Archive, Baroque Floral Wallpaper, possibly by Crace, c.1840. Ref. 1210800.

⁵⁵⁰ McDermott.

colour copy exists from which to make a comparison with the colour of the Cowtan order sample. However, red flock fibres were discovered beneath other layers of papers in the Drawing Room during analysis undertaken for the National Trust in 2013,⁵⁵¹ which lends support to the theory that the wallpaper sent from Cowtan in 1838 was destined for the Drawing Room. The quantity of wallpaper in the order, fourteen pieces, provides further evidence for its use in the Drawing Room, which measures thirty-eight feet four inches by eighteen feet, and eleven feet ten inches high. Allowing for the deep architrave all round the room, the skirting board, the three doors, three windows and the mantelpiece, the Drawing Room would have required approximately eleven pieces of wallpaper and therefore the fourteen pieces specified in the Cowtan order would have been sufficient to decorate this room.⁵⁵²

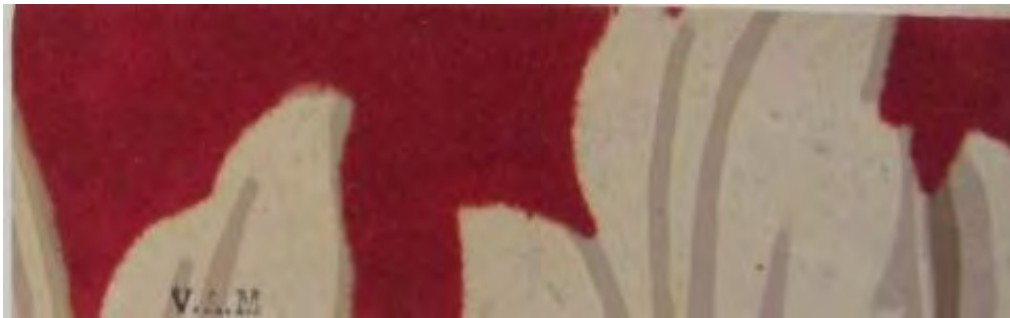


Fig. 82: Cowtan Order for Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Oxburgh Hall, 1838.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵¹ McDermott.

⁵⁵² Oxburgh's Drawing Room now has wainscoting all around the room, but as it does not appear in Matilda Bedingfeld's 1850s watercolour, I have not included it in my calculation of the amount of wallpaper that would have been required in 1838.

⁵⁵³ COB 3, p.188.



Fig. 83: Wallpaper design by S.F. Scott. Image: Allyson McDermott for the National Trust.



Fig. 84: Black and white copy of a watercolour painting of the Drawing Room, Oxburgh Hall, by Matilda Bedingfeld, c.1850.⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵⁴ Norfolk, Bedingfeld Family Archive.

Reconsideration of the use of Pugin's 'Triad' paper in the Billiard Room in 1880

The fourth Cowtan order for Oxburgh Hall, placed in 1880, is for a paper patterned with a diagonal trellis, shamrock, daisies and thistles, printed in light brown on a dark brown ground [fig.85] The initials 'S.&C.' next to the sample refer to Scott Cuthbertson & Co. A woodblock print of the same design is held by the V&A [fig.86] and catalogued as a mid-nineteenth-century design by Pugin. A sample of the same design wallpaper is held in the Oxburgh archive, catalogued by the National Trust as a twentieth-century reprint by Watts and Co. of Pugin's 'Triad'.⁵⁵⁵ Allyson McDermott has suggested that the dark gothic pattern and colours of the 'Triad' wallpaper from Cowtan would have rendered it an appropriate choice for the Billiard Room⁵⁵⁶, which is believed to have been added to the Hall in the 1860s and now houses the National Trust shop.⁵⁵⁷

However, the quantity of 'Triad' paper ordered from Cowtan, twenty pieces, is considerably more than would have been required for the Billiard Room, which measures twenty-seven feet by eighteen feet six inches and ten feet eight inches high.⁵⁵⁸ Allowing for the stone mullioned bay window along the whole length of the south elevation, the window and the door, the amount of wallpaper required for the Billiard Room would have been approximately thirteen pieces, which is seven pieces less than specified in the Cowtan order. Since a hand block-printed wallpaper in a Pugin design would have been among Cowtan's more expensive papers, it is unlikely that the Bedingfelds would have ordered such a large quantity without having a firm purpose in mind for its use.

This raises the question as to whether the 'Triad' paper was intended for the Billiard Room and perhaps another smaller room that required the remaining seven pieces of wallpaper. Alternatively, it may have been intended for a much larger room or a hallway and staircase. Further investigation of the layers of wallpapers in all parts of Oxburgh Hall might provide a more accurate understanding of whether Cowtan's 'Triad' paper was ever hung in the Billiard Room and where else it might eventually have been installed.

⁵⁵⁵ National Trust Oxburgh Hall Archive. Ref. 1210802.

⁵⁵⁶ McDermott.

⁵⁵⁷ Menuge, p.150.

⁵⁵⁸ These dimensions are similar to the ideal size for a Billiard Room, 24 feet by 18 feet, suggested by Robert Kerr in, *A Small Country House: A brief practical discourse on the planning of a residence, to cost from £2,000 to £5,000 with supplementary estimates up to £7,000*, (London: John Murray, 1873), p.51.



Fig. 85: Cowtan order for Sir Henry Bedingfeld, Oxburgh Hall, 1880, for ‘Triad’ design wallpaper by A.W.N. Pugin.⁵⁵⁹



Fig. 86: ‘Triad’ design by A.W.N. Pugin, c.1848, printed by Arthur Sanderson & Sons Ltd. c.1951. Image: Victoria and Albert Museum.⁵⁶⁰

Investigation of the quantities of Cowtan wallpapers for Oxburgh Hall has added to the previous understanding of the nineteenth-century redecoration schemes. Not only have the Cowtan samples of wallpapers provided insights into the patterns, colours and materials used in specific years, but the quantities ordered have either challenged, supported or raised questions about which rooms were decorated, and with which papers, by Cowtan & Sons and others.

⁵⁵⁹ COB 15. P.174.

⁵⁶⁰ London, Victoria and Albert Museum, E.1400-1979.

The Edwardian remodelling of Insole Court, Cardiff: Names and Locations of Rooms revealed by the Cowtan Orders

A further way in which the Cowtan orders add to knowledge of the history of individual buildings is by revealing past names of rooms, which in turn may help to elucidate lost floorplans, as has proved to be the case at Insole Court.

James Insole's Gentleman's Residence

Insole Court at Llandaff, Cardiff is a substantial Grade II listed Victorian house with Edwardian additions and is an important architectural reminder of the industrial heritage of South Wales [fig.87]. In 1855 a Welsh colliery proprietor, James Insole, appointed the architects W.G. & E. Habershon to build a stone clad double-fronted gentleman's residence in the countryside overlooking Cardiff.⁵⁶¹ The original house, then known as Ely Court,⁵⁶² was a modest property, built at a cost of between £1,959 and £2,900 to accommodate Insole, his young family and three maids.⁵⁶³ By 1878 Insole's mining operation at Cymmer Colliery in the Rhondda Valley had become immensely profitable and he retired in considerable wealth at the age of fifty-seven, leaving the business under the management of his two sons.

Between 1873 and 1878 a substantial programme of works to improve, enlarge and remodel Ely Court in the Gothic Revival style was undertaken by the architects George Robinson and Edwin Seward at a cost of ten thousand pounds, between three and five times the sum paid for the original house. Further improvements were made in 1898, when the octagon and circular wings were added to the north wing of the house at a cost of £775.⁵⁶⁴

The Edwardian Remodelling

Following the death of James Insole in 1901 his widow continued to live at Ely Court until she remarried in 1905, at which time his eldest son George Insole inherited the property. He too embarked on extensive remodelling works and between 1906 and 1909 the house was transformed, with many Gothic features removed and an oak panelled dining room installed.

⁵⁶¹ Matthew Williams, *Insole Court, Llandaff: The Story of a Victorian Mansion*, (Cardiff: Friends of Insole Court, 1998), p.5.

⁵⁶² Insole Court was originally named Ely Court. After about 1908 it became known as The Court, Llandaff. After the Insole family left in 1938 it was known as Llandaff Court, but has been known as Insole Court for many years. I am grateful to Michael Statham of the Insole Court Research Group for this information.

⁵⁶³ Williams, p.5.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p.14



Fig. 87: Insole Court, Llandaff, Cardiff. Image: The Insole Court Trust.

The addition of a substantial service wing including servants' accommodation further increased the scale of the property, rendering it one of the largest in the Cardiff area. Builders' accounts for Ely Court reveal that over sixteen thousand pounds was spent on this phase of the redevelopment.⁵⁶⁵ During the same period, as the Cowtan Order Books reveal, George Insole ordered substantial quantities of wallpapers and furnishing fabrics from Cowtan & Sons.

Early in 2016 the Insole Court archive research group discovered an entry in a purchase ledger belonging to the building firm W. Clarke of Llandaff for a payment made in 1908 to Cowtan & Sons, that was annotated 'Ely Court'.⁵⁶⁶ The reference to Cowtan & Sons led the group to the V&A, where Penelope Hines, Assistant Curator, searched the Cowtan Order Books for orders in the name of Insole at Ely Court. Aware that doctoral research, including the creation of a database of all Cowtan customer surnames, was underway the V&A invited the author of this thesis to assist with the search to identify further Cowtan orders for the Insole family.

⁵⁶⁵ Williams, p.15.

⁵⁶⁶ Cardiff, W. Clarke, Llandaff, Purchase Ledger 1904 – 1921 (private collection).

Altogether, thirteen orders for Ely Court, dating from 1908 to 1924, and holding fifty-three samples of wallpapers and thirteen samples of upholstery and furnishing fabrics, were discovered in the Cowtan Order Books.⁵⁶⁷

Cowtan Orders for Insole

The first Cowtan order for Ely Court, in April 1908, was for, ‘decorative, paperhanging and upholstery works,’ and included twenty-four pieces of a floral paper with matching frieze by Sanderson for George Insole’s Bedroom and Dressing Room; eight pieces of a similar paper and frieze for Miss Insole’s Bedroom; twelve and fourteen pieces of a plain paper by J. Line & Sons for the ‘Boys Room’; and fifty panels of Tynecastle Vellum No.4109 for the Drawing Room ceiling.⁵⁶⁸

Between April and July 1908 virtually every room in the house appears to have been decorated with wallpapers supplied by Cowtan & Sons. They included moulded, decorative plaster effect paper for the Principal Staircase; floral paper for the Morning Room; eight pieces of dark blue plain paper for the Smoking Room; tile patterned paper for the Bathrooms at a cost of two shillings and sixpence per piece; heavy dark leather effect paper for the Dining Room at sixty-one shillings per piece and similar paper for the Billiard Room at sixty-five shillings per piece; and fifty-four pieces of a scarlet and gold foliate pattern paper by Jeffrey & Co. for the, ‘Best Bedroom Corridor and North End Corridor’[fig.88].

Papers for servants’ accommodation, including a bird patterned paper at three shillings and three pence per piece for the Housekeeper’s Room and a similar design at five shillings and three pence per piece for the Servants’ Hall; a pale blue floral patterned paper with dado at two shillings per piece for the Footman’s Room and nine pieces of a leaf and stem patterned paper for the ‘Room over the Stables’ were among the many wallpapers supplied by Cowtan & Sons to the Insoles at Ely Court [fig.89].

⁵⁶⁷ COB 20(ii), pp. 498, 513, 523, 555, 564, 565; COB 21(i), p.145; COB 22(i), p.66; COB 23(i), pp. 67, 115, 126, 148, 244.

⁵⁶⁸ COB 20(ii), pp. 498, 499, 500-513.

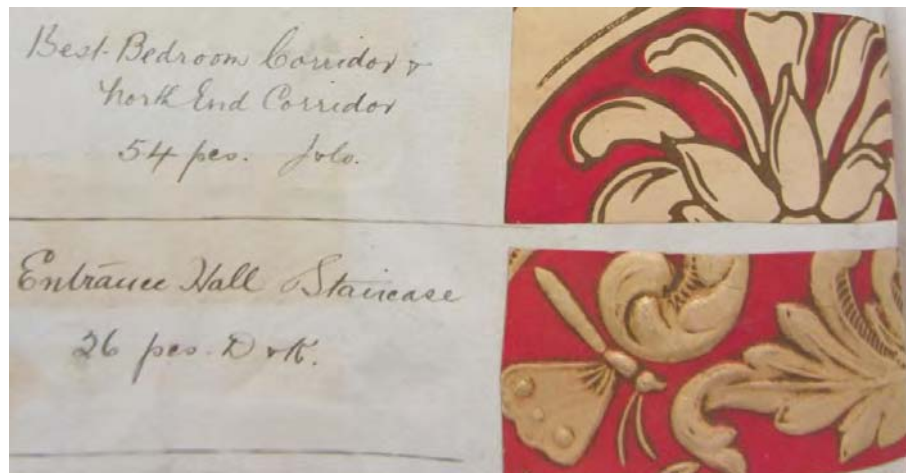


Fig. 88: Cowtan order for George Insole, Ely Court, Llandaff, Cardiff, 1908, for wallpapers for Best Bedroom Corridor, North End Corridor, Entrance Hall and Staircase.⁵⁶⁹



Fig. 89: Cowtan order for George Insole, Ely Court, 1908, for wallpapers for the Dining Room, Billiard Room, Entrance Lobby, Cloakroom, Two Lavatories, Housekeeper's Room and Servants' Hall.⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁹ COB 20(ii), p.513.

The firm also supplied a range of furnishing fabrics, including floral loose covers in shades of pink for the Drawing Room at eight shillings and for the Morning Room at eight shillings and sixpence; crimson festoon blinds at five shillings and a red corded fabric at six shillings and sixpence for the Hall curtains. Upholstery fabrics were also supplied for the Library, Hall and the 'Pink Room'. The Insoles returned to Cowtan & Sons some years later, with an order in 1914 for floral fabric for the Drawing Room. A small number of orders were also placed in 1921 and 1922, including for thirty-six pieces of wallpaper and also loose covers for the Drawing Room and cream lace for blinds.

Insights into the Edwardian Floorplan

Equipped with the information and images gathered during their visit to the V&A, the Insole Court group applied their knowledge of the history of the house and family to the process of mapping the rooms referred to in the Cowtan orders onto contemporary floor plans. Given the post-Edwardian history of Ely Court and the fact that the earliest surviving floor plans date back only to 1970, this presented a challenge. Following George Insole's death in 1917 and the death during the First World War of his eldest son Claude, Ely Court passed to George's eldest surviving son, Eric, who lived there with his mother and sister Violet. In 1931 plans were published for the new Cardiff orbital road, which would cut through the Insole estate. After failing to have the route altered and being served with a compulsory purchase order, Eric Insole insisted that Cardiff City Corporation purchase the entire estate, which it did for the sum of £26,250.⁵⁷¹ The family remained in residence for a further five years before finally departing in 1937. Subsequently, Insole Court was designated as a physical education training college but at the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 it was reassigned as the headquarters of the local Air Raid Precautions (ARP) unit. The ARP's occupation, followed by post-War conversion of the upper floors into seven flats and Cardiff City Council's use of the building as a public library and offices, resulted in substantial structural alterations to Insole Court. Rooms were partitioned, doors and walls were inserted, bathrooms were installed or removed and staircases were relocated.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷⁰ COB 20(ii), p.523.

⁵⁷¹ Williams, p.19.

⁵⁷² *Cowtan Wallpapers at Insole Court*, ed. by Michael Statham (Cardiff: Insole Court Trust, unpublished report, 2016).

However, utilising the information held in the Cowtan Order Books, the Insole Court group was able to make significant additions to the previous understanding of the history of the house. Of the thirty-four separate rooms mentioned in the Cowtan orders, the group was able to verify the original location of thirty-one of them; nineteen rooms with a high degree of confidence and twelve rooms with a moderate degree of confidence, leaving only three that were named in the Cowtan orders, the Boys' Room, a Bedroom and the 'Pink Room', unidentified on the contemporary plan.⁵⁷³

Prior to the discovery of references to Insole Court in the Cowtan Order Books the Edwardian floorplan, room names and decoration of the mansion had remained hidden to curators and researchers. The Cowtan Order Books have provided new information about how the interior of Insole Court was arranged, decorated and inhabited by the Insole family, which in turn has contributed to a reinterpretation and presentation of the house that is part of a restoration project supported by a two million pound grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

Holkham Hall, Norfolk: a comparison of Cowtan orders and estimates for ‘Large Alterations Works’ for the Third Earl of Leicester

Holkham Hall

Holkham Hall in Norfolk (fig.90), seat of the Coke family and the Earls of Leicester, was built of yellow brick in the Palladian style from 1734 to 1764 for Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester, by the architects William Kent and Lord Burlington. Thomas Coke took a life-long interest in his grand building project and, with his wife, the former Lady Margaret Tufton, was the driving force in its design and execution.⁵⁷⁴



Fig. 90: Holkham Hall, Norfolk, view from the south. Image: Paul Barker.⁵⁷⁵

The grand entrance is through the magnificent Marble Hall constructed of pink Derbyshire alabaster, described by Jeremy Musson as, ‘one of the most unforgettable rooms in Europe’,⁵⁷⁶ and which leads to the state rooms on the first floor. The arrangement of the Saloon, South Drawing Room, South Dining Room, Green State Bedroom, North State Bedroom, North Dining Room and Statue Gallery is symmetrical in design. Holkham Hall’s

⁵⁷⁴ D.P. Mortlock, *Aristocratic Splendour: Money & the World of Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester*, (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2007), p.4. Also, Amy Boyington, ‘Lady Margaret, Countess of Leicester: A Re-evaluation of her Contributions to Holkham’ (master’s dissertation, University of Cambridge, 2013), reworked in Amy Boyington, ‘The Countess of Leicester and Her Contribution to Holkham Hall’, *The Georgian Group Journal*, Vol. XXII (2014), pp.53-66.

⁵⁷⁵ Jeremy Musson, *English Country House Interiors*, (New York: Rizzoli, 2011), p.117.

⁵⁷⁶ Musson, p.121.

plan is completed by the four pavilions situated at the four corners of the main building: the Strangers' Wing, the Family Wing, the Chapel Wing and the Kitchen Wing [figs.91 and 92]. A notable aspect of the interior finish of many of the state rooms is the use of wallhangings of silk caffoy, a material composed of wool, linen and silk. The original wallhangings remain in the Saloon, though natural degradation has necessitated the installation of replacements in other rooms.

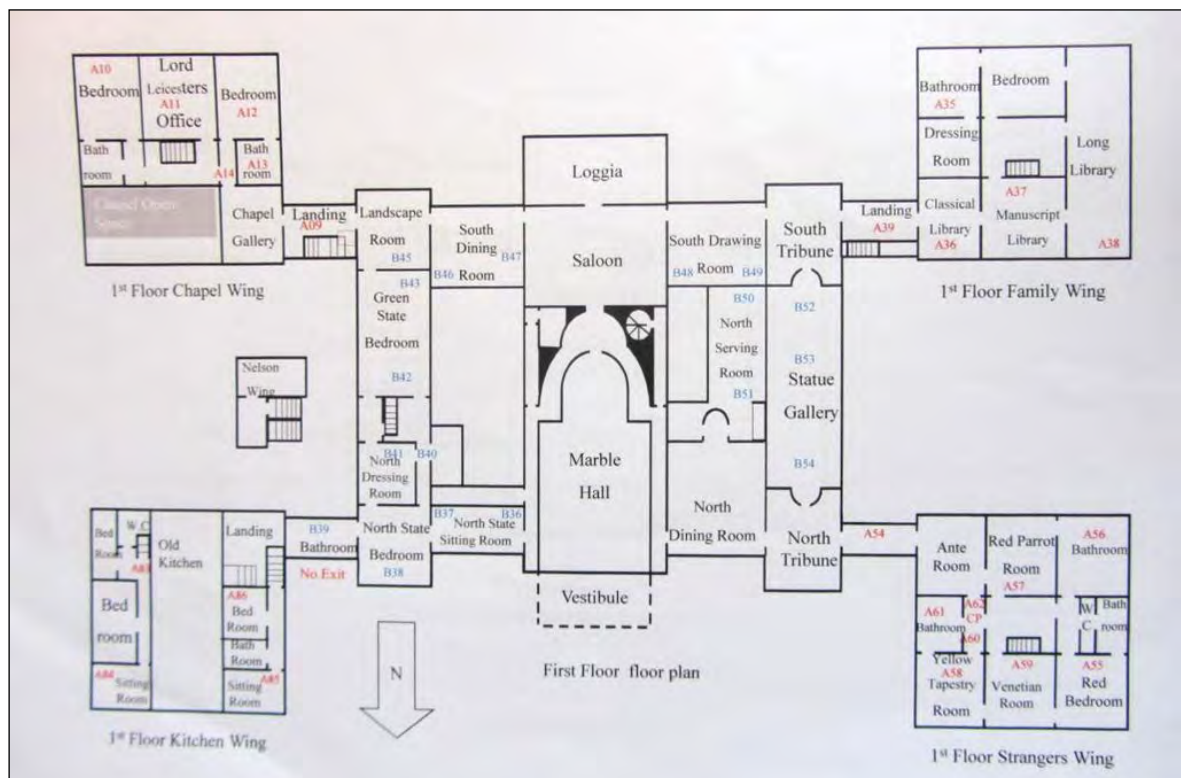


Fig. 91: Plan of the First Floor of Holkham Hall, 2016.⁵⁷⁷

⁵⁷⁷ Holkham Hall Archive.

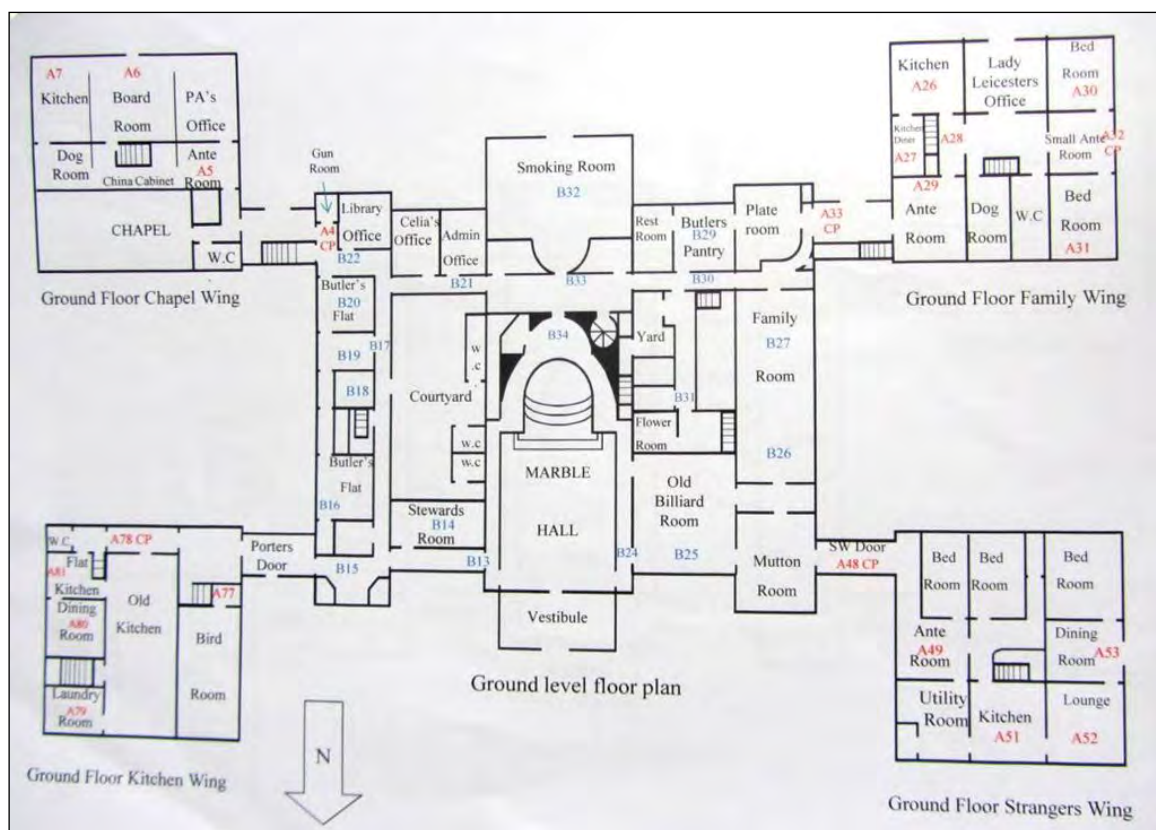


Fig. 92: Plan of the Ground Floor of Holkham Hall, 2016.

Cowtan & Sons at Holkham Hall

In his 1914 lecture to the Institute of British Decorators, Mawer Cowtan Cowtan referred to supplying, ‘Mr Warner’s sunflower leather paper for Holkham, for the father of the Earl of Leicester’, in 1882⁵⁷⁸ and in 1889 nine pieces of a poppy patterned paper were sent to Holkham for a bedroom.⁵⁷⁹ Cowtan also carried out work in 1909 for Viscount Coke, the eldest son of the 3rd Earl of Leicester, at his house at Lymington where they supplied, ‘charming papers of the day.’⁵⁸⁰ However, by far the most significant commission was for the Earl of Leicester at Holkham Hall in 1909, when, ‘This year my brother commenced the large alteration works etc at Holkham Hall...’⁵⁸¹ Mawer Cowtan Cowtan was referring to the firm’s structural, decorative and upholstery works carried out under the direction of his youngest brother, Arthur Barnard Cowtan, for Thomas Coke, 3rd Earl of Leicester (1848-1941). Upon succeeding to the title in January 1909, the Earl embarked upon a comprehensive programme of improvements at the Hall.

⁵⁷⁸ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.26.

⁵⁷⁹ COB 16, p.610.

⁵⁸⁰ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.48.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid., p.48.

Evidence for the scope of the works undertaken by Cowtan in 1909 and 1910 can be found in two sources: the archives at Holkham Hall, which hold estimates provided to the Earl of Leicester by Cowtan & Sons⁵⁸², and the Cowtan Order Books which specify the rooms to be decorated and include samples of wallpapers and upholstery fabrics. Holkham's General Payments Ledger also provides insight into the cost of works undertaken by Cowtan & Sons, with the balance of the account at January 1911 being £3,855 17s. 10d,⁵⁸³ equivalent to approximately £409,000 today.

While the Cowtan estimates provide a description of the work to be undertaken, the Cowtan orders furnish the precise detail of how each room was to be decorated, illustrated by the samples of wallpapers and materials pasted into the order books. By comparing the Cowtan estimates with the Cowtan orders new insights into the 3rd Earl's decorative schemes at Holkham can be gained, as the following section illustrates.

Comparison of the Cowtan Orders and the Cowtan Estimates

One obvious distinction between the Cowtan Order Books and the Cowtan Estimates is that the orders refer to seventy-one rooms, whereas the estimates refer to only thirty-nine rooms, meaning the orders provide information about almost twice the number of rooms. Tables 13, 14 and 15 show the names of rooms mentioned in either one of the sources, or in both. In some instances, it may be that different terms are employed to describe the same room in each source. For example, the Cowtan order for the Kitchen Wing refers to, 'Rooms 3, 4 & 5 over Kitchen', whereas the Cowtan estimate refers to, 'Five Bedrooms over Kitchen Passage'. Some of these may be the same rooms, but without other evidence, it is unconfirmed.

Holkham Hall's Archivist, Christine Hiskey, suggests that the rooms described as the King's and Queen's Rooms in the Cowtan orders may be the rooms now known as the North State Bedroom, North Dressing Room and North State Sitting Room, as identified in a Holkham inventory of 1910,⁵⁸⁴ and as shown in the contemporary first floor plan [fig.91]. In a separate 1910 Holkham inventory, the Strangers' Wing incorporates a Red & Yellow Bedroom, likely to be the room now known as the Red Parrot Room; a Red & Yellow Dressing Room; and a

⁵⁸² Norfolk, Holkham Hall Archive, MS Document 7, Cowtan & Sons (Late Duppa), 1909, Archive Box, Mansion.

⁵⁸³ Norfolk, Holkham Hall Archive, MS Holkham General Payments Ledger 1910-1911.

⁵⁸⁴ Norfolk, Holkham Hall Archive, MS Inventory of Heirlooms, 1910 (H/Inv11).

Brown & Gold Bedroom and Dressing Room.⁵⁸⁵ The Red & Yellow Bedroom and Brown & Yellow [Gold] Dressing Room also appear in the Cowtan orders but not in the estimates.

The Saloon, South Drawing Room, South Dining Room, North and South Tribunes, Statue Gallery, Landscape Library and Manuscript Library are examples of principal rooms in the Main Building that are mentioned in both the Cowtan orders and the Cowtan estimates.

Estimate No. 25, dated 26th April 1909, specifies fifteen festoon blinds to be adapted from the Earl of Leicester's, 'own silk curtains as suggested', and to supply and make up, '63" silk @ 42/- per yard for the remaining 20 blinds, mounting same in best quality laths to be supplied, fitted with our special check action and finished with silk fringe and tassels as follows...'⁵⁸⁶

The estimate continues with the specifications for ten rooms which demonstrates the recycling of silk damasks from various parts of the Hall, including the North Sitting Room, 'using the light crimson silk from the South Drawing Room and South Dining Room', and the South Dining Room, 'using silk from the Statue Gallery and the Landscape Room', all at a cost of one hundred and twenty pounds and ten shillings. New silk, however, was to be used in the North Tribune, North Dining Room, Statue Gallery, South Tribune and South Drawing Room, all at a cost of three hundred and thirty pounds. Silk festoon blinds for the Saloon at one hundred and seventy-five pounds and for the Queen's Sitting Room at sixty-eight pounds are also itemised in the estimate.

⁵⁸⁵ Norfolk, Holkham Hall Archive, MS Inventory (Not Heirlooms), 1910 (H/Inv12).

⁵⁸⁶ Norfolk, Holkham Hall Archive, MS Document 7, Cowtan & Sons (Late Duppa), 1909, Archive Box, Mansion.

FAMILY WING (first floor)	Named in Cowtan Estimates/ Holkham Archive	Named in Cowtan Order Books/V&A
Long Library	x	
Manuscript Library	x	x
Classical Library	x	
Lady Bridget's Room	x	x
Lady Marjorie's & Lady Bridget's Bathroom		x
Lady Marjorie's Room & Wardrobe Closets	x	x
Young Ladies' Bathroom		x
Staircase	x	
Her Ladyship's Bedroom & Dressing Room	x	x
Boudoir	x	x
FAMILY WING (ground floor)		
His Lordship's Sitting Room	x	x
His Lordship's Bedroom	x	x
His Lordship's Bathroom	x	
The Terrace Sitting Room	x	x
The Hon. Mr Roger Cooke's Room	x	x
Maid's Room and Wardrobe Room	x	
Groom of Chambers' Room	x	x
Brushing Room, W.C. & Lobby	x	
Work Room & Lady's Maid's Bedroom		x
KITCHEN WING & SERVANTS' OFFICES IN MAIN BUILDING		
3 Bedrooms & Passages over Servants' Hall	x	
5 Bedrooms over Kitchen Passage	x	
Cooks' 3 Bedrooms, Passage & Stairs	x	
Kitchen	x	x
Scullery, Party Larder & Meat Larder	x	
Servants' Hall & Lobby to Same	x	
Post Office & Porter's Bedroom	x	
Steward's Room	x	
Butler's Bedroom	x	x
Butler's Pantry		x
Plate Room	x	
2 Visiting Maids' Rooms	x	
China Room	x	
Chef's Room		x
Men's Room		x
Dark Room over Servants' Hall		x
Rooms 3, 4, & 5 over Kitchen		x
Kitchen, Middle Room & Room Top of Stairs		x
BASEMENT		
Old Kitchen, Fish Larders, Salting Larder, Staircase, W.C., Lobby, New Brushing Room, Drying Room & Passage	x	

Table 13: Rooms in the Family Wing and Kitchen Wing, Servants' Offices in Main Building and Basement at Holkham Hall decorated by Cowtan & Sons, 1909-1910, recorded in the Cowtan Estimates and Cowtan Order Books.

MAIN BUILDING (first floor)	Named in Cowtan Estimates/ Holkham Archive	Named in Cowtan Order Books/V&A
North Sitting Room	x	
South Dining Room	x	x
Landscape Room	x	x
North Tribune	x	x
North Dining Room	x	
Statue Gallery	x	x
South Tribune	x	x
South Drawing Room	x	x
Saloon	x	x
Queen's Sitting Room	x	
Queen's Bedroom		x
Green State Bedroom		x
King's Sitting Room		x
King's Dressing Room		x
Nelson Room		x
Smoking Room		x
4 Tower Rooms		x
Maids' Rooms by Smoking Room		x
Women Servants' Bathroom		x
WHITE ATTICS		
Housekeeper's Room & Bedroom		x
Housekeeper's Sitting Room		x
2 Visiting Valets' Rooms		x
2 Visiting Ladies Maids' Rooms		x
CHAPEL WING		
Day Nursery		x
Night Nursery		x
2 Maids' Bedrooms		x
Nursery (right hand room, top floor)		x
Lady's Maid's Room		x
Large Family Room		x
Bathroom & W.C.		x
Smoking Room		x
Green Room		x
Gun Room		x
Ground Floor Passage		x
Ground Floor Room		x
The Hon. Mr Arthur's Room		x
Guard Room		x
His Lordship's Room & Bathroom		x
Plate Cupboards		x
Laundry Bedroom		x

Table 14: Rooms in the Main Building, White Attics and Chapel Wing at Holkham Hall decorated by Cowtan & Sons, 1909-1910, recorded in the Cowtan Estimates and Cowtan Order Books.

