

W ^{T H E} WALLACE COLLECTION

Out of the Frame Loan Boxes



Gossip and Scandal



Gossip and Scandal



Contents

1	How to use the Box
2	10 Basic Questions
3	Thoughts about the Pictures
4 5	The Founders of the Wallace Collection
6 7	The Swing
8 9	Robert Dudley, Earl of Essex
10 11	Mrs Mary Robinson (Perdita)
12 13	Celebration of the Birth
14 15	Snuff Box
16 19	The Women of the Family
20 27	Poems

The creation of this material by The Wallace Collection has been financed by the Skills Funding Agency through the Community Learning Innovation Fund managed by NIACE.

Copyright in this material is vested in the Crown but it is made freely available through an Open Government Licence. This licence enables you to use and adapt the material but you must attribute The Wallace Collection as the creator and include details of the licence.

Full details of the licence are available at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence>

How to use the Box

The theme of this Box is **Gossip and Scandal** and in the Box you will find:

- A booklet which tells you information about paintings and objects from the Wallace Collection.
- Images of the painting or objects.
- Handling items, fabrics and costume relating to the paintings/objects.
- An ipad, with preloaded resources such as images, and audio descriptions and much more.

It's all about the picture

- The picture or object is the important thing. Encourage your resident to tell *you* what they see. Guide them where necessary, by suggestion, by asking questions, by giving a finger to follow, but unless they have very poor sight, try and avoid telling them what's there. Discovery is exciting.

One thing at a time

- Keep the questions and the handling to one at a time. Too many questions, or surrounding your resident with all the handling objects at once can be confusing. Finding an interesting facial expression, stroking a feather or pondering a question will be enjoyed much more without distractions.

Break it up!

- Look at the image or object in short bursts. Introduce conversation, tactile resources, activities to give a break – then go back to it. 'Real looking' is absorbing but also tiring physically and mentally.

Share your thoughts

- There are lots of ways to read a painting, some of them based purely on personal preference. Share your opinions and feelings about the picture with your resident, especially if your tastes are very different.

Know when to stop!

- You may want to look at 'just one more thing', but if the resident has clearly had enough, take the box away and look at it on your own! Always leave them wanting more.

10 Basic Questions

These can be used to help find details in the works of art and stimulate discussions with your residents.



- ? What can you see?
- ? Can you find the...? Shall we see if we can find the...?
- ? What colour is the...? Is there anything else the same colour in the picture?
- ? How many ... are there? Shall we count them?
- ? What do you think is the most important thing in the picture?
- ? Are we looking up or down or straight into the picture? Does that make a difference?
- ? Where do you think the light is coming from in the picture?
- ? What is lit up and what is in the shadow? Why do you think that is?
- ? What is the mood of the picture? How does it make you feel?
- ? Does the picture puzzle you, make you smile, not appeal to you? Why?

Some Thoughts about the Pictures in the Box

Robert Dudley

Elizabeth made Robert Dudley her Master of the Horse. As befitted his station in life, he was a fine horseman, but even so, Elizabeth made a clever move. The Master of the Horse had to accompany the Queen every time she went riding. Dudley had to see that the horses were prepared and then go out with her, even at five o'clock in the morning. Thus Elizabeth kept him at her side and in relative privacy. If you look at Dudley's doublet carefully, you will see that the little pearl ornaments are in the shape of Tudor roses (*right*), so even his clothing showed his devotion to the Queen.



Knickers

Until the French Revolution, women simply wore a chemise or shift under their long heavy skirts. At that time, dresses became light and semi-transparent in the 'Empire' style and it was necessary to wear warmer undergarments. The first, known as pantalettes or drawers, were simply two legs joined at the waist with no crutch. Gradually, during Victorian times, the drawers were joined into a single garment called 'knickers' after knickerbockers, a loose style of men's breeches. (*Drawing, above right: Open knickers, 1860*). At first knickers were thought shocking, and only worn by 'loose women', but gradually, the Victorians' obsession with modesty took over, and knickers were essential for the well-bred lady.



Emilie du Châtelet

Emilie du Châtelet (*right*) had the misfortune to be born in France at a time when it was considered unnecessary and ill-advised to educate girls. In spite of this, and with the encouragement of her father, she studied and soon mastered Latin, Italian and English. She married at the age of 19 and had two children, but this didn't stop her working with her tutors and also having a spirited social life at court. She captured the heart of Voltaire (*below right*), one of the greatest scholars and writers of the 18th century, and lived a great deal of the time away from the turmoil of Paris. During this time, she undertook to translate Isaac Newton's great work on the principles of mathematics into French – the first person to do so. Her third child was born in her study while she was still at work and Voltaire wrote that 'the newly born baby was placed temporarily on a quarto volume of geometry, while her mother gathered together her papers and was put to bed'. Sadly, it was shortly after the birth of this child that Emilie died, leaving Voltaire bereft and heart-broken.



