

The Furniture History Society

Newsletter 234

May 2024



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An Untouched William and Mary Chest Rediscovered

Fig. 1: Detail of initials and date on leather-covered studded lid, 1677, with initials 'R' over 'W' and 'M', Westminster Abbey Muniment Room.



The delight of discovering a wonderful and long-forgotten piece of furniture in the attic of some historic building is something of a dream for furniture lovers. Thanks to the Attingham Trust's Royal Collection Study Course and the generosity of Westminster Abbey's Keeper of Muniments Dr Matthew Payne, Adrian Hume-Sayer and I were able to enjoy one such moment in September. We had just completed a study session in the Muniment Room, looking at a range of ancient manuscripts and the furniture which held them. As we were leaving, the conversation turned to the reign of William and Mary and its significance in the longer story of British design. At this point, Matthew uttered the immortal words, 'Ah, well, if you're interested in

William and Mary, there's something here that you might want to see, which I've not yet had the opportunity to check out with a furniture person. Do you have time to come back during your lunch break?'. He would not have been able to stop us. And so it was that we ended up nose-to-nose with a late-seventeenth-century leather covered and studded chest (cover image) that had, in all probability, belonged to William of Orange and Queen Mary.

The chest is 41.75 inches wide, 22 inches deep and 18 inches high. The exterior leather covering has suffered losses in some places and is darkened and brittle, and the studding has tarnished to black (Figure 1) – so is not immediately obvious when viewed in shadowy eaves. The method of construction is boards nailed

together, with a central batten inside the lid, so the exterior is completely flat-faced (ready to receive the leather), with strengthening batten on the inside – which was easy to smarten up with pasted on, patterned lining-paper. The front of the lid has been broken off at some point, probably to force access and, as evidence, a sturdy-looking padlock is still in place, with the fastening loop and eyebolt attached. Studding on the lid traces out a framing pattern for the initials of 'R' (Rex/ Regina) over 'W' and 'M', and the date of William and Mary's marriage, 1677, sits below (Figure 1).

Perhaps one of the most precious survivals is the interior. This is lined with its original printed paper (Figure 2), for which comparable examples survive in the V&A's collection (Figure 3). The lining paper has been subject to considerable wear and tear in places, but nearly all the loose scraps still sit inside the bottom of the chest and can be jigsawed together.



Fig. 2: Detail of printed lining paper in leather studded chest, 1670s, Westminster Abbey Muniment Room.



Fig. 3: Printed wallpaper, late seventeenth or early eighteenth century, V&A E.554-193. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.



Fig. 4: Detail of crossed ribbons inside lid of trunk, 1677, Westminster Abbey Muniment Room.

The criss-crossed ribbon document holders (Figure 4) and the straps of webbing that stopped the lid from dropping too far back when open, are all still in place too, though not all fully attached.

This chest is not a glamorous object: it is utilitarian, but of good and solid quality.¹ It was made to be tough and expected to last. This low status or at least 'unshowy' nature is probably what has ensured its survival, with no signs of intervention or restoration. The type is well known, but examples that make their way to market are generally more decorative and grand and have, almost without exception, been relined.² Among the highest-status examples of these is the one in the V&A collection, which is on display in the Dr Susan Weber Gallery of Furniture (Figure 5). In that example, the red leather and the intricate pattern of brass nailing all work together to make a far more visually impressive and high-status object. In addition, the two large drawers at the base

of the V&A chest would have made its contents far easier to access, so that it operated much more as a travelling piece of decorative furniture – fit to be seen and used by a monarch. The Westminster Abbey chest, by comparison, is effectively a standard travelling trunk that might travel with the royal entourage but stay behind the scenes.

The questions that remain are, how did this trunk get to the Muniment Room of Westminster Abbey and why hasn't it been spotted before? The initials and pattern on the lid are not immediately obvious because the nailing and leather have both darkened to black together and, without an intent to explore and good lighting, the identity marked out on the chest is easily missed. Matthew Payne arrived at the Abbey in 2012 to take up the role

of Keeper of Muniments, at which point the chest held an old collection of index cards, as it had, probably since at least the 1970s. Dr Payne realised that, despite its long life as a useful, sturdy and large-sized storage container, the chest was, in fact, a bit special and worth looking after. He removed the index cards, made sure all the pieces of lining were saved, closed the chest, covered it with a protective sheet and made a note to mention it to a furniture person.

To answer the question of what the chest was doing in the Abbey in the first place, we have to look to the historic functions of the Abbey and the stream of communications and material goods that flowed back and forth between monarchs and the Abbey. Major royal occasions such as royal funerals and coronations



Fig. 5: Leather covered trunk, once red, with brass studding decorations and the cypher of William and Mary on the lid, 1689-1702, V&A 497-1884. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

required the delivery of large volumes of material from either the royal palaces or the royal wardrobe to Westminster Abbey, both before and after services. In 1694, for the funeral of Queen Mary, preparatory material included '57 loads of sawed timber, 55 packs of bullrush mat, 16 tin candlesticks, 14 glass lanterns and other raw materials worth a total of £1110 12s 6d'.³ The Abbey was to be hung with black cloth 'from ye west door unto ye altar on both sides', along with cushions, chairs of black velvet, banners, bannerets and other ornaments.⁴ All was to be delivered to the Abbey by the Master of the Great Wardrobe 'before the day of the funeral'.

After such services, the disposal of some of the material used, and the fees and perquisites to which various people involved with the event felt entitled, required the arbitration of the Lord Chamberlain and sometimes led to bitter disputes. To resolve some of these issues around coronations, since the fourteenth century, a Court of Claims had been established to rule on the hereditary roles of various peers and office-holders, and the rights that went with them. This did not necessarily stop the disputes. For example, at the coronation of Elizabeth of York in 1487, the striped cloth that ran from Westminster Hall to Westminster Abbey was fought over so violently that a number of people died.⁵

Similar claims were also made for specific rights and fees at royal funerals, largely centering on what precedent dictated that the relevant parties were entitled to receive after the service for their efforts. Prominent among these claimants was Westminster Abbey itself, whose

claim to various items, especially the hearse, with fabrics and mourning cloth that had been used around the Abbey, often brought them into dispute with the heralds.⁶ But the senior clergy and lay officials of the Abbey also claimed by right a prescribed amount of mourning cloth by way of fees;⁷ the dean, sub dean and twelve prebendaries all were to receive gowns, as well as the chanter, two vergers, sacrists, the twelve almsmen, and there were coats for the four bellringers, two porters and the beadle.⁸

These huge quantities of valuable cloth all had to be transported to the Abbey from royal residences or the wardrobe. At this point, a relatively low-grade but sturdy chest – already nearly 20 years old and with now obsolete initials on its lid – would have been the perfect vessel for transporting these goods so their arrival could be recorded and accounted for. In a busy early-modern Muniment Room, which needed to accommodate vast amounts of paperwork, it is easy to imagine that, once emptied of the all-important cloth, a chest such as this would be repurposed for storing papers. Now that this long-forgotten object has been brought to light as something special, it can take its rightful place in furniture history and the story of late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century studded leather chests.

DR JENNY SAUNT

Senior Curator of Furniture and
Woodwork, V&A

With thanks to Dr Matthew Payne for introducing us to this chest and providing detailed context and explanation of Abbey practice around distribution and movement of goods.

1 For discussion of the full range of types and their uses, see Olivia Fryman, 'Coffer-Makers to the Late Stuart Court', *Furniture History* 52 (2016), pp. 1-16.

2 Thomas Coulborn & Sons had an example in 2016: a travelling chest of four drawers, with Queen Anne's monogram on the top, which had the original quilted crimson silk lining in one of the drawers.

The broader subject of leather covered, brass studded trunks has been much published: Maria Hayward, 'William Green, Coffer maker to Henry VIII, Edward VI and Mary I', *Furniture History* 36 (2000), pp. 1-13; 'A Royal Travelling Trunk', *Country Life* (May 17th, 1924); Sheelah Ruggles-Brise, 'Some Royal Coffers', *Connoisseur*, (August 1952) pp. 19-24; R. W. Symonds, 'The Craft of the Coffer and Trunk Maker in the 17th Century', *Connoisseur*, Vol. CIX (Jan.-June, 1942), p. 40; R. W. Symonds, 'Chests and Coffers', *Country*

Life (Jan 15th, 1943), pp. 126-127; R. W. Symonds, 'Standards, Coffers and Trunks', *Country Life* (February 5th, 1943), pp. 262-263.

3 WAM 6426.

4 WAM 6437.

5 Roy Strong, *Coronation: A History of Kingship and the British Monarchy* (London: HarperCollins 2005), p.152.

6 Their pre-emptive claim traced their right to such items back to the 1530s, WAM 6438.

7 What they did with these claims varied. The scaffold to which they were entitled was sold, and the resulting money divided between them, WAM 44665. In 1737 it was recalled that Dean Sprat had had the pall of Queen Mary in 1694, and that it was 'now to be seen at Bromley church, where it is converted into a pulpit cloth', WAM 6273.

8 WAM 6436.

FHS Events Calendar

Here you can find **all currently scheduled** forthcoming FHS and BIFMO Events; please refer to subsequent pages for more information. Additional events may still be added and advertised by email and on the website.

2024

17-19 MAY	UK Study Trip to Derbyshire
23 MAY	Visit to Beckford's Tower
18 JUNE	Visit to Buscot Park
JUNE (TUESDAYS)	BIFMO-FHS Online Summer Course
8 JULY	Visit to Spencer House
18 SEPTEMBER	Visit to Grimsthorpe Castle
1-2 OCTOBER	UK Study Trip Merseyside
23 OCTOBER	Annual Lecture
25-29 OCTOBER	Overseas Study Trip to Dresden
23 NOVEMBER	AGM & Talks



Grimsthorpe Castle

Visit to Grimsthorpe Castle

BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE PE10 0LY

WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2024

10.00 AM - 2.00 PM

Grimsthorpe Castle has been in the Willoughby de Eresby family for five hundred years. It was granted by Henry VIII to William Willoughby, 11th Baron Willoughby de Eresby on the occasion of his marriage to Maria de Salinas, lady-in-waiting to Katherine of Aragon, in 1516. The castle is set in extensive parkland and is a large quadrangular house with a central courtyard. The oldest part of the castle, King John's Tower, was built in the early 13th century and the South façade is Tudor. However it is the principal north front which gives the castle its grandeur and dramatic scale. The final masterpiece of Sir John Vanbrugh, architect of

Blenheim Palace and Castle Howard, it was commissioned in 1715 by Robert Bertie, 17th Baron Willoughby de Eresby and 1st Marquis of Lindsey (later becoming 1st Duke in 1715), to celebrate the family's elevation to Dukes of Ancaster and Kesteven. This long and continuous occupation by the Willoughbys is reflected in the remarkable collection of art and furnishings to be found in the house today. The state rooms include collections of paintings, furniture, tapestries and objets d'art.

The Willoughby de Eresby family is one of three in England who still fulfil the hereditary office of Lord Great Chamberlain, the Monarch's representative at the Palace of Westminster. Due to this role, Grimsthorpe houses one of the largest collections of royal thrones and furnishings from the House of Lords outside the Royal Palaces.

This visit will be led by Emma Miller, Collections Curator at Grimsthorpe Castle and Michael Shrive, Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts at Waddesdon Manor and FHS Events Committee member.

COST: £ 50 (INCLUDING LUNCH)

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

FRIDAY 17 MAY 2024

Autumn UK Study trip Merseyside

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER TO WEDNESDAY 2
OCTOBER 2024

This two-day study trip is a wonderful opportunity to stay at Knowsley Hall, the seat of the Stanley family since 1385 and the Earls of Derby since 1485. The collection of furniture contains a few seventeenth-century pieces but is predominantly comprised of English and French items from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. There are also some significant contemporary pieces commissioned by the current Earl and

Countess of Derby. The most important piece of furniture is the celebrated Derby House commode, designed by Robert Adam and made by Ince and Mayhew for the 12th Earl's house in Grosvenor Square. The visit will be led by Dr Stephen Lloyd, Curator of the Derby Collection and Lucy Wood, independent furniture historian, and will include a tour of both Knowsley Hall and a rare opportunity to see furniture in rooms, including Lord's Derby's Office, not normally accessible to the public in the private residence of Lord and Lady Derby. The FHS is very grateful for this special access.

