

The Furniture History Society

Newsletter 235

August 2024



Drawn by Tho. H. Shepherd

Engraved by W. Wallis

ALDGATE.

31

Jones, & Co. Temple of the Muses, Finsbury Square, London, Jan. 18. 1830.

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What's in a Name? 'The Cabinet Makers' Society'

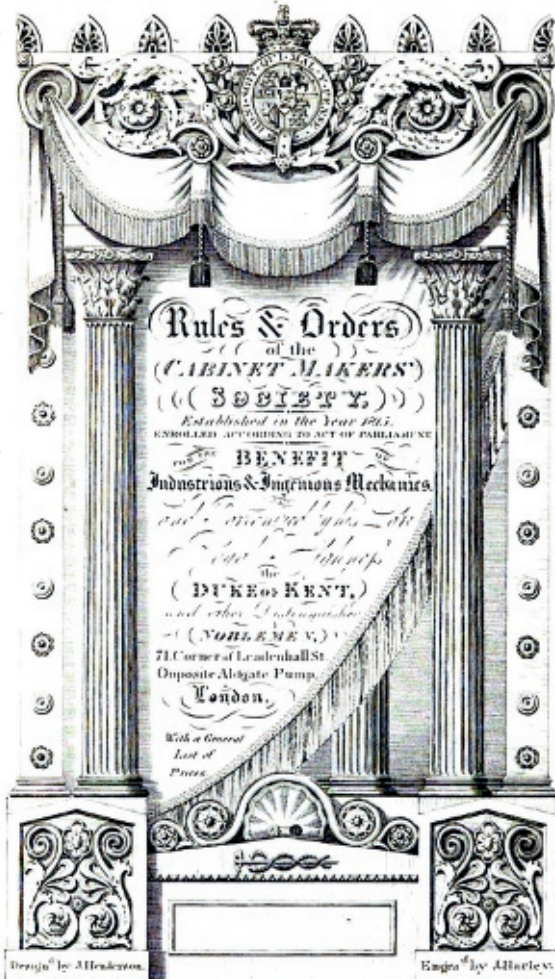


Fig. 1: Frontispiece.

About the middle of the century cabinet-makers and upholsterers formed a special society of their own to promote their interests by publishing trade catalogues. A drawing by T. H. Shepherd shows their premises facing down Aldgate and bearing the sign 'Cabinet-Makers

Society' but no particulars of this society's membership or organisation are known.¹ (Cover image)

So wrote Ralph Edwards and Margaret Jourdain in their 1946 publication *Georgian Cabinet-Makers*. This conflation of The London Society of Cabinet Makers, a trade body for craftsmen established circa 1760,² with a furniture business titled 'The Cabinet Makers' Society' (also known as 'The London Repository for The Cabinet Makers' Society) needs unravelling.

The business that styled itself the Cabinet Makers' Society was established in c.1818 by one William Thurnell, a cabinet maker and upholsterer of 71 Leadenhall Street, London. It was recorded as an 'Agency House to the Cabinet Makers' Society'.³

On 10 September 1818 William Thurnell concluded his first advertisement with the following apparently altruistic statement:

This Society respectfully informs the Public, that they have commenced the above Establishment for the employment and support of a number of industrious mechanics, with large families; and now offer their manufactured articles in the cabinet line of the best workmanship, without any profit being required upon the goods, except the bare house expenses, the workmen being fully satisfied in having constant employment.⁴

Despite this apparently positive

beginning, problems later arose. In 1825 *The Economist and General Adviser* published a series of articles entitled the 'Annals of Gulling'. Gulling is an obsolete term for scams and swindles. The business identified as 'Aldgate Pump and Co.' came in for some serious criticism.

The first humbugging establishment that falls within our notice as we enter the metropolis from the east, is ALDGATE PUMP AND Co., Dealers in Household Furniture, Wholesale and for Exportation! Who has not heard of this "firm?" Who, with eyes, that ever passed from Whitechapel into Fenchurch Street, or Leadenhall Street, within the last few years, has not beheld the "Company" staring them in the face?⁵

This evidently referred to the business titled 'The Cabinet Makers' Society' which had premises very close to the Aldgate Pump. Indeed, a few months later the *Adviser* published a note from the genuine craft union, the London Society of Cabinet Makers, that pointed out that 'The journeymen cabinet-makers' society have found it necessary to caution the public, that they have nothing to do with the above gulling concern; observing, that they only work for respectable masters.'⁶

Despite this adverse publicity, the business clearly expanded, as in 1826, in addition to their premises at 71 Leadenhall Street, they established a branch in 'that magnificent Gothic Building, late the Regency Bazaar, situated in the New Road, between Marylebone New Church and Baker Street.'⁷

However, a year or so later, the business had further unwelcome publicity when



Fig. 2: Masonic style chair apparently made by the Society in 1830.

the case of *Thurnell v. Veroni* was heard in the Court of King's Bench, Guildhall, on 22 April 1828. Veroni's advocate told the jury that 'the defendant had been attracted to the plaintiff's shop by a hand-bill, in which the plaintiff held himself out to the public as the agent of the Journeymen Cabinetmakers' Society, and stated that the goods deposited at his warehouse were for sale at no profit beyond that which was sufficient to pay the bare journeymen's wages.' The counsel went on to say, 'This was a barefaced fraud, there being no such society the one alluded to'. After some further arguments the judge found that 'This is a gross a fraud as was ever

committed. Great injury is done to the fair and honest tradesman by such practices as these...'.⁸

The issues raised in the trial, and the nature of the firm's reputation had gone beyond London by the early 1830s. In July 1831 *The Salopian Journal* published a note explaining that the

JOURNEYMEN CABINET-MAKERS of Shrewsbury feel themselves imperatively called upon, in consequence of the repeated attempts to practise imposition upon the public by some individuals, styling themselves 'THE LONDON CABINET-MAKERS' SOCIETY' to disclaim all connexion with any such Society...⁹

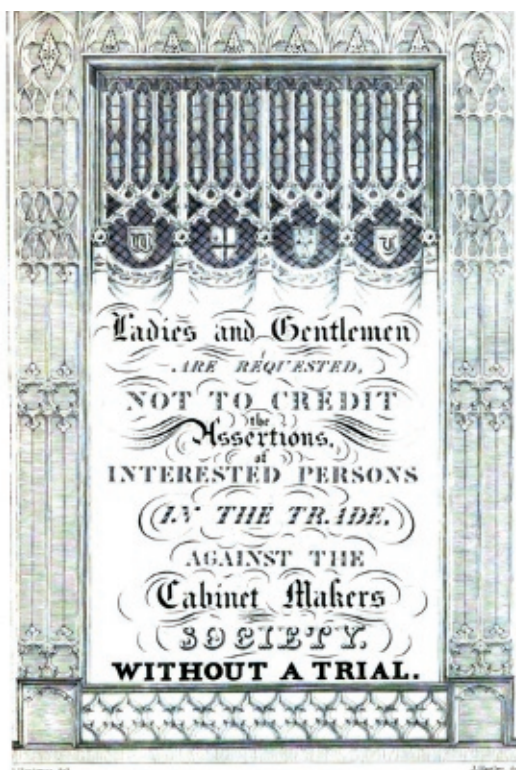


Fig. 3: Front matter in *Rules & Orders of the Cabinet Makers' Society*.

Rather belatedly the business trading as the Cabinet Makers' Society responded and tried to justify themselves. *The Sunday Times* published a letter from them:

We have received a letter from Thomas Hasler, Secretary to the "Cabinet Makers' Society," contradicting the assertion of counsel in the case "Thurnell v. Veroni," that no such Society existed. Mr Hasler states that the Society is constituted according to Act of Parliament, and that its rules, regulations, and enrolment, lie at his house for inspection.¹⁰

This was true, as three years prior to this in 1830, they had published 'Rules & Orders of the Cabinet Makers' Society'. The business had disingenuously constituted itself as a friendly society with all the trappings thereof.