STRANGERS' WING	Named in Cowtan Estimates/ Holkham Archive	Named in Cowtan Order Books/V&A
2 Large Rooms (top of wing)		x
2 Small Rooms (top of wing)		x
Lady's Maid's Room (ground floor)		x
2 Office Rooms (ground floor)		x
Red & Yellow Bedroom (now Red Parrot Room)		x
Brown & Yellow Dressing Room		x
Green & White Room		x
Bachelors' Rooms		x
North Room		x
LOCATION NOT SPECIFIED		
Strong Room		x
Laundry		x
Audit Room		x

Table 15: Rooms in the Strangers' Wing and other locations at Holkham Hall decorated by Cowtan & Sons, 1909-1910, recorded in the Cowtan Estimates and Cowtan Order Books.

While the Cowtan estimates provide a narrative description, the Cowtan orders illustrate the colours, designs and textures of the materials that were used. For example, a red and gold patterned silk, overlaid with a piece of plain gold silk, is annotated in the Cowtan order for use on the walls of the Red & Yellow Bedroom and for curtains in the Strangers' Wing, while a crimson silk damask in the Cowtan order is described as being, 'for wall covering & curtains in Green State Sitting Room.' Another crimson damask is annotated as, 'Own Italian silk used for curtains in Saloon, South Drawing Room & South Dining Room, also as covering for chairs in North Dining Room' [fig.93].

'Own silk' suggests that it was supplied by the Earl of Leicester and that a sample had been provided to Cowtan to be pasted into the order book to ensure that the correct silk was used. Another crimson damask thus described is used for curtains in the Dining Room, the North and South Tribunes and, 'also for furniture covering in Statue Gallery'. Yet another red silk damask is specified for a wallcovering and curtains in the 'Landscape Room', known as the Landscape Library today. A damask of the same colour and design still hangs on the walls and upholsters the furniture of the Landscape Library [fig.94] and a similar damask hangs in the North State Bedroom, referred to as the Queen's Bedroom in the Cowtan orders [fig. 95].

Over one hundred years have passed since Cowtan & Sons carried out the work and the silk appears to be in good condition so it is unlikely to be the same material originally hung by the firm in 1910, but the sample in the order demonstrates that the family's preference for that particular pattern and shade of silk damask has not wavered over time. The Cowtan order also specifies that the Earl of Leicester's 'Own Italian Silk' is to be used on the walls of the 'Brown & Yellow Dressing Room' and for curtains in the Long Library. The Green State Bedroom was supplied with a dark green velvet for the, 'outside backs of chairs' and a sample of the 'Own Genoa Velvet' patterned in deep green and red for curtains and furniture upholstery is shown for the same room. The order also holds a sample of blue-green leather for a table top in the Smoking Room, to be, 'dyed a darker shade after table was lined' [fig.96].



Fig. 93: Cowtan order for Holkham Hall, 1910, for wallcoverings and upholstery, (top to bottom): Red & Yellow Bedroom, Green State Sitting Room, the Strangers' Wing, Saloon, South Drawing Room, South Dining Room, North Dining Room, North & South Tribune Statue Gallery, Statue Gallery, Landscape Room and Manuscript Library.⁵⁸⁷

⁵⁸⁷ COB 21(i), p.246.



**Fig. 94: Walls and sofa covered with crimson silk damask, Landscape Library, Holkham Hall.
Image: Wendy Andrews, 2016.**



Fig. 95: Silk wallhangings in the North State Bedroom [referred to as the Queen's Bedroom in the Cowtan orders], Holkham Hall. Image: Wendy Andrews, 2016.

A sample of the silk chosen for the walls of the Queen's Bedroom and the South Drawing Room and for furniture in the Saloon and the South Drawing Room has regrettably been removed from the Cowtan order, though traces of red silk fibres remain visible on the page where it had been pasted [fig.96]. A red woven braid border for covering the selvages of the silk caffoy wallhangings on the walls of the Saloon, the South Dining Room, the South Drawing Room, the King's Sitting Room & Dressing Room and the Queen's Bedroom is also shown in the Cowtan order. The same braid border is clearly visible today in the Saloon along the edges of the caffoy wallhangings, exactly as it was supplied by Cowtan in 1910 [fig.97]. Likewise, the red silk damask that covers the chairs in the Saloon today may be the same material as supplied by Cowtan & Sons in 1910, judging by the degree to which it has faded [fig.98].



Fig. 96: Cowtan order for Holkham Hall, 1910, for wallcoverings and upholstery for the Brown & Yellow Dressing Room, Long Library, Smoking Room, Green State Bedroom, Queen's Bedroom, South Drawing Room, Saloon, South Dining Room, King's Sitting Room and King's Dressing Room.⁵⁸⁸

⁵⁸⁸ COB 21(i), p.245.



Fig. 97: Cowtan order for Holkham Hall, 1910, for braid trim for the Saloon [also visible along lower edge of the wallhanging [see fig. 98]. Image: Wendy Andrews, 2016.



Fig. 98: Red silk damask upholstered chair and red braid trim along lower edge of the wallhanging (visible behind chair) in the Saloon, Holkham Hall, supplied by Cowtan & Sons in 1910 [see figs. 96 and 97]. Image: Wendy Andrews, 2016.

While the state rooms, showrooms and guest rooms at Holkham Hall have retained decorative schemes in keeping with the original eighteenth-century interiors, many of the rooms occupied by the Coke family in the Chapel Wing and the Family Wing, and by the servants in the Chapel Wing and the Kitchen Wing, have been redecorated in the intervening years. With the exception of a few fragments of wallpapers found in the attics, evidence for past decoration of these rooms has disappeared but the Cowtan orders and the Cowtan estimates together reveal how these rooms were decorated in the early twentieth century and provide details of colour schemes, materials and even the uses of rooms, that would be otherwise lost.

The decoration of the Family Wing itemised in the Cowtan estimates shows that the work included preparation of the walls in each room but that the surface finish was often left unspecified. In His Lordship's Sitting Room and Her Ladyship's Bedroom & Dressing Room the estimate states, 'Strip and prepare the walls and leave for further treatment'; in His Lordship's Bedroom the decorators are to, 'Strip and prepare the walls and leave for paper to be selected'; and in Her Ladyship's Boudoir, they are to, 'Strip silk from walls, clean down, strain new canvas, line walls with brown paper and leave for further treatment.' Similarly, in Lady Bridget's Bedroom & Bathroom, the estimate states, 'Strip and prepare walls, ready to receive paper to be selected', and the same instruction is also given for the Hon. Mr Roger Coke's Room.⁵⁸⁹

Other structural and decorative works are described in the estimates, such as, 'Take down and reset the chimney piece and lay new hearth in cement', in His Lordship's Bedroom; 'Clean and restore the painted and enriched ceiling, paint the plain parts and preserve the gilding', in Her Ladyship's Bedroom; and 'Restore the gilding of cornice and woodwork, regilding the parts that are worn off with best English leaf gold, and preserve and lacquer to old effect', in Lady Bridget's room. However, the wallpapers and wallcoverings that were eventually chosen for these and other rooms are not described in the estimates and would have remained invisible to contemporary eyes without the evidence of the Cowtan Order Books. Here we find that His Lordship's Sitting Room & Bedroom was decorated with sixteen pieces of a dark green herringbone embossed paper, while the walls of Her Ladyship's Room were lined with a dark green silk damask. As noted in the Oxburgh Hall example, the quantities of

⁵⁸⁹ The 3rd Earl of Leicester and his wife Alice were parents to five children: Thomas Coke, 4th Earl of Leicester (1880-1949); Hon. Arthur George Coke (1882-1915); Lady Marjory Coke (1884-1946); Hon. Roger Coke (1886-1960) and Lady Bridget (1891-1984).

wallpapers ordered also give an insight into the dimensions of rooms. Sixteen pieces of wallpaper would have covered a Sitting Room and Bedroom each measuring approximately twelve feet square and ten feet high. The contemporary first floor plan of the Chapel Wing shows Lord Leicester's office and bedroom; the dimensions of these rooms should equate to the quantities of Cowtan wallpaper ordered and thus confirm whether the rooms were used for the same purpose in 1909. Lady Marjorie's and Lady Bridget's Rooms and Dressing Closet were decorated with twenty pieces of a buff coloured embossed anaglypta paper, presumably for over-painting in a colour [fig.99]. Master Roger's Room was to have walls distempered in a pale grey, with panelling and a border paper patterned with pale blue ribbons and twisted rope decoration, and also a plain dark blue Bruges carpet [fig.100]. Lady Bridget's Room was decorated with a pink rose patterned paper and her Boudoir walls were lined with a plain green silk, although as the Cowtan order notes, this was a temporary wallcovering [fig.101.]



Fig. 99: Cowtan order for Holkham Hall, 1909, for wallpapers and upholstery for Her Ladyship's Room, His Lordship's Sitting Room & Bedroom, Lady Marjorie & Lady Bridget's Rooms & Dressing Closet, Nelson Room and also a carpet for Master Roger's Room.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁹⁰ COB 21(i), p.5.

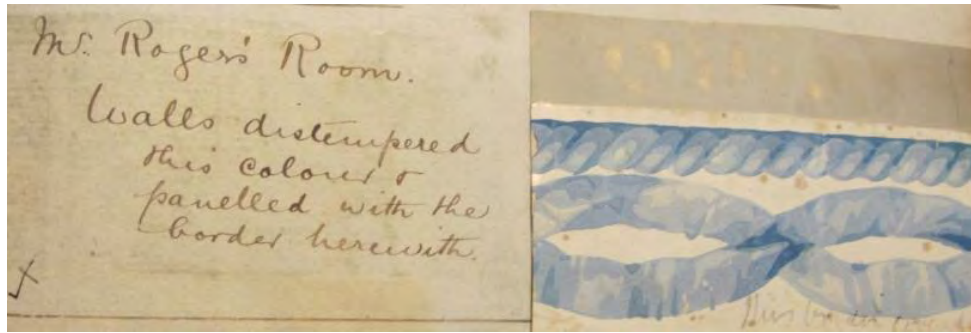


Fig. 100: Cowtan order for Master Roger Coke's Room, Holkham Hall, 1909. 'Walls distempred this colour & panelled with the border herewith.'⁵⁹¹



Fig. 101: Cowtan order for Holkham Hall, 1909, for wallpapers and upholstery fabrics for Lady Bridget's Room, the Boudoir, Butler's Pantry, Day Nursery, Night Nursery and Maids Room in the Chapel Wing.⁵⁹²

⁵⁹¹ COB 21(i), p.6.

⁵⁹² COB 21(i), p.84.

Although they are not mentioned in the estimates, the order books reveal that the nurseries of the Coke children were also decorated by Cowtan & Sons. In the Chapel Wing the Day Nursery was papered with ten pieces of a pattern with large pink roses and green foliage, and the Night Nursery & Maids Room with fifteen pieces of a cream and white broad striped pattern. The nursery samples are alongside a bold geometric diagonal striped paper in ochre and green for the Butler's Pantry [fig.101].



Fig. 102: Cowtan order for Holkham Hall, 1909, for wallpapers (top to bottom): Housekeeper's Room, Bedroom & Room adjoining; Ben's Room & Rooms 1 & 2 over Kitchen; Dark Room over Servants' Hall; Rooms 3, 4 & 5 over Kitchen; Groom of Chambers' Room in Family Wing.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹³ COB 21(i), p.7.

As both the estimates and the orders record, Cowtan & Sons decorated numerous servants' rooms at Holkham Hall, as they did at other aristocratic houses in the later nineteenth century. Servants' rooms were often decorated with attractive wallpapers, as chapter 9 explains further. The servants' rooms at Holkham Hall were no exception; bright cheerful floral papers were ordered for the accommodation and working quarters of servants of all ranks in the Kitchen Wing, the Chapel Wing and in the Main Building. In the Attics, the Housekeeper's Room, Bedroom and adjoining room were decorated with seventeen pieces of a paper patterned with rose blooms. A similar paper was chosen for what was presumably a manservants' room, noted in the Cowtan order as 'Ben's Room' and also for Rooms 1 & 2 over the Kitchen. A paper with sprigs of red rose buds and pale blue ribbons on a pale yellow striped ground was chosen to brighten the 'Dark Room over the Servants' Hall'. Rooms 3, 4 & 5 over the Kitchen were also decorated with paper patterned with pink blooms and blue ribbons. Even the Groom of Chambers' Room in the Family Wing was enhanced with floral wallpaper [fig.102].

Varnished tile pattern 'sanitary' wallpapers became popular for bathrooms and lavatories in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Cowtan & Sons supplied several such papers to Holkham Hall, including a pale green tile pattern for the 'Young Ladies Bathroom' and a plain white version for a Bathroom & W.C. in the Chapel Wing [fig.103]. The Large Family Room in the Chapel Wing was decorated with a pale green self-striped paper which is the same as a paper chosen for the Day Nursery. The Smoking Room was decorated with an embossed dark blue leather effect wallcovering. The same leather effect material but in a sea green was ordered for the Old Gun Room, though 'Cancelled - see Guard Room' was subsequently written across the order [fig.103]. The order shows a plain red wallpaper for the Guard Room, which confirms that the choice of paper, as well as the room name, had changed. Leather effect papers were introduced in the 1870s⁵⁹⁴ and Holkham's Audit Room was also decorated in an embossed and varnished fleur-de-lys pattern leather effect paper.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹⁴ Woods, in *The Papered Wall*, p.158.

⁵⁹⁵ COB 21(i), p.182.



Fig. 103: Cowtan order for Holkham Hall, 1909, for wallpapers for Large Family Room, Bathroom & W.C., Smoking Room, Green Room in Chapel Wing (and Old Gun Room, later cancelled).⁵⁹⁶

The Green Room, also located in the Chapel Wing, was decorated not, as might be expected, with a green wallpaper, but with a bright red poppy patterned paper [fig.103]. A similar poppy pattern was also chosen for two Maids Rooms in the Chapel Wing. The enthusiasm for rose and poppy patterned papers at the Hall continued with the decoration of the rooms for the Visiting Valets and Visiting Ladies' Maids [fig.104]. A fragment of the paper chosen for the Visiting Valets remains visible today in an attic room in the Chapel Wing [fig.105]. The Cowtan order therefore confirms the location in the Hall of the Visiting Valets' room in 1909. The rose wallpaper is just visible beneath the remnants of another, larger expanse of paper decorated with small pale blue flowers on a pale yellow narrow striped ground; this paper is similar, though not identical, to a wallpaper supplied by Cowtan for the Work Room and Lady's Maids Room in the Family Wing [fig.106].

⁵⁹⁶ COB 21(i), p.117.



Fig. 104: Cowtan order, Holkham Hall, 1909, for wallpapers for Young Ladies' Bathroom, Two Visiting Valets' Rooms and Two Visiting Ladies Maids' Rooms.⁵⁹⁷



**Fig. 105: Fragments of wallpapers in an attic room at Holkham Hall; the rose pattern paper is the same as the paper ordered for the room for Two Visiting Valets in 1909 [see fig.102].
Image: Wendy Andrews, 2015.**

⁵⁹⁷ COB 21(i), p.8.



Fig. 106: Cowtan order, Holkham Hall, 1909, for wallpapers and upholstery fabrics for Lady Marjorie's Room, the Housekeeper's Room and Sitting Room, Work Room & Lady's Maids' Bedroom in the Family Wing, Day Nursery and Two Maids' Bedrooms in the Chapel Wing.⁵⁹⁸

Exploration of the Cowtan Order Books has yielded new information about the decoration of Holkham Hall in the early twentieth century. Like many of Cowtan's aristocratic and wealthiest customers of the period the Earl of Leicester chose luxurious wallhangings for Holkham's state and formal family rooms and lighter papers patterned with pink florals, ribbons and colourful foliage for his servants' quarters. He also indulged in new designs and materials such as sanitary tile patterns for bathrooms, anaglypta and leather effect papers for his own and his family's apartments.

⁵⁹⁸ COB 21(i), p.83.

The Cowtan orders have confirmed or challenged previous assumptions and have offered new information to add to the records of how Oxburgh Hall, Insole Court and Holkham Hall were decorated to reflect the tastes and lives of their inhabitants. These examples illustrate how the Cowtan orders can shed light on the naming and decoration of rooms and on floorplans that have been obscured by subsequent remodelling, where other sources might be less detailed or completely lost. Similar details for thousands of properties are recorded in the Cowtan orders. In chapter 8, the value of comparing the Cowtan orders with written and photographic records is discussed, presenting as examples the properties of two among Cowtan & Sons' most loyal customers, the American banker, J.P. Morgan and the Liberal peer, Viscount Harcourt.

Chapter 8

COWTAN'S ADDITIONS TO HISTORIC RECORDS OF ROOMS

Previous chapters have presented evidence that the Cowtan Order Books are a rich source of information about the decorative history of houses in the UK and overseas. In this chapter comparisons are drawn between the Cowtan orders and written and photographic records of rooms to demonstrate what the Cowtan archive can add to the details found in other historic sources. The decoration of properties belonging to Cowtan & Sons' most loyal customers, the American banker John Pierpont (J.P.) Morgan and his son J.P. (Jack) Morgan Junior and Viscount Lewis Harcourt of Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire are presented as case studies.

In addition to their significant patronage of Cowtan & Sons, a connection was established between the Harcourts and the Morgans in 1899 through the marriage of Lewis Harcourt, son of Sir William Harcourt, and Mary Ethel Burns, niece of J.P. Morgan. Lewis Harcourt (known as 'Loulou') served as Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1910 to 1915 in Asquith's Liberal government and in 1917 was created the 1st Viscount Harcourt.⁵⁹⁹ His engagement to an American heiress was welcomed by his father, who wrote, 'It is another link with the American alliance. We are all Americans now!'⁶⁰⁰ This chapter later explores whether the alliance between the two families may also have created a union of their tastes in decorating and furnishing.

From 1897 to 1937 large quantities of wallpapers, wallhangings and furnishing fabrics were ordered from Cowtan & Sons by J.P. Morgan for his British and American properties, and by the Harcourts of Nuneham Park. Not only were they Cowtan & Sons' best customers in terms of the numbers of orders placed, the Cowtan Order Books also suggest that J.P. Morgan and his son introduced the firm to further wealthy customers in New York, as several orders for

⁵⁹⁹ <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/33692?docPos=1> [accessed 16 October 2015]

⁶⁰⁰ Alfred George Gardiner, *The Life of Sir William Harcourt*, (London: Constable, 1923), II, p.506.

business partners and relations of J.P. Morgan, such as Charles Lanier, William and David Egleston, appear in the order books from the late 1890s.⁶⁰¹

The principal Harcourt property decorated by Cowtan & Sons between 1898 (the year of Lewis and Mary's betrothal) and 1937 was Nuneham Park. During the same period Cowtan decorated UK properties owned by J.P. Morgan Senior and J.P. Morgan Junior, including Dover House, Roehampton; Aldenham Abbey (later known as Wall Hall), Hertfordshire; 13/14 Prince's Gate, London; 2 South Street, London; 12 Grosvenor Square, London and Gannochy, Edzell, Scotland. The firm also supplied wallpapers and furnishing fabrics to the Morgans' properties in Madison Avenue/East 36th Street, New York; and Matinecock Point, Long Island.

In the following sections the Cowtan orders for the Harcourt and Morgan properties are compared to other records of their interiors.

Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire

A noble Conquest family, the Harcourts were important figures in Oxfordshire, serving as elected members for the county for almost six hundred years.⁶⁰² In 1756 the 1st Earl Harcourt commissioned the architect Stiff Leadbetter to build a new mansion close to his Stanton Harcourt estate, five miles south of Oxford [fig.107]. Nuneham Park was built in the Palladian villa style with interior decoration by James 'Athenian' Stuart.⁶⁰³ In 1777 George Harcourt, the 2nd Earl, employed Lancelot 'Capability' Brown to improve the landscape and make alterations to the house. These were admired by George III who visited Nuneham Park with Queen Charlotte and their three eldest daughters, the Princesses Charlotte, Augusta and Elizabeth, in August 1786 and commended it as, 'the most enjoyable place I know'.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰¹ COB 19(i), pp.11-13.

⁶⁰² John de Harcourt was elected to Parliament in November 1322. Edward Harcourt served as MP for Oxfordshire from 1878 to 1885 and for Henley from 1885 to 1886.

⁶⁰³ Mavis L. Batey, *Nuneham Courtenay, Oxfordshire: A Short History and Description of the House, Gardens and Estate*, 3rd edn (Oxford: University of Oxford, 1984), p.10.

⁶⁰⁴ *The Harcourt Papers*, ed. by Edward William Harcourt, (Oxford: James Parker, 1880-1905), VI, p.194.



Fig. 107: Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, west facing aspect. Image: Wendy Andrews, 2015.

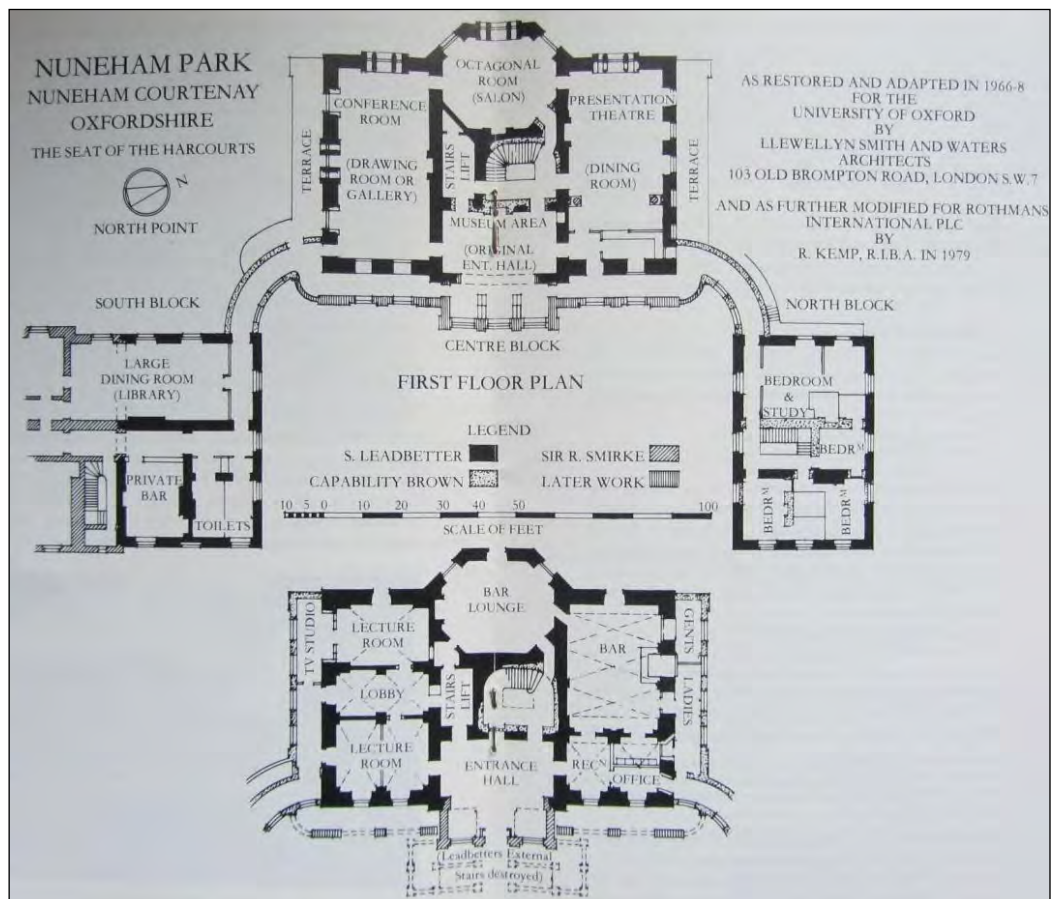


Fig. 108: Nuneham Park plan of 1979, showing earlier plans by Stiff Leadbetter, Capability Brown and Robert Smirke [top: First Floor Plan; bottom: Ground Floor Plan].⁶⁰⁵

⁶⁰⁵ Batey, pp.16-17.

In 1830 Nuneham Park was inherited by Edward Venables Vernon Harcourt who served as Archbishop of York from 1808 until 1847. Deeming the accommodation at Nuneham Park inadequate for his large family, the Archbishop engaged Robert Smirke to modernise the house, including enlargement of the south wing and remodelling the interior. The old library in the north wing was converted into a sitting room, while a library and other apartments were added to the south wing that had formerly housed the state rooms.⁶⁰⁶ Fig.108 shows the phases of alteration by Leadbetter, Brown and Smirke. Among the Archbishop's guests at Nuneham Park were Queen Victoria and Prince Albert shortly after their marriage in 1841.⁶⁰⁷

As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir William Harcourt (1827-1904) introduced death duties in 1894;⁶⁰⁸ ten years later he felt the impact of his own legislation when he unexpectedly inherited Nuneham Park in 1904. Writing to his sister, he complained that even with proceeds from the sale of Harcourt House, the family's Cavendish Square townhouse, there was insufficient finance for essential repairs to the dilapidated mansion, adding,

What is called a *succession* is full of trouble. Every day I find there is more to pay and less to receive. It is now claimed the whole roof of the house at Nuneham is in a state of decay, having been neglected for the last fifty years, and that it must be stripped and replaced. All the carpets are worn out, and the place wants repainting from top to bottom.⁶⁰⁹

Soon after inheriting Nuneham Park, Sir William died, leaving his son, Lewis Harcourt (1863-1922), to deal with the burden of the estate. Lewis and his wife Mary moved into Nuneham Park but struggled to afford the substantial repairs. It was timely, therefore, that Mary's uncle, J.P. Morgan, established an account with the sum of £52,000 in his niece's name at his London bank, telling her not to worry about repaying the loan, 'What I want is that you & Loulou should enjoy the place. Life is short & one never knows what may happen.'⁶¹⁰ The couple embarked on the restoration of Nuneham Park, including an extensive schedule of interior redecoration carried out by Cowtan & Sons. Upon completion of the work, they hosted a house party in 1907; among their guests were J.P. Morgan and Edward VII [fig.109].⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁶ *The Harcourt Papers*, III, p.219.

⁶⁰⁷ Batey, p.15 and *The Harcourt Papers*, III, p.192.

⁶⁰⁸ Gardiner, II, p.569.

⁶⁰⁹ Gardiner, II, p.568.

⁶¹⁰ Jean Strouse, *Morgan: American Financier*, (London: Harvill Press, 1999), p.386. Strouse also notes that J.P. Morgan acquired a portrait of Mary, Countess Harcourt (1751-1833) from his friend Henry Clay Frick which he gave to Mary and Lewis at Nuneham in 1899.

⁶¹¹ Strouse, p.386.



Fig. 109: House party at Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, 1907. Seated centre, Edward VII, to his left, Mary Harcourt. On the stairs: 3rd from left, J.P. Morgan; 2nd from left, Lewis Harcourt. Image: Archive of the Pierpont Morgan Library.⁶¹²

***The Harcourt Papers'* description of Nuneham Park in 1890: how the Cowtan orders compare**

Edward Harcourt, Conservative MP for Oxfordshire from 1878 to 1885, inherited Nuneham Park in 1871. From 1880 until his death in 1891 he compiled and edited fourteen volumes of Harcourt family papers. Following the deaths of the two subsequent successors to the Nuneham estate it fell to Lewis Harcourt to oversee the publication of the complete *Harcourt Papers* in 1905, of which only fifty copies were printed. The volumes include a detailed description of the interior of the house, recorded by Edward Harcourt in 1890. The largest Cowtan order for Nuneham Park was recorded in April 1906 and comprises sixteen pages of wallpaper and fabric samples specified for forty-six rooms and two pages of descriptions of carpets to be supplied.⁶¹³

⁶¹² Strouse, p.387.

⁶¹³ COB 20(i), pp.209-224.

Abingdon Room	North Wing Staircase and Corridors
Ante Room	Octagon Room
Billiard Room	Oxford Room
Bosworth Room	Pope's Room
Boudoir	Princess Augusta's Room
Breakfast Room	Princess Charlotte's Room
Centre Block Corridor	Principal Staircase
Cokethorpe Room	Radley Room
Corridor to Gower Room	Sandford Room
Day Nursery	Schoolroom
Dining Room	Secretary's Room
Drawing Room	Small Library
Ellenhall Room	Small Night Nursery
Evelyn Room	South Wing Staircase
Front Hall	State Room
Gray's Room	Smoking Room
Ground Floor Corridor from Serving Lobby	Vernon Room
Lady Anne's Room	Waldegrave Room
Large Night Nursery	Walpole Room
Lavatories off Billiard Room	Wardrobe Room
Library	Whitehead Room
Mason's Room	Wytham Room
Mrs Harcourt's Bedroom and Dressing room	York Room

Table 16: Nuneham Park's rooms decorated by Cowtan & Sons in 1906. Bold text denotes rooms also mentioned in *The Harcourt Papers* in 1890.

The room names in the Cowtan order for April 1906 are listed in table 16; those in bold are also mentioned in Edward Harcourt's description of the house in *The Harcourt Papers* in 1890.⁶¹⁴ By comparing Edward Harcourt's 1890 description of Nuneham Park's interiors to the Cowtan order of 1906, new details can be added to the description of the decorative schemes for the house.

Edward Harcourt's description of Nuneham Park concentrates on the State rooms and family rooms. [**Bold text** denotes rooms and decorative details also mentioned in the Cowtan orders]:

On entering the house, a low vestibule formed with arches leads to an **Oval Staircase** of an ornamental character; upon ascending this staircase, the **Ante-Room**⁶¹⁵ is found on the right hand, the **Dining-Room** in front, and the **Octagon Drawing-Room** on

⁶¹⁴ *The Harcourt Papers*, pp.186-214.

⁶¹⁵ The Ante-Room was originally the first floor entrance hall designed by Stiff Leadbetter in 1756. The exterior staircase to the first floor was removed in the Capability Brown remodelling of 1781.

the left hand. **The Ante-Room** is thirty feet long by sixteen feet broad, and eighteen feet six inches high. This room is generally used for meals, when the party staying in the house is a small one.....a door on the right hand leads into the **Great Drawing-Room** [which] is forty-nine feet long, by twenty-four feet broad, and eighteen feet six inches high; the ceiling was designed by Stuart, and the mantel-piece by Paul Sandby. **The walls are hung with crimson damask.**⁶¹⁶

Harcourt's 1890 description of the Drawing Room can be illustrated by the 1906 Cowtan order, which includes a sample of crimson silk damask for the Drawing Room walls [fig.110] and suggests that Cowtan & Sons was contracted to hang the same or similar crimson damask in the Drawing Room that had been in place when Edward Harcourt surveyed the room. The same damask, though without colour, can be seen in a black and white photograph of the Drawing Room published in *Country Life* magazine in November 1913 [fig.111]. The damask has since been removed and the Drawing Room is now used as a conference room and is painted pale cream and gold. However, the ceiling designed by James Stuart and the mantelpiece by Paul Sandby remain intact [fig.112].

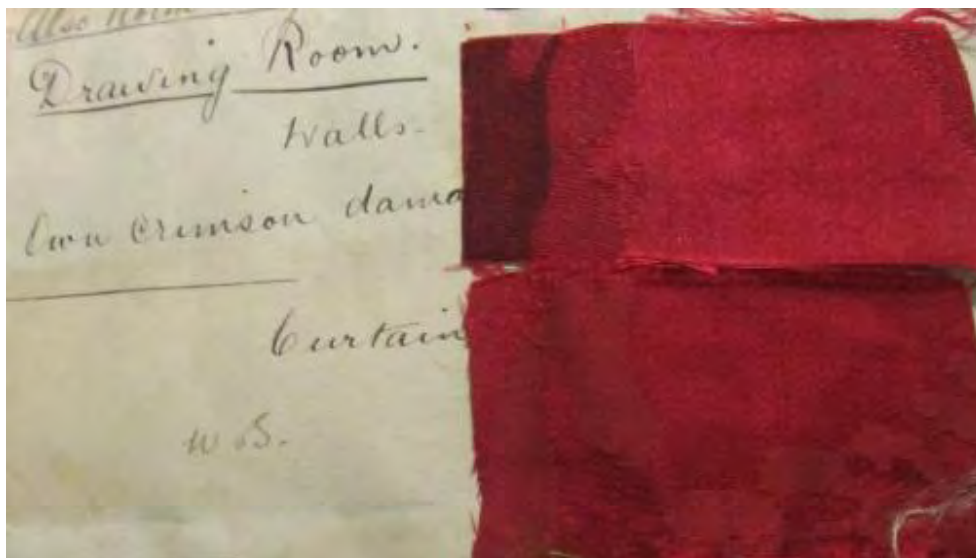


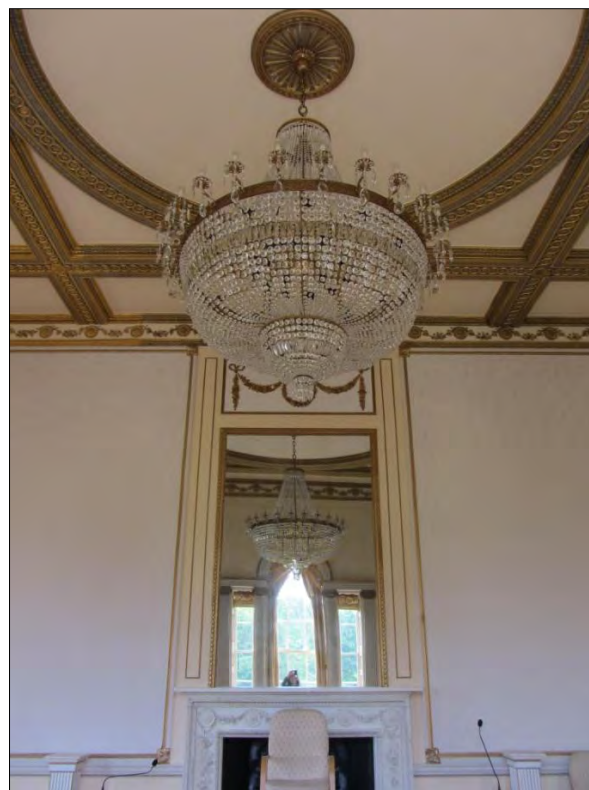
Fig. 110: Cowtan order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, Oxford, 1906, with 'Own crimson damask' for the Drawing Room walls.⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁶ *The Harcourt Papers*, III, p.190.

