



Paxton House Recognition Report 2025



THE CHIPPENDALE AND TROTTER FURNITURE COLLECTION
OF PAXTON HOUSE IS



RECOGNISED AS A
NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT COLLECTION

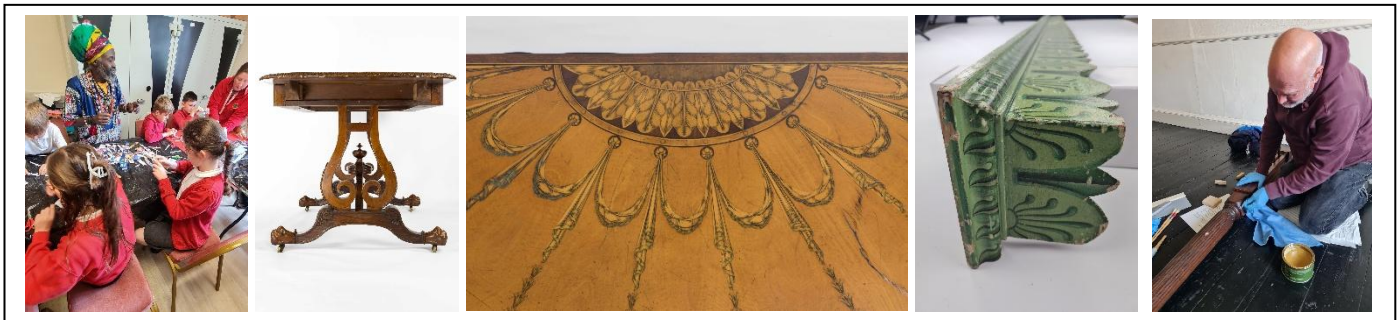
AWARDED BY MUSEUMS GALLERIES SCOTLAND
ON BEHALF OF THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT

www.paxtonhouse.co.uk

About The Paxton Trust

The Paxton Trust is an independent Scottish charitable trust, (SC002177), set up in 1988 to preserve, protect and enhance, for public benefit, Paxton House, its collection and the estate in which it stands. The trust's chief goals are to facilitate and encourage access to and appreciation and study of the collection, to advance the cause of education and social welfare and actively to develop and promote such activities as will best serve these ends.

Paxton House opened to the public in 1992 and is open from April to October annually, seven days a week with additional access to pre-booked groups during the 'closed' season. We attract over 20,000 visitors a year from across the country, North America, and Europe. We also have a substantial group of loyal local supporters and volunteers who support a wide range of activities including the gardens, the community garden, archives transcribing and cataloguing, and collections care.



Introduction and eligibility

[Paxton House is] '...one of the most meaningful and enlightening study houses in the British Isles. The opportunities to gain insights into taste, fashion, craft, and decoration are almost limitless... Paxton House offers the rare opportunity to examine his [Thomas Chippendale's] work and that of his son in one section of the residence, then move into another section to see the striking pieces supplied by William Trotter. It is a tour de force that calls for special recognition'. (Professor Brock Jobe, Winterthur Museum, 2017).



(L): African dancing in Paxton's Picture Gallery furnished with Trotter furniture (photo by Rod Penn).

(R): Replica costume of named enslaved individuals and their enslaver in Drawing Room which is filled with Chippendale the Younger's furniture and pier glasses.

The Paxton Trust was delighted to be awarded Recognition for our world class Chippendale and Trotter furniture collections in 2017. Recognition has brought great benefits to our collection in terms of engagement, conservation, display, status, interpretation, funding, and support.

Our outstanding collections are primarily those accumulated by the Home family who constructed and lived in Paxton House throughout successive generations over 230 years. They include Scottish, British, and European furniture, fine and decorative art from Europe and Asia, an exceptional costume collection (c.400 items encompassing the period 1600-c.1960s), textiles, family history archives, and around 3,200 historic books (dating from the early 16th century-early 20th century). They are housed in the grade A listed, Adam designed house, which is one of the finest neo-Palladian villas in the UK, with a stunning extension designed by Robert Reid. Paxton House is at the heart of 80 acres of woodland gardens bordered at the bottom by the River Tweed and England.

In the eight years since Recognition was awarded, The Paxton Trust has seen both exciting and challenging changes. Our position as one of the world's finest collections of Chippendale and Trotter furniture has been greatly enhanced with now 160 Chippendale items and 32 Trotter items forming part of the Recognised collections compared to 117 Chippendale items and 30 Trotter items listed in 2017. This increase of over 70% is the result of detailed research into the collection and new acquisitions.

The Paxton Trust holds the third largest collection of Chippendale furniture in the world!



In 2018 we celebrated the tercentenary of Thomas Chippendale the Elder's birth with multiple loans from private and public collections in our 'Paxton Style' exhibition. We successfully renewed our full Accreditation in 2019 and completed the annual returns form for Recognised collections in 2025.

The pandemic was extremely challenging for Paxton House which had to close its doors for 18 months due to government-imposed restrictions. During that time our staff raised vital funds to meet the basic running and re-opening costs. It has taken some time for the impact of the pandemic to ease and for visitors to return to museums across the UK.