The business continued to develop, and in 1833 took space in the Egyptian Hall, in Piccadilly. It was noted that 'the exhibition rooms, [were] at present occupied by the Society of Cabinet Makers, whose title in large letters disfigures the beauty of the front.'¹¹

Disputes over the name also continued. In a very long letter, dated 25 December 1841, to *Cleave's London Satirist and Gazette of Variety*, the secretary of the actual London Society of Cabinet Makers, Thomas Blundell, wrote an excoriating analysis of the business and its faults. He explained:

The members of our Society having frequently received letters of complaint regarding the proceedings of a Company advertising themselves in their name, or in that of the "Cabinet Makers' Trade Society," have often been



Fig. 4: Front matter in *Rules & Orders of the Cabinet Makers' Society*.

induced to caution the public against such specious puffs and pretensions; and now, when distress prevails, and public sympathy is excited, they perceive that a new species of deception is being practised, by the distribution of £1,200 worth of cabinet furniture, in lottery shares of 2s. 6d. each! And this, forsooth, is proposed under the plea of keeping working men in employment; when, in reality, it is mainly for the interest of an individual speculator. This so called "Cabinet-Makers' Trade Society," is indeed but an individual speculation, though, by means of a Benefit Society, which the proprietor has established.¹²

Finally they made their own case:

That the public may understand the nature of the London Cabinet-Makers' Society (the body to which we belong) we beg to inform them that it is composed exclusively of journeymen cabinet makers; that it has been in existence for nearly a century; ...; that there has been a good understanding between us and the great body of our employers for a considerable number of years, our prices being regulated by a book, drawn up and agreed to by both masters and men; that we do not manufacture any description of furniture on our own account, but work for employers in different parts of London, persons who maintain their respectability, by conducting their business honestly and fairly. Such is the nature of our Society...¹³

The business was still listed in the Post Office London directory in 1842, but by May 1845, Thurnell was declared bankrupt. However, this did not deter him from other ventures. Thurnell went into a partnership with Henry Caley, at No. 71, Leadenhall Street, London, under the name of William Thurnell and Company, but by 1850 they too were 'out of business and employ'.¹⁴

On the other hand, the genuine and original Cabinet Makers' Society (London Society of Cabinet Makers) continued to consolidate their position as an independent craft union that later merged with the Friendly Society of Operative Cabinet Makers in 1877.¹⁵

CLIVE EDWARDS

1 Ralph Edwards and Margaret Jourdain, *Georgian Cabinet-Makers*, (London: Country Life, 1946), pp. 30-31. The image of Aldgate shows the building's central prominence.

2 See Pat Kirkham, 'London Furniture Trade 1700-1870', *Furniture History* 1988, p. 149. Also, William Lovett, *Life & Struggles of William Lovett in His Pursuit of Bread, Knowledge, and Freedom* (London: Trübner, 1876), p. 32.

3 British and Irish Furniture Makers Online <https://bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org/entry/thurnell-william-1821-39>. Accessed 27 February 2024.

4 *The Times*, 10 September 1818.

5 *The Economist and General Adviser*, 22 May 1824, p. 11.

6 *The Economist and General Adviser*, 4 September 1824, p. 251.

7 *Morning Post*, 24 February 1826.

8 *The Examiner*, 27 April 1828.

9 *The Salopian Journal*, 27 July 1831.

10 *Sunday Times*, 9 June 1833.

11 Leigh and Son, *Leigh's New Picture of London*, (Leigh and Son: London, 1834), p. 298.

12 See for examples 6th Anniversary Dinner Report in the *Morning Chronicle*, 15 January 1824.

13 *Cleave's London Satirist and Gazette of Variety*, 5, 25 December 1841.

14 *London Gazette*, 24 May 1850, p. 1389.

15 Kirkham, 'London Furniture Trade', (see note 2) p. 161.

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

20 SEPTEMBER	Visit to Grimsthorpe Castle
1-2 OCTOBER	Autumn UK Study Trip to Merseyside
23 OCTOBER	Annual Lecture
25-29 OCTOBER	Overseas Study Trip to Dresden
13 NOVEMBER	Visit to Christopher Howe (postponed from 2023)
23 NOVEMBER	AGM & Talks



Knowsley Hall

Autumn UK Study Trip to Merseyside

TUESDAY 1 OCTOBER TO WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2024 M

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 to check if any places are still available.

FHS Annual Lecture

SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES, BURLINGTON HOUSE, PICCADILLY, LONDON W1J 0BE

23 OCTOBER 2024

6.00 PM FOR A 6.30 PM START

Armchair designed by Philip Webb (1831-1915), manufactured by Morris & Co. (1875-1940) London, 19th century.



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 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.

Visit to Christopher Howe's Warehouse

16 BLOOMFIELD TERRACE, LONDON SW1W 8PG

WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2024

4.00 – 6.00 PM

FHS Member Christopher Howe has sourced antiques from around the globe for their unique provenance, exceptional quality and character for over 30 years. His understanding and appreciation for the design and craftsmanship of these antiques has led to a huge inventory of fine old pieces and has informed a diverse and acclaimed collection in his bespoke range of designs of furniture and lighting 'Made by Howe'. Inspired by and developed alongside the antique business these pieces are hand crafted in Britain by highly skilled and experienced craftsmen.

During our visit to his new 7,000 sq ft Battersea warehouse Christopher will explain the history of this old stableyard, the origins and history of his business (which includes two shops in Belgravia) and guide members on a tour of this new



18th century
Birdcage Mahogany
Centre table.

space which he shares with the company 'Woven'. Since 1965, Woven founder and co-owner Abraham Moradzadeh has been lovingly collecting antique rugs from all over the world. Launched in 2016, 'Studio Woven' designs handwoven rugs that intertwine ideas and cultures, inspired and informed by the antique and vintage masterpieces.

COST: £20

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:

FRIDAY 13 FEBRUARY 2024

FHS Annual General Meeting and Works in Progress Talks



Collinson and Lock Cabinet, Standen's Staircase Hall, designed by Stephen Webb c.1890 (Inventory No.1214007) ©National Trust Images/Leah Band 2024.

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 and will include Dr Anne Stutchbury, Independent Researcher/Consultant, and Dr Alice Strickland, Curator for the National Trust on 'Furnishing Standen's interior in the 1970s'. Further details in the November FHS Newsletter and on the FHS website.

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.

Save the Date

The 48th Annual Symposium

in association with the National Trust and the Royal Collection Trust

The Art of the Dolls House

THE LYDIA AND MANFRED GORVY LECTURE
THEATRE, VICTORIA & ALBERT MUSEUM,
LONDON

SATURDAY 22 MARCH 2025

10.30 AM – 5.00 PM

Confirmed speakers include Dr Heike Zech, Deputy Director, Germanisches Museum, Nuremberg; Sara van Dijk, Curator of Textiles, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam and Kathryn Jones, Senior Curator of Decorative Arts, Royal Collection Trust.

The symposium will be led by Dr Tessa Murdoch and chaired on the day by William Newton, Curator at Young V&A and Dr Megan Wheeler, Assistant Curator, Furniture, National Trust.

During conference breaks there will be demonstrations of miniature furniture making by Terence Facey.

There will be an opportunity for delegates to visit the exhibition *Sarah Lethieullier's 1730s Dolls House* at the Huguenot Museum, Rochester, Kent on Friday 21 March 2025.

A detailed programme for the day will be available on the FHS website later in the year and more details on speakers published in the next Newsletter.

Tickets for the Symposium will be available on Eventbrite in early 2025.

Bookings

For places on visits please apply by email or letter to the Events Secretary, Beatrice Goddard indicating that you wish to pay by card or online or providing separate cheques for each event. 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.



Silver Throne, miniature designed by Edwin Lutyens for Queen Mary's Dolls House, 1923. © Royal Collection Enterprises Limited 2024 | Royal Collection Trust.

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 considered equally following the closing date.

Cancellations

Please note that no refunds will be given for cancellations for events costing £20.00 or less. In all other cases, cancellations will be accepted up to seven days before the date of a visit, but refunds will be subject to a £10.00 deduction for administrative costs. Separate arrangements are made for study weekends and foreign tours; terms are clearly stated on the printed details in each case.