⁶¹⁷ COB 20(i), p.213.



**Fig. 111: The Drawing Room, Nuneham Park, *Country Life*, 29 November 1913.
Image: *Country Life*.⁶¹⁸**



**Fig. 112: The former Drawing Room (now Conference Room), Nuneham Park.
Image: Wendy Andrews, 2015.**

⁶¹⁸ *Country Life*, XXXIV (1913), p.746.

Edward Harcourt's description of Nuneham Park continues,

The **Octagon Drawing-Room** is thirty feet by twenty-four, and eighteen feet six inches high; a pleasanter room it would be impossible to find, and the views from the windows are very fine; **the walls are painted a light green with gold decorations.**⁶¹⁹

The Cowtan order for the Octagon Room includes the instruction for the walls to be 'painted a shade of green with gilding'⁶²⁰ which suggests that in 1906 the firm painted the room to the same colour scheme as had been visible to Harcourt in 1890. The Octagon Room's ornate gilded plasterwork decoration remains in place but its walls are now painted a pale blue [fig.113]. Edward Harcourt's description and the Cowtan order therefore provide evidence for the earlier decoration and for its duration of at least sixteen years between 1890 and 1906.

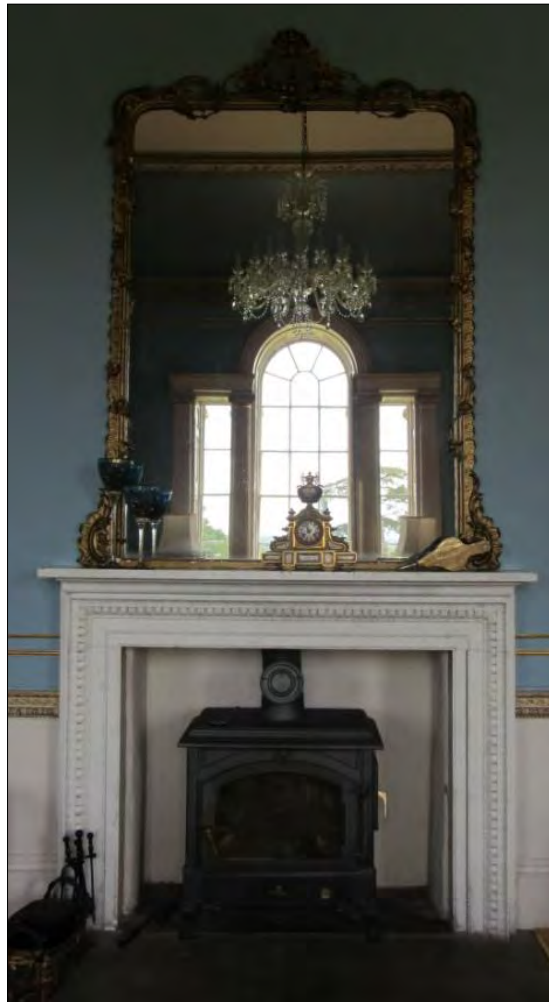


Fig. 113: The Octagon Room, Nuneham Park. Image: Wendy Andrews, 2015.

⁶¹⁹ *The Harcourt Papers*, III, p.191.

⁶²⁰ COB 20(i), p.214.

Harcourt records the dimensions of the Great Dining-Room as, ‘forty-one feet long by twenty-four feet broad, and eighteen feet six inches high in the centre, fifteen feet high under the columns.’⁶²¹ However, he does not describe the decoration of the room. In 1906 the Cowtan order states that the Dining Room is to be, ‘panelled & painted white’.⁶²² The panelling that remains in place in the Dining Room (now the Presentation Room) is likely to be the same as mentioned in the Cowtan order, although it is now painted in several shades of a pale cream colour.

Harcourt continues his tour of Nuneham Park with a description of the dimensions of the Library, ‘thirty-three feet long by twenty feet broad, and fourteen feet high’, and adds, ‘above the books are pictures of the poets, many of them presents from themselves’. His reference to the gifts from the poets is further supported by the naming after them of many of the bedrooms at Nuneham Park, as the Cowtan order confirms. The order reveals that the Library paper chosen in 1906 is a dark blue damask pattern, of which twelve pieces at a cost of seven shillings and three pence are specified. It is accompanied by a matching fabric to be used for, ‘festoon blind curtains in damask design’ [fig.114].

From the Library, Harcourt proceeds to the Inner Library and the State Apartments, the latter of which he describes as hung with crimson velvet, in which Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, Queen Adelaide and other members of the royal family had stayed at various times. The Cowtan order includes wallpaper or fabric samples for each of these rooms. However, in 1906 the State Room was no longer to be hung with crimson velvet as described by Edward Harcourt but, according to the instruction in the Cowtan order, with, ‘own yellow damask material’. The Cowtan sample is of an ochre yellow silk damask, and is accompanied by a heavier yellow fabric woven with a dark red pattern, intended for ‘Curtains for Bookcase doors’ [fig.114].

Harcourt offers no description of the Inner Library but the Cowtan order includes a paper for the Small Library and it is possible that it was formerly known as the Inner Library. The Small Library walls are to be hung with nineteen pieces of a paper with white ground, patterned with a bold design in red. The Cowtan order also specifies red jacquard material curtains for the Small Library [fig.114].

⁶²¹ *The Harcourt Papers*, III, p.191.

⁶²² COB 20(i), p.214.



Fig. 114: Cowtan order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, 1906, for wallpaper and fabrics for the Library, Small Library and State Room.⁶²³

Although they are not mentioned in the description in the *Harcourt Papers*, Princess Augusta's Room and Princess Charlotte's Room are likely to have been situated in the suite of State Apartments to which Harcourt refers, as they accompanied their parents George III and Queen Charlotte when they visited Nuneham Park in 1786.⁶²⁴ One hundred and twenty years later, at the time of the Cowtan order in 1906, the rooms retained their royal attributions. Princess Charlotte's Room was to be decorated with a 'large rose design' paper with pink silk moirée curtains to match, while a 'large peony design' paper in blue and white, with matching blue silk moirée curtains was chosen for Princess Augusta's Room [fig.115].

⁶²³ COB 20(i), p.215.

⁶²⁴ Batey, p.7.



Fig. 115: Cowtan order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, 1906, for wallpaper and fabrics for Princess Charlotte's Room, Princess Augusta's Room, Ante-Room and North Wing Corridors.⁶²⁵

Other rooms at Nuneham Park are mentioned by Edward Harcourt in 1890, but with no description of their decoration. However, the Cowtan order provides the missing details of the decoration of those rooms, as executed by the firm in 1906. The Billiard Room was to be decorated with, 'the real Chinese hand painted decoration on yellow ground', while a paper of 'Italian design in greens' was chosen for the Smoking Room [fig.116].

⁶²⁵ COB 20(i), p.216.



Fig. 116: Cowtan order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, 1906, with samples of wallpaper and fabrics for the Front Hall, Billiard Room, Lavatories off Billiard Room, Smoking Room and Breakfast Room.⁶²⁶

Harcourt refers to 'Suites of Bedrooms' situated above the principal apartments.⁶²⁷ Their interiors are illustrated in detail by the Cowtan order of 1906 which includes papers and fabrics for seventeen rooms that are identified by proper nouns, in addition to those named to honour Royal visitors or attributed to members of the Harcourt family [fig.117]. Several rooms celebrate prominent literary figures such as the poets Alexander Pope, Thomas Gray and William Mason, and the writer and politician Horace Walpole, all of whom were entertained at Nuneham Park in the eighteenth century by the 2nd Earl Harcourt and his wife Elizabeth who established Nuneham as a literary and artistic salon.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁶ COB 20(i), p.209.

⁶²⁷ *The Harcourt Papers*, III, p.193.

⁶²⁸ Gardiner, I, p.13.



Fig. 117: Cowtan order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, 1906, with samples of wallpaper and fabrics for rooms named after the poets Gray, Pope and Mason.⁶²⁹

Edward Harcourt's account of Nuneham Park in 1890 concludes with the observation that the house is lit by gas throughout, is warmed by hot water pipes and can accommodate seventy people. Nevertheless, the attractions of its abundant apartments and modern conveniences were eventually outweighed by the cost of its maintenance. In 1948 Lord William Harcourt, son and heir of Lewis Harcourt, sold Nuneham Park to the University of Oxford, from whom since 1993 it has been leased by the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University as a global retreat centre.⁶³⁰

Although the floorplan of the principal first floor rooms of the original mansion has been little altered, many of the ancillary rooms on the ground floor and the apartments in the north and south wings have been remodelled. Scant evidence survives of the decorations described

⁶²⁹ COB 21(i), p.218.

⁶³⁰ <www.globalretreatcentre.org/history-of-nuneham-house/> [accessed 31 August 2015].

by Edward Harcourt in 1890 or of the decorative works undertaken by Cowtan & Sons in the early twentieth century. The Cowtan Order Books have therefore provided previously unknown details about the materials used in the 1906 redecorations that were made possible by J.P. Morgan's generosity to his niece and her husband, the future Viscount Harcourt.

In the following section the decoration of the properties of J.P. Morgan and his son J.P. Morgan Junior is examined. A comparison is made between a written and photographic description of J.P. Morgan's Madison Avenue property in 1883 and the decorative schemes undertaken by Cowtan & Sons for the Morgans between 1897 and 1937 at their properties in the UK and the USA.

The J.P. Morgan properties in the UK and the USA

The American industrialist and financier John Pierpont 'J.P.' Morgan (1837-1913) presided over one of the USA's most powerful and successful corporations. As well as heading his eponymous bank, J.P. Morgan was instrumental in establishing the General Electric Company and the United States Steel Corporation. In 1913 his son, J.P. 'Jack' Morgan Junior (1867-1943) inherited his father's eighty million dollar fortune and continued his business and philanthropic interests. During the First World War J.P. Morgan Junior provided loans to Britain and was the sole supplier of munitions to the British and French governments.⁶³¹

J.P. Morgan and J.P. Morgan Junior employed Cowtan & Sons to decorate six properties in the UK and four in the USA between 1897 and 1937. The Morgans were Cowtan & Sons' most prolific patrons, placing more orders than any other customer throughout the decorating firm's history. Cowtan & Sons also conducted probate inventories of furniture, books, linen, china, glass, silver, wine, cigars and other effects at J.P. Morgan's London properties after his death in 1913.⁶³²

⁶³¹ www.jpmorgan.com/country/GB/en/jpmorgan/about/history/month/apr [accessed 6 May 2015].

⁶³² New York, Archives of The Pierpont Morgan Library, MS J.P. Morgan Jr. Papers.

13-14 Prince's Gate, London SW7 [fig.118] overlooks Hyde Park and was designed by Harvey Lonsdale Elmes who was also architect for St George's Hall, Liverpool.⁶³³ Prince's Gate was completed in 1849 and bought by J.P. Morgan's father, Junius Spencer Morgan in the 1850s. A biography of J.P. Morgan published in 1912, the year before his death, described his Prince's Gate residence, to which,

In recent years he has added an art gallery, consisting of an adjoining mansion of almost equal size. The entire inside of this building was reconstructed; one of the stories [*sic*] at the top was taken out and the first floor raised, so that the space from floor to ceiling was doubled. After the whole building had been rebuilt to answer to the needs of a modern art gallery it was filled with every sort of beautiful and artistic work, from tiny miniatures set in little jewelled frames to great paintings by old masters, ancient church ornaments, tapestries, porcelain, books and manuscripts.⁶³⁴



Fig. 118: 13-14 Prince's Gate, London SW7. Image: Archives of The Pierpont Morgan Library.⁶³⁵

⁶³³ <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8732> [accessed 7 December 2016]

⁶³⁴ Carl Hovey, *The Life Story of J.P. Morgan*, (London: William Heinemann, 1912), p.325.

⁶³⁵ Strouse, p.689.

In 1919 J.P. Morgan Junior offered 13-14 Prince's Gate to the American Embassy which occupied it from 1922 until 1955.⁶³⁶ The future President John F. Kennedy lived there as a young man in the 1930s when his father, Joseph Kennedy, was American Ambassador. From 1962 until 2010 the building was the headquarters of the Royal College of General Practitioners.⁶³⁷ Cowtan & Sons undertook redecorations at 13-14 Prince's Gate between 1897 and 1910.

2 South Street, London W1 also occupied an imposing position overlooking Hyde Park. In 1852 the architect Charles Barry was commissioned to design an external decorative frieze with stucco cornice at second floor level, and a double portico and balustrade to the principal entrance. J.P. Morgan Junior leased 2 South Street from 1900 to 1901. Shortly after its next occupant, the Duchess of Westminster, vacated the house in 1927 it was demolished.⁶³⁸ Cowtan & Sons supplied wallpapers and furnishing fabrics to J.P. Morgan Junior for 2 South Street in 1899 and 1900.

12 Grosvenor Square, London W1 was built c. 1727.⁶³⁹ From 1868 to 1873 it was occupied by Lord Lytton, who commissioned Cowtan & Sons to decorate the Dining Room in the Pompeian style by Desfosse; as Mawer Cowtan Cowtan recalled, 'I found in our own basement some of the original pilasters of 50 years before that time and made use of the old Desfosse wallpapers to repair those that were damaged at 12 Grosvenor Square.'⁶⁴⁰ J.P. Morgan Junior occupied 12 Grosvenor Square from 1902 until 1943 and employed Cowtan & Sons to fulfil various internal works, including redecorations, between 1904 and 1937. The house was demolished in 1961.

Dover House, Roehampton, Surrey. The Victoria County History for Surrey noted in 1912 that there were, 'many interesting houses in Putney parish, situated chiefly at Roehampton and on the brow of Putney Heath, which commands a beautiful view.'⁶⁴¹ Among those mentioned were Upper Grove House, then owned by Richard Paston-Bedingfeld, son of Sir

⁶³⁶ Strouse, p.688.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., p.688.

⁶³⁸ *Survey of London*, 40, (1980), Grosvenor Estate Mayfair, Part 2 (The Buildings), pp.336-344.

⁶³⁹ Ibid., pp. 117-166.

⁶⁴⁰ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.5.

⁶⁴¹ < <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/surrey/vol4/pp78-83>>. *A History of the County of Surrey*, (London: Victoria County History, 1912), IV, pp.78-83. [accessed 30 September 2015]

Henry Bedingfeld of Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk; and ‘Dover House, now occupied by Mr. J. P. Morgan [that] belonged to Lord Dover at the end of the eighteenth century’.⁶⁴² Dover House was situated seven miles from London and twenty-five minutes by carriage from Morgan’s townhouse at Prince’s Gate.⁶⁴³ The house was approached along a winding drive from Putney Park Lane, through stone entrance pillars, past trees and lawns, to the columned portico of the Regency villa. From the octagonal entrance hall a grand staircase rose to sixteen bed and dressing rooms. There were two kitchens and coal, beer and wine cellars. Outside were stables, a dairy, greenhouses and a lawn tennis court [fig.119].⁶⁴⁴



Fig. 119: Tennis at Dover House, Roehampton, Surrey, 1876. L. to R. Junius Spencer Morgan, a Burns child, Mary M. Burns, Juliet P. Morgan, Walter H. Burns. Image: Archives of the Pierpont Morgan Library.⁶⁴⁵

J. P. Morgan’s father, Junius Spencer Morgan, leased Dover House for several years before purchasing it in 1878. After Junius’ death in 1890 Dover House became J.P. Morgan’s principal residence in England. J.P. Morgan Junior inherited Dover House on the death of his father in 1913 and donated it to the British government for the duration of the First World

⁶⁴² *A History of the County of Surrey*, pp.78-83.

⁶⁴³ Strouse, p.161.

⁶⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.161.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.161.

War to serve as a convalescent home for wounded and limbless officers.⁶⁴⁶ Dover House was acquired by London County Council soon after the First World War and demolished to make way for the Dover House Road Estate designed on the garden city model.⁶⁴⁷ Cowtan & Sons undertook redecorations at Dover House between 1897 and 1910.

Wall Hall (also known as Aldenham Abbey), Hertfordshire is a grade II listed eighteenth-century country house situated eighteen miles to the north of central London. Humphry Repton produced a Red Book for Wall Hall in 1803 and the estate was acquired in 1812 by Admiral Sir Charles Pole, who renamed it Aldenham Abbey. In 1901 J.P. Morgan Junior took over the lease and in 1910 he bought the property. During the Second World War, as he did with Prince's Gate, J.P. Morgan Junior made Wall Hall available for the use of the American Ambassador, Joseph Kennedy.⁶⁴⁸ Cowtan & Sons carried out redecorations at Wall Hall/Aldenham Abbey (under both names) between 1905 and 1931. According to the Cowtan orders for J.P. Morgan Junior, the property name had reverted to Wall Hall by 1910.

Gannochy, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. J.P. Morgan Junior entertained guests at his Scottish hunting lodge, including George V and Queen Mary, and George VI and Queen Elizabeth.⁶⁴⁹ In 1938 the *Chicago Tribune*, under the headline, 'The House of Morgan and Gannochy Lodge', reported that, 'King George VI has gone from Balmoral castle to spend a few days grouse shooting as the guest of J.P. Morgan at Gannochy Lodge, Angus'. The article added,

A lodge in Scotland for the grouse shooting is regarded by many Americans, including some of our diplomats, as something so little this side of paradise as to be almost actually over the border....To be host to the king and queen is undoubtedly tops in human experiences in Britain.⁶⁵⁰

Cowtan & Sons supplied wallpapers and furnishing fabrics to Gannochy in 1929.

⁶⁴⁶ <<http://ezitis.myzen.co.uk/doverhouse.html>> Lost Hospitals of London. [accessed 3 March 2016].

⁶⁴⁷ <<http://www.londongardensonline.org.uk/gardens-online-record>> [accessed 20 April 2016].

⁶⁴⁸ <<http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1001455>> [accessed 30 September 2015].

⁶⁴⁹ <<http://www.worldcat.org/title/guest-book-gannochy-1929-1939/oclc/270879667>> [accessed 6 June 2016]

⁶⁵⁰ <<http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1938/08/20/page/8/article/the-house-of-morgan-and-gannochy-lodge>> [accessed 7 October 2016].

Matinecock Point, Long Island is situated on the North Shore of Long Island's Gold Coast off Glen Cove. The island was bought by J.P. Morgan Junior in 1909⁶⁵¹ and he commissioned the architect Christopher Grant LaFarge to design a new mansion in 1913. The house was demolished in 1980.⁶⁵² Cowtan & Sons supplied wallpapers and furnishing fabrics for Matinecock Point between 1910 and 1915.

Madison Avenue/33 East 36th Street, New York [fig.120]. As one of the New York's wealthiest men, in 1881 J.P. Morgan made the unusual decision to move south in the city rather than north, from 6 East 40th Street to 219 Madison Avenue, a brownstone house on the corner of Madison Avenue and East 36th Street, which he purchased for \$215,000.⁶⁵³ Built between 1853 and 1856, the property was one of three brownstones erected by members of the copper firm Phelps, Dodge & Co. J.P. Morgan hired the architect Christian Herter to make structural alterations and to redecorate the interior. Herter relocated the principal entrance from Madison Avenue to East 36th Street and maintained the character of the original façade by inserting a large bay window in the Drawing Room facing onto Madison Avenue.⁶⁵⁴

In 1904 J.P. Morgan bought an adjacent house on Madison Avenue. With forty-five rooms, including twelve bathrooms, J.P. Morgan's house was one of the most impressive New York residences of its day. In 1906 the architects McKim, Mead and White completed the Morgan Library at 29 East 36th Street, to house Morgan's collection of rare books, manuscripts and letters and in 1928 an annex to the library was added.⁶⁵⁵ The Morgan family lived at Madison Avenue until J.P. Morgan Junior died in 1943, when the house was sold to become the headquarters of the Lutheran Church in the USA. In 1988 the Morgan Library acquired the house situated on the corner of 37th Street and Madison Avenue, which is now the sole survivor of the three original brownstone buildings.⁶⁵⁶ Cowtan & Sons supplied wallpapers and furnishing fabrics for Madison Avenue/33 East 36th Street, between 1909 and 1915.

⁶⁵¹ <<http://www.mansionsofthegildedage.com/>> [accessed 26 September 2016].

⁶⁵² <http://www.oldlongisland.com/2011/11/matinecock-point.html> [accessed 9 October 2016].

⁶⁵³ *Opulent Interiors of The Gilded Age: All 203 Photographs from "Artistic Houses"*, ed. by Arnold Lewis, James Turner and Steven McQuillin, (Toronto: Dover Publications, 1987), p.144.

⁶⁵⁴ *Opulent Interiors of The Gilded Age*, p.147.

⁶⁵⁵ Strouse, p.488.

⁶⁵⁶ <<http://www.themorgan.org/about/architectural-history>> [accessed 1st December 2016].



Fig. 120: J.P. Morgan's house at 231 Madison Avenue/33 East 36th Street, New York. Image: Library of Congress, Washington DC.⁶⁵⁷

***Artistic Houses/Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age's* description of J.P. Morgan's Madison Avenue house in 1883: how the Cowtan orders compare**

J.P. Morgan's New York house was photographed and described in 1883 in the publication *Artistic Houses*, published by D. Appleton & Co., which featured 203 photographs of the interiors of the, 'Most Beautiful and Celebrated Homes in the United States with a Description of the Art Treasures contained therein'.⁶⁵⁸ *Artistic Houses* was sold only through subscription and the photographs and text were the exclusive property of its five hundred subscribers. Republished one hundred and four years later as *Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age* with updated descriptions of the rooms, it includes a chapter on J.P. Morgan's house at

⁶⁵⁷ <https://www.loc.gov/resource/cph.3b45070/> [accessed 9 October 2016]

⁶⁵⁸ The author of the original *Artistic Houses* is unknown but the editors of *Opulent Interiors of The Gilded Age* stated that they believed him to have been George William Sheldon.

Madison Avenue/East 36th Street, with the original black and white photographs of his Drawing Room, Dining Room and Library.⁶⁵⁹

Artistic Houses was published fourteen years before Cowtan & Sons first supplied wallpapers and furnishing materials to J.P. Morgan in 1897. However a comparison of the descriptions of the interiors of the Madison Avenue house with the Cowtan orders for the Morgans' properties in the USA and the UK provides additional insights into the decoration of the Drawing Rooms, Libraries and Dining Rooms across the whole collection of properties.

The Library at Madison Avenue

The Library at Madison Avenue was J.P. Morgan's favourite room, in which he held meetings, entertained friends and enjoyed his books.⁶⁶⁰ When the house was refurbished in 1893, Morgan reportedly said of the Library, 'Renew, by all means, but retain the original designs of Herter. You cannot improve upon them.'⁶⁶¹ When his new Library next door, later to become the Morgan Library, was completed in 1906 his manuscript collection was moved there. *Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age* describes the Library at Madison Avenue as it was photographed in *Artistic Houses* in 1883 [fig.121],

The finish of this room, including its high wainscoting and comfortable inglenook, was fine Santo Domingo mahogany. To separate this fireplace recess from the rest of the room, Herter elevated its floor and tiled both floor and fire front with squares of blue and ochre. The soft furniture was covered with plush of peacock green. The ceiling was divided into octagonal panels, six of which were larger and contained painted allegorical figures representing History and Poetry.⁶⁶²

J.P. Morgan's taste for plush, or velvet, furnishings in his Library was to endure. Twenty-five years later, in 1908 Cowtan & Sons recorded an order for a dark green velvet for the Library at East 36th Street. The Cowtan order also contains a sample of a dark brown velvet with a silk embroidered border by Johnson & Faulkner, beside which is noted, 'this velvet eventually used instead of the above' [fig.122]. In 1910 a deep red velvet for a handrail in the Library at East 36th Street was also supplied by Cowtan & Sons [fig.123], which may have been similar to the 'cherry plush' upholstery found in the Drawing Room at Madison Avenue in 1883.

⁶⁵⁹ *Opulent Interiors of The Gilded Age*, pp.146-147. The Morgan Library & Museum was built between 1902 and 1906 to the east of J.P. Morgan's residence at Madison Avenue and East 36th Street.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p.147.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.* p.147.

⁶⁶² *Opulent Interiors of The Gilded Age*, p.147.



Fig. 121: J.P. Morgan's Library at Madison Avenue/East 36th Street, New York, photographed in 1883. Image: *Artistic Houses/Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age*.



Fig. 122: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, 1908, for the Library, 33 East 36th Street, New York.⁶⁶³

⁶⁶³ COB 20(ii), p.563.



Fig. 123: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, 1910, for the Library, 33 East 36th Street, New York.⁶⁶⁴

The walls above the panelling in the Library at Madison Avenue appear in the *Artistic Houses* photograph to be papered with a patterned paper. Although no such wallpaper was supplied by Cowtan & Sons, in 1915 the walls of the Library, which was occupied by J.P. Morgan Junior after the death of his father in 1913, were hung with dark green silk damask from Cowtan, with the furniture upholstered in dark green velvet [figs.124 and 125]. Velvet was also favoured by J.P. Morgan Senior and Junior for the Libraries of their other properties, according to the evidence of the Cowtan Order Books. A dark blue velvet was ordered in 1899 from Cowtan & Sons by J.P. Morgan Junior for curtains and loose covers for his Library at South Street in London, complemented by dark blue leather for the furniture [fig.126].



Fig. 124: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, 1915, for the Library, 231 Madison Avenue, New York.⁶⁶⁵

⁶⁶⁴ COB 21(i), p.237.

⁶⁶⁵ COB 22(i), p.190.

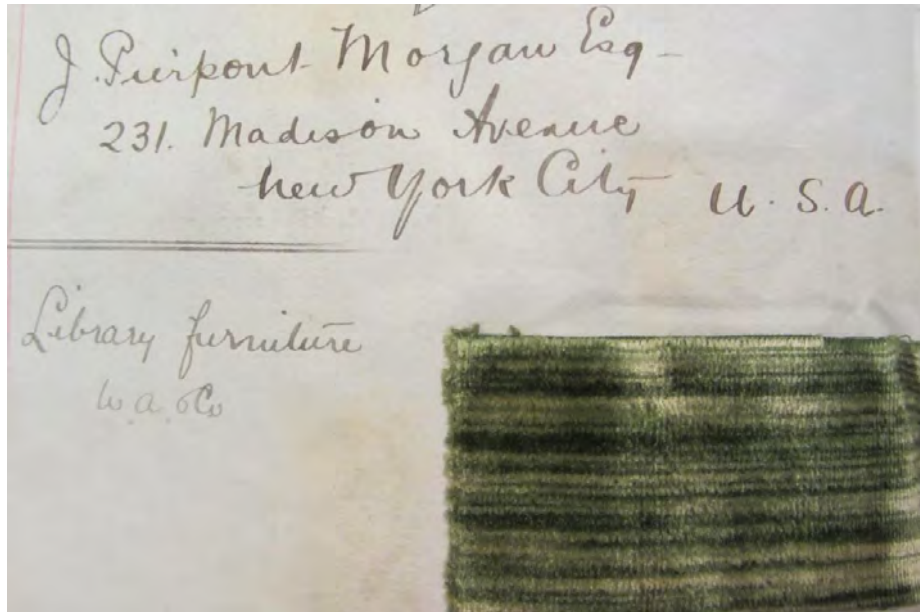


Fig. 125: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, 1915, for the Library, 231 Madison Avenue, New York.⁶⁶⁶



Fig. 126: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan Junior, for the Library, 2 South Street, London, 1899, for wallpaper, velvet curtains and loose covers and leather upholstery.⁶⁶⁷

In 1910 a dark green velvet was ordered for a mantelboard and an olive green velvet for a pillow for J.P. Morgan's Library at 13 Prince's Gate, with the writing table and chairs to be, 'covered in green leather as before'[fig.127]. Twenty years later, a red velvet was ordered for the Library at Aldenham Abbey, by then renamed Wall Hall [fig.128].

⁶⁶⁶ COB 22(i), p.199.

⁶⁶⁷ COB 19(i), p.9.



Fig. 127: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, December 1910, for the Library at 13 Prince's Gate SW, 'Writing table & chairs covered with green leather as before'.⁶⁶⁸



Fig. 128: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, for the Library, Wall Hall, Hertfordshire, 1930.⁶⁶⁹



Fig. 129: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, 1903, for the Library at 12 Grosvenor Square, London.⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁸ COB 21(i), p.288.

⁶⁶⁹ COB 24(i), p.141.

⁶⁷⁰ COB 20(i), p.6.

Velvet was not the only luxurious material favoured by the Morgans for their Libraries. In 1903 J.P. Morgan ordered a dark red silk damask for upholstery in his Library at 12 Grosvenor Square [fig.129]. The Library at J.P. Morgan's country house, Matinecock Point, Long Island was supplied with red silk for curtains and an Axminster carpet in the same colour in 1911.⁶⁷¹ Silk damask in dark colours evidently appealed to J.P. Morgan Junior as he also ordered loose covers in dark green damask for his Library at Aldenham Abbey, by then restored to its former name, Wall Hall, in 1913.⁶⁷² In 1915, a Cowtan order noted that the Library at Matinecock Point, East Island, New York was to have J.P. Morgan's, 'Own chair and desk from Wall Street', upholstered in a dark green leather [fig.130], the same leather as ordered by Morgan from Cowtan in 1914 for 'office furniture' for 'new offices'.⁶⁷³

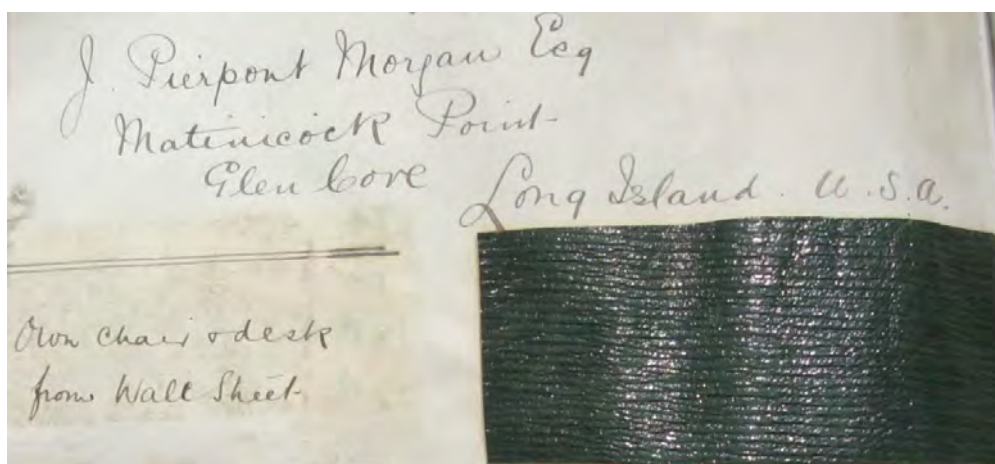


Fig. 130: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, 1915, for dark green leather for 'Own chair & desk from Wall Street', Matinecock Point, Long Island.⁶⁷⁴

Despite the preponderance of heavy, dark, colours and materials used to decorate the Morgans' Libraries, they also employed lighter floral wallpapers and fabrics in the early decades of the twentieth century. In 1909 and 1910 J.P. Morgan ordered floral woven linen loose covers for Library furniture at 12 Grosvenor Square.⁶⁷⁵ Floral loose covers by Haynes were sent by Cowtan in 1914 for the Library at Matinecock Point;⁶⁷⁶ and in 1930 cream woven silk festoon blinds were supplied for the Libraries at Wall Hall and 12 Grosvenor Square.⁶⁷⁷

⁶⁷¹ COB 21(i), pp.296-299.

⁶⁷² COB 22(i), p.54.

⁶⁷³ COB 22(i), p.134.

⁶⁷⁴ COB 22(i), p.243.

⁶⁷⁵ COB 21(i), p.134 and p.287.

⁶⁷⁶ COB 22(i), p.121.

⁶⁷⁷ COB 24(i), p.117.

The Drawing Room at Madison Avenue

The Drawing Room at Madison Avenue as it appeared in *Artistic Houses* in 1883 is described in *Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age* [fig.131] as a room of ‘restrained elegance’ featuring,

lower woodwork [painted] in ivory sprinkled with flecks of gold, the wooden frieze and pilasters in Pompeian red, the coved ceiling a light tone. The hangings of silk and gold thread elaborated with Persian embroidery were made in Japan. The chair coverings were black accented with gold thread. For the divans and cushions, Herter chose cherry plush, also highlighted with Persian embroidery. The rugs were Persian.⁶⁷⁸

The description of the Drawing Room at Madison Avenue presents a luxurious and exotic interior of rich, dark colours, offset with pale painted wainscoting, red velvet and gold threaded wallhangings and textiles imported from Asia. Sixteen years later, in 1899 J.P. Morgan turned to Cowtan & Sons to provide similarly sumptuous decoration for his Drawing Room at 13 Prince’s Gate, ordering crimson silk damask in the ‘Wheatsheaf’ design for the furniture and curtains [fig.132].



Fig. 131: J.P. Morgan’s Drawing Room at Madison Avenue/East 36th Street, New York, photographed in 1883. Image: *Artistic Houses/ Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age*.

