



## THE FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

No. 187

AUGUST 2012

### JOHN LINNELL'S REDISCOVERED BILL FOR FURNISHING AMMERDOWN HOUSE, SOMERSET

In their excellent survey of the work of William and John Linnell, Helena Hayward and Pat Kirkham refer to John Linnell's bill for furniture supplied in 1795/96 to Thomas Samuel Joliffe (1746–1824) for Ammerdown House in Somerset. However, the invoice was thought lost and a transcript was not therefore included in *William and John Linnell: Eighteenth Century London Furniture Makers* (1978). However, the invoice has recently been rediscovered at Ammerdown House and is here reproduced for the first time in its entirety.

The commission was perhaps John Linnell's last private commission before his death in March 1796. However, it is probable that most of the work was supervised by Thomas Tatham, John Linnell's cousin and brother of Charles Heathcote Tatham.

T.S. Joliffe Esq.

To the Estate of the late Mr John Linnell

1795

Nov 23<sup>rd</sup>

T.Tatham going to Ammerdown Coach hire & Expenses £3.13s.6d.

Dec 1<sup>st</sup>

23 Pieces of French grey and white striped paper @4/- £4.12s.0d.

16 Pieces of blue paper on satten white @8/- £6.8s.0d.

29 doz. of blue moulding Border @2/6 £3.12.6d.

12 best white cotton Tassells @1/3 £0.15s.0d.

1 Gros. of white cotton Line £1.4s.0d.

A case 16ft and packing *D*<sup>o</sup> £0.4s.8d.

Porterage with *D*<sup>o</sup> to the Kings Arms Holburne  
Bridge

Dec 23<sup>rd</sup>

A frame for your Chimney Glass the mouldings  
carved and gilt in burnished Gold on white  
ground £2.18s.0d.  
A Case 46ft and packing *D*<sup>o</sup> £0.13s.5d.  
Porterage with *D*<sup>o</sup> to the Kings Arms Holburne  
Bridge

1796

Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>

Paid porterage of a Case / containing Glass / from  
Holburne Bridge to Berkeley Square £0.2s.0d.

May 12<sup>th</sup>

206 yds of green Tabaret @6/9 £69.10s.6d.  
51 yds of rich green Mantua @3/6 £124.0s.6d.  
130y½ yds of Superfine white Durant @1/6 £9.15s.9d.  
20 yds of rich bellendine silk knotted Fringes, pea  
green and white, 4in deep made very thick &  
heavy @10/6 £0.10s.0d.  
24 yds of *D*<sup>o</sup> 3in deep @9/- £10.16s.0d.  
8 large bellendine silk Tassells white and pea  
green, 3 stitch cauls, knotted shags & ornament  
with green silk egg hangers @13/- £5.4s.0d.  
4 large silk Eggs @3/6 £0.14s.0d.  
74 yds of large pea green silk rope Line & hooks @4/- £1.8s.0d.  
52 yds of green Ribbon @3/- £0.13s.0d.  
82 yds of green silk Line £2.1s.0d.  

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£148.15s.10d.

Brought forward £148.15s.10d.  
4 rack pullies and screws £0.7s.0d.  
4 long driving Cloakpins £0.4s.0d.  
4 brass pulley rods containing 32ft8 and eight  
brass screw Hooks £4.5s.0d.  
2 very long window Cornices, ornamented and  
gilt in burnished Gold in the best manner  
on a white ground £12.12s.0d.  
Making 2 very large p<sup>r</sup> of rod window Curtains  
of Tabaret lined with white Durant and bound  
with ribbon, deep gathered Vallens lined & fringed  
and green silk Draperies over *D*<sup>o</sup> fringed compleat  
silk, buckram, braid, oes, tape &c £6.8s.0d.  
8 yds of large pea green silk rope Line for Bells  
2 gilt Eggs for *D*<sup>o</sup> £1.17s.0d.  
16 pieces of montague damask green paper £6.8s.0d.  
13 Quire of elephant paper £0.19s.6d.  
277<sup>ft</sup>6 of broad beaded moulding gilt in burnished  
gold in the best manner @1/6 £20.16s.3d.  
70<sup>ft</sup>6 of Internal angular *D*<sup>o</sup> @2/2 £7.12s.9d.  
24 blocks for *D*<sup>o</sup> £1.4s.0d.