Online Events

We continue to arrange occasional online events, but we are sometimes unable to advertise them in the Newsletter owing to publication lead-in times. We let members know by email and 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 via accessing My Account on the FHS website using the following link:

www.furniturehistorysociety.org/membership/account/login/

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

www.furniturehistorysociety.org/accountforgot-your-password/

If you have any enquiries, or suggestions for future speakers or topics, please email the Events Secretary.

FHS News

New Overseas Events Manager appointed

We are delighted that Cristina Alfonsín has been appointed as FHS Overseas Events Manager and began work in July. Cristina will be known to some members as academic co-adviser (with Félix Zorzo) of the successful Seville trip in October 2023. She has taken over administration of the trip to Dresden in October 2024,

working with academic adviser Melanie Doderer-Winkler who devised the itinerary, and will travel with the group. Cristina is a PhD Candidate at University of York, History of Art, writing on *The Vulliamys and the London Luxury Market 1740s to 1854*. We are pleased to say that Beatrice Goddard, who has been dealing with overseas events in addition to UK events, will continue to act as UK Events Secretary.

KATE HAY

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

Arts & Crafts Exhibition Society Catalogues

The digitised transcriptions of the first eleven ACES catalogues, 1888-1916, are now available on BIFMO. This source includes a search facility for all object types and materials and a cumulative index of exhibitors, artists and craftsmen; thus facilitating research in ceramics, glass, fine art, design and architecture, needlework etc., as well as furniture of the Arts & Crafts Movement. The collection also gives a short history of the Society and records notable furniture-related articles in the catalogues written

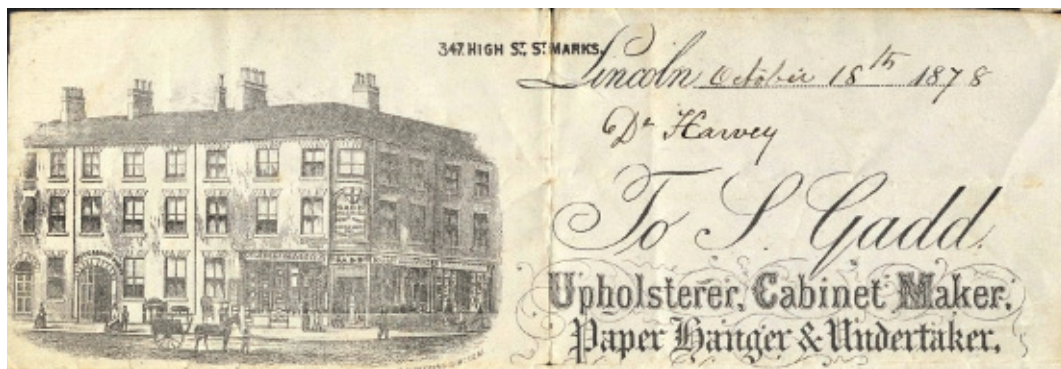


Painted and gilded Cabinet. Executed by Jessie Bayes, F. Stuttig, Emmeline Bayes and Kathleen Figgis. Exhibited in Arts & Crafts Exhibition, 1912, cat. no. 242. © Christie's Images/Bridgeman Images.

by leading figures of the style. Links from the index lead to BIFMO biographies of furniture makers and craftspeople in woodworking, carving and gilding trades.

The project was generously funded by the Albert Dawson Educational Trust. Jo Buckerell, research assistant, carried out all transcriptions.

<https://bifmo.furniturehistorysociety.org/research/aces>



Graham Gadd Archive, © National Museums Scotland, GSG 2/40.

The Graham Gadd Archive at National Museums Scotland

Two BIFMO interns, Emma Baillie and Charlotte Trueman, were funded by the Worshipful Company of Art Scholars, to scan and digitise the Graham Gadd Archive at National Museums Scotland. Formed by a long-term benefactor of the Furniture History Society, the holding includes approximately 1,100 bills and billheads of nineteenth-century furniture makers and retailers throughout Great Britain. The interns also considered the

various styles of images used on these documents and certain trends emerged relating to the choice of objects to illustrate the businesses' manufacturing; an image to indicate the expansion of premises, and the change from the use of engravings, normally produced by local artist, to photography.

Approximately half the makers in the Archive are yet to be recorded in BIFMO and this project will increase the number of furniture makers entries, particularly those based outside London. The scanned images of all bill and letterheads in the Graham Gadd Archive will also be included in the BIFMO biographies.



Graham Gadd Archive, © National Museums Scotland, GSG 8/37.



Graham Gadd Archive,
© National Museums
Scotland, GSG 3/15.

Charlotte Trueman carried out research on cabinet makers based in Leek, Staffordshire and in her BIFMO blog focused on the Leek-based furniture maker, A. Overfield & Co.. An invoice of 1899 to a Mrs Brookes of Cromwell Terrace, lists a wide range of furniture including bedsteads, a Pembroke table, a bamboo table, four bentwood chairs, a Breton lounge chair, a square kitchen table with hardwood legs, a walnut washstand and a child's chair with cane seat and back. A later letterhead from 1909 shows the company's extensive site with sizeable shop front and extensive factories, warehouses and yard.

Emma Baillie chose to explore three other regional makers previously unrecorded in BIFMO. The Graham Gadd Archive includes five invoices from Arthur S. Howard of Norwich, dating between 1873 and 1910, with his trades listed as upholsterer, cabinet maker, paper hanger, carver, gilder and general house furnisher based on the Prince of Wales Road. By 1890 an advertisement indicates that the removal and storage of furniture element of his trades had become 'the largest and most important business in Norwich'.¹

A similar volume of documentation is found in the archive for Creighton &

Son/Creighton & Co. of Carlisle. Further research showed that James Creighton 'had come from the Scottish Lowlands to Carlisle as a young joiner. There he became a partner in his employer's business, which he developed and ultimately made his own'.² By 1847, his son, Robert, had joined his father's firm and, in 1855, the premises moved from Lowther Street to Castle Street. Robert was recognised as a 'man of much natural shrewdness and business capacity, and of an active and enterprising mind'.³ He was elected Mayor of Carlisle in 1866 and the family became successful and prominent figures in Carlisle.

In Dumfries, the cabinet making and upholstery business of G. Dunbar &



Graham Gadd Archive, © National
Museums Scotland, GSG 3/15.

Son (established in 1826), chose, in the late-nineteenth century, to expand into auctioneering, operating from a large hall attached to its shop on Buccleuch Street, as recorded in 1891. Sometime between this date and April 1896, Robert Pattie joined the business, and the firm became known as Dunbar, Son & Pattie. Their invoices and other documentation in the Archive illustrate three different engravings. One shows a domestic interior of a drawing room, an image which was reused by at least two other firms – James Osborne of Kirkcudbright and Charles Garbutt of Harrogate.

The Furniture History Society are indebted to Stephen Jackson, Senior Curator of Furniture and Woodwork and Jill Dye, Library Services Manager, at NMS for supporting our interns and facilitating this BIFMO project.

Blogs on the Graham Gadd Archive and biographies of the makers mentioned above can be found on BIFMO.

1 Norfolk 1890 (Norfolk Industrial Archaeology Society, 2016).

2 Louisa Creighton, *Life and Letters of Mandell Creighton* (1904)

3 Louise Creighton, *ibid* (London: Longmans, Green, 1904).

Tributes

Mindy Papp (1950-2024)

After joining many FHS study trips over the course of forty years, Mindy Papp became a well-known presence in the Society. She was generally the first person to get on her knees and shine her torch on a piece of furniture that was of particular interest to her. She would not just stand and appreciate it as an object. It would tell her a story. As her stepdaughter Sarah Durham commented, 'She used her art history brain to see the narrative of that object or piece of furniture'.

That knowledge was extensive as Mindy had grown up in the antiques trade. From childhood, her family's antique business played a major part

in her life. The business, Florian Papp Antiques, started by her grandfather in 1900, was one of the most prestigious stores in New York. Situated in Madison Avenue, almost opposite the Carlyle Hotel, the business attracted an equally prestigious clientele, from the movie stars who stayed at the hotel, to international antique collectors, plus the great and good of New York Society and beyond. It was an essential source for leading interior designers from across the country and abroad.

