

husband Edwin come into focus. Edwin gave her the distinctive Seacole surname that has so facilitated documentary research.

The text includes the period of Mary's life covered in her book, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands* (1857). Rappaport engages in close analysis of that text, emphasising the insights it provides into Seacole's experiences first in Panama and subsequently, and importantly, in the Crimea. The generous, outgoing and indefatigable nature of Mary Seacole's character are drawn not only from the *Adventures* text, but strongly supported and outweighed by research into many archives and contemporary newspaper accounts, not just in the British and Jamaican archives, but from European and Australian newspapers too. Mrs Seacole was noted across the world for her work not only under fire on the battlefields, but also for her 'British Hotel' where she provided food and drink for all – from the navvies of the Land Transport Corps to the senior officers (she was privileged to view the body of Lord Raglan after his death in the Crimea) – sustenance with pricing according to means, officers paying more and so funding free medical care and food for less well remunerated fellow expeditionaries. Seacole worked despite the horrors and privations 'because I wish to be useful all my life' as she herself put it. After the Crimea, unable even to fund her laundry, as she declared in the bankruptcy court, she was nonetheless not only lauded and cheered, but also rescued from destitution by royal and public subscription and special fund-raising events.

The culmination of the text addresses her life after Crimea, her legacy and developing awareness of her significance when voted Greatest Black Briton in 2004, and today. As I write, a Seacole film is being completed, a stage show has come from New York to London and a statue stands outside St Thomas's hospital in London. Material continues to come to light, as Rappaport has shown. Among these finds is a letter written by Mary in 1869 to the eldest sister of Albert Challen, who painted the portrait that sparked Rappaport's interest and submitted it to the Royal Academy Exhibition that year. Matilda Challen (1844–1943), the recipient of this charming personal letter, preserved it in her special box of 'treasures' until her death aged ninety-nine. It is likely that the portrait, now in the National Portrait Gallery, came from the house where Matilda's nieces lived in Oxfordshire, thence eventually to the boot sale. Surely the preservation of these artefacts is an indication of the personal charisma and celebrity

of this remarkable Jamaican 'doctress' and 'sutler'?

Seacole, M 1857. *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands*, James Blackwood, Paternoster, London

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Unbuilt Strawberry Hill. By PETER N LINDFIELD. 250 mm. Pp x + 214, 204 ills (183 in col). Shaun Tyas, Donington, Lincs, 2022. ISBN 9781915774040. £35 (hbk).

Peter Lindfield was fortunate in finding in Shaun Tyas 'a publisher who demanded more images' instead of asking for them to be pared back. The illustrations in *Unbuilt Strawberry Hill*, largely provided by the Lewis Walpole Library, that treasure trove in Farmington, Connecticut, are essential for Lindfield's purposes. Walpole's written accounts of his Gothic villa shed some light on its development over the course of a quarter century beginning in 1747, but they fail to give the full picture of Walpole's back-and-forth with the many designers who were involved – the false starts, the rejected proposals, the unrealised projects and the cooling of personal relations that emerge from the dozens of sketches and plans reproduced in Lindfield's book. By way of example, Walpole's friend and principal amateur architect, John Chute, submitted thirty-two drawings for the design of the Tribune, and Richard Bentley a further 'handful'. One has the sense from this that working on Walpole's architectural commissions was not always easy: Bentley was sidelined by Chute, Johann Heinrich Müntz dismissed, Robert Adam displaced by James Wyatt. As Lindfield suggests, Walpole and his 'Strawberry Committee' were working out the new Gothic style as they went along – or perhaps as Walpole changed his mind about things (and people). The illustrations help the reader understand this process in a way that description on its own might not, especially for a reader unsure what a mouchette is, or an ogee flip. The illustrations are placed near the related text, making reference easy.

