

National Trust Press Release

15 September 2009

Coral paint and kitsch accessories surprise visitors to Victorian home

The start of September saw the opening of a fascinating part of the house at the National Trust's **Scotney Castle**, near **Lamberhurst**. The kitchen, butler's pantry and small dining room joined the other rooms that are already open in the public eye. And the bright, modern kitchen has already proved quite a talking point as it's certainly not in keeping with the décor of the rest of the house.

The kitchen boasts a bright coral coloured wall plus a collection of kitsch accessories, including old sweet-shop style jars, spotty crockery and a plastic clock that makes a different bird noise on the hour! It is also the favourite resting place of Mrs Hussey's cat who is often the highlight for visitors.

House Manager Chloe Tapping says: "This house is truly unique. It shows brilliantly the different eras of occupation from the Victorian décor and furniture in the dining room to the Edwardian clothes that we found hidden away in draws and the completely refurbished kitchen and modern accessories dotted around the other rooms."

The last owner of the house, Betty Hussey, refurbished the kitchen in the 1980s. It is said that she could afford to do this because she received a sum of money as a result of *Yanks*, the film starring Richard Gere, being partly filmed here.

After her husband Christopher's death, Betty loved to spend time in the kitchen. She was herself a trained chef. Old recipes of hers have been recently found at Scotney and the team hope to display them in the kitchen for people to see in the near future.

"One of the more unusual things in the kitchen", Chloe continues, "is that Betty, who was friends with the renowned modern artist John Piper, hung a painting of his that he gave to her above the Belling cooker! This seems a rather odd place to hang what many consider to be an important work of art, but we have left it there because we wanted to present the whole house as she would have had it, just as though she has popped out for a while. That is why this place is so unique and why so many people seem to love it."

The Trust plans to open more upstairs rooms next year, but this will depend on whether enough volunteers can be recruited to help. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at Scotney there will be an **open day** in the New Year offering you the opportunity to meet existing volunteers and hear about what the role of a volunteer room guide entails. Plus you will get to preview some of

the rooms that are currently not open to the public. Please call 01892 893868 for further information.

Ends

For images and media enquires please contact:

Michelle Cleverley, Communications Officer (National Trust South East): 01372 455045 or michelle.cleverley@nationaltrust.org.uk