8 sattinwood tablet back'd elbow Chairs with mouldings gilt in burnish'd gold round the painted tablets, the elbows carved, the legs turn'd, the backs, seats and elbows french stuff'd in fine canvas cover'd with the above Tabaret and nail'd with the best princes metal nails compleat	£44.0s.0d.
8 painted silk Tablets for <i>D<sup>o</sup></i>	£2.0s.0d.
Cutting out and making loose covers for <i>D<sup>o</sup></i> Of your printed Calico, thread, tape &c	£1.15s.0d.
2 large sophas to match the Chairs with square bolsters	£28.0s.0d.
Cutting out and making Cases for <i>D<sup>o</sup></i> of your printed Callico, thread, tape &c	£1.1s.0d.
	<hr/> £288.5s.4d.
Brought forward	£288.5s.4d.
A plate Glass 35 by 27 to match your own	£5.15s.0d.
2 Girandoles with top and bottom ornaments richly carved and gilt in burnish'd gold in the best manner to carry 4 lights each with cut glass pans, ormolu nosells and sockets cutting and stopping in your Glass and the above new one compleat	£39.15s.0d.
58¾ yds of wilton Carpet, thread, best tape &c and making a Carpet border'd all round	£20.11s.3d.
A long pole for <i>D<sup>o</sup></i>	£0.5s.0d.
A very large best Hearth rug	£1.8s.0d.
2 large Frames with ornaments in therm'd Legs and Gollosses [guilloches] in the rails gilt in burnished Gold in the best manner for your slabs	£18.18s.0d.
6 Chairs with caned backs and seats, painted sattinwood colour with green ornaments in varnish	£7.7s.0d.
A 5 <sup>ft</sup> 6 wainscot double veneer'd Bedstead with mahogany carved and fluted posts fine sacking bottom, bright compass rod and on french casters compleat	£13.12s.0d.
A sett of shaped moulding Cornices for <i>D<sup>o</sup></i> with Tablets, neatly jappan'd with ornaments to correspond with the furniture	£4.12s.0d.
66 yds of ell wide blue strip printed Callico @5/1	£16.15s.6d.
62½ yds of plain blue <i>D<sup>o</sup></i> @2/5	£7.11s.0½d.
20 yds of yd wide white <i>D<sup>o</sup></i> @1/5	£1.8s.4d.
Making a furniture for the above Bedstead with gather'd inside and outside Vallens bases &c lined and bound with the blue Callico, thread, tape, buckram, rings, &c	£3.16s. 0d.

5 <sup>ft</sup> 6 best wood and hair matrass in a fine white Case, border'd, bound and tyed down with silk tufts	£6.10s.0d.
A 3 <sup>ft</sup> 6 strip hair Matrass, border'd, quilted & tyed down compleat	£7.3s.0d.
A p <sup>r</sup> of 14/4 fine witney Blankets	£3.12s.0d.
A single 10/4 D <sup>o</sup>	£0.15s.0d.
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	£447.19s.5½d.
Brought forward	£447.19s.5½d.
A p <sup>r</sup> of wilton bedside carpets containing £3½ yds	£1.5s.0d.
18 yds of ell wide blue strip printed Callico @5/1	£4.14s.0½d.
23½ yds of plain blue D <sup>o</sup> @2/5	£2.16s.9½d.
12 yds of blue silk Line	£0.6s.0d.
4 large blue cotton vellum Tassells	£0.8s.0d.
3 yds of large blue cotton rope Line	£0.5s.0d.
2 large blue cotton Eggs	£0.3s.0d.
A Lath and 3 12 in iron brackets	£0.3s.0d.
A brass pulley rod and 2 brass screw Hooks	
A rack pulley and screws	£1.1s.0d.
Making a p <sup>r</sup> of rod window Curtains to match Bed furniture with gather'd Vallens lined and bound with blue Callico, silk, thread, tape buckram, oes, rings &c	£0.15s.0d.
A p <sup>r</sup> of sattinwood pole Firescreens the claws run, the ovals cover'd with green silk and sattinwood margins round D <sup>o</sup> varnish'd compleat	£3.18s.0d.
A Gallon of brown spirit varnish	£2.12s.0d.
A stone bottle	£0.1s.0d.
11 Cases and battins containing 824 <sup>ft</sup>	£12.0s.4d.
5 Matts used	£0.8s.9d.
2½ Quire of large brown paper, 2 Quire of Elephant	
8 Quire of whited brown, 8 Quire of silver paper	
5 doz <sup>n</sup> of screws, 2 Bedcords, pack thread tacks haybands &c and packing all the above furniture	£2.5s.0d.
The hire of 2 Carts and 3 Horses with D <sup>o</sup> to the Kings Arms Holborn Bridge and my man With D <sup>o</sup> Booking and Tolls	£1.1s.6d.
May 30 <sup>th</sup>	
My Forman going to Ammerdown unpacking All the furniture, smoothing the walls of Drawing Room, papering D <sup>o</sup> with Elephant paper pummice stoning and hanging D <sup>o</sup> with green paper, assisting the joiner to fix the gilt mould -ings Girandoles, Tables, fixing the Cornices putting	
	<hr/>
	£482.2s.10½d.