Lindfield also shows how the design of Strawberry Hill did not always evolve in the way that Walpole said it did: there is ample evidence in the book that 'the design history of

Strawberry Hill is significantly more complicated than how Walpole presented it'. He was at pains to say that the early influence of the architect William Kent and the pattern-books of Batty Langley had been rejected in favour of a more historically informed vision of Gothic style. As Lindfield's examination of drawings by Chute, Bentley and Walpole himself suggests, however, elements of Kent and Langley persisted far longer than Walpole cared to acknowledge. In spite of claims to a new-found antiquarian purity of style, Walpole continued to accept a certain hybridity, as we see in the designs of the professional architect Robert Adam in the late 1760s for the chimney-piece in the Round Drawing Room, which have both Gothic and neo-classical components. (Adam's initial design for the chimney-piece was in fact *more* Gothic than the finished product.) At the same time, it is true that Walpole and his friends moved from a 'whimsical', unscientific conception of the Gothic (which Walpole associated with Kent and Langley) to a more precise understanding based on observation and research – although one that Lindfield rightly calls an 'applied antiquarianism' that could take an imaginative approach to the source material.

The design of the house did not slavishly reproduce its stated historical models. Walpole claimed that the ceiling of the Tribune was modelled on that of the Chapter House at York Minster, and Chute's early designs bear that out – but the actual ceiling derives from Chute's more complex reworking of other sources, including the 'Heart of Yorkshire' window at the Minster. While Walpole's instructions for the chimney-piece in the Library were to produce something based on the tomb of John of Eltham, Earl of Cornwall, in Westminster Abbey, what resulted is a hybrid of that (partly as misapprehended by Bentley from an engraving of the tomb) and the designer's own musings for other, unrealised projects.

The central argument of the book is that there is no single 'Strawberry Hill Gothic'. The house evolved and accreted over time, and the influences on its design were more various than Walpole would have had one believe – including the much-disparaged Kent and Langley. As Lindfield observes, Strawberry Hill was an 'antiquarian project undertaken when the understanding of medieval design was vague' and thus a work that was continually in progress.

There are some wonderful discoveries in the book, which previous studies on Strawberry Hill have tended to overlook because of their focus on the house as it was built rather than on how it might have been. One rejected design by

Walpole, 'just recently come to light' in the holdings at Farmington, is for a panelled chamber with forty-one heraldic shields of his ancestors (mostly on his mother's side). New to this reviewer were Bentley's delightful and rather rococo designs for a columbarium, with niches for cinerary urns, and Chute's proposal for an artfully fake ruined gable on the north front of the house. There is a good section on the Chapel in the Wood that Walpole added to the grounds of his estate in 1772. Through Sir William Hamilton, Walpole bought large fragments of a tomb from Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, which were assembled with other materials to form a shrine-like Gothic confection, surmounted by the Walpole arms, that was placed in the Chapel. Lindfield's photograph of the interior of the Chapel today shows the tomb's replacement, an 'off-the-peg' statue of the Virgin Mary that dates from the period when the house and gardens were owned by a Roman Catholic college. Lindfield does not explain what happened to the tomb, which was auctioned off in the Strawberry Hill sale of 1842. The tomb seems to have disappeared from sight not long after the sale, although a few pieces of it ended up in the *pasticcio* church of St Mary & St Nicholas, Wilton. Walpole, a 'Protestant Goth', would surely be dismayed by the pious bad taste of the substitution. *Unbuilt Strawberry Hill* is also good on the links between the Castle of Otranto in Walpole's novel of the same name with the actual Strawberry Hill, noting that they are not exact architectural counterparts. (Late eighteenth-century illustrations of *Otranto* are considered in a brief appendix.)

Lindfield's book is beautiful to look at, clear in conception and lucid in description. *Unbuilt Strawberry Hill* is a valuable contribution to our understanding of a house we thought we knew.

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British Women and Cultural Practices of Empire. Edited by Rosie Dias and Kate Smith. 225mm. Pp xiii + 273, 11 col pls, 27 figs. Bloomsbury Visual Arts, Bloomsbury, London, 2019. ISBN 9781501332159. £102 (hbk).

Dias and Smith's edited volume is a very welcome addition to more material- and visual-based approaches to understanding the everyday experiences and workings of European