The Founders of the Wallace Collection

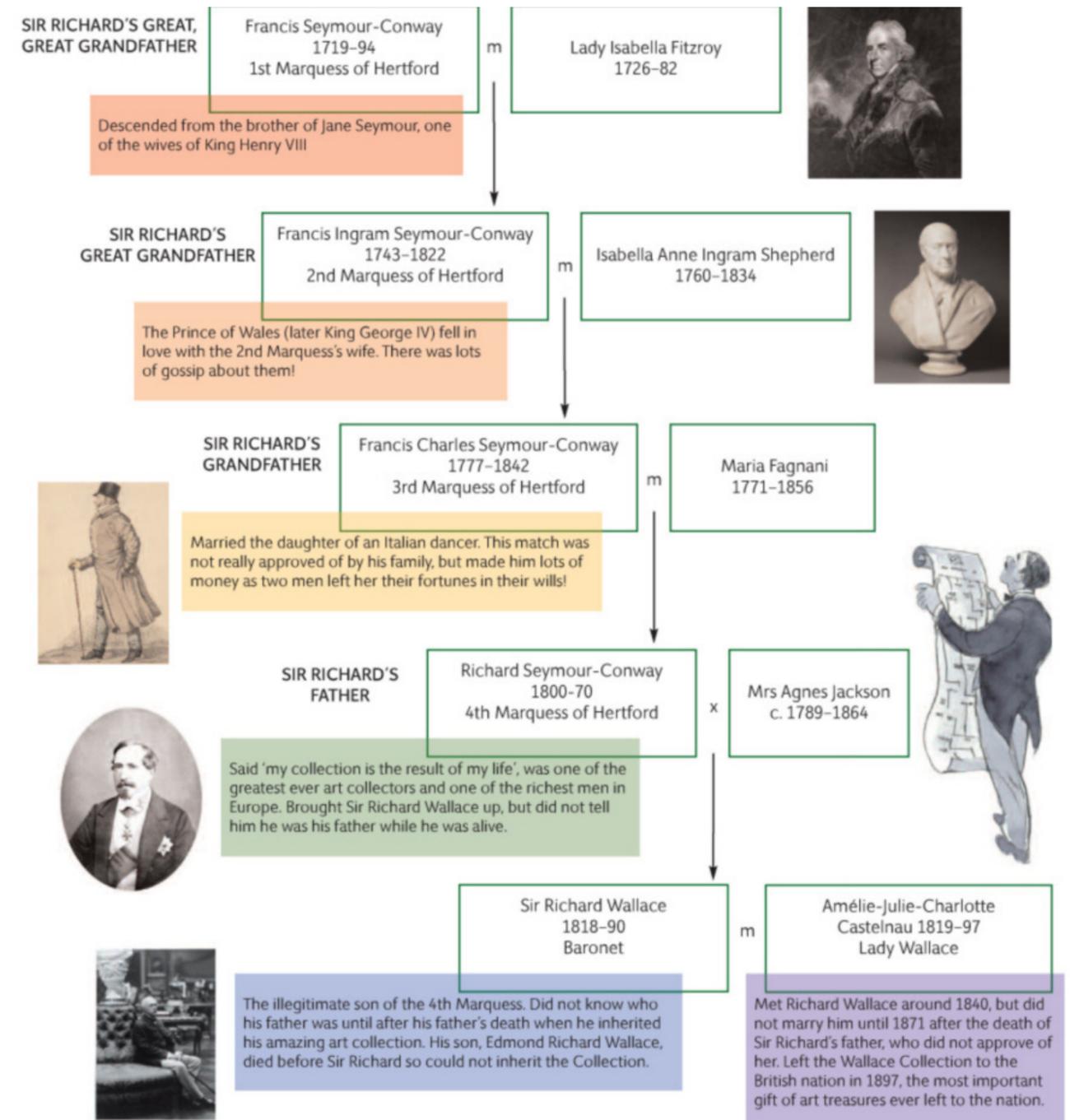


Hertford House (1776-88) and the Front State Room

Everything in this box comes from the Wallace Collection at Hertford House, in the centre of London. Hertford House was the home of the Marquesses of Hertford and later of Sir Richard Wallace, the illegitimate son of the 4th Marquess.

- In 1797 the 2nd Marquess bought the house as a hunting lodge but subsequent owners have added to it. They also added to the Collection, but the greatest of the collectors were the 4th Marquess and Sir Richard.
- When he was 18, the 4th Marquess had a love affair with a married woman, Agnes Jackson. Six years later, she left their young son Richard with him in Paris where he lived. Richard was brought up as Richard Jackson. He was never told that the Marquess was his father and later adopted his mother's maiden name of Wallace. In his early twenties, his father told him that he must settle down. Richard made enlarging and looking after the Collection his life's work.
- Richard himself had a mistress, Amélie Castelnau, who worked in a Paris parfumerie but his father didn't approve of a marriage. When the 4th Marquess died in 1870, he left the Collection to Richard. Richard discovered that the Marquess was his father and was now free to marry Amélie.
- Sir Richard performed many charitable works for which Queen Victoria created him a Baronet. He died in 1890 and left the Collection to Lady Wallace who died in 1897. Following her husband's wishes, Lady Wallace left the Collection to the Nation.

Family Tree



The Swing



Jean-Honoré Fragonard
France, 1767

Oil on canvas, 31.9 x 25.3in / 81 x 64.2cm

Description of the picture

A dainty young woman is tossed up high on a swing in a wooded glade.