We will also be visiting the Lady Lever Art Gallery where we see at least three Ince and Mayhew derivatives of the Derby House commode. Other visits include the Athenaeum and the Walker Art Gallery to see furniture by George Bullock and Herbert McNair.

Please contact events@furniturehistorysociety.org for an application form. The deadline for application will be 24 May 2024.



Knowsley Hall

FHS Annual Lecture

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES, BURLINGTON
HOUSE, PICCADILLY, LONDON W1J OBE

23 OCTOBER 2024

6.00 PM FOR A 6.30 PM START

Philip Speakman Webb, Architect and Designer of the Arts and Crafts Movement

Dr Susan Weber

Philip Webb was one of the most original and talented designers of secular furniture in the nineteenth century. He created articles of domestic work from seating furniture to tables, bookcases, and wardrobes as well as pianos, screens and standing mirrors that lie beyond the normal remit of most Victorian furniture designers. Although his work has been overshadowed by that of his friend and early business partner William Morris, this lecture explores his contributions to the field of furniture through an examination and analysis of his creative efforts. The sources of his work are also surveyed as he journeyed from Gothic revivalist to British vernacular enthusiast to Arts and Crafts practitioner with his own distinctive 'plain and substantial style'. This talk is a preview of Dr Weber's study of his furniture output as part of the upcoming exhibition and catalogue, *Philip Speakman Webb, Architect and Designer of the Arts and Crafts Movement* slated for the Bard Graduate Center in 2026.

Dr. Susan Weber is founder and Director of Bard Graduate Center for the Decorative Arts, Design History, and material culture (BGC) in New York where she is the Iris Horowitz Professor in the History of Decorative Arts. Established in 1991, The Graduate



Dr Susan Weber

Research Institute offers both Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees. She holds a PhD from the Royal College of Art, London. She is the author, or editor, or co-editor and contributing author to a range of publications, including *E. W. Godwin: Aesthetic Movement and Designer* (1999), *Thomas Jeckyll: Architect and Designer* (2003), *The Castellani and Italian Archaeological Jewelry* (2004), *James "Athenian" Stuart, 1713-1788: The Rediscovery of Antiquity* (2006), *The American* (2012), *William Kent: Designing Georgian Britain* (2013), *History of Design Decorative Arts and Material Culture, 1400–2000* (2013), *John Lockwood Kipling: Arts and Crafts in the Punjab and London* (2017) and *Majolica Mania: Transatlantic Pottery in England and the United States, 1850–1915* (2021). She has curated many shows at BGC in conjunction with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, and the Villa Giulia, Rome. She is the recipient of numerous awards, including the Soane Foundation Honors from Sir John Soane's Museum Foundation, the Philip C. Johnson award

of the Society of Architectural Historians, and the College Art Association's Alfred H. Barr Jr. award. Currently she is working on the Exhibition and catalogue on *Philip Speakman Webb (1831-1915), Architect and Designer of the Arts and Crafts Movement* scheduled to open at BGC in the fall of 2026.

Admission to the lecture is free for members, but attendance is by ticket only, which must be acquired in advance.

Drinks beforehand kindly sponsored by Bonhams

Please apply to the Events Secretary by email or post. Numbers are limited to 110.

FHS Annual General Meeting and Works in Progress Talks

THE EAST INDIA CLUB, 16 ST JAMES'S SQUARE,
LONDON SW1Y 4LH

SATURDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2024

11.00 AM – 1.00 PM

The Annual General Meeting for the year ending 30 June 2024 will be held at the East India Club. The AGM will start at 11.00 am (coffee from 10.30 am).

Talks will follow the business of the day. Further details will be in the August Newsletter.

Admission to the AGM is free for members but all members wishing to attend should notify the Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance. Tickets for a sandwich lunch with a glass of wine at the price of £24 per head should be booked with the Events Secretary at least 7 days in advance. We plan to record the talks for those who cannot attend in person.

Bookings

For places on visits please apply by email or letter to the Events Secretary, Beatrice Goddard providing separate cheques for each event or indicating that you wish to pay by card or online. The email address is events@furniturehistorysociety.org, or telephone 0777 5907390. For online payments you will be provided with a link to a payment page and an event reference. Where possible, joining instructions will be dispatched by e-mail, so please remember to provide your e-mail address if you have one. 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 provide a telephone number. Please note the closing dates for applications printed in the Newsletter. Applications made after the closing date will be accepted only if space is still available. Members are reminded that places are not allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, but that all applications are equally considered following the closing date.

Cancellations

Please note that no refunds will be given for cancellations for events costing £20 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 deduction for administrative costs. Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours; terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

Online Events

We are continuing to arrange occasional online events, but we might not be able to advertise them in the Newsletter owing to publication lead-in times, in which case we will let members know by email. We send links to members about a week in advance. They will also be advertised on the FHS website, on Instagram and Facebook (@furniturehistorysociety).

Most online events are free to members. Non-members can join for a small fee. BIFMO study courses will charge a fee for both members and non-members.

Recordings of many of our past lectures are freely available to members on the Events page of the FHS website. If you need a reminder of the login details or have any enquiries, or suggestions for future speakers or topics please email the Events Secretary.

FHS News

Membership renewal

Early in June members who do not pay by direct debit will receive a reminder to renew their 2024-25 subscription.

To renew use your email address and password set up in 'My Account' to renew. If you have forgotten or not set up a password, please use the link below.

www.furniturehistorysociety.org/Account/login

Click the link 'Forgot my password'. Enter your email address. Send and you will receive a link to set up a password which will enable you to renew by either direct debit, if you have a UK bank account, or by debit card. Setting up a direct debit is the preferred method of payment, but you require a UK bank account to do this.

It is important to renew on time. Every year approximately 5% members are struck off due to non-payment. In addition to the administrative burden of chasing

non-payers, this restricts the Society's aim of growing membership.

Members can also use 'My Account' to change your personal details e.g., email address, postal address, telephone number.

Membership Officer, Furniture History Society

E-mail:

finance@furniturehistorysociety.org

Overseas events manager

Members will be aware, from the email advertising the post, that we are recruiting a new Overseas Events Manager to arrange our trips outside the UK. We hope that the post will be filled from July 2024. However, I am very pleased to report that Beatrice Goddard, our Events Secretary, will continue to manage UK visits and events with her customary dedication and flair.

KATE HAY

Chair, Events Committee

BIFMO UPDATE

British and Irish Furniture Makers Online

BIFMO (bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org) publishes biographies and blogs about British and Irish furniture makers and associated craftspeople, c.1600-1914.

Launched in 2016, the project is solely managed by the FHS. It is our globally-free research tool with a wealth of entries and is an authoritative one-stop site for all researchers in the fields of furniture history, interiors, country house furnishings, and associated trades. To spread the word about this important resource, please acknowledge your use of BIFMO resources in any published material.

If you have any information you would like to contribute to BIFMO please contact the BIFMO Editors at bifmoeditor@furniturehistorysociety.org.

Online summer course

Join us every Tuesday in June for this year's BIFMO-FHS online Summer course which will consider the eclecticism and variety of the nineteenth century country house interior with particular attention paid to the themes of fantasy and historicism. Each week the sessions will be introduced by Dr Megan Aldrich (weeks 1-3) and Lis Bogdan (week 4) followed by two country house case studies delivered by experts. The sessions will start at 5pm (BST) and conclude at 7.30pm (BST) and will be recorded, with the links to the recording being sent to

ticketholders. Further information is available on the FHS website and tickets are available on Eventbrite.

BIFMO Migration and Craftsmanship project.

We are delighted to present the third in a series of brief articles written by interns working on the Migration and Craftsmanship project that is researching both known, and previously undocumented, furniture makers who migrated from the British Isles. Generously funded by the Decorative Arts Trust, research draws upon contemporary newspapers, census reports, wills, inventories, and directories to reconstruct the lives and careers of early American furniture makers. To date our interns have identified nearly 300 tradespeople (the vast majority previous unknown) in New York City, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Annapolis, Fredericksburg, Lynchburg, Richmond, and Savannah. For more information see: bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org/research/migration-craftsmanship

LAURIE LINDEY, BIFMO
Managing Editor and Project Leader.

Baltimore-based bedstead patents in Virginia furniture-making

Several furniture makers in Baltimore, Maryland submitted patents related to their work between 1790 and 1830. Contemporary newspaper advertisements and related parish records established that some of these patents were designed by British immigrants and their children, including:

- Improved chair designs, Jacob Daley (December 1814) and Daniel Powles (October 1821)
- Improvement on cradles for rocking chairs, Samuel Simmons (December 1819)
- Improvements on bedsteads, particularly incorporating dovetail designs, Peregrine Williamson (December 1821)
- Bedstead joint fastenings, Isaac Cooper (February 1825)
- Improvement on windlass bedsteads, Charles Adams (February 1825)
- Washstand variations, John Williams (March 1828)¹

Essential to the development of Baltimore’s economic dominance, these patents also provided an opportunity for Baltimorean influence to expand beyond Maryland, particularly to the neighbouring state of Virginia. This brief article discusses Isaac Cooper’s patent for bedstead joint fastenings, issued on February 22, 1825. (Figure 1)

Cooper later advertised his patent for ‘improved bedstead joint fastening’. Manufacturers and journeymen from across the state purchased rights to use Cooper’s patent. The first documented appearance of his patent was published in the *Phenix Gazette* in December 1825, advertising his visit to local warehouses and showrooms for the purpose of ‘exhibiting and disposing of the right to manufacture HIS SUPERIOR PATENT BEDSTEAD’.² The adoption of the patent across the state was published in newspapers with one of the first in *The Virginian* on January 26 1826. (Figure 2)

Cooper’s patent appeared at a critical time in Virginia’s economic and furniture-making history. Located on the James River, Lynchburg became a major

Fig. 1: Isaac Cooper’s patent in a January 1826 list of issued patents, February 22, 1825. (U.S. Congress. House of Representatives. Letter from the Secretary of State [...] from January 1st, 1825, to January 1st, 1826. January 3, 1826.)

Do	Wool Carding machine	Feb.	18	Ed ^l Hale, Jr. S. Hale, and James Hale	Haverhill, Mass.
Do	scale beams and balances		19	Solomon A. Rogers	Philadelphia.
Do	bedsteads		22	Isaac Cooper	Baltimore.
Do	Hoes		23	Paul White	Northbridge, Mass.
Do	Lever Washing machine		26	Reuben Wheeler	Vergennes, Vermont.
Do	Flax dressing machine		28	Francis Bardick	Koetright, New York.
Do	certain grasses for making brushes, brooms, &c.		28	Shadrach H. Wood	New York.
Do	Windlass Bedstead		29	Charles Adams	Boston.
Do	drawing batteries	March	3	Joseph I. Cohen	Baltimore.
Do	Bells		3	William Hoyt	Brockville, Indiana.
Do	carriage wheels		3	William Cooper	Columbia, S. Carolina.
Do	shovel for excavating earth		3	Thomas Pierce	Hartwick, New York.
Do	making pins		10	Leomar W. Wright	Maschovitz, England.
Do	circular propelling levers in the construction of the carding machine		12	John Turner	Marcellus, New York.
Do	preserving flour for exportation		12	Nathaniel Rider	Starbridge, Mass.
Do	construction of rail ways		12	Edwin Ford & B. Brown	ing
Do	machine for excavating earth		13	Edward Gray	Fleming county, Ken.
Do	water press for extracting tannin from bark		15	Darius Comstock	Boston, Mass.
Do	increasing the speed of vessels by a centre board		15	William Lowder	Lockport, New York.
Do	changing the motion of machinery		15	Garret Fountain	Philadelphia.
Do	Steam Engine, and other machinery		15	Otis Pettee	Staten Island, N. York.
			15	Isaiah Jennings	Newton, Mass.
					New York.

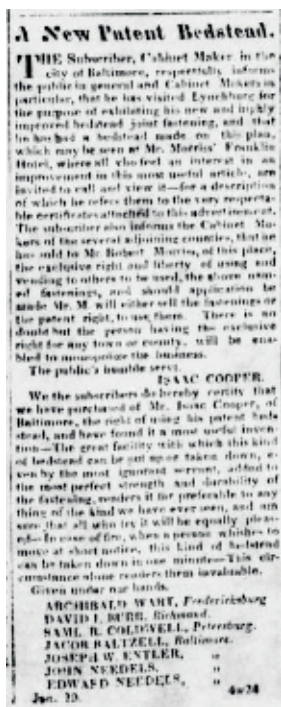


Fig. 2: Advertisement for Isaac Cooper's patent. 'A New Patent Bedstead', *The Virginian* (Lynchburg, VA), January 30, 1826 (Vol. 4, No. 48). Transcribed in Appendix 1.

commercial, industrial, and transportation centre in the early nineteenth century. It served as a hub for travel to the state capital, Richmond, which was a centre for iron and steel manufacturing, and for goods exported to Europe.³ In 1810, Thomas Jefferson wrote that 'Lynchburg is perhaps the most rising place in the U.S.... It ranks now next to Richmond in importance....', thus recognising Lynchburg's standing in Virginia's status throughout the United States. By the 1850s Lynchburg was one of the richest towns per capita in the country.⁴

Furniture making in the Scottish-Irish populated Roanoke and Shenandoah Valleys grew, along with the expansion and refinement of other manufacturing industries, especially after the discovery of important mineral deposits. By 1816, Lynchburg had nine furniture-related shops, including three cabinet makers,

three chair makers, three carriers plus five blacksmiths.⁵ Acknowledging the opportunities in Lynchburg, Cooper made several visits to meet local furniture makers and exhibit his patented fastenings at the Franklin Hotel, owned by a former Lynchburg mayor, Robert Morriss. The hotel served as a commercial centre of the town, hosting everything from organisational meetings, slave auctions, and industrial and mechanical equipment sales.⁶ Cooper sold Morriss the exclusive 'right and liberty' to use and vend the patented fastenings and rights to interested makers in the region. Others who had previously purchased the rights provided Cooper support through their advertisements.⁷

Cooper's patent was advertised in *The Virginian* until May 1826, republished every two to three days. Although these patents are not extraordinary, they were an important aspect of the development of the Virginia furniture industry in the wake of industrial and economic advancement. Cooper argued that obtaining 'the exclusive right for any town or county' helped purchasers to 'monopolize the business' in their area, such patents serving as entry points for new or struggling makers in regions such as the Shenandoah and Roanoke Valleys, building a solid foundation for their business, the result strengthening the system of furniture-making supply to the state and beyond.

ABBY S. WHITLOCK

Gallery Support Specialist at the National Museum of Art, Washington D.C. and BIFMO intern

- 1 G. Terry Sharrer, 'Patents by Marylanders: 1790-1830,' *Maryland Historical Magazine*, Vol. 71 No. 1; Spring (Maryland Historical Society, 1976) pp. 52-59.
- 2 'A New Patent Bedstead', *Phenix Gazette* (Alexandria, VA, December 5, 1825, Vol. 1, No. 145).
- 3 'Lynchburg, July 27, 1816', *Lynchburg Press* (Lynchburg, VA, August 8, 1816, Vol. 8, No. 15).
- 4 Thomas Jefferson, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Series, Volume 3: 12 August 1810 to 17 June 1811*. Eds. J. Jefferson Looney, Susan Holbrook Perdue, et. Al. (Princeton University Press, 2006, p. 2).
- 5 'Lynchburg, July 27, 1816', *Lynchburg Press* (Lynchburg, VA, August 8, 1816).
- 6 Christian W. Asbury, *Lynchburg and Its People*. (Lynchburg: J. P. Bell Company, Printers, 1900), p. 151.
- 7 'A New Patent Bedstead', *The Virginian* (Lynchburg, VA, January 30, 1826, Vol. 4, No. 48).

Appendix 1, transcription of newspaper article, Figure 2.

A New Patent Bedstead

The Subscriber, Cabinet Maker in the city of Baltimore, respectfully informs the public in general and Cabinet Makers in particular, that he has visited Lynchburg for the purpose of exhibiting his new and highly improved bedstead joint fastening, and that he has had a bedstead made on this plan, which may be seen at Mr Morriss' Franklin Hotel, where all who feel an interest in an improvement in this most useful article, are invited to call and view it – for a description of which he refers them to the very respectable certificates attached to this advertisement. The subscriber informs the Cabinet Makers of the several adjoining counties, that he sold to Mr. Robert Morriss, of this place, the exclusive right and liberty of using and vending to others to be used, the above named fastenings, and should application be made Mr. M. will either sell the fastenings or the patent right, to use

them. There is no doubt but the person having the exclusive right for any town or county, will be enabled to monopolize the business.

The public's humble servt.

ISAAC COOPER

We the subscribers do hereby certify that we have purchased of Mr. Isaac Cooper, of Baltimore, the right of using his patent bedstead, and have found it a most useful invention – The great facility with which this kind of bedstead can be put up or taken down, even by the most ignorant servant, added to the most perfect strength and durability of the fastening, renders it far preferable to anything of the kind we have ever seen, and am sure that all who try it will be equally pleased – In case of fire, when a person wishes to move at short notice, this kind of bedstead can be taken down in one minute – This circumstance alone renders them invaluable.

Given under our hands.

ARCHIBALD WART, *Fredericksburg*

DAVID I. BURR, *Richmond*

SAML R. COLDWELL, *Petersburg*

JACOB BALTZELL, *Baltimore*

JOSEPH W. ENTLER, “

JOHN NEEDELS, “

EDWARD NEEDELS, “

Jan. 19

The Metropolitan Museum of Art Hosts the 2024 Early Career Research Symposium

New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art was the setting for the seventh Early Career Research Symposium in late January. Generously supported by a grant from the Oliver Ford Trust, organised by Adriana Turpin and chaired by the European – Sarah Lawrence, Danielle Kisluk-Grosheide, Wolfram Koeppe and

Wolf Burchard – and American – Alyce Englund – Decorative Arts Departments, the sold-out conference brought together a group of ten speakers from the UK, Europe and the USA, all in the early stages of their careers, who presented an accomplished assortment of short papers exploring a broad range of chronological and geographical topics, from ebonyworkers in seventeenth-century Amsterdam to furniture production in Post-War Czechoslovakia. For reports on the papers, see p. 40.

Other News

New Fund for Publications launched in memory of Mark Girouard

The Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, has launched a new fund to support writing and publications in memory of the prolific historian, author, and campaigner Mark Girouard (1931-2022). Mark's daughter, Blanche Girouard, launched the fund at the SAHGB's Annual Book Awards in December, giving it her wholehearted support and sharing fascinating memories of her father's writing habits and his generosity to younger researchers.

The SAHGB will use the Girouard Fund to help further the work of a wide range



Mark Girouard

of authors and researchers at all levels, producing publications, digital resources, and other outputs taking architectural history to a broad audience. With comparatively few sources of funding in the field at this time, the need to keep such support and innovation going is a compelling one.

The fund has a target of £100,000, which will come from a range of donations and sources: crowdfunding; larger gifts from individuals, and grants and trusts. We welcome all contributions, which can be made online at Justgiving, SAHGB.org.uk or via the SAHGB's Treasurer.

'Part of the Furniture': Exhibition, University of Leeds

9 JANUARY – 21 DECEMBER 2024

A new exhibition at the University of Leeds explores the history of furniture

and furnishings through rare and beautiful books from the world-leading library of book collector and antiques dealer John Bedford. Ornate designs by a renaissance pioneer, a unique Chippendale cabinetmaker's pattern book, elaborate trade cards, colourful catalogues, drawings and manuals chart the evolution of furniture history – and the journey from drawing board, to workshop, to home.

The exhibition also celebrates Bedford's life, his vast knowledge and his generous legacy to the University of Leeds, which enabled the extension and refurbishment of the Brotherton Research Centre on campus, and the establishment of The John Bedford Fellowship in addition to the donation of his dazzling library. He began his career in the world of antiques with a stall in a Kensington antiques market in the 1960s and went on to dominate the trade in London. The knowledge he accumulated through buying and selling antique furniture, and building his library



helped to shape the study of furniture history. On his death in 2019, Bedford left his collection of rare books, manuscripts, artworks and objects to the University of Leeds, where it joined the renowned Art and Antiques Market Collections

The exhibition, curated by Dr Mark Westgarth, Dr Rachel Eckersley and Rhiannon Lawrence-Francis, is at The Treasures of the Brotherton Gallery, University of Leeds. Admission is free; no booking required; open 10am – 5pm, Tuesday – Saturday.

Zimingzhong: Clockwork Treasures from China's Forbidden City: Exhibition, Science Museum, London



Zimingzhong, 18th century (Beijing: The Palace Museum).

UNTIL 2 JUNE 2024

A major exhibition opened at the Science Museum features more than 20 mechanical clocks, called *zimingzhong*, on loan from The Palace Museum in Beijing and never before displayed together in the UK. The exhibition takes visitors on a journey through the 1700s, from the Chinese trading port of Guangzhou to the home of the emperors in the Forbidden City, the palace in the heart of Beijing. The exhibition explores the emperors' keen interest in these remarkable clockwork instruments, the origins of the trade, and the mechanisms that inspired British craftsmen and emperors alike. Translating as 'bells that ring themselves', *zimingzhong* were more than just clocks: they presented a combination of a flamboyant aesthetic, timekeeping, music and movement, using technologies new to most people in eighteenth-century China. There are four interactive mechanisms explaining how they work, provided by Hong Kong Science Museum.

Special Exhibition Gallery 2, Level 2.
Admission £1 minimum.

Discoveries and Research

Have you discovered or researched something you would like to share with the Society? We welcome short articles on discoveries made on Society visits, or other discoveries and developments relevant to furniture history. Please send suggestions to the Editor, details on the back of this Newsletter. Articles should be about 500-800 words; a lead article 1,000-1,500; the Editor will send you our author guidelines or can be downloaded from the Newsletter page on the FHS website.

Thomas Hope Revisited

In 1937 John Tiranti & Co. issued a reprint of Thomas Hope's 1807 *Household Furniture and Interior Decoration*.¹ They omitted his *Introduction* and *Explanation*. They offered no justification for the omission but a glance at his prose suggests that the impenetrable complexity of his style would give pause to any editor



Fig. 1: Engraving from *Designs of Modern Costume* by Henry Moses showing a tambour-fronted sideboard from Hope's collection.

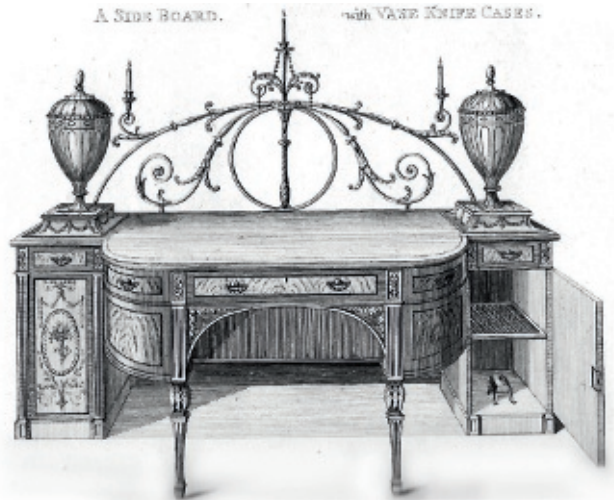


Fig. 2: Sideboard from the appendix to Sheraton's *Drawing Book*.

embarking on a reprint. However, his main theme was that British furniture of the era was ill-designed and ugly and he was therefore offering the Egyptian and Greek-derived designs from the show rooms of his Duchess Street house as an alternative. He particularly derided 'wretched ideas and trivial conceits borrowed from the worst models of the degraded French school of the middle of the last century'², presumably referring to Louis XV-influenced design. The furniture in his book certainly presents a complete contrast to current design which by this time had moved on to the more rectilinear style of the turn of the century.

In view of Hope's expressed antipathy to British furniture design of the era it is interesting to consider how the domestic quarters of his Duchess Street house were furnished. In 1812 he commissioned Henry Moses to illustrate his ideas on



Fig. 3: Plate 7 from Moses's *Designs of Modern Costume* showing demilune card tables and a Pembroke table echoing Hepplewhite's designs.

costume design with a series of plates set in the private apartments of the Duchess Street house. Plate 11 in the book shows a sideboard with a tambour front (fig. 1) which resembles Plate 21 from the Appendix to Sheraton's *Drawing Book* (fig. 2). Moses's Plate 7 (fig. 3) shows a pair of demilune card tables and a Pembroke table with rectangular leaves resembling the designs of Hepplewhite (Plates 60 & 62 in *The Cabinet-maker & Upholsterer's Guide* – figs. 4 & 5).

Why Hope should have railed against current British fashion whilst adopting it in his domestic quarters must remain a mystery. Could it be that the taste of his wife, Louisa, differed from his and held sway in their private apartments as opposed to the Duchess Street showrooms?