Brought forward £482.2s.10½d.  
 up the window curtains compleat hanging  
 the Bell Lines and laying down the carpet  
 In Drawing Room, cutting out brown holland  
 Cases for the sophas, Chairs, window Curtains  
 Girandoles, Tables, Screens &c, cutting out bases  
 and altering a field Bed furniture, cutting out  
 and making a border'd tick mattrass, prepar<sup>g</sup>  
 and hanging with printed paper and border  
 one Room a closet and a passage in Attic  
 story, preparing and hanging with printed  
 paper and border, a Bedroom, 2 Dressing  
 rooms and 2 closets on first floor, putting  
 up a large Bedstead with french castors  
 putting up the cornices and furniture comp<sup>t</sup>  
 fixing the lath, rod & and putting up a p<sup>r</sup>  
 of rod window Curtains, with gathered Vallens  
 making a roller Blind and fixing D<sup>o</sup> in Bed  
 -room, making 2 roller Blinds and fixing D<sup>o</sup>  
 in Library, making a roller for the bottom of  
 Dressing room Door, covering p<sup>r</sup> of stiff bands  
 and sundry other jobs, 5 doz. stucco nails, 6000  
 Tacks, 5 doz. Gilt screws, brass pins, 1 doz. of brass  
 eyes for stairs, 1 doz. of large hooks and Eyes  
 pummice stone &c

£9.4s.0d.  
£491.6s.10½d.

Deduct: Cash paid for Gib Varnish £2:13s.0d.  
 25ft of Borders returned £1:17s.6d.

£486.16s.4½d.

Deduct [?disc<sup>n</sup>] on this Sum £24:0s.0d.

£462:16s.4½d.

Add for varnish £2.13s.0d.

£465.9s.4½d.

A draft for £466 being the  
 Balance of this account and a Consideration for  
 The short pieces of Border returned see [?] [?]  
 NB By Draft on Hodsol and C<sup>o</sup> in the Strand

Received August 10th 1796 of Thomas Sammuell  
 Jolliffe Esq the Sum of four hundred and sixty six Pounds being the amount of a bill  
 delivered from the Estate if Mr John Linnell late of Berkley Square deceased and being in  
 full of all demands from the said Estate. Received by  
 Thos Tatham  
 John Bond  
 Executors

Amanda Sheridan and Matthew Winterbottom

## EVENTS SECRETARY

The Council was sorry to have received the resignation of our Events Secretary, Sara Heaton, who has over the last 18 months organised an excellent series of events for the Society, which is grateful for her hard work and dedication. Sara will be leaving on 30 September 2012, so the Council has begun the process of recruiting her successor. The task, challenging but rewarding, is at the heart of the Society's activities. It comprises planning all events, is flexible and part-time, and requires reliability, commitment, initiative and administrative skills. It commands a modest honorarium (fee) and expenses. Expressions of interest and CVs should be directed to James Yorke FSA, Secretary, The Furniture History Society, 64 Peterborough Road, London SW6 3EB; jamesayorke@gmail.com, by 12 August 2012.