She is caught in mid-air, smiling and flirtatious, against a mist of blue-green leaves. A shaft of sunlight catches her pink silk gown and her skirts swirl up in a froth of lace, showing a shapely, white-stockinged leg. On her head is a jaunty straw hat, and one little shoe flies through the air watched by a stone cupid with one finger to his lips. But someone else is watching too. Crouching back on one elbow in the midst of a rose bush is a young man, his pink cheeks the colour of the blossoms that half-conceal him. His eyes widen as he pushes the bushes aside to gaze directly up the young woman's skirts. Behind the swing, almost hidden in the shadows cast by the gnarled old tree, is an elderly man. He sits on a bench, controlling the swing with two lengths of rope. He too gazes up at the young woman, but his eyes can't share the view that delights the young man from his vantage point among the roses.

Some thoughts about the picture

According to a story told by the poet Collé, an unnamed gentleman of the court of Louis XV commissioned the painter Gabriel Doyen to paint his young mistress on a swing being pushed by a bishop, while he himself admired her from below. But Doyen was a painter of serious historical subjects and felt that the making of such a picture was not his style. He suggested the young artist Fragonard to take his place. Fragonard made the picture slightly less scandalous by showing not a bishop, but an older man without clerical robes, but still his little masterpiece is the essence of 18th century French art. No other picture captures the racy frivolity of the times with such delicacy and humour.

Discussion point: Feelings

- In the 18th century, women's knickers hadn't been invented. Their only undergarment was a kind of long shirt, called a shift. So when the young man looked up the young woman's skirts, he saw parts of her that he perhaps shouldn't have done!
- ? When you first looked at the picture, did you realise what was happening? Or did you think it was simply a charming picture of a girl on a swing? Do you think the artist was clever in the way he showed the story, but not too obviously, so you have to search for the meaning?
- ? The young woman is smiling. Do you think she is aware of the situation and is encouraging her lover? Or is she blissfully unaware of his presence and simply enjoying the moment?
- ? The painting was made for a private collection. Only a select few would have viewed it. Now it is very famous. Do you disapprove of its being available to the public, or do you think everyone should see it and delight in it?

Discussion point: Colour

- The artist uses soft pinks and greens for his enchanting little painting.
- ? How do you think these colours affect the mood of the painting? If they were brighter – reds and emerald green perhaps – would it make a difference?
- ? Do you think the deep shadows and sudden shaft of sunlight through the tall, leafy trees give the picture a romantic feel? Or is there an air of secrecy and naughtiness about the scene? What is it about the picture that makes you feel this way?
- ? What is the most romantic moment that you can remember? A first meeting? A proposal? Perhaps just a walk in a park or by the sea?



Robert Dudley, Earl of Essex



Attributed to Steven van der Meulen
c1560 - 1565
Oil on oak panel, 35.9 x 27.95in / 91.2 x 71cm

Description of the picture

Robert Dudley gazes out at us with steely blue eyes, his gorgeous golden doublet clasped high round his long neck, framing his face with a stiff, white frill, known as a ruff. His long moustache and goatee beard are carefully groomed over a sensual mouth. On his short dark hair is perched a jaunty, black velvet hat bedecked with jewels and a cluster of gold and white ostrich feathers. The doublet too is encrusted with jewels and gold thread. Round his neck, Dudley wears a medallion showing St George and the Dragon - the insignia of the Order of the Garter. His left hand encircles the hilt of his sword and his right hand rests on the crest of his helmet, to show him not just as a powerful aristocrat and statesman, but a great soldier too.

Some thoughts about the picture

Sir Robert Dudley was the favourite of Queen Elizabeth I. Rumour had it that they were lovers, but this was always denied and never proved, although it was common knowledge that they were very close. Robert's wife, Amy Robsart died in very strange circumstances. She was found at their house in Oxford at the bottom of a flight of stairs with her neck broken. Dudley was away at court as he usually was, but did he arrange her murder so he could marry the Queen? And was the Queen implicated? No one knows. It's one of the great historical mysteries. The Queen sent Dudley away from court till the gossip died down, but a marriage between them was out of the question now. Tired of waiting for her, Dudley secretly married Lady Lettice Knollys, a cousin of the Queen. When she found out, a furious Elizabeth banished them both. Later, he was restored to favour, but things were never quite the same between them and he died a proud and passionate man, his ambitions unfulfilled.

Discussion point: Sir Robert Dudley

- Robert Dudley was the fifth son of the Duke of Northumberland and knew Elizabeth before she was Queen. They lived in tumultuous times. Robert's brother, Lord Guildford Dudley, had been married to Lady Jane Grey, the 'nine day queen' and both had been executed for treason. Robert was thought to have been involved and narrowly escaped their fate.
- ? Looking at the painting and thinking about their past, why do you suppose Elizabeth might have fallen in love with Robert Dudley? What sort of man do you think he was?
- ? If Elizabeth couldn't or wouldn't marry Robert because of the scandal of his wife's suspicious death, why do you suppose she was so upset when he finally did marry again? Does it make you wonder what their relationship really was?
- ? In spite of their difficult situation, Dudley was never far from Elizabeth's side and became very powerful in her government. She clearly depended on him and trusted him. Do you think that was wise? Do you think that a similar situation has ever arisen in your own times between people in power?