JOHN STABLER

- 1 Hope, T., *Household Furniture & Interior Decoration* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1807).
- 2 *Ibid*, p. 1.



Fig. 4: Demilune card table from Hepplewhite's *The Cabinet-Maker & Upholsterer's Guide*.



Fig. 5: Pembroke table with rectangular leaves from Hepplewhite's *The Cabinet-Maker & Upholsterer's Guide*.

Book Reviews

Suggestions for reviews should be sent to Wolf Burchard at the Metropolitan Museum, 1000 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10028, U.S.A. (email: wolf.burchard@metmuseum.org; telephone +1 212 650 2208).

DANIELA HEINZE, ACHIM STIEGEL (EDS), *Canops: Möbel von Welt für Karl III. von Spanien (1759–1788)*, Kunstgewerbemuseum Berlin (Petersberg 2023). 367 pp. ISBN 978-3-7319-1368-9, €49.95.

Achim Stiegel, curator of furniture at the Kunstgewerbemuseum Berlin is known for his scholarship on Berlin cabinet makers, and on Abraham and David Roentgen. It therefore came as something of a surprise, when in 2021, he convinced his museum to acquire a Spanish rolltop desk. The present publication, the exhibition it accompanied and an international symposium held at the museum in late January 2024 were the conclusion of many years of research bridging Berlin and Madrid. Thus, the history of European luxury furniture making has been enriched by an important new chapter.

Like so many cabinet makers of the *Ancien Régime*, the unjustly forgotten master came from the German-speaking world: José Canops was born Joseph Cnops in 1733, in the Duchy of Limburg, near Aachen. At a young age, his career took him to the Spanish court via the highly specialized workshops of the Parisian Faubourg Saint-Antoine. In Madrid an art-loving, enlightened monarch was at work: as King of Naples and Sicily, Charles III had already excited the educated world with the excavations of Pompeii and



Herculaneum. When he succeeded to the Spanish throne in 1759, he focused his ambition on completing the Palacio Real, which had been under construction since 1738. The king's architect Francesco Sabatini set up court workshops, which co-operated congenially in the furnishing of the palace. The Venetian Mattia Gasparini was enlisted as artistic director of the king's apartment. One particular enfilade of rooms in the king's apartment was to become a triumph of the Rococo: the Parade Room, known as the *Salón de Gasparini*, and the three adjoining rooms, known as *Gabinetes de Maderas de Indias* owing to their lavish decoration with exotic West Indian tropical woods.

The present publication, edited by Achim Stiegel and Daniela Heinze, and the exhibition – both staged with great aesthetic effort – not only present Canops' magnificent furniture creations, but also provide an overview of the broader cultural and historical context. As yet, the publication is available only in German, although a Spanish edition may be in the

making. The catalogue and the exhibition address subjects such as the migration of cabinet makers, the circulation of ideas, practices and techniques between craftsmen, artists and architects across Europe, the routes of transmission of Chinese designs to Madrid as well as the connection of colonialism and the trade in exotic woods. This rediscovery of an *ébéniste* thereby expands into an innovative inspection of an entire historic era.

With its linen binding, generous proportions, quality paper and abundance of superb full-page photographs the book is as much a pleasure to behold as it is to read. Like Charles III at the Palacio Real in Madrid, Stiegel seems to have engaged an artistic director to oversee all design and production aspects of the book. The first half, with a number of inspiring essays, is printed on matt green-tinted paper against which the gilt chapter headings and page numbers appear like *ormolu* mounts. The catalogue part in the second half, with its splendid photographs of all known pieces by Canops, is printed on silky white paper. While this contrast adds to the overall appearance and makes easy separation of essays and catalogue, it reduces the clarity of the monochrome images printed alongside the essays on the green paper.

The Kunstgewerbemuseum's rolltop desk is the centerpiece and starting point of both the exhibition and catalogue, and one of the very few pieces of Canops exclusive production that ever left the Madrid palace. The only other pieces outside the Spanish royal collection are in San Francisco and Brooklyn, which might explain why relatively little scholarship has been devoted to Canops so far.

A participant of the symposium in Berlin summed up the success of Canop's spectacular furniture creations: They are the result of the fruitful fusion of German precision cabinet making, inspiration from leading Parisian workshops, designs of an Italian architect and – in the form of striking exotic timbers – the riches of the Spanish colonies. As stated by Achim Stiegel's book title, Canops truly supplied his monarch with 'Möbel von Welt' – which can be translated as both, 'furniture of world class' and 'furniture from around the world'. In this publication Canops has himself become the protagonist of a global narrative.

MARCUS RÄDECKE

BERND WILLSCHIED, *Roentgen & Kinzing à Neuwied, Möbel und Uhren für Europa/ Furniture and Clocks for Europe, Sammlung/ Collection Roentgen-Museum Neuwied*, (Roentgen-Museum Neuwied 2022), 160 pp. 123 col. illus, 1 family tree. ISBN 978-3-982273-0-6 €19.80.

CHRISTINE CORNET AND BERND WILLSCHIED (EDS), *Möbel à la Roentgen, Inspirationen aus der Neuwieder Manufaktur*, (Roentgen-Museum Neuwied 2023), 344 pp. 410 col., 63 b.&w illus., 1 family tree. ISBN 978-3-982273-4-4, €38.

These handsomely produced and modestly priced books celebrate the Roentgen furniture manufactory and its influence. As members will recall, Abraham Roentgen (1711-1793), born at Mülheim on the Rhine, opposite Cologne, joined the Moravian Brethren while a journeyman cabinet maker in London in 1737. His own workshop was from 1742 in the Moravian settlement at Herrnhag near Frankfurt, but when their



patron, Graf Ernst Casimir zu Ysenburg, died in 1749, a group moved to Neuwied on the Rhine, under the protection of Graf Friedrich Alexander zu Wied-Neuwied. There Abraham thrived until in 1775 he handed over his workshop to his even more successful son, David Roentgen (1743-1807), who had been independent since 1773 and who eventually gave up business in 1791, only six years after his father's final retirement.

The Roentgen-Museum in Neuwied adopted its present title in 2007, the bicentenary of David Roentgen's death. It opened in June 1928 as a local history museum and in that November acquired David's Apollo Clock, made for Russia in 1789, at a Soviet sale in Berlin; this is still its greatest treasure. *Roentgen & Kinzing*, with texts in both German and English, surveys the collection displayed in the museum, including many loans.

Abraham is the more richly represented, with over thirty pieces. A recent coup was the acquisition in 2015 of a suite of four side-chairs, four stools, a harlequin table and a tea-table, in cherrywood, the chairs with engraved brass plaques,

sold to Graf Ysenburg-Büdingen in 1752. An impressive run of desks, commodes and architects' tables, with rising tops, is complemented by a clutch of neat tea caddies. Although nothing approaches the elaboration of the Rijksmuseum's Waldersdorff desk of about 1760, a contemporary curvilinear desk from the 1995 Neues Schloss Baden sale, but earlier at Schloss Bruchsal, the seat of the Prince-Bishops of Speyer, is a dashing complex object, while a mahogany table with rising top of about 1770 represents a later Chippendalesque mode. Portraits of Abraham (1772) holding a neo-classical design and of his wife Susanna (1771) with a box decorated with blue floral marquetry are complemented by the oak door carved with rococo ornament, which he made for their house after 1760.

As for David Roentgen there are fine convertible tables and a games-table and two notable desks in his manner, one by Johannes Kroll of Mainz and the other by Georg Rudolph Gams of Karlsruhe. And the Apollo clock is accompanied by two longcase clocks likewise made in collaboration with Peter Kinzing, one adopting a movement devised by Benjamin Franklin. A personal letter from David is addressed to Kinzing 'Horloger de la Reine' at Versailles; touchingly it was a gift from Hans Huth, the pioneer of Roentgen studies. A whole section, written with the conservator Ian D. Fowler, is devoted to clocks, longcase, bracket and pictorial, and watches by the extensive Kinzing dynasty, including Peter's father, Christian, and his uncle Hermann Achenbach; these are mainly of a more workaday quality but a 1767 square piano

by Christian demonstrates his versatility.

In 1804 David Roentgen's eldest son, Philipp Jakob, married Henriette Stobwasser, daughter of Johann Heinrich Stobwasser, co-founder of that notable lacquer manufactory, who himself married David's widow, Katharina Dorothea, in 1812, and a small clutch of Stobwasser wares rounds off the collection, nearly all of it with tight Moravian connections.

The main author of this enjoyable and useful survey, Bernd Willscheid, is also the co-editor and part-author of *Möbel à la Roentgen*, the substantial catalogue of an exhibition held at the Roentgen-Museum last year shortly before his retirement after 38 years of service, 26 as director. Its focus is not the Roentgens themselves, but the extraordinary *rayonnement* of their craftsmen and their styles. The catalogue proper contains 38 solid entries, but the real meat lies in the two thirds of the volume taken up by eighteen richly-illustrated chapters involving twelve well qualified authors. In the first and longest Willscheid's co-editor, Christine Cornet, prefaces a hundred biographies, some brief, others extensive, of craftsmen associated with the manufactory, with a short but authoritative account of its development, concluding with a list of 33 prominent workers arranged by dates of engagement, from Philipp Schmeder, already present in 1750, to Johannes Klinckerfuss who only joined in 1789. The biographies, well supplied with cross-references, include cabinet makers, locksmiths, turners, seal-engravers, mechanics, girdlers (including the widowed Anna Katharina Kern from Coblenz who supplied gilt

mounts for Abraham's great Walderdorff commission), clockmakers, draughtsmen, musical instrument makers, glaziers and marqueteurs.

Cornet's longer biographies include Elie Gervais, a seal engraver who from 1769 to 1774 also designed marquetry for David, as did his journeymen, Marc Voullaire, Louis Schmutz and Johannes Raillard; Johann Christian Härder, very close to David who helped to engineer him ducal permission to set up a continuation of the Neuwied enterprise in Brunswick (a later chapter, by Michael Sulzbacher, analyses a cylinder desk of about 1802 which Härder supplied to Caspar Heinrich von Sierstorppff); Johann Christian Krause, David's master mechanic who also devised stains and finishes; and Johann Wilhelm Kronrath, whose appointment as court cabinet-maker in Weimar in 1798 was again the result of David's advocacy, not to speak of Goethe's support.

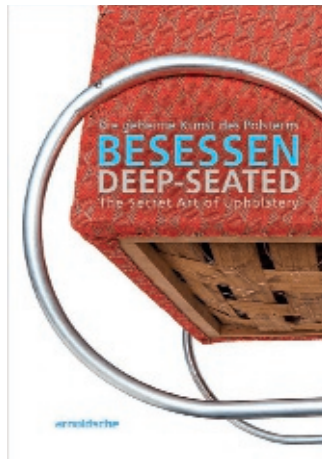
The chapters which follow are principally devoted to major successors, beginning with the Berlin-born Johann Gottlieb Frost, who was David's representative in Paris from at least 1779 and ran his outlet in the Rue de Grenelle from 1780. When David withdrew in 1784 Frost took over and then in 1785, a newly minted *menuisier-ébéniste*, set up a flourishing business in the Rue Croix-des-Petits-Champs; his works and their resemblances to and divergencies from those of David, are carefully analysed in two chapters, the first by Ulrich Leben and Miriam Schefzyk, the second by Michael Sulzbacher. Later chapters include Burkhardt Göres on Johann David Hacker (Berlin) and Heinrich Gambs (St Petersburg); Florian Ebinger adds

an account of Gambs's young cousin Georg Rudolph Gambs (St Petersburg and Karlsruhe). Wolfgang Wiese tackles Johannes Höfflin (Karlsruhe), Johannes Klinckerfuss (Stuttgart) and the marqueteur Johann Michael Rummer, who in 1767 spent a spell in London with Abraham's old mentor, William Gomm ('Gern'). This selection must suffice to demonstrate the usefulness of *Möbel à la Roentgen*, but one further chapter deserves mention: this, by Bernd Willscheid, gives an account of the Moravian brotherhood and in particular its cabinet workshop in Neuwied. Often exchanging craftsmen with the Roentgen manufactory, it concentrated on practical joinery and, as the Roentgens departed, developed a line in simplified versions of Roentgen models, before turning to Biedermeier forms. A biographical list of twenty-one of its mainly Moravian clients with entries from 1791 to 1820 supplies a piquant postscript to the earlier parade of court splendours.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

ED. GRASSI MUSEUM FÜR ANGEWANDTE KUNST LEIPZIG, *Die geheime Kunst des Polsterns BESESSEN (DEEP-SEATED The Secret Art of Upholstery)* (Stuttgart: arnoldsche Art Publishers, 2022), 391 pp., ISBN 978-3-89790-681-5. €44.00.

