

THE FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY

(a registered charity)

c/o Department of Furniture, Textiles and Dress,

Victoria & Albert Museum, London SW7 2RL

www.furniturehistorysociety.org

ROLE DESCRIPTION, EVENTS SECRETARY

Preamble

The Furniture History Society (the “Society”) is a membership organisation with approximately 1,000 members divided as to two-thirds in the UK and Ireland and one-third in the rest of the World (predominately North America and Europe). It is constituted as an unincorporated charity governed by an elected Council (i.e., the charity trustees). The Society is administered on a day-to-day basis by the Chairman and the three unpaid honorary officers (the Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer and Hon. Editor). They are supported by a small group of paid, self-employed contractors with responsibility for specific areas of activity (e.g., Website Officer, Finance Officer) of whom the Events Secretary is one. There are two committees: the Events committee and the Grants committee.

The Society was founded over 50 years ago to study furniture of all periods, places and kinds, to increase the public’s knowledge and appreciation of it, and to assist in the preservation of furniture and its records. It fulfils its objects by: publication (including a widely respected journal *Furniture History*, and a quarterly Newsletter); a programme of events and tours; by an educational programme including lectures and an annual symposium; and, in conjunction with the Institute of Historical Research the creation of an on-line resource, British & Irish Furniture-Makers On-line—a biographical directory of the furniture and allied trades in Britain and Ireland from 1660-1900.

The Society has capital funds of over £800,000, and an annual income of just over £149,000 p.a. derived mainly from subscriptions and the surplus on events and tours. More detail of the Society, its structure and activities may be found on the Society’s website

www.furniturehistorysociety.org

Events Secretary

The main element of the Events Secretary’s role is to organise and manage the Society’s UK-based events programme, of which the main elements are:

- Study days, usually at country houses or museums throughout the UK and continental Europe
- Tours within the United Kingdom (usually 2-3 days) and Overseas (3-5 days). At present, the overseas tours are organised and run by an Overseas Events Secretary (currently Melanie Doderer-Winkler) although the Events Secretary remains responsible for some administrative duties, including applications
- Private visits to exhibitions and to private collections
- The Annual Symposium—an all-day event and the only event open to the general public
- The Annual Lecture
- The Annual General Meeting
- Occasional special events, e.g., the 50th Anniversary celebrations

In addition, in consultation with the chair of the Events committee (currently Sarah Medlam, formerly a curator at the V&A Museum) , the Events Secretary is required to service the Events committee (including the preparation of agenda, minutes and supporting papers). The committee meets four times each year to plan the Society's external activities programme and the Events Secretary is expected to participate fully in its deliberations.

As part of his/her role, the Events Secretary is expected to attend all the Society's events and tours(necessary and proportionate expenses are paid). If he/she is unable to attend an event, the Events Secretary is expected to provide administrative support to those organizing the tours working with the Chair of the Events committee to ensure that leaders/organizers are properly briefed.

More details of the role and the duties and responsibilities are set out in the Appendix.

Terms and Conditions

The Events Secretary is a self-employed contractor retained on a Contract for Services.

Time commitment: Three days per week averaged over the year. Commitments necessarily vary from week to week. The contractor will not be required to render his/her services for four weeks per annum in consultation with the Hon. Secretary or Hon. Treasurer.

Remuneration: £1,200 per month paid 14 days in arrears against monthly invoices.

Notice: 7 days during the Trial Period and one month thereafter.

Trial period: Three months

Expenses: Proportionate, proper and necessary out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the provision of the Events Secretary's obligations will be reimbursed against vouchers and receipts provided that the Events Secretary complies with the terms of the Society's Guidelines for the Reimbursement of Expenses.

Place of work: The Events Secretary will be based at his/her home and is expected to provide all the necessary office facilities such as PC, printer; broadband access, &c. without charge. A flat-rate contribution of £5 per week will be made towards landline telephone and broadband costs.

Mobile telephone: A mobile telephone will be provided only for use in connection with the Society's activities. The rental and all business calls will be paid for by the Society.