The discreet smallish window on the ground floor with its always arresting display gave little indication of the huge showrooms in the two floors above. Mindy would be in her basement office, armed

with an extensive art history library, a small birdcage hanging near her desk. She was incredibly discreet about her clientele, never gossiped and would never reveal who had purchased what. This was one of the reasons for her success and high regard in the trade and with her clientele.

Mindy was born in 1951 and grew up in Yonkers. After attending her local high school, she studied applied arts and art history at Syracuse University, then moved to Chicago to work in an advertising agency, little thinking that she would be needed back at the shop.

Sadly though, in 1977 her father became ill. She returned home to help with the business. She wasn't expecting to stay for long, but found that with her fine arts education, she was enjoying herself. After his death in 1979, Mindy took over the shop with her mother. Her younger brother William was then in college and joined the business after he graduated.

Mindy published well researched and scholarly catalogues on English Aesthetic furniture and antique boxes among other topics. She specialised in English and European furniture, Neoclassical and Queen Anne being her favourite periods.

Like her father, she would come to England on buying trips, spending two or more weeks on the road, making twenty-five or thirty stops a day, which you could do in those heady antiquing days of the '70s and '80s. She would also visit antique sources in Brussels, Holland and Paris.

In 1981 she married her late husband, Guy Durham. The two anglophiles, inspired by the architecture of Devon cottages and the panelled interior of a Fleet Street pub, designed and built a fine

and unique stone house on a wooded hill outside Bedford in upstate New York.

She was an advisory member of the Bard Graduate Centre board from 2015 to 2023. She served as co-chair from 2017 to 2020. Susan Weber, founder and director of Bard wrote: '...Mindy exemplified unwavering commitment to and passion for our mission'.

Mindy died of an aggressive cancer in the spring. Martin Levy commented, 'Her knowledgeable and lively presence will be much missed by FHS members who knew her'.

KATE DYSON

Charles Tracy (1938-2024)

Charles William Justin Hanbury-Tracy, known as Charles Tracy, studied the history of art as a mature student at the Courtauld Institute from 1978 to 1981 and then completed a doctorate on *English Gothic Choir-stalls to c.1400* (1984), the basis for two authoritative books on the subject, the first (1987) covering stalls up to 1400 and the second (1990) later examples. He also wrote a catalogue of *English Medieval Furniture and Woodwork* (1988) in the Victoria & Albert Museum. He was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1989. His productive and persistent career was devoted to the study of church woodwork, the subject of many articles and several further books, notably *Britain's Medieval Episcopal thrones* (2015) and *Continental Church Furniture in England: A traffic in piety* (2001), the latter much influenced by Clive Wainwright and others at the V&A; his international scope was also exemplified by *The Choir-Stalls at*

Amiens Cathedral (with Hugh Harrison, 2004). Charles had a sharp eye and his notable finds included in 1997 a remarkable early-fourteenth century screen in store at Kingston Lacy, Dorset, possibly acquired by William John Bankes (1786-1855): it incorporates a painted figure of St Edmund and is now, appropriately, on loan to the cathedral of Bury St Edmunds.

Charles was always ready to provide advice on church woodwork and served on the council of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology (2008-2012) and as a director of the British Archaeological Association (2007-2010), and for seventeen years (1985-2002) on the Sculpture and Furnishing Committee of the Council for Care of Churches. In 2022 he donated his photographs of choir stalls to 'Stalla – Medieval choir stalls database', Radboud University Nijmegen.

In his catalogue essay on 'Woodwork' in Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski, *Age of Chivalry, Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400* (Royal Academy, 1987) for which he also wrote many catalogue entries, Charles wrote: 'England can boast the finest collection of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century ecclesiastical woodwork in Europe', a claim echoed in his magisterial survey, 'Church Furniture of Medieval English and Welsh Parish Churches' (*Regional Furniture*, 21, 2007, pp.21-52). Generous and a natural collaborator Charles more than made up for his late start by illuminating and enriching that inheritance through his research and discoveries. He will be much missed, but his writings will remain fundamental.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

Other News

Bill and Gerry Cotton - a celebratory reception

MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER FROM 2.00 – 5.00PM
MUSEUM OF THE HOME, LONDON E2 8EA

Members of the Regional Furniture Society and Furniture History Society are invited to a celebratory reception in honour of the 50 years Bill and Gerry Cotton have devoted to Regional Furniture Studies. There will be no charge for the event. Please contact events.rfs@gmail.com for any queries.

André Charles Boulle Exhibition

GRANDS APPARTEMENTS, CHÂTEAU DE CHANTILLY

8 JUNE – 6 OCTOBER 2024

Former home of the princes of Condé, eminent collectors of furniture by André Charles Boulle, now housing a museum preserving two of the most important desks of his production, the Château de Chantilly is the ideal location for presenting the first exhibition in France dedicated to the famous cabinetmaker to Louis XIV.

Around fifty loans are brought together at Chantilly. The pieces have been selected using an approach linking history, condition and provenance. The furniture in the exhibition offers a renewed vision of the cabinetmaker's career and production, and allows you to enter his workshop, understand his methods, and admire his innovations.

The exhibition takes as its focus the evolution of the *bureau plat* and allows us to retrace the development of its form and decoration. It brings together a significant number of desks created by Boulle and places them side by side allowing them to be examined up close. Alongside the desks, other essential pieces from the workshop put into context a production unlike any other. Bookcases, consoles, pedestals, torchères, coffers, chandeliers, medal cabinets and even bindings, many with illustrious provenances, serve as a reminder of the extent of Boulle's talent and creativity. Institutional loans have come from the Louvre, Château de Versailles, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Abbaye de Chaalis and internationally from the Wallace Collection, the V&A and the Rijksmuseum.

This exhibition is based on rigorous analysis of a limited number of pieces from Boulle's workshop. These studies endeavour to determine solid benchmarks regarding the construction, marquetry decoration and gilt bronzes of Boulle's furniture, as well as the links established between the pieces and the documents or drawings and engravings by Boulle. This method, explained in the exhibition catalogue, gives a clearer, more precise vision of Boulle's work, and aims to encourage new research on the corpus of one of the greatest French cabinetmakers.

Book Reviews

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

BETTY C. MONKMAN, WILLIAM G. ALLMAN, LYDIA S. TEDERICK AND MELISSA C. NAULIN, *Furnishing the White House: The Decorative Arts Collection*, (Washington DC, 2023). 420 pp., 619 illus. ISBN 978-1950273379. \$65.

Since its inception in 1961, the White House Historical Association has emphatically been promoting the research, conservation and – where appropriate – the expansion of the US presidents' art collection. A handsomely produced new tome, *Furnishing the White House*, now offers a comprehensive catalogue of the White House's furniture and decorative arts collection. Written by four generations of White House curators, whose years of service span eleven presidencies, the book provides fascinating insights into the history of the collection and how it is cared for today. The publication's front matter comprises a preface by the White House Historical Association's President, Stewart D. McLaurin, personal reflections by two interiors designers recently employed by the White House, and an introduction by erstwhile curator Betty C. Monkman that will prove particularly useful to a non-American audience. One key point to remember is that, as the first democratically elected heads of state in the Western World, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, etc. had no template on which



they could model themselves. Creating interiors suitable for the presidential couples to entertain their guests, turned out to be an exercise of trial and error of which the most prominent episode was James Monroe's purchase of a grand suite of gilt-wood seat furniture by Pierre-Antoine Bellangé. Monroe, who previously served as US ambassador to Paris, moved into an entirely re-erected White House in 1818 (first built between 1792 and 1800, the house had been burned down by British troops in 1814) and set out to adorn its interiors according to the latest French fashions with the view of reinforcing the American presidency's respectability. Such levels of ostentation were not without their critics and the suite although kept by several ensuing presidents was ultimately auctioned off in 1860. Monroe would not be the only president in the line of fire for his extravagance and for importing luxury goods from abroad rather than supporting domestic productions. In April 1840, congressman Charles Ole delivered an impassionate speech likening President

Martin Van Buren's White House to 'a royal establishment... a palace as splendid as that of the Caesars' (p. 77-8; for more details see also Melissa C. Naulin's forthcoming article in *Furniture History*).