The Grassi Museum of Applied Arts in Leipzig should be congratulated on producing a generous publication to accompany and record for posterity the research behind its exhibition *DEEP-SEATED The Secret Art of Upholstery* (24 November 2022 – 26 March 2023). The fact that it is written in German with a translation in English on the same page



should also be applauded as its content is immediately accessible to a wider audience.

The driving force behind the exhibition was museum curator Thomas Schriefers, who was also responsible for much of the catalogue text, subdivided into 17 sections, with contributions from six other specialists. Based mainly on the Grassi Museum's own large holdings of upholstered items, with loans from other German institutions, particularly the extensive Werner Löffler collection in Reichenschwand, the project was considerably enhanced by the expertise of the restoration firm, Fachgruppe der Restauratoren im Handwerk e.V., Fachbereich Raumausstatter-Handwerk. Its involvement was crucial, not only in providing the historic technical detail described in the catalogue, but also in making accurate reconstructions for the visitors to have an interactive experience by sitting on different types and shapes of seating produced over the centuries.

Following the exhibition's lead, the catalogue takes a chronological approach, devoting the first part to development of upholstery over 400 years within

an historical context. The lack of good examples covering the early years is more than made up for by the wide range of seat furniture from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The creation of new styles, as a result of the revolution in technology forcing a departure from traditional forms, is comprehensively covered and includes the use of tubular steel during the Bauhaus era, with their bold and dynamic fabric covers, the growing popularity of foam seating after the 1930s and even the bean bag cushion of the 1960s. But traditional upholstery techniques have never completely died out and are gaining traction as sustainability and ecological influences are affecting purchasing decisions in the desire for 'cosiness and comfort', always deciding factors when buying seat furniture.

A second, shorter section of the catalogue provides a comprehensive overview of the furnishing textiles and trimmings at the Grassi Museum and range from early Italian brocatelles to the decorative woven fabrics of the 1960s and various fringes, braids and tassels. Written by Stefanie Seeberg, they provide an important addition to the publication, a subject often overlooked despite being a key component to the final appearance of seat upholstery. The book ends with an extensive glossary of technical terms, although some of the translations use the French name rather than English, footnotes and a bibliography.

One of the major attractions of the book is its photography that divides the large blocks of text. While the technical descriptions could have benefitted from some diagrammatic sketches, the

illustrations of the seat furniture and textiles are generous in its size and detail, covering several full-sized pages. The images amply record the close link between quality craftsmanship and upholstery as a functional art form.

ANNABEL WESTMAN

ALICE MINTER, *The Art of Stone: Masterpieces from the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection*, (Victoria & Albert Museum 2023), 144 pp, ISBN 9781838510411, £10.

If one needed a *Vademecum* to learn the basics on the various works made over the centuries with coloured hardstones, the small volume *The Art of Stone – Masterpieces from the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection* recently published by the Victoria & Albert Museum, with a text by Alice Minter and contributions by Sophie Morris and Rosie Mills, is now at hand.

Conceived as an introduction to the unique ensemble of objects put together by Mr. & Mrs Arthur Gibert between 1962 and 2001 and exhibited for some time at Somerset House before joining the collections of the V&A, *The Art of Stone* is indeed much more than a handbook of the Gilbert remarkable pieces.

The volume starts with a historical account of what is known as *commessi di pietre dure*, since the Florence Grand ducal workshops of the Medici family ended up introducing to the world this particular type of stone work, although it was/is in no way restricted to Italy. Most of the major centres of production of such stone mosaics are thus discussed, starting with the Medici workshops, going on to the Castrucci family of stonemasons established in Prague through the will of Holy Roman



Emperor Rudolf II, the Saxonian and Prussian masters – such as Johann Christian Neuber – having worked for Frederick the Great, the Manufacture royale des Gobelins in Paris (because you can always expect the French to have a go at beauty-making...), the Agra workshops in India, or the – I must confess unknown to me until then – marble working firm J. Darmanin & Sons unexpectedly established in... Malta!

After this introduction, the authors have used the best examples from the Gilbert Collection as milestones in the understanding of the art of working in stone, cleverly weaving into their descriptions most of the details that one needs to know, and more, due to recent research and the collaboration of a number of specialists abroad. Through six successive sections, not only are the various types of techniques surveyed, but one learns fascinating details on the different types and origins of the stones: Italian *pietra paesina*, or 'alberese' limestone, close in use to Mocha agate from Yemen; green Egyptian nephrite, not to be confused with dark green chalcedony; or petrified wood mined at Freital in Saxony. Talented masters come to the fore, such as Antonio Cioci and Carlo Carlieri in Florence, Daniel Baudesson and Jean-Guillaume Krüger in Berlin or

Heinrich Taddel in Dresden. Tricks of theirs are revealed such as how to 'make' mother of pearl with foiled chalcedony or rock crystal rods filled with a silver precipitate. Meanwhile, strongly coloured stones would be 'obtained' by placing coloured cement behind transparent agates, or hues of the minerals could be changed by heating them, in the case of Mario Montelatici, who created incredibly realistic 'stone paintings' in the early twentieth century.

As to production centres and workshops, it might have been useful to mention the *Real Laboratorio de Pietras Duras del Buen Retiro* in Madrid, which created remarkable examples of hard stone mosaics between 1762 and 1808, as well as the three Russian Imperial stonecutting manufactories of Ekaterinburg, Kolyvan, and Peterhof, the latter producing elaborate specimen tabletops very early in the nineteenth century and similar pictorial work to that of the Florentine workshops in the 1850s. As to special stones, such as malachite, it might also have been interesting to mention the lucrative commerce of that mineral developed by the Demidoff family. They owned its best mines at Nijni Tagil in the Urals and sent raw material to many European capitals throughout the nineteenth century, prompting local workshops to produce malachite objects being described today 'of Russian manufacture', while they're not.

Apart from these minor gaps, one cannot praise enough such a useful and informative work as this V&A volume, another tribute to the natural and inexhaustible beauty of coloured stones.

EMMANUEL DUCAMP

Reports on FHS Events

Inevitably some reports have had to be edited down for the Newsletter, but longer reports are in many cases available from the Events Secretary on request. They are also circulated to those who attend the visit.

Study Trip to Seville

THURSDAY 5 – SUNDAY 8 OCTOBER 2023

Hospital de los Venerables

We started our study trip at the seventeenth-century clerical hospice founded by Justino de Neve, Murillo's patron and friend. Structured around arched courtyards decorated with traditional tiled walls (*azulejos*), the building houses a single-nave church and sacristy, both profusely decorated with Baroque frescos. We admired the neo-classical altarpiece (*retablo*), tabernacle, pulpit, tribunes and its 1991 Gerhard Grenzing organ, from the organ loft. Of particular interest were two Sicilian reliquaries made at Trapani, one in the form of a chariot, the other as a vase of flowers.

The attached Centro Velázquez includes a collection of paintings representing the leading figures in the city's artistic landscape of the Counter-Reformation, including Velázquez's *Santa Rufina*. Upstairs, the Biblioteca del Barroco holds reference materials on Baroque art and culture, including an important collection of prints and the personal library of Professor Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez. A covered rooftop provided views over the surrounding townscape.

DAVID MURDOCH



Casa Fabiola - Mariano Bellver Bequest

Casa Fabiola - Mariano Bellver Bequest

Casa Fabiola opened to the public in 2018 to display the collections of Mariano Bellver and his wife, Dolores Mejía. It houses some 567 objects, including Spanish baroque and romantic paintings, parts of an unknown church forming a baroque chapel, and painted statues of the Christ Child.

The seventeenth-century Spanish cabinets (*bargueños*) were discussed; pieces of red velvet around the escutcheons indicated whether or not the outsides of these cabinets had once been covered in velvet. The most impressive Hispanic piece of furniture was a Peruvian cabinet veneered

in mother-of-pearl. There were nineteenth-century copies of French furniture, including one of a commode at Chantilly. The Spanish equivalent of ‘Victorian’ Rococo and historic revivals, the *Estilo Isabelino* associated with Queen Isabel II, was exemplified by an elaborate marquetry table. This was a very enjoyable visit, enlivened by Pedro González, Director of Casa Fabiola and our guide.

JAMES YORKE

Palacio de las Dueñas, Casa de Alba

Our first private house visit was to a palace of the Dukes of Alba, descended from our King James VII and II. In Alba ownership since 1612, now it is rather a shrine to the eighteenth Duchess, Cayetana, a popular figure in Seville.



Palacio de las Dueñas, Casa de Alba

The house was of a typical Sevillian pattern — built around a double-arcaded garden-courtyard, tiled ground floor originally planned for summer living and the first floor for the winter — but now with public displays downstairs and private quarters above.

The furniture downstairs includes a mixture of French and Italian giltwood chairs and tables of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and more exotically a pair of early(?) nineteenth-century chairs encrusted in mother-of-pearl, perhaps Anglo-Indian or Syrian. Of interest were three sets of japanned and gilded chairs in eighteenth-century Anglo-Spanish style, two of which may be English exports, the other probably made in Spain.

Upstairs, one large dining room and two smaller flanking rooms are covered by a single Moorish roof in Mudejar style. Some interesting Chinese furnishings include a cabinet and a folding screen of Coromandel lacquer, a set of figurative soapstone panels, and a group of mirror-paintings, one possibly in its original frame. In the large dining room, armorial tapestries of a kind we were to see in several houses were used as curtains. The highlight of the furnishings on this floor was the set of six Florentine sixteenth-century tapestries of the story of Phaeton.

JULIAN GIBBS

Palacio de los Guzmán and Medina Sidonia Archive, Sanlúcar de Barrameda

In this well-constructed programme where each visit built on the information gained from the last, this visit was well-timed at

the start of the second day. The Palacio de los Guzmán, with its Renaissance façade, is a residence which has been associated with the powerful Medina Sidonia family since the twelfth century. The dukedom is one of the oldest and each successive generation has added to its contents so that it now contains an extensive collection of paintings, furniture and tapestries. It also houses the family's historic archive, the largest in private hands with documents relating to the Spanish occupation and administration of the Americas.

Many of the items on display in the palace were acquired from the local churches, convents, and monastery, including a significant number of dowry chests, many of chestnut wood, as well as several *bargueños* (cabinets on stands), a couple of splendidly carved and gilded altar frontals and sets of embossed leather dining chairs with small metal finials, a specific Spanish/Portuguese feature. One impressive piece, which dominated the Ambassadors' Hall (Salón de Embajadores), was a large, rotating pyramid-shaped lectern of carved wood on a stand (1621–23) originally part of the furniture used by the choir from the old church of Our Lady of Mercy (of the Order of Mercedaries). Lining the walls of this sizable room was a continuous ottoman which, with other pieces of padded seat furniture, was covered with a floral printed cotton possibly purchased in England in the later nineteenth century.

Of particular note amongst the *bargueños* was a richly carved example, still in its original condition, made by artisans in Mexico in a European Renaissance style,

1520–30s. It was given as a gift to the 6th Duke, Juan Alonso Pérez de Guzmán (1518–1558), by his friend, Hernán Cortes, the renowned Spanish *conquistador*.

Tapestries formed a significant feature in many of the properties visited and the stars of this residence were five of the original twelve heraldic tapestries c.1665 with the arms of Luis Guillén de Moncada (1614–1672), woven in silk and wool to the designs of Jan van Kessel by the important Brussels factory of Frans van der Hecke.

ANNABEL WESTMAN

Palacio del Tiempo, Museos de la Atalaya, Jerez de la Frontera

This museum, dedicated to the history of clockmaking and launched in 1972, displays a collection of 152 timepieces bequeathed to a local religious order by the dowager Countess of Gavia. The Countess hosted regular hunting parties in her home in Northern Spain and her guests presented her with clocks. Between 1974 and 1977, a further 174 clocks were added from the collection of local antiquarian Pedro León. Today, it is considered to be one of the three most significant historic clock collections in Europe, with 287 objects on permanent display telling the history of European clock and watchmaking during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with some British table clocks and many French mantel clocks. The collection is arranged chronologically and by country, providing an opportunity to explore the technical advances made in each region. It also allows for the examination of stylistic differences between countries and preferences in



Palacio del Tiempo, Museos de la Atalaya, Jerez de la Frontera

case-making and design.