⁶⁷⁸ *Opulent Interiors of The Gilded Age*, p.147.

In 1901 J.P. Morgan commissioned Cowtan & Sons to panel the Drawing Room walls at 13 Prince's Gate and finish them in 'vellum colouring & gilding'⁶⁷⁹, a similar treatment to the panelling in the Drawing Room at Madison Avenue in 1883. J.P. Morgan Junior ordered hand-painted 'Japanese decoration' from Cowtan & Sons for the Morning Room at Aldenham Abbey in 1905⁶⁸⁰ and in 1910 Cowtan supplied, 'wall panels of the Chinese paper decoration', for the Drawing Room of J.P. Morgan's house at Matinecock Point.⁶⁸¹ Twenty years later, J.P. Morgan's grandson, Junius Spencer Morgan Junior, ordered, '11 Sheets Chinese Decoration (Personages & Industries)', to be sent from Cowtan & Sons to New York in 1930.⁶⁸²



Fig. 132: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan, 13 Prince's Gate, 1899, for red silk 'Wheatsheaf' design fabric for Drawing Room curtains and furniture upholstery.⁶⁸³

⁶⁷⁹ COB 19(i), p.204.

⁶⁸⁰ COB 20(i), p.158.

⁶⁸¹ COB 21(i), p.297.

⁶⁸² COB 24(i), p.135.

⁶⁸³ COB 19(i), p.14.



Fig. 133: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan Junior, for the Drawing Room, 2 South Street, London, 1899, for wallpaper and fabrics for curtains, loose covers and a screen.⁶⁸⁴



Fig. 134: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, for the Drawing Room, 13 Princes Gate, London, 1902, for loose covers.⁶⁸⁵

The comparison of the Cowtan orders with the description and photograph of the Drawing Room at Madison Avenue, reveals that although decorative textiles and carpets from Asia were favoured by the Morgans, they also employed chintzes and damasks in the decoration of their properties in the UK, as orders for 2 South Street in 1899 [fig.133] and 13 Prince's Gate in 1902 [fig.134] illustrate.

⁶⁸⁴ COB 19(i), p.8.

⁶⁸⁵ COB 19(ii), p.401.

The Dining Room at Madison Avenue

The Dining Room at Madison Avenue is described in *Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age* as it was photographed in *Artistic Houses* in 1883 [fig.135] as,

impressive because it looked so solid and established. This impression was conveyed largely through the wainscoting of English oak 8' high, the heavy built-in sideboard to the right and the broad mantel with deep niches below and above to the left. The mantel area, 12' wide and 10' high, was faced with Sienna marble. Surrounded by oak and leather chairs, the table appeared to be underscaled and unequal to the challenge of its environment.⁶⁸⁶



Fig. 135: J.P. Morgan's Dining Room at Madison Avenue, New York, photographed in 1883.
Source: *Artistic Houses/Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age*.

While the Madison Avenue Dining Room walls were panelled to a height of eight feet, J.P. Morgan Senior and his son did not replicate this style of decoration in their English Dining Rooms. Instead, both chose silk wallhangings or flock wallpaper. In 1899 Cowtan & Sons supplied a deep red flock paper with matching red silk curtains to J.P. Morgan Junior for his Dining Room at South Street [fig.136].

⁶⁸⁶ *Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age*. p.147.



Fig. 136: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan Junior, 2 South Street, 1899, for red flock wallpaper for the Dining Room.⁶⁸⁷

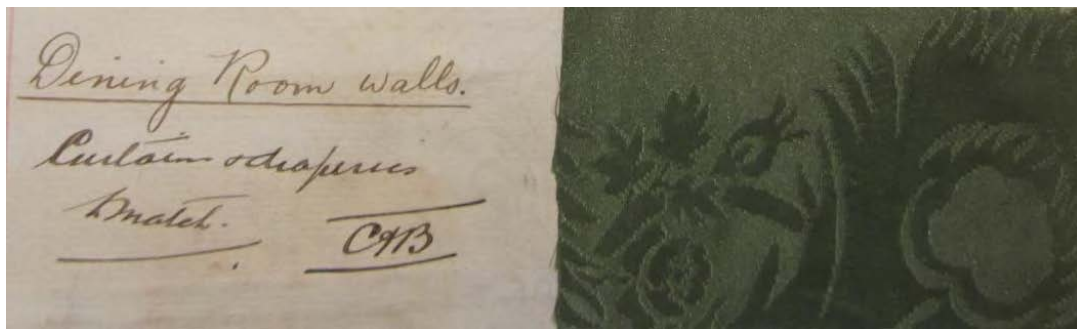


Fig. 137: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, 1905, Dover House, Roehampton for silk damask for the walls of the Dining Room.⁶⁸⁸

The Dining Room at Dover House in 1902 was draped with tapestry woven curtains, but three years later these were replaced when dark green silk damask wall hangings with curtains and draperies to match were installed [fig.137]. In the same year, Cowtan supplied the Dining Room at Aldenham Abbey with a, ‘real Axminster carpet, oak leaf and acorn design... shade of green as Library at 12 Grosvenor Square’.⁶⁸⁹ ‘Green and gold old panelling’ was supplied by Cowtan for the Dining Room at Matinecock Point in 1911. Curtains in the ‘Columbus’ design and a green Axminster carpet, perhaps similar to the carpet in the Dining Room at Aldenham Abbey, were also supplied by Cowtan & Sons for Matinecock Point.⁶⁹⁰ However, there was further change for the Matinecock Dining Room when in 1914 a brown hessian pattern striped paper was ordered.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁷ COB 19(i), p.6.

⁶⁸⁸ COB 20(i), p.58.

⁶⁸⁹ COB 20(i), p.159.

⁶⁹⁰ COB 21(i), p.297.

⁶⁹¹ COB 22(i), p.118.

J.P. Morgan Junior returned to Cowtan & Sons in 1929 for crimson cut silk velvet for upholstery in the Dining Room at 12 Grosvenor Square⁶⁹² that was very similar to the fabric he chose for Drawing Room furniture at Grosvenor Square in 1910,⁶⁹³ further evidence of the constancy of the Morgan preferences in decoration. Also in 1929, at Gannochy in Scotland, as well as red velvets for curtains in the Tea Room, Hall and Main Corridor, Cowtan supplied textured oatmeal coloured wallpaper for the Drawing Room, evidence of J.P. Morgan Junior's taste for contemporary as well as traditional materials.⁶⁹⁴

The Cowtan orders for the Morgan family's properties reveal that aspects of the décor at Madison Avenue recorded in 1883 were still favoured by the family in their UK properties some forty years later. However, the orders also reveal that elements of the English style offered by the firm migrated across the Atlantic to the USA. In the next section the question of whether the marriage alliance between the Morgans and the Harcourts had any influence on the decorative schemes commissioned from Cowtan & Sons for the two families' respective properties is considered.

The union between the Harcourts and the Morgans: similarities and differences in their Cowtan orders

In 1899, six months after the marriage of his niece Mary Burns to the future Viscount Harcourt, J.P. Morgan entertained the Harcourt and Burns families at his London home Prince's Gate and at Dover House in Surrey; the party also visited Nuneham Park.⁶⁹⁵ These and other visits by the Harcourts to J.P. Morgan's English residences and by the American banker to the Harcourt's Oxfordshire seat would have given both families the opportunity to observe and form opinions about their respective tastes in interior decoration.

Chintzes and Brocades for Upholstery

When J.P. Morgan Junior required a decorator for his new home in South Street, he turned to Cowtan & Sons, probably on the recommendation of his father. Although the two families' properties represented a range of architectural traditions, Dover House and Nuneham Park shared similarities in their eighteenth century classical proportions and countryside settings;

⁶⁹² COB 24(i), p.18.

⁶⁹³ COB 21(i), p.287.

⁶⁹⁴ COB 24(i), pp.66-73.

⁶⁹⁵ Strouse, p.367.

both also shared a distinctive feature, the Octagon Room. At Nuneham Park the Octagon Room is on the first floor, and was originally the principal room entered from the first floor entrance hall in the scheme designed by Stiff Leadbetter.⁶⁹⁶ At Dover House, the Octagon Room formed the ground floor entrance hall and contained a grand staircase leading to the first floor bedrooms.⁶⁹⁷ In 1900, J.P. Morgan ordered from Cowtan & Sons a pink silk brocade embroidered with silver and green leaves for the upholstery of three chairs for the Octagon Room at Dover House [fig.138]. This was followed in 1902 with an order for floral linen for loose cases (or covers) again for furniture in the Octagon Room [fig.139]. In 1906 Nuneham Park's Octagon Room was decorated in a classical style, with walls painted a, 'shade of green with gilding'. A brocade fabric was chosen for curtains for the Octagon Room at Nuneham Park in 'E.J. brocade @ 26/- yard'.⁶⁹⁸ The sample has been removed from the Cowtan Order Book, thus preventing comparison with the brocade used in the Octagon Room at Dover House.



Fig. 138: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan, Dover House, 1900, for 'brocade for 3 chairs' for the Octagon Room.⁶⁹⁹



Fig. 139: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, Dover House, 1902, for loose cases for the Octagon Room, annotated 'W&S, C1764, 5/3'.⁷⁰⁰

⁶⁹⁶ Batey, p.10.

⁶⁹⁷ *A History of the County of Surrey*, pp.78-83.

⁶⁹⁸ COB 20(i), p.214.

⁶⁹⁹ COB 19(i), p.67.

⁷⁰⁰ COB 19(ii), p.401.

An order for fabric for loose cases for the Octagon Room at Nuneham Park in 1907 is also missing its sample.⁷⁰¹ However, it is possible to determine that the fabric for loose cases for the Octagon Room at Nuneham in 1907 was different from that chosen for the Octagon Room at Dover House in 1902 because these particular Cowtan orders include initials for the makers, code numbers for the fabrics, and prices. The Dover House fabric is annotated, 'W&S, C1764, 5/3', while the Nuneham Park fabric is annotated, 'E.J. 8142, @ 10/', which confirms that not only did the Morgans and Harcourts choose different fabrics for their Octagon Rooms, but that, perhaps surprisingly, given their respective fortunes, the Harcourts paid almost double the price per yard for their fabric in 1907, compared to the price paid by the Morgans in 1902.

In 1910 Cowtan recorded an order to paint the walls and woodwork of the Dining Room at Matinecock Point, Long Island in green and gold; this may have been inspired by the green and gold décor of the walls in the Octagon Room at Nuneham Park that J.P. Morgan would have observed when accompanying Edward VII there in 1907.

Crimson and Burgundy Damasks, Flocks and Velvets

In 1899 Cowtan & Sons supplied twenty-one wallpapers and fourteen upholstery fabrics to J.P. Morgan Junior for South Street. Among them was a crimson red flock wallpaper and matching crimson silk damask curtains for the Dining Room [fig.140]. The wallpaper and fabric colours were similar to the silk damask 'wheatsheaf' design chosen by J.P. Morgan in 1899 for the Drawing Room at 13 Prince's Gate [fig.132]. The crimson damask fabrics for both South Street and Prince's Gate are also reminiscent of the walls, 'hung with crimson damask', in the Drawing Room at Nuneham Park recorded by Edward Harcourt in 1890 and the crimson silk damask wallhangings and curtains hung by Cowtan & Sons in the same room in 1906 [fig.141]. In 1930 Viscountess Harcourt again ordered crimson silk for the Drawing Room at Nuneham Park.⁷⁰² The Cowtan orders reveal that in addition to crimson silk damask, velvet was favoured both by the Morgans and the Harcourts for Libraries and other principal rooms from the 1880s until 1930.

⁷⁰¹ COB 20(i), p.365.

⁷⁰² COB 24(i), p.158.

In 1906 Cowtan & Sons supplied a burgundy red velvet for the Front Hall curtains at Nuneham Park,⁷⁰³ while J.P. Morgan Junior ordered a claret red velvet for curtains at Aldenham Abbey in 1909.⁷⁰⁴



Fig. 140: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan Junior, 2 South Street, 1899, for red flock wallpaper and red silk damask fabric for Dining Room walls and curtains.⁷⁰⁵



Fig. 141: Cowtan Order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, 1906, for crimson silk damask for the Drawing Room walls and curtains.⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰³ COB 20(i), p.209.

⁷⁰⁴ COB 21(i), p.133.

⁷⁰⁵ COB 19(i), p.6.

Evidence of the Harcourts' and Morgans' similarity of taste in decoration is further provided in the Cowtan Order Book for 1910. On the same page (and therefore ordered at the same or similar time) orders for J.P. Morgan, J.P. Morgan Junior and Lewis Harcourt follow one after the other. Two red velvets were ordered for J.P. Morgan's Library at 33 East 37th Street, New York and J.P. Morgan Junior at Aldenham Abbey, and two crimson silks were chosen for Drawing Room curtains at Nuneham Park [fig.142].



Fig. 142: Cowtan Orders for red velvet for J.P. Morgan Junior, Aldenham Abbey and for J.P. Morgan's Library at 33 East 37th Street, New York, 1910, and for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, 1910, for crimson silk for Drawing Room curtains.⁷⁰⁷

⁷⁰⁶ COB 20(i), p.213.

⁷⁰⁷ COB 21(i), p.237.

Cowtan & Sons also supplied red velvets to J.P. Morgan Junior for his Scottish estate, Gannochy in 1929 [fig.143] and for the Library at Wall Hall in 1930.⁷⁰⁸ In 1930 Viscountess Harcourt again chose crimson silk damask fabric for Drawing Room chair covers at Nuneham Park.⁷⁰⁹



Fig. 143: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan Junior, Gannochy, Scotland, 1929, for red velvets for curtains for the Tea Room (top), Hall and Main Corridor (bottom).⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁸ COB 24(i), p.141.

⁷⁰⁹ COB 24(i), p.158.

⁷¹⁰ COB 24(i), p.67.

While the Morgans chose darker colours for their Dining Rooms, the Harcourts at Nuneham Park chose a paler palette when, in 1906, Cowtan & Sons was contracted to panel and paint the walls white. However, the Harcourts, like the Morgans, favoured darker colours for their Libraries at Nuneham Park. A deep blue damask wallpaper and matching fabric for, ‘festoon blind curtains in damask design’, was supplied by Cowtan in 1906 for the Library, and also a red fine line pattern wallpaper for the Small Library.⁷¹¹

Chinese and Chinoiserie Decorations

Decorations originating from Asia noted in *Artistic Houses/Opulent Interiors of the Gilded Age* in the Drawing Room at Madison Avenue in 1883 were also found in the Drawing Room at Nuneham Park in 1906 when the Billiard Room was decorated with, ‘Chinese hand-painted decoration on yellow ground’, and Cowtan supplied twenty-three, ‘Persian, Turkey, Indian and oriental’ carpets.⁷¹² In 1907 the firm sent red and gold fabric decorated with Chinese designs for loose covers for the Drawing Room at Nuneham Park.⁷¹³ As noted in chapter 6 Cowtan’s orders employed terms such as ‘Chinese’, ‘real Chinese’, ‘Japanese’, and ‘mock Indian’ to describe papers and textiles from Asia.

Twisted Rope Borders

As analysis of the occurrence of wallpaper patterns (see chapter 10) illustrates, the twisted rope pattern border was popular with Cowtan’s customers from the firm’s earliest years of trading in 1824, and remained in demand throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The earliest Harcourt orders for twisted rope borders with two matching floral papers on pale green grounds were for the bedroom of Lady Elizabeth Harcourt (wife of George Granville Harcourt and daughter-in-law of Archbishop Harcourt) at their house at Hanover Square in 1832 [fig.144] and for an unnamed room at Nuneham Park in 1833 [fig.145]. The latter was installed at the same time as the modernisation and redecoration scheme undertaken by Sir Robert Smirke for Archbishop Harcourt, who inherited Nuneham in 1830. Three more twisted rope borders were ordered for Nuneham Park in 1835 for a Sitting Room, Bedroom & Stairs and School Bedrooms,⁷¹⁴ evidence of their popularity with

⁷¹¹ COB 20(i), p.215.

⁷¹² COB 20(i), p.209 and pp. 223-224.

⁷¹³ COB 20(ii), p.384.

⁷¹⁴ COB 2, p.560.

the Archbishop and his wife, and also with his son George and his wife Lady Elizabeth, since the house was decorated to their taste too.⁷¹⁵



Fig. 144: Cowtan Order for Lady Elizabeth Harcourt, Hanover Square, 1832, for green and white floral paper and matching twisted rope border for a Bedroom.⁷¹⁶

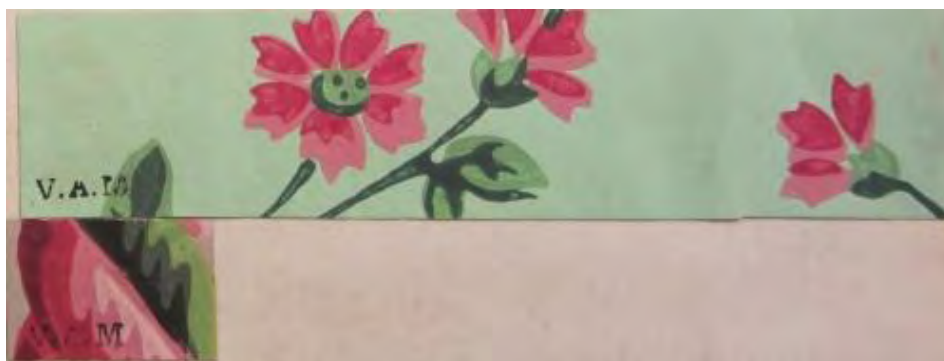


Fig. 145: Cowtan Order for George Vernon Harcourt, Nuneham Park, 1833, for green and pink floral paper and matching twisted rope border.⁷¹⁷

When the Morgan and Harcourt families were joined through marriage in 1899, the twisted rope border wallpaper may still have been visible at Nuneham Park, as the estate had had little spent on its maintenance in the years intervening between the Archbishop's residency and Lewis Harcourt's inheritance in 1904. Despite ordering many wallpapers from Cowtan & Sons in the first decade of the twentieth century, there was no Harcourt order for the twisted rope border pattern after the 1830s. However, numerous Cowtan orders demonstrate the Morgans' enthusiasm for the twisted rope border paper. This might be attributed to the general popularity of the design, but they may also have admired it at Nuneham Park whilst

⁷¹⁵ The Harcourt Papers, XII, p.219.

⁷¹⁶ COB 2, p.286.

⁷¹⁷ COB 2, p.368.

staying there soon after Lewis and Mary's marriage. J.P. Morgan ordered a twisted rope border for the Large Nursery at Dover House, in 1898.⁷¹⁸ J.P. Morgan Junior chose a twisted rope border for the Day Nursery at 2 South Street in 1899 [fig.146] and another for 'Mademoiselle's Room' at Aldenham Abbey in 1909 [fig.147]. J.P. Morgan Junior also ordered the twisted rope border for his sons, Junius and Harry's Rooms, and for the Governess' Room and a Landing and Staircase at 231 Madison Avenue, New York in 1914 [fig.148].



Fig. 146: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan Jr, 2 South Street, London, 1899, for twisted rope borders for his Bedroom and Dressing Room and for the Day Nursery.⁷¹⁹



Fig. 147: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan Jr, Aldenham Abbey, Hertfordshire, 1909, for twisted rope border for 'Mademoiselle's Room'.⁷²⁰

⁷¹⁸ COB 18(ii), p.372.

⁷¹⁹ COB 19(i), p.9.

⁷²⁰ COB 21(i), p.132.



Fig. 148: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan, 231 Madison Avenue, New York, 1914, for twisted rope borders for Mr Junius' Room, Mr Harry's Room, Governess' Room, Landing and Staircase.⁷²¹

Floral Papers

Bright floral papers were also popular in the Cowtan Order Books from the earliest orders and continued to be in demand during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both the Harcourts and the Morgans chose floral papers, often in similar colours and designs, as the Cowtan orders illustrate. In 1899 J.P. Morgan Junior ordered a paper patterned with pink blossoms and grey-green stems on a cream ground for the Principal Staircase at 2 South Street [fig.149]. Six years later he chose a pink and green floral wallpaper for 'Bedrooms Nos. 17 & 18' at Aldenham Abbey [fig.151]. In 1904 J.P. Morgan ordered a pink rose patterned wallpaper for a second floor front room at 14 Prince's Gate [fig.150]. Two years later Lewis Harcourt chose similar rose patterned wallpapers for the Schoolroom and the Ground Floor Corridor in the North Wing at Nuneham Park [fig.152].

⁷²¹ COB 22(i), p.171.



Fig. 149: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan Jr, 2 South Street, London, 1899, for pink blossom patterned paper for the Principal Staircase.⁷²²



Fig. 150: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan, 14 Prince's Gate, London, 1904, for pink rose patterned wallpaper for 2nd Floor Front Room.⁷²³



Fig. 151: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan Jr, Aldenham Abbey, Hertfordshire, 1905, for pink and green floral patterned wallpaper for Bedrooms Nos. 17 & 18.⁷²⁴

⁷²² COB 19(i), p.6.

⁷²³ COB 20(i), p.46.

⁷²⁴ COB 20(i), p.159.



Fig. 152: Cowtan Order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, 1906, for pink rose patterned wallpapers for the Schoolroom and the Ground Floor Corridor in the North Wing.⁷²⁵

In 1913 Cowtan & Sons supplied a pink rose and blue ribbon patterned wallpaper to Nuneham Park for the Lady Anne Room, named after Archbishop Harcourt's first wife [fig.153]. A fabric in the same rose and blue ribbon design was chosen by J.P. Morgan for Matinecock Point in 1915 [fig.154]. J.P. Morgan also returned to Cowtan for floral paper in 1931 when he ordered a border patterned with pink, yellow and blue blossoms for three nurseries on the third floor at 12 Grosvenor Square [fig.155].

⁷²⁵ COB 20(i), p.210.



Fig. 153: Cowtan Order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, 1913, for pink rose and blue ribbon patterned wallpaper for The Lady Anne Room.⁷²⁶



Fig. 154: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan, Matinecock Point, USA, 1915, for fabric in same design as wallpaper chosen by Lewis Harcourt for Nuneham Park in 1913 [see fig.156].⁷²⁷



Fig. 155: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan, 12 Grosvenor Square, London, 1931, for pink, yellow and blue blossom patterned wallpaper for three nurseries on the third floor.⁷²⁸

⁷²⁶ COB 21(ii), p.586.

⁷²⁷ COB 22(i), p.190.

Lavatory and Bathroom Papers

The Morgans and Harcourts chose light, floral wallpapers in the decoration of their bathrooms and lavatories in the early decades of the twentieth century. Lilac blossoms in mauve and purple adorned the walls of the, 'Lavatories off the Billiard Room', at Nuneham Park in 1906;⁷²⁹ a profusion of pale daisies decorated the paper for the, 'New Bathroom off Chintz Room', at Dover House in 1907 [fig.156] and pale pink geraniums and green leaves on a white ground were chosen for a North Wing Lavatory at Nuneham in 1908 [fig.157].



Fig. 156: Cowtan Order for J.P. Morgan, Dover House, Roehampton, 1907, daisy patterned wallpaper for New Bathroom off Chintz Room.⁷³⁰



Fig. 157: Cowtan Order for Lewis Harcourt, Nuneham Park, Oxfordshire, 1908, for pink geranium patterned wallpaper for the North Wing Lavatory.⁷³¹

⁷²⁸ COB 24(i), p.275.

⁷²⁹ COB 20(i), p.209.

⁷³⁰ Book 20(ii), p.500.

⁷³¹ Book 20(ii), p.512.

Servants' Wallpapers

There is one particular aspect of interior decoration in which the Harcourts and Morgans appear to have differed. There are numerous wallpapers for servants' rooms in the Morgan orders but none in the orders for Harcourt. J.P. Morgan's servants occupied accommodation that was decorated in light papers, often with floral patterns, as orders for the Butler's Bedroom, Cook's Room, Kitchenmaid's Room and Footman's Room at Dover House in 1906 illustrate [fig.158]. His son J.P. Morgan Junior was similarly generous with wallpapers for the Housekeeper's Room, Cook's Room, Kitchenmaid's Room, Housemaids' Rooms and Still Maid's Room at 12 Grosvenor Square in 1908 [fig.159].



Fig. 158: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan, Dover House, Roehampton, 1906, for the Butler, Cook, Kitchenmaid and Footman's Rooms.⁷³²

⁷³² COB 20(i), p.195.



Fig. 159: Cowtan order for J.P. Morgan Jr, 12 Grosvenor Square, 1908, for the Housekeeper, Cook, Kitchenmaid, and Housemaids' Rooms.⁷³³

The absence of wallpapers for servants in the Harcourt orders suggests that the family was less inclined, or less able to afford, to decorate the rooms of their staff. The Morgans appear to have been more generous, and perhaps took a less hierarchical view, towards the standard of decoration of the living accommodation of their domestic employees.

Through comparisons made between the Cowtan orders and other records of the interiors at Nuneham Park and the Morgan properties in the UK and the USA, additional details of wallpapers, fabrics and paint schemes have been identified. The Cowtan orders allow us to determine where and how the two families' tastes evolved over time or remained the same. They also provide evidence that the Harcourts and Morgans shared similar tastes, such as their preference for deep red velvets and crimson silk damasks for wallhangings and upholstery, twisted rope pattern wallpaper borders and floral wallpapers.

⁷³³ COB 20(ii), p.480.

Although these materials and patterns were popular with many of Cowtan's customers during that period, the marriage union of the two families, the evidence that they visited one another's houses, and the similarity of many of the orders for the two families, argues that the 'American Alliance' between the Harcourts and the Morgans was manifested, at least partially, in their patronage of Cowtan & Sons and that this, in turn, influenced the way in which they decorated in the UK and in the USA.

The Harcourt and Morgan case studies illustrate the value of the Cowtan Order Books in contributing to our understanding and interpretation of historic interiors. In the next chapter Cowtan orders for the rooms of the Clergy, the Professions and Servants are analysed.

Chapter 9

COWTAN'S WALLPAPERS FOR THE CLERGY, THE PROFESSIONS AND SERVANTS

As previous chapters have sought to demonstrate, the Cowtan Order Books contain a wealth of detail about the interior decoration of buildings and also offer insights into the lives of the occupants. Forty-nine different titles appear in the order books, from Kings and Queens to MPs and Misses [appendix V]. As well as decorating the properties of among the most powerful people in the land, Cowtan & Sons served many groups in middle and upper-middle class society. In chapter 6, Cowtan's commissions for royalty, the aristocracy and other groups of upper class society were examined. In this chapter the firm's work for customers among the middle and professional classes, and also for servants, is addressed. The purpose is to demonstrate how the Cowtan Order Books can yield information about the tastes of different groups in society and also whether there are similarities or differences in the patterns of consumption amongst various professions.

Cowtan Orders for the Clergy and the Professions

A survey of the 18,156 title entries that appear in the Cowtan customer database reveals that 1,433 belong to members of the Clergy, 1,035 are for members of the Military, 174 are for Doctors and 164 are for Members of Parliament [table 17]. Orders for the most frequently occurring titles in these categories are examined below. Men in Victorian England often took a keen interest in the decoration of their homes, especially those who worked at home, such as the clergy and doctors.⁷³⁴ The Cowtan orders provide ample evidence of their decorative tastes. Servants do not appear in the Cowtan customer database because they were not customers in their own right; they did not order their own wallpapers, which were bought on their behalf by their employers for tied accommodation in town or country houses.

⁷³⁴ Deborah Cohen, *Household Gods: The British and Their Possessions*, (New Haven and London: Yale, 2006), p.90.

However, orders for the rooms of servants such as Housekeeper, Butler, Lady's Maid, Cook and Groom are worthy of attention and will be addressed in the final section of this chapter.

Cowtan Book No.	Reverend	Colonel	Doctor	MP
1	102	15	20	9
2	112	13	20	7
3	115	16	13	15
4	107	22	8	24
5	108	23	10	21
6	109	10	4	6
7	86	22	6	2
8	94	19	7	12
9	12	6	0	0
10	95	22	10	8
11	85	20	9	9
12	81	35	10	12
13	44	11	7	2
14	46	0	3	0
15	43	14	4	12
16	27	24	8	8
17	14	12	1	4
18	11	10	4	1
19	5	9	10	2
20	8	9	6	5
21	2	10	5	4
22	7	5	5	1
23	0	7	1	0
24	3	7	2	0
Totals	1,316	341	173	164

Table 17: Number of orders for a sample of professions in each Cowtan Order Book.

Cowtan Orders for the Clergy

After the titles Esq and Mrs the most frequently occurring entry in the Cowtan Order Books is the title Reverend which appears 1,316 times. Entries for higher ranks of the Clergy include the title Bishop which occurs 42 times; Archdeacon 27 times; Canon 20 times; Dean 19 times and Rector which occurs twice. Reverend is a style or title bestowed most often on parish priests, vicars and parsons in the Church of England. As the most frequently occurring clerical title, Cowtan orders for Reverends are examined further below. A search of the Cowtan customer database reveals that orders for those with the title of Reverend occur predominantly in the earlier Cowtan Order Books. There are more than one hundred orders for Reverends in each of Books 1 to 6, which span the years 1824 to 1854, However, there are only twenty-five orders altogether for Reverends in Books 19(i) to 24(ii), spanning the

years 1899 to 1938. An explanation for the steep decline may be that despite regularly attracting custom from the upper echelons of society, the majority of Cowtan's orders in the early years were received from the middle and professional classes, into which category the Reverends fall. As the company became more successful its clientele appears to have become wealthier, judging by the increasing quantities of wallpapers and furnishing fabrics contained in individual orders and by the quality of the materials ordered. It is possible that the prices of Cowtan's goods and services increased beyond the reach of those employed in more modest occupations, such as the lower levels of the clergy.

Cowtan Orders for Military Officers

Titles of various officer ranks of the British Army and Navy appear in the Cowtan Order Books.⁷³⁵ The most frequent occurrence is the rank of Colonel, with 341 orders, followed by Captain with 321 orders and Major with 166 orders. There are fewer entries for the highest ranks, with ninety-one orders for Generals and fifty-four orders for Admirals. The orders for military personnel appear consistently throughout the order books, although there is a slight decline in the quantity of military orders in the early twentieth century. For example, in the first six order books, there are ninety-nine orders for Colonels and 122 orders for Captains; in the final six books there are forty-seven orders for Colonels and forty-three orders for Captains. It is noticeable that from the 1860s onwards, orders from military officers were often sent overseas, particularly to India.

Cowtan Orders for Doctors

In comparison to the Clergy and Military Officers, Medical Doctors have far fewer entries in the Cowtan Order Books, with only 173 orders placed between 1824 and 1938. As with the Reverends, orders for Doctors are more prevalent in the earlier books, with a steady decline evident as the nineteenth century progresses. In Books 1 to 6, which span the years 1824 to 1854, there are seventy-five orders for Doctors; in Books 19(i) to 24(ii), from 1899 to 1938, the figure has dropped to only twenty-nine orders. The decline in orders from Doctors may bear the same explanation as for the Reverends, i.e. that Cowtan & Sons outgrew the budgets of their more modestly remunerated middle class customers as their business expanded.

⁷³⁵ <www.army.mod.uk/structure> [accessed 24 October 2016]. The hierarchy of the British army ranks that appear in the Cowtan Order books, from highest position to lowest is: General, Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major and Captain.

Cowtan Orders for Politicians

The number of Cowtan orders for Members of Parliament is 163, slightly fewer than the orders for Doctors, and considerably fewer than the orders for Colonels and Reverends. The MPs' orders are distributed fairly evenly across the twenty-four order books, but again there is a noticeable decline towards the end of Cowtan's trading history. In the first six order books, from 1824 to 1854, there are eighty-two orders for MPs but the number dwindles to just twelve orders in the early decades of the twentieth century.

In the following section, Cowtan wallpapers chosen by four categories of customer are examined more closely.

Wallpapers chosen by the Clergy, Doctors, Politicians and Military Officers

Gold Patterns on Pale Grounds

A survey of the orders placed by the Clergy, Doctors, Politicians and Military Officers in the early Cowtan Order Books reveals common characteristics in their choices and demonstrates that they shared similar tastes to one another, as well as to many of Cowtan's customers. For example, white or pale ground papers decorated with ornate gold patterns were widely popular from the 1820s to at least the 1850s. In 1824 Dr Williams chose a buff flock paper for his front and back Drawing Rooms at 39 Bedford Place, Russell Square, London [fig.160]. The order includes the instruction to the decorator for, 'Moulding top and bottom only. Paper flock without gold', so in this case, Dr Williams had evidently chosen to dispense with the gold. A pencil sketch adjacent to the sample shows the form of the moulding to be carved and is labelled, 'M, B, M', denoting 'Matt, Burnished, Matt', referring to its painted finish. Similar sketches for mouldings of different degrees of complexity appear throughout the Cowtan Order Books; in some the cases the words 'matt' and 'burnished' are written in abbreviated form, as an 1825 order for the Reverend John Peel of Sussex Place illustrates [fig.161].