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APPENDIX – DETAILED RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Events Committee

- Convene, prepare agenda, attend, take and distribute minutes of the Events committee's quarterly meetings
- Prepare report for the Chair of the Events committee to present to Council at its quarterly meetings
- Attend Council meetings when required (usually held at 6.00 pm on weekdays in South Kensington).
- Follow up suggestions and put together programme of events, ensuring that all events are carefully budgeted to create, overall, a small surplus for the Society

2. All Types of Events: Preparation

- Book confirm arrangements with the relevant venue/host
- Involve relevant scholar(s)/curator(s) to lead each visit
- Work out costings and decide on a charge per head, to include costs of attendance by the Events secretary, leaders or organisers, an allowance for contingency, plus a modest surplus.
- Prepare copy for the Society's Newsletter
- Receive application forms for Events (both physically and electronically)
- Advise participants of details, including catering and, if required, travel plans.
- Log and process applications as booking forms and payments (currently by cheque)
- Accept successful applications and inform unsuccessful applicants—sometimes after a ballot
- Maintain a record of attendance so that places can be allocated with the greatest possible fairness
- For each event, arrange for a vote of thanks and, where appropriate, a small gift and arrange for guide(s) and leader(s) to be entertained.
- For each event secure an appropriate Member(s) to write a report for the *Newsletter*
- For some events, especially study trips, negotiate and book hotel, catering and transport for the group well in advance as well as liaising with the individual houses/museums to be visited, and preparing package for participants,
- Continue to liaise with the venue(s) in advance, confirming list of attendees numbers for any catering, provision of guidebooks etc. as required
- For certain events, liaise with chairman of the Tom Ingram Fund (an associated grant making charity) about the feasibility of grants to qualifying applicants, and to encourage the participation of younger scholars/curators
- Specific events may require that the Events Secretary should arrange for name labels to be printed in advance.

3. Events: Participation

- Attend the day events (if necessary arriving the night before if remote location) and ensure that all runs smoothly, ensure that leaders and organisers are in place for all weekends and overseas visits
- Welcome group, introduce guide/host, keep group together and running on time, be aware of owners' security concerns and whether photography is allowed, instigate discussion if guide not forthcoming, pay bills for entrance charges/refreshments &c.

4. Events: Follow-up

- After the event send hand-written thank-you note from the Society to house owner, curator and/or outside leader
- Send any receipts to Finance Officer.
- Ensure there is a report for *Newsletter* preferably to be published within six months of the visit. Check content and) send to Newsletter Editor. To request hosts edit reports in advance and check they are happy with them pre-publication.
- For study weekends/overseas tours collate visit reports, copy and send to all participants; prepare or ask a participant/ leader to report for *Newsletter*.

5. Specific Event Requirements

Annual Symposium

- Work with the organiser of the Symposium to confirm speakers and inform them of detailed arrangements
- Marketing (production of flier for circulation to relevant institutions, PR processing of ticket applications, including EventBrite.
- Organisation of speakers' accommodation, if required
- Check AV requirements of the day
- Secure synopses of talks and CVs of speakers to assist the chairman of the day
- Arrange thank you lunch/dinner for speakers (usually day before event)
- Thank-you notes afterwards to speakers (done with Chairman)

Annual Lecture

- Liaison with speaker and with the Officers and Council of the Society; providing necessary background notes
- Organise catering including dinner for the speaker with Council Members
- Request a synopsis from the speaker of the Annual Lecture for *Newsletter*

Annual General Meeting

- Decide with Events Chairman on post AGM talks/ presentations and contact all potential participants.
- Liaison with speakers and with the Officers and Council of the Society; providing necessary background notes
- Organise catering as required (lunch after the AGM)

6. Communications

- Forward messages to the Membership and Publication secretary, the Hon Editor, the Newsletter Editors, the Chairman or other contacts, as appropriate.
- Answer any telephone queries from members/non-members. Monitor voicemails and e-mails as necessary.

7. Website

- Responsibility for Events pages which require regular updates.
- Monitor members' expressions of interests and payments
- Liaise with Website Editor over the above when necessary and any amendments/news/corrections that need to be uploaded
- Arrange e-shots for marketing of events and liaise with website editor over copy.

8. Finance

- Creating a budget for each event and agreeing it with the Chair of the Events committee and the Finance Officer
- Work with Finance Officer on annual budget and annual report.
 - Pay-in UK and overseas cheques from members if required and pass on credit card details to Finance Officer as required
 - Receive income and expense statement from Finance Officer for each event and resolve any queries.

9. General

- Assist the Hon. Secretary with the upkeep of the events archives,
- Work on Special Projects as required

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