Another essential point made by the authors is that for the first one hundred years, the furniture, silver and porcelain of the White House was very much considered a working collection that could be replaced and disposed of when no longer usable or out of fashion. The last two auctions at which contents from the house were sold took place in 1903 and 1905. Following the foundation of the White House Historical Association under the aegis of Jacqueline Kennedy, numerous artefacts historically associated with the house were re-acquired through purchase or indeed donations. A complete list of these is provided in the end matter.

In eight chapters arranged in chronological order, the authors revisit the collection's history on the basis of those pieces that have remained at or returned to the White House. The story of each piece is woven into a broader narrative about the American presidency, while additional information and bibliographic references are supplied in a catalogue at the end of the book. The catalogue brings to the fore the eclectic nature of the collection, which includes refined American pieces made in New York and Philadelphia by the likes of Duncan Phyfe, as well as French gilt-bronze clocks and candelabra, Chinese export ware and British ceramics. No exact location is given, which is understandable, as many pieces get moved around regularly or are not on view.

In the middle of the book is a section

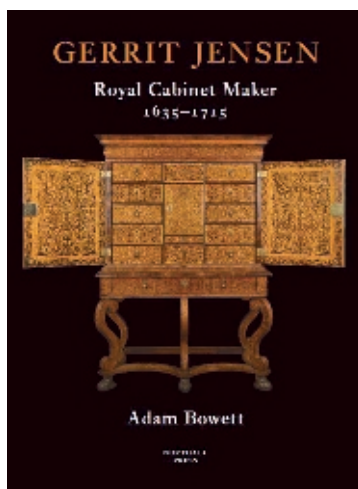
illustrating the five principal reception rooms as they look today, each on a double spread, juxtaposed with historic engravings and black and white photographs recording how the rooms have changed over time. The fact that a large proportion of the heavier pieces from the Aesthetic Movement and Renaissance Revival cannot be spotted in the most recent photographs of the interiors (both public and private) is likely to suggest that many of these pieces are kept in store.

The White House's curators and its Historical Association are to be congratulated for a highly enjoyable publication of which the elegant prose and design have given extraordinary coherence to a collection assembled over two centuries in a manner indeed far from coherent.

WOLF BURCHARD

ADAM BOWETT, *Gerrit Jensen - Royal Cabinet Maker 1635-1715*, (Northall Press, 2023). 184 pp., 168 col. and 12 b.&w. illus. ISBN 978-1-3999-6546-0. £55.

The interesting historiographical introduction to this book describes how,



having generated more surviving documentation than all of his contemporary cabinet makers combined, Gerrit Jensen (1635-1715) fell largely into obscurity after his death, only being recognised by furniture historians as an important supplier of the late Stuart court in 1927. Since then, a correction has occurred, and Jensen is now 'the only seventeenth-century English cabinet maker whose name is occasionally recognised by people other than furniture specialists.' Such is Jensen's renown, that this shift may have led to an over-correction, whereby there is now a tendency to attribute any furniture in one of his 'signature' styles or forms to Jensen. This lavishly illustrated book, which draws together the author's previous publications on Jensen with the work of other furniture historians, augmenting both with new archival material and a close study of Jensen's surviving documented or attributed furniture, lays out both what we can know with certainty and, perhaps, more importantly, what we cannot.

Following the now well-established format of most monographs discussing individual cabinet makers or cabinet making firms, Bowett covers Jensen's life and career, his workshop, its techniques and outputs, and his business practices, in the first two chapters, which together comprise Part I. The second chapter includes a useful discussion of the features of documented or attributed furniture which might be described as diagnostic – i.e. the profiles of stands, often incorporating a truncated cone and a domed fitting; carved edge mouldings; the leaf-carved scroll foot; solid cast pear-drop pulls articulated on a true hinge;

the use of battens and stirrups to support mirror crestings – if found in combination with other evidence; these features are further discussed and illustrated during the course of subsequent chapters.

Jensen's output of marquetry (several different hands are identified in surviving examples), japanning (far more prominent in Jensen's oeuvre than marquetry) and glass (increasingly important to Jensen's business after 1690) are also covered, together with a particularly helpful discussion of the complicated variety of financial instruments by which business was transacted in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. Relevant surviving documents – Jensen's will, inventories etc. – are provided in Appendix A.

The rest and bulk of the book is dedicated to Jensen's clients and commissions. By far the best documented is the furniture and glass he supplied to the Great Wardrobe for the royal palaces, beginning in 1680. The chronological account of Jensen's work for Charles II and successive Stuart monarchs is supported by a full transcription of surviving documents (bills, commissioning warrants, Privy Purse accounts) in Appendix B. Using the documentation as a starting point, Bowett has scoured the Royal Collection's furniture for pieces which correspond to bills and commissions, before describing and comparing stylistic and constructional features. Bowett considers and reconsiders earlier attributions to Jensen, as well as introducing new pieces to the discussion, such as tables in princeswood (Hampton Court) and walnut (Kensington Palace and Windsor, now Holyrood House), and

a table box (Hampton Court). Interesting passages cover the roles played by Jensen's competitors, the Pelletiers and the Goles.

This full survey of royal furniture allows Bowett to draw interesting and useful comparisons with furniture supplied for 'Other Commissions', which form the book's third part. This includes details of all twenty of Jensen's known clients (several of whom owned several properties, of course), a significant advance on the fifteen 'Jensen Houses' (aside from those for the Great Wardrobe, covered under another, single heading) listed in the *Dictionary of English Furniture-Makers* in 1986. Here, all known documentation in both public and private archives is reproduced at the end of each entry. Some of the new clients – such as Henry Somerset, 2nd Duke of Beaufort and Anne Scott, Duchess of Buccleuch – are included solely on the basis of recently discovered archival material; what the furniture Jensen supplied to either client looked like can only be a matter for speculation. As well as establishing a definitive *status quo* vis-à-vis Jensen's clients and their properties, significant value is added by Bowett's inclusion and illustration (many for the first time) of objects still in great private collections at, amongst other houses, Knole, Petworth, Ham, Chatsworth and Hatfield, allowing for a much fuller consideration of Jensen's furniture than has hitherto been possible. Thus, Bowett can consider a cabinet (Figures 100 & 101) in the private apartments at Hatfield, alongside other similar examples from Chatsworth and in the Royal Collection.

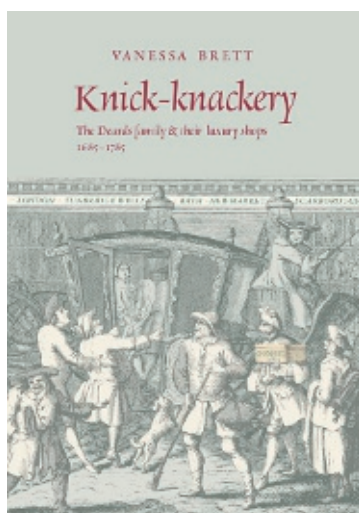
Of necessity, many of Bowett's discussions are ultimately inconclusive,

and many of his attributions tentative, a measure of his scrupulousness in considering every piece of furniture in the light of other supporting, surviving evidence and, as is quite often the case, the lack of it. As ever, Bowett's analysis is simultaneously close and wide-ranging, and produces a very valuable addition to what we know about this important cabinet maker in particular, and seventeenth-century cabinet making in England in general.

MEGAN WHEELER

VANESSA BRETT, *Knick-knackery, The Deards family & their luxury shops 1685-1785* (privately printed by the author, 2023). 536 pp. over 450 illus. ISBN 978-1-3999-6598-9. £35.

