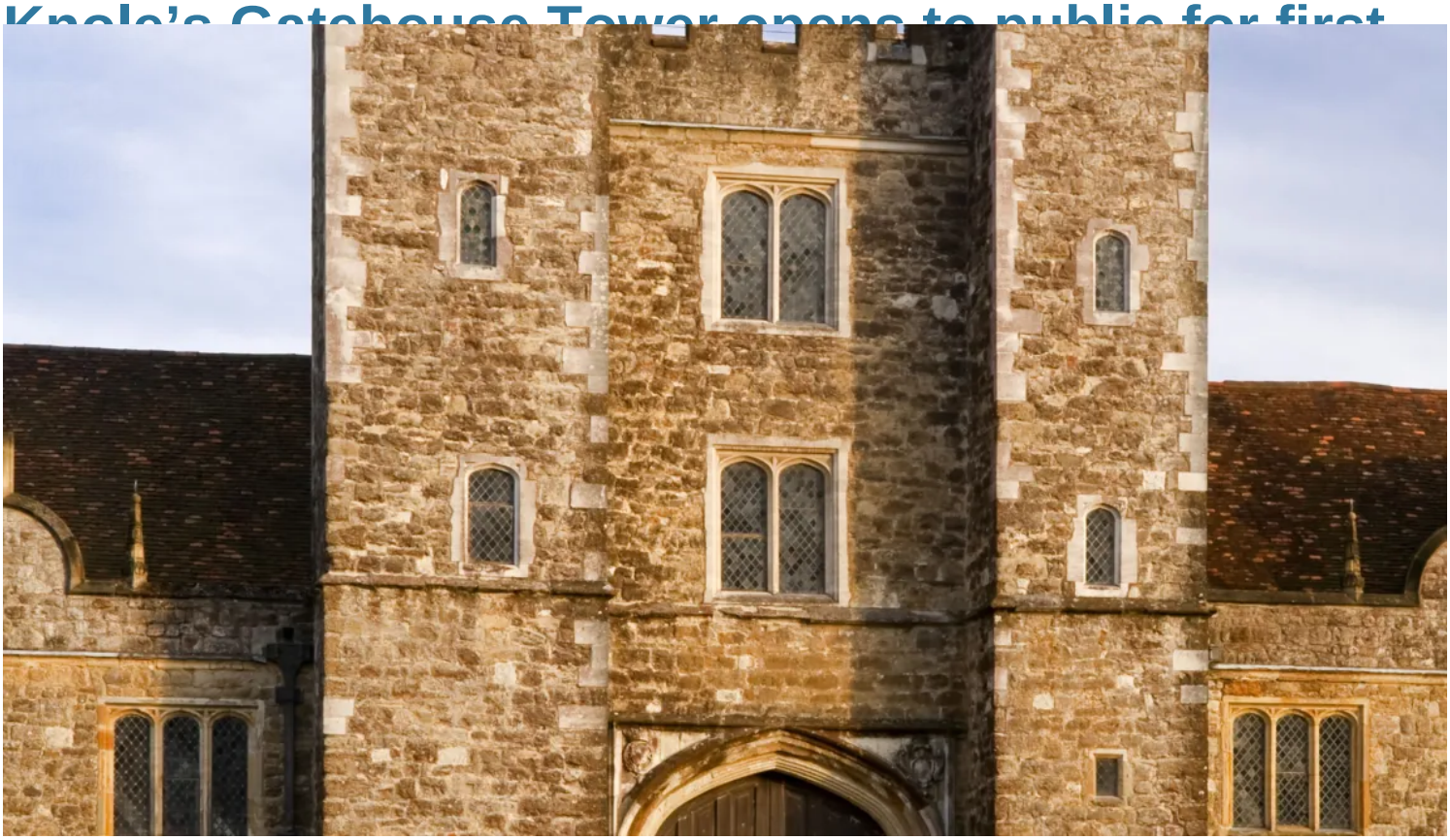
Knole’s Gatehouse Tower opens to public for first



Knole's dramatic Gatehouse Tower National Trust/Robert Morris

The National Trust unveiled Knole’s imposing Gatehouse Tower today – the first time a domestic area of this imposing Kent family home has been open to the public.

This milestone is part of a wider five-year building and conservation project to preserve Knole and its precious collection, made possible by a £7.75million HLF grant.

Steeped in history

The Gatehouse Tower’s impressive façade dominates Knole’s west front and was built for Thomas Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, between 1472 and 1474. Since the 18th century, the Gatehouse Tower entrance has served as the main thoroughfare for visitors making their way to Knole’s historic courtyards and showrooms.

[quote=Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East]“The Gatehouse Tower has always been off limits to the public; its opening now adds a fun new experience to those visiting the house.”[/quote]

Stuart McLeod, Head of HLF South East, said: “The Gatehouse Tower has always been off limits to the public. Its opening now adds a fun new experience to those visiting the house. The National Trust has worked closely with the

Sackville-Wests to share more stories about the lives of those who lived and worked at Knole and also its key role within the market town of Sevenoaks.

"Our £7.75m investment of National Lottery players' money is helping preserve this spectacular place and in so doing will attract more tourists and boost the local economy."

In the steps of the Bloomsbury Group

Visitors will be able to climb the steep spiral staircase to the top of the tower, where they will be met with panoramic views of Knole Park. It is here that Virginia Woolf's claim in *Orlando* (1928) comes to life - that Knole is "more like a town than a house".

The Gatehouse Tower's previously unseen bedroom and music room were once home to Edward Sackville-West, 5th Baron Sackville. Known to his friends as Eddy, he was a novelist and music critic who lived at Knole between 1926 and 1940. Passionate about art, music and literature, he was regularly visited by members of the Bloomsbury Group, including novelist Virginia Woolf and the painter Duncan Grant, as well as his famous cousin, gardener and poet Vita Sackville-West.

Find out more

The Gatehouse Tower will be will be open to visitors from Saturday 11 June. To find out more, please visit the National Trust's website.

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