Fig. 160: Cowtan order for Dr Williams, Bedford Place, London, 1824.⁷³⁶

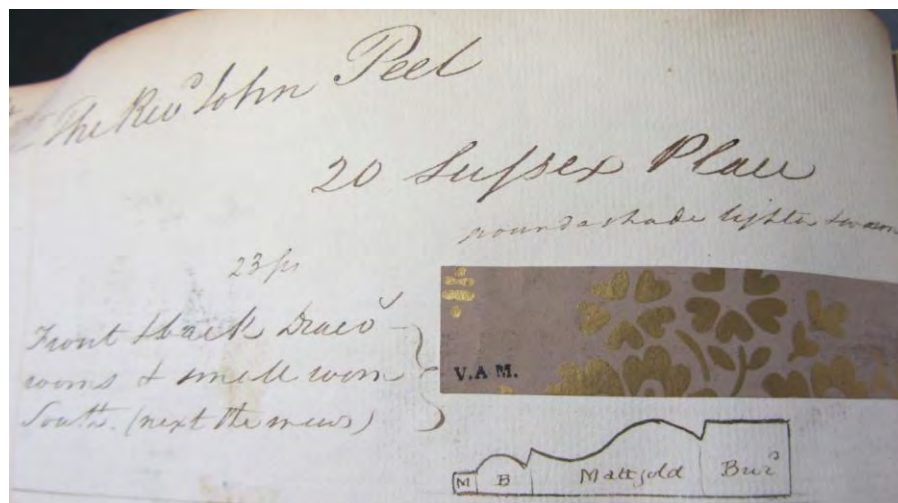


Fig. 161: Cowtan order for the Reverend John Peel, Sussex Place, London, 1826.⁷³⁷

Buff coloured papers decorated with intricate gold leaf patterns were chosen by the Reverend Mr Villers of Waresley Green, Kidderminster in 1824 [fig.162] and the Reverend W. Sherriffe of Uggheshall, Suffolk in 1825 [fig.163]. Unlike Dr Williams, the two Reverends did not eschew fine gold wallpaper decoration for their vicarages, and other doctors also favoured the gold decoration as further examples show.

⁷³⁶ COB 1, p.51

⁷³⁷ COB 1, p.264.



Fig. 162: Cowtan order for the Reverend Mr Villers, Waresley Green, Kidderminster, 1824.⁷³⁸



Fig. 163: Cowtan order for Reverend W. Sherriffe, Uggeshall, Suffolk, 1825.⁷³⁹

The quantities of gold decorated wallpaper ordered by the Reverends Villers and Sherriffe, nine pieces and seventeen pieces respectively, give an indication of the size of their rooms, with nine pieces suitable for a room approximately ten feet high, sixteen feet long and twelve feet wide; and seventeen pieces sufficient for a room approximately twelve feet high, twenty-six feet long and eighteen feet wide. (See chapter 7 for quantities of ‘pieces’ of wallpaper required to decorate rooms of various dimensions).

Wallpaper printed with delicate gold tracery on a pale ground continued to be popular with the clergy in the 1830s as an order for the Reverend Julius Deedes at Wittenham Rectory in Oxfordshire illustrates [fig.164]. The order also records the means of transport from Cowtan’s London paperstaining factory to Wittenham, ‘By Rye Coach to be forwarded by the Van’. Many of the earlier Cowtan orders carry similar instructions for the transport and delivery of wallpapers and provide details of the collection points, often one of the numerous

⁷³⁸ COB 1, p.79 .

⁷³⁹ COB 1, p.112.

coaching inns and wharfs such as Bottolph's Wharf [fig.166] in the City of London, delivery routes, and coach and hoy⁷⁴⁰ destinations, that were employed by London firms before the development of the railways in the 1840s, after which Cowtan orders often specified the railway station to which the delivery was to be made.



Fig. 164: Cowtan order for the Reverend Julius Deedes, Wittenham Rectory, Oxfordshire, 1835.⁷⁴¹

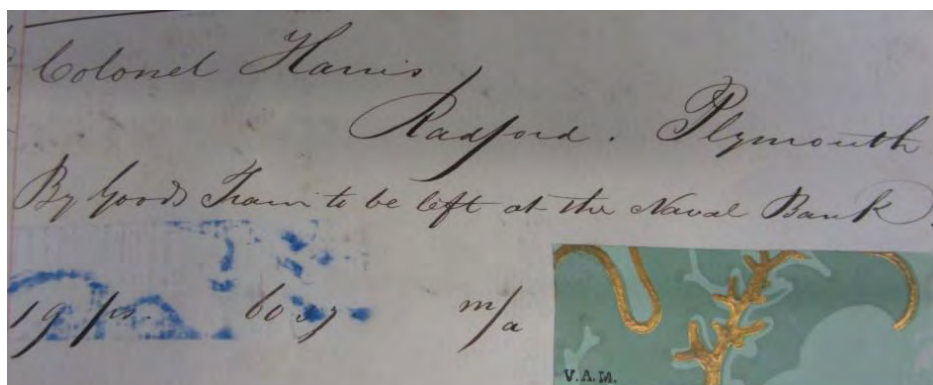


Fig. 165: Cowtan order for Colonel Harris, Radford, Plymouth, 1851.⁷⁴²

Fine gold patterned wallpapers continued to be in demand in the early 1850s. Colonel Harris of Radford, Plymouth ordered nineteen pieces of a delicate gold stem pattern on a pale duck-egg blue ground [fig.165]. By this time Cowtan was delivering its wallpapers by train, as Colonel Harris's order illustrates with the instruction, 'By goods train to be left at the Naval Bank'. White and gilded panelling was also popular, as an order for the Right Honourable J. Milner Gibson MP in 1859 illustrates. For his Front Drawing Room at Hyde Park Place, the order reads, 'Walls panelled with enriched mouldings & finished white & gold. Cornice and woodwork to match.'⁷⁴³

⁷⁴⁰ A hoy was a small sloop-rigged coasting ship or a heavy barge used for transporting freight.

⁷⁴¹ COB 1, p.632.

⁷⁴² COB 6, p.226.

⁷⁴³ COB 8, p.430.



Fig. 166: Map of Billingsgate Ward, engraved for Noorthouck's History of London, 1772, showing Bottolph's Wharf, off Thames Street, to the east of London Bridge.

Source: Map owned by Wendy Andrews.

Medieval Quatrefoil Patterns

Medieval decoration experienced a revival in England after the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 which permitted free expression of the Catholic faith after a long period of suppression.⁷⁴⁴ A medieval quatrefoil patterned wallpaper, usually printed in a stone colour against a deep red ground, was particularly popular with Cowtan's customers in the 1820s and 1830s. In March 1827 Colonel Bromley of Abberley Lodge, Worcestershire ordered eleven pieces of the medieval pattern for his Library [fig.167]. Two months later, twelve pieces of the same paper were ordered by the Honourable Colonel O'Neill [fig.168]. The Reverend R. Williamson ordered five pieces of the medieval paper for his Library at Dean's Yard, Westminster in 1829, with the instruction, 'Woodwork to be painted light oak' [fig.169].

⁷⁴⁴ Mark Bence-Jones, *The Catholic Families*, (London: Constable, 1992), p.33.

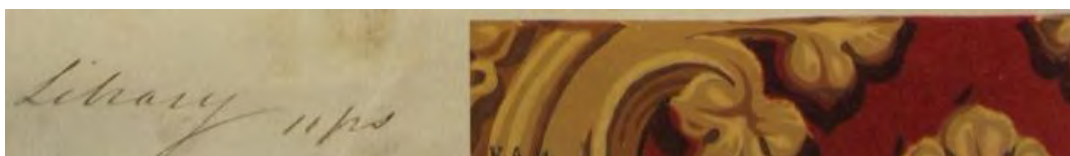


Fig. 167: Cowtan order for Colonel Bromley, Abberley Lodge, Worcestershire, 1827.⁷⁴⁵



Fig. 168: Cowtan order for the Honourable Colonel O'Neill, 1827.⁷⁴⁶

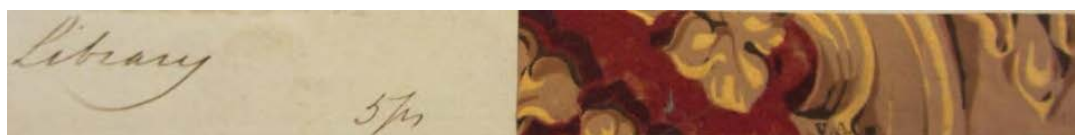


Fig. 169: Cowtan order for the Reverend R. Williamson, Dean's Yard, Westminster, 1829.⁷⁴⁷

Chintzes, Florals and Bold Patterns

There is plentiful evidence in the early Cowtan Order Books for the enthusiasm for chintzes, florals and bold patterns that would endure throughout the firm's history. In August 1824 Doctor Godwyn of Bartlow, Cambridgeshire ordered a pale pink leaf pattern paper with matching twisted silk rope pattern border, both printed in two colours.⁷⁴⁸ A month later, Colonel Gordon of Walmer, Kent ordered three brightly coloured wallpapers; four pieces of a three-colour pink and green floral paper printed on pale blue ground; and five pieces each of a pale blue quatrefoil pattern on stone coloured ground and a pink and green floral paper on a pink ground. The directions for transporting the papers are, 'By Dunn & Co's Hoy, Botolph's Wharf, Thames St.'⁷⁴⁹ Colonel Gordon's rooms were not large, judging by the quantities of wallpapers ordered, which suggest that each room was perhaps seven feet high, by twelve feet long and ten feet wide. In contrast, in 1825 Admiral Windham's order reveals the much more spacious rooms at Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk, for which he selected twenty-one pieces for two dressing rooms each measuring twenty feet square and ten feet high, and ninety-two

⁷⁴⁵ COB 1, p.415.

⁷⁴⁶ COB 1, p.439.

⁷⁴⁷ COB 1, p.681.

⁷⁴⁸ COB 1, p.53.

⁷⁴⁹ COB 1, p.101.

pieces selected to be mounted in eight panels, for a room twenty feet square and ten feet high [fig.170].



Fig. 170: Cowtan order for Admiral Windham, Felbrigg Hall, Aylsham, Norfolk, 1825.⁷⁵⁰

Nine papers in a variety of brightly coloured patterns and three matching borders were chosen by the Reverend Sir Philip Grey Egerton for bedrooms at Oulton Park, Cheshire in 1826, including a floral paper for the Chintz Room and the direction that a French paper should be printed on ‘pink sattin’. The order also notes that the delivery would be sent, ‘By Pickford’s Boat’ [fig.171].⁷⁵¹ At first glance a sample of a green flocked and striped paper over-printed with a gold leaf pattern for the Drawing Room at Hales Hall, Market Drayton, Shropshire in 1827 suggests that the Reverend A. Buchanan preferred a darker paper than the pale papers often favoured by his fellow clerics in the 1820s [fig.172]. However, the Cowtan order is annotated, ‘Ground of paper to be the color of board No.23, the stripes darker’. The sample of paper below the green flock shows the ground required, a pale straw colour which would

⁷⁵⁰ COB 1, p.183.

⁷⁵¹ <www.pickfords.co.uk/our-history> [accessed 22 September 2016]. Pickford’s are referred to in numerous Cowtan orders. Pickford’s carriers was founded in 1646. By 1803, Pickfords owned a fleet of canal boats, wagons and horses and had built its own canal-connected facilities.

have rendered the finished paper altogether lighter, even with darker stripes. This is an example of often very precise directions to the decorator, noted on numerous Cowtan orders.



Fig. 171: Cowtan order for the Reverend Sir Philip Grey Egerton, Oulton Park, Middlewich, Cheshire, 1826.⁷⁵²

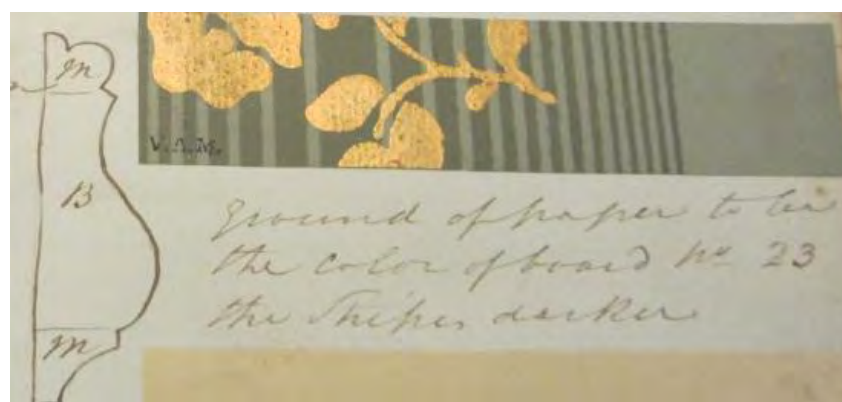


Fig. 172: Cowtan order for the Reverend A. Buchanan, Hales Hall, Market Drayton, 1827.⁷⁵³

⁷⁵² COB 1, p.329.

An ornate illustration in gold ink accompanies an order for Sir Ralph Lopes MP of Maristow in Devon in 1834. The paper chosen is a gold acanthus leaf pattern on crimson ground. The illustration is adjacent to a drawing of a carved moulding annotated, 'compo leaf in matt gold', which refers to the gold leaf to be applied to parts of the moulding that will complement the wallpaper [fig.173]. Gold moulding was also chosen by Sir Hesketh Fleetwood, High Sheriff of Lancashire and MP for Preston, for Rossall Hall in Lancashire in 1840 to enhance a dark green flocked paper over-printed with pink and gold flowers [fig.174].



Fig. 173: Cowtan order for Sir Ralph Lopes Bart MP, Maristow, Plymouth, 1834.⁷⁵⁴

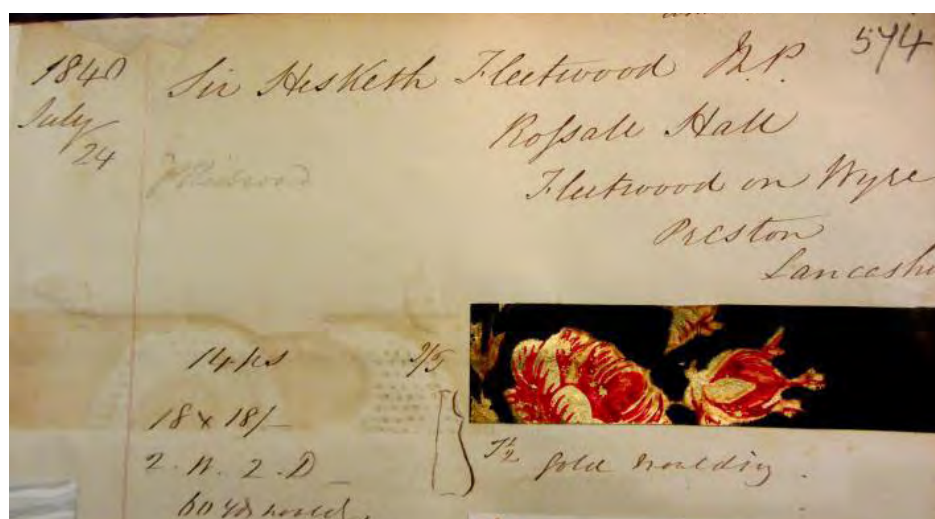


Fig. 174: Cowtan order for Sir Hesketh Fleetwood MP, for Rossall Hall, Fleetwood-on-Wyre, Preston, Lancashire, 1840.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵³ COB 1, p.408.

⁷⁵⁴ COB 2, p.495.

In 1839 a white paper printed with diagonal lines of small bright pink and green spots was ordered by the Reverend Canon Pulsford at Wells, Somerset⁷⁵⁵ and a geometric Egyptian patterned paper in dark purple and verditer green on a white ground was dispatched to the Reverend Arundell Bouverie at Denton Rectory, Harleston, Norfolk.⁷⁵⁶ The Reverend J. H. Harrison of Bugbrooke, Northamptonshire also chose a geometric pattern in 1854, in the form of a dark burgundy flock on a bright pink ground for his Library.⁷⁵⁷ However, floral papers and simple patterns printed in one or two pale or mid-tone colours also continued to be popular in the 1840s. For example, two papers, a pale green leaf pattern on a simple pin-spot background and a stone coloured architectural pattern were ordered for Colonel Austen of Belle Vue, Sevenoaks in 1849.⁷⁵⁸ Elaborate larger scale flock patterns and bolder floral patterns become more popular in the mid nineteenth century, as the Cowtan orders illustrate. John Floyer MP ordered a buff and burgundy flock with gold, a pink floral paper and a gold finial pattern border for his Drawing Room at West Stafford in Dorchester in 1852 [fig.175]. A border of bold blue and burgundy flock with gold ornament was chosen by the Reverend Rector of Exeter College, Oxford in 1854 to accompany a mosaic patterned paper [fig.176].



Fig. 175: Cowtan order for John Floyer MP, West Stafford, Dorchester, 1852.⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁵⁵ COB 3, p.574.

⁷⁵⁶ COB 3, p.374.

⁷⁵⁷ COB 3, p.381.

⁷⁵⁸ COB 7, p.143.

⁷⁵⁹ COB 5, p.580.

⁷⁶⁰ COB 6, p.330.



Fig. 176: Cowtan order for the Reverend Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, 1854. ⁷⁶¹

Mosaic patterns were favoured from this time; for example, a turquoise mosaic pattern paper was selected by the Reverend James Bulwer for Hemsworth Rectory at Holt, Norfolk in 1856.⁷⁶² Pale green and turquoise were popular colours for wallpapers in the 1850s and 1860s. Three oak leaf patterned papers, including one on a green ground, were ordered for a Drawing Room, three Bedrooms and Dressing Room by the Reverend J. J. Bence at Thorington Rectory, Saxmundham, Suffolk in 1857 [fig.177]. Similar shades of green in simple two colour designs were chosen by Dr Clifford at the Catholic Bishop's House in Bristol in 1858 [fig.178] and the Reverend John Daintry of North Road, Congleton in 1860.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶¹ COB 7, p.37.

⁷⁶² COB 7, p.367.

⁷⁶³ COB 9, p.153.



Fig. 177: Cowtan order for the Revd J. J. Bence, Thorrington, Saxmundham, Suffolk, 1857.⁷⁶⁴

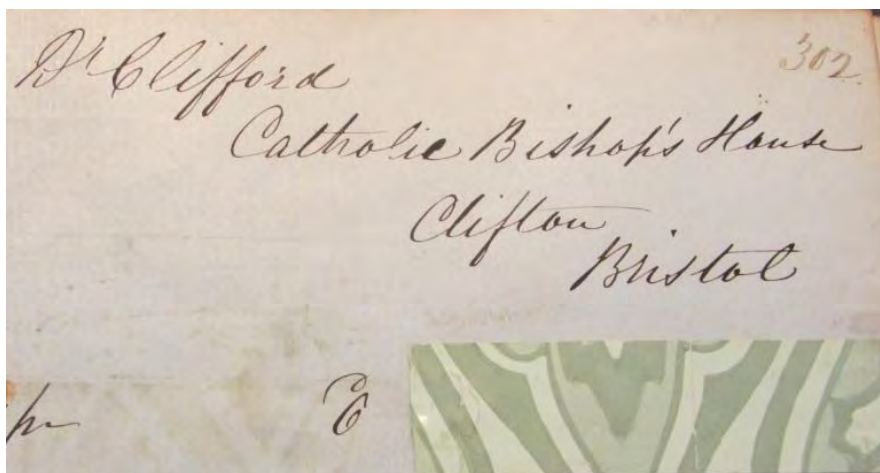


Fig. 178: Cowtan order for Dr Clifford, the Catholic Bishop's House, Clifton, Bristol, 1858.⁷⁶⁵

Cowtan's customers embraced bright colours and bold patterns. In 1861 the Reverend Lord Wrothesley Russell ordered several wallpapers including a mauve spot pattern and a matching mosaic and bead pattern border for 'Miss Russell's Bedroom' at the Cloisters, Windsor.⁷⁶⁶ A mauve paper was also among the papers chosen by Colonel The Honourable Douglas Pennant at Penrhyn Castle in 1863.⁷⁶⁷

⁷⁶⁴ COB 7, p.489.

⁷⁶⁵ COB 8, p.302.

⁷⁶⁶ COB 10, p.6.

⁷⁶⁷ COB 10, p.506.

Indeed, the taste in wallpapers sold by Cowtan & Sons during the nineteenth century might be described as an eclectic assemblage of designs, colours and surface finishes. The wide range of patterns ordered by Cowtan's professional customers can be illustrated by a selection of orders, such as the rope border for the Reverend D. Cavalli at the Catholic Church in Newport, Monmouth in 1861⁷⁶⁸; a bamboo pattern for Colonel W. H. Frederick Cavendish at Burlington Gardens in 1874⁷⁶⁹; papers decorated with roses and bluetits for H. Hussey Vivian MP at Park Wern, Swansea in 1874 [fig.179]; a pattern of russet leaves by William Woollams for Mrs Hill at Downton Vicarage, Salisbury in 1888⁷⁷⁰; autumnal leaves for Lieutenant Colonel the Honourable H. W. Campbell at Charles Street in 1890⁷⁷¹ and lilac blooms for Captain Rawson of the 1st Life Guards at Walton Bury, Stafford in 1891 [fig.180].



Fig. 179: Cowtan order for H. Hussey Vivian MP, Park Wern, Swansea, 1874.⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁸ COB 10, p.127.

⁷⁶⁹ COB 13, p.483.

⁷⁷⁰ COB 16, p.537.

⁷⁷¹ COB 17(i), p.161.

⁷⁷² COB 13, p.544.



Fig. 180: Cowtan order for Captain R. H. Rawson, 1st Life Guards, Walton Bury, Stafford, 1891.⁷⁷³

Even in the final years of Cowtan & Sons' trading, their chintz papers in pale colours remained popular. In 1936 Captain Nugent Head ordered three papers patterned with roses and ribbons from Cowtan's Old English Wallpapers (O.E.W.)⁷⁷⁴ range for his house at Bryanston Square, London [fig.181].



Fig. 181: Cowtan order for Captain Nugent Head, 30 Bryanston Square, London, 1936.⁷⁷⁵

⁷⁷³ COB 17(i), p.287.

⁷⁷⁴ Old English Wallpapers & Co. was formed in 1934 by Cole & Son in partnership with Cowtan & Sons to purchase the collection of Crace & Son printing blocks which Cowtan had owned since 1899.

⁷⁷⁵ COB 24(ii), p.513.

Elegant Papers for Drawing Rooms and Dining Rooms

Drawing Rooms and Dining Rooms were among the most frequently decorated by Cowtan's customers, as might be expected, for these were the showrooms into which guests would be invited. Captain Hamilton ordered, 'Pompadour decoration in compartments', for his Drawing Room at Ecclestone Square in 1858,⁷⁷⁶ expressing his taste for French decoration in panels around the room. White and gold, or white-on-white patterns also maintained their popularity for Drawing Rooms, as illustrated by orders for the Reverend Clarence Hilton at Badlesmere Rectory at Faversham, Kent in 1858 [fig.182]; Captain White Goodrich of the Naval & Military Club for his house at Avenue Road, Dulwich Wood Park, Upper Norwood in 1869;⁷⁷⁷ Captain Herford at Tarrant Keynston, Blandford, Dorset in 1872⁷⁷⁸ and Captain Rodd R.N. of Basque, Guildford, Surrey in 1873.⁷⁷⁹ Lilac, pink and peach coloured papers in plain finishes or damask patterns were in demand in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. In 1873 Captain F.A. Boyce of the Royal Navy ordered a plain lilac paper for two Drawing Rooms at his home at William Street, off Lowndes Square. The paper was to be, 'mounted with margins and mouldings', and the order is accompanied by a hand painted illustration of a gilding decoration, with the direction, 'The husk to form a margin on ceilings' [fig.183].



Fig. 182: Cowtan order for Reverend Clarence Hilton, Badlesmere Rectory, Faversham, Kent, 1858.⁷⁸⁰

⁷⁷⁶ COB 8, p.142.

⁷⁷⁷ COB 12, p.397.

⁷⁷⁸ COB 13, p.208.

⁷⁷⁹ COB 13 pp.385-387.

⁷⁸⁰ COB 8, p.196.

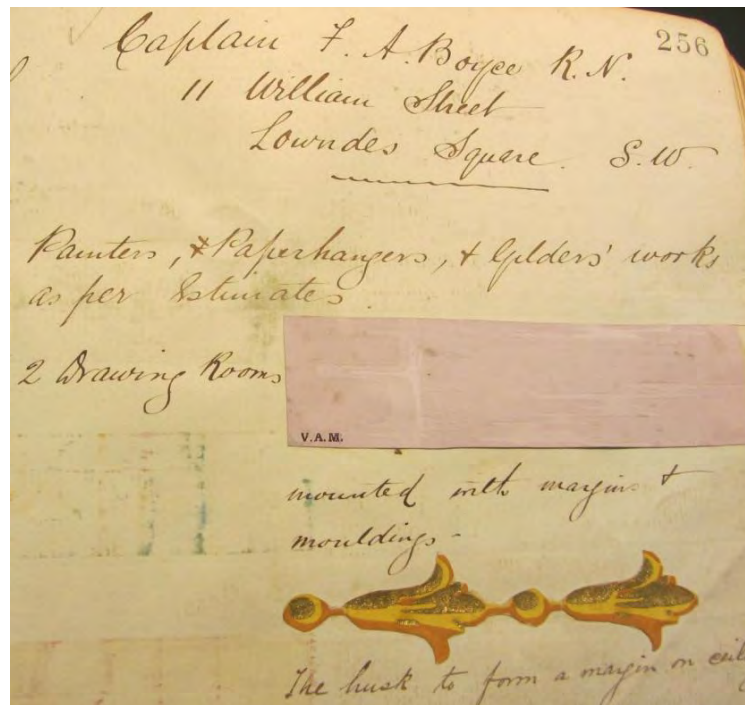


Fig. 183: Cowtan order for Captain F. Boyce RN, 11 William Street, Lowndes Square, London, 1873.⁷⁸¹



Fig. 184: Cowtan order for the Reverend John Mitchell, Sandringham, Norfolk, 1882.⁷⁸²

Damask pattern papers in pastel shades were chosen by the Reverend John Mitchell for his Drawing Room and Dining Room at Sandringham in 1882 [fig.184]. The Wedderburn damask in a shade of apricot with the 'Cupid frieze' was selected by the Reverend E. S. Garnier for the Dining Room at Quidenham Parsonage, Attleborough, Norfolk in 1884⁷⁸³ and a similar damask paper in peach colour was ordered by Colonel C. R. Rowley of the Grenadier Guards for his Drawing Room at 33a Saville Row in 1891 [fig.185].

⁷⁸¹ COB 13, p.256.

⁷⁸² COB 15, p.436.

⁷⁸³ COB 16, p.78.

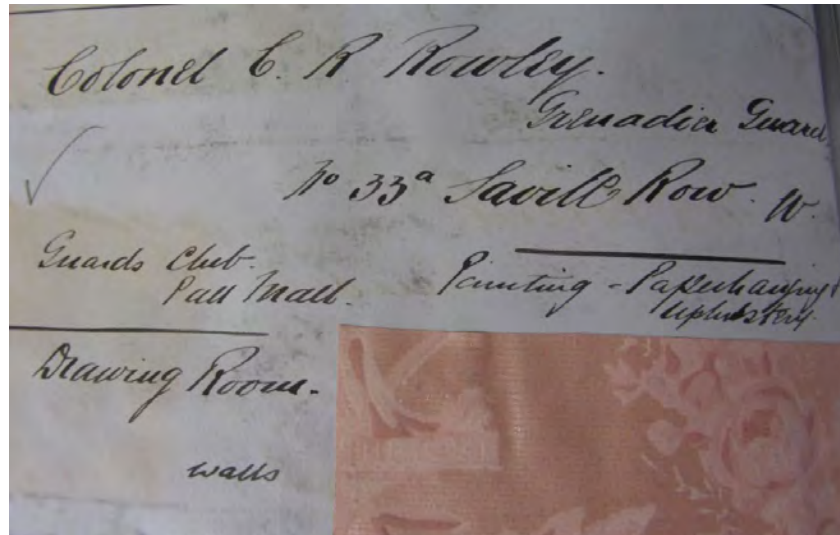


Fig. 185: Cowtan order for Colonel C. R. Rowley, Grenadier Guards, 33a Saville Row, c/o Guards' Club, Pall Mall, 1891.⁷⁸⁴

Heavily Flocked and Embossed Papers

Despite the long duration of the fashion for pale wallpapers and gilded mouldings and ornamentation, the Cowtan Order Books also bear witness to the popularity of the variety of heavily flocked and embossed papers that became increasingly available from the mid nineteenth century onwards. An order for the Reverend Baring at Ashgrove, Sevenoaks in 1864 includes three such samples: a buff coloured flock for the Billiard Room; an embossed and varnished brown wall covering for Mrs Baring's room; and a plain buff coloured flock for the Hall, beneath which is noted, 'painted green'[fig.186].

The method of putting up uncoloured flock wallpaper and painting it once installed was a speciality of Cowtan & Sons, as Mawer Cowtan Cowtan described in 1914,

When the re-action came against marbling, my father brought in the painting of white flockpaper, and we used it very extensively for some years until the Tynecastle period arrived, both for ceilings and walls of halls, staircases and dining rooms. The idea originated with him from his being constantly asked to do something with our old flock papers that we had put up in many houses in the kingdom years ago, and which people felt were good enough if the colours had not faded, and he resorted to painting these flock-papers. Then it suggested itself to him – “why not have white flock and paint it.”⁷⁸⁵

⁷⁸⁴ COB 17(i), p.205.

⁷⁸⁵ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, p.4.



Fig. 186: Cowtan order for the Honourable Reverend F. Baring, Ashgrove, Sevenoaks, 1864.⁷⁸⁶

Four similarly plain unpainted flock papers are attached to the order for Major Gunter at Wetherley Grange in Yorkshire in 1865; two for the Drawing Room, with the instruction that one should be painted in a lavender grey tint with gilt mouldings; and two for the Library, with one to be painted green [fig.187]. However, Cowtan also supplied flocks finished in the paperstaining factory, as an order for the Reverend A. S. Baker at 68 Hazelwood Crescent, Kensal Road, London in 1883 illustrates, with a heavy dark green flock in heraldic pattern on a burnished copper ground.⁷⁸⁷



Fig. 187: Cowtan order for Major Gunter, Wetherley Grange, Wetherley, Yorkshire, 1865.⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁶ COB 11, p.44.

⁷⁸⁷ COB 16, p.29.

⁷⁸⁸ COB 11, p.412.

Embossed wallcoverings designed to imitate antique stamped leather, such as those manufactured by Tynecastle, appear in the Cowtan orders from the 1870s onwards. Embossed wallcoverings were popular among the professional classes, as illustrated by orders for a 'Japanese' wallcovering for Colonel H. P. Ewart of the 2nd Life Guards at 11 Stratton Street in 1883 [fig.188]; embossed papers for Colonel Maitland at 35 Grove End Road, London NW in 1884 [fig.189]; and for Captain Hervey at Ickworth Lodge, Bury St Edmunds in 1903.⁷⁸⁹ The order for Colonel Ewart is an example of the diversity of wallpapers that were chosen by Cowtan's customers; beneath the dark burgundy and copper embossed 'Japanese' paper for the Drawing Room is a pale architectural paper for the ceiling, then a delicate lace pattern over a canary yellow ground annotated 'Balin Venetian'⁷⁹⁰ that is for the upper panels of the walls in the Smoking Room; a plain gold flock paper for the lower walls of the same room; and a crimson velvet as a colour sample for the walls and carpet of the Hall and Staircase.

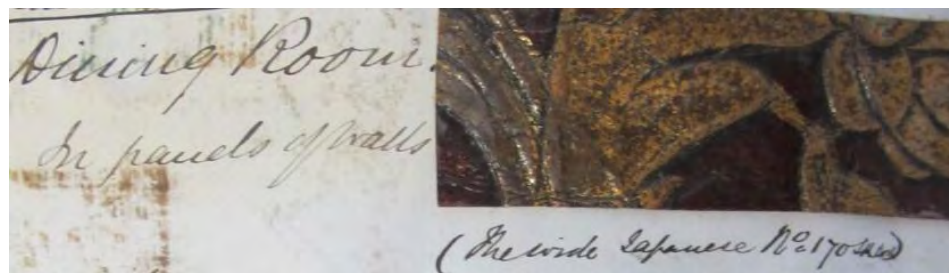


Fig. 188: Cowtan order for Colonel H. P. Ewart, 2nd Life Guards, 11 Stratton Street, for, 'The wide Japanese' wallcovering, 1883.⁷⁹¹



Fig. 189: Cowtan order for Colonel Maitland, 35 Grove End Road, London, 1884.⁷⁹²

⁷⁸⁹ COB 19(ii), p.411.

⁷⁹⁰ <<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O211404/wallpaper-balin-paul>> [accessed 10 July 2016]. Paul Balin exhibited a similar paper with a lace pattern on a lilac ground at the Vienna Exhibition 1873.

⁷⁹¹ Book 15, p.525.

⁷⁹² COB 16, p.142.

Orders for Multiple Rooms

Many Cowtan customers purchased large quantities of wallpapers within one order, indicating the complete redecoration of the property. Among the professions, Clergy and MPs in particular ordered papers for many rooms that were required to accommodate their large households. In 1856 Sir James Hogg MP ordered seven wallpapers and two borders for his Saloon, Morning Room, Library and Ante-room at Carlton House Gardens.⁷⁹³ His neighbour and fellow MP, the Right Honourable John Denison, ordered twelve papers and ten borders for the Dining Room, Drawing Room, Gentleman's Bedroom, Large Bedroom, Bedroom over Servants' Hall, Bedroom over Kitchen, Passage, Servants' Rooms, No.6 Bedroom and Chamber Floor WC at Carlton House Terrace in 1858 [fig.190].



Fig. 190: Cowtan order for the Right Hon. John Denison MP, Carlton House Terrace, 1858.⁷⁹⁴



Fig. 191: Cowtan order for the Revd. Pennefather, Liskinfere Rectory, Gorey, Ireland, 1856.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁹³ COB 7, p.467.

⁷⁹⁴ COB 8, pp.187-188.

⁷⁹⁵ COB, 8, p.460.