Discussion point: Fashion

- Robert always dressed in the height of fashion. His clothes cost a fortune, yet he was often in debt.
- ? Why do you suppose he felt he must dress so sumptuously? To keep up his status? To impress Elizabeth? Sheer vanity?
- ? Look at the detail of his doublet. What jewels can you see used for fastenings and decoration? His pearl buttons are made in the shape of the Tudor Rose. Do you think this was to convince Elizabeth of his loyalty? Or it was because he had ambitions to become the consort of a Tudor monarch?
- ? Robert chose to be painted in a fashionable hat but took care to have his armour helmet included. What would you wear to have your portrait painted? Do you think there are two sides to your personality, or even more maybe, like Robert? What things would you have in your portrait to show your various aspects?



Mrs Mary Robinson (Perdita)



Thomas Gainsborough
England, 1781
Oil on canvas, 92.01 x 60.24in / 233.7 x 153cm

Description of the picture

Perdita sits in a shady park, her handsome white dog beside her.

Fragile and pensive, Perdita's paleness is heightened by the dark wood behind her, and the stormy sky above. Her long legs are crossed gracefully under the foaming white flounces of her delicate dress, the bodice decorated with wide frills and pale blue bows. The deep scoop neck reveals the creamy flesh of her chest. A transparent scarf is twisted and tucked in at the breast. In one hand, she holds a black-framed locket open to show the picture of a man in a red jacket. In the other hand is a crumpled handkerchief. Her powdered hair is piled high, and accentuates the length of her slender face.

Some thoughts about the picture

But who is Perdita? And why does she sit, alone and enigmatic, under the trees? Her real name was Mary Robinson, but she became known as Perdita because of her success in the title role of an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* called *Perdita and Florizel*, in which the 17-year-old George, Prince of Wales, first saw her and fell in love with her. Perdita was 23. For many months he pursued her, sending her highly-charged love letters signed Florizel, but she refused him. Unlike many actresses of her time, Perdita was mindful of her reputation, but finally, when the Prince made promises for her financial security, she relented and left the stage to become his first mistress. Within a year, the fickle young Prince had abandoned her. She struggled to get him to honour his promise. On the return of his love-letters, a Crown annuity was granted her but was rarely paid. Her acting career was lost. She scraped a living with her writing and died in poverty aged only forty-two.

Discussion point: Perdita

- Perdita was a very successful actress and considered a great beauty.
- ? How do you think the artist has portrayed her? What is her expression – is she sad, or happy, thoughtful or restless? Is she a romantic figure, do you think?
- ? Do the things she is holding tell us more about her and her feelings? The Prince is probably portrayed in the locket, and she holds a crumpled handkerchief. Is the artist on Perdita's side, or the Prince's do you think?
- ? A dog in a picture sometimes stands for faithfulness. Do you think Perdita's dog is a sign of her fidelity to the Prince, or is it simply a companion in her loneliness?

Discussion point: Public opinion

- Perdita's relationship with the Prince was a great scandal. She was an actress, a career not considered respectable in many quarters, she was beautiful and clever and so an object of jealousy, and she was six years older than the Prince, an age gap also not considered respectable.
- If Perdita and the Prince were alive now, would there be such a fuss? Do you think the gossip was worse because of the Prince's royal status? Do we gossip about the Royal Family nowadays?
- What do you think about the age gap? Do you think it mattered? Do you think it contributed to the Prince's short attachment to Perdita?
- Some reports accused Perdita of blackmailing the Prince, using his love letters to get the money she had been promised. Do you think that was true, or do you think she had little option, once her career had gone?



Celebration of the Birth



Jan Steen
Netherlands, 1664
Oil on canvas 34.5 x 42.1in / 87.7 x 107cm

Description of the picture

Brilliant colours and lots of activity set the scene for a happy family event.

A proud father holds up his newborn tightly wrapped in red. Around him swarm womenfolk, servants, neighbours, all busy celebrating, except perhaps for his wan-looking wife recovering in bed in the background. Quite a party – but for just one sinister figure who looks on with a crafty smile and who is about to leave through the open door.

Some thoughts about the picture

The figure holds up two fingers above the baby's head, telling us that the father is a cuckold – the baby isn't his, but the sinister stranger's. The strange, out-of-place objects refer to old Dutch sayings and are other signs that all isn't well in this cheerful household. Jan Steen is making us smile, but giving us a moral story too.

On the floor lies a warming pan – the marriage-bed is cold. Food on the floor is sometimes used a sign of a badly run household and broken eggs of someone's sexual misdoings. Behind the two cooks, a young girl hangs up a limp sausage, maybe to tell us that the father is impotent.

On the right, the midwife and a cook hold out a hand. Father reaches for his purse. The young woman with her back to us may be learning a moral lesson, but she's wearing red stockings and her shoe slips off – probably signs that she's already 'no better than she should be'. Next to her, a pregnant girl sips wine, something we would disapprove of today.

