

GUIDE TO
STOURHEAD



Stourhead House

Aspiration
Inspiration
Creativity

Genius of the Place

Meet the makers of Stourhead

Stourhead as we know it today is the result of generations of visionaries, most especially Henry Hoare II who set about building a garden inspired by the works of art he'd collected while abroad on the Grand Tour of Europe. While his ambitious achievements earned him the nickname Henry 'the Magnificent', Hoare and his descendants employed the finest creative minds to help turn their ideas into reality.

As you explore the house look out for examples of the work of these creative geniuses

"The noble statue of an Hercules, executed by the ingenious Mr. Rysbrack, is sent to Stourton, the seat of Mr. Hoare, who has built a magnificent temple to receive it." So declared the Public Advertiser, on 12 January 1757. Look out for Rysbrack's working model in the Library



Mahogany bergère chair, by Thomas Chippendale the Younger (1749-1822). One of at least 163 pieces of furniture commissioned for Stourhead by Sir Richard Colt Hoare. Fine examples of Chippendale's work can be seen throughout the house.



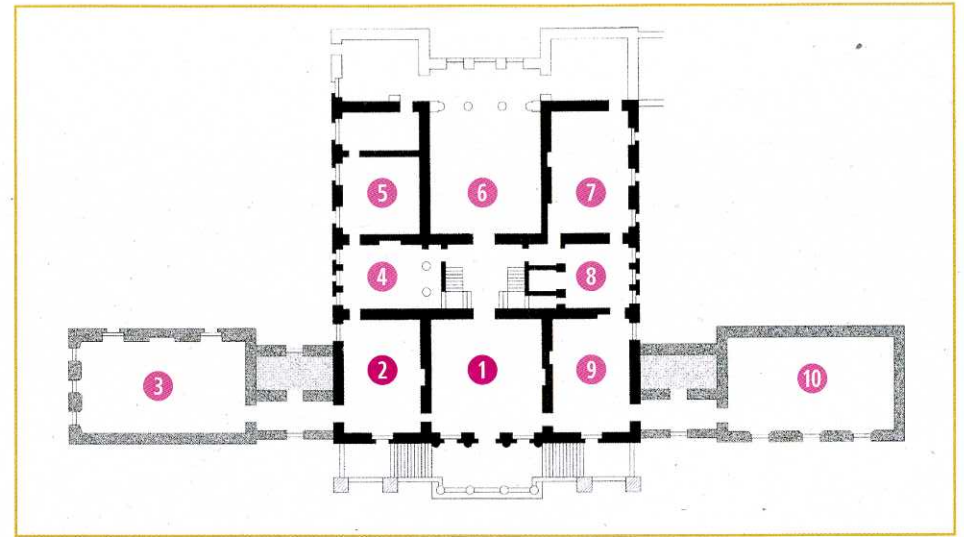
'A very splendid Cabinet, embellished with precious stones, marbles, agates, &c. of every Description.' Visit the Cabinet Room to admire the work of the very finest Italian master-craftsmen



The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne after Leonardo Da Vinci's 1508 masterpiece - whilst not an original Leonardo, the brushwork in the background is exquisite



Look out for this symbol as you explore and meet more of the makers of Stourhead.



1 Entrance Hall: meet the makers of Stourhead

'Let us now introduce ourselves into the interior of this mansion, and by a handsome well-proportioned hall, being an exact cube of 30 feet. Its walls are chiefly covered with family portraits, a very appropriate decoration for the first entrance into a house... They remind us of the genealogy of our families, and recall to our minds the hospitality of its former inhabitants, and on the first entrance of the friend, or stranger, seem to greet them with a SALVE, or welcome.'

Sir Richard Colt Hoare, *A History of Modern Wiltshire*

2 Music Room: an escape from the city

Good Henry died before his new house was completed and was never able to enjoy life in his long dreamt of family home. Stourhead should have been his escape from the city but instead it was his widow, Jane Benson, who made the long and arduous journey from London to escape the hustle and bustle, spending time relaxing in the country with her son, Henry 'the Magnificent'.



3 Library: Colt Hoare's sanctuary

More than any other place at Stourhead, the library encapsulates the personality, passions and pursuits of its custodian, Sir Richard Colt Hoare. A true man of the Enlightenment: he was occupied with history and archaeology; collecting and creating art; exploration at home and abroad; and the pursuit and sharing of knowledge.

4 The Garden Hall: Treading the paths of paradise

In later years known as the Little Dining Room, for Henry the Magnificent this was his garden hall - the first point of connection between the house and the distant, hidden paradise of his landscape garden. A sweeping staircase led Henry's guests down on to the lawns to explore the surprises concealed within his living work of art.

5 South Apartments: a living legacy

While Stourhead has belonged to the National Trust since 1946, Henry the Good's legacy to his family lives on - these are the private rooms of Audrey Hoare, distant cousin of Sir Henry and Lady Hoare and seventh great-granddaughter of Good Henry.

6 The Saloon: a place to entertain

Colen Campbell designed a chapel, but this was soon transformed into a versatile space for entertaining. Armies of servants moved the furniture around at a moment's notice to suit the social occasion. This was the 'big' dining room, the ball-room and the elegant salon. Generations of the Hoare family entertained countless guests treating them to grand occasions and intimate honeymoons...

7 Column Room: a place of patronage

The early makers of Stourhead used their wealth and influence to commission the finest artists, architects and craftspeople of the day to create their vision whilst nurturing, educating and investing in the talents of those at the very beginning of their career. Hanging in the Column Room, the intricate and intriguing works of the Swiss artist, Louis Ducros, were Colt Hoare's treasures.

8 Italian Room: Stourhead's grand tourists

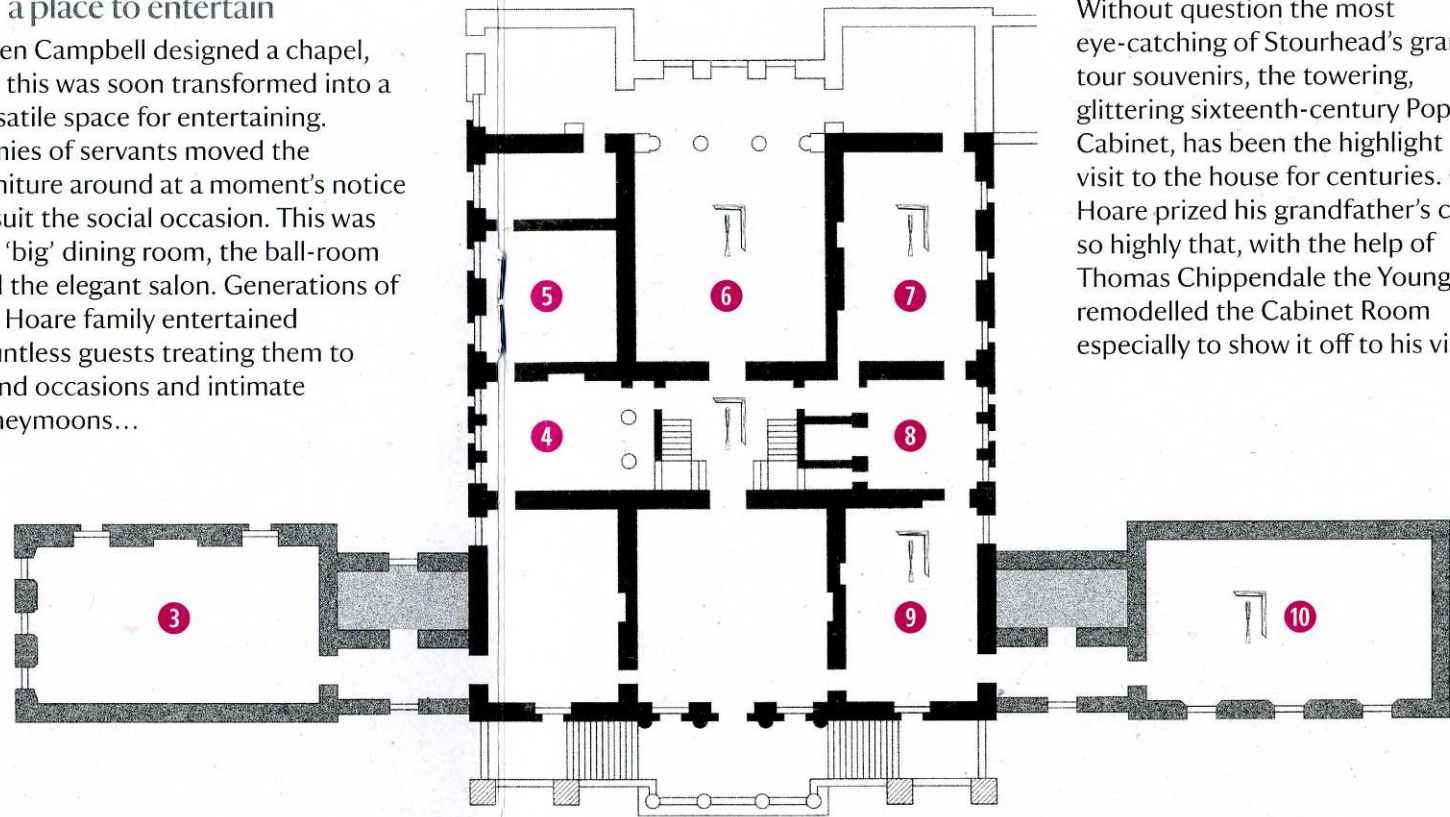
During their formative years both Henry 'the Magnificent' and his grandson Colt Hoare embarked on lengthy grand tours - following elaborate routes across continental Europe and completing their classical education. Colt Hoare painstakingly recorded his travels in diaries and sketches. Grandfather and grandson collected souvenirs to remind them of their travels, from the simple to the exceptionally extravagant.

9 The Cabinet room

Without question the most eye-catching of Stourhead's grand tour souvenirs, the towering, glittering sixteenth-century Pope's Cabinet, has been the highlight of a visit to the house for centuries. Colt Hoare prized his grandfather's cabinet so highly that, with the help of Thomas Chippendale the Younger, he remodelled the Cabinet Room especially to show it off to his visitors.

10 Picture Gallery: influence and inspiration

Inspired by artists like Claude Lorrain, Nicolas Poussin and Andrea Locatelli, who immortalised idyllic rural landscapes in works of art, Henry set about engineering this idea in reverse at Stourhead. His vision would see the creation of a living work of art - a garden inspired by the masterpieces he admired so much. Those masterpieces, many collected on his grand tour, fill the walls in the Picture Gallery today.



Meet the makers of Stourhead

The Good. The Magnificent. The Scholar.

Good Henry (1677 – 1724)



Senior partner in his father's bank, prudent Henry earned his nickname through donations to worthy causes - funding hospitals, orphanages and bible societies.

By 1717 he was looking to invest his fortune and secure a future for his family. His solution was to buy land in Wiltshire: Stourton Manor, with its ruined castle and expansive views across ancient downland. Medieval buildings were demolished and replaced by a strikingly modern Palladian villa designed in the Italian style by pioneering architect Colen Campbell.

Proud of his achievements – he holds a drawing of Stourhead in his portrait – Henry died the year before the house was complete.

Henry Hoare 'the Magnificent' (1705 – 1785)



Charismatic banker, hard-working Member of Parliament, and extravagant grand tourist, Henry's ostentatious nickname arose from the undeniably magnificent landscape vision he created in his garden.

A family man at heart, everything Henry built he intended to share and leave to his sons, including a considerable fortune and Stourhead, his beloved family home. But, despite a privileged lifestyle, in other ways life was terribly hard on Henry and he lived to endure the hard loss of his both wives and his natural heirs.

Adamant that the family home should not be sacrificed if the family bank failed, he shrewdly negotiated with younger generations to ensure that the two institutions were inherited separately.

Sir Richard Colt Hoare (1758 – 1838)



Henry 'the Magnificent's' grandson, Colt Hoare, was known for his studious nature and his passion for the ancient world - exactly why he was chosen, above many other potential heirs, as custodian for Stourhead.

After the early death of his wife, and having been forced to give up his fledgling career at the family bank to secure his inheritance, he dealt with his grief by travelling through Europe and immersing himself in history and the arts. His grand tour lasted six years and he was eventually forced to return home by war on the continent.

Stourhead continued to thrive in Richard's hands. He preserved the garden's classical idyll, and two new wings for the house made space for ancient treasures found on his travels and newly commissioned pieces of art and furniture.



The Golden Path

Securing a future – uncover a journey of family ambition, hard work and social aspirations

'...those are the fruits of industry and application to business and shows what great things may be done by it...'

Henry Hoare 'the Magnificent', 1753



The Grand Tour

European culture, ideas and treasures – trace the Italian influences at Stourhead

'A love for drawing and literature induced me to visit this once happy and enlightened country; and a desire of examining the less frequented and most picturesque provinces...'

Sir Richard Colt Hoare writing about his travels in Italy, 1812



The Painterly Eye

Celebrate the changing fashion of garden design – explore the new naturalistic style and the inspiration behind it

'...Nature has formed the outline and art has completed the picture.'

Sir Richard Colt Hoare, 1834