Over the past three years changes have been made to enhance the income generation possibilities at Paxton to provide a firm footing for the Trust to enable it to continue. These changes have included doubling the provision to 30 touring camping spaces and improving the setting with new landscaping and shower and toilet provision in the walled garden caravan park; refurbishment and provision of new holiday accommodation within the west wing at Paxton House; and five new glamping pods which are just about to launch this summer set on the banks of River Tweed. Extensive fundraising has enabled these improvements, and they would not have been possible without the support of funders including the

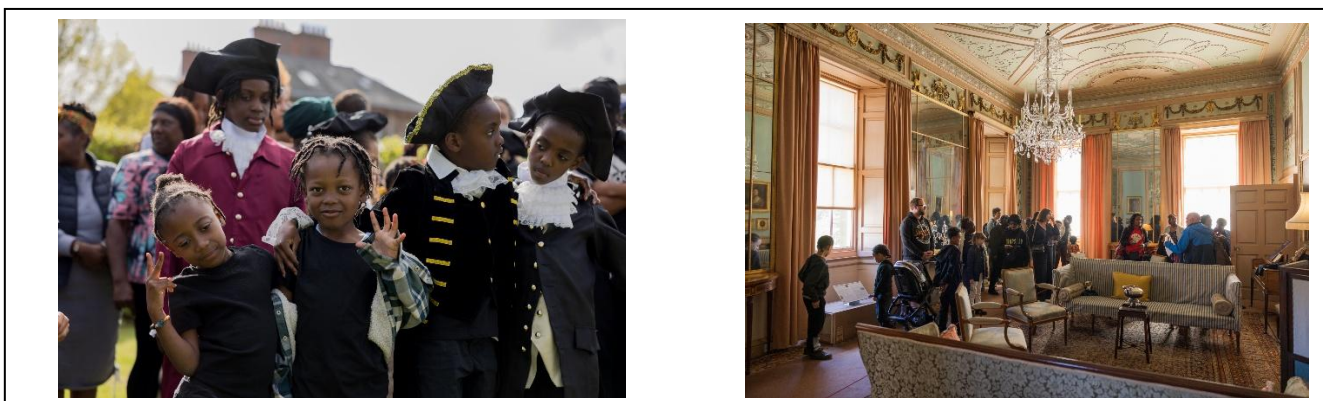
National Lottery Fund, South of Scotland Enterprise, and others. [Berwickshire visitor attraction receives SOSE funding boost for ambitious development plans](#)

In 2022, after two years of planning, fundraising, partnership, conservation, and development work, the curator working with our partners, Descendants (www.descendants.org.uk), created the ground-breaking and award-winning 'Parallel Lives, Worlds Apart' project on transatlantic slavery which launched in June. The project was funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund, Museums Galleries Scotland, and The Textile Society.

Parallel Lives, Worlds Apart was short-listed for the **Museums Change Lives – Decolonising the Museum Award** and won the Young Ealing Foundation's *Creative Project of the Year*. The project launched three exhibitions including the permanent 'Paxton House, Slavery, and Caribbean Connections' exhibition, an online '*Sugar and Slavery*' trail with 90 items from across the collections, new online access to 1370 sets of slavery related Home family archives, new resources and workshops for schools, and a Caribbean Connections celebration day. Twenty-four items from our Recognised Collections were conserved as part of this project. See: [Paxton Trust - Museums Association](#)



Building upon this, with a successful application to the MGS Sustainable Co-production fund in 2024, we have made formal partnerships with three Caribbean connected groups in *Edinburgh Caribbean Association* in Scotland, *Zoe Smith and Bonaire Primary School* in Grenada, and *Descendants* in England.



Each group worked with the curator and the Grenadian-born, New York-based artist and filmmaker, Billy Gérard Frank. Each group undertook a series of workshops and then worked with a filmmaker to create their own 7-8 minute film. These powerful films launched at a celebratory event in May 2025. Each film describes different aspects of transatlantic slavery history, its connections with Paxton House and its collections including the Recognised furniture.

Our original Recognition application outlined the role of our collections in the life and culture of Scotland, and in the wider world, in the context of an outstanding historic house. It also explained in some detail how the collections had developed since Patrick Home, the builder of Paxton House, began collecting in c.1750. Our application focused upon how our Chippendale and Trotter furniture collection met the Significance criteria for eligibility. Since then, we have widened our audiences, built new community partnerships, and made several strategic acquisitions and developments in research and understanding of the collection (outlined in the next section) which have strengthened our collections.

New acquisitions and their impact

There have been three strategic purchases of important and unique Chippendale and Trotter furniture which were formerly part of the Home family collection in the last four years. These planned acquisitions have been considered and steady, underpinned by research and successful fundraising campaigns. Grant funding, private donations, and a private treaty sale agreement have been vital to supporting these.

Chippendale furniture acquisitions



A Mahogany Secretaire Cabinet designed and made by Thomas Chippendale Senior and Junior, 1774-79 for Ninian and Penelope Home of Paxton House, Berwickshire.

Sold out of the collection in 1970, and lost for 50 years, this secretaire came up for sale in New York and was acquired by The Paxton Trust in 2022 with the support of Art Fund, The National Fund for Acquisitions, The Beecroft Bequest, The Chippendale Society, Yew Tree Antiques, and a private donor. It was conserved with the support of The Pilgrim Trust, MGS, and a private donor. Accession number: Pax. 2022.1

This acquisition features as an exemplar on both the Museums Association's and NFA's websites. It was made for the businessman and enslaver Ninian Home (later Lieutenant- Governor of Grenada) and his wife Penelope at a time when Thomas Chippendale the Elder and Younger were collaborating and mining the Elder's famous '*Director*' publication for designs prior to the elder's death in 1779. Its deceptively simple, restrained neoclassical design showcases the highest quality 'flame' mahogany cut down with great difficulty by enslaved people during early de-forestation in the Caribbean.

Since its acquisition, it has formed an integral part of the new permanent exhibition, physical and online trail on the connections with the Caribbean, Africa, and transatlantic slavery. The outstanding cabinetry with restrained neoclassical motifs, elegant secretaire drawer, and lower trays complete with their marbled paper linings and remnants of the 'bays aprons' are an extraordinary survival and internationally significant.

[Chippendale secretaire at Paxton House - Museums Association](#)

[Paxton House – National Fund for Acquisitions](#)

Overall, thanks to significant research into the existing collection by David Jones (discussed below), we now know that The Paxton Trust holds the third largest collection of Chippendale furniture in the world (c.160 pieces subject to final cataloguing) which is more than double what was thought to exist at the start of the research project in 2016. This is incredibly significant for Paxton House as a whole, considerably raising the status, size, quality, and strength of the collection which at the time we applied for Recognition was thought to be in the top eight collections of Chippendale furniture.

Trotter furniture acquisitions

Thanks to the two recent significant acquisitions we now hold 32 of the original 40 pieces of William Trotter furniture commissioned for the house which means Paxton continues to hold the largest publicly accessible collection of Trotter furniture in the world. There have been no disposals.

William Trotter (1772-1833), *Lobby Table*, 1813-14. Rosewood, ash, and black slate.

Acquired in 2024 via private treaty sale with the support of Art Fund, the National Fund for Acquisitions, and a private donor. This was conserved in the Picture Gallery by Fergus Purdy in 2024 with the support of The Pilgrim Trust and MGS. Lobby tables were an important feature of Edinburgh society who lived and rented homes in the New Town. George Home and Nancy Stephens commissioned this furniture.



William Trotter, *Grecian 'Picture Viewing' Sofa, 1813-14. Rosewood.*

One of unique pair of rosewood 'Picture Viewing Sofas' made for the Picture Gallery at Paxton House. This carved rosewood upholstered sofa was sold out of the collection in 1923 and ended up over 11,000 miles from its original home.

Thanks to a major fundraising effort it returned to Paxton House in 2025. Funders included several private donors, The NFA, Georgian Antiques, and the vendor supported costs of transport from Tasmania to Scotland! It is shown below at the private view with a portrait of William Trotter.



Thus, The Paxton Trust cares for a truly remarkable and internationally important Recognised collection of documented furniture by Thomas Chippendale the Elder and Younger, and by William Trotter which was commissioned by the Home family between 1774 and 1814.

Curatorial provision for the collection and whether this has changed since Recognition status was awarded?

The Paxton Trust's curator (Dr Fiona Salvesen Murrell, AMA) was employed 3 days a week from January 2016. She prepared and submitted the Recognition application. Due to family circumstances she left in Feb. 2019. Between mid-2019 to June 2020 another curator was in post working 2 days a week for a year. Fiona was invited to return to the post in August 2020 on a freelance basis of 2 days a week. As of December 2024, she became an employee of The Paxton Trust on 21 hours per week.

The curatorial panel of advisors which historically met twice a year with the curator has recently increased the meetings to four times a year. The Chair of the panel is art historian, curator, author, and editor of the Burlington Magazine, Christopher Baker. Panel members are furniture historian, David Jones, dress and textiles historian and Senior Lecturer at the University of Glasgow, Dr Sally Tuckett, and Hermione Hoffmann, Chief Executive of The Paxton Trust.

How collections knowledge has been improved since Recognition

Research – Chippendale collection

At the time of the application for Recognition in 2017, a grant-funded research project had been underway into the Chippendale furniture collection for about nine months. At the commencement of that (in 2016), it was understood that there were 74 items by Thomas Chippendale Senior and Junior.

Furniture historian and advisor, David Jones led the research project supported by curator, Dr Fiona Salvesen Murrell. By mid-2018, 120 Chippendale items were documented (not including the interiors of the Dining and Drawing Rooms). This placed Paxton's collection in terms of size, quality and importance, amongst the top eight largest collections of documented Chippendale furniture in the UK; the others being Burton Constable, Harewood, Nostell Priory, and Temple Newsam in Yorkshire, Saltram in Devon, and Stourhead in Wiltshire and, Dumfries House in Ayrshire (the latter has 66 pieces of Chippendale the Elder's furniture).

Subsequent research has now listed c.160 items in total in the Paxton Trust's collection which now means that The Paxton Trust's Chippendale collection is the third largest in the world, after Harewood and Stourhead. Paxton's collection is made of the finest quality mahogany, and many pieces exhibit the unique 'Paxton Style' an understated, but exquisitely detailed style which brings the decorative qualities of the wood to the forefront.

Several experts including those from the Chippendale Society, V&A, and Royal Collection Trust have regularly visited Paxton and spent time with the Curator and David Jones confirming the research. Indeed, wider research by David into the extensive Chippendale commissions by Patrick and Ninian Home between 1774 and c.1791 has revealed a much greater original collection in the region of 250 items. Some of these items whilst in private ownership were sold between 1923 and the 1970s, with a small number more recently. The rest of this furniture is in private collections and discussions are underway to potentially publish a full catalogue of the Chippendale furniture collected by the Home family. This is a substantially larger catalogue project and requires additional detailed information and photography for which fundraising is a priority.