Discussion point: Symbols

- The artist gives us a cheerful scene until you read the signs he has put in to tell you that this is a dysfunctional family.
- ? Do you like the painting better now you know the truth about it, or did you like it better before?
- ? Which things in the picture would you disapprove of most – the money-grubbing women, the broken vows, the careless, dirty habits, the wine drinking pregnant girl?

Discussion point: Characters

- Each of the characters in the picture is very distinct and tells us what kind of person they might be and even what they are thinking perhaps.
- ? An old woman looks down at the pregnant girl. What might she be saying to her? Does she want her to stop drinking or has she given her the wine herself?
- ? Behind the table is a fat woman in a white ruff. She has her arms folded comfortably across her ample bosom and looks up at the baby with a little smile. Is she just admiring the new addition or is she smugly aware of what's going on in the family?
- ? How is the mother feeling? Does she feel guilty, or doesn't she? With a mocking grin, the real father of the baby is about to leave - does she care about that?
- ? And the young maid hanging up the sausage has a troubled expression on her face. Is she sorry about what's happened, or is she worried that she too might be unmarried and pregnant?

Discussion point: Colours

- Jan Steen uses clear bright colours to tell us his story. But the vivid reds have a message. The baby is wrapped in red, the young woman wears scarlet, especially her stockings, and the chair she touches is red. This is the chair of the head of the household, which should be father's - but it's empty. He isn't in control. But elsewhere, colours gleam – on the pewter plates, the jug, the cheeks of the cook, the white of the tablecloth.
- ? Do you think the colours give us mixed messages – cheery but at the same time a warning about what we see?
- ? Do the bright colours help you to enjoy the painting and forget about the message?



Snuff Box



Probably Johann Christian Neuber, Germany, c1775
 The miniatures probably late 18th century or later.
 Gold, cornelian, ivory and gouache, painted and inlaid
 Height 1.5in / 3.5cm: Width 3.25in / 8.1cm: Depth 2.375in / 5.7cm
 Weight (with miniatures) 7.1oz / 201.6 g
 Gold content 56.5% (approximately 14 carat)

Description of the snuff box

Snuff-boxes were widely used in the 18th and 19th centuries and held ground tobacco leaves, known as snuff, that were inhaled through the nose. Although this oval-shaped snuff-box is often referred to as 'Voltaire's snuff-box' it is now certain that it never belonged to the great French writer and philosopher. The box is made of cornelian, an orange-red semi-precious stone set in a spider's web of metal. On the lid is a tiny carved image of Leda and the Swan, one of the many scandalous stories told of the love affairs of the Greek God Zeus.

Some thoughts about the snuff box

We know that the box had always contained two miniatures, but who the original lovers were and why the new ones were inserted, we don't know. Voltaire and Emilie's notorious affaire lasted for sixteen years and was one of the scandals of the age. They visited the court of King Louis XV as a couple and lived together openly, apparently with the approval of Emilie's husband who lived with them, spending his time hunting while they pursued their scholarly interests. Sometimes they worked as a team, sometimes separately, sending each other notes about their progress during the day. A guest reported that, when they argued, they spoke to each other in English. So although their relationship was undoubtedly considered outrageous, it was in fact a marriage of minds as much as a passionate affaire and when Emilie died in 1749, Voltaire wrote to a friend: 'It is not a mistress I have lost but half of myself, a soul for which my soul seems to have been made.'

Discussion point: The snuff box

- Because of the two hidden portraits, it was thought that the snuff-box belonged to Voltaire, but it is now known that it was made 25 years after Emilie's death and when Voltaire was much older than he appears in the picture.
- ? So who might have wanted a snuff-box with their pictures hidden in it? The couple had no children, but perhaps there were other relations who wanted to celebrate their affaire. Or might someone have had it made, persuaded possible collectors that it *had* belonged to Voltaire and made more money that way?
- ? Do you think it matters that we don't know the full story of the snuff-box? Or should we just enjoy the mystery and let it add to our appreciation of a little treasure?

Discussion point: Leda and the Swan

- Leda and the Swan is a story from Greek myth. Zeus, King of the Gods, fell in love with a beautiful mortal, Leda, but he didn't want his wife, Hera, to find out about yet another of his many infidelities. He visited Leda disguised as a swan, deceiving both the young woman and his wife. One of the results of the affaire was Helen of Troy, the great beauty who caused the Trojan War.
- ? Do you think that the story of Leda is a suitable one to portray on the snuff-box? Although sometimes thought of as romantic, Leda's relationship with Zeus was short-lived and possibly violent. Does this fit with the relationship of Voltaire and Emilie? Do you think there was any deception in their story? Was it a true romance or just another myth?
- ? The stories from the Greek myths were very popular in Voltaire's day. They are read and enjoyed still. Do you know any others? If you had a tiny object to decorate with a scene from one of them, which would you choose? Or perhaps you would choose a more modern story – James Bond or Jack Aubrey perhaps, or going back a little, Elizabeth Bennett and Mr Darcy.

Discussion point: Snuff

- Taking snuff was a way of enjoying tobacco before the invention of cigarettes. The powder was placed on the back of the hand, lifted to the nose and sniffed. The habit was messy and left stains but was fashionable thing. Snuff is increasingly taken today because of the ban on cigarettes in public places.
- ? Do you fancy taking snuff? Would the idea of owning a pretty trinket like the Voltaire box tempt you? What do you feel about cigarettes?
- ? Snuff comes in a range of texture and moistness and can be scented with flowers or spices or flavoured with menthol. Do you think that's a little strange?