## NEW FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY WEBSITE AND EMAIL ADDRESSES

We are very pleased to announce that the Society will re-launch its website in August. It has been completely redesigned and we hope it will improve access to INFORMATION, EVENTS, PUBLICATIONS, MEMBERSHIP, GRANTS, SALES and RESEARCH. To allow a site to grow and to be an enjoyable experience for Society members, we would welcome input and, from the time that the new site goes live in August, please email your comments and communications to the relevant Officer of the Society:

events@furniturehistorysociety.org  
grants@furniturehistorysociety.org  
journal@furniturehistorysociety.org  
membership@furniturehistorysociety.org  
newsletter@furniturehistorysociety.org  
publications@furniturehistorysociety.org  
research@furniturehistorysociety.org  
website@furniturehistorysociety.org

Once the site is live, all members who have given the Society an email address will receive a Username and Password by email from the Society. You can then search for the site (address below) and on the top left hand of the home page you will see a members log-in button. Click on this and enter the Username and Password that has been sent to you and you will be able to use the site to a greater degree than the general public.

[www.furniturehistorysociety.org](http://www.furniturehistorysociety.org)

## FUTURE SOCIETY EVENTS

### BOOKINGS

For places on all visits please apply to the Events Secretary, Sara Heaton, 18 First Street, London, SW3 2LD. Tel. 07775 907390 enclosing a separate cheque and separate stamped addressed envelope for each event using the enclosed booking form.

Some advance event information (including weekends) will be available by email, please email the Events Secretary or send your email address with your application: [furniturehistorysociety@hotmail.com](mailto:furniturehistorysociety@hotmail.com)

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 £10.00 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

*Duncan Phyfe: Master Cabinetmaker in New York*, Peter M. Kenney

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

Tuesday 30 October, 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm – 7.45 pm lecture

To those with even a passing knowledge of furniture history, the name Duncan Phyfe is instantly recognizable. The apotheosis of Duncan Phyfe, described in his own lifetime as the 'United States Rage,' from a successful furniture maker to an American icon in the early twentieth century provides a logical starting point for a reconsideration of this renowned master cabinetmaker. Phyfe's brilliant craftsmanship and sense of design made him the leader of an entire school of cabinetmaking in early nineteenth-century New York. How Phyfe and the other cabinetmakers of this school forged their own distinctive version of the Grecian or classical style in its various iterations over time is a fascinating story of a celebrated master craftsman and the dynamic city he called home throughout his long career.

Peter M. Kenney is the Ruth Bigelow Wriston Curator of American Decorative Arts and the Administrator of the American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He is the curator of the current Duncan Phyfe retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum, where he has worked for the past twenty-three years, principally with the seventeenth-, eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century American furniture collections.

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



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND WORKS IN PROGRESS TALKS

The East India Club, 16 St James's Square, London SW1

Saturday 24 November 2012, 11.00 am – 1.00 pm

The Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30th June 2012 will be held at the East India Club. The AGM will start at 11.00 am (coffee from 10.30 am).

There will be a presentation on the Society's 50th Anniversary followed by Works in Progress talks including Rufus Bird, Deputy Surveyor of the Queen's Works of Art, Christopher Rowell, The National Trust, and Christopher Wilk and Joanna Norman of The Furniture Textiles and Fashion Department at the V&A who will give a general update on the department and an update on the Europe 1600–1800 Gallery.

There will be a special presentation by Dr John Martin Robinson on recent works at Wilton House.

Admission to the AGM is free but all members wishing to attend should notify the FHS Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance for security reasons. Tickets for lunch with a glass of wine at £20 per head should also be booked at least 7 days in advance.

## ADVANCE NOTICE — THE 37TH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM OF THE FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY

The Wallace Collection, Hertford House, Manchester Square, London W1

Saturday 9 March 2013

### *The Architect as Furniture Designer*

The annual symposium will be organised by the FHS and Charles Hind, H. J. Heinz Curator of Drawings at the RIBA. The symposium will discuss a number of architects, from the eighteenth century onwards, in respect of their careers as designers of furniture as part of the interior decoration for the buildings for which they are best known.

