



THE FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL AND MUSICAL CLOCKS

INTRODUCTION

Three eighteenth-century clockmakers, Charles Clay and John and George Pyke, left their mark on English horological history in the specialist field of musical clockmaking.

Charles Clay, a renowned maker of musical clocks, chose John Pyke to complete his masterpiece the *Temple of the Four Grand Monarchies of the World*. Clay's works are prized pieces in international royal collections and museums. John Pyke was maker to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. George Pyke, son of John, apprenticed as a clockmaker but also made mechanical musical bookcases, harpsichords and organs and continued the tradition established by Clay. The Pykes inherited the same clients and subsequently sold off Clay's stock after his death. Many Pyke clocks bear the same castings as those found on Clay's clocks.

CHARLES CLAY AND HIS MUSICAL MASTERPIECES

In 1716, Clay submitted a patent to Parliament for a complicated musical watch, but was challenged by vigorous opposition within the Clockmakers' Company. Daniel Quare, a senior member of the Company, had produced a similar watch, and litigation ensued for over a year. Eventually Clay's application for the patent was declined and he is not recorded again until 1720, when he began to exhibit his work in London.

The *London Weekly Advertiser* dated May 8, 1736, announced that a clock by Clay was to be raffled. Many of Clay's clocks, owing to the high cost of production found their owners in this manner.

The advertisement read as follows:

On Monday, Mr. Clay the inventor of the machine watches in the Strand, had the honour of exhibiting to His Majesty at Kensington his surprising musical clock, which gave uncommon satisfaction to all the Royal family present, at which time Her Majesty, to encourage so great an

artist, was pleased to order fifty guineas to be expended for numbers in the intended raffle, by which we hear Mr. Clay intends to dispose of the said beautiful and complicated machinery.¹

There is no record of who won this clock. Like other musical clocks by Clay, it was programmed to play tunes arranged and composed by George Frideric Handel. A contemporary transcription of ten tunes composed and arranged by Handel for Clay's clocks is preserved in the British Library. In addition to Handel, Clay used seventeenth-century composers Francesco Saverio Geminiani and Arcangelo Corelli. Sculptors John Michael Rysbrack and Louis-François Roubiliac, and the decorative painter Jacopo Amigoni contributed to the decoration of his clock dial plates and cases.² Clay's patrons included royal and noble European families and his Temple of the Four Grand Monarchies of the World can still be seen in its original eighteenth-century setting at Kensington Palace.

THE TEMPLE AND ORACLE OF APOLLO

This musical clock by Charles Clay is now in the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle. Princess Augusta may have purchased the clock from George Pyke in June 1759, as a bill of sale records the purchase of 'an Organ Clock in a black case with glass columns'. The rock crystal casket was supplied by seventeenth-century furniture-maker Melchior Baumgartner, with assistance from goldsmith Andreas Lotter, and enameller Johann Georg Priester. The casket once housed a figure of Apollo, but now contains the Bible of General Gordon of Khartoum, which was placed there by Queen Victoria. The cast bronze figure of St George and the Dragon was added during the reign of George IV, when the movement was overhauled and reconfigured, a new case made, and the gilt bronze plaques were fitted to the plinth below the casket. The clock was recorded in the Queen's Gallery at Kensington Palace during the reign of George III. During the reign of George IV, the *Temple of Apollo* clock was moved into the Green Drawing Room (then called the library) at Windsor Castle. It was restored to working order in the 1990s, and moved to the state apartments.³

This article from a newspaper dated August 27, 1743 describes the clock:

The WIDOW of the late ingenious Mr. CHARLES CLAY, begs to leave to acquaint the publick, THAT she hath reserv'd the most curious and valuable of all the Pieces of Clock-Work which her late Husband left behind him, and which with his own Hands he had brought so near Perfection, that he called it, from the Figure of that Deity standing within the Fabrick, The TEMPLE and ORACLE of APOLLO.

This Machine, for the Perfection of the Musick, the Elegancy of the Structure and the Richness of the Materials far surpass any Thing of the Kind exhibited either by Mr. Clay in his Life-time, or any other; and which the Widow believes the Curious, who shall do her the Honour to see and consider it, will readily allow.

It is impossible to describe this beautiful Piece of Mechanism in the Compass of an Advertisement, the solid Parts of the Fabrick are of Silver gilt, the Pillars, as also the Doors and other Lights into it, are made of Rock-Chrystal, curiously engrav'd and adorn'd with Silver Mouldings, Capitals and Bases. It is embellish'd with a great Number of Solid Silver Figures both within and without, most of which are gilt, and the whole is cover'd with a most curious Foliage of enamell'd Work, pierced and emboss'd in so beautiful a Style and Manner, as renders it exceeding difficult to convey to the Apprehension any just Idea of it, nor is it to be had otherwise than by viewing the Piece of Work itself. Mrs. Clay therefore humbly hopes that Gentlemen and Ladies, