

# Open House



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Garden Court Chambers, 57-60 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3LJ

## Introduction

Welcome to Garden Court Chambers. These are two buildings remarkable for their architecture, historical and literary associations. The current occupiers, a barristers' chambers, which moved here from the Middle Temple in August 2005, are delighted at this opportunity to share these buildings with you. Because of the confidential nature of our business this will be by guided tour.

## Construction

The two buildings are 59-60 and 57-58 Lincoln's Inn Fields. 59-60 was built by 1640 as part of London's first garden square and is the only remaining example of its type from that time (although much copied) (1). The design has been ascribed to Inigo Jones. It has been written that it shows what he intended the whole square to be like (2). These sources are over 100 years from construction (3). However Sir John Soane's Museum hold Jones's plans for a housing development round the Fields, the houses built to the same design which we see at 59/60. Although he may not have designed 59/60 specifically at the very least he provided the blueprint. More recently the specific designer (and likely builder) has been identified as Nicholas Stone, Master Mason, who worked with Jones on the construction of the Banqueting House in Whitehall (8). The land on the west side of the Fields had been used as rough pasture before, apparently for the coach horses of nearby inns. The barristers of Lincoln's Inn had opposed development, but in the 1630s (the period of the 1<sup>st</sup> Stuart Tyranny) Charles I, eager to raise money and responsive to a genuine shortage of housing, sanctioned building here and elsewhere in London (4). The exterior is virtually unchanged from completion-including the columns with the stone vases on top at the gates. A crowned female bust which once stood above the central window on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor had gone by the early 18th century. Built of brick, the front was stuccoed and painted over. Internally, the oak floor in what is now the main reception is believed to date from 1640. The well staircase is also of oak. The ornamental alcove with the coat of arms in reception dates from 1759 (Isaac Ware). The fireplace in the same room comes from Spencer Perceval's occupation (1791-1812). Sir John Soane carried out the limited works required to reunite 59-60 for Perceval in 1802 after Isaac Ware had divided them (5). Since then it has remained one building.

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The present 57-58 was built about 1730, replacing a previous structure. Although it was intended to be the same design as 59-60, it attracted early criticism (1734) for failing to be of the same quality and detracting attention from 59-60 because of its height (3). With one exception the exterior, which is of stone, has changed even less than that of 59-60. Originally it was one house with one door. In about 1795 Soane divided the house into two (the reverse of what he was later to do at 59-60), created two doors, and masked them with the current Roman Doric porch (5). The elliptical staircase running from the basement to the top of No 57 was inserted at this time and is one of the most attractive features of the building. It is one of only three known existing elliptical staircases of Soane's – apart from those in Sir John Soane's Museum also in Lincoln Inn Fields

Nos 59/60 are Grade 1 Listed.

## History and Literature

Some sources say 59-60 was lived in by Robert Bertie, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Lindsey (Charles I's general at the battle of Edgehill in 1642 – the first major battle of the English Civil War) at which he was killed. However, this association is probably a confusion with two Earl Lindseys who lived here after 1685 – and from whom its common description in the books of "Lindsey House" is derived. In 1683, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stuart Tyranny (1683-5), a friend of the family of the then occupier Lord Winchester, Lord William Russell was beheaded in Lincoln's Inn Fields after having been convicted for treason by association with the Rye House plot – the aim of which had been to assassinate Charles II and James, Duke of York – the future James II – in order to prevent a Catholic accession to the throne. In a gruesome aftermath his body was brought into the house and his head sewn back on before being carried off for burial (3) (6) (10). Some of the more imaginative members of the Chambers criminal team have declared the blood stain can be discerned on the main reception floor. Spencer Perceval has the distinction of being the only British Prime Minister to have been assassinated – on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1812 in the lobby of the House of Commons – by a bankrupt who had a grievance against the government. The deep safe in which it is believed he kept his ministerial red boxes is in reception.

57-58 has a gentler history. Edward Montagu, the Earl of Sandwich - a principal figure in organising Charles II's Restoration (and whose great grandson, also Earl of Sandwich-was the creator of the comestible) - was here between 1664 and 1666. He was the patron of Samuel Pepys, the diarist and clerk to the Exchequer under both Cromwell and Charles II. Pepys visits

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that “fine house” on a number of occasions but notes the rent was “deadly dear” - £250 a year (3). Perhaps the only radical former occupier of these buildings was John Thelwall- a late 18<sup>th</sup> century/early 19<sup>th</sup> century agitator, campaigner for Parliamentary reform, abolitionist and supporter of women’s rights. Also a prolific poet and literary polymath, Thelwall published a newspaper *The Champion*, while on the premises. His day job was elocution and speech therapy and from 1813 to 1821 he lived at No 57, with his family, while treating patients and taking students at his pioneering Institute of elocution here. Thelwall described the Institute as “for the Cure of impediments of Speech, Instruction of Foreigners, Cultivation of Oratory, English Composition and Polite Literature and the Preparation of Youth for the More Liberal Departments of Active Life” (9).

Subsequent associations occupying No. 57 in the 1820s and 1830s include the Medical and Chirurgical Society (later the Royal Society of Medicine) and the Royal Astronomical Society. The cataloguist of the medical society's library was one Dr Peter Mark Roget, author of the *Thesaurus*. A principal figure in the Astronomical Society was William Herschel, the discoverer of Uranus. It was from the attic rooms of No. 57 that observations were carried out (10).

Tulkinghorn, the lawyer to the aristocracy from Charles Dickens’ “Bleak House” lived here. Dickens described it as “a large house, formerly a house of state. It is let off in a set of chambers, and in those shrunken fragments of its greatness lawyers lie like maggots in nuts” (2) (7). Here Tulkinghorn was found one morning shot through the heart when on the point of revealing Lady Dedlock’s terrible secret to her devoted husband (7). There is a non- fictitious association with Dickens. On 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1844 he read one of his ghost stories “The Chimes” to a company of friends including the historian Thomas Carlyle at no 58 in this building, where his close friend and subsequently his executor John Forster was living from 1834-1854 (the first occasion, it appears, on which he read one of his works to an audience).

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the buildings had become the offices of Marks & Clerk, the Chartered Patent Agents, who acquired 57-58 in 1908 and 59-60 in 1918. They remained here until the transfer to Garden Court Chambers in December 2004.

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## Conclusion

Finally your guides include practising barristers from the Chambers. If you have any general questions about the legal profession or practice in the UK, we will attempt to answer them for you. We hope you will enjoy your visit.

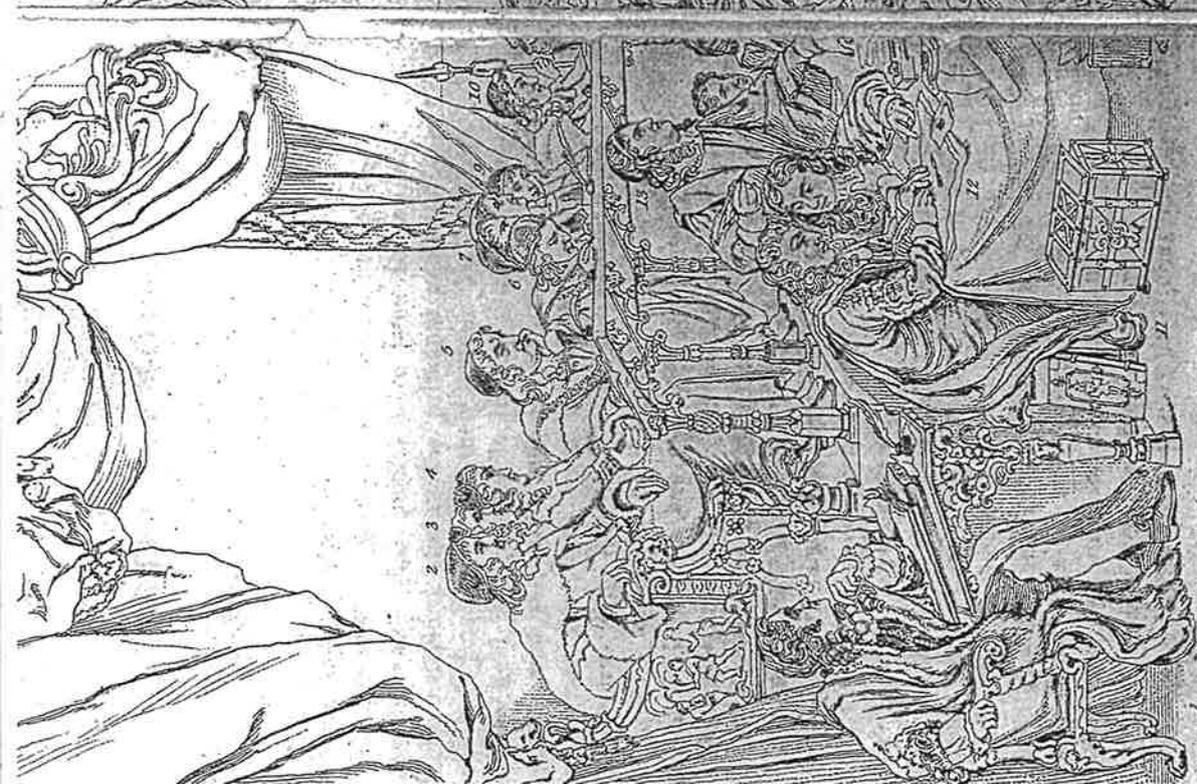
**NB Legal Papers are confidential. Although it is not intended to take you to any of the barristers' rooms, should you see any legal papers, please ignore them.**

- (1) "A guide to the Architecture of London" Jones & Woodward pub Weidenfeld & Nicholson 1992 para K-16c
- (2) Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Localities Adjacent by C.W. Heckethorn pages 89/90 pub London 1896
- (3) Volume 3 of the London County Council's Survey of London "The Parish of St Giles in the Fields" Part 1 Lincoln's Inn Fields pages 97,90, 100, 93 (cites Pepys diary entry for 10/2/1664) pub LCC 1912
- (4) The Cromwell Association website- entry for Lindsey House
- (5) "Sir John Soane and London" by Ptolemy Dean pub Lund Humphries 2006 pages 156-7
- (6) "A Student's History of England" by S.R.Gardiner Vol 2 London 1900 pages 625-6
- (7) "Bleak House" Penguin ed 1983 pages 72 and 189
- (8) "A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840" by Howard Colvin, 4<sup>th</sup> ed 2008 Yale University Press
- (9) Professor Judith Thompson, University of Dalhousie, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, member of the John Thelwall Society and Thelwall's May 1813 *Plans and Objects of Mr Thelwall's Institution*
- (10) Professor Randy Boswell, Associate Professor of Journalism and Communications, Carleton University, Ottawa
- (11) See attached copy of the painting "The Trial of William Lord Russell,1683" by Sir George Hayter c.1825, courtesy of the Hull Museums Collections website. Accompanied by a key to the people in the painting and an Art Journal extract with a note on the painter and the trial.

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1. Sheriff of London.  
 2. Judge Wingham.  
 3. Wilkins.  
 4. Lovings.  
 5. \_\_\_\_\_  
 6. Sir F. Penberton.  
 7. Judge Adams.  
 8. \_\_\_\_\_  
 9. \_\_\_\_\_  
 10. \_\_\_\_\_  
 11. \_\_\_\_\_  
 12. \_\_\_\_\_



Spectators

Spectators

Jury Box

13. Secy<sup>r</sup> Jeffries.  
 14. Ward.  
 15. Holt.  
 16. Indefsen.  
 17. Lord Howard.  
 18. Col<sup>l</sup> Ravensey.  
 19. Shiplord.  
 20. Lady Ray, Secy.  
 21. Lord Ray, Secy.  
 22. Lord R<sup>r</sup> Gentleman.  
 23. Lord Cavendish.  
 24. Duke of Somerset.  
 25. \_\_\_\_\_  
 26. \_\_\_\_\_  
 27. \_\_\_\_\_  
 28. \_\_\_\_\_  
 29. \_\_\_\_\_

26. Marquis of Halifax.  
 27. Mr Hayward.  
 28. Rev<sup>d</sup> Pittcom.  
 29. Rev<sup>d</sup> Burnett.  
 30. Secy<sup>r</sup> of the Tower.

## THE TRIAL OF LORD WILLIAM RUSSELL.

FROM THE PICTURE IN THE POSSESSION OF THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

SIR GEORGE HAYTER, Painter.

C. G. LEWIS, Engraver.

THIS picture is the work of an artist who, in the early part of the present century, enjoyed a very large share of royal and aristocratic patronage as a portrait painter. It is in this character that he is most worthily known, though he painted a few historical works which, having been engraved on a large scale soon after their production, brought his name very extensively before the public. Of these pictures the most popular, perhaps, are 'The Coronation of Queen Victoria,' 'The Marriage of the Queen,' 'The Trial of Queen Caroline,' 'The Meeting of the First Reformed Parliament,' and the picture we have here reproduced on a smaller scale. Sir George Hayter was a favourite at court, and at the time of his painting this work held the appointment of Portrait and Miniature Painter to Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, and was also a Member of the Academy of St. Luke in Rome, where he studied in his earlier days; the Academies of Parma, Florence, Bologna, and Venice also elected him a member. He was never elected into our own Academy; possibly he never entered his name as a candidate. On the accession of her Majesty, Sir George was appointed Portrait Painter to the Queen, and in 1841 Historical Painter in Ordinary. He died in 1871; but the last time he appeared as an exhibitor at the Royal Academy showed a long interval between that occasion and his decease: his latest picture seen there was a 'Portrait of her Majesty seated on the Throne of the House of Lords,' executed for the City of London, and

exhibited in 1838. Sir George received the honour of knighthood in 1842.

The trial and execution of Lord William Russell, son of the Earl of Bedford, was one of the numerous acts of cruelty and tyranny that disgraced the reign of Charles II. He was tried at the Old Bailey on the charge of being concerned in what has been historically called the "Rye House Plot," was convicted on the most disreputable evidence, and beheaded on a scaffold erected in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1683. Hayter appends to the title of his picture, as printed in the catalogue of the Academy, a passage from the "State Trials" as descriptive of his composition:—"He was assisted during his trial by his wife, Rachael, Lady Russell, and attended by many of his friends. The first two witnesses (seated in the centre of the picture) having been examined, Lord Howard of Escrick was sworn." This person, a man of very bad character, and one of the chief witnesses against Russell, was himself one of the actual conspirators, but turned king's evidence, and it was mainly on his statements that Russell was condemned. In the picture the prisoner is pointing to the two men who have already given their evidence, as if appealing to the bench against the truth of their assertions, while his devoted wife is seated underneath the "bar" taking notes. This admirable woman remained a widow during forty subsequent years, always mourning the death of her husband.

## ART NOTES FROM THE CONTINENT.

PARIS.—The French Ministry of Fine Arts has recently issued a new regulation in respect to the prize of Rome, in connection with the great annual exhibition. Hitherto the fortunate student who obtained this passport to three years' sojourn in the "City of the Soul" had but to expend that precious period in continuous toil, in the study of imaginative composition, together with the accomplishment of the maulstick and the management of mysterious magilp. This unity of plan is henceforth to submit to a triple arrangement. The student proceeds in the first instance to Rome, where he pursues his vocation for one year; thence he makes for Madrid, associating for another year with the spirits of Velasquez and Murillo; and, for his concluding pilgrimage, draws nutriment from the rich reminiscences of Flanders and its Dutch vicinity. For each locality an appropriate task is assigned to him, viz. a *tableau*, in which historic recollections of the *locus in quo* connected with France and Frenchmen will be illustrated. These are to be transmitted each year to Paris. Thus *on change tout ça*.

*Parisian Exhibition of Sketches by the Old Masters*.—The great success of the collection of Old-Master Sketches in London has had the effect of stimulating an effort of the like kind in Paris. There did not, however, exist in regard to both cases a similar desideratum. In England a temporary void of the deepest interest had to be, for awhile, filled up. Our neighbours have, on the other hand, the permanent possession of that invaluable collection of such *reliques* as we allude to, crowning their Louvre treasures, and ever under their eyes. Where will the toiling student or fervid amateur be most surely found, but in lingering contemplation of those cabinet gems in retired saloons

where they are garnered? The Ministry of Fine Arts, however, gave a full concurrence to this proposed presentment of a most welcome surplussage, wherein was veritably realised the admirable result—without overflowing, full. A few leading collectors responded with free hands to the call made on this occasion, and close upon seven hundred sketches and finished drawings, illustrating the mastership of the great old schools, were consigned for exhibition to the *École des Beaux Arts*. Conspicuous amongst abundant Florentine contributions were the names of Michel Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, and Fra Bartolommeo. Rome gave some twenty drawings of Raffaele and Giulio Romano; from Venice came Titian, Bellini, Paul Veronese, Canaletto, and Sebastian del Piombo; Lombardy contributed Correggio and Luini; Bologna sent Guercino, Annibale Carracci, and Primaticcio. From Spain appeared Murillo, Velasquez, and Zurbaran; Germany, Dürer and Holbein. From the older Flemish came Van Dyke, Rubens, Van Eyck, Memling, Teniers, and Goltzius; from Holland, Cuyp, Rembrandt, Wouvermans, Ruysdael, Hobbima, Paul Potter, Van de Velde. The French school had its Poussin, Claude, Bouchet, Greuse, Fragonard, Prud'hon, and many others, closing with the last century. The names of Hobbima, Ruysdael, and Van de Velde were conspicuous for exquisitely finished water colours. For the finest part of this rich review of time-honoured Art Paris has reason to be grateful to the Duc d'Aumale. Our British Malcolm collection followed spiritedly, as did that of Mitchell. The prominent group was filled up with the names of De Chennevières, Armand, Dutuit, Dumenil, and other conspicuous amateurs. There is no doubt that the success of this exhibition will lead to others of a similar kind.