Full programme and booking arrangements will be in the November *Newsletter*.









## REQUEST FOR FURNITURE HISTORY

FHS Member and traditional upholsterer Stephen Franklin would like to obtain a complete set of *Furniture History* as would several other Members. If anyone is thinking of disposing of journals please could they contact Stephen directly on 07749 847251 [stephen.franklin@homecall.co.uk](mailto:stephen.franklin@homecall.co.uk) or the Membership Secretary Brian Austen at [brian.austen@zen.co.uk](mailto:brian.austen@zen.co.uk)

## NEW PUBLICATION ON ARDTORNISH HOUSE, ARGYLL

Peter Warren, *Ardtornish House. The Architectural and Decorative Marbles and Granite*

Ardtornish House is a mansion in the Scottish Highlands (in Morvern, Argyll) built by the Inverness architect Alexander Ross for the then owner, Thomas Valentine Smith, in 1884–91. It was refurbished by the Edinburgh architect John Kinross in 1908–10 for

Gertrude Craig Sellar. Among many fine interior fittings, in wood, metal and plaster, it contains a superb range of chimney-pieces and other fittings in Mediterranean coloured marbles, especially from France and Italy that are the subject of the book. This comprises chapters on the wider setting of the material used in the mansion, that is on coloured stone in architecture, on what was done by Ross and what by Kinross, on the marbles room by room and an account of each marble alphabetically.

£10.00 including p&p. Available from The Ardtornish Estate Office, Morvern, Argyll, PA80 5UZ (sale proceeds to the Morvern Heritage Society)

## 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

Trevor Cooper and Sarah Brown (eds), *Pews, Benches and Chairs, Church seating in English parish churches from the fourteenth century to the present*, (London Ecclesiological Society: 2011) x + 500 pp., 403 b. & w. illus. ISBN 978-0-946823-17-8, £35.

It is surely unusual for any book noticed in this *Newsletter* to be focussed on a burning topic of controversy, and still more so if that controversy be not historical but rather liturgical, theological, functional and social, although history — and aesthetics — are certainly part of the mix. Moreover, *mirabile dictu*, this brouhaha echoes, continues and is in many respects the mirror image of a great argument which preoccupied our ancestors a century and half ago. Then the battle was to destroy the box-pews which were seen not only to deface the architectural unity of the vast majority of Gothic churches, but also to express and reinforce an iniquitous system by which privileged worshippers could monopolise the best seats in God's house. The now ubiquitous Victorian bench or bench-pew was then the answer, but this did not long remain uncontested, chairs gaining many supporters even in the late nineteenth century. Now the box-pew is no longer a major issue; their rarity, thanks to the thoroughness of Victorian extirpation, is such that most will probably survive for historic interest alone. But the Victorian bench or bench-pew is distinctly under threat, seen as cramping flexibility, drearily dominant and, sin of sins, lacking in comfort.

*Pews, Benches and Chairs* adopts a neutral stance, but describes a context in which new liturgies proliferate, along with informal music, projection screens and 'multi-sensory worship', bewildering and unsettling traditionalists. Of the thirty chapters in the book, by over twenty principal authors, five are background: one, on St Michael and All Saints, Abingdon, abandons neutrality, and in a high rhetorical tone presents a recent re-ordering (pews expelled, chairs and a Chartres-style labyrinth introduced) as a model of 'sacred geography'; another carefully documents the reasons for what is arguably an over-capacity of seating in Anglican churches.

Context is succeeded by history, first seven pre-Victorian chapters and then nine broadly Victorian. The earlier period highlights the need for historical and archaeological precision. Somerset bench-ends prove to have been repeatedly misidentified, and examination of pews at St Mary, Newent, Gloucestershire demonstrates that they were not 'largely Victorian', but carefully reduced seventeenth-century survivals. An account of the allocation of seats describes an intricate picture, but more than hints that, contrary to stereotypes of seething discontent among the groundlings, the leaders of local society were the most

likely to be responsible for quarrels and disorderly conduct. Whether this judgment would comfort the poor of Puddletown in Dorset, who were expected to stand in the belfry after an ambitious re-seating in 1635, is a moot point.