The Women of the Family



The Hon. Isabella Ingram-Shepherd, 2nd Marchioness
by John Downman, England, 1781
Black chalk, stump, pastel and wash with white heightening on paper
Image size: 8.26 x 6.57in / 21 x 16.7cm, in an oval mount

Gossip and scandal certainly followed the Marquesses of Hertford. With every generation there was another cause for fingers to point and tongues to wag. You can read a brief outline of their story on pages 4-5 of your booklet. But a brief outline hardly does it justice. Illegitimate children, outrageous extravagance, intriguing personalities, and that's just the men. Let's have a look at some of the women involved too.

Isabella Ingram-Shepherd, 2nd Marchioness of Hertford

Compare the stern, statesmanlike bust of the 2nd Marquess (*left*) with the enchanting painting of his wife, the Hon. Isabella Ingram-Shepherd, with her rouge, her frills and feathers, her ringlets and her little secret smile. Small wonder that the Prince Regent (*below left*) was bewitched by her and constantly sought her company. It is said that he called at Hertford House in his yellow carriage and stayed from 3 o'clock till 5 o'clock every day. The 2nd Marquess held an important position at court and the Marchioness had great political influence over the Prince. He presented the Marquess with Gainsborough's portrait of Perdita, his first mistress. Was that a 'thank you' for favours received from the Marchioness as was widely rumoured? Or was the liaison as innocent as was claimed by the family? Outrageous cartoons of the Prince's unseemly passion flooded the coffee houses of London, and when the then youngest member of the family, the future 4th Marquess, heard that the Prince had been seen riding with Lady Conyngham, his new favourite, he said: 'By God, our grandmother must learn to ride or it is all up with us.' To him, their political status was at stake.



Maria Fagnani, 3rd Marchioness of Hertford
by Richard Cosway
England, 1791
Painted on ivory, 2.99 x 2.48in / 7.6 x 6.3cm

Maria Fagnani, 3rd Marchioness of Hertford

The most infamous member of the family was the 3rd Marquess (*right*). The heir to the Hertford title is known as the Earl of Yarmouth. This Lord Yarmouth had red hair and was known as 'Red Herrings'. He caused a scandal by marrying Maria, the illegitimate daughter of a beautiful Italian dancer. This made her unacceptable in polite society no matter how genteel her behaviour. Two men claimed to be Maria's father, both of whom were extremely wealthy and left her large sums of money. But the 3rd Marquess was notorious for his libertine ways. On his death, Lord Greville said of him: 'no man ever lived more despised nor died less regretted', and William Thackeray, the great novelist, creates a vivid picture of 'Red Herrings' as the wicked Marquess of Steyne, in *Vanity Fair*:

'Lord Steyne's barouche, blazing with heraldic devices, came whirling along the avenue, borne by the almost priceless horses, and bearing Madame de Belladonna lolling on the cushions, dark, sulky and blooming,...old Steyne stretched at her side with a livid face and ghastly eyes. Hate, or anger, or desire, caused them to brighten now and then still, but ordinarily they gave no light, and seemed tired of looking out on a world of which almost all the pleasure and all the best beauty had palled upon the worn-out wicked old man.'

On the other hand, in her memoirs, Harriet Wilson the famous English courtesan suggests that he was more sympathetic than other aristocrats she met in the course of her spectacular career. Whatever the truth of the 3rd Marquess's character, after the birth of their son Richard, the 4th Marquess (*right*), Maria lived alone in Paris while her husband roamed Europe. She took a lover herself, and gave birth to Lord Henry Seymour who was brought up as a member of the family. Permanently estranged from 'Red Herrings', Maria became affectionately known to the family as Mimi.



The Women of the Family (cont)



Julie-Amélie-Charlotte Castelnau, Lady Wallace
by Ch. Lebourg, France, c1872
Marble. Height 2.33ft / 71cm

Julie-Amélie-Charlotte Castelnau

But perhaps the greatest scandal of all that haunts the elegant rooms of Hertford House is that of Sir Richard Wallace himself (*left*). Born out of wedlock, Richard was taken to France at the age of six by his mother, Mrs Jackson, and left with his father, the 4th Marquess. He was brought up in Paris largely by his grandmother, Mimi. His uncle Henry became very fond of the little boy, although his father never acknowledged him. Richard grew up to be charming and popular, perhaps thanks mostly to Mimi and Henry's care and affection. But his father did pay Richard's debts when he got into financial trouble, and took him on as his secretary, gradually placing the collection in his care. The 4th Marquess never married, though he lived for many years with his mistress, Mme Oger, and forbade Richard to marry his own mistress, Amélie-Julie-Charlotte Castelnau (*above, and below left*). Amélie was said to have been an assistant in a Paris parfumerie, probably a humble position. An enigmatic figure, almost nothing is known about her except that after she moved to London, she refused to speak English, living alone in Hertford House seven years after Richard's death. In spite of Richard leading a full life on the side, his relationship with his mistress lasted for thirty years. They had a son and grandchildren, all illegitimate, and there are descendants still surviving in France. Though still not acknowledging Richard officially as his son in his Will, when he died, the 4th Marquess left Richard the Collection. Eligible bachelor as Richard was, he could have married anyone he chose, but he remained faithful to Amélie. She became Lady Wallace and, in accordance with his wishes, left the Wallace Collection to us all.

Discussion point: Scandal

- The scandals that dogged the Hertfords over the years were many and various and would have brought down many a less wealthy and aristocratic family.
- ? Having discovered all this information about the Hertford family, what do you think of them now? Does their story amuse you or does it make you sad?
- ? Do you think that stories such as theirs would be considered as scandalous today? Do you think we enjoy other people's misdemeanours in the same way? Do you think we do still consider it misbehaviour or do we accept it as simply 'the way human beings are' and ignore it?
- ? Lots of soaps on television are really about scandal but at one removed from us. Do you enjoy them? If so, which ones? Do you think they make us more or less interested in scandal? Are we still as critical as people were in the past?
- ? How much of these stories is true, do you think? Do you think that the 2nd Marchioness's relationship with the Prince Regent was purely platonic? How does the Prince Regent come out of the story? Do you think that a portrait of Perdita, his first mistress, is a strange gift? Do you think that the 3rd Marquess was as evil as Thackeray painted him? And do you think that Richard Wallace's fairy tale ending is all that it seems?

Discussion point: The women of the family

- Isabella, 2nd Marchioness of Hertford, Mimi, 3rd Marchioness, and Julie-Amélie-Charlotte, Lady Wallace, were all the cause of scandal, by their behaviour, by rumour, or by their own or their parents' status or profession.
- ? Do you feel sorry for any of these women? Which one do you think had the most difficult time?
- ? Do you think the scandals were their fault? Do you think their wealth made up for the various kinds of humiliation they suffered? How do you think each woman might have dealt with her problems?
- ? Do you think it was easier to bear public ridicule and slander like Isabella, or not to be considered as suitable wives by the family itself like Mimi and Julie-Amélie-Charlotte, and perhaps the shadowy Mme Oger too?



Some Poems

to enhance your enjoyment of the pictures

Gossip and scandal have given rise to some entertaining verse.
Some, like the following, are anonymous.

Georgie Porgie, pudding and pie,
Kissed the girls and made them cry
When the boys came out to play,
Georgy Porgy ran away!

There was a little girl, who had a little curl,
Right in the middle of her forehead.
And when she was good, she was very, very good,
And when she was bad she was horrid!

There was an old woman,
And what do you think?
She lived upon nothing
But victuals and drink,
Victuals and drink
Were the chief of her diet,
And yet this old woman
Could never keep quiet.

There was a young woman from Wantage
Of whom the Town Clerk took advantage.
Said the Borough Surveyor:
'Indeed you must pay 'er,
You've totally altered her frontage.



Sandys Watson in his limerick, and Gavin Ewart in his single stanza
Miss Twye, have given us two more little gems.

There was a young person of Mullion,
Intent upon marrying bullion,
By some horrible fluke,
She married a duke
And had to elope with a scullion

Miss Twye

Miss Twye was soaping her breasts in the bath
When she heard behind her a meaning laugh
And to her amazement she discovered
A wicked man in the bathroom cupboard.

Hengist and Horsa

This poem by Desmond Carter perhaps tells us a little of how petty gossip usually is.

Hengist was coarser than Horsa
And Horsa was awfully coarse.
Horsa drank whisky
Told tales that were risqué,
But Hengist was in a divorce.
Horsa grew coarser and coarser,
But Hengist was coarse all his life.
That reprobate Horsa
Drank tea from a saucer,
But Hengist ate peas with his knife.

A Frosty Night

Robert Graves' *A Frosty Night* seems like the very promising beginning to a scandal:

'Alice, dear, what ails you,
Dazed and lost and shaken?
Has the chill night numbed you?
Is it fright you've taken?'

'Mother I am very well,
I was never better.
Mother, do not hold me so,
Let me write my letter.'

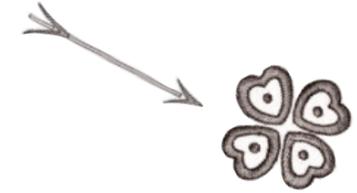
'Sweet, my dear, what ails you?'
'No but I am well.
The night was cold and frosty –
There's no more to tell.'

'Ay, the night was frosty,
Coldly gaped the moon,
Yet the birds seemed twittering
Through green boughs of June.'

'Soft and thick the snow lay,
Stars dance in the sky –
Not all the lambs of May-day
Skip so bold and high.'

'Your feet were dancing, Alice,
Seemed to dance on air,
You looked like ghost or angel
In the starlight there.'

'Your eyes were frosted star-light;
Your heart, fire and snow.
'Who was it said, "I love you"?'
'Mother, let me go!'



Perhaps Alice was heading for disaster and all that an abandoned love brings, but not all abandoned lovers are as forgiving as the playwright William Congreve:



False though she be to me and Love,
I'll ne'er pursue revenge;
For still the charmer I approve,
Though I deplore her change.