The museum is managed by the Fundación Andrés de Ribera, and the collection is displayed in the principal rooms of a recently restored nineteenth-century neoclassical palace located in the centre of Jerez. Independent Curator, May Ruiz Troncoso, has recently published a comprehensive guide of the collection. We were welcomed by Miriam Morales Lara, recently appointed Director, Marian Bermúdez García, Assistant Curator and the museum's external conservator Francisco Osuna.

TESSA MURDOCH

Palacio Domecq

Originally built for the Marquis of Montana in 1774, Palacio Domecq has been, since 1885, the home of an important dynasty of winemakers. Its ornate red and white

marble late-Baroque façade announces a magnificent courtyard and imperial staircase where the originality and flare of architects Juan Díaz de la Guerra, the Sevillian Antonio Matías de Figueroa and Pedro de Cos is shown to a dazzling effect. For the group, the most interesting rooms were the Ballroom, lit by four large chandeliers from the Royal Glass Factory of La Granja and closed by tall glazed and finely carved rococo doors; the Board Room, lined with the Domecq family portraits; and the beautiful Library, presided over by a polychrome and gilt wooden bookcase with late-Baroque mouldings. Of note were a selection of *bargueños* and straight-backed armchairs (*sillones flaileros*), and three seventeenth-century Flemish tapestries telling the history of Pompey the Great.

FÉLIX ZORZO

Palacio Virrey Laserna

It was a delightful surprise that our guides at Palacio del Virrey Laserna were its owner, the eighth Count of the Andes, and his younger brother. Although the foundations and parts of the building predate the Castilian conquest of 1264, most of the current structure reflects late-eighteenth-century redecoration campaigns in Neoclassical taste. The group marvelled at the many family possessions, including seventeenth-century ebony and turtleshell *bargueños* in the reception rooms combined with elegant French Empire *secrétaires* and a Balearic marquetry rococo chest-of-drawers. The Dining Room exuded a taste for nineteenth-century English interiors that is characteristic of the region: mahogany Chippendale-style seat furniture, a long mahogany table dressed with the family

silver displayed along the plain wainscot, and a black stone chimney-piece with tiled hearth. In the Library, nineteenth-century porcelain was displayed on twin late-sixteenth-century carved and gilt altarpieces with added shelves.

FÉLIX ZORZO

Bodegas Tradición, Jerez de la Frontera

A scrap of sailcloth from HMS Victory, records of shipments of sherry to Leith, London, New York and China, and a splendid tale of a troublesome African elephant imported in 1777 and sent on to Madrid without a trainer — these were some of the remarkable accounts revealed to us in the archives of the Rivero family, superbly presented by the archivist



FHS Group in the archives at Bodegas Tradición, Jerez de la Frontera

Manuel Marín and translated by our guide Águeda Caputto during our early evening visit to Bodegas Tradición. Although only partially catalogued, the Rivero archive is truly rare and significant for its size and the degree of detail and covers the entire history of the business until its sale in 1978, and subsequent recovery by Joaquín Rivero in 1998. The family had been one of the most successful winemakers and exporters in Jerez from 1660, and we learnt about the processes of making different types of sherry, the significance of using American oak barrels of at least twenty years old, followed by a delicious tasting of the products. We also visited the adjacent cellars which now house the Rivero's collection of Spanish Old Master Paintings which included works from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries — El Greco, Velázquez, Murillo, Zurbarán and Goya, a beautiful art gallery run by Helena Rivero who is also the editor of the Spanish *Ars Magazine*.

LISA WHITE

Real Alcázar

The Alcazar of Seville is arguably the most ancient still standing Royal Palace in Europe and the site covers several hectares; at the height of the Spanish Empire's power, it was the seat of government and the trading centre of the Western world. The top floor is still in use as the official Seville residence of the Spanish monarch.

Several themes were immediately apparent: architecture, tiles and plasterwork, courtyards, water, gardens and tapestries. The architecture is eclectic due to building works over many centuries and is an outstanding example of Mudejar design and work.

In 1526 Charles V married Isabel of Portugal in his newly created and magnificent Hall of the Ambassadors in the centre of his palace, which he used as his throne room. This room, two stories high, is covered with tiles and polychrome plasterwork and is capped by an inspiring wooden *media-naranja* dome reflecting sparkling gold light. This was flanked with several other rooms including the Royal Chamber, one of the King's bedrooms, which were in the Renaissance style. Phillip II's Ceiling Room (1590) is the longest in the palace containing a semi-barrelled Mannerist wooden ceiling with geometric patterns.

In a vestibule adjoining a small chapel hang a series of six huge eighteenth-century tapestries depicting Charles V's military expedition to Tunis against his Turkish enemy Suleiman the Magnificent. Five of the tapestries show scenes of the conflict but the sixth is a strange map of the European continent and North Africa showing everything upside down and includes the Pillars of Hercules and the two-headed black eagle of the Hapsburgs. The originals of these tapestries were made in Brussels by Pannemaker in 1550–4, a selection of which are on display at the newly opened Galería de las Colecciones Reales, Madrid. Those on view in Seville were commissioned by Felipe V in 1740 and made in Madrid in the Royal Tapestry Factory of Santa Bárbara.

The upper floor is extensive and remains the Monarch's private residence. It was designed as part of the fourteenth-century renovations, but much adapted in the nineteenth century. The Assembly Hall is decorated with tiles and stuccowork and

has views over the courtyard below with the Giralda in the distance.

CHARLES POWELL

Archivo General de Indias

The General Archive of the Indies holds documents related to the government of Spanish overseas territories. The building was designed by Philip II's lead architect Juan de Herrera in 1585 as a central market, but in 1781 it was converted into an archive. The group studied the largest piece of furniture seen during the trip, a set of running shelves covering the entire U-shaped gallery on the first floor. A first design by the Sevillian sculptor Blas Molner, with a sober Doric order and open shelving in mahogany (1878) was revised by lead Neoclassical architect Juan de Villanueva, who proposed his own design in fire-resistant scagliola. However, mahogany and cedar from Cuba had already been bought for the job, prompting Molner to readapt Villanueva's fluted pilasters into wood, and completing the works by 1788.

FÉLIX ZORZO

Casa de Salinas

Casa de Salinas is a private house built in 1577 by a family of converted Jews who had fought with the kings of Castille during the Reconquista. The current owner, Mr Bruno de Salinas, gave us a tour starting in the large patio, with ornate nineteenth-century plasterwork above Renaissance marble columns brought from Genoa and walls covered in tiles from the Mensaque factory in Triana

neighbourhood. Around the patio, the dining room contained a seventeenth-century *bargueño* with a central drawer in the shape of a Jesuit baroque church façade with a painted crucifixion. The family room had an interesting Castilian or Andalusian ebony and tortoiseshell *bargueño*, c.1660, with unusual decoration of brass inlay semicircles around each drawer, the central part in silver repoussé between four tortoiseshell columns, the base sitting on brass bun feet. The visit ended around an exquisite Roman mosaic (2nd century AD) representing Bacchus, centaurs and other Bacchic scenes in the private courtyard.

SYLVAIN LEVY-ALBAIN

Hospital de la Caridad

The Hospital of the Santa Caridad is one of the jewels of Baroque Seville. The Brotherhood of the Santa Caridad (Holy Charity) supported the old, the sick and the poor and provided a proper burial for those executed and drowned in the river Guadalquivir. It was built using part of the structure of the shipyard (*atarazana*) constructed by order of King Alfonso X El Sabio in the thirteenth century by the river outside the city walls.

The church was the first building to be completed between 1645 and 1670 by Pedro Sánchez Falconete, master builder of the city. Two years later, the most famous member of the Brotherhood, Don Miguel de Mañara, financed the construction of the hospital. Designed by architects Francisco Rodríguez de Escalona and Leonardo de Figueroa, when completed in 1682 the hospital

occupied three naves of the old shipyard. The result is a magnificent ensemble of buildings, patios and small gardens, typically Andalusian.

Our tour guide, Alejandro, welcomed the FHS group at the *zaguán* (entrance hall) and through the two main courtyards with marble fountains imported from Genoa representing *Faith* and *Charity* and with Delft tile panels on the walls representing scenes from the Bible by Willem van der Kloet (1666–1747). An exhibition at the Sala de la Virgen, one of the long naves, showed pieces related to the history of the building and Mañara himself, including paintings and sculptures as well as nineteenth-century vitrines on console tables.

In the church dedicated to Saint George, we sat on pews deemed to be the original ones, some covered in modern crimson silk brocade. The main altarpiece or *retablo mayor* was designed, and carved, by Bernardo Simón de Pineda (1637–1703) a famous *arquitecto de retablos*; the two superb lamp-holding angels were carved by Pedro Roldán (1624–1699).

After seeing Miguel de Mañara's gravestone by the church entrance, we visited the Sala de Cabildos, the meeting room for of the Brotherhood members — all laymen — still in use today. It has a group of Spanish mid-nineteenth-century seats of *Isabelino* style and a group of chairs *a la inglesa* Andalusian interpretations of English styles popular in Spain during the second half of the eighteenth century.

FERNANDO ROMERO

Cathedral

Built in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in the transitional 'Mudéjar' Gothic style on the site of an old twelfth-century Almohade mosque, the cathedral's highlight is the monumental High Altar (*Retablo Mayor*), begun by the Flemish sculptor Pieter Dancart in 1481. It narrates the lives of Christ and the Virgin Mary in 44 intricately carved and gilt niches. In the same style, the Choir is another masterpiece of local fifteenth-century woodcarving that incorporates 117 seats adorned with sculptures of saints and high reliefs depicting scenes from the Old and New Testaments. It is attributed to Castilian Nufro Sánchez, and Dancart, mentioned earlier.

Most commented after the visit was the spectacular oval-shaped cupola of the mid-sixteenth-century Sala Capitular (Chapter House). Mounted in the dome are Sebastián Esteban Murillo's 1767 roundels of virtuous Sevillian saints and one of his best depictions of the Immaculate Conception. Presiding the space is the 1592 carved mahogany, ebony, boxwood and cedar Archbishop's Chair designed by Asensio de Maeda, made by Pablo Torres, and with sculptures of Faith, Hope and Charity by the sculptor Diego Velasco, carvings by Francisco de Uceda and Andrés de Ocampo, and painted panels by Juan de Saucedo. Placed opposite, the carved bench (*Escaño del Secretario*) is by the same artists.

We regrouped in the Patio de los Naranjos (Orange Tree Courtyard), remnant of the original mosque site, where we enjoyed the side view of the twelfth-century Giralda Tower.

CRISTINA ALFONSIN

Casa de Pilatos

In the Casa de Pilatos, home to the Dukes of Medinaceli, a High Renaissance entrance doorcase led into a courtyard garden fronting the late-fifteenth-century main courtyard, as a two-storey cortile. Genoese marble columns supported mudejar-style arches while Roman busts filled oval niches.

Four Antique statues greeted us, the first hint of two major collections: that of the 1st Duke of Alcalá, (said to rival the collection of Cosimo de Medici, Pope Paul III) and that of his great-nephew the 3rd Duke, whose Italian sojourns coincided with the sculptor Francois Dequesnoy's Roman period. This sculptor had improved a Pallas Athene as Warmaker or Peace giver.

Off the main cortile, the gothic vaulted chapel had extensive Mudejar dado tiles, said to mark a phase of polychrome development. A free-standing marble column related to the Stations of the Cross, from which the Palace gains its popular name. The ground-floor summer rooms opened both into the courtyard and the garden. The Praetor Room had walls covered with *cuenca* technique tiles, another innovative phase of tile design. A magnificent staircase took us to the upper, winter floor. The 3rd Duke is reported as presiding over a humanist Salon including artists such Francisco Pacheco, who painted a ceiling with the Apotheosis of Hercules. Rather than Pilate's House at Jerusalem, the house evoked an authentic Roman Renaissance classicism and Grand Tour-type collecting.

RORY O'DONNELL

San Luis de los Franceses

A short visit to San Luis on the way to Santa Paula allowed the group to explore one of the highlights of Spanish Baroque architecture and the architectural masterpiece of Leonardo de Figueroa, whose Hospital de los Venerables we had already seen. San Luis was a more ambitious project both in scale and in complexity of decoration. It was built between 1699 and 1730, when Seville was already in economic decline, for the education of Jesuit novices but also to strengthen catholic presence in southern Spain, at the border of Europe with the Muslim world and gateway to the Americas.