Knick-knackery is Vanessa Brett's second book about the luxury trade. In this volume the focus moves from the Bertrand family in Bath, to London and to their in-laws the Deards family, whose shops were keystones in the retail of eighteenth-century toys. In



fact, Deards' shop was considered one of the sights of London to be visited by tourists where they might spend their money on what Samuel Johnson described as 'playthings and little nice manufactures'. As Brett's work on the Bertrand family did before it, this volume dissects the eclectic range of objects encompassed by the definition 'toy', items which in the 18th century might have been seen to have little 'moral value' but which were costly, decorative and sometimes exotic – items of silver or porcelain, gold boxes and toothpick cases, seals, buckles, jewellery, toiletries, children's playthings, and curiosities. Brett delves into the eclectic range of wares and materials that might appear in a toyshop and their significance to contemporary society, both clients and shopkeepers.

The thrust of her work is to fathom how such toy merchants operated, using the Deards and their extended family as a case study. Grounded in a rich wealth of detail drawn from the few surviving bills, letters, journals, reports of losses and thefts and bankruptcy notices, *Knick-knackery* brings to life the working practises of the Deards. The archival sources even include extracts from Robert Dodsley's 1735 dramatic satire '*The Toyshop*' to offer us further insight into how these sellers of luxury goods operated. Brett is candid in revealing that this book is not intended to offer a comprehensive study of the trade, not least because many items of this sort, particularly at the lower end of the trade, were bought and sold for cash and little or no paper trail survives in these instances. Instead, she suggests that her work offers us threads to be pursued in the future. What were the middling classes spending their cash on? What was

the role of the Freemasons in supporting this wide-ranging family and others as toymen? Who were the anonymous financial backers who may or may not have supported the foundation of the ventures?

This is not to imply that *Knick-knackery* does not offer depth of research into the industry of shopkeeping. Brett carefully places the Deards in the context of their physical and social milieu. She emphasises the importance of physical location in connection to retail – not only for passing trade – the seasonal shop set up in Westminster when Parliament was in session, the shops at Epsom and Newmarket to catch the racing crowds – but also that network of neighbouring shops where connections between goods and salesmen might be made. Similarly, she explores the complex and wide-spreading family connections of the Deards, and the related Bertrands and Chenevixes, which form an extraordinary web of merchants, artists, goldsmiths, engravers, gold-box makers and financiers.

Brett's fresh, clear and insightful text is aided by illustrations and pages she describes as abstracts – short asides offering definitions and explanations of contemporary vocabulary, specialist terms, the decoding of particular details or small nuggets about certain characters. As the author points out, these might either be ignored, treated as 'side dishes' or form the central menu of the reader if preferred. Like *Bertrand's Toyshop in Bath* (2014) before it, *Knick-knackery* is a lively and welcome exploration of luxury shopkeeping, a subject that had been underserved until Vanessa Brett's publications.

KATHRYN JONES

CHARLOTTE RIBEYROL, *William Burges's Great Bookcase & The Victorian Colour Revolution*, (Newhaven & London, 2023). 240pp., 218 col. and 10 b.&w. illus. ISBN 978-0-300-26797-6. £40.

The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, *Colour Revolution, Victorian Art, Fashion and Design* exhibition (21 September 2023 – 18 February 2024) emerged from the European Research Council project (2019-2024), 'CHROMOTOPE, the 19th century chromatic turn', led by Charlotte Ribeyrol, the author of this book, which examines William Burges's Great Bookcase (1859-1862), first published in detail by Charles Handley-Read in 1968 (*Burlington Magazine*, CV, pp.469-509) and first displayed in public at the 1862 London Exhibition, in the Mediaeval Court, organised by Burges himself for the Ecclesiological Society. Ribeyrol's focus on the Great Bookcase is tight. Burges's Yatman casket (1856), painted by Edward Poynter, and roughly contemporary with William Morris's experiments in painted furniture after moving into Red Lion Square in 1856, is illustrated, as is Burges's 1858 Yatman cabinet (or Cadmus escritoire) more closely based on the 14th century painted armoire at Noyon, shown in two illustrations from Viollet-le-Duc and a sketch by Burges, than the Bookcase itself. But there is no mention of Burges's early and personal Architecture cabinet, another Noyon-derived piece, also shown in the 1859 Architectural Exhibition, and, while the Wines and Beers sideboard, another 1859 exhibit, acquired by the South Kensington Museum in 1862, is noted, the accompanying St Bacchus sideboards, one, the more elaborate, now



in Chicago and the other in Detroit, are not. Their jocular pursuit of the Bacchus motif, melding the pagan and the Christian, prefigures that apposition of these two themes central to the Bookcase. Another absentee is the lofty Noyon-crested bookcase designed by Richard Norman Shaw in 1861, a star in 1862 and at once homage and riposte to Burges's Bookcase, which Shaw must have known.

Conventional furniture history is not Ribeyrol's preoccupation, and she is selective in her approach to the Bookcase. She concentrates on the eight pictorial panels on its upper section. These depict Poetry, Architecture, Sculpture and Painting two by two, pagan and Christian, all explicated in a diagram and key by Burges (surely 'records' rather than 'designs' as in the caption). Colour is central: 'chromophobia', 'chromophobic' and 'chromophobe', 'chromophilia' and 'chromophile', also 'chromoclasm' and 'chromoclastic', are enlivening presences and the 1862 London Exhibition a 'pivotal chromatic event.' For CHROMOTOPE a cardinal moment was William Perkins's discovery in 1856 of a dye, 'mauve',

derived from coal tar, the first new aniline colour, which won Perkins a medal in 1862. The Bookcase was too early to exploit this innovation, but a technical Annex by Tea Ghigo establishes that Burges and the six artists who worked on the eight panels displayed no prejudice against modern materials.

Kickstarted by John Gage, *Colour and Culture* (1993), the study of colour has gained impetus and popularity. Ribeyrol, part of this movement, reflects on the increasing interest, from about the 1830s onwards, in 'polychromy', a recent coinage which Lady Eastlake, Ruskin's foe, mocked for its pretentiousness in 1855. Memories may have survived of Belzoni's exhibition of colourful rooms from the tomb of Seti I in the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, in 1821 but in 1854 the Pompeian and Egyptian Courts at the Crystal Palace at Sydenham made ancient polychromy public. In the Burges context Ribeyrol stresses the relevance of chromolithography, and throughout she usefully cites the presence of relevant works in Burges's library, possibly once housed in his Bookcase.

The meat of the book lies in four main chapters, each covering two of the Bookcase's panels. Two respect Burges's original pairings, those on Poetry and Sculpture, but the others mingle his Architecture and Painting. All present elaborate interpretations of the paintings' subjects, stressing colours and their possible significances. Burges, as antiquary and scholar, rejoiced in displays of iconographic virtuosity, although the panels (but not their borders) are free of his characteristic humour, unless more

in-jokes lurk to add to the portrait of Swinburne convincingly identified by Ribeyrol in Henry Holiday's Sappho and Phaon. That chapter, also covering Poynter's Dante's Vision and headed 'Translating Poetic Colour', introduces Gladstone's theory that Homer had a limited sense of colour, the dangers of arsenical greens, the revelation of Sappho as Lesbian, in the modern sense, and links to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and to his revolutionary father Gabriele, with green as a colour of the Risorgimento, alongside Ruskin's observations on Dante's own description of green in the Purgatorio. 'Sculptural Bodies' on the two Sculpture panels, Simeon Solomon's Pygmalion and Albert Moore's Torrel and Queen Eleanor, is faced by two monochrome sculptures, the first leading to the rediscovery of ancient polychromy from Quatremère de Quincy (1814) onwards and to John Gibson's Tinted Venus, shown at the 1862 London Exhibition in a pavilion by Owen Jones (not to Burges's taste, surely) and to earlier wax anatomical models; the second to Robert Browning and to Ruskin, and a revelation that its background was originally patterned, one of many detailed losses when Burges partly repainted the Bookcase after it crashed in 1878, now revealed by scientific analysis. Both panels in 'Sanctifying Colour', Solomon's St John and Thomas Morten's Beato Angelo are Christian, and mentions of Alexis-François Rio and Lord Lindsey might have been enriched by reference to Ronald Lightbown, 'The Inspiration of Christian Art' (1985). 'Excavating Colour' covers two pagan panels, Poynter's Rhodopis and Frederick Smallfield's

The Origin of Painting, replete with accurate archaeological details, Egyptian and Pompeian, and the latter inspiring mentions of Lord Lytton, *Last Days of Pompeii* (1834). In the former Rhodopsis, fabled patron of a pyramid, is shown an architectural drawing (surely not a sketch, as Ribeyrol has it), and her legendary identity as an Egyptian Cinderella leads to mention of 'a foot-fetishist Pharaoh'.