Research – Home family

Further research into the Home family and their connections with the Caribbean has been undertaken by Dr Fiona Salvesen Murrell and historian Dr Charles Fletcher (who held two temporary grant-funded posts from 2021-24) as part of other projects. This has revealed much more detailed knowledge of the lives of the early owners of Paxton House (Patrick, Ninian, and George Home) and their families, servants, friends, business associates, and their roles in colonial plantations and enslavement. This research has been shared through exhibitions, blogs, talks, and partnership projects, but there are more aspects to reveal potentially in a publication with further research particularly in other archives required. The colonial connections date from considerably earlier than previously thought – 1716, right through to 1848.

Currently, the research has helped reveal how the Chippendale furniture commissioned by Ninian & Penelope Home was paid for through profits from slavery and possibly from some of his extensive borrowings, though more detailed research is required to trace the extent and details of this.

The curator has supervised six placements of Dress and Textiles History postgraduate students from The University of Glasgow since 2021. The students have researched portraits, dress, and created excellent replica 18th-century costumes which are on permanent display. Their blogs (see: [Costume – Paxton House](#)) and research have greatly helped in heightening awareness of the collections and contextualising them as a whole.

Research – Trotter furniture

We also now know that the Trotter furniture was not paid for from profits from slavery, but other Scottish income sources, as George Home who with his ward, Nancy Stephens, commissioned the furniture, did not receive any income from his inherited Waltham estate in Grenada from 1795 until 1815. David Jones has been working on further research on William Trotter with the view to planning an exhibition on Trotter in 2027 at Paxton House. Thanks to support from Georgian Antiques, the photography for the planned publication is underway at present, but fundraising is required to make the exhibition itself possible.

Exhibitions

2018

In 2018 the Tercentenary of Thomas Chippendale's birth was celebrated across the UK with a variety of exhibitions jointly marketed by a partnership of historic houses including Paxton House, Harewood, Dumfries House, Newby Hall, Leeds Museum, and The Chippendale Society. [Home | Chippendale 300](#)

The Paxton Trust lent seven items of Recognised Chippendale furniture to the largest Chippendale exhibition ever held at Leeds City Museum [Chippendale Exhibition at Leeds City Museum. | Chippendale 300](#) and one piece to Dumfries House.

Our own exhibition 'The Paxton Style: Neat and Substantially Good', (5th June to 28th August 2018) made feasible with the generous grants from the Weston Loan Programme with Art Fund, MGS, and others, was held in the historic Dining Room at Paxton House which was transformed into an elegant modern exhibition space. Amongst the 44 exhibits were examples from our own collection as well as several loans from private and public collections including the V&A, Blair Castle, The Garrick Club, and Dumfries House. The exhibition catalogue was written by David Jones and edited by Paxton's curator. A series of events and lectures were held along with special workshops for schools.



The Paxton Style exhibition, Paxton House, 2018



2022

Caribbean Connections exhibition – featured two Chippendale secretaires, and a Chippendale chair.

Sugar and Slavery Trail – online exhibition and in house trail – features 40 items from the Recognised collections amongst 90 items altogether with links to transatlantic slavery.

See: [Objects – Paxton House](#)

2025

Chippendale Laid Bare: celebrating the 250th anniversary of the first commission of furniture for Paxton House, 1774-2024.

This new, permanent exhibition celebrates the 250th anniversary of the first commission of furniture designed by the internationally influential cabinetmaker Thomas Chippendale (1718-79) made for Paxton House from 1774.

The STEM learning focused exhibition ‘Chippendale Laid Bare’ reveals the ‘bare bones’ of our internationally important Recognised Chippendale furniture. Interpretation in different rooms in the historic house and online, designed for children and adults, explores construction, design, uses, social history, conservation, and materials, which include colonial and mercantile connections.

The furniture models made by Leo Norris that can be dismantled and reconstructed by children (and adults!) are a significant and successful innovation as part of the *Chippendale Laid Bare* exhibition and have been integrated into the learning space.



The 10 different sets of exquisite hand-painted bed cornices dating from the late 1770s-80s had nine months of consolidation and cleaning to enable them to be displayed for the first time. This section is from the Portico Bed. Re-touching would cost c.£30,000 for this set.



Interactive 'Chippendale Pier Table' jigsaws & a selection of Chippendale cornices



Publications

Judith Goodison, 2017, *The Life and Work of Thomas Chippendale Junior*, (Bloomsbury Publishing), features a wealth of Paxton-related material.

Bowett, Adam & Lomax, James, 2018, *Thomas Chippendale 1718-1779: A celebration of British Craftsmanship and Design* (The Chippendale Society), features nine Chippendale pieces commissioned by the Home family.

Jones, David, (edited by Salvesen Murrell, Fiona), 2018, *The Paxton Style: Neat and Substantially Good* (The Paxton Trust), features 33 Chippendale pieces commissioned by the Home family.

Bowett, Adam & Lomax, James, 2021, *Thomas Chippendale* (Shire Library, Bloomsbury Publishing).

Jackson, Stephen, 2024, *Scottish Furniture, 1500-1914*, NMSE Publishing Ltd, features 13 'Paxton' Trotter pieces.

