



THE FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

No. 179

AUGUST 2010

'SAVED FOR THE NATION': MAJOR NATIONAL TRUST ACQUISITIONS AT LACOCK ABBEY AND CASTLE DROGO

The potential dispersal of indigenous loaned or privately owned contents is the greatest risk to the historic entity of National Trust houses. The retention of its historic collections *in situ* remains a key challenge for the Trust. Although the cost of securing indigenous works of art, libraries and other material is considerable, their acquisition is fundamental to the continuing purpose of the National Trust, which is encapsulated in the mantra: 'preservation and public access'. Many Trust properties have indigenous objects on loan, but those at greatest risk are the twenty-one houses where the Trust owns more than 50% of the collection; thirteen where ownership is less than 50% and six where the contents do not belong to the Trust. Fortunately, vendors and the Trust usually negotiate mutually acceptable deals by private treaty or *in lieu* of tax, without resorting to the sale room.

Two of the National Trust's major new acquisitions relate to houses long in its care, where up to two thirds of the historic contents were on loan. Much gratitude is due to the families of Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire (National Trust, 1944), and of Castle Drogo, Devon (National Trust, 1974) for their determination to work with the Trust in securing the preservation *in situ* of their inherited collections. These negotiated settlements — in which the Trust was advised by Martin Levy of Blairman's, London — will lead to re-appraisals of the presentation of both houses, involving display improvements or the opening of new rooms (see E. Debruijn et al, 'Acquisitions', *National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annual 2010*, published by *Apollo*, April 2010, pp. 34–37).

Making acquisitions — even of indigenous objects on loan for many years — involves new research and discoveries. This brief notice outlines some of the expanded potential at Lacock and Castle Drogo, with the emphasis upon newly acquired furniture. The two properties could not be more different. The former was founded as a royal nunnery in 1232, converted into a private house in 1540–50 and gothicised in the eighteenth-century; the

latter is a granite fortress on the moors high above the Teign valley built (1910–31) by Lutyens for Julius Drewe, the founder of Home & Colonial Stores. It would have been unthinkable for these significant houses to have lost the major part of their indigenous collections, so the Trust was determined to secure the loaned and private contents on offer. Had it not done so, the whole point of accepting the buildings in the first place would have been seriously prejudiced.

At Lacock, all the new acquisitions have passed by long inheritance, some from Sir William Sharington (c. 1495–1553), an unscrupulous adherent of Henry VIII, who bought Lacock in 1540 and converted the nunnery into a house. His most notable architectural contribution is a three-storey octagonal tower containing a *studiolo* or *kunstkammer* on the first floor, with a dining room and roof terrace, balustraded with Sharington's heraldic emblems in a style reminiscent of the 'King's Beasts' at Hampton Court (Fig. 1). Appropriately, the newly acquired library contains a vellum bound copy (Paris, 1595) — with a Sharington signature — of Montaigne's *Essais* (1580). Sharington's tower was clearly built in the same spirit as Montaigne's, creating a place for private study, the display of art and civilised existence, with panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. Although the treasures of Sharington's *studiolo* have long gone, a remarkable octagonal marble table with carved stone central support (c. 1540–50) stands in the centre of the room upon an octagonally laid stone-flagged floor. It and the companion table in the dining room above



Fig. 1 Lacock Abbey: Sharington's Tower (c. 1540–50). Photo: C NTPL/Andrew Butler 53078



Fig. 2 *Lacock Abbey: Sir William Sharington's Pestle and Mortar, c. 1540–50.*
Photo: C NTPL/Andreas von Einsiedel 81143

incorporate sculptural figures of satyrs, gods and goddesses. They indicate the Continental derivation of Sharington's works at Lacock, when the Henrician court was looking abroad for inspiration and patronage.

Among the new acquisitions are a bell-metal pestle and mortar, c. 1540–50, inscribed 'W Sharington' with his ubiquitous scorpion crest, which also appears upon 300 tiles from a colourful ceramic pavement (Fig. 2). This was probably made in Worcester, c. 1540–50, and has been in store after being taken up in the nineteenth-century. The pestle and mortar was listed in the kitchen in the 1575 Lacock inventory which indicates that the house was very richly furnished with velvet- and silk- covered furniture and tapestries imported from Antwerp, all sadly no longer in situ (see T. Vernon, 'Inventory of Sir Henry Sharington', *Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine*, vol. 63, 1968, pp. 72–82).

In 1753, Sharington's descendant, John Ivory (1691?–1772), who took the name of Talbot on inheriting Lacock in 1714, was persuaded by his friend, Sanderson Miller, that Lacock 'as an old Nunnery... would be most proper to fit ... up in Gothick taste'. The barrel-vaulted Entrance Hall was invigorated by Gothick windows and niches, which contain eccentric plaster statuary (1755–56) by the otherwise unknown Victor Alexander Sederbach, several of whose preliminary maquettes have been acquired (Fig. 3). Miller may have designed the four Gothick marble-topped sidetables (c. 1760) which are probably the '4 Gothick Plumbtree Tables' listed in the Entrance Hall in 1778. They are certainly made of fruitwood. Among other acquisitions are two larger Gothick tables with marble tops (c. 1760), which are of slightly different, but comparable patterns, and are probably the '2 Mahogany Frame tables with Marble Slabs' listed in the Stone Gallery from 1788, where they remain (the smaller one is made of fruitwood). Also in the Entrance Hall are '12 Walnuttree Hall Chairs' of *sgabello* type listed in 1778 (Fig. 5). Lacock inventories were taken in 1778, 1788, 1801 and 1827. In the 'Best Gallery' in 1778, the 'Curious Cabinet on a

Fig. 3 Lacock Abbey: The Entrance Hall. Photo: © NTPL/Andreas von Einsiedel 81186



Carv'd & White Frame' is the newly acquired South Italian, ebony, tortoiseshell and marquetry cabinet of architectural form, c. 1670, on a carved English stand, c. 1690.

John Ivory Talbot is known to have employed the Marlborough cabinetmaker, Henry Hill (active 1741–77), who may have supplied a bed, which is also part of the recent purchase. This mahogany bedstead, with serpentine shaped gadrooned and pierced canopy surmounted by anthemions, fluted front posts with Gothick detailing and floral marquetry on the plinths, c. 1770, may be the 'Four Post Mahogany Carvd and Fluted Bedstead with Green worsted Damask Fringed Furniture' first listed in the Green Bedchamber in 1788. Since then, the two rear posts have disappeared, possibly when the bed was recovered with chintz in the nineteenth century. Hill is known to have had a clientele in the country around Lacock, supplying furniture for Corsham Court (for Henry Hill, see L. Wood, 'Furniture for Lord Delaval Metropolitan and Provincial', *Furniture History*, vol. xxvi, 1990, pp. 198–234).

Much early nineteenth-century English mahogany furniture in neo-classical style has also been acquired, including sabre-legged dining chairs, daybeds, sofas, a half-tester *lit bateau* (c. 1820), which retains its original crimson hangings and *passanterie*; and a Carlton House desk attributed to Gillows, c. 1835 (Fig. 4). A set of bedroom furniture (c. 1830) is of



Fig. 4 Lacock Abbey: The Blue Parlour.
© NTPL/Andreas von Einsiedel 81182

Fig. 5 Lacock Abbey: Sgabello chair (from a set of six), English, c. 1625. Height: 103 cm. Photo: © NTPL/Andreas von Einsiedel 81153





Fig. 6 Castle Drogo: The Entrance Hall, showing a Spanish *vargueno* (centre left); four 19th-century Italian X-frame chairs and two of four Limoges enamel roundels, c.1560. Photo: C NTPL/James Mortimer 35527

faux bamboo. Several pieces of mid-nineteenth-century English furniture are of interest due to their presence in early photographs by William Henry Fox-Talbot (1800–77), the pioneer of photography.

A highlight of these acquisitions is a set of six English painted walnut *sgabello* chairs, c. 1625 (Fig. 5) in Italian style. The set has been linked to the Gilt Room (1624) at Holland House, Kensington and attributed to the German painter, Franz Clein (1582–1648), Charles I's Director of the Mortlake tapestry factory, who had travelled in Italy and who previously worked in Denmark for Christian IV. However, this tradition needs to be treated with caution, as the provenance is unclear. Also, Clein's main activity was the tapestry factory



Fig. 7 Castle Drogo: The Drawing Room, showing (centre) one of two Venetian inlaid tables, c. 1600 (base altered in the nineteenth century) and a Neapolitan ebony and ivory cabinet, c. 1650. Photo: © NTPL/Dennis Gilbert 164038



Fig. 8 Castle Drogo: Giltwood Stand, c. 1730, of early eighteenth-century Chinese lacquer cabinet (detail). Photo: © NTPL/John Hammond 166237

Fig. 9 Castle Drogo: One from a set of ten plumwood 'Chinese Chippendale' chairs, c. 1760, with an early eighteenth-century Chinese lacquer cabinet on English giltwood stand, c. 1730 (detail) to right. Photo: © NTPL/22639



and the extent of his involvement in Caroline interior décor is uncertain. The Lacock *sgabelli* are walnut and painted like the contemporary pair of *sgabelli* made (1623–28) for the 1st Duke of Buckingham (S. Jervis, 'Furniture for the First Duke of Buckingham', *Furniture History*, vol. xxxiii, 1997, pp. 48–74). The blue and grey scheme seems to have been the original, though no doubt retouched. The backs are very fresh, incorporating *faux* black and porphyry oval 'hardstones' within Jacobean strapwork. The chairs were standing in the Stone Gallery at Lacock by 1778, when they were described as '6 Camp Chairs with Talbot Crest' (they were described more precisely in 1788 as '6 Shell Back Chairs'). Given the detachable backs, they seem indeed to be 'Camp Chairs', demountable for use on campaign or for travel.

At Castle Drogo in 2009, the National Trust acquired by private treaty for £765,405 a large collection of furniture, works of art, textiles and memorabilia, previously on loan from the Drewe family. The contents of Lutyens's granite castle have exotic Mediterranean overtones in contrast to the stark interior. This strange juxtaposition is due to Julius Drewe's 1898 purchase 'lock, stock and barrel' of Wadhurst Park, Sussex (dem. 1950). Wadhurst was built in High Victorian style for the De Murietta brothers, Cristobal, Adriano and their married brother José, Marqués de Santurce, whose beautiful wife — perhaps the subject of Tissot's famous painting *The Crack Shot* at Wimpole (NT) — captivated the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII. The De Muriettas combined Oriental, Continental and English pieces in equally eclectic interiors. They were immensely rich Spanish merchants, whose fortune derived from South America, but they were casualties of the Argentinian

loans crisis, which also hammered Barings Bank: hence the sale of Wadhurst to Julius Drewe. The Wadhurst connection — strongly represented among the Trust's new acquisitions — will now be preserved intact at Castle Drogo. The display of Lutyens's rooms can also be reappraised, with the emphasis on recreating original arrangements, such as Julius Drewe's study (hitherto used by the Trust as a tearoom).

It is not clear exactly which pieces came from Wadhurst, but it can be assumed that the more exotic contents of Castle Drogo came from there. As well as Spanish furniture, including a writing desk or *vargueno* (one of several), with a fall-front inlaid in ivory depicting the seven ages of man (Mexico?, c. 1650), there are two early-seventeenth century, possibly Venetian, tables inset with pictorial scenes in ivory, bone and mother-of-pearl (Fig. 7), one just acquired by the Trust; the other, with a support re-built in the nineteenth century, bought by private treaty in 2008 for £56,749. Also probably from Wadhurst are Neapolitan ebony cabinets (c. 1650), set with engraved ivory panels depicting religious scenes taken from engravings (Fig. 7); and a massive nineteenth-century Chinese dinner gong, with elaborately carved frame. Vitrines in the Drawing Room, made up in the nineteenth century from elements of seventeenth-century Antwerp cabinets, contain numerous curiosities, including a finely embroidered seventeenth-century Italian cushion cover from the Chapel at Wadhurst. Other acquisitions include a set of circular Limoges enamels (c. 1560) framed as *tondi* depicting the *Four Seasons*, signed 'IH'; Hispano-Moresque lustre dishes; Spanish jars; Venetian glass and Chinese porcelain. There is nineteenth-century Italian seat furniture in High Renaissance style, notably a set of walnut X-frame stools covered in red velvet, embroidered with gold. Two almost identical early eighteenth-century Chinese lacquer cabinets were provided with English carved giltwood stands in the style of James Moore with cabriole legs in the form of bust-length Native North American Indians wearing head-dresses (Fig. 8). Other English furniture includes ten plumwood 'Chinese Chippendale' latticed dining chairs, c. 1760 (Fig. 9). Lutyens designed the oak furniture of the domestic quarters, which includes kitchen and scullery fittings down to boxes for vegetables, but these are already in Trust ownership.

Christopher Rowell, The National Trust, London

FUTURE SOCIETY EVENT BOOKINGS

For places on all visits, please apply to the Activities Secretary, Clarissa Ward, 25 Wardo Avenue, London, SW6 6RA, tel. /fax 020 7384 4458, enclosing a separate cheque and separate stamped addressed envelope for each event using the enclosed booking form. Applications should only be made by members who intend to take part in the whole programme. No one can apply for more than one place unless they hold a joint membership, and each applicant should be identified by name. If you wish to be placed on the waiting list please enclose a telephone number where you can be reached. Please note that a closing date for applications for all visits is printed in the Newsletter. Applications made after the closing date will be accepted only if space is still available.

CANCELLATIONS

Please note that no refunds will be given for cancellations for occasional visits costing £10.00 or less. In all other cases, cancellations will be accepted up to seven days before the date of a visit, but refunds will be subject to a £5.00 deduction for administrative costs.

Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours and terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

N.B. PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND SUFFICIENT STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPES FOR ALL APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING REQUESTS FOR DETAILS OF FOREIGN TOURS AND STUDY WEEKENDS

ANNUAL LECTURE

Nicodemus Tessin (1654–1728): The First Historian of Interior Decoration and his Collections

The Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1

Monday 8 November 2010, 6.00 pm drinks, 6.30–7.45 pm lecture

This year's Annual Lecture on Nicodemus Tessin will be delivered by Dr Martin Olin, Research Curator, The National Museum of Fine Arts, Stockholm, who is preparing a full catalogue of the Tessin collection of drawings for furniture and decoration.

Nicodemus Tessin the Younger is perhaps best known as the architect of the Royal Palace in Stockholm, begun in the 1690s and completed according to his plans in the 1750s. Tessin regarded the decoration and furnishing of the palaces of the King of Sweden as one of his most important tasks. He brought French and Italian artists to Stockholm and procured drawings and objects from the leading designers of the time, such as Jean Bérain and Claude III Audran. From early years, he studied the decorative arts of Baroque Europe, and in 1717 he composed a treatise on interior decoration, arguably the earliest text treating the subject in a scientific manner. The collection of drawings survives almost intact and has often been used by scholars, above all perhaps Peter Thornton, as a source to the history of interior decoration in the seventeenth century.

Admission to the Lecture is free but attendance is by ticket only, which must be acquired in advance from the Activities Secretary. Numbers are limited to 90.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND WORKS IN PROGRESS TALKS BY THE NATIONAL TRUST, ENGLISH HERITAGE, VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM AND SPECIAL PAPER ON THE SOANE MUSEUM AND KENSINGTON PALACE, WITH AFTERNOON VISIT TO THE LONDON LIBRARY

AGM will be held at The East India Club, 16 St James's Square, London SW1

Saturday 27 November 2010, 11.00 am

The Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30 June 2010 will be held at the East India Club. The AGM will start at 11.00 am (coffee from 10.30 am).

This will be followed by illustrated Works in Progress talks by Christopher Rowell, the National Trust, Treve Rosoman, English Heritage, and Sarah Medlam, Department of Furniture Textiles and Fashion, V&A. In addition to these talks will be special papers on other current furniture related projects including the Soane Museum by Simon Swynfen Jarvis, and a representative of Historic Royal Palaces on the future plans for Kensington Palace.

Afterwards there will be an optional lunch and in the afternoon a visit to the London Library. Now the world's largest independent lending library, the Library owes its foundation in 1841 to the vision of Thomas Carlyle and its unique subject system to Sir Charles Hagberg Wright, librarian from 1893 to 1940. Located in the north-west corner of St James's

Square since 1845, the premises have been extended several times since and in 2004 additional space was acquired extending the Library in a practical and elegant design along Mason's Yard. The conversion of Duchess House has just been completed and the FHS visit will give Society members the opportunity to see the new space and contemporary facilities available.

Admission to the AGM is free but all members wishing to attend should notify the FHS Activities Secretary at least 7 days in advance for security reasons. Tickets for lunch £18 per head and afternoon visit £10 per head should likewise be booked with the Activities Secretary at least 7 days in advance.

ADVANCE NOTICE — FHS ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

Miniature Furniture And Interiors

Saturday 5 March 2011, The Wallace Collection

Next year's Annual FHS symposium, chaired by Simon Swynfen Jervis, will consider miniature furniture and interiors.

Speakers will include Jet Pijzel-Dommisse of the Gemeente Museum, The Hague, on the seventeenth-century dolls' houses in the Rijksmuseum, Christopher Monkhouse, Curator of European Decorative Arts at the Chicago Institute of Art, on the Thorne Rooms there, Dr Annette Cremer of the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Culture, Giessen on 'Mon Plaisir' at Arnstadt and Kathryn Jones of The Royal Collection on Queen Mary's Doll's House at Windsor Castle.

Full programme and details for booking tickets will appear in the November *Newsletter*.

OCCASIONAL EVENTS

IMPORTANT NINETEENTH-CENTURY PRIVATE COLLECTION, London W11

Tuesday 14 September 2010, 6.00–9.00 pm

The FHS have very kindly been invited to an evening viewing and reception at a highly important collection of furniture, ceramics, glass and sculpture dating between 1830 and 1930 in Notting Hill. This private collector has a truly unabashed passion for the best in British craftsmanship and this visit is a unique opportunity to view pieces of the utmost quality, including some commissioned for the Great Exhibitions of the period.

Fee: £15 per head Limit: 20 members

Closing date for applications 1 September 2010

CHARLECOTE PARK STUDY DAY (including the private apartments) Wellsbourne, Warwick

Wednesday 29 September 2010, 10.45 am–4.00 pm

Charlecote Park was built by Sir Thomas Lucy in 1558 and was extensively refitted and extended by George Hammond Lucy and his wife 1823–1863. Thomas Willement, the antiquarian glassmaker, was appointed decorator of this nineteenth-century Elizabethan revival of the house and Lucy bought widely; spending £3,400 at the Beckford Fonthill sale in 1823 and commissioning pieces such as the stunning carved sideboard, 1858, by Willcox

of Warwick. Bet McLeod, independent furniture historian and FHS member, will talk about the Walpole furniture during our study day.

Sir Edmund Fairfax Lucy has kindly invited members of the Society to visit his private apartments at Charlecote in the morning and for lunch, and the afternoon will be spent in the side of the house transferred to the National Trust in the 1940s.

Fee: £35 per head Limit: 25 members

Closing date for applications 1 September 2010

THE CONSERVATION OF THE COMTE D'ARTOIS CHAIR: A TRIFLE BROUGHT TO LIFE

Lecture Theatre, Wallace Collection, Manchester Square, London W1

Wednesday 3 November 2010, 2.30–5.00 pm

The Society is holding a seminar to celebrate the display at the Wallace Collection of a recently conserved chair and screen with an illustrious royal provenance, both on loan from a Rothschild Family Trust and normally on display at Waddesdon Manor (*Furniture History*, XIII, 2007, pp. 127–41).

Both were commissioned by Charles-Philippe, Comte d'Artois, the youngest brother of Louis XVI. He made a bet with Marie-Antoinette that he could build a country house within seventy days. The result was the lavishly-furnished pavilion, *Bagatelle*. Only recently identified as having been made, as part of a suite for the *Grand Salon*, by the eminent furniture maker, Georges Jacob (1739–1814), the suite is documented in contemporary inventories.

Following a research project, the chair has been conserved and restored thanks to a partnership between Waddesdon Manor and Buckingham New University Furniture Conservation. This seminar will examine the history and design of the chair, and the conservation techniques, with talks by Dr Ulrich Leben (Associate Curator of Furniture, Waddesdon Manor), Dr Campbell Norman-Smith, (MA Course Leader, Furniture Conservation, Buckingham University) and Claire Daly and Gregory Cupitt-Jones, who conserved the chair.

Fee: £6 per head to include tea

OVERSEAS TOURS

IMPORTANT CHATEAUX NORTH OF PARIS

Sunday 10 to Tuesday 12 October 2010

This study tour is now fully subscribed and there is a waiting list if there are any cancellations.

STUDY TOUR, WINTERTHUR, DELAWARE AND PHILADELPHIA, USA

Monday 16 May to Sunday 22 May 2011

Winterthur is the ultimate treasure of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American decorative arts, textiles and porcelain. Tom Savage, Director of Museum Affairs and who will be remembered for arranging the outstanding FHS trip to Charleston, has expertly and

meticulously planned the itinerary for this study tour which will include in-depth study sessions at Winterthur Museum and visits to the most interesting and private collections and historic towns in the vicinity culminating in a day at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. David Wurtzel, FHS Activities Committee member, has co-ordinated the programme and will be leading the group on this exceptional tour.

Full programme and application form are available from the FHS Activities Secretary. Closing date for applications will be 15 December 2010.

The Tom Ingram Memorial Fund and Oliver Ford Trust invite applications from students/junior curators and scholars for funding towards participation in this study tour. For details of funding please contact Adriana Turpin, email: turpinadriana@hotmail.com

OTHER EVENTS

Please note that these events are not organised by the FHS. Information/booking instructions can be found under individual items.

MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES HISTORY GROUP ANNUAL CONFERENCE — MUSEUMS AND THE MARKET, Leeds City Museum, 10–11 September 2010

This innovative conference, the first of its kind, focuses on the intersections, the formal and informal spaces where the market and the museum meet and overlap. The papers reflect a wide range of interests and perspectives and bring together leading academics and museum professionals in order to further discussion and debate around this increasingly significant subject. Located at the new Leeds City Museum, the conference will be of interest to academics, museum professionals, and all those who are interested in the history of the museum and its role in society.

£45 MGHG Members, £65 Non-members. See website for further details: www.mghg.org

MORRISON HECKSCHER LECTURE — REDISCOVERING AMERICAN ART AT THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM IN NEW YORK, The English-Speaking Union, 37 Charles Street, London W1

22 September, 7.00 pm

Morrison H. Heckscher has been on the staff of the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art since 1969. He has served on the boards of the Society of Architectural Historians and American Friends of the Attingham Summer School and is a trustee of the Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum. He has written extensively on American furniture and architecture.

£7.50. For further details please contact Gillian Parker, tel. 020 7529 1550, email: gillian_parker@esu.org

FIRST NEW ZEALAND FURNITURE HISTORY CONFERENCE

From 8 to 10 October 2010 an inaugural New Zealand Furniture History Symposium will be held at the Southland Museum and Art Gallery, Invercargill, New Zealand. It will be preceded by a pre-symposium excursion starting from Christchurch on 5 October, to view

early New Zealand homesteads, architecture and furniture. October is Spring in New Zealand and the country will be looking at its best.

Details may be found at www.southlandmuseum.com. Alternatively the Museum's address is P. O. Box 1012, Invergargill 9840, tel. 0064 3 219 9069, email: office@southlandmuseum.co.nz

JOHN MAKEPEACE EXHIBITION

John Makepeace is holding his first-ever solo exhibition this autumn, showcasing 50 years at the forefront of British design. 'John Makepeace — Enriching the Language of Furniture' will be shown at The Devon Guild of Craftsmen at Bovey Tracey from 18 September to 29 October 2010 before embarking on a national tour that includes Somerset House in Spring 2011. The exhibition brings together 25 pieces from public and private collections in the UK and abroad, some not previously seen by the public. For more information visit: www.crafts.org.uk

OTHER ITEMS

CHANNEL ISLANDS CABINET MAKERS — REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

John Vost is keen to receive any information that members might have on Channel Islands cabinet makers. He is particularly interested in eighteenth-century pieces and possible links with New England. Please contact John Vost, 24 Doddshill Road, Dersingham, Norfolk PE31 6LW, tel. 01485 542174, email: enquiries@vosts.co.uk

FURNITURE HISTORY FOR SALE

A run of *Furniture History* has been donated to the Society for sale in aid of our funds. This is complete from vol. xiv (1978) to vol. XLIV (2008) with the exception of vol. XL(2004), which is in print and available. There are a few extras, one index and a some Newsletters. In all there are 29 volumes. They are on offer at £145.

Purchasers should contact Brian Austen (tel/fax 01444 413845) or email: brian.austen@zen.co.uk. The books are in West London and can be collected from there. If delivery is required the cost will have to be added.

BOOK REVIEWS

Suggestions for future reviews and publishers' review copies should be sent to Dr Reinier Baarsen, Reviews Editor, Rijksmuseum, PO BOX 74888, 1070 DN Amsterdam, The Netherlands, tel. 00-31-20-6747220. E-mail: r.baarsen@rijksmuseum.nl

Mirjam Gelfer-Jørgensen, *Furniture with Meaning, Danish Furniture 1840–1920* (Copenhagen: Danish Architectural Press, 2009), 2 vols., 808 pp., 710 illus., ISBN 978-87-7407-400-7, DKK 756.

In 1988 Mirjam Gelfer-Jørgensen edited *Herculaneum paa Sjaelland* (Herculaneum on Zealand), a survey of the archaeological neo-classicism which has been a central feature of Danish furniture design from the 1790s onwards. In 2002 she chronicled the heroic years of this phenomenon in *The Dream of a Golden Age: Danish Neo-Classical Furniture 1790–1850*

(English edition, 2003) and in 2003 her catalogue of the Danish Museum of Decorative Art's collection, *Danish Neo-Antique Furniture — from Abildgaard to Kaare Klint*, came out. The 'Neo-Antique' theme is present in *Furniture with Meaning*, but this massive work breaks new ground in presenting a survey of the equivalent of the Victorian and Edwardian periods. It emerges that the Danish reaction against historicism remains so severe that its study needs constant justification. In England, where the Victorian Society was founded in 1958 and the 1830 barrier between good and bad taste is receding into history, such defensiveness may seem anachronistic, but the Danish self-image is rooted in the achievements of such more-or-less Modern designers as Kaare Klint, Arne Jacobsen, Poul Kjaerholm, Finn Juhl and Hans Wegner.

The influence of English design on Denmark was limited. The precocity and originality of English Gothic Revival found no parallels and few echoes. William Morris's influence was rhetorical and ideological rather than formal. Later eighteenth-century models — Chippendale, Hepplewhite and Sheraton — enjoyed some popularity, although partly mediated through earlier adoptions, Hepplewhite by J. C. Lillie at Liselund in 1793, for example. A set of souped-up 'Chippendale' chairs designed by Martin Nyrop for Copenhagen Town Hall (Fig. 442) in about 1904 is particularly egregious. Founded in 1890, the Kunstindustrimuseet (the Danish Museum of Decorative Art, now Museum of Art and Design) held exhibitions on Walter Crane in 1896 and on the Guild of Handicraft in 1899, but in 1908, significantly, it sold eighteen of the twenty-two pieces by J. S. Henry that had been purchased from 1895 onwards.

The main relationships were with Germany and Austria and with France, or rather Paris. Full accounts of the furniture trade and its organisation are prefaced by a splendid 1883 cross-section (Fig. 3) of Severin and Jensen's seven-story workshops and showrooms. It emerges that Andreas Jensen overlapped with Anton Pössenbacher, future cabinet-maker to Ludwig II of Bavaria, when working for Heinrich Dübbel in Vienna, and that Jensen was later employed by Alexandre-Georges Fourdinois in Paris. He was recommended to Dübbel by Theophil Hansen, a Dane in Vienna since 1846, influential as both architect and designer. That the Severin and Jensen firm owned designs by Josef Storck, another Viennese designer, underlines this international dimension.

The Gothic revival was a minor theme but, as all over Europe, there was a Rococo Revival (its early appearance in England is overlooked); an elaborate desk designed by Vilhelm Dahlerup, proficient in many styles, shown at the 1888 Nordic exhibition (Fig. 217), was called 'Italian rococo' and seems, surprisingly, to be influenced by Piffetti. As elsewhere a 'Louis XVI' revival followed; under King Frederik IX (1947–1972) 'Louis XVI' chairs were still being acquired for Amalienborg palace. In upholstered furniture, however, a late Renaissance/Baroque revival, which often built on or melded with 'Neo-Antique' forms and ornament, was dominant. Gelfer-Jørgensen struggles valiantly in distinguishing and naming various styles and phases, one of which, 'Bourgeois Empire', sounds faintly *marxisant* in English and another, 'Historicist Rococo-Classicism', counterintuitive. The models became freer towards 1900, notably in designs by Ludwig Frøhlich, which bracket Neo-Antique and the influence of Austrian peasant houses, and Martin Nyrop, who spanned, *inter alia*, Gothic and Baroque. The approximate Danish equivalent of Art Nouveau, Skønvirke (fine or beautiful works, the title of exhibitions from 1907 and a periodical from 1914) was equally eclectic. Among designers Thorvald Bindsbøll and Johan Rohde stand out, the one synthesising Neo-Antique forms with cloud- or tadpole-like ornaments, the other producing sleek and subtle designs, precursors of a reborn Classicism, itself a harbinger of Modern design.

Ambitious and comprehensive, *Furniture with Meaning* covers the waterfront, construction being a rare lacuna, although it is evident that almost all Danish furniture was

well, and some beautifully, made. It will be the foundation for all future studies. The English is always grammatical and, if some unfamiliar words or usages appear, 'apophthegm' for instance, the meaning is clear. There is fun, too, the 1918 'Millipede' piano at Christiansborg (Fig. 319), for example, or the bearded Prime Minister, Thorvald Stauning, caught lighting a cigar amid the incongruously Victorian furniture with which he had filled his Modernist house presented by a grateful nation. Nor is all restraint: the supercharged symbolism of Harald Slott-Møller's 1894 cradle (Figs 608–12), shown at the Paris 1900 Exhibition, and inscribed in English with Keats's 'A thing of beauty is a joy for ever', would stand out in any company.

Simon Swynfen Jervis

Dimitra Andrianou, *The Furniture and Furnishings of Ancient Greek Houses and Tombs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 213 pp., 40 b. & w. illus., 2 maps, ISBN 978-0-521-76087-4, £45.

Nearly fifty years have passed since the publication of the enlarged version of Gisela M. A. Richter, *Furniture of the Greeks, Etruscans and Romans* (London, 1966; first edition Oxford, 1926), but it has not been seriously challenged, although the wider-ranging Hollis S. Baker, *Furniture in the Ancient World* (London, 1966) is also useful, as is *The Furniture of Western Asia, Ancient and Traditional* (ed. Georgina Herrmann, Mainz, 1996). These two latter are not included in the bibliography to Dimitra Andrianou's more focussed study, which draws on recent decades of archaeology, weighted towards Northern Greece. Her readers are expected to have some Greek and to know that 'IG' stands for *Inscriptiones Graecae*, the continuing corpus published in Berlin, or that 'SEG' signifies *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, another series, based in Amsterdam. Most of her furniture survives in fragments much less well recorded or analysed than architecture or pottery, particularly in stratigraphic terms. Literary references are thin, and the scattered mentions of furniture in inscriptions are often enigmatic. Andrianou systematically juxtaposes first the literary and epigraphic evidence and then the archaeological for each category of furniture — seats, bed-couches, tables, containers, open cupboards and shelves — in two divisions, domestic and funerary. She then surveys the textiles and furniture included in the various lists of sacred treasures belonging to temples, and their possible purposes — what, for instance, was the difference between the Chian and Milesian bed-couches in the Parthenon? Many interesting objects are noted, including a footstool at Delos resembling a turtle, and the illustrations include an ivy-wreathed satyr carved in ivory, presumably part of a bed-couch, and three round table tops, two of marble from Vergina and Eretria, and one of stone, with inlaid Greek key and floral decoration, from Pella. A final chapter analyses ancient concepts of luxury in the context of Macedonia and Macedonian tombs. A fully annotated study for the specialist with archaeological knowledge and access to the literature, Andrianou's book is frank about the many uncertainties inherent in her subject and scrupulous in weighing the evidence. Opening up what will be to many an unfamiliar — but evidently lively — field of research, it merits careful reading.

Simon Swynfen Jervis

SHORTER NOTICE

Max Tillmann, *Ein Frankreichbündnis der Kunst, Kurfürst Max Emanuel von Bayern als Auftraggeber und Sammler* (Berlin and Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2009), 372 pp., 42 col., 81 b. & w. illus., ISBN 978-3-422-06869-8, €51.

The subject of this study is narrower than its title suggests: it is solely concerned with the years 1692–1715 which Max Emanuel, the Elector of Bavaria (1662–1726), spent almost entirely in the Spanish Netherlands, whose Governor he had been appointed in 1691, and in France, where he lived in exile from 1708 to 1715. In line with a series of recent German publications, the book largely deals with the functional and ceremonial background to the disposition and furnishing of the prince's successive residences, culminating in a reconstruction of the interior of the house Max Emanuel bought in Saint-Cloud in 1713. Of special interest to the furniture historian is the analysis of purchases made in Paris, highlighting the role played by agents, advisers, upholsterers, dealers and others. There is a detailed presentation of the many acquisitions made from Laurent Danet, the powerful dealer who also supplied the Grand Dauphin and who may be regarded as one of the earliest *marchands-merciers*, the merchants who were to dominate the Parisian luxury trade until the early nineteenth century. Some of Danet's deliveries are convincingly linked to pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain mounted in gilt bronze and silver, preserved in Munich; these can now be dated more precisely, and somewhat earlier, than was previously thought. As usual there is a dearth of information on the actual craftsmen involved: sadly, even this thorough investigation of all the available documents throws no new light on the identity of the maker of the famous *bureau de l'Electeur* in the Louvre who is still tentatively associated with the enigmatic Bernard van Risenburgh I.

REPORTS OF THE SOCIETY'S ACTIVITIES

MARBLE HILL HOUSE, TWICKENHAM, 16 March 2010

The group was warmly welcomed over a cup of tea by Cathy Power, Senior Curator, English Heritage, and Treve Rosoman, Curator, English Heritage. Marble Hill was built from 1724 to 1729 as a refugium for Henrietta Howard, later Countess of Suffolk (1688–1767). She had been the official mistress of George II for nearly twenty years but her position at court was significantly complicated by her dual role as Woman of the Bedchamber to Queen Caroline.

It is assumed that the king's architect Colen Campbell drafted the initial plans for this Palladian villa, which were published in *Vitruvius Britannicus* in 1725. The actual building work was carried out by Roger Morris under the supervision of Henry Herbert, later 9th Earl of Pembroke. The Great Room on the *piano nobile* is a direct reference to Inigo Jones' Single Cube Room at Wilton House.

The Marble Hill estate was saved for the nation in 1902 by an Act of Parliament. At that time this elegant Palladian villa was not at all the focal point of this rescue operation but rather the prevention of its grounds falling victim to urban expansion and hence ruining the famous view from Richmond Hill across the Thames Valley. Stripped of its original content the County Council used Marble Hill for several decades as tea rooms and even as changing rooms for the local sport's club. Fortunately, after years of neglect and misuse, the Georgian Group pushed for an extensive restoration programme resulting in the house being partially opened to visitors in 1966. All nineteenth-century alterations were judged

insignificant and consequently reversed to the original eighteenth-century plans. When in the mid-1980s English Heritage took over Marble Hill together with its over sixty-six acre estate, it was decided to continue this focus on presenting the house in the way Catherine Howard's guests would have experienced it.

Wherever possible, paint analysis has been carried out and colour schemes reintroduced based on careful studies of inventories and contemporary sources. For example, today the Entrance Hall in the style of a Roman atrium is once more painted in lead-based white. The Dining Room has been decorated with hand-painted bird and flower wallpaper as recently as 2006, echoing the leading cabinet-maker William Hallett's 1755 commission to hang '62 sheets of India Paper' in the Chinese manner.

The staircase, made entirely of very costly mahogany and probably the earliest example of its kind in the UK, leads to the most important space in the house, the Great Room. Here again the floor is made of mahogany. No nails were used, instead the boards are pegged in 6 inch intervals. The widest boards are used in the centre of the room, narrowing outwards in order to create a visual lengthening of the room. The individual components are so closely fitted that it would be impossible to lift this floor without cutting it. The rich carvings on the walls are by James Richards, who had succeeded Grinling Gibbons as the King's Master Sculptor and Master Carver in Wood. The overdoors and overmantel are once more filled with an exceptional set of five *capricci*, all signed by Giovanni Paolo Panini and dated *Rome 1738*. They had been removed in 1901 but English Heritage rediscovered them gradually throughout the 1980s in as diverse places as the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, a private collection in the South of France and at an auction in New York. From even further afield came the magnificent Kentian marble-topped peacock pier table. It had been removed from the house by a tenant in c. 1817 and consequently lost until its rediscovery at an Australian ladies hairdresser's in 1987. The inventory made on Henrietta Howard's death in 1767 states that the Great Room contained originally four of these impressive tables. The inventory also indicates of Henrietta Howard's great love of *chinoiserie*. A particularly fine eight-leaf and double-sided Chinese lacquer screen, found in a London basement in 1991, is probably the one mentioned in the inventory as having been used in the Great Room. It bears the arms of the Earls of Suffolk as well as those of Lady Suffolk's paternal Hobart family. Also in the Great Room stands an interesting set of four early eighteenth-century drop-seat Asian export chairs. Although nearly identical, one pair is made of rosewood while the other, which has added carving to the seat rails, is made of Padouk. Their country of origin is unclear with suggestions ranging from China and Indonesia to the Philippines. The set is not original to the house as is the case with all other pieces of furniture not previously mentioned.

The Dressing Room contains the noteworthy Northey Suite, consisting of seven carved mahogany chairs and a settee by an unknown maker, c. 1745–60. The nailed rectangular seats and backs are covered in their original upholstery created by Anne Northey. Her father had been a Secretary of State for Ireland and her husband William was George III's Commissioner of Trade and Groom of the Chamber. She incorporated earlier *petit point* panels of pastoral scenes in her own floral *gros point* work on yellow ground. The same room contains a gilt-gesso side table, c. 1730, which bears a so far unidentified marquis's coronet. Its provenance is unknown but a possible link to the Duke of Chandos was suggested.

The original furniture in the adjoining Red Damask Bedchamber would have been removed from Henrietta's apartment in St James's Palace when she left the court in 1734. Today there is a four-poster carved mahogany tester bedstead, c. 1740, purchased by English Heritage from the Williamsburg Foundation in 1988. Next to it stands an Indo-Portuguese writing cabinet, c. 1720–50. Henrietta Howard's own bedroom on the other side

of the Great Room contains the Barrington Bed, made of mahogany c. 1740–50 and on loan from the V&A. There are no arrangements for fitting curtains and Treve thinks that this bed might have started out as a church organ case and was converted to its present form in the early twentieth century.

A group of seat furniture, which were originally part of a 14-piece suite from Glemham Hall, Suffolk, now stands in the Gallery on the top floor. Carved in the late Baroque manner the five chairs and two small settees were made around 1720, probably for Dudley North. The remaining pieces are at the V&A. They had been bought for the Norfolk Room and their modern upholstery was chosen by the late Peter Thornton, based on *bizarre* Spitelfield's brocade fabric.

We are immensely grateful to Cathy Power and Treve Rosoman for leading the group so expertly and it was with some considerable reluctance that we left Henrietta Howard's charming retreat.

Melanie Doderer-Winkler

NORFOLK HOUSE STUDY DAY, ARUNDEL CASTLE, WEST SUSSEX, 19 April 2010

Our group, only slightly depleted by the disastrous effect of volcanic ash on European air travel, gathered below the wonder that is Arundel Castle on a glorious Spring day. Norman keep, Medieval castle, High Victorian dream, Arundel Castle is perhaps the last place one would expect to find one of the most extraordinary suites of mid-eighteenth-century furniture in England. However, guided by the irrepressible Dr John Martin Robinson, we were able to use this collection to recreate the splendours of its original home, Norfolk House, St James's Square, the exceptional creation of the 9th Duke of Norfolk and his Duchess Mary Blount.

Coffee in Charles Buckler's rigorous stone and oak beamed Servants Hall (Norfolk's Victorian servants were remarkably well housed) introduced us to the scale of Arundel Castle, which has effortlessly swallowed the contents of several great houses. The Castle was, however, largely abandoned until the late eighteenth-century, when the 11th Duke turned his attention to it. Until then Worksop, the most northerly of the adjoining estates in Nottinghamshire collectively known as the Dukeries, and Norfolk House, were the focus of the Norfolks' passion for building. Norfolk House came first. Economic realities resulted in its demolition in 1938; we were assured that had it survived another year the War, and the consequent instigation of the Listing process, may have saved it (notwithstanding the Blitz). Christie's carried out two sales of contents and fittings at the time but despite this, as we were to discover, a remarkable amount survived.

Before inheriting from his brother the 9th Duke and Duchess had lived on a relatively small income in southern France for many years, and the Francophile (and Italianate) taste they developed was to profoundly influence their creation of Norfolk House. The exterior of Norfolk House, designed by Matthew Brettingham following predictable Palladian lines, was completed in 1750 and gave little hint of the exoticism of the interior. This was the creation of the Duchess and the Turinese architect Giovanni Battista Borra, and it is assumed that much of the design work for the furnishing was his; they certainly have a remarkably consistent style and are complemented by many spectacular Italian marble table tops. The house was completed in 1756 and this event was celebrated publicly by a Ball (at which, Dr Robinson informed us, Horace Walpole, quipped that the Duke appeared scared of the guests and the guests appeared scared of the Duchess) and privately by the compilation of a comprehensive inventory. The latter survives in the Norfolk Archives as do accounts narrating the building and furnishing of the house. The most important of

these had been made available for us to see on the billiard table and included the enormous account from the carver Jean Antoine (John) Cuenot, dated 1756 and totalling £2643 3/8½ d for three years work.

Norfolk House had a plan similar to that of the Strangers Wing at Holkham (also effectively Brettingham's creation), the piano nobile comprising a sequence of six State Rooms. This plan was repeated at ground floor, where the family had their rooms, including particularly the Drawing Room and Dining Room. Dr Robinson explained how a ruthless logic pervaded the decoration of these rooms. Family portraits, walnut and mahogany at ground, Old Masters and Gobelins tapestries complemented by gilt furniture in the State Rooms. The decoration of the latter progressed from the plain Ante room, through the white and gilt Music Room (recently re-installed within the British Galleries at the V&A), the green silk 1st Drawing Room, the cut crimson velvet 2nd Drawing Room, to the Great Room with its Gobelins tapestries, and on to the State (Duchess's) Bedchamber and Dressing Room, which were hung with 'Indian' wallpapers.

Our tour of the Castle began with the set of twelve uncharacteristically unattributed mahogany hall chairs, similar to those at Althorp. We were then allowed to peek in the Chapel but the excuse was to admire the silver candlesticks made by Charles Kandler, possibly to the designs of James Gibbs, which were originally in the chapel at Norfolk House. In the magnificent Barons Hall were two of the set of four tapestries from the Great Room. Next was a seventeenth-century Piedmontese devotional triptych in a walnut, ivory and mother-of-pearl frame containing wax figures representing the Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection. A set of giltwood armchairs of thronely scale had been removed from Norfolk House to Worksop, to make way for the Duchess's new furniture. Their scale was thronely, and the design Italianate, but they were felt to be attributable to Grendey. Finally a sedan chair by the Royal maker Samuel Vaughan and still in wonderfully original condition, which had been kept in a small room off the Entrance Hall, aroused great interest.

The Castle's State Dining Room has the mahogany chairs made by John Metcalfe for the family Dining Room at Norfolk House in 1750; they were most notable for the set of needlework covers worked at the time by Henrietta, Dowager Duchess of Gordon, who lived with the Norfolks for many years, and graced each cover with her initials. Their seats were inspired by engravings of Aesop's Fables. Metcalfe also made walnut chairs with Soho tapestry covers for the family Drawing Room, which we admired later.

Arundel's Small Sitting Room is home to the charming series of Canaletto capriccios (in their Cuenot frames) which had been overdoors on the ground floor of Norfolk House. Next, in the State Drawing Room, came the most exceptional items of the day: magnificent gilt brass pier tables with tops of Derbyshire marble, made for the family Dining Room and presumably designed by Borra, crafted by Cuenot, and created in the Duke's iron works in Sheffield as a marketing exercise. They were pored over (and under). They have been reunited with the room's pier glasses and the extraordinary naturalism of the vine carved frames amazed. We moved on, noting that the Duke and Duchess did stick to more traditional giltwood pier tables for the State Rooms at Norfolk House; several survive at Arundel, with magnificent Turin marble tops, again from the Borra/Cuenot stable.

We entered the Regency Library from the private apartments in a memorable *coup de theatre*. This sequence of rooms was created by the 11th Duke to his own designs. Various exotic pieces of furniture were surreptitiously admired but our attention was soon refocused on the 8th Duke's silver tea kettle stand, recently repurchased by the present Duke, which had been at Norfolk House.

In one of the bedrooms we finally encountered a sofa from the suite of gilt seat furniture from the State Drawing Rooms. This is the sole surviving piece of seat furniture from these

rooms, the remainder having been dispersed in 1938 when its exotic nature, and extensive overgilding, meant it was dismissed as Victorian.

Our day culminated appropriately, as did the sequence of State Rooms at Norfolk House, with items from the Duchess's Bedchamber and Dressing room. The exquisite overmantel in the Chinese taste from her 'Indian' Dressing Room, incorporating beautiful Chinese paintings on glass, graced one of the bedrooms and in pride of place in the Upper Gallery was the best 'French' commode from her Bedchamber, firmly attributed to Langlois by the group, and a thing of outstanding quality and beauty.

The present Duke and Duchess gave the Castle a new lease of life in the 1990s, restoring the family wing and moving in with their young family. The Duke, who had welcomed us after lunch to the family wing, gave us free run not only of the public areas of the Castle on a closed day, but also these private rooms.

We were enormously privileged throughout the day, not only by the exceptional access to the Castle granted by the Duke but also by the guidance we had from his Librarian Dr Robinson. He wears his knowledge most lightly but a more learned, erudite, patient and generous of tutors could not be imagined.

Sebastian Pryke

DORNEY COURT, 27 April 2010

We were welcomed to Dorney Court by Mrs Peregrine (Jill) Palmer, whose late husband's ancient family has owned Dorney since 1537. She and her three sons carry on the tradition. The most famous of the Palmers was the linguist, traveller, diplomat and writer, Roger Palmer, 1st Earl of Castlemaine (1634–1705), who was educated at nearby Eton College in the lea of Windsor Castle, which dominates the skyline from Dorney Common. Several of the houses in the village are picturesque half-timbered brick structures like the Court itself, which dates from at least 1086. The Court was rendered in neo-classical style from the eighteenth-century until the original half-timbering was revealed in an antiquarian restoration by Col. Charles Palmer (1872–1939). It is surrounded by a beautiful formal garden, which reputedly produced the first pineapple grown in England.

The interior is remarkably well preserved. The Parlour is probably the oldest part of the house. Here hangs the *Palmer Needlework*, a rare framed panel, still refulgent with gold and silver thread. The Palmer armorial achievement in raised work is in the centre. The arms of Palmer impaling Shirley commemorate the marriage in 1624 of Sir Thomas Palmer of Wingham, Kent and Elizabeth Shirley. The panel is unique for depicting eight Palmer males at full-length, each bearing a shield with the family arms. This remarkable heraldic embroidery was lent to the *Treasure Houses of Britain* exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, in 1985. Otherwise, the Parlour is filled with good furniture, mainly of the early-eighteenth century, notably some untouched Chinese lacquer and japanned pieces, together with a small columnar legged table of c. 1650.

Returning to the Entrance Hall, we were faced by a magnificent carved and gilded glass, which was clearly made in 1680s Rome. Its sculptural frame is a riot of *putti* frolicking within palms (an allusion to 'Palmer' and the family motto 'Palma Virtuti') and other freely carved vegetation. This must surely have been made for Roger Palmer, 1st Earl of Castlemaine, cuckolded husband of Barbara Villiers, *suo jure* Duchess of Cleveland, mistress of Charles II. As James II's ambassador to the Vatican (1685–87), Castlemaine entered Rome on 8 January 1686 in a cavalcade of elaborately carved carriages covered with crimson velvet embroidered with gold. These were moving pieces of allegorical sculpture — state beds on wheels — of a type that survives in the Museu Nacional dos Coches, Lisbon. Castlemaine's major domo, the Catholic portrait painter, John Michael Wright (1617–94),

published an illustrated account of his master's Roman Embassy (London 1688). The designer of the carved woodwork of the principal coach was the painter and sculptor, Ciro Ferri (1634–89), according to the engraving in Wright's book. Other engravings record coaches and table decorations, some decorated with palms. Castlemaine gave the grandest of banquets to Pope Innocent XI in Palazzo Pamphili, Piazza Navona. The Dorney glass must derive from the same Roman *milieu*. We noted other possible souvenirs of Castlemaine's Roman embassy (eg. a painted *Vanitas* and a portrait of an Italian prelate). In the Great Hall gallery is a set of portraits of turbaned Turks, commemorating his earlier journey in support of the Embassy (1668) to the Sublime Porte.

Upstairs, a series of evocative bedrooms contain a caned daybed, c. 1660, complete with its original leather cushion; a carved oak bed with massively bulbous front columns, c. 1600 (the canopy seemed later); a South German parquetry wardrobe inlaid with brass, c. 1720; and a tri-partite giltwood overmantel glass, c. 1760, English but with Continental overtones, possibly by a carver such as Gideon Saint.

In the linenfold panelled Great Hall, with its half-timbered roof, screens passage, dais and numerous family portraits — all reminiscent of an Oxford College — stand two massive oak dining tables, c. 1650, with attendant forms. There are three superb family portraits (1632) by Cornelius Johnson; a set of small glazed pastel portraits by 'Van Wessel' retaining their carved giltwood frames of c. 1690; and Mytens's full-length of Thomas Palmer of Wingham in a c. 1730 carved giltwood frame. This magnificent portrait was bought back for the family collection by the late Peregrine Palmer. Our tour ended with a walk through the garden to the church. Our thanks go to Mrs Palmer and to her informative guide for a most enjoyable and intriguing visit to this charming and little-known family seat.

Christopher Rowell

ETON COLLEGE, 27 April 2010

In the afternoon the group assembled in the large quad at Eton, known as School Yard, facing the iconic Lupton's Tower and was greeted by Mrs Henrietta Ryan, Curator of Collections. Eton was founded in 1440 by Henry VI. He is commemorated by a large bronze statue by Francis Bird set in 1719 to the centre of the yard and surrounded by buildings which date from the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

We entered the Headmaster's chambers and were shown a fascinating and highly important wall painting only recently uncovered depicting a secular scene of life in school in the early 1500s. Clearly visible are the Master holding a book and birch with nine boys in caps sat on a bench. Facing them but mostly obscured are the Master and boys of Winchester, the arch rivals of Eton. A text in Latin translates as 'the precept of the Master is to discern the qualities of the boys.' The gilt ivy-leaf frame of a painting of Henry VI prompted some discussion as to a date and we noted an elm whipping block which was even more difficult to date precisely.

We then proceeded to Lower School, a large open-plan room with pillars and arches of Spanish chestnut and a row of shuttered windows high above the many benches, seats and desks. It claims to be the classroom of longest continuous use anywhere in the world and every conceivable wooden surface has the graffiti of generations of boys carving their initials, the earliest being 1577. Across School Yard is the Chapel, still attended by the boys every weekday morning. The wall paintings here are stunning. Executed in the 1480s *en grisaille*, they depict on the North side the miracles of the Virgin Mary, to whom the chapel is dedicated, and on the South side a Medieval story about a mythical Empress of Rome. At

the time of the Reformation the paintings were whitewashed over and not rediscovered until 1847. They were then covered over with wooden panelling until the 1920s. The fan-vaulted roof actually dates from the 1950s, imitating the original which finally succumbed to the ravages of death-watch beetle. Virtually all the glass was destroyed by a war-time bomb. Some of the windows are designed by John Piper and the wonderful East window depicting The Last Supper and The Crucifixion is by Evie Hone, completed in 1952. The back-drop to the altar is formed of a series of tapestries designed by Sir Edward Burne-Jones and woven on the William Morris looms at Merton Abbey. In the Ante-Chapel a long bench carved with Tudor roses to each end was examined; two more reside elsewhere in College, good examples of Tudor architectural simplicity.

We had a brief look in Upper School where Dr Keate, one of the more famous/notorious of Eton's Headmasters (fl. 1809–34), taught over a hundred boys at a time. Now it contains rows of busts of famous Old Etonians as well as much graffiti on the panelling. At the entranceway we discussed an early Dutch oak cabinet. It was a particularly good example dating to the early seventeenth-century and carved with religious panels and the Virtues, the latter derived from the sixteenth-century prints of Hendrick Goltzius.

In the room known as Election Hall, originally built as a library but since the sixteenth-century used as a dining hall, the furniture provoked some good discussion. A long set of thirteen Spanish style leather-covered chairs thought to be early proved in fact to be late nineteenth century. In the adjacent Election Chamber a mahogany library table in the manner of Chippendale proved to be an Edwardian copy. This room is hung with many nineteenth-century 'leaving portraits' of pupils, a tradition which will hopefully be revived in the near future.

College Library was built in 1729 and now houses over 80,000 printed items in its three elegant rooms with upper galleries. A set of metamorphic library steps, identical to one in the V&A by Francois Hervé and made in London c. 1790, was admired. We were shown an 1816 Ackermann print of the library featuring the library steps *in situ*. A humble desk with sloping hinged top purportedly used by Samuel Johnson was examined. The library also has a pair of superb quality Regency rosewood pedestal tables cross-banded in calamander.

Finally the group was privileged to be able to visit the Provost's Lodge where the current incumbent, Lord Waldegrave, welcomed us to his private rooms. Amongst the furnishings was a substantial figured mahogany dining table with four cluster-column pedestals and ormolu castors, c. 1820, which took centre position in the dining room.

We are hugely grateful to our host Henrietta Ryan of Eton College, to Nick Humphrey of the V&A, our guide and commentator, and to Clarissa Ward for organising such a rewarding day.

Simon Green

THE OLIVER FORD TRUST AND TOM INGRAM MEMORIAL FUND

In line with one of its roles — the promotion of interest in interior design — the Oliver Ford Trust has generously expressed the desire to sponsor a place on each FHS study weekend or foreign tour. Applicants should either be a student with a particular interest in interiors, or a junior museum professional. Applications from non-members will be considered. Grants will be awarded via the Tom Ingram Fund, to which candidates should apply.

The Tom Ingram Memorial Fund makes grants towards travel and other incidental expenses for the purpose of study or research into the history of furniture (a) whether or not the applicant is a member of the Society; (b) only when the study or research is likely to be of importance in furthering the objectives of the Society; and (c) only when travel could not be undertaken without a grant from the Society. Applications towards the cost of

FHS foreign and domestic trips and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Fund in any resulting publications and must report back to the Panel on completion of the travel or project. All applications should be addressed to Adriana Turpin, Secretary to the Fund at 39 Talbot Road, London W2 5JH, Turpinadriana@hotmail.com, who will also supply application forms for the Oliver Ford Trust grants on request. Please remember to send an s.a.e. with any request.

The committee requests that applications for study trips be made well in advance of the final deadline for acceptance — preferably at least one month before.

COPY DEADLINE

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next Newsletter is **15 September**. Copy should be sent, preferably by email, to m.winterbottom@bath.ac.uk or posted to Matthew Winterbottom, The Holburne Museum, Bath BA2 4DB, tel. 01225 820813

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MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY (MEMBERSHIP, SUBSCRIPTIONS, ADDRESS CHANGES, AND PUBLICATIONS): Dr Brian Austen, 1 Mercedes Cottages, St John's Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 4EH. Tel. and fax 01444 413845, e-mail: brian.austen@zen.co.uk

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FHS e-mail: furniturehistorysociety@hotmail.com

Web site: www.furniturehistorysociety.org

Council members can be contacted through the Activities or Membership Secretaries whose details are shown above. Contributors can be contacted through the Newsletter Editor who in the case of this issue is Matthew Winterbottom at The Holburne Museum of Art, Bath BA2 4DB, tel 01225 820813 or email: m.winterbottom@bath.ac.uk

This issue edited by Matthew Winterbottom

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