The architecture was inspired by the churches of the Jesuit Andrea Pozzo in Rome, well known to Figueroa's Jesuit patrons. The church's complex design and iconographic programme resulted from an artist and patron collaboration. We started by exploring the façade, in carved stone and profusely decorated, and discussing the ambiguous religious and political symbolism of the church which is dedicated to the thirteenth-century King Louis IX of France.

The church was deconsecrated after the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1834. Painting, sculpture, architectural ornament, niches, vitrines, reliquaries form a spectacle to convey the Order's ideological message through theatrical devices. The dome was designed so that light projected down to be in interplay with the sculptures and to exploit internal reflective surfaces to create visual effects (carefully placed glass, mirrors, gilt-metals and surfaces, marbles, stones, etc.). We made our way out via



Monasterio de Santa Paula

the Sacristy, where fitted on a recess was perhaps the only piece of furniture from the period (unconfirmed), a heavy carved wood chest or '*credenza*', mounted with a mirror and an elaborate gilt-wood foliate border.

CRISTINA ALFONSIN

Monasterio de Santa Paula

Founded in 1475, this small active convent remains both a haven to its Hieronymite order of nuns and the treasure trove of ecclesiastical art. Due to its aristocratic patrons it benefitted from their largesse and has managed to survive largely intact.

Amongst the treasures was a silver and gilt-bronze reliquary originally belonging to Queen Mariana of Austria (1694), various objects using exotic woods and silver from Mexico, two armoires thought to be good examples of Spanish furniture dating from

the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries, and a massive eighteenth-century terracotta scene by Fernando de Santiago representing the History of Salvation from the Original Sin. The suite of seat furniture was, in Tessa Murdoch's opinion, early twentieth century, however David Kirkby was interested in two folding tables, thinking they could be English; we also saw a pair of armchairs, richly upholstered in red velvet with gold embroidery bearing the arms of a cardinal.

The High Choir had a spectacular wooden coffered ceiling which is Mudejar work by Diego López de Arenas, c.1623, that runs through into the adjoining church, where the group saw two opposed altarpieces by Alonso Cano (1635) with St John Evangelist (1637) and St John the Baptist (1638) by Martínez Montañés.

CHARLES GARNETT

Palacio de la Condesa de Lebrija

Our final visit was to the home which the celebrated archaeologist the Condesa de Lebrija created in the early twentieth century. Having passed fabulous Roman mosaics on the ground floor, we became aware of three seventeenth-century masterpieces: domed and metal-bound 'marriage' coffers, including one richly coloured example from Colombia, covered in *barniz de Pasto* or *mopa-mopa* resin.

We saw some cane-seated, painted and gilded chairs, whose fretted vase-splats related to English chairs of the George II era. We also saw a magnificent bargueño with eagle-claw feet, supported on a stand with Salomonic columns and an antique 'baroque' apron of scrolled acanthus. Included amongst its multitude of drawers were three Doric-columned tabernacles of mounted commanders on elephant ivory.

We were finally shown a mahogany 'spinet'! But David Murdoch correctly identified it as a square piano, such as John Broadwood and Sons exported worldwide around 1815. It had paired, French-fashion, front columnar legs, that were fat-reeded in Egyptian style.

And so ended our trip to Seville, which was, as usual, brilliantly organised by Beatrice. It was also excellently led by our experts Cristina Alfonsín and Félix Zorzo.

JOHN HARDY

Visit to the Faringdon Collection

WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2024

We were welcomed to 28 Brompton Square by curator Dr Amy Lim and joined by James and Lucinda Henderson, son and daughter-in-law of the current Lord Faringdon.



Amy Lim showing the commode attributed to Jacob Frères, in the dining room at 28 Brompton Square.

Overlooked in the dining room by the Roy Hobdell (1911-61) *trompe l'oeil* murals of 1955, Amy started by giving us the background to the Faringdon collection, held both here and at the family's country home, Buscot Park, which the FHS will visit in June 2024. Gavin Henderson, 2nd Lord Faringdon, bought this early-nineteenth-century townhouse in 1953 as his London home. Examples of British Regency, French Empire and Biedermeier furniture 1790-1850 were our main focus and were used to decorate the house with great flair.

In the dining room attendees were set the enjoyable test of working out which six of the set of twelve mahogany lyre-back dining chairs inlaid with ebony were the originals of 1820 and which were reproductions made in 2009. The table is attributed to Gillows of Lancaster. We also examined an impressive mahogany commode with gilt-bronze mounts attributed to the French firm Jacob Frères. The design is in the manner of Percier and Fontaine, the leading exponents of the French Empire style (1804-15). Displayed on the commode is a marble bust of an unidentified gentleman on the Grand Tour of Europe, made in Rome in 1830. A pair of mahogany dining pedestals with bronze mounts based on a Thomas Hope design were examined in detail. One of the pedestals is lined with tin and Kate Dyson explained that it was probably used as a warming cupboard for plates, above a tray of hot coals. The pedestals were possibly supplied by George Bullock and are similar to a pair made for the Earl of Harewood, they were purchased from Blairmans.

In the Trustees' Room we examined a German Biedermeier secretaire of c.1825 in

mahogany, perhaps an unusual wood for this period. FHS member and conservator Arthur Peters explained the construction of the piece with a counter-weighted lid and extractable pins. We also saw a late-eighteenth-century French mantel clock with later plinth, decorated with Pan pursuing Syrinx.

Other furniture of note were Regency games tables and Edwardian mahogany and cane sofa and armchairs (1901-10). In the staircase we saw the late-nineteenth-century ceiling lanterns originally designed for the Saloon at Buscot Park by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, probably made by WAS Benson.

In the Green Drawing Room, we examined a Regency commode, attributed to George Bullock, originally made to contain the leaves of an extendable dining table. We also admired a 'Genoese style' chandelier of 1785-90 with glass beads threaded on copper wire mimicking the use of rock crystals in older chandeliers, which was possibly Italian or Swedish.

The Yellow Drawing Room contained another beautiful French Empire clock depicting Aurora, the Greek Goddess of the Dawn, which celebrates 'Napoleon's Comet' of 1811-12, whose appearance coincided with the French invasion of Russia. Also much admired was the Biedermeier furniture, including a sofa and armchairs of satin birch discussed as possibly Danish, a William IV work table and Charles X burr-elm bergère chairs.

Our thanks are due to Dr Amy Lim for leading this fascinating visit for us and we look forward to the visit to Buscot Park in June to see the rest of the Faringdon Collection.

BEATRICE GODDARD & KATE HAY

Reports on ECD Event

Early Career Research Symposium 2024

24 JANUARY 2024, METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, NEW YORK

Cynthia Kok (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

Ebonyworkers in Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam

The influx of novel woods into early modern Amsterdam via the Dutch East India Company (VOC), particularly a dark hardwood sourced from Africa and Asia, gave rise to a new specialization in furniture-making: ebonyworkers. These ebonyworkers shaped the wood into furniture characterized by its distinctive black coloring, often offset by decorative accents in mother-of-pearl or lighter-toned tropical woods, and smaller objects such as the frames that now often surround seventeenth-century Dutch paintings. Before French *ébénistes* became the most sought-after makers of luxurious cabinets, these specialized craftsmen formed a community that intersected and cooperated with other artisans in seventeenth-century Amsterdam.

Studying seventeenth century ebony workers as a community helps to better understand their workshop practices and networks; a closer examination of Amsterdam City Archives reveals that ebonyworkers were situated in a wider community of makers who relied on each other. Rembrandt, for example, painted portraits of ebonyworker Herman Doomer

and his wife Baertje Martens. Mother-of-pearl inlayer Dirck van Rijswijck once commissioned Willem Albertsz Deutgens, a ‘master ebonyworker [meester ebbenhoutwerker]’, to make frames for his panels; at the time of Deutgens’ death, van Rijswijck still owed him sixteen guilders and seventeen stuivers for his work. Tracing such sources reveals more about networks of makers across Amsterdam, many of whom were previously unknown, as well as how ebonyworkers, specifically, are situated within it.

Bridget Griffin (The Attingham Trust, London)

Crafting Connections: Mapping the Lives and Trade Networks of British and Irish Immigrant Furniture Makers in North-Eastern Port Cities of Early America

In colonial America, British and Irish immigrants played a pivotal role in shaping early American life, including traditions found in the early American furniture trade. While the impact immigrant furniture makers had on New England social and material cultures in the long eighteenth century has been well-documented, the impact on lesser-explored urban centres has yet to be examined to a similar degree. This study further examined immigrant furniture makers’ contributions by documenting the multifaceted relationships within furniture trade communities – both professional and personal. By exploring networks, the aim has been to present a more comprehensive picture of craftsmen’s lives from their start in Great Britain and

Ireland to their destination in port cities including Philadelphia, New York, Annapolis and Baltimore.

Through examination of primary sources – ranging from wills and local tax records to US furniture patents and legal documents – this analysis provided a vivid case study into motivating factors for immigrating, the rationales behind shop and residency arrangements, cross-trade connections, and the nuances of craftsmen’s furniture-making, retail and manufacturing practices. To date, 300 furniture makers have been identified, the vast majority previously unknown. The recorded information includes background information, workshop details, apprenticeship connections, business advertisements, biographies and networks in the trade community. This ongoing research will continue to show the underrepresented aspects of furniture history and immigrant influence, offering insights into how British and Irish immigrants shaped design, cultural exchange, trade networks and craftsmanship across the Atlantic.

Grace Ford-Dirks (Philadelphia Museum of Art)

*Exploring the Lives and Meanings of an
Eighteenth-Century Caribbean Armoire*

In 1988, the Winterthur Museum purchased a unique armoire from an antiques dealer in Louisiana. This Louis XV-style piece, supposedly made between 1770 and 1790 in New Orleans, was hailed as ‘a significant example of furniture made by French-speaking peoples of colonial America’ by curators and museum leadership. In 2021a re-evaluation of the object’s origins

concluded that the object originated from the island of Martinique.

This study first explores how the armoire’s vernacular style reflects the tremendous cultural confluence that defined the late-eighteenth-century Caribbean. Qualitative comparisons to other armoires with strong provenances in the French Caribbean revealed close similarities in construction, material, and aesthetic properties. Similar comparisons to armoires produced around New Orleans in the same period revealed differences in types of hardwoods used and methods of construction. While the individuals who contributed to the construction and maintenance of this object are unknown, their presence is still reflected in the fabric of the object itself. Examining the marks they left behind helps to illuminate important aspects of the object’s history that would otherwise go unrecorded. The second section explored the significance of the physical evidence left behind by the enslaved people who harvested the hardwood, the enslaved and freed individuals who made the piece, the merchants who brought the armoire to New Orleans, and the German immigrant family who kept the armoire in their boarding house for decades. This unassuming object offers a rich window into the interconnected material landscapes of the late eighteenth-century Caribbean and Gulf South. It invites critical conversation about the ways in which people and materials shaped one another in a rapidly changing world.

Noah Dubay (Bard Graduate Centre, New York)

Comfort, Convenience & Convalescence: how the Fauteuil de Malade Changed Eighteenth-Century France

Fauteuils de malade, meaning ‘armchairs of the sick’, were originally created for members of the French court who experienced injury or illness. Hand-powered rolling chairs with cranks were in use since the late seventeenth century, as were other related chair forms, including those for parturition, surgery and electrotherapy.

While traditional studies of eighteenth-century French furniture focus on attribution and style, the technical knowledge required to build these intricate chairs is often forgotten. Clients and artisans had very close relationships, and carpenters were attentive to the physical needs of their patrons. Large, well-upholstered *fauteuils* embodied the French principle of *commodité*, typically translated as ‘comfort’ or ‘convenience’, providing not only relaxation and informality, but the alleviation of chronic pain or discomfort. Portraiture, prints, and pamphlets demonstrated how sitting in a *fauteuil* the right way could even further one’s social advancement.

Fauteuils de malade also reveal the gaps that remain between the study of material culture and the history of medicine. While treatises are useful for researching medical philosophy, they lack the physicality that material culture emphasizes. *Fauteuils* bring clarity to these often-opaque texts and provide alternative evidence for examining comfort, wellness, and the body. Using Louis XIV’s garden *roulette* and a 1763 design for a *chaise roulante* as case studies, this research explored the complex relationship between mobile seat furniture, health, and society,

rediscovering period notions of illness and disability.

Geoffrey Ripert (Bard Graduate Centre, New York)

The Road from Rome to Paris: Sourcing Rare Marbles at the End of the Ancien Regime and the Rise of French Taste for Objets d’Art made from Stone, 1760-1810

This paper examined the taste for rare marble objects in eighteenth-century France, focusing on two exceptional examples in the Wrightsman Galleries of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, namely a porphyry vase on a column stand (1971.206.44) and a pair of orbicular diorite vases (1999.122.1–2). Whether in the form of tabletops, pedestals, columns or vases, marble furnishings reminiscent of antiquity (or their imitations in substitute materials) became a staple of interior design during this period, ranging in size from the monumental to the intimate, and frequently mounted in gilt bronze.

Based on archival sources held at the Archives Nationales in Paris, and in the Archivio di Stato in Rome, the study has shed light on the sourcing of marble required to make these extraordinary objects, while also exploring the actors behind their design, display, and function. In the eighteenth century, the search for fine stones suffused French royal policy, underpinned by a culture of curiosity that encouraged universal and rationalized classification of the natural world. Important French administrative figures such as the Marquis de Marigny (1727–1781) and Comte d’Angiviller (1730–1809), sought to limit Italian

imports by supporting the discovery and exploitation of French marbles. This study aimed to demonstrate the ways these pioneering French geological prospectors and marble-sourcing networks, from Paris to the Pyrenees, and from the island of Corsica to Rome, accompanied the rise of a scientific and aesthetic taste for stones, and for objects made from them.

Laura Jenkins (The Courtauld Institute of Art, London)

From Galerie to Ballroom: Gilbert Cuel at 1 West 57th Street

Between 1892 and 1894, the Paris decorator Gilbert Cuel created one of the most iconic rooms of New York's Gilded Age in the ballroom of the Cornelius Vanderbilt II mansion at 1 West 57th Street. The interior was based on the Galerie Dorée of the Hôtel de Toulouse (now Banque de France), decorated by Robert de Cotte and François-Antoine Vassé in 1713–17 and reconstructed by Charles-Auguste Questel and others in 1865–75. While Cuel's design demonstrated a close observation of the gallery interior, particularly its wood panelling, new research reveals significant alterations made to its scale and iconography. Taking these changes as its starting point, this investigation situated the Vanderbilt ballroom within a transatlantic taste for, and trade in, French décors at the end of the 19th century. Focusing on boiseries, which have conventionally fallen between the scholarly categories of furniture and architecture, it highlighted the historical power of interiors to mobilise and reform 'French' cultural and stylistic ideals.

Romana Mastrella (University of La Sapienza, Rome)

Collecting Roman Fireplaces in the Eighteenth Century

The objective of this study was to thoroughly examine the dynamics of the market for a relatively overlooked specialty of Roman craftsmanship: fireplaces produced in Rome between the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century. The significance of these fireplaces in interior decor has been substantiated by numerous eighteenth-century treatises published in France, England, and Italy. In Rome, fireplace production was significant due to the large quantity and exceptional quality of these objects, as demonstrated by the mantelpieces created by the Valadier workshop for the Borghese Palace. Their significance gained further validation by Alvar González-Palacios, an authority in the field of furniture and decorative art studies, who dedicated attention to Roman fireplaces, thereby underscoring their status as 'a local specialty'.

Around 1770, the Scottish merchant James Byres was extensively involved in various trades, including furniture, 'antique-style' artworks, pianos, mantelpieces, and tables adorned with excavated marbles and hard stones, a traditional specialty of Roman stonecutters. Similarly, Piranesi traded in fireplaces, evident in surviving specimens like those found in the State Bedroom of Burghley House, Stamford, commissioned in 1767 for the 9th Earl of Exeter.

Other examples, sold by Piranesi and intended for the Amsterdam residence of the English merchant and banker John Hope, are in the Rijksmuseum. The primary focus

of this research was to analyse the complex network of international relationships among artists, collectors, and antiquarians that contributed to the success of Roman fireplaces. These insights helped assess the significance of this production and its role in the European collecting landscape.

Justine Gain (Ecole de Louvre, Paris)

When the Furniture Matches the Architecture: The Birth of French Eclecticism through the Oeuvre of Jean Baptiste Plantar (1790-1879)

As the *Sculpteur des Bâtiments du Roi*, (sculptor for the King's Buildings), Jean-Baptiste Plantar had a prominent role during the periods of the Restoration and the July Monarchy. He oversaw architectural projects including the Louvre, the Palais-Royal, and Versailles.

Plantar was also tasked with ensuring coherence between monumental sculpture and furniture in official buildings such as the Hôtel de Ville of Paris. A dozen drawings testify to Plantar's ornamental expertise, which reference the French Renaissance in both stone sculptures and the chairs furnishing the building. The difficulty in studying Plantar's furniture is that creating it was a collective process involving multiple artists and makers. For example, furniture designed for the Count of Sérent (1796-1836), notably a frame shown at the Industrial Products Exhibition in 1834, is not listed under Plantar's name but that of the gilder, M. Thomas, even though Plantar is mentioned, and the frame appears in his drawings. Furthermore, a study of his archives reveals that not only did he subcontract certain tasks, but he

was also commissioned to execute pieces under the names of other artists.

The diversity of Plantar's activities allowed him to disseminate the eclectic aesthetic designed for the elite, to a broader audience. For example, designs for the Pont Royal in Paris of around 1835, appear in several drawings and are similar to the aesthetic employed at the Hôtel de Ville. An analysis of the interplay between architecture and furniture within Plantar's body of work also emphasizes how the former informs the latter in terms of motifs.

This research primarily relied on the study of albums by Plantar at the National Institute of Art History in Paris, the Getty Research Institute, Versailles and the Musée Carnavalet.

Karolina Kourilova (Masaryk University, Brno)

Design Behind the Iron Curtain: Furniture Industry Development in Post-War Czechoslovakia

Czechoslovak furniture production after the Second World War was marked by fundamental changes in property relations and the reorganization of the furniture industry, which was directed towards large-scale production, central management, and a common market. The manufacturing sector was divided into several categories. In 1954, an important research and development body called the Furniture Industry Development (Vývoj nábytkářského průmyslu) was established, which occupied a privileged position in the new manufacturing structure. Over the years, it dealt with various tasks throughout the furniture industry and

had a significant influence on the history of design in Czechoslovakia. Among its most important tasks were experiments with new materials and creating a manufacturing programme for national enterprises to produce furniture in large series for both the domestic and export markets. Designs for furniture by talented designers such as Jindrich Halabala were comparable to foreign products but were included in domestic mainstream production only sporadically.

This investigation focused on the current state of research and examined the history of the Furniture Industry Development in the context of the furniture industry and post-war housing culture. It described the furniture produced in large numbers that became an integral part of Czechoslovak homes. Furthermore, it announced the intention to create a database, including images of furniture, originating from the Furniture Industry Development, and to process and interconnect a mass of information from different sources to make it accessible to a wider audience.

Melania Andronic (Independent Curator and Researcher for the A.L. Colombo Archive, by Antonio Colombo, Milan)

*Columbus Rational Furniture: A Chair is
Made for Sitting!*

This study centers on the history and significance of the rational furniture department (Columbus) of A. L. Colombo, founded in 1919 in Milan by Angelo Luigi Colombo. In 1930s Italy, the company established itself as a pioneer of rationalist

furniture, producing innovative steel tube furniture.

In 1933, Colombo formed an exclusive partnership with the Swiss company Wohnbedarf and Embru, acquiring the rights to produce 'original' furniture under license, marking a crucial turning point for the company. The partnership enabled Columbus to collaborate with renowned designers such as Marcel Breuer, Flora Steiger and others, producing a wide range of high-quality furniture. Commissions for important architectural projects, including Giuseppe Terragni's Casa del Fascio and Asilo Sant'Elia, numerous commissions from the Milan Triennale (1933,1936), contributed to the company's reputation.

Colombo's distinctive strategy has always focused on quality, specialization and exclusivity, enabling it to carve out niches in the market during a period of creative freedom for Italian industry. However, as war approached and problems arose with the supply of quality raw materials, the company began to struggle, but survived until 1964. After the war, Carlo Colombo, Angelo Luigi's brother, attempted to revive the furniture business, but without success. In 1964, the furniture department of the company was closed.

Also highlighted was the Columbus Archive created by Antonio Colombo, Angelo Luigi's son, which has preserved the company's history and heritage, becoming a reference point for studies of Italian design. Ultimately, Columbus' story represents a significant chapter in the evolution of industrial design in Italy, illustrating the intersection of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship during a period of cultural and industrial transformation.

Calling All Scholars and Museum Professionals

The Furniture History Society welcomes grant applications for independent travel, research or for participation in the Society's study trips both overseas and in the United Kingdom. Scholars and museum professionals working in the fields of furniture history, furniture making, decorative arts, interior design and conservation who are in need of support for travel and research are encouraged to apply.

The Society makes grants to individuals and organisations from two funds which have been established thanks to the generosity of members of the Society. They are administered by the Society's Grants committee (Chair: Adriana Turpin) which meets quarterly to consider applications – either for independent travel for study or research, or for participation in the Society's study trips, both overseas and in the United Kingdom.

Tom Ingram Memorial Fund

Grants are awarded from the Ingram Fund towards travel and associated expenses for the purpose of study or research into the history of furniture. These grants are offered, whether or not the applicant is a member of the Society, where travel could

not be undertaken without funding from the Society; and only where the study or research is likely to further the Society's objectives. Applications towards the cost of the Society's own foreign and domestic trips and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars and museum professionals. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Ingram Fund in any resulting publications and will be required to make a short report on completion of the trip.

Oliver Ford Trust

The Oliver Ford Trust supports research by emerging scholars and junior museum professionals in the fields of furniture history, the decorative arts and interior design mainly by sponsoring places on the Society's study weekends or foreign tours. Recent awards have included grants to enable participation in the Society's Symposium at The Frick Collection in New York; a weekend visit to the TEFAF (The European Fine Art Foundation) fair; and international conferences.

Applications from individuals who are not members of the Society will be considered.

For further information or to download a grant application form, please go to the Grants page of the Society's website at www.furniturehistorysociety.org/grants/ enquiries. Enquiries should be addressed to the Grants Secretary, Jill Bace, at grants@furniturehistorysociety.org.

Publications

The Society is a leading publisher in the field of Furniture History and a variety of publications are available for purchase to members and non-members.

Publication	UK	EUROPE	Rest of World
<i>Index to the Dictionary of English Furniture Makers</i>	£25.50	£30.50	£44.00
Pat Kirkham, <i>The London Furniture Trade 1700-1870</i>	£25.50	£40.50	£44.00
Francis Bamford, <i>Dictionary of Edinburgh Furniture Makers 1660-1840</i>	£25.50	£30.50	£44.00
Jacob Simon, <i>Thomas Johnson's The Life of the Author</i>	£11.00	£16.00	£25.00
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Morrison H. Heckscher, "Chippendale's Director: The Designs and Legacy of a Furniture Maker." <i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i> (May 2018)	£10.00	£13.00	£22.00
The Chippendale Society, <i>Thomas Chippendale 1718-1779: A Celebration of British Craftmanship and Design</i>	£10.00	£13.00	£22.00
Jonathan Marsden, <i>Makers, Dealers and Collectors in Honour of Geoffrey de Bellaigue</i>	£26.00	£31.00	£44.00
<i>Furniture History (Furniture History Society Journal) -</i> Journals available from 1973 (Volume IX) except 1974 (Volume X), 1977 (Volume XIII), 1985 (Volume XXI) and 1988 (Volume XXIV)	£30.00	£35.00	£48.00
Index Volumes for Furniture History Vols I-X, XI-XV, XVI-XXV and XXVI-XXXV	£10.00	£13.00	£22.00

Payment may be made by online, or by cheque, bank transfer, debit or credit card (American Express, Visa or Mastercard).

Alternatively, you can e-mail your order to our Publications Secretary, Jill Bace, and she will send you an invoice. Contact details on the back page. Orders will be dispatched by the Society upon receipt of payment.

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Copy Deadline

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next Newsletter is Thursday 6th June 2024. Copy should be sent by email to Iain.Stephens@royal.uk.

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COVER PICTURE: Leather covered trunk with brass studding, dated 1677, with initials 'R' over 'W' and 'M', Westminster Abbey Muniment Room.