Online articles (see also listings in next section):

[The Paxton Style: Neat and Substantially Good | The Decorative Arts Trust](#)

[PressReader.com - Digital Newspaper & Magazine Subscriptions](#)

[Master Furniture Makers – Paxton House](#)

[Come and See The Chippendales at Paxton House - Historic Houses | Historic Houses](#)

Collaborations

We collaborated with Dumfries House in 2017 and 2018 with our respective staff visiting both houses and with reciprocal loans, lectures, and promotional material. Since 2021 we have worked with the University of Glasgow Dress and Textile History PG course, with the curator supervising six placements who produced excellent work. In 2024 we had exchange visits (supported by MGS as part of learning and well-being programme) with NTS staff at Newhailes and House of the Binns. We have continued our long-standing partnership with the National Galleries of Scotland and are about to have large change in loaned paintings. We are a Royal Horticultural Society partner garden. We are members of the Chippendale Society, The Furniture History Society, Art UK, and participate in the Transatlantic Slavery and Legacies in Museums Forum. Our curator joined the Scottish Association of Country House Archivists, and they have had a special tour and event at Paxton House and we will shortly be undertaking a learning event seminar day with Historic Houses at Paxton focusing upon telling 'engaging' and 'difficult' histories. The curator has discussions underway with Dr Esther Mijers and Dr Jonny Geber of the University of Edinburgh on Grenadian connections.

Specialist tours & Study Days

Paxton House has welcomed many tour groups over the years offering specialised furniture study tours as well as art and architecture tours and general tours. Our standard house tour always includes many references to the Recognised collections. We have offered special study days focusing upon the three



different makers featured in our Recognised collections. The most recent were in September 2023 with a day upon each maker which attracted curators, dealers, and historians.

Bloomberg Connects

The curator is currently preparing several different guides to Paxton House on Bloomberg Connects which will feature highlights, exhibitions, and Recognised collections. These are planned to launch in 2026 and an accessible tour and a children’s tour will be developed.

The reputation of the Collection and organisation

Recognition status has raised the status and reputation of Paxton House considerably and has been crucial to demonstrating how important both the historic house and collections are to the public, local community, stakeholders, and the Trust itself. Thanks to the status of our collections and the quality of our interpretation and programming we have won and been nominated for awards, which, in turn, has increased the profile of the collection. For example, in 2022 our ‘Parallel Lives, Worlds Apart’ project was showcased to 10,000 members of the Museums Association, and the curator was invited to speak at the MGS Strategy Symposium in 2025 attended by over 400 people in person and online. Our sustainable co-production project was described as a ‘great example... of working together to engage marginalised groups’, by MGS Senior Advocacy and Public Affairs Manager, Jason Rose. We have been selected by MGS and the MA for examples of ‘best practice’ and invited by other museums and organisations to discuss our collections and ways in which we have developed them, worked with community groups, and conserved them.

Recognition Logo use

The Recognition logo features on Paxton’s website (homepage) and is included on Paxton House leaflets. References are made to our Chippendale and Trotter collections being Recognised in many blogs, reports, grant applications, and promotional material / social media. The plaque is displayed in our Entrance Hall.



How has the digital presence of the Collection changed?

The digital presence of the Collection has dramatically increased over the past few years. The ways in which the collection can now be accessed are listed below.

Main website: www.paxtonhouse.com

[Collections – Paxton House](#)

[History of the House – Paxton House](#)

Collections database (Ehive) [Paxton House | eHive](#)

At the time of applying for Recognition there were approximately 1000 records digitised overall to a basic standard. As of August 2025, there are 4133 public records in total, with at least another 2000 still to be added. In the last four years, the curator, two part-time volunteers, and one temporary part-time researcher (who uploaded 1370 records) have increased the online presence by 400% overall.

With the research and new cataloguing of Paxton's Chippendale collection by David Jones, we have been gradually adding the up-to-date information to Paxton's collection database, Ehive. This can be accessed online either via Ehive, or through links on Paxton's website, e.g.

[Lady's Writing Table; Thomas Chippendale the Elder; 1774; 257F | eHive](#)

[Lady's Dressing table by Thomas Chippendale the Younger, c.1776-1790. ; Thomas ... | eHive](#)

As of August 2025, there are 126 items listed on Ehive as by either Chippendale Senior / Junior and some needing revised information / better images. We need to buy in the services of a professional photographer which is usually only feasible with the support of grant funding recording the items after conservation treatment. Alternatively, staff / volunteers take images of the collection. Fundraising to improve documentation of the whole collection with photography and making that accessible is a priority. We are continuing to work with David Jones to ensure we have the full final catalogue information before uploading it to the database.

The Trotter collection is fully represented on Ehive, but some better photographs and further details and editing of older records would enhance the accessibility and accuracy of the collection records. This is planned to be done during the research for the planned Trotter exhibition in 2026/27.



