Great Hall and Porch - Furniture

1. **Oak Sideboard**
   Originally bought for the Dining Room in 1837 but moved to the Hall in 1858 after being displaced by the ‘buffet’.
   The date carved on the piece is 1558 (the date the House was originally finished) but the main body of the sideboard could not have been made before the 1820s. The bill from the dealer (Edward Baldock) reads ‘1837…a fine large carved oak sideboard £45, adding brackets to Do and altering date £2.10.0’.

2. **Gothic Oak Tables (4 in total)**
   A set of four finely carved in oak. Bought as lot 478 at the Fonthill Abbey Sale in 1823 for 16 guineas. They bear the ‘Latimer Cross’ which is common on Beckford objects and very similar to the Lucy ‘cross crosslets’. The Latimer cross actually identifies the Hamilton family and was used by Beckford to display his connections to the family through his mother who was a Hamilton. At Fonthill Abbey they stood in the King Edward’s Gallery with the pietra dura table.
   George had two more tables made to match; the only difference is that the two tables that were made for Charlecote have one drawer in each.

3. **Log Box**
   Oak log box with five panels and two side panels. It appears in its present position, left of the chimneypiece, in the 1845 lithograph by F.W Hulme (hanging in the Great Hall).
Pietra Dura Table
Made in the 16th Century for the Borghese Palace in Rome, it is one of the largest and most important pietra dura (literally ‘hard stone’) tables in existence.

According to Mary Elizabeth’s diary, it had been taken by the French from the Borghese villa in the time of Napoleon’s Italian campaign. The table was taken to Paris and later bought by William Beckford of Fonthill Abbey. Beckford had the gothic oak frame made and positioned it in the King Edward’s Gallery at Fonthill with the set of gothic tables also seen in the Great Hall at Charlecote. The table has stood in its current position at Charlecote since 1823. The weight of the slab, without the base, is 2290 lbs approximately and its dimensions are 9’ x 4’6”.

At the Fonthill Abbey sale in 1823, George Hammond Lucy spent more than half of his money on one item – the pietra dura table - having outbid two of Britain’s wealthiest men, King George IV and the Marquis of Westminster, to claim the piece at £1890 (the equivalent of £79,228.00 in the year 2005). The table was Lot 446 on the 14th day of the sale and was described as

‘the centre being an oval specimen of mammillated oriental onyx, surrounded by parterres of rare and beautiful jaspers and breccia, with a border of bold arabesque, of various costly and uncommon marbles…..’

Pietra dura is the term used for a piece of hardstone inlay, often using semi precious stones or marble. It has often been called ‘painting in stone’ because of the smooth, colourful and intricate detail of the finished pieces.
This decorative stonework in its simplest forms has been identified as far back as the Roman Empire, but it resurfaced and became incredibly popular in sixteenth century Rome. From Rome, it spread to Florence, where a workshop was founded by the Medici family in 1588.

Creating a piece of pietra dura was, and still is, an incredibly complex process, which relies heavily on the skills of the craftsmen, as only limited tools were used. For a large or complex piece of pietra dura, it would be a team of craftsmen working under a master, to try to reduce the amount of time needed. However, the process was still a lengthy one; for example, a table top in the Tribuna of the Uffizi is said to have taken eleven years to complete.

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### Oak Rocking chair

19th century oak elbow rocking chair carved with the impaled arms of Lucy and Acton and Apollo driving a chariot. An inscription reads

'Ladie Joyce Lucie 1592'
and
'When wearie take reste'.

### Dutch High Back Chair

These chairs are reproductions, the original chairs having been sold by the family to an American museum in the 1920s. These reproductions are now upholstered in glazed cotton, replicating the pattern of the wallpaper in the Library. This re-upholstery was done by the National Trust in the late 1940’s.

The original six chairs date from 1720 and were in the style of Daniel Marot. They were purchased by George and Mary Elizabeth from Samuel Isaacs of 131 Regent Street, London. These originals are possibly now in California.
Pew in the Porch
An oak pew dating from c.1870 with a three panelled back.

Pew in the Great Hall
Until recently, this pew was in another building on the estate, and was brought into the Hall for visitor use. There is nothing further known about this pew.