There was no uncertainty when, in around 1840, the Cambridge Camden Society mounted its attack on box-pews and dismissed them as 'eye-sores and heart-sores'. In 1855 a squire's pew, retained in the re-built mediaeval church at Spofforth in Yorkshire, was described by the Incorporated Church Building Society as 'a special object of deformity'. The architect William Butterfield railing against hassocks 'always in different stages of decay, raggedness and nastiness', and a doughty correspondence in *The Ecclesiologist* from 1844 to 1856 on the respective merits of benches or chairs, with the entrance of the moveable bench as a 'third way' (as now!) are revealing contemporary witnesses. The graphic evidence is supplied by sample illustrations from ten church furnishers' catalogues, with a price hierarchy from oak to pitch pine to pine to red deal, and such specialised products as a 'harmonium chair'. The twentieth century is largely passed by, although the latest 'Victorian' catalogue is of 1933 and it is touching to learn that H. Munro Cautley, the great student of Suffolk churches, designed the pews of Mildenhall church as a memorial to his wife, who died in 1958.

The penultimate segment moves back to the more or less contemporary, less in the case of an updated 1964 article which defines a church as 'the place of the Christian people', but also acknowledges the ungainly and boxy look of wooden stacking chairs derived from those designed for Coventry Cathedral by Gordon Russell. Indeed, despite lapses into dogmatism, these seven articles contain much that is practical and common-sensical, food for serious thought when a congregation considers its options. The finale, consisting of no fewer than fifteen case-studies, runs the gamut. 'Putting a loo in a family pew' strikes dread as a title, but proves to describe a sensitive and careful scheme, while at Redgrave in Suffolk the parishioners cherish their Victorian pews *and* find them an asset in mounting concerts etc.

In a coda one of the editors, Trevor Cooper, ponders the history of church seating and its future (not without some interesting evidence on open benches from music halls to pubs and wine bars), and concludes with properly Anglican uncertainty as to what the future holds. The 'pew rage' of earlier centuries has taken on a new meaning with all too frequent extreme prejudice against Victorian bench-pews. *Pews, Benches and Chairs* presents a splendidly variegated landscape of attitudes and possibilities. Let us hope that it helps to stop the pendulum swinging too far, as pendulums so often do. For furniture historians the book is full of new research and discoveries, but the treatment of the whole subject provokes fascinating reflections on the nature of functional — in the widest sense — change and adaptation. Strongly recommended.

Simon Swynfen Jervis

Georg Himmelheber, *Der Mailänder Kabinettsschrank, Ein Augsburger Prunkmöbel des Manierismus* (Vienna: Liechtenstein Museum, 2010), 78 pp. 80 col., 7 b. & w. illus., ISBN 978-3-9502380-7-5, €29.50.

In November 2009 the most sensational piece of furniture to come on the market for a very long time was sold at Christie's in London, from a family collection in Milan where, unknown to the world, it had been kept for many decades, perhaps even centuries. It is the finest surviving example of a sixteenth-century Augsburg *Schreibtisch*, or writing cabinet, the prime representative, therefore, of the earliest class of furniture to acquire European renown as an art form at the time of its making. Contested by museums and collectors the

world over, the cabinet was acquired by the German dealer, Neuse, who following a commendably discreet conservation treatment sold it to the Prince of Liechtenstein who has put it on display in the Liechtenstein Museum in Vienna.

The cabinet has been fortunate in having Georg Himmelheber, the nestor of German furniture studies who in 2010 was honoured, on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, with a major symposium at the Kunstgewerbemuseum in Berlin, devote the present publication to it. First of all, this provides an incisive description of the piece. The breathtaking beauty of the marquetry decoration, unparalleled in its complexity and liveliness, is captured in a generous series of illustrations. Even these, however, cannot do justice to the extraordinary, shimmering appearance of the various woods, reminiscent of embroidery in silks, which is particularly notable in those areas that have hardly ever seen the light of day, such as the sides of the small, removable, subsidiary cabinets within the interior. Nowhere else in the world can the original feeling of delicacy and preciousness of this type of decoration be experienced in alike manner.