New acquisitions

The most recent acquisitions have fully up-to-date information, see:

- [A Mahogany Secretaire Cabinet designed and made by Thomas Chippendale Senior and... | eHive](#)
- [The Paxton Secretaire – Paxton House](#)
- [Lobby table by William Trotter \(1772-1833\) of Edinburgh, 1814. ; William Trotter;... | eHive](#)
- [Furniture Archives - Paxton House](#)
- [A Lost Table returns to Paxton - Paxton House](#)

Newly conserved items have been added to the database, see example links below:

- [Painted Chippendale bed cornice in green with anthemion \(honeysuckle\) pattern, c... | eHive](#)
- [Easy Chair, upholstered winged armchair with painted legs by Thomas Chippendale,... | eHive](#)
- [Sofa table, rosewood; William Trotter; 1814; 113F | eHive](#)

Sugar and Slavery Trail

This online (and in house) trail launched in 2022 as part of a much larger project entitled 'Parallel Lives, Worlds Apart' made possible with grant funding from The Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund and Museums Galleries Scotland. It now features 90 items from the collections arranged by historic room. Many of these are pieces of Recognised furniture which have links to transatlantic slavery through who commissioned them / used them / the materials that they were made from and so on. The trail was written by Dr Fiona Salvesen Murrell. See, for example:

- [Objects – Paxton House;](#)
- [Secrétaire Writing Table – Paxton House](#)
- [Lady's Dressing Table – Paxton House](#)
- [Sofa – Paxton House](#)



Paxton House Blogs /social media:

We also have features in our blogs:

[Furniture – Paxton House;](#)

[Conservation – Paxton House](#)

[The Paxton Secrétaire – Paxton House](#)

[Caribbean Connections – Paxton House](#) – we have written and since revised the history of Paxton's 18th and 19th century links with the Caribbean and transatlantic slavery, working with our partners to do so.

(1) [Paxton House | Facebook](#)

(2) [Paxton House \(@paxton_house\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

(3) [Paxton House \(@PaxtonHouse\) / X](#)

(4) (6) [Paxton House: Overview | LinkedIn](#)

Other online features and a selection of press articles featuring Paxton's Recognised collections

- [Museums Change Lives Awards 2022 - Museums Association](#)
- <https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/3385/pair-of-sidetables-and-centre-table-william-trotter>
- <https://www.artfund.org/supporting-museums/art-weve-helped-buy/artwork/9149/four-caned-library-bergeres-william-trotter>
- <http://www.nhmf.org.uk/projects/paxton-house-trotter-tables>
- <https://www.museumsassociation.org/funding/beecroft-bequest/paxton-house/>
- <https://thechippendalesociety.co.uk/chippendale-secretaire-returns-to-paxton-house/>
- [The Chippendale Society | Chippendale 300 – The Paxton Style 'Neat & Substantially Good'](#)
- <https://nationalfundforacquisitions.wordpress.com/2022/06/23/a-chippendale-secretaire-lost-for-50-years/>
- [Resilience Stories - Museums Galleries Scotland](#)
- [You searched for paxton - Museums Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Scotland's Museums and Galleries Strategy Symposium 2025: Achievements, Challenges, and Adapting for the Future - Museums Galleries Scotland](#)
- [Paxton House National Recognition Award – Paxton House](#)
- [Paxton House | The Castles of Scotland, Coventry | Goblinshead](#)
- [Paxton House – Historic Houses | Historic Houses](#)
- ['When dealers co-operate, great things can happen' | Antiques Trade Gazette](#)

A discussion of the demand for loans from the Collection and the organisation's approach, and whether this changed since Recognition status was awarded?

During the tercentenary year of the birth of Thomas Chippendale in 2018, The Paxton Trust lent Chippendale furniture by the cabinetmaker to both Dumfries House and to Leeds City Museum. We have not had requests any other Recognised furniture to be lent since then, as there has not been a suitable exhibition held. Other loan requests have approved.

How engagement with the Collection has changed since Recognition status was awarded?

The context within which the collection is displayed, discussed, and interpreted has changed since the award of Recognition. Previously, the story told in guided tours was very much white male focused. The curator has extensively revised the interpretation following research on the history of the family and those connected with it. She has consulted with partners, curatorial panel members, Home family members, and sought the advice of experts in the relevant fields to ensure accuracy.

Now we tell a much fuller history with a strong focus on decolonisation in a dedicated permanent exhibition and in the ways mentioned above. There are more objects on display, including specially commissioned replica costumes which tell the histories of individual enslaved people, women and children and the few pieces of furniture that directly relate to women (dressing tables and a writing table) have been conserved and permanently displayed.



New workshops have been created for schools which explore many different aspects of the collections in relation to the curriculum. We have also created new resources for adults will be made available online on our website shortly in addition to those discussed above. We have special group tours focusing upon the furniture which are pre-bookable and have an annual visit from the Chippendale School of Furniture and frequent visits from Martin Randall tour groups and others. We ran furniture study days focusing upon each of the three makers in our Recognised collections in 2018 and in 2023. The cycle (every 3-4 years) is planned to continue. This will enable new applicants to sign up and new acquisitions to be shown, discussed and publicised. Next round, 2026.

Working with our partner, Descendants, from 2020 and new partners in Grenada and Scotland from 2024 we have explored the collections in the context of decolonisation enabling our partners to engage with difficult histories and create their own unique interpretation of the Recognised and other collections, family history and impact of past events. The artist Billy Gérard Frank (see below) worked with the curator to develop his first major exhibition in the UK at Paxton House in 2025. During his artist residency he created four new works inspired by Paxton's history and collections, an intervention (as below), and the powerful and moving exhibition 'Palimpsest' which features his film that represented Grenada at the Venice Biennale in 2022 and new works of art.



Grenadian-born artist, Billy Gérard Frank, creating part of his intervention in the Drawing Room at Paxton House in April 2025. This room was originally decorated and fitted out with exquisite furniture by Thomas Chippendale the Younger for the enslavers Ninian and Penelope Home in 1789-91.

The furniture incorporates Jamaican mahogany, West Indian satinwood, purpleheart, ebony, and other woods derived from colonial exploitation. The portrait of enslaver Alexander Campbell (bottom left) who owned up to 14 plantations in the Caribbean and 1000 enslaved people has had a new work by Frank placed next to it entitled *The Abolitionists: Equiano*.

The benefits Recognised status has brought for the Collection and/or the organisation?

Recognition status has had a fundamental impact upon Paxton House and the Trust’s collections with the formal independent acknowledgement of the quality and importance of the collection. This has helped us build partnerships and collaborations in Scotland, the UK, and internationally and influenced others to support The Paxton Trust and its collections.

Crucially, it has been vital in securing funding for conservation, interpretation, acquisitions, and exhibitions relating to the Recognised collections which for a small independent charitable trust is transformational. Recognition status has enabled us to access a wider range of funds to enable us to improve care of the collections and make them more publicly accessible. These funds have also assisted us in providing specialist training for our staff and volunteers and develop educational projects. Recognition status has also been highly beneficial in applications for other projects including those that aim to deliver long-term sustainability for the Trust and building long-lasting community partnerships. These benefits in turn have raised the profile of Paxton House and its international significant collections.

Funding secured for the collection and public access has included:

Year	Project	Funding source	Funding total
2024-2026	Photography of William Trotter furniture for future exhibition catalogue	Georgian Antiques	£5000

2024-25	Acquisition of the Rosewood Grecian Sofa by William Trotter, 1813-14.	National Fund for Acquisitions £10K, several donors and trusts £15K, plus £5400 in kind for transport and photography.	£30,400
2024-26	Caribbean Connections Creative Partnership. Working with our existing and new partners in Grenada, Scotland, and England, and the internationally renowned Grenadian artist, Billy Gérard Frank, we are building on our award-winning work in new sustainable ways. Each partner following a series of workshops created a film inspired by Paxton's collections / historical links with the Caribbean. These launched at Paxton House on 3 May 2025 with Frank's 'Palimpsest' exhibition.	MGS Sustainable Co-production Fund (first round)	£40,000
2024-25	Billy Gérard Frank – Palimpsest exhibition (3 May -31 October 2025) Grenadian-born multimedia artist, Billy Gerard Frank's internationally recognised work is critical to the history of Paxton House and its transatlantic slavery and colonial past in Grenada and the Caribbean. Centred upon Frank's 'Palimpsest' film which envisions the life of abolitionist Ottobah Cugoano who was enslaved in Grenada and brought to Paxton; the exhibition is the crux around which our Sustainable Co-Production project is based and key to its success. The project includes an artist's residency (which created 4 new works inspired by Paxton's collections), varied programming and engagement with the co-production partners - Edinburgh Caribbean Association, Descendants, our Grenadian partners, and the local community.	Destination Tweed £10,000; MGS £11,003; Hugh Fraser Foundation £5000; Henfrey Charitable Trust £2,500; Simpson's Malt £1000, private donations.	£34,419
2023-25	Chippendale Laid Bare – 250th Anniversary exhibition. This involved over 9 months of conservation work to our Recognised Chippendale collection of painted furniture. Thirty items were conserved in total, plus training, development and learning programmes to diversify and support wider access to Paxton's collections.	MGS Museum Development Fund £30,000; Anon. donor £18,000; Pilgrim Trust £10,000; (and in kind £10,300 from Georgian Antiques – for conservation and photography); The Paxton Trust: £4000	£62,000 Note the people working on this (including the conservators) contributed c.£54,900 of their time in kind in addition to the sum raised.
2020-2022	'Parallel Lives, Worlds Apart' – building our partnership with Descendants, we delivered 3 exhibitions, conserved many items of Recognised furniture and other collections, created a Sugar and Slavery trail, researched the transatlantic slavery connections and made over 1350 sets of archives accessible. We also improved collections storage. The exhibitions included the permanent 'Caribbean Connections, Slavery, and Paxton House'; and the semi-permanent 'Parallel Lives, Worlds Apart' costume exhibition which included 18 th century	Museums Galleries Scotland Museum Development Fund £60,000, MA Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund £90,000; The Textile Society £3500	£153,500

	costumes and specially commissioned replica dress to tell some of the individual stories of those people enslaved and their enslavers.		
2020-23	Conservation of Furniture – this project ran alongside the Parallel Lives project and enabled several important pieces to be conserved including the Italian ebony and ivory cabinet of c. 1580-1620 and Recognised furniture. Restoring The Hercules Cabinet – Paxton House	The Leche Trust £10,000; The Pilgrim Trust £20,000.	£30,000
2023	Acquisition of the Trotter Lobby Table (private treaty sale with the support of Art Fund).	Art Fund £11,500; National Fund for Acquisitions £15,000; donation £5000.	£31,500
2021-22	Acquisition of the Chippendale Secretaire 1775-1779.	Art Fund £15,500; NFA £19,000; Beecroft Bequest £10,000; Chippendale Society £5000. Plus, a donation of £20,000.	£49,875 acquisition cost (plus transport from USA and conservation paid for by private donor); total £69,500
2020-22	Second Research Fellowship - Costume research partnership project with the National Museums of Scotland to catalogue the historic collection of costume (400 items) and assess its importance.	Art Fund Ruffer Curatorial Grant	£5,500
2017-18	Conservation of Recognised furniture (the initial work comprised a preventative treatment for active and suspected woodworm, followed by selected items being conserved classed as urgent / for immediate display. This was match funded with some of the funds listed below.	The Leche Trust £4000; The Pilgrim Trust £10,00.	£14,000
2017-18	‘The Paxton Style’ exhibition celebrating the 300th anniversary of Thomas Chippendale’s birth. Included conservation of Recognised furniture, loans from national, public, and private collections, events, and exhibition catalogue.	Art Fund Weston Loan Programme £25,000; MGS £60,000. Furniture History Society £3,300; The Decorative Arts Trust (USA) £5000 and several private donations.	£100,000
2016-2018	Inaugural Paxton Trust Research Fellowship – Chippendale collection	The Art Fund Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Grant Programme (£2,550), a special award from the Furniture History Society (£2000), and a private Trust (£2000)	£6550

Achieving the Recognition Scheme objectives

Namely:

1. *To advocate for, and raise awareness and appreciation of, the Recognised Collections of National Significance, maximising their potential to celebrate Scotland’s culture and heritage – locally, nationally and internationally.*

2. *To protect and secure the future of the Recognised Collections of National Significance by raising standards in collections care and management and increasing knowledge and understanding.*
3. *Use the Recognised Collections of National Significance to support the sustainability of the museums that hold, care for, and exhibit them.*
4. *To inspire and enable access to, public engagement with, and learning and research about, the Recognised Collections of National Significance.*
5. *To support holders of Recognised Collections of National Significance to increase their contribution to the sector through ambition, collaboration, and partnership working.*

It is hoped that we have clearly demonstrated our commitment and efforts in achieving the Scheme objectives throughout this report.

We advocate for, raise awareness and appreciation of our Recognised Collections through our public programming, online access, research, professional and community partnerships in Britain and abroad.

We have greatly improved the condition of the Recognised collections with a focused programme of conservation which has been funded mainly by grant support and donations. This continues to help ensure the longevity of our collection. We continue to employ a highly qualified curator and have supported our team to expand their knowledge and collections care with the support of specialists. We have also invested in upgrading our collections management programme. We have undertaken an extensive programme of research into the collection which more than doubled the number of objects Recognised and we are sharing that in multiple ways.

We are continually focused upon making Paxton House sustainable through a variety of initiatives and fund-raising. Without the Recognition status, The Paxton Trust may not have survived the economic impact of the pandemic as the National Significance of the collection has, as with all our funding applications, been of vital importance in gaining support.

We have significantly improved public access and interpretation and enriched the visitor experience and continue to plan for further developments in making our collections accessible. Almost every piece of Recognised furniture is on public display now at Paxton House – an increase of at least 30 items. We have been delighted to welcome new audiences and build new partnerships with African and Caribbean communities over the last few years.

Engaging audiences is a key strand in our strategic plan and we are actively working with schools and the local community in the House and wider estate (including the new community garden) and have over 50 volunteers supporting the work of the Trust. We have and continue to collaborate with other institutions, individuals and organisations to support each other and deliver objectives.

We are planning to undertake a conservation survey of the house as a prelude to undertaking an ambitious project to ensure the long-term safety and upgrade of the condition of the Grade A listed house and in turn its interiors in which the collections are presented. This will be a transformational opportunity to preserve and enhance the house for the nation, as The Paxton Trust was set up to deliver in 1988.

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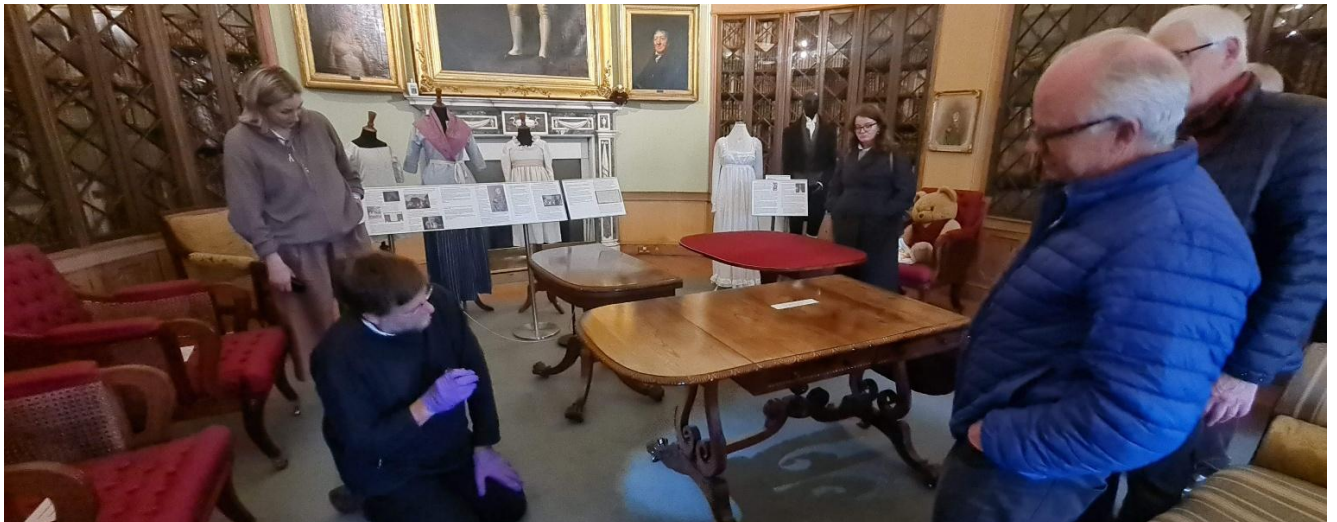


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