What Burges would have made of this will never be known. Ribeyrol's explorations and speculations, of which only the slightest sketch has been given, are always stimulating and rewarding, if sometimes stretching. Only the Great Bookcase could have stood up to such an examination and survived.

SIMON SWYNFEN JERVIS

ECD News

If you are in the early stages of your career and would like to join the ECD, please contact 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. A list of available publications can be viewed here: www.furniturehistorysociety.org/publications/

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.

Visit to Farley Prop Hire

22ND FEBRUARY 2024

To encapsulate our morning at Farley's for a *Newsletter* article is to take the art of summary to new heights. The address alone gives an indication to the size of the operation: 1-21 Brunel Road, with nearby workshops, appears to dwarf even the great London Victorian furniture stores such as Maple & Co. or Shoolbred. Farley's has been built up and extended over the years since the modest beginnings as picture framers of the founders Joseph & Madalyn Farley in 1962 and now has some 100,000 square feet of floor space housing 60,000 objects.

Our welcome from those amongst the thirty-five staff was heartwarming, with a delightful tour led by Mark Farley himself. The warehouse is situated within striking distance of the Pinewood and Shepperton Studios, amongst others, and within easy reach of central London. The number of productions with Farley props is legendary, from movies such as James Bond to *Barbie*, from *Dune* to *Gladiator*, and a chandelier from the TV series *Only Fools and Horses*. Due to the long theatre runs of successful plays, their furniture does not regularly grace theatre productions. Props are also regularly hired out for events, from those at the Victoria & Albert



Museum to private parties such as the Beckham wedding, royal boxes, fashion events and photo shoots. Rupert Everett and Madonna are amongst the stars who have visited.

The props, in addition to the huge collection of furniture, cover a wide variety of different decorative objects and date mainly from the 19th century to modern (made in their own workshops), with a few earlier treasures such as, somewhat eccentrically, a large collection of late seventeenth-century portable Franco-Flemish oyster-veneered brass-bound strongboxes¹ and a much prized eighteenth-century marble bust acquired from Mallets. A marquetry table fascinated

this onlooker - surely made by the Blake family - and a pair of seventeenth-century walnut stools deserves further inspection. Each room is a veritable treasure trove and is carefully and considerately themed and curated. An English Room leads to an Italian and a French room with *boiserie* for hire. Each floor revealed new secrets, such as a Chinese Room, an Indian Room, metalwork and a room full of oak that would have kept the late dealer Herman Baer and the expert Victor Chinnery in discussion for days! For those of us in the FHS who bemoan furniture of the wrong period in a movie, the director of *Napoleon*, Ridley Scott, a frequent visitor to Farley's, famously wanted 'the effect rather than authenticity'! The day ended on a charming note with a look at the service used by the late Queen Elizabeth II to serve tea to Paddington Bear at Windsor Castle in her 2022 Platinum Jubilee broadcast. In the background is the jewel cabinet made by Riesener in 1787, purchased by Robert Fogg for George IV in 1825.²

Mark places a great emphasis on learning and, after his father passed away in 1993, he set up an annual Joe Farley Award to award design talent. Farley's is a wonderful place for all of us to learn and Mark has kindly allowed Peter Holmes and myself to lead a small team of Early Career Development Group from members of the FHS for a detailed examination of techniques and construction of carefully selected items of furniture.

CHRISTOPHER PAYNE

¹ See: Peter Thornton and Maurice Tomlin, 'Ham House', *Furniture History*, XVI (1980), pp. 1-194.

² RCIN 31207

The 48th Annual Symposium

New Light on Arts and Crafts Furniture and Interiors

ART WORKERS' GUILD, 6 QUEEN SQUARE, LONDON WC1N 3AT

Also live streamed over Zoom

SATURDAY 23 MARCH 2024

Chaired by Tessa Wild and Martin Levy

Dr Kathy Haslam FSA, Curator, Kelmscott Manor

Evidential Choreography: Recomposing the interiors at Kelmscott Manor

In 1961, ownership of Kelmscott Manor in rural west Oxfordshire devolved upon the Society of Antiquaries of London (SAL). Used by Victorian polymath William Morris and his family over a sixty-seven-year period it had, during that time, assumed an unforeseen significance in relation to the thinking and creativity of both Morris and his daughter, May, who died in 1938 and bequeathed it to Oxford University. It was a property of international importance, therefore, though in a perilous state of repair by the time the University sought to surrender ownership; SAL then embarked on a five-year programme of renovation and conservation. Sixty years further on, the £6 million *Kelmscott and Morris: Past, Present and Future* project, encompassing all aspects of the site, has enabled SAL to safeguard the estate's future and re-shape visitors' engagement with this most atmospheric of places. This paper examined those aspects of the KMPPF project relating to the materiality,

decoration, furnishing and interpretation of the Manor's period spaces. Using case studies, it looked at how evidential sources had informed decision-making in relation to these modest yet complex interiors in order to create spaces reflecting not the Manor as the Morris family would have known it, but rather the intentionality of May Morris and her vision for the house as expressed through her curatorial interventions, and the provision she made for it in her will.

**Dr Imogen Hart, Managing Editor,
Journal of Modern Craft**

Exhibiting the art of domestic life at Emery Walker's House

The protagonists of the Arts and Crafts movement famously promoted the home as a site of artistic creativity and sought to bring art into everyday domestic life. House museums shape the legacies of these ideas in the present. Publicised today as 'The Arts and Crafts Home', Emery Walker's House (7 Hammersmith Terrace, London) provides an opportunity to encounter Arts and Crafts furniture in a space that retains the aura of domesticity. A Sidney Barnsley bed, cabinets by Philip Webb, and a 'Rossetti' chair take their places alongside William Morris wallpapers, the embroidery of May Morris, and Webb's glassware. Also on display are diverse objects collected by the Walker family and their friends, including a seventeenth-century chair that belonged to Jane Morris, Persian rugs and Moroccan ceramics. This composite collection speaks to a network of collaborations and exchanges between the Morris and Walker families and their wider circle. Drawing

on archival research, this paper explored some questions raised by the Arts and Crafts movement's emphasis on the domestic interior. What is the relationship between art and use? How do interiors conjure absent bodies? Is there a hierarchy of aesthetic categories in the Arts and Crafts interior? And how does the Arts and Crafts home redefine concepts of authorship and artistic agency?

**Dr Caroline Ikin, Curator, National Trust,
Munstead Wood**

Gertrude Jekyll at Munstead Wood: the home of the 'artist-gardener'

As the home of celebrated gardener Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), Munstead Wood holds deep significance as the place where her ideal of the 'artist-gardener' achieved complete expression. As a trained artist, Jekyll focused her attention on gardening and garden design when her deteriorating eyesight forced her to give up painting, but her artistic energies were also directed towards decorative art and furniture-making. Recent research on the furnishing of Munstead Wood reveals a collaboration between Jekyll and her architect Edwin Lutyens to create a domestic space shaped around Jekyll's Arts and Crafts ideals. While most of her original furnishings are now lost, designs in Jekyll's surviving scrapbooks have been matched to photographs of her interiors, tracing her inspiration, and revealing her extraordinary artistic accomplishment. This talk explored Jekyll's decorative art, appraised her talent for design and role as a collector, and introduced the interiors of Munstead Wood, now in the care of the National Trust.