Among the Clergy, the Reverend Pennefather ordered eight wallpapers for Liskinfere Rectory at Gorey, Ireland in 1856 [fig.191] as did the Reverend Nisbet at the Rectory in Deal, Kent in 1857.⁷⁹⁶ The Reverend William Cooke chose eleven papers and three borders for the Drawing Room, Library, Dining Room, two Front Bedrooms, Attics, Housekeeper's Room and Passages at Gazeley Vicarage, Newmarket, Suffolk in 1857.⁷⁹⁷ It is noticeable that these orders for multiple rooms, whether for MPs or the Clergy, tend to favour a range of light floral designs, two dimensional architectural patterns and colourful matching borders, almost to a prescribed formula for the decoration of a comfortable mid-Victorian family home. Even some twenty years later, when Captain Rodd of Guildford, Surrey ordered twelve papers for his Drawing Room, Dining Room, Hall, Library, Bathroom, Best Bedroom, Sitting Room, Best Spare Bedroom, Green Damask Room and White Room, the taste for bright florals and cheerful papers persisted, though with the addition of a blue and white Chinese bridge pattern paper for the ground floor WC [fig.192].



Fig. 192: Cowtan order for Captain Rodd, RN, Guildford, Surrey, 1873.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁶ COB 8, p.110.

⁷⁹⁷ COB 7, p.470.

⁷⁹⁸ COB 13, pp.385-387.

Wallpapers Sent Overseas

Altogether, 425 Cowtan orders were sent overseas between 1824 and 1938. In chapter 6 it was noted that many orders were for British ambassadorial residences. A significant number of overseas orders were also placed by members of the Armed Forces, particularly those living and working in British held territories in the second half of the nineteenth century. Medical Doctors who took up overseas posts also chose wallpapers from Cowtan.

In 1862 Dr Monro ordered eight wallpapers in quantities of eight, nine and ten pieces, including a thistle patterned paper on a pale green ground for his Study at Nelson, New Zealand [fig.193]. An instruction on the Cowtan order records the packaging required for safe delivery of fragile paper goods to the other side of the world, stating that Dr Monro's wallpapers were to be transported, 'In case lined with tin. By Electra.' A record of the many ships that arrived in New Zealand in the 1860s reveals that the 'Electra' docked at Nelson on 30 March 1863, seven months after the Cowtan order was placed, which is likely to be when Dr Monro received his selection of new wallpapers.⁷⁹⁹

In 1867 the Honourable Dr Tupper of 86 Oxford Terrace, Paddington, was soon to emigrate to Halifax, Nova Scotia, according to his Cowtan order for a white and grey patterned paper, edged with gold, to be sent to him, 'care of D. & C. McIvan in Liverpool', from where ships set sail to Canada.⁸⁰⁰ An order for a red crimson flock paper for Captain Arkwright in Malta, 'care of Mr Sedley, 210 Regent's Street' in 1863⁸⁰¹ and another for sixteen pieces of a French grey, cream and red striped paper for Colonel Haggart in the West Indies in 1865⁸⁰² are examples of wallpapers ordered by members of the British Military serving in different parts of the world in the 1860s.

Twenty-two Cowtan orders were sent to provinces of British-governed India. Substantial quantities of wallpapers were ordered by Captain Henry Wood at Murree, India⁸⁰³ in 1866. Captain Wood's accommodation was evidently spacious since he ordered three different wallpapers in quantities of eighty-eight pieces each, including one for a Drawing Room, and forty-two pieces of a fourth paper [fig.194].

⁷⁹⁹ <<http://members.iinet.net.au/~perthdps/shipping/mig-nz2.htm>. > [accessed 7 November 2016]. New Zealand Migrant Shipping (1861-1875). Index compiled by the New Zealand Society of Genealogists, 1988. Ships identified from 'White Wings' by Sir Henry Wood, published Auckland 1924 and 1928.

⁸⁰⁰ COB 12, p.14.

⁸⁰¹ COB 10, p.595.

⁸⁰² COB 11, p.466.

⁸⁰³ Now in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

In contrast, despite holding a position several ranks above the Captain, Colonel Keating ordered significantly smaller quantities of three papers and one border to be sent to him in India in 1868, with the, 'Account to Messrs J. Barber Sons & Co.' [fig.195].



Fig. 193: Cowtan order for Dr Monro, Nelson, New Zealand, 1862.⁸⁰⁴

⁸⁰⁴ COB 10, p.333.



Fig. 194: Cowtan order for Captain Henry Wood, Murree, India, 1866.⁸⁰⁵



Fig. 195: Cowtan order for Colonel Keating, India, 1868.⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰⁵ COB 11, p.667.

Orders for officers of the rank of Major General tended to be for large quantities and often included more luxurious wallpapers. In 1877, Major General Sir E.B. Johnson ordered thirty-four pieces of a cream damask paper and 135 yards of deep burgundy flock and gold embossed border for his residence in Calcutta, 'Care of Messrs Colvin Cowie & Co.' [fig.196]. One year later the Major General placed a further order with Cowtan & Sons to be sent to him at Simla⁸⁰⁷ care of Messrs Grindlay, Groom & Co. [fig.197]. On this occasion he ordered thirty pieces of a tapestry weave paper for his Dining Room; fifteen pieces of a cream damask paper with dark green flock and gold embossed border for his Study; twenty-three pieces of a pink floral paper with the pink and green twisted rope border for a Bedroom and Dressing Room; twenty-five pieces of a green and cream foliate paper and matching pink and green border for Miss Johnson's Room; and thirty-one pieces of a cream embossed paper for the Hall and Staircase. This order was mentioned by Mawer Cowtan Cowtan in 1914 when he referred to 'the late General Johnson, son of Dowager Lady Johnson, supplied "6620" and other papers, which were sent to Simla, where he was on duty.'⁸⁰⁸



Fig. 196: Cowtan order for Major General Sir E. B. Johnson KCB, Calcutta, 1877.⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁶ COB 12, p.272.

⁸⁰⁷ Now Shimla, capital of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh.

⁸⁰⁸ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, p.23.

⁸⁰⁹ COB 14, p.429.



Fig. 197: Cowtan order for Major General Sir E. B. Johnson, Simla, India, 1878.⁸¹⁰

Colonel A.D. Butler of the 42nd Light Infantry in Assam, India also selected two luxurious deep red flock papers and two gold and ochre papers for the decoration of his residence in Assam in 1885 [fig.198]. However, Colonel H. Mellis at Simla displayed more modest taste in 1892, when he selected a paper in two shades of blue, in a leaf pattern printed over a fine stripe.⁸¹¹

⁸¹⁰ COB 14, p.570.

⁸¹¹ COB 17(ii), p.407.



Fig. 198: Cowtan order for Colonel A.D. Butler, 42nd Light Infantry, Assam, India, 1885.⁸¹²

Not all Cowtan orders were necessarily for the personal use of the customer, as one for Captain Lowther of the Royal Navy in 1897 seems to suggest. Ten pieces of a design of pink roses on a white ground was ordered to be sent to Mademoiselle Douffant in Fontainebleau, France [fig.199]; further orders were sent to Fontainebleau on behalf of Captain Lowther in 1898⁸¹³ and 1899.⁸¹⁴



Fig. 199: Cowtan order for Captain Lowther, 'Sent to Mademoiselle Douffant', 73 Pont St, Les Ruches, Fontainebleau, France, 1897.⁸¹⁵

⁸¹² COB 16, p.232.

⁸¹³ COB 18(ii), p.437.

⁸¹⁴ COB 18(ii), p.522.

⁸¹⁵ COB 18(i), p.264.

Chinese Papers

In 1914 Mawer Cowtan Cowtan made several references to ‘antique’ or ‘old sets’ of Chinese papers that the firm had supplied to eminent customers over the years and mentioned that in 1876 Cowtan & Sons received a delivery from Japan of a large number of sets of paperhangings in the style of Chinese paperhangings.⁸¹⁶ In 1883 at Hornby Castle, seat of the Duke of Leeds, Mawer Cowtan Cowtan was,

very much struck on going to Hornby with certain Chinese papers I saw there, which seemed familiar....and on my return I found that in 1811 we removed Chinese paperhangings from Holderness Park and brought them up to Hornby. Holderness House was pulled down by the then Duke of Leeds at the suggestion of George IV, the Duke being a great friend of His Majesty. These Chinese paperhangings, I believe, were originally put up by our firm previous to 1811.⁸¹⁷

He added that his brother, Arthur Barnard Cowtan, had recently visited Lord and Lady Ebury at Moor Park in Hertfordshire, where he saw beautiful Chinese wallpapers, ‘and he was able to show them from our Order Book at Oxford Street that we had supplied this decoration and put it up in 1829’.⁸¹⁸ The expense of imported Chinese wallpapers made them the preserve of aristocratic customers, and also of those who were wealthy among the professions. In 1835 the Hon. Captain Somerville ordered for his two Drawing Rooms, ‘Chinese pattern paper with coloured border, gold moulding top and bottom’ at 24 Landsdowne Place, Leamington.⁸¹⁹ In 1864 Captain Grant ordered, ‘A set of Chinese paper, lavender ground, with birds and foliage’, for Moy House, Forres in Scotland.⁸²⁰ As is often the case with Cowtan orders for Chinese papers, there is no sample attached. However, Captain Grant’s order records the price of his set of Chinese papers as being the substantial sum of seventeen pounds.

Mawer Cowtan Cowtan recalled that in 1878 the firm had supplied a set of Chinese papers on pink ground for General Sir Dighton Probyn at Queen Anne’s Mansions.⁸²¹ The General was evidently satisfied with Cowtan’s Chinese papers, for in 1879 he ordered a further set of, ‘real Chinese papers on lemon ground, birds, trees etc’, for his Dressing Room and Bathroom, with the, ‘woodwork all red in both rooms and the paper in the panels.’⁸²²

⁸¹⁶ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, p.23.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid., p.3.

⁸¹⁸ Ibid., p.3.

⁸¹⁹ COB 2, p.565.

⁸²⁰ COB 11, p.53.

⁸²¹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, p.22.

⁸²² COB 15, pp.3-4.

Papers decorated with Chinese figures and motifs were also popular with Cowtan's customers in the early twentieth century, as an order in 1910 for Colonel Frank Shuttleworth at Old Warden Park, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire illustrates [fig.200]. In this case, the sample is included. In 1924 Captain Oliver Lyttelton commissioned Cowtan & Sons to undertake decoration works to his Chinese Room at 104 Eaton Square, London, 'in accordance with specification, including the supplying & putting up of 7 sheets of specially painted Chinese paper, forming a continuous Decoration'.⁸²³



Fig. 200: Colonel Frank Shuttleworth JP, Old Warden Park, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, 1910.⁸²⁴

The survey of wallpapers ordered by different professions reveals that they often shared similar tastes in decoration. Whether members of the Clergy, Military, Doctors or MPs, they tended to favour the papers, patterns and materials that were in demand among Cowtan's other customers. The orders for the the clergy and the professions also serve to underline the long duration of favoured patterns and materials such as flocks and chintzes.

⁸²³ COB 23(i), p.292.

⁸²⁴ COB 21(i), p.284.

Wallpapers for Servants' Rooms

A survey of seven Cowtan Order Books covering the period from 1824 to 1925 illustrates the range of rooms occupied by servants for sleeping, living or working [appendix VI]. Orders for servants' rooms that occur only in Books 1 or 3, from 1824 to 1841, include Butler's Pantry; Coachman's Room; Governess's Chamber; Ladies' Maids' Rooms; Housekeeper's Bedroom; Housemaids' Room; Steward's Room; and Strangers' Servants' Room. Rooms that first appear in Book 10 or Book 16, from 1861 to 1889, include Butler's Bedroom; Coachman's Cottage; Cook's Bedroom; Footman's Attic; Men Servants' Rooms; Needlewoman's Room; and Servants' Hall & Pantry. Rooms that first appear from 1902 onwards include Cook's Sitting Room; Housemaids' Closet; Nurse's Bedroom; Servants' Bathroom; and Stables Living Room & Bedroom. Finally, rooms that appear only in the last two books surveyed, covering 1910 to 1925, include Chauffeur's Cottage; Garage Scullery & Kitchen; Gardener's Cottage; Head Housemaid's Room; Mademoiselle's Room; Odd Man's Room; Parlourmaid's Bedroom; Porter's Bedroom Lobby; Under Housemaids' Room and Valet's Room.

The quantity of Cowtan orders for servants' rooms and the range of servants' titles increases as the nineteenth century progresses, reflecting the wealth of the firm's customers.

The question of whether or not the servants of Cowtan's customers were given the opportunity to express their opinions on wallpapers chosen for their own rooms is not readily resolved by studying the the Cowtan Order Books. Apart from the customer's name and address and the names of rooms for which wallpapers were selected, the order books offer little other insight into the decision-making process. However, they do provide details about how the rooms of various ranks of servant were decorated over time, as the following examples illustrate.

Servants' Rooms in the 1820s

Wallpapers for servants in the earliest Cowtan Order Books tend to display simple designs in two or three colours, often similar in style, if not in quality, to the papers chosen by their employers for their own apartments. In 1824 Sir William Curtis selected three wallpapers for Cliff House, Ramsgate. Two were in shades of green for his Drawing Room and Bedroom, the latter with a matching border; and a plaster pink paper printed with a simple two dimensional floral pattern in blue and white, and a border in dark green on brown ground, for

the decoration of his Housekeeper's Room, Butler's Pantry and Ladies Maids' Rooms [fig.201]. The same paper Sir William Curtis selected for his servants was also chosen, though printed in blue and white on a pale grey ground, by Pascoe Grenfell MP for his Butler's Pantry at Belgrave Square in 1829 [fig.202]. The order for Mr Grenfell illustrates a common occurrence in the Cowtan Order Books, whereby the customer simultaneously places orders for his family's rooms and his servants' rooms; in this case, the Butler, Housekeeper and Coachman's rooms, as well as for various bedrooms and front and back rooms. However, it is clear from the samples in Pascoe Grenfell's order that the quality and intricacy of the wallpapers chosen for his own rooms were of a better class than the generally more subdued, simpler patterns chosen for his servants.



Fig. 201: Cowtan order for Sir William Curtis, Cliff House, Ramsgate, for papers for Bedrooms, Housekeeper's Room, Butler's Pantry and Ladies' Maid's Room, 1824.⁸²⁵

⁸²⁵ COB 1, p.42



Fig. 202: Cowtan order for Pascoe Grenfell MP, Belgrave Square, for Bedrooms, Housekeeper's Room & Stillroom, Butler's Pantry and Coachman's Room, 1829.⁸²⁶

Mr Grenfell may have recommended Cowtan & Sons to his neighbour, the Hon. Colonel Fitzgibbon at 44 Belgrave Square, who in 1829 ordered four papers, with matching borders, including one in a blue, white and black leaf pattern on a pale grey ground, with matching blue and brown border, for his Butler's and Housekeeper's Rooms [fig.203].

⁸²⁶ COB 1, p.649.



Fig. 203: Cowtan order for the Hon. Colonel Fitzgibbon, 44 Belgrave Square, for Front, Middle and Back Rooms, and Butler's and Housekeeper's Rooms, 1829.⁸²⁷

Servants' Rooms in the 1880s

As discussed in chapter 1, by the 1880s the artistic quality of hand block-printed papers and the production quality of machine printed English wallpapers had advanced considerably since the 1850s. Indeed, the development of the artistic and technical prowess of the wallpaper industry is clearly articulated through the Cowtan Order Book samples. An order for P.W. Blunt Esq at 8 Westbourne Crescent, London in 1883 illustrates the sophisticated and naturalistic patterns then available [fig.204]. Like some customers in the 1820s, Mr Blunt ordered wallpapers for himself and his family alongside papers for his servants. However, it is noticeable that the papers are remarkably similar. Although cheaper machine made wallpapers were often ordered for servants' quarters, Mr Blunt ordered a pale primrose pattern for his own Bedroom, Dressing Room and Miss Blunt's Room; a pale pink campion pattern for the Day Nursery; a pale yellow daisy pattern for the Young Lady's Room and finally a pink and white starflower pattern for the Servants' Hall. The four papers appear to have been chosen as a complementary set. The same complementarity appears in an order for R. Holmes White Esq at 10 Devonshire Place, London in 1885, in which five finely printed

⁸²⁷ COB 1, p.753.

papers are specified for two Nurseries, Cook's Bedroom, Housemaid's Bedroom, Housekeeper's Room and Back Room through Entrance Hall [fig.205].



Fig. 204: Cowtan order for P.W. Blunt Esq, 8 Westbourne Crescent, London, for Own Bedroom & Dressing Room, Day Nursery, Young Lady's Room and Servants' Hall, 1883.⁸²⁸



Fig. 205: Cowtan order for R. Holmes White Esq, 10 Devonshire Place, London, for wallpapers for Two Nurseries, Cook's Bedroom, Housemaid's Bedroom, Housekeeper's Room and Back Room through Entrance Hall, 1885.⁸²⁹

⁸²⁸ COB 16, p.24.

⁸²⁹ COB 16, p.186.

Floral papers in pale colours were popular in the 1880s, particularly for servants' rooms as a Cowtan order for Earl Brownlow at Ashridge, Berkhamstead, illustrates with three papers chosen for the Servants' Hall; an Ante Room, WC and Attic; and for a Bedroom. The paper for the Servants' Hall was described as 'French' and twelve pieces were ordered, enough for a room measuring approximately twenty-two feet by fourteen feet and ten feet high [fig.206].



Fig. 206: Cowtan order for Earl Brownlow, Ashridge, Hertfordshire, for wallpapers for the Servants' Hall, Ante Room, WC and Attic; and a Bedroom, 1884.⁸³⁰

Rooms in Stables often provided accommodation for Groomsmen, Coachmen or other staff working in the owner's main house, though in London and other cities they were often later converted to separate mews houses. Wallpapers chosen for Stables in the 1880s were often in light floral patterns, as shown in orders for W.B. Phillimore Esq at 7 Hyde Park Gardens [fig.207] and Colonel Oliver Montagu at 26 Chapel Street, Park Lane [fig.208].

⁸³⁰ COB 16, p.39.



Fig. 207: Cowtan order for W.B. Phillimore Esq, 7 Hyde Park Gardens, London, for Stables, 1884.⁸³¹



Fig. 208: Cowtan order for Colonel the Honourable Oliver Montagu, 26 Chapel Street, Park Lane, London, for Stables, 1887.⁸³²



Fig. 209: Cowtan order for C. R. Palmer Esq, 43 Gloucester Place, London, for Stables, 1885.⁸³³

Decorative tile pattern wallpapers also became popular in this period, as seen in an order for C.R. Palmer Esq for his Stables at 43 Gloucester Place in 1885 [fig.209]. Two papers were chosen for the Bedroom and Kitchen, one printed in a pink hexagonal design and the other in a pale green diamond pattern.

⁸³¹ COB 16, p.41.

⁸³² COB 16, p.426.

⁸³³ COB 16, p.212.

However, other patterns were also chosen for servants' rooms in the 1880s, such as the thirty-two pieces of a paper decorated with exotic red birds on a cream ground, ordered by the Duke of Leeds in 1884 for a Spare Bedroom, Servant's Bedroom and Store Room at Hornby Castle [fig.210].



Fig. 210: Cowtan order for the Duke of Leeds, Hornby Castle, Yorkshire, for wallpapers for Servants' Bedrooms, 1884.⁸³⁴

Servants' Rooms in the 1920s

Despite the impact of the First World War on the lives and fortunes of the wealthy, Cowtan & Sons continued trading and supplied numerous customers in the years between the two World Wars. One indicator of affluence was the number of servants' rooms and servants' cottages that were decorated with attractive wallpapers at the same time as Cowtan undertook work in the principal rooms of the owner's house.

In 1921 a customer named A. Mikellatos placed a substantial order with Cowtan & Sons for his property, 'Bevendean' at Oxshott, Surrey. Across twenty-five pages of the order book, Mr Mikellatos' requirements for, 'Decorative, Electrical, Upholstery, Hot Water & Drainage Works', are illustrated with samples of wallpapers and furnishing fabrics for the entire house.⁸³⁵ For the Lounge, a frieze of burnished bronze leather effect paper was to be installed above an oak dado. The paper chosen for the Drawing Room was a pale grey floral paper, described as 'Own private design'. An embossed dark grey paper was chosen for the Billiard Room, while an Anaglypta style paper was selected for the Library. The walls of the Main

⁸³⁴ COB 16, p.5.1

⁸³⁵ COB 23(i), pp.69-93.

Staircase were to be papered with a flock in Cowtan's 'Egleston' design, with the instruction that it should be painted and scumbled.⁸³⁶ The walls of the staircase to the first floor, running from the Vestibule to the Billiard Room, were to have a sepia decoration, 'La Touraine', while the Day Nursery was to have painted walls bordered with a 'Peter Pan' frieze and 'Cinderella' dado. Alongside the orders for his own apartments were Mr Mikellatos' requirements for his servants' quarters. The walls of the Servants' Hall were to be lined with a paper with the appearance of textured felt, patterned with flowers outlined in pink and green [fig.211]. A green foliage patterned paper was chosen for the Housekeeper's Sitting Room [fig.212] and one decorated with a dark green succulent plant for the Governess' Room [fig.213]. At this residence, the more colourful and decorative papers were specified for the servants' rooms while the principal rooms of the house such as the Lounge, the Library and the Staircases were decorated with textured papers in sombre colours, in keeping with fashionable interiors of the day.



Fig. 211: Cowtan order for A. Mikellatos Esq, 'Bevendean', Oxshott, Surrey, for Servants' Hall, 1921.⁸³⁷

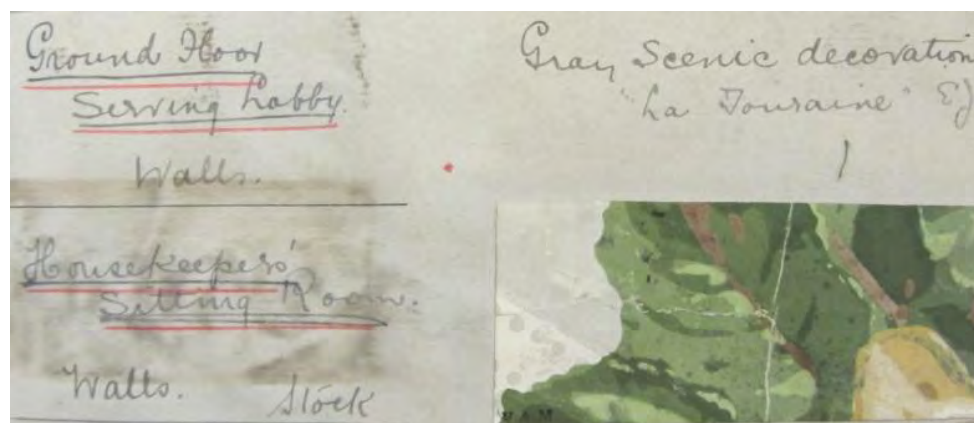


Fig. 212: Cowtan order for A. Mikellatos Esq, 'Bevendean', Oxshott, Surrey, for 'Gray Scenic Decoration "La Touraine"' for the Serving Lobby and wallpaper for the Housekeeper's Sitting Room, 1921.⁸³⁸

⁸³⁶ 'Scumbling' is the application of a coat of opaque paint, which is then rubbed or brushed off in part, to reveal the ground coat beneath. See Arthur Seymour Jenkins, *The Modern Painter and Decorator*, rev. edn (London: Caxton Publishing, 1951), II, p.129.

⁸³⁷ COB 23(i), p.84.



Fig. 213: Cowtan order for A. Mikellatos Esq, 'Bevendean', Oxshott, Surrey, for the Governess' Room, 1921.⁸³⁹

Sir Alfred Tritton also ordered numerous wallpapers for his home at Upper Gatton Park, Surrey in 1922. Just above a border decorated with lilac blooms for Sir Alfred's Bedroom is a similarly exuberant floral paper for the Odd Man's Room.⁸⁴⁰ Sir Alfred evidently wished to provide his servant with paper as decorative as his own [fig.214]. Five different papers were chosen for the Gardener's Cottage; a fine dark blue stripe, a green floral paper edged with gold [fig.215]; a turquoise self striped paper; an embossed pearlised paper and a dark red broad striped paper for the Hallway of the cottage. Other servants' rooms to be decorated at Gatton Park included the Governess's Room to be papered with a delicately drawn floral paper in grey and pale brown [fig.215] and the Chauffeur's Quarters, where the Boy's Room, somewhat incongruously, was to be decorated with an intricate gold design on a white ground.

The survey of the Cowtan orders for servants' rooms reveals the characteristics of the wallpapers chosen and also gives insight into how the property owners often decorated their servants' rooms to a high standard and in a manner that complemented the decoration of their own accommodation. In the final chapter of this thesis, chapter 10, the extensive range of patterns, materials and wallpaper makers that appear in the Cowtan Order books will be examined.

⁸³⁸ COB 23(i), p.82.

⁸³⁹ COB 23(i), p.84.

⁸⁴⁰ 'Odd Man' was the title given to a servant who carried out mundane tasks such as fetching logs and coal and pumping water. See Pamela A. Sambrook, *The Country House Servant* (Sutton, Stroud, 2002).



Fig. 214: Sir Alfred A Tritton Bart, Upper Gatton Park, Merstham, Surrey, for wallpapers for the Odd Man's Room and Own Bedroom, 1922.⁸⁴¹



Fig. 215: Cowtan order for Sir Alfred Tritton, Upper Gatton Park, Merstham, Surrey, for wallpapers for the Gardener's Cottage and the Governess' Room, 1922.⁸⁴²

⁸⁴¹ COB 23i, p.120.

⁸⁴² Ibid., p.120.

Chapter 10

PATTERNS, MATERIALS AND MAKERS: DESIGN AND TECHNICAL INNOVATIONS ILLUSTRATED BY THE COWTAN ORDERS

The Cowtan Order Books present a detailed account of changing and enduring tastes in interior wall decoration. As the V&A catalogue notes, the order books record what people were actually buying at the time and demonstrate that many customers resisted changing fashions, ignoring the advice of design critics and decorating experts, ‘in favour of the ever-popular bright florals, stripes, “satins” and trellis patterns.’⁸⁴³ A Cowtan sales ledger entry for the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth House in 1910 illustrates the continuing popularity of trellis and rose patterns [fig.216]. However, the order books also demonstrate that there was considerable demand among Cowtan’s customers for innovative designs and materials as they became available to purchase. While some patterns did remain popular throughout, others went out of fashion and then revived, while others were overtaken in popularity by new creations in wallcoverings and virtually disappeared altogether.

In 1964 the wallpaper historian Eric Entwisle challenged the prevailing mid-twentieth century view that Victorian wallpapers had been, ‘either very dull and sombre or impossibly garish, matching the heavy, ornate furnishings then in favour.’⁸⁴⁴ This view was often illustrated, he observed, by dining rooms in crimson, blue or green flock paper; bedrooms in papers with enormous rose patterns; halls and bathrooms in, ‘sticky looking “washable” papers’ imitating marble; ceilings, ‘sagging under the weight of Anaglypta decorations of pseudo-classic design [and] walls arbitrarily divided into three sections – dado, filling, frieze – each of which was hung with wallpapers of the worst possible design’.⁸⁴⁵ Entwisle argued that not all Victorian wallpapers should be condemned for poor design and manufacture.

⁸⁴³ <www.vam.ac.uk/collections> [accessed 1 October 2013]

⁸⁴⁴ Entwisle. *Wallpapers of the Victorian Era*, p.8.

⁸⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.8.

He commended the Cowtan Order Books as evidence for the elegance, artistic merit and technological sophistication of many wallpapers produced in that period. Entwisle's admiration for Cowtan sets the context for this chapter, which considers what can be learned from the Cowtan wallpaper samples and how an archive so rich in material content may be quantified, described and analysed.

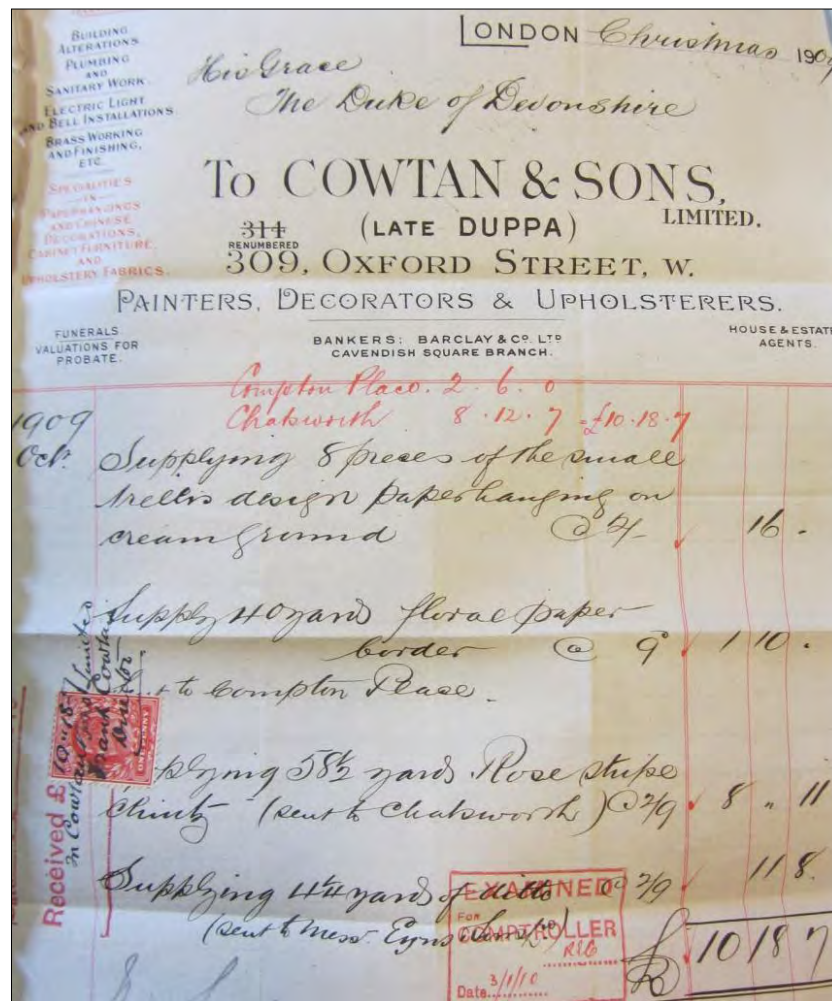


Fig. 216: Cowtan invoice to the Duke of Devonshire, 1909, for supplying '8 pieces of trellis design wallhanging on cream ground, 40 yards of floral paper border and 58½ yards of rose stripe chintz'. Source: Chatsworth Estate Archives.

Identification and Description of Patterns

My survey of the twenty-four Cowtan Order Books has involved photographing and transcribing a sample of approximately 3,000, more than ten percent, of all the orders. For this part of the research, specifically concerned with close examination of patterns and materials, four Cowtan Order Books were selected, covering similar lengths of time and spaced evenly across the whole archive; Book 1 dating from 1824 to 1830; Book 6 dating from 1850 to 1854; Book 16 dating from 1883 to 1889; and Book 23(i) dating from 1919 to 1925, from which to gather information to establish a categorisation of the wallpaper samples they held. Together, these four books contain 4,747 orders, from which written and photographic records were made of generic types of patterns and materials, and of named designs, designers and makers. Appendix VII shows the detailed results of the survey of these four order books, supplemented with selected information from a further three, Book 8 (1857-1859), Book 11 (1864-1866) and Book 22(i) where they contain additional names of manufacturers of interest.

Across the four order books, seventy-two different generic wallpaper and wallcovering patterns and materials were recorded under headings such as, 'Chinese', 'architectural', 'small florals', 'sanitary papers', 'marble effect' and 'wood grain effect'. Sixty-eight named patterns, designers or makers were separately recorded across the four books, such as 'Jeffrey & Co', 'Lincrusta Adams Pattern', 'Panorama of London, D&K (Desfosse & Karth)', 'The Foxbury Tynecastle Tapestry' and 'The Manard Design, Warner & Sons'. The objective was to establish when categories of patterns and materials or specific designs or makers appeared in the Cowtan Order Books and over what period of time they occurred. There are hundreds of different shades and tints of colours in the samples. This part of the research exercise did not attempt to count and describe them as that task would be fulfilled more readily and reliably with the use of digital image recognition technology. A sample of four out of twenty-four order books could not provide definitive evidence for the contents of the whole archive, but it was possible to determine the duration of the availability and popularity of the wallpapers identified in the four order books. These are described in the following sections.

Generic Patterns and Materials

Among the seventy-two generic wallpaper patterns and materials identified in Books 1, 6, 16 and 23(i), none appears in all four books, but many appear in two or three of the books. Nine types of pattern or material occur in both Book 1 and Book 23(i) and therefore evidently continued in production and popularity between at least 1830, the last year in Book 1, and 1919, the first year in book 23(i). These were two or three colour floral patterns of various designs; architectural stone or guilloche pattern borders; twisted rope pattern borders; Chinese papers; geometric patterns of various design; moiré silk effect patterns; wide striped printed papers; and sanitary varnished papers.

Twisted Rope Borders

For example, the twisted rope pattern border was ordered in shades of green and gold by the Bank of England in 1824⁸⁴⁶ and in shades of blue by Mrs Farrer at Clapham Common in 1825.⁸⁴⁷ The same twisted rope pattern in green and white was ordered by F.R. Sanderson Esq for his dressing room at Campden Hill, London in 1922;⁸⁴⁸ a similar rope pattern, but with the addition of a twisted beaded decoration, was ordered by Horace Hutchinson of Lennox Gardens, London in 1919.⁸⁴⁹ Rope pattern borders were also favoured by J.P. Morgan and Viscount Harcourt, as shown in chapter 8.