In hours of bliss we oft have met –
They could not always last;
And thou the present I regret,
I'm grateful for the past.

Lord Byron, the source of many of the worst scandals of the early 19th century, was anything but forgiving of Lady Caroline Lamb, who stalked him for months at the end of their brief affair and who wrote the word 'Remember me!' on the flyleaf of a book she sent him.

Remember thee! remember thee!
Till Lethe quench Life's burning stream
Remorse and shame shall cling to thee,
And haunt thee like a feverish dream!

Remember thee! Aye doubt it not.
Thy husband too shall think of thee:
By neither shalt thou be forgot,
Thou false to him, thou fiend to me.

Whether Shakespeare was the subject of gossip, we don't know, but his some of his sonnets suggest that perhaps he might have been. Here he rails against the woman he loves in a way that tells us that perhaps he loved unwillingly, as many an object of scandal has done.

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun;
Coral is far more red, than her lips red:
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun;
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks;
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
The music hath a far more pleasing sound:
I grant I never saw a goddess go,
My mistress when she walks, treads on the ground:
And yet by heaven, I think my love as rare,
As any she belied with false compare.

The Sorrows of Werther

William Makepeace Thackeray savagely satirised 'Red Herrings' the 3rd Marquess of Hertford in his book *Vanity Fair* but in *The Sorrows of Werther* uses his wit to satirise the folly of a man in love.

Werther had a love for Charlotte
Such as words could never utter;
Would you know how first he met her?
She was cutting bread and butter.

Charlotte was a married lady,
And a moral man was Werther,
And for all the wealth of Indies,
Would do nothing for to hurt her.

So he sigh'd and pined and ogled,
And his passion boil'd and bubbled,
Till he blew his silly brains out,
And no more was by it troubled.

Charlotte, having seen his body
Borne before her on a shutter,
Like a well-conducted person,
Went on cutting bread and butter.

Advice to a Young Lady on the Subject of Alcohol

For once, listening to a poem isn't enough. Although it's fun to listen to, *Advice to a Young Lady on the Subject of Alcohol* by Eric Parrott really needs to be seen on the page to be enjoyed to the full – so have a look when you've listened to it.

Beware the man who keeps you late
When Mum said to be in by ate,
And shun the chap who, at the Palais,
Invites you to inspect his chalais.
Behave, then, as you really ought,
Refuse that second glass of pought,
Supping unaccustomed liquor
Will only make you fall the quicor;
Drinking brandies at 'The Mitre'
Is sure to go and make you titre;
And oh! that headache in the dawn
Will make you wish you'd not been bawn.
Remember, then, a maiden oughter
Shun all drink, and stick to woughter.

The Ruined Maid



Thomas Hardy's great poem *The Ruined Maid* gives us quite another picture:

And perhaps best of all another anonymous poem that you may well remember from *Palace of Variety* days.

'O 'Melia, my dear, this does everything crown!
Who could have supposed I should meet you in Town?
And whence such fair garments, such prosperi-ty?'
 'O didn't you know I'd been ruined?' said she.

'You left us in tatters, without shoes or socks,
Tired of digging potatoes, and spudding up docks;
And now you've gay bracelets and bright feathers three!'
 'Yes, that's how we dress when we're ruined,' said she.

'At home in the barton you said 'thee' and 'thou',
And "thik oon' and 'theas oon' and 't'other'; but now
Your talking quite fits 'ee for high compan-y!'
 'Some polish is gained with one's ruin,' said she.

'Your hands were like paws then, your face blue and bleak
But now I'm bewitched by your delicate cheek,
And your little gloves fit as on any la'dy!'
 'We never do work when we're ruined,' said she.

'You used to call home-life a hag-ridden dream,
And you'd sigh, and you'd sock; but at present you seem
To know not of megrims and melancho-ly!'
 'True. One's pretty lively when ruined,' said she.

'I wish I had feathers, a fine sweeping gown,
And a delicate face, and could strut about Town.'
 My dear – raw country girl, such as you be,
 Cannot quite expect that. You ain't ruined,' said she.

See him in the splendid mansion,
Entertaining with the best,
While the girl that he has ruined,
Entertains a sordid guest.

She was poor, but she was honest,
Victim of the squire's whim:
First he loved her, then he left her,
And she lost her honest name.

See him in the House of Commons
Making laws to put down crime,
While the victim of his passions
Trails her way through mud and slime.

Then she ran away to London,
For to hide her grief and shame;
There she met another squire
And she lost her name again.

Standing on the bridge at midnight,
She says: 'Farewell, blighted Love.'
There's a scream a splash – Good Heavens!
What is she a thinking of?

See her riding in her carriage,
In the Park and all so gay:
All the nibs and nobby persons
Come to pass the time of day.

Then they drag her from the river,
Water from her clothes they wrang,
For they thought that she was drowned,
But the corpse got up and sang:

So the little old-world village
Where her aged parents live,
Drinking the champagne she sends them;
But they never can forgive.

'It's the same, the whole world over,
It's the poor that gets the blame,
It's the rich what gets the gravy,
Ain't it all a bloomin' shame?'

In the rich man's arms she flutters,
Like a bird with broken wing:
First he loved her, then he left her
And she hasn't got a ring.