Richard Platt, Furniture Maker, The Marchmont Workshop

Evolution, not revolution. Interpreting Ernest Gimson's designs through the generations

Richard Platt, together with his colleague Sam Cooper who sadly could not be with us on the day, are award winning furniture makers specialising in rush-seated ladderback chairs and tables, based in the Arts and Crafts style. They are the next chapter of a 130-year legacy that started with Ernest Gimson learning how to make chairs from Philip Clissett in 1890. This has subsequently been passed down through Ed Gardiner, Neville Neal, and Lawrence Neal but by 2018 had gone no further until the late Hugo Burge - a rush seated chair enthusiast - funded two apprentices to learn from Lawrence Neal and to open a new workshop in the Scottish Borders: The Marchmont Workshop. Through his apprenticeship, the people around him, and furniture in Marchmont House, Richard was in the unique position of being able to talk about the history of furniture from a furniture makers perspective. Richard explained his own background and interest in furniture making, and went on to discuss Ernest Gimson, Philip Clissett, and the subsequent makers who continued this craft, both as chairmakers and as people. He gave a brief overview of the challenges of moving vernacular furniture production – which has close ties to its surrounding country – to a different location, and how the techniques of woodworking practices such as tools, wood-bending techniques and workshop flow, have evolved. He brought physical examples

of each of the maker's chairs, giving the audience a chance to see the differences for themselves up close and see how the use of chairs has changed within interiors over the years. Richard and Sam have added new designs to their catalogue (something not done since Ed Gardiner's time) and modernised the rush-seated chair, using techniques from other chairmakers outside their legacy, as well as interpreting Ernest Gimson's original designs and updating them to resonate with contemporary styles and the modern aesthetic.

Peyton Skipwith, Fine art consultant and author and former Master of the Art Workers' Guild

The Early Years of the Art Workers' Guild

The Art Workers' Guild provided a historic and highly appropriate setting for this year's FHS Symposium. Established in 1884 by a group of architects concerned with the unity of the arts, the Guild bought the leasehold of 6 Queen Square, a Georgian townhouse, in 1914 and immediately created the meeting hall within it, which remains much as originally designed by the architect Francis William Troup, a Brother of the Guild from 1895. It is furnished with rush-seated chairs made by Philip Clissett, Ernest Gimson and their successors and around the walls are portraits of past Masters; the Master's chair was designed by W.R. Lethaby, and the table by W.A.S. Benson, both founding Brothers. Peyton Skipwith gave a knowledgeable and entertaining history of the Guild, and of the Masters portrayed.

Clarissa Ward, BIFMO 19/early 20th Century Editor and Jo Buckrell, BIFMO Research Assistant and Researcher at Haslemere Educational Museum

BIFMO and the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society Catalogues 1888-1916

The Albert Dawson Educational Trust generously funded a recent project to transcribe the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society Catalogues 1888-1916 for BIFMO (British and Irish Furniture Makers Online, the free online database administered by the FHS). To make the resulting information searchable, an index of craftsmen and designers who exhibited has also been created, so that the project will greatly facilitate future detailed research on those involved with the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society. Clarissa and

Jo presented some case studies revealing new research on wood carvers, furniture makers and designers who exhibited.

Tony Peart, Senior Lecturer in Illustration at The University of Cumbria

A Question of Attribution: the contemporaneous appropriation of architect-designed Arts and Crafts Furniture

There are many well-known examples of Arts and Crafts Movement furniture that have historically been either knowingly, or unknowingly, misattributed to a particular designer. However, these misattributions, when repeated often enough and without question, have a habit of becoming 'firm' attributions. This paper explored how the plethora of illustrations of architect-designed



The meeting-hall at the Art Workers' Guild, designed in 1914 by Bro. Francis W Troup and furnished with rush-seated ladder-back chairs dating from the same period.

Arts and Crafts furniture reproduced in contemporary journals (the best known being *The Studio*) were received and reinterpreted by a generation of amateur woodworkers and unscrupulous commercial manufacturers both at home and abroad. The motivation for the average amateur maker was, no doubt, the desire to own a piece of 'designer' furniture, something that could only be achieved if they made it themselves. Many commercial manufacturers, on the other hand, had always been keen to exploit the latest trends in furniture design, their in-house designers scouring the pages of illustrated magazines and trade journals for 'inspiration'. Sometimes minor stylistic elements would be borrowed and applied to new forms but often furniture was created with only minimal differences from the original, no doubt to avoid copyright law but creating confusion and uncertainty for later generations. Tony investigated the Voysey chairs retailed by Liberty & Co. (even though Voysey never designed for them), a famous design of George Walton's that may well have been 'borrowed' but which, in turn, was appropriated by the mass market, and how one catalogue of furniture by the architect M H Baillie Scott became the template for much iconic furniture of the American Arts and Crafts Movement.

Annette Carruthers, Honorary Senior Lecturer, University of St Andrews.

Augustus H. Mason: 'Cabinet Maker, chiefly special designs'

Among the many makers listed in the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society catalogues and mentioned in contemporary

journals as having executed furniture for well-known designers of the period, Augustus Mason stands out because he also frequently stamped his work with his name. The son of a cabinetmaker, he trained in London and from 1889, when he was about 25 years old, occupied a series of workshops in the city, originally near Tottenham Court Road, the heartland of the furniture trade, then gradually moving westwards until he gave up making in 1916 and became a second-hand furniture dealer in Hammersmith.

Designers known to have commissioned work from him include Reginald Blomfield, John Paul Cooper, Ernest Gimson, W. R. Lethaby and Edward Prior, and he also made copies of pieces in the South Kensington Museum for the 3rd Marquess of Bute to furnish the House of Falkland in Fife. Questions remain about Mason's life and career, but by piecing together evidence from the furniture itself, from original letters and publications and from online sources such as marriage and electoral records we can build up a picture of an individual who enabled the innovative designers to realise their ideas – the 'special designs' he cited in his 1911 Census return.

Daniel S. Sousa, Assistant Curator, Historic Deerfield, Inc., Massachusetts

Garden of Hearts: A Case Study of an American Arts and Crafts Masterpiece

In 1903, Madeline Yale Wynne (1847-1918), a leader in the American Arts and Crafts movement, constructed an oak bride's chest ornamented with paint, decorative carving, hammered copper panels, wrought iron hinges, and semi-precious stones. Known as *Garden of Hearts* for its



Garden of Hearts chest by Madeleine Yale Wynne, 1903. Historic Deerfield, Massachusetts; photograph by Penny Leveritt.

landscape of three inverted heart-shaped trees along a winding river, this chest is a *tour de force* of Arts and Crafts design and showcases Wynne's talents as a painter, metalsmith, and woodworker. Inscribed on the back 'Made in America / 1903 / MYW' and arriving in England by 1914, the chest was probably commissioned for a bride moving to or living in England. Considered 'perhaps better than anything she had done', the chest was lost for much of the 20th century, until its recent discovery and acquisition by the museum Historic Deerfield, Inc. in early 2023.

With the location of Wynne's *Garden of Hearts* a mystery for well over 100 years, Wynne's *magnum opus* has received limited scholarly attention since its construction. Utilizing recent research by Suzanne L. Flynt and the author, this paper offered

a case study of Wynne's *Garden of Hearts*, chronicling its history, decoration, and unique place within Wynne's extensive artistic output and the work of other American women Arts and Crafts woodworkers. It also explored questions related to the chest's patron (recently discovered) and their role in influencing the chest's decoration, as well as how the chest may have been used or displayed. A close examination of the chest also revealed important information about Wynne herself: her artistic process, her versatility and diverse artistic talents, and her innovative and progressive spirit. In the creation of *Garden of Hearts*, Wynne gave it her heart and soul, resulting in what is perhaps one of the most significant pieces of American Arts and Crafts furniture made by a woman.

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.

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The views expressed in this *Newsletter* are those of the respective authors. They are accepted as honest and accurate expressions of opinion, but should not necessarily be considered to reflect that of the Society or its employees.

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Copy Deadline

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next Newsletter is Thursday 5th September 2024. Copy should be sent by email to katehay86@gmail.com

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COVER PICTURE: William Wallis after Thomas Hosmer Shepherd, View of Aldgate. Steel engraving with hand colouring; published by Jones & Co. Temple of the Muses, Finsbury Square, London, 1830. Image: Courtesy of Ash Rare Books.