Architectural Papers

Architectural stone pattern borders in grey, stone and white were ordered by Major Hollway at the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa in 1825⁸⁵⁰ and Priaulx Esq at Montville, Guernsey in 1828 [fig.217]. Architectural borders in more elaborate designs were ordered by Sir Ian Malcolm at 87 Onslow Square, London in 1921 [fig.218], Mrs Dawson Warren at 129 Cromwell Road, London in 1922,⁸⁵¹ M.C. Pilkington at Hutton Hall, Shenfield, Essex in 1923⁸⁵² and Lord Fane at Gleneagle, Kenmuir, Scotland in 1924 [fig.219].

⁸⁴⁶ COB 1, p.36.

⁸⁴⁷ COB 1, p.218.

⁸⁴⁸ COB 23(i), p.105.

⁸⁴⁹ COB 23(i), p.7.

⁸⁵⁰ COB 1, p.109.

⁸⁵¹ COB 23(i), p.147.

⁸⁵² COB 23(i), p.213.



Fig. 217: Cowtan Order for Priaulx Esq, Montville, Guernsey, for architectural pattern border, 1828.⁸⁵³



Fig. 218: Cowtan Order for Sir Ian Malcolm, 87 Onslow Square, London, for architectural pattern border, 1921.⁸⁵⁴

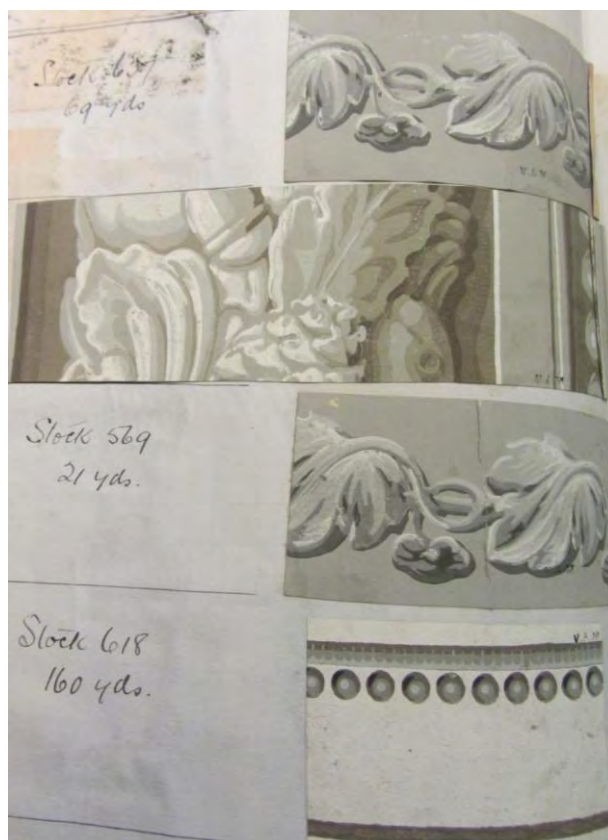


Fig. 219: Cowtan Order for Lord Fane, Gleneagle, Kenmuir, Scotland, for four architectural pattern borders, 1924.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵³ COB 1, p.624.

⁸⁵⁴ COB 23(i), p.66.

⁸⁵⁵ COB 23(i), p.267.

Wallpaper types that appear in Book 1 and Book 16, in the periods 1824 to 1830 and 1883 to 1889, are flock papers in one colour; flock papers in two or more colours; hessian or woven fabric patterns; large floral patterns; floral patterns edged in gold; metallic embossed papers such as copper, gold and silver; and plain ground colour papers with no pattern. For example, a bold red and green floral flock paper was ordered by Lewis Corkran at Long Ditton, Surrey in 1824,⁸⁵⁶ and various flocked papers were ordered by Colonel A. Butler of the 42nd B.N.I. (Bengal Native Infantry) at Shillong, Assam in 1885.⁸⁵⁷ Floral and foliate designs finely outlined in gold are examples of a pattern type that appear in Book 1, Book 6 and Book 16. A paper patterned with delicate flowers in a lilac colour edged in gold on a pale green ground was ordered by the Duke of Bedford at Belgrave Square in 1830,⁸⁵⁸ a green foliate pattern edged with gold was supplied to Colonel Harris at Plymouth in 1851⁸⁵⁹ and a floral design in shades of pink, also edged with gold, on a blue ground, was ordered by Mrs Mitchell-Innes of Thurloe Square, London in 1887.⁸⁶⁰

Only a few wallpaper pattern types appear in Book 1 but not in Books 6, 16 and 23i. They include a flat leather effect pattern; florals overprinted on a striped pattern; a medieval quatrefoil pattern; and a tartan pattern. Several tartan 'satin' papers, one overprinted with a floral design, were ordered by Mr Heathcoat at Tiverton, Devon in 1825.⁸⁶¹ A mediaeval architectural quatrefoil pattern paper in ochre and dark red was popular in the early Cowtan order books, particularly for libraries and studies. Evidence of the popularity of the medieval quatrefoil pattern among the clergy is also presented in chapter 9.

Fleur-de-Lys Patterns

Papers that only appear in Book 6 onwards, from 1850 to 1854, were fine striped patterns; the fleur-de-lys pattern; flock overlaid on a woodgrain effect paper; star patterns; and imitation wood grain panelling paper. For example, in April 1852 the Duke of Devonshire ordered a pale green paper with white stars for Chatsworth House, Derbyshire.⁸⁶² In the following month the Countess of Pembroke ordered a green flock paper decorated with gold embossed fleur-de-lys motifs for her home at Grafton Place, London [fig.220]. Neither of these pattern

⁸⁵⁶ COB 1, p.13.

⁸⁵⁷ COB 23(i), p.243.

⁸⁵⁸ COB 1, p.815.

⁸⁵⁹ COB 6, p.172.

⁸⁶⁰ COB 16, p.403.

⁸⁶¹ COB 1, p.102.

⁸⁶² COB 6, p.353.

types appeared in Book 1 or in Books 16 or 23(i). However, a red fleur-de-lys on a bronze embossed wallpaper was ordered by J.F.W. Deacon Esq at Mabledon, Tonbridge, Kent in 1904 [fig.221] which serves to underline the point that a sample of four order books can only be an indicative survey rather than a definitive account of the occurrence of particular patterns and textures in all twenty-four order books.



Fig. 220: Cowtan Order for the Countess of Pembroke, 1 Grafton Place, London, for green flock paper with gold embossed fleur-de-lys pattern, 1852.⁸⁶³

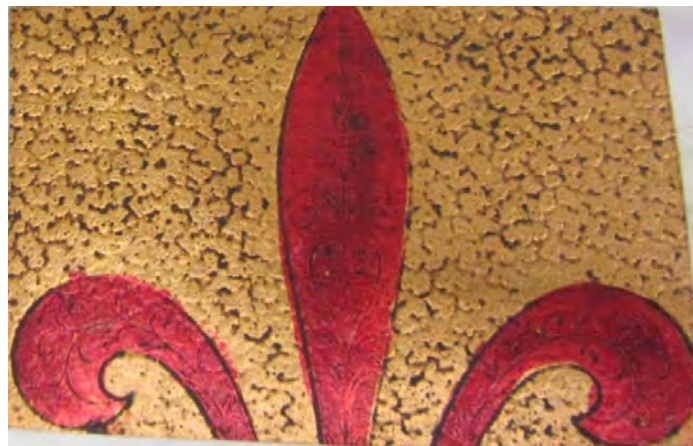


Fig. 221: Cowtan Order for J.F.W. Deacon Esq, Mabledon, Tonbridge, Kent, bronze embossed wallpaper with fleur-de-lys pattern, 1904.⁸⁶⁴

The quantity and range of patterns and materials displayed in the Cowtan books increased from the 1860s onwards, following the expansion in wallpaper production, made possible by new machine printing techniques and inspired by advances in design quality and craftsmanship that occurred after the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the International Exhibition of 1862. Patterns that appear from Book 16 onwards, from 1883 to 1889, were those in which birds were the main motif; zigzag pattern borders; Chinese papers decorated with pagodas or human figures; embossed or burnished leather effect papers; flocked heavily moulded papers; florals overprinted on zigzag patterns; foliage overprinted on fine stripes;

⁸⁶³ COB 6, p.359.

⁸⁶⁴ COB 19(i), p.522.

heavily moulded papers in plain colours; sparkling mica effect surfaces; varnished mosaic patterns; nursery rhyme papers; papers designed for the tri-partite divided wall with frieze, filling and dado; tapestry weave pattern papers; and velvets for wallcoverings.

Colourful Bird Patterns

By the mid nineteenth century bird patterns had gained favour as wallpaper decoration. For example, two papers with brightly coloured birds were ordered from Cowtan by the decorating firm Battam & Craske in Oxford Street in 1859 [fig.222] and Lord Alfred Churchill ordered a paper decorated with a blue and gold plumed bird in 1870 [fig.223]. In 1884 Frederick Lewis Esq ordered a paper patterned with a bird of blue, red, gold and green for his bedroom and dressing room at 51 Holland Park, London.⁸⁶⁵ Birds continued in popularity into the twentieth century; Lady Gordon Lennox ordered a paper decorated with blue and pink birds for her servants' hall at Queen Street in Mayfair in 1920.⁸⁶⁶



Fig. 222: Cowtan order for Battam & Craske, Oxford Street, for two bird pattern papers, 1859.⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶⁵ COB 16, p.59.

⁸⁶⁶ COB 23(i), p.21.

⁸⁶⁷ COB 9, p.568.



Fig. 223: Cowtan Order for Lord Alfred Churchill, for a bird pattern paper, 1870.⁸⁶⁸

Nursery Papers

Wallpapers decorated with characters and words from nursery rhymes gained favour from the 1870s. A nursery rhyme paper designed by the artist Walter Crane and decorated with the words, 'Thys is ye house thatte Jack built', was ordered by Captain Hargreaves at Remenham House, Wraysbury, Buckinghamshire in 1885 [fig.224]. The Earl of Molton ordered the same paper from Cowtan for his children's nursery at Loddington, Leicestershire in 1888.⁸⁶⁹



Fig. 224: Cowtan Order for Captain Hargreaves, Remenham House, Wraysbury, Buckinghamshire, for Walter Crane wallpaper, 'Thys is ye house thatte Jack built', 1885.⁸⁷⁰

The rhyme 'Sing a Song of Sixpence' was illustrated with some of the four-and-twenty-blackbirds emerging from a pie on a wallpaper ordered by Lord Trevor for the bedrooms of his children at Brynkinalt Hall, Chirk in 1887 [fig.225]. A sanitary nursery paper illustrated with images of children was ordered by Dr Pasteur for his premises at 4 Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London in 1900.⁸⁷¹

⁸⁶⁸ COB 12, p.434.

⁸⁶⁹ COB 16, p.525.

⁸⁷⁰ COB 23(i), p.170.

⁸⁷¹ COB 19(i), p.121.



Fig. 225: Cowtan Order for Lord Trevor, Brynkinalt Hall, Chirk ‘Sing a Song of Sixpence’ nursery wallpaper, 1887.⁸⁷²

Chinese Figures

Patterns that only appear in the last book of the four Cowtan Order Books sampled, Book 23(i), dating from 1919 to 1925, are basket weave textured patterns; geometric diamond pattern borders; ‘egg and dart’ pattern borders; chevron pattern borders; a giant beetle pattern; rubble stone pattern; and varnished tile pattern papers. Chinese male and female figures do not appear in Books 1, 6 or 16, but they do occur in other Cowtan Order Books by the early twentieth century.⁸⁷³ For example, a Chinese child is illustrated on a wallpaper ordered by the Hon. Hugh Fitzwilliam in 1909 [fig.226] and a Chinese female figure appears on a wallpaper ordered by Mrs Bryce at Moyns Park, Halstead, Essex in 1910 [fig.227]. Chinese figures continue to occur in Cowtan orders up to the 1930s. In 1919 J.P. Morgan Junior ordered a paper featuring a Chinese woman in traditional dress for his home at Matinecock Point, Long Island, USA;⁸⁷⁴ and a paper patterned with a Chinese male figure on a red ground was ordered by Mrs Watney Waguelin for the lining of a cupboard at 8 Cornwall Terrace, London in 1934.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷² COB 16, p.422.

⁸⁷³ However, an order (COB 3, p.355) for Earl de Grey at Wrest Park in 1839 specifies ‘Chinese paper with figures on dark grey’.

⁸⁷⁴ COB 23(i), p.14.

⁸⁷⁵ COB 24(ii), p.407.



Fig. 226: Cowtan Order for the Hon. Hugh Fitzwilliam for wallpaper depicting a Chinese child, 1909.⁸⁷⁶



Fig. 227: Cowtan order for Mrs Bryce, Moyns Park, Halstead, Essex, for wallpaper depicting a female Chinese figure, 1910.⁸⁷⁷

Named Patterns, Designers and Makers

The majority of the sixty-eight named wallpaper patterns, designers and makers identified in the sample of four Cowtan Order Books appear only in the latter two, Book 16, dating from 1883 to 1889 and Book 23(i), from 1919 to 1925 [appendix VII]. The lack of named manufacturers in the two earlier books may reflect the fact that until 1862, when Cowtan & Sons replaced the paperstaining factory to the rear of their Oxford Street showroom, they printed many of the wallpapers they sold. This would explain their greater reliance on other manufacturers from 1862 onwards. However, even in their earliest years of operation, Cowtan & Sons imported Chinese and French papers.

⁸⁷⁶ COB 21(i), p.50.

⁸⁷⁷ COB 21(i), p.258.

Dufour, Zuber, Desfosse and Balin Wallpapers

Evidence that the firm was importing French papers before the order books began in 1824 is supplied in a business letter from Duppa & Slodden, one of the company's earlier incarnations, dated 26 August 1814 and addressed to Monsieur Mullier in Boulogne, France. The letter states that the company, 'will take one or two sets of Captain Cooke's *[sic]* Voyages, if delivered to them after they have paid the duty at the London Custom House.'⁸⁷⁸ The wallpaper referred to by Duppa & Slodden is a set of scenic wallpapers first produced by the French firm Dufour in 1806, entitled *Sauvages de la Mer du Pacifique*, which illustrates the travels of the British explorer Captain Cook and which became immensely popular after its display at the Exposition des Produits de l'Industrie in 1806.⁸⁷⁹

There is further evidence for Cowtan & Sons' early commercial exchange with France found on the inside front cover of the very first Cowtan Order Book, which reads, '14 May 1824, M. Golin, 76 St Martin's, Jean Zuber & Co., Rixheim', and appears to record a transaction, correspondence or meeting. The Zuber & Cie wallpaper manufacturing company was established in 1797 and still operates from its original headquarters in Rixheim, France.⁸⁸⁰ Cowtan & Sons was evidently among the firm's earliest customers and admired their productions. Mawer Cowtan later drew an unfavourable comparison between the inferior quality of English wallpapers and their French counterparts in his 1844 lecture to the Decorative Arts Society, lamenting that, 'we are obliged to confess the superiority of the French in this branch of art', despite the fact that, 'patterns exist, manufactured in England sixty years ago [ie in 1784], equal, if not superior, to those executed in France at the present time'.⁸⁸¹

Cowtan & Sons worked with Desfosse and Karth of Paris in the early 1860s, when they began panelling drawing rooms with silk or paperhangings and painted pilasters. As Mawer Cowtan later observed, if a customer could not afford painted pilasters, they used paperhangings printed with imitation pilasters, 'notably those of Messrs. Desfosse and Karth who were very enterprising in this direction at that period'. He added,

⁸⁷⁸ MS Duppa & Slodden, MSL/1946/2069-2074, 86.AA.9-14.

⁸⁷⁹ Odile Nouvel-Kammerer, 'Wide Horizons: French Scenic papers', in *The Papered Wall*, p.102.

⁸⁸⁰ I am grateful to Isabelle Dubois-Brinkmann, Curator, Musée Papier Peints, Rixheim, for providing me with the history of Zuber during my visit to the Museum in 2015.

⁸⁸¹ Mawer Cowtan, p.19.

Mr Desfosse also produced Pompeian and Etruscan decorations in the same way, and we had considerable success with them in many houses of note. The most interesting one was the dining room at 12 Grosvenor Square.⁸⁸² The room lent itself to a Pompeian treatment, and we used Mr Desfosse's then lately executed Pompeian decoration for the purpose, and I can remember Lord Lytton's letter to my father, expressing his delight with the room when he returned from abroad, where he had been whilst we were doing the room, and he said in his letter that it was "really Pompeian."⁸⁸³

The firm also supplied many wallcoverings by the French firm, Paul Balin, as Mawer Cowtan recalled in his review of the company's work from the 1860s onwards, 'All through these years we used the beautiful leather papers of Balin', but he added that he could not recall ever supplying real leather, which comment underlines the quality and popularity of the leather effect papers, not only those by Balin but by British firms such as Tynecastle.⁸⁸⁴

William Woollams

In most cases, the names of manufacturers in the Cowtan Order Books are simply given initials, no doubt to save time for the clerk who recorded the orders. The initials 'W.W.', indicating a paper made by the William Woollams wallpaper firm, appear in two orders in Book 6, one for a green foliate pattern edged with gold for Colonel Harris at Plymouth in 1851⁸⁸⁵ and another for a dark aubergine colour flock on a royal blue ground paper for C. Wykeham Martin Esq at Leeds Castle, Kent in 1852 [fig.228].



Fig. 228: Cowtan order for C. Wykeham Martin Esq, Leeds Castle, Kent, for flock wallpaper by 'W.W.', 1852.⁸⁸⁶

⁸⁸² From 1866, 12 Grosvenor Square was the home of the writer, Lord Bulwer-Lytton. John Pierpont Morgan inherited 13 Grosvenor Square in 1890 on the death his father and bought the adjacent 12 Grosvenor Square in 1903.

⁸⁸³ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.5.

⁸⁸⁴ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.21.

⁸⁸⁵ COB 6, p.172.

⁸⁸⁶ COB 6, p.467.

The number of named patterns and makers increased considerably in Book 16, dating from 1883 to 1889, in which twenty-five names appear. These include two orders in 1884, the 'Fitzwilliam' floral paper in two shades of apricot, for E.J. Jekyll Esq at Higham Bury, Ampthill, Bedfordshire⁸⁸⁷ and the Jeffrey & Co., 'Sunflower frieze @ 1/6 and paper belonging to the same @ 7 ½ d', for R.E. Brandt Esq, at Palace Road, Roupell Park, Streatham.⁸⁸⁸ Another Woollams paper, the 'Rivoli' damask, a private design, was ordered by Earl Cowper for Wrest Park, Bedfordshire in 1884 [fig.229] and a broad green and white stripe paper by Woollams was ordered by W. Hulton Esq for Calle della Feste, SS Giovanni Paolo, Venice in 1888.⁸⁸⁹

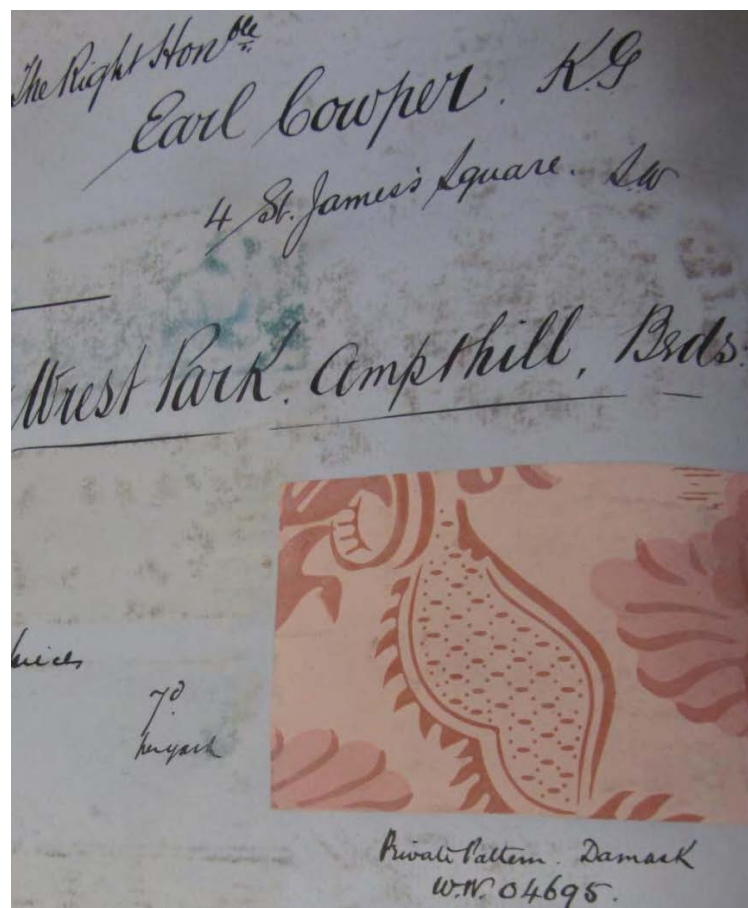


Fig. 229: Cowtan Order for Earl Cowper, Wrest Park, Bedfordshire, for 'Private Pattern Damask' by 'W.W.', 1884.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸⁷ COB 16, p.56.

⁸⁸⁸ COB 16, p.63.

⁸⁸⁹ COB 16, p.579.

⁸⁹⁰ COB 16, p.73.

Sanderson

Forty named patterns and makers appear in Book 23(i), from 1919 to 1925, including several by 'A.S. & Co.' or 'S. & Co.', both likely to refer to the wallpaper maker Arthur Sanderson & Co., whose individual patterns are often identified in the Cowtan books by a five digit reference number. Examples of orders for Sanderson papers include twenty pieces of a pale pink and cream wide striped paper for the Hon. R. Leslie Melville at Hinton Woodhouse in Bournemouth, Hampshire in 1888;⁸⁹¹ a basket weave pattern paper for W. G. Rawlinson Esq of 26 Cadogan Court, London SW in 1921⁸⁹² and several papers for Baron Schroder in the same year at 35 Park Street, London W1, including a fine mosaic pattern paper, 'Sanderson 70555', for the lavatory and bathroom [fig.230].



Fig. 230: Cowtan Order for Baron Schroder, 35 Park Street, London, for a fine mosaic pattern paper, 'Sanderson 70555', for the lavatory and bathroom, 1921.⁸⁹³

Jeffrey

Wallpapers made by Jeffrey & Co., who printed William Morris wallpapers for many years under the direction of Metford Warner, continued to be in demand from Cowtan's customers in the early twentieth century. In 1921 twelve pieces of a red floral patterned paper with green leaves on a dark pink ground, to be 'sent to Paris', were ordered by Miss Sands at 15 Vale Avenue, Chelsea.⁸⁹⁴ Also in 1921, three pieces of a pink and pale grey floral paper by Jeffrey were ordered by Miss Palmer at 3 Swan Walk, Chelsea.⁸⁹⁵ Wallpapers made by Jeffrey & Co. were popular with Cowtan's American customers, as an order sent to their New York office in 1924 illustrates, with samples of several of Jeffrey's floral designs [fig.231].

⁸⁹¹ COB 16, p.520.

⁸⁹² COB 23(i), p.45.

⁸⁹³ COB 23(i), p.62.

⁸⁹⁴ COB 23(i), p.50.

⁸⁹⁵ COB 23(i), p.60.



Fig. 231: Cowtan Order sent to their New York Office, 37 West 57th Street, for wallpapers by Jeffrey & Co., 1924.⁸⁹⁶

Cole & Hill

The name 'C. & Hill' appears in many later Cowtan Order Books and refers to the wallpaper firm Cole & Hill, which was founded in 1910, became Cole & Son in 1932 and acquired Cowtan & Sons' historic printing blocks in 1934. A Cole & Hill paper ordered in Book 23(i) is a modernist design in bold colours on an embossed ground, ordered by Messrs Chilcott & Anstee Ltd at 2 Union Court, London in 1923 [fig.232].

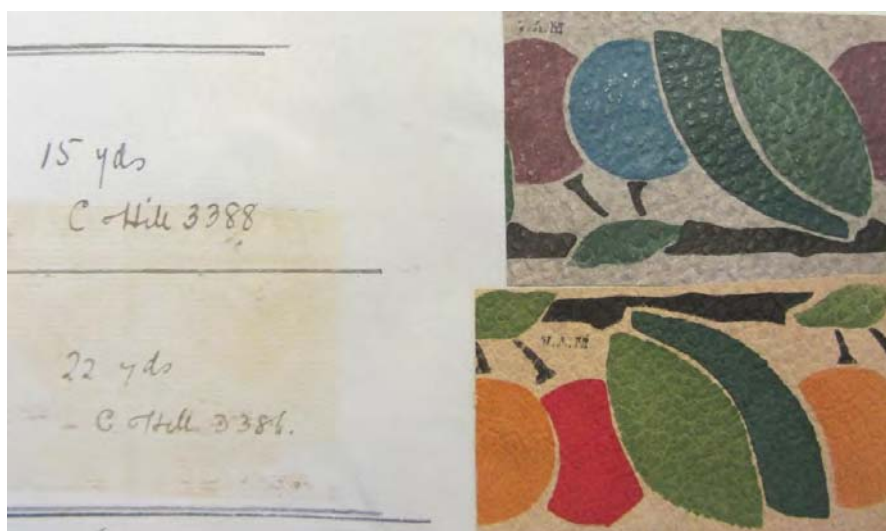


Fig. 232: Cowtan Order for Messrs Chilcott & Anstee Ltd, 2 Union Court, London, for two borders by 'C. & Hill', 1923.⁸⁹⁷

⁸⁹⁶ COB 23(i), p.314.

⁸⁹⁷ COB 23(i), p.160.

Scott, Cuthbertson & Co.

The initials 'S.C. & Co.' denoting Scott, Cuthbertson & Co., with whom Cowtan & Sons enjoyed a long trading relationship, also appear on many Cowtan orders. In 1885 a varnished, wood grain effect paper by Scott Cuthbertson was ordered by the Duchess of Marlborough for the staircase and landings at 28 Grosvenor Street, London [fig.233]. In 1887 three papers in dark red bold patterns for a tri-partite wall decoration of border, filling and frieze were ordered from the same firm by Mrs Winkworth for the billiard room at Holly Lodge, Campden Hill, London.⁸⁹⁸



Fig. 233: Cowtan Order for the Duchess of Marlborough, 28 Grosvenor Street, London, for wallpaper by 'S.C. & Co.'⁸⁹⁹

Cowtan's Endorsement of Tynecastle

Several brand-named wallcoverings are specified in Books 16 and Book 23(i), such as Anaglypta, Lincrusta, Muraline and Tynecastle, illustrating the expanding choice of materials in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tynecastle, in particular, was taken up and promoted by Cowtan & Sons, as Mawer Cowtan explained in his lecture to the British Institute of Decorators, saying, 'I have always felt that for certain treatment of walls Tynecastle canvas....lends itself to the scumbling treatment and makes the best background for pictures', citing Cowtan's use of Tynecastle in the Princes' Chamber at the House of Lords and St Stephen's Hall. Indeed, Tynecastle is frequently specified in Cowtan orders for His Majesty's Office of Works. Mawer Cowtan Cowtan was, 'so taken with this form of

⁸⁹⁸ COB 16, p.477.

⁸⁹⁹ COB 16, p.180.

decoration that Mr. Scott Morton came to me and asked me to encourage his production, which I certainly did.’⁹⁰⁰

Tynecastle embossed wall coverings were developed and manufactured under patent from 1874 by William Scott Morton (1840-1903) at the firm’s Albert Works, Murieston Road, Tynecastle in Edinburgh. They were designed to imitate antique embossed leather and were produced by pressing canvas into carved wooden moulds. At the turn of the twentieth century the firm offered an extensive range of wallcoverings and ceiling decorations, many of which were illustrated in their catalogues published in 1900, 1902 and 1903.⁹⁰¹ By then they had opened show and stock rooms at 14 Rathbone Place, Oxford St, London. and a showroom at 39 Deansgate Arcade, Manchester. Their catalogues gave prominence to Tynecastle Canvas, which possessed, ‘distinctive merits’, including, ‘the artistic surface, unequalled colouring qualities, and the soundness and good-working nature of its fabric’; Tynecastle Vellum, ‘an inexpensive material of a texture resembling vellum, in which most of the “Tynecastle” designs are produced’; Tynecastle Texture, ‘a new fabric specially suitable for picture backgrounds’; Tynecastle Leathers, which were a ‘revival of old styles of wall decoration in exclusive designs’; and Tynecastle Mosaics which were canvas panels mounted in frames, ‘into which are inserted lustrous tesserae of a thin, new, vitreous mosaic, producing the luminous effect of colour so well known in fine old mosaic work.’⁹⁰²

Tynecastle supplied wood mouldings in a variety of cross-sections illustrated in their catalogues and, ‘circles of cross-banded wood, squares, and octagons, to any section of moulding’, adding that, ‘all the parts required in wood for a ceiling design can be provided mitred ready for fixing, if a careful plan be given’. Their range also included ‘Ship Decoration’ such as saloon ceilings, and ‘Special Patterns’ which could be, ‘prepared in about one month....for special purposes, such as public buildings with heraldic devices, etc’.⁹⁰³ In 1903 Tynecastle promoted its private designs for several companies, including John Line & Sons (one design); Watts & Co (one design); and Rottmann & Co. (sixteen designs). The only designs that were individually named in that catalogue were three for Cowtan & Sons: The Fitzwilliam, The Foxbury and The Duppa.⁹⁰⁴ Tynecastle wallcoverings

⁹⁰⁰ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.4.

⁹⁰¹ Tynecastle Catalogue 1903.

⁹⁰² Ibid.

⁹⁰³ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁴ Tynecastle Catalogue 1903.

provided an appearance, surface texture and durability that overtook the popularity of the old fashioned marbled and flock papers, as Mawer Cowtan Cowtan explained,

When the re-action came against marbling, my father brought in the painting of white flockpaper, and we used it very extensively for some years until the Tynecastle period arrived, both for ceilings and walls of halls, staircases and dining rooms.⁹⁰⁵

In his opinion, Tynecastle was a better replica of ornamental plaster than painted white flock and he, ‘used it for some time in old houses’, although he preferred painted white flock, ‘in the Great Room facing south at Holland House, Kensington, and at Merton Hall, Thetford, it being better for these places than the Tynecastle.’⁹⁰⁶

Orders for various designs and forms of Tynecastle wallcoverings appear in Book 16, as well as in later order books. An order for Henry Tiarks at Foxbury, Chislehurst, Kent in 1886 specified, ‘the Tynecastle tapestry in ivory tint (the design made specially and afterwards named “The Foxbury”)’ for his drawing room. The sample is missing from the order but on the following page, a sample of another Tynecastle wallcovering is shown for the Billiard Room [fig.234]. ‘The Foxbury’ was one of the designs produced exclusively for Cowtan & Sons by Tynecastle. It is also an example of Cowtan’s practice of naming designs after the customers, or their properties, who commissioned them, as mentioned by Mawer Cowtan Cowtan at the Institute of British Decorators, where he also reflected on the work undertaken for Henry Tiarks, saying they had ‘used painted flocks, leather papers etc, also Tynecastle in ivory, our private pattern’. He added, ‘The house was only prepared temporarily in distemper nine or ten years before, as it was a new one’.⁹⁰⁷

Foxbury was completed in 1877 in the gothic style, under the direction of the architect David Brandon, a former vice president of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Built by Hill, Higgs & Hill it cost £22,000 and was described by *The Builder* magazine in July 1881,

The mansion is erected upon an estate of sixty acres, on rising ground to the right of the Kemnal-road, Chislehurst....The principal rooms have been decorated with enriched paneled ceilings and characteristic high mantelpieces of oak, cedar, and walnut, inlaid with other woods, and the walls of the dining-room are lined with wood framing of pitch-pine. On the first floor, which is 11ft. high, there are eleven bedrooms and dressing rooms, with three bathrooms, the servants’ bedrooms being arranged over the offices....The stables and kitchen-garden, with gardener’s cottage and extensive greenhouses, are arranged on ground to the north-east of the mansion.⁹⁰⁸

⁹⁰⁵ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.4.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibid., p.5.

⁹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.30.

⁹⁰⁸ <www.kemnal-road.org.uk/Pages/Houses/Foxbury.html> [accessed 17 July 2016].



Fig. 234: Cowtan Order for Henry Tiarks Esq, Foxbury, Chislehurst, Kent, for embossed wallcovering for the Billiard Room, 1886.⁹⁰⁹

The Builder's account of the house, and a ground floor plan of similar date [fig.235] is interesting to compare with the work undertaken by Cowtan & Sons some five years later in 1886 on the ground floor of the main building, when the entrance hall, principal staircase, corridors, drawing room, dining room, business room, library, billiard room and housekeeper's room, were all decorated in a wide range of wallpapers and wallcoverings, including Tynecastle. On the first floor of the 'Wing Building' (not shown on the floor plan), Cowtan decorated the 'Balham bedroom', possibly so named because Mr and Mrs Tiarks had moved from Balham to Chislehurst; and the day nursery, night nursery, play room, school room, housekeeper's bedroom, butler's bedroom, work room and men servants' bedrooms.⁹¹⁰

Henry Tiarks (1832-1911) was a partner at Schroder's Bank, whose founder was another important customer of Cowtan & Sons. Baron Henry Schroder employed the firm to work at his home, The Dell at Englefield Green, Surrey in 1887, one year after they carried out work at Foxbury; it is possible that he had visited and admired Cowtan's craftsmanship at the home of his business partner, Henry Tiarks. Cowtan's relationship with Baron Schroder proved to be a fruitful one, 'In August [1890] we had another large order from Baron Schroder: the family staircase at The Dell was done in Tynecastle, in ivory, very beautiful effect'; they also supplied many other papers to the Baron at this time.⁹¹¹

⁹⁰⁹ COB 16, p.282.

⁹¹⁰ COB 16, pp.297-298.

⁹¹¹ MS Mawer Cowtan Cowtan, 47.W.Box 3 [S], p.33.

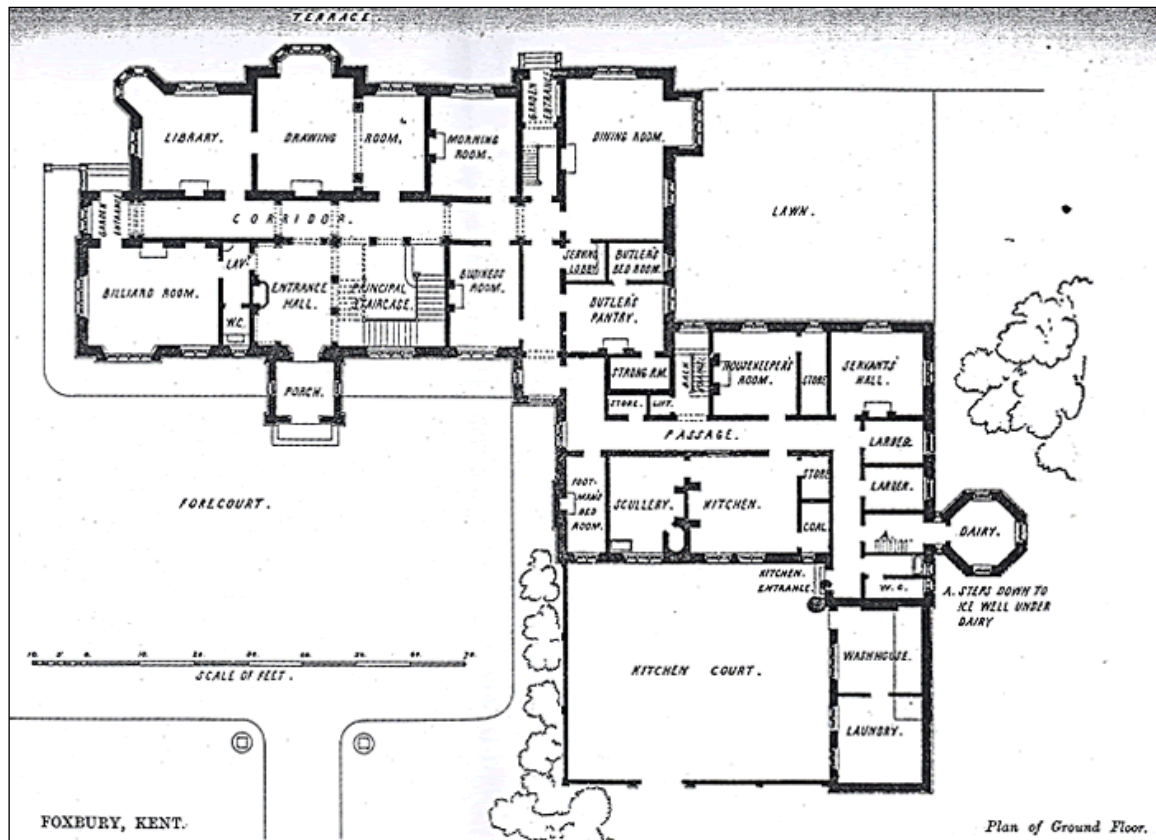


Fig. 235: Floorplan of Foxbury, Chislehurst, Kent, c.1881⁹¹²

It has long been acknowledged that the Cowtan Order Books supply valuable evidence of many patterns and types of wallpapers and wallcoverings that remained popular throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The aim of closely examining four temporally widely dispersed order books was to try to quantify and describe the diversity of patterns, materials and makers represented within each book and to draw comparisons between them. The research exercise recorded the introduction, the frequency of occurrence and the disappearance of particular patterns and materials; its findings largely concur with previous commentaries on the scope of the order books and substantiate established interpretations. The exercise also served to demonstrate Cowtan & Sons' versatility in being willing to embrace and promote new products at the same time as continuing to satisfy many of their customers' demands for tried and tested patterns and materials, even when that required them to go against the grain of contemporary 'fashionable' taste.

⁹¹² <www.kemnal-road.org.uk/Pages/Houses/Foxbury.html> [accessed 17 July 2016]

During study of the Cowtan Order Books it has become clear that the variety and quantity of patterns, colours and materials would be significantly easier to identify, categorise, search and navigate if the whole archive were to be digitised. Although it has not been within the scope of this doctoral research to investigate the potential of digital approaches to recording and displaying the Cowtan Order Books, the feasibility of a research project employing digital image recognition technology to make the Cowtan Order Books more readily accessible to researchers, curators and the public might be worthy of consideration in future.

CONCLUSION

The Cowtan Order Books have long been a valuable source for a small band of historians of wallpaper and interiors. However, prior to this doctoral research, no systematic recording or interpretation of the contents of all twenty-four order books had been undertaken. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the orders presented here, including the types of customer, their properties, and the materials used by Cowtan & Sons, has sought to demonstrate the new perspectives that they can offer, not only into the history of individual buildings, but also into the way in which different groups in society occupied and decorated their houses. By examining the decorating records for categories of customer such as Royalty, Politicians, the Clergy and Servants, it is possible to identify similarities, and divergences, in taste over more than a century. Furthermore, the quantities of wallpapers ordered allow reconsideration of phases of decoration, while the names of rooms in the orders can provide new insight into remodelled or demolished buildings and lost floorplans.

Although Cowtan & Sons has disappeared from general public view and their reputation has not survived to the extent of some other manufacturers and designers, the order books provide a vivid record of changing patterns, materials and tastes, and of how, when and where wallpapers were hung. This thesis has sought to add to the depth and breadth of knowledge of the contents of the Cowtan Order Books and to demonstrate their potential as a resource that, particularly if made accessible online, would provide significant new information, not only to historians but to the wider public. The evidence presented here is not exhaustive but the examples provided have sought to show the type of analysis that could be employed by future researchers.

While this thesis has concentrated on describing the origin and scope of the archive, it has also demonstrated the challenges of analysing it. The sheer number of entries inevitably makes any examination across the 114-year span of the order books a complex and time-consuming process. The case for some form of digitisation to enable better analysis seems clear, although how such an exercise would be funded and what it might entail are beyond the scope of this research. Hopefully, however, the evidence presented here has demonstrated that the Cowtan papers are a rich source that is waiting to be fully exploited and that will prove invaluable for generations of architectural, cultural and social historians to come.

Appendices

- I Cowtan Order Books: Data for each Book**
- II Countries that received Cowtan Orders**
- III Map of Cowtan Orders sent around the World**
- IV Graph showing Cowtan Orders by Quantity**
- V Titles of Cowtan's Customers**
- VI Servants' Rooms named in seven Cowtan Order Books**
- VII Designers, Wallpaper Printers, Patterns and Materials named
in seven Cowtan Order Books**
- VIII Cowtan & Sons' Chronology**
- IX List of Illustrations**
- X Bibliography**

Appendix I: Cowtan Order Books: Data for each Book

Cowtan Order Book Number	Dates	No. of Years	No. of Pages	No. of Orders
1	21 June 1824 - 10 June 1830	6	849	1,938
2	10 June 1830 - 29 Aug 1836	5	762	1,811
3	30 Aug 1836 - 28 May 1841	5	731	1,471
4	28 May 1841 - 12 Sept 1845	4	712	1,402
5	17 Sept 1845 - 15 March 1850	5	700	1,402
6	20 March 1850 – 11 Feb 1854	4	667	1,330
7	11 Feb 1854 – 7 April 1857	3	501	991
8	9 April 1857 – 15 Aug 1859	2	463	956
9	13 Aug 1859 – 9 June 1861	2	568	758
10	26 June 1861 – 26 July 1864	3	674	1,278
11	1st March 1864 – 24 June 1866	2	698	1,170
12	Jan 1867 – 12 July 1871	4	634	1,015
13	July 1871 – March 1875	4	593	927
14	1st March 1875 – Dec 1878	3	589	952
15	Jan 1879 – 20 Aug 1883	4	598	902
16	14 Aug 1883 – March 1889	6	610	941
17(i)	March 1889 – Feb 1892	5	323	523
17(ii)	Feb 1892 – Dec 1894	2	287	523
18(i)	Jan 1895 – Oct 1897	2	347	616
18(ii)	Oct 1897 – March 1900	3	262	440
19(i)	March 1899 – Jan 1902	3	271	448
19(ii)	Jan 1902 – Sept 1904	2	365	549
20(i)	Sept 1904 – Jan 1907	3	331	546
20(ii)	Jan 1907 – Feb 1909	2	293	496
21(i)	1908 – 1911	3	299	514
21(ii)	1910 – June 1913	3	320	607
22(i)	July 1913 – Dec 1915	2	303	567
22(ii)	Dec 1915 – July 1919	4	310	501
23(i)	1919 – 1925	6	322	538
23(ii)	Feb 1925 – Oct 1928	3	297	552
24(i)	Sept 1928 – Dec 1932	4	327	647
24(ii)	Jan 1933 – March 1938	5	224	497
			Total Pages 15,230	Total Orders 27,808

Appendix II: Countries that received Cowtan Orders

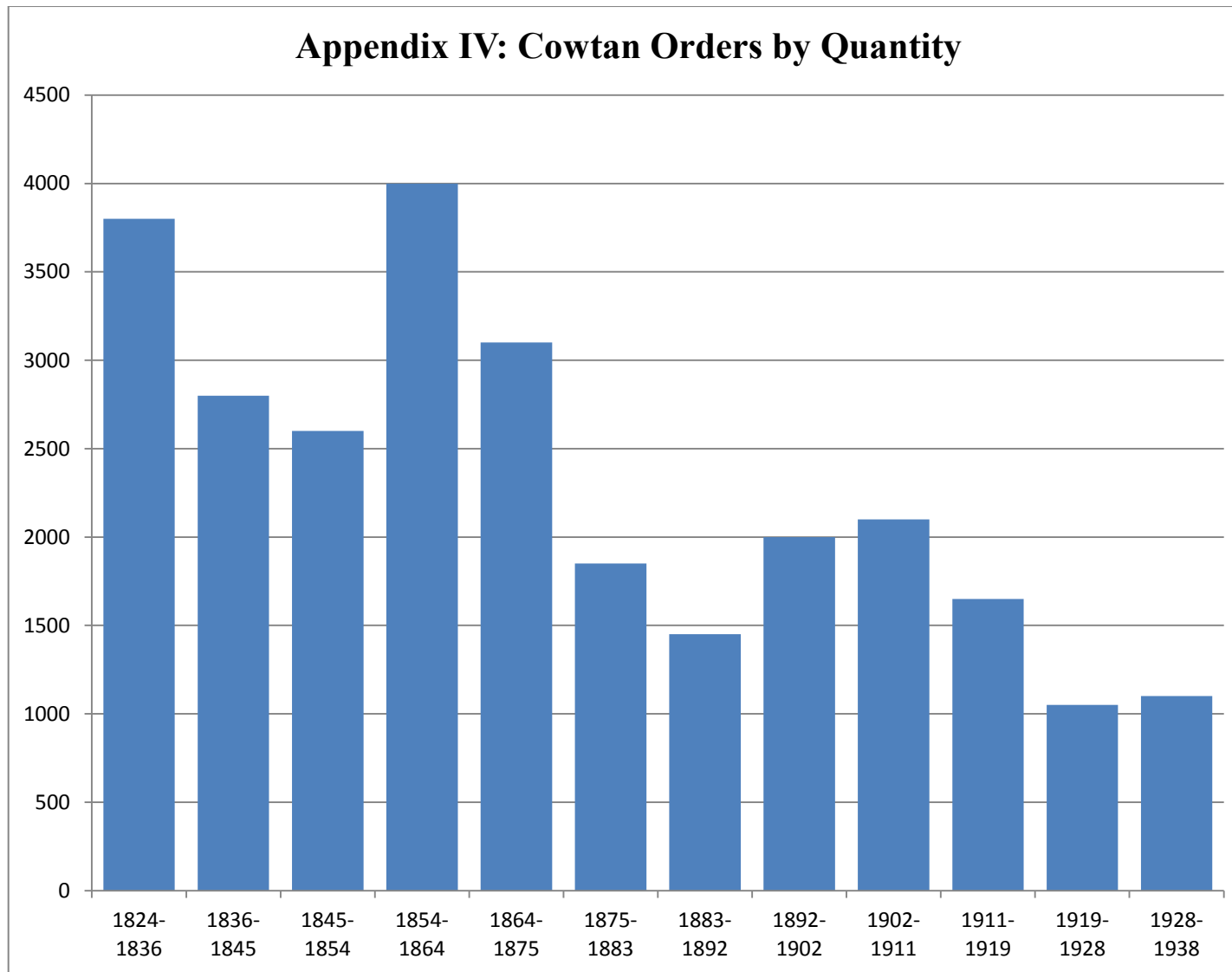
Country	Region or City	No. of Orders 1824-1850	No. of Orders 1851-1880	No. of Orders 1881-1910	No. of Orders 1911-1938	Total Orders 1824-1938
Argentina	Buenos Aires			2		2
Australia	Adelaide		4	5		9
Australia	Freemantle		1	1	1	3
Australia	Melbourne				2	2
Australia	Tasmania	1				1
Australia	Terang			1		1
Australia						16
Austria		1				1
Barbados		1	2			3
Belgium	Brussels		1			1
Brazil	Rio de Janeiro			1		1
Bulgaria	Sofia				1	1
Canada	Montreal		1	1	1	3
Canada	Halifax Nova Scotia	2	1			3
Canada	Ottawa				1	1
Canada	Quebec			1		1
Canada	Vancouver				1	1
Canada			1			10
Ceylon	Ceylon		1			1
China	Hong Kong				1	1
China					1	2
Czechoslovakia	Bahon				1	1
Denmark	Christiana				2	2
Denmark	Ejby				2	2
Denmark	Hammel				1	1
Denmark						5
Egypt	Cairo				1	1
Falkland Isles			1			1
France	Cannes		1			1
France	Dinard			1		1
France	Fontainebleau			1		1
France	Nice		3			3
France	Paris		1	1	9	11
France	Rixheim			1		1
France						18
Germany	Berlin	1	1	16	2	20
Germany	Bonn			1		1
Germany	Cologne		3	5	1	9
Germany	Darmstadt		8	4		12
Germany	Dresden			2		2
Germany	Geversdorf				1	1
Germany	Manheim		1			1
Germany	Ostfriesland			2		2
Germany	Ostpreussen				1	1
Germany	Potsdam			1		1
Germany	Weimar			1		1
Germany						51

Country	Region or City	No. of Orders 1824-1850	No. of Orders 1851-1880	No. of Orders 1881-1910	No. of Orders 1911-1938	Total Orders 1824-1938
Gibraltar					1	1
Guernsey		1				1
Greece	Athens				1	1
Greece	Corfu				1	1
Greece						2
Holland	The Hague				1	1
Hungary	Budapest			8		8
Hungary	Horpacs, Nograd			1		1
Hungary	Keszthely			1		1
Hungary						10
India	Aligarh			1		1
India	Assam			1		1
India	Calcutta		1	1		2
India	Delhi				2	2
India	Madras		2			2
India	Bangalore		1			1
India	Karachi		1			1
India	Muree		1			1
India	Simla			4		4
India	Shillong			1		1
India			3	3		22
Italy	Alassio				1	1
Italy	Cernobbio		1			1
Italy	Fiesole (Villa Medici)				1	1
Italy	Florence				2	2
Italy	Lake Como				1	1
Italy	Parma				1	1
Italy	San Remo			1		1
Italy	Turin		1			1
Italy	Venice			1		1
Italy				1		10
Jamaica		2				2
Malta		1	1	1	1	4
Mauritius			1			1
Netherlands	The Hague				1	1
New Zealand	Auckland		1			1
New Zealand	Nelson		1			1
New Zealand		1				3
Peru		1	1			2
Portugal	Oporto				1	1
Portugal		2				3
Prussia	Frankenstein		1			1
Prussia		1	1			3
Rhodesia					1	1
Rumania	Bucharest				1	1
Russia	St Petersburg			1		1
Sierra Leone		1	1			2

Country	Region or City	No. of Orders 1824-1850	No. of Orders 1851-1880	No. of Orders 1881-1910	No. of Orders 1911-1938	Total Orders 1824-1938
South Africa	Bloemfontein			1		1
South Africa	Cape of Good Hope	2				2
South Africa	East London				1	1
South Africa	Johannesburg			1		1
South Africa	Pretoria			1		1
South Africa						6
Sweden	Stockholm		1		1	2
Switzerland	Basel			1		1
Switzerland	Schaffhausen			1		1
Switzerland						2
Turkey	Constantinople			2		2
USA	Ardsey on Hudson				1	1
USA	Boston				3	3
USA	Centre Island NY				1	1
USA	Chicago				1	1
USA	Connecticut			1	2	3
USA	Detroit				1	1
USA	Georgia		1			1
USA	Glen Eyrie, Colorado			1		1
USA	Indianapolis				1	1
USA	Lenox, Massachusetts				2	2
USA	Long Beach, California			2		2
USA	Long Island NY				4	4
USA	Missouri		1			1
USA	New Jersey				1	1
USA	New Orleans				1	1
USA	New York			41	152	193
USA	Philadelphia				1	1
USA	Rhode Island			2	3	5
USA	Sterlington				1	1
USA	Washington				2	2
USA						226
West Indies			1			1
All Countries = 41		All Orders 1824-1850 = 18	All Orders 1851-1880 = 54	All Orders 1881-1910 = 127	All Orders 1911-1938 = 226	All Orders 1824-1938 = 425

Appendix III: Map of Cowtan Orders sent around the World





Appendix V: Titles of Cowtan's Customers

Title (alphabetical order)	Number in Cowtan Books
Admiral	54
Ambassador	2
Archbishop	7
Archdeacon	27
Baron	66
Baroness	20
Bart	285
Bishop	48
Canon	20
Captain	321
Colonel	341
Count	11
Countess	160
Dame	3
Dean	19
Doctor	174
Dowager	123
Duchess	41
Duke	144
Earl	461
Emperor	1
Empress	3
Esq`	5,873
General	91
Honourable	813
Justice	6
King	1
Lady	773
Lord	614
Lord Chief Justice	4
Madame	22
Major	166
Marchioness	30
Marquis/Marquess	123
Miss/Misses	1,030
MP	148
Mr	448
Mrs	2,817
Prince	10
Princess	9
Queen	2
Rector	2
Reverend	1,316
Right Honourable	517
Senator	1
Sir	723
Vice Chancellor	2
Viscount	123
Viscountess	25

Title	Number in Cowtan Books (descending)
Esq	5,873
Mrs	2,817
Reverend	1,316
Miss/Misses	1,030
Honourable	813
Lady	773
Sir	723
Lord	614
Rt Honourable	517
Earl	461
Mr	448
Colonel	341
Captain	321
Bart	285
Doctor	174
Major	166
Countess	160
MP	148
Duke	144
Dowager	123
Marquis/Marquess	123
Viscount	123
General	91
Baron	66
Admiral	54
Bishop	48
Duchess	41
Marchioness	30
Archdeacon	27
Viscountess	25
Madame	22
Baroness	20
Canon	20
Dean	18
Count	11
Prince	10
Princess	9
Archbishop	7
Justice	6
Lord Chief Justice	4
Dame	3
Empress	3
Ambassador	2
Queen	2
Rector	2
Vice Chancellor	2
Emperor	1
King	1
Senator	1

Appendix VI: Servants' Rooms named in seven Cowtan Order Books

ROOM NAMES	Book 1 1824 to 1830	Book 3 1836 to 1841	Book 10 1861 to 1864	Book 16 1883 to 1889	Book 19ii 1902 to 1904	Book 21ii 1910 to 1913	Book 23i 1919 to 1925
Butler's Bedroom			X	X	X	X	
Butler's Pantry	X	X					
Butler's Room		X		X		X	
Chauffeur's Cottage (Boys' Room)							X
Chauffeur's Cottage (Kitchen)							X
Chauffeur's Room							X
Coachman's Cottage (Sitting Room, Bedroom)				X			
Coachman's Room	X						
Cook's Bedroom				X		X	
Cook's Room			X				
Cook's Sitting Room					X		
Footman's Attic			X				
Footman's Bedroom					X		
Footman's Room		X	X			X	
Garage (Scullery, Kitchen)						X	
Gardener's Cottage							X
Governess's Bedroom				X			
Governess's Chamber		X					
Governess's Room			X		X		X
Governess's Sleeping Room	X						
Head Housemaid's Bedroom							X
Head Housemaid's Room						X	X
Housekeeper's Bedroom				X			
Housekeeper's Lobbies			X				
Housekeeper's Room	X	X					X
Housekeeper's Sitting Room							X
Housemaids' Bedroom				X			
Housemaids' Closet					X		
Housemaids' Closet & W.C.				X			
Housemaids' Room				X			
Kitchen Maid's Room				X			
Lady Maid's Room next to Governess		X					
Ladies Maids' Rooms	X						
Mademoiselle's Room						X	
Maid's Room	X						X
Maid's Room - Attic		X					
Maidservants' Room							X

ROOM NAMES	Book 1 1824 to 1830	Book 3 1836 to 1841	Book 10 1861 to 1864	Book 16 1883 to 1889	Book 19ii 1902 to 1904	Book 21ii 1910 to 1913	Book 23i 1919 to 1925
Manservants' Bedroom				X			
Men Servants' Rooms			X				
Housemaids' Room		X					
Needlewoman's Room				X			
Nurse's Bedroom					X		
Nurse's Dining Room					X		
Odd Man's Room							X
Parlourmaids' Bedroom							X
Parlourmaids' Room							X
Porter's Bedroom Lobby						X	
School Room & Governess's Room	X						
Secretary's Office					X		X
Servants' Bathroom					X		
Servants' Bedrooms							X
Servants' Hall						X	X
Servants' Hall & Pantry				X			
Servants' Hall & Passage		X					
Servants' Quarters							X
Servants' Rooms	X			X			X
Servants' Room (Girls' Room)				X			
Servants' W.C.							X
Stables				X			
Stables (Living Room & Bedroom)					X		
Stables (Room in/over)		X	X	X			
Steward's Room		X		X			
Strangers' Servants' Room	X						
Tutor's Room		X					
Under Housemaids' Room						X	
Valet's Room						X	

Appendix VII: Designers, Printers, Patterns and Materials named in seven Cowtan Order Books

Named designers, wallpaper makers, designs, materials	1824-1830 Book 1	1850-1854 Book 6	1857- 1859 Book 8	1864- 1866 Book 11	1883- 1889 Book 16	1913- 1915 Book 22i	1919- 1925 Book 23i
'8 panels green ground. Japanese (crossed through). Chinese.							X
'A.S. & Co. 10653 [Arthur Sanderson & Co] [basket weave sanitary paper]							X
'A.S. & S. [Arthur Sanderson & Sons] 12295 [floral paper]							X
Bryde, S.M.							X
'C & Hill 3388 & 3386' [modern stylised fruits on embossed ground]							X
'Carmichael. 4273 and 4265' [light florals]							X
'Carmichael. 5817. [narrow gold and white stripes]							X
'Carmichael 3255' [grey floral over fine horizontal line]							X
'Chinese magpie design paper' [no sample]							X
'Chinese paperhangings'	X						
'Clouded Paper Ceiling'	X						
Cotterell Brothers			X				
Crace						X	
'D.M. Co.' [Copper burnished embossed paper]							X
'D.M. & Co.' [two shades of green stripe]							X
'D.M. & Co.' [architectural paper in greys]							X
Desfosse & Karth							
'Dutch metal'	X						
Duppa	X				X		
'Fitzwilliam' design					X		
'Flock upon Flock, "National Gallery Design". S.C. & Co.'					X		
'French gold moulding'	X						
'French stock 364'					X		
'Guilloche border'	X						
'H.S. & Co. 05622 [plain textured paper]							X
'H.S. & Co. [H. Scott & Co.] 794800K' [rose pattern on satin ground'	X						X

Named designers, wallpaper makers, designs, materials	1824-1830 Book 1	1850-1854 Book 6	1857- 1859 Book 8	1864- 1866 Book 11	1883- 1889 Book 16	1913- 1915 Book 22i	1919- 1925 Book 23i
'H.S. & Co. 08222 [pretty floral paper]							X
'H. Scott 07202' [bold floral paper]							X
Heywood & Co.			X				
Hinchcliffe & Co.			X				
Holmes and Aubert & Co.	X						
'Italian pattern specially designed with the Colebrooke arms in a shield' [heavily moulded copper burnished paper]					X		
'J.D. fine pattern 6951A' [James Duppa?]					X		
'J.W. & Co.'					X		
'Japanese No.248' [leather effect embossed]					X		
'Japanese papers: trees, flowers, birds etc'					X		
'Jeffrey' [heavily embossed varnished paper in cream and buff]							X
'Jeffrey 95229' [bright red flower on pink crackle effect ground]							X
'Jeffrey & Co' [green leaves and trellis on white ground paper]							X
'Jeffrey & Co. 13395 and 10481'							X
Jones, Owen							
'Lincrusta "Adams" pattern'					X		
'Lincrusta'					X		
Manooch & Co.							
'Muraline' [bold foliate 2 shades of green for Canon Street Hotel]							X
'Muralene, D.M. Co.'							X
'Own Private Design, The Primrose' [for HM King, Buckingham Palace]							X
'Panorama of London. D & K.' [Desfosse & Karth]							X
'Paraquet pattern, butterflies etc'					X		
"Peter Pan" frieze, "Cinderella" dado. [for a night nursery]							X

Named designers, wallpaper makers, designs, materials	1824-1830 Book 1	1850-1854 Book 6	1857- 1859 Book 8	1864- 1866 Book 11	1883- 1889 Book 16	1913- 1915 Book 22i	1919- 1925 Book 23i
‘Private pattern “Primrose” [bold foliate 2 shades of red for Canon Street Hotel]							X
Pugin Design						X	
Purdie Bonnar & Carfrae				X			
‘R.S. & C. 5219’ [heavy floral fabric]							X
‘S&C 68759’ [Scott, Cuthbertson & Co]					X		
‘S&C 65801’ [Scott, Cuthbertson & Co]							
‘S.M.B. 1038’ [red basket weave pattern]							X
‘S.M. Bryde’ [heavy white anaglypta type paper]							X
‘Sanderson 40099 and 30729’							X
‘S. & Sons No.14957’ [heavily embossed dark brown paper]							X
‘Sanderson 40099 and 30729’							X
‘S. & Sons No.14957’ [heavily embossed dark brown paper]							X
‘Sanderson 10167’ [fabric: blue stylised flowers on buff ground]							X
‘Sanderson 10163’ [pink rose on green ground, horizontal ribs]							X
‘Sanderson 70555’ [fine mosaic floral pattern]							X
‘Sanderson & Sons. No.30459’ [sanitary mosaic tile, overprinted with rose pattern]							X
‘Sanderson 30222’							X
‘Sattin’ paper	X						
‘Sepia decoration “La Touraine” E.J.’	X						
‘Small diaper Tynecastle tapestry’					X		
‘Stamp’d Elephant paper for painting’	X						
‘Sunflower frieze’ Jeffrey & Co. A.671					X		
‘Tapestry papers after Teiness? The Feast and the Wedding’					X		
‘The Ewart’ design					X		
“The Foxbury” Tynecastle Tapestry’					X		

Named designers, wallpaper makers, designs, materials	1824-1830 Book 1	1850-1854 Book 6	1857- 1859 Book 8	1864- 1866 Book 11	1883- 1889 Book 16	1913- 1915 Book 22i	1919- 1925 Book 23i
'The Clouded Ceiling with Birds'					X		
'The Colebrooke frieze'					X		
'The "Crosby" design. Warner & Sons'							X
'The Cupid Leather Paper'					X		
'"The Egleston". Painted & scumbled'. [Dark green Flock]							X
'The Fitzhardinge. D.M.J.A.'							X
'The Japanese tile decoration with trees in shades of blue. Stock 256. Border 1218 and plain tile 240'					X		
'The "Manard" design. Warner & Sons.'							X
'The Raphael decoration on grey'					X		
'The Wedderburn Damask'					X		
Trollope, George & Son	X						
'Tynecastle'					X		
'Tynecastle tapestry No.4034'					X		
'Tynecastle Tapestry No.1028'					X		
'W.W.' [William Woollams]		X			X		
'W.W. & Co.89653' [floral on stripe]							X
'W.W. "Noto" 2598'							X
Warner & Sons							X
Zuber et Cie	X						

Appendix VIII: Cowtan & Sons' Chronology

18th Century

- 1791 James Duppa opens paperhanging warehouse at 39 Bow Lane, Cheapside, EC1.
1794 J. Duppa's business moves to 42 Lombard Street, London EC1.
1797 J. Duppa's business moves to 34 Old Broad Street, London EC1.

19th Century

- 1808 J. Duppa opens paperhanging warehouse at 314 Oxford Street, London W1 (renumbered 309 Oxford Street in 1882).
1812 Company name changes to Duppa & Slodden.
1813 Mawer Cowtan born.
1823 Company name changes to Duppa, Slodden & Collins.
1833 Mawer Cowtan joins the firm Duppa, Slodden & Collins as an assistant.
1838 Company name changes to Duppa & Collins.
1839 On 4th and 18th February, John Gregory Crace delivers two lectures on the 'History of Paperhangings' to the Royal Institute of British Architects.
1844 On 9th October, Mawer Cowtan delivers a lecture on 'Paperhangings' to the Decorative Art Society.
1848 Duppa & Collins moves all its operations to 314 Oxford Street.
1847 Mawer Cowtan is listed as Honorary Treasurer of The Decorative Art Society, in abstracts of the Society's proceedings for January 1844 – January 1846.
1862 Duppa & Collins becomes Purdie, Cowtan & Co. (late Duppa & Co.)
This is the first time that the company name includes 'Cowtan'.
1862 Purdie, Cowtan & Co. awarded a bronze medal in Class XXX (Furniture and Upholstery) at the International Exhibition.
1862 At the company's premises at 314 Oxford Street, Sir Digby Wyatt completes a saloon or showroom 'in the Italian style.'
1863 Mawer Cowtan's eldest son Mawer Cowtan Cowtan begins work at the firm.
1868 The firm becomes Cowtan & Manooch (late Duppa & Co.).
1872 Mawer Cowtan's sons Mawer Cowtan Cowtan and Frank Cowtan join the partnership and it is renamed Cowtan & Sons.
1875 John Perry Ltd wallpaper company founded.
1880 Mawer Cowtan dies.
1887 Arthur Barnard Cowtan, youngest son of Mawer Cowtan, joins his brothers in the partnership and establishes the company's sales in New York.
1899 Crace & Son closes and their printing block are acquired by Cowtan & Sons.

20th Century

- c1900 Cowtan appoints American agent, W.F. Bordier. Cowtan & Sons open an office at 37 West 57th Street, New York.
1910 Cole & Hill founded by Albert P. Cole and Lionel Hill trades at 39 Berners Street, London W1.
1911 T.A. Tout, assistant to Arthur Barnard Cowtan, takes up position of Manager of Cowtan & Sons, New York.
1912 Frank Cowtan dies.

Cowtan & Sons' Chronology

- 1912 Arthur Leslie Cowtan son of Arthur Barnard Cowtan, becomes a Director of Cowtan & Sons, the only member of his generation of the family to do so.
- 1914 On 6th March, Mawer Cowtan Cowtan delivers a lecture, 'Reminiscences and Changes in Taste in House Decoration' to the Incorporated Institute of British Decorators.
- 1920 Mawer Cowtan Cowtan dies.
- 1920-21 Cowtan & Sons Incorporated is established and moves to 542 Fifth Avenue, New York.
- 1921 Cowtan & Sons moves to 18 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1, with workshops in Markham Street, SW3.
- 1930-31 New York company name changes to Cowtan & Tout Inc.
- 1932 Cole & Son established after Hill retires and Frank Cole joins his father Albert in the firm which is registered at 18 Mortimer Street, London W1 in 1938.
- 1933 Cowtan & Sons awarded Royal Warrant as 'Decorators and Upholsterers' by HM Queen Mary and an OBE is awarded to Arthur Barnard Cowtan.
- 1934 Arthur Barnard Cowtan dies.
- 1934 Old English Wallpapers Ltd is formed by Albert Cole, Frank Cole and Arthur Leslie Cowtan to purchase Cowtan's collection of Crace company printing blocks.
- 1938 Arthur Leslie Cowtan sells his interest in Cowtan & Sons to Trollope & Sons (London) Ltd, West Halkin Street, London SW1. He stays on as Managing Director for a few years.
- 1941 Cole & Son acquires the John Perry Ltd wallpaper company.
- 1946 Arthur Leslie Cowtan donates the Cowtan Order Books to the Victoria and Albert Museum in memory of his father, Arthur Barnard Cowtan.
- 1947 The Crace and Cowtan printing blocks are transferred to the John Perry factory (owned by Cole & Son) in Offord Road, Islington, London N1.
- 1978 Cowtan & Tout sold to Eldo Netto in New York.
- 1992 Eldo Netto sold to Colefax & Fowler Group plc (London); in 1998 it is at 979 Third Avenue, New York, under Chief Executive Stephen Vignolo.
- 1995 Cole & Son bought by Walker Greenbank plc.

Twenty-First Century

- 2000 Cole & Son bought by its Executive Directors: Tim Burles, Anthony Evans and Karen Beauchamp.
- 2008 Cole & Son bought by a Swedish firm.
- 2017 Cole & Son operate from Lifford House, 199 Eade Road, London N4 1DN, where their collection of c.3,500 original Pugin, Crace and Cowtan wallpaper printing blocks is stored, some of which remain in use.

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