Himmelheber convincingly attributes the Liechtenstein cabinet (or 'Milan cabinet' as it is here called) to the same workshop as the so-called *Wrangelschrank* in the Landesmuseum in Münster. Dated 1566, that famous piece was the subject of a monography by Lieselotte Möller, published in 1956. It is the only known cabinet with marquetry of the same outstanding quality, and many detailed analogies are pointed out. The decoration of the Liechtenstein cabinet is even richer and, unlike the *Wrangelschrank*, features a number of mythological scenes which, in parenthesis, would seem to belie the highly involved and fairly questionable iconographical interpretation of the *Wrangelschrank's* decoration proposed by Möller.

In her book Möller presented a large number of more or less related cabinets, some of which she attributed to Augsburg whereas many others were relegated to other localities in South Germany or the Tirol. Dieter Alfter, in his study of Augsburg cabinets of 1986, argued that the majority were actually made in Augsburg, uniquely famous at the time for its cabinet-making industry: the very nature of this large and sophisticated group of furniture points to its origin in a major centre where advanced methods of manufacture were being developed.

In several publications, Georg Himmelheber has greatly contributed to the present knowledge of sixteenth-century Augsburg cabinets. The discovery of the Milan cabinet has incited him to address the matter of attributions anew. He notes that it shares various pictorial devices as well as some idiosyncratic technical details with a number of lesser pieces, notably a cabinet in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, and concludes that these must have been made in the same workshop. Taking a brave plunge, he attributes the entire group to Lienhart Stromair, celebrated in his own time as the leading marquetry furniture specialist in Augsburg. In 1927 Adolf Feulner attributed to Stromair an impressive architectural cabinet, dated 1555, in a Spanish collection. Feulner assumed that this key piece had been made for Emperor Charles V for whom Stromair is known to have worked, but recently Sybe Wartena has established that it was almost certainly commissioned by the Emperor's brother, Ferdinand I. While questioning Feulner's attribution, Himmelheber mainly bases his own hypothesis on the superior quality of the Milan and Wrangel cabinets. As he points out, this quality is not shared by the Amsterdam example and its peers, and it could also be argued that those cabinets are part of a large, somewhat later production, in which the splendid inventions embodied in the great early pieces were popularized for a broader market. Such cabinets might have emanated from the same workshop, but equally from a spreading number of competing establishments. That the attribution to Stromair is all but straightforward, is indicated by Himmelheber's identification of two engravings after Philips Galle as the source for the corresponding scenes in marquetry



on the Milan cabinet. The engravings were apparently published in 1569, a year after Stromair's death.

It is the great merit of the present publication to point the way to a detailed stylistic and technical analysis of the hundreds of existing Augsburg marquetry cabinets. This will not be an easy matter: for example, the author feels that a number of different hands can be detected in the decoration of the Milan cabinet alone, drawing the attention to the lack of detailed information about workshop practices. An important step towards a greater understanding of Augsburg cabinet-making would be the publication of Sybe Wartena's exemplary thesis on the imperial cabinet in Spain. Meanwhile, Georg Himmelheber is to be congratulated on this study which will doubtless stimulate further research. He himself has demonstrated how this should be undertaken in a recent fascinating article on a group of mid-seventeenth-century cabinets — which he conclusively removes from the Augsburg canon.\*

\* Georg Himmelheber, "Gallanterie Cästen', Kabinettschränke des Frühbarock', *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* 2011, pp. 35–45.

Reinier Baarsen





## 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 Clarissa Ward, Secretary FHS Grants Committee, 25 Wardo Avenue, London SW6 6RA, email [grantsfhs@gmail.com](mailto:grantsfhs@gmail.com), who will supply application forms for the Tom Ingram Memorial Fund and the Oliver Ford Trust. Please remember to send an s.a.e. with request.

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

### COPY DEADLINE

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next *Newsletter* is **15th September**. Copy should be sent, preferably by email, to Elizabeth Jamieson [ea.jamieson@fiscalis.co.uk](mailto:ea.jamieson@fiscalis.co.uk) or posted to Elizabeth Jamieson, 10 Tarleton Gardens, Forest Hill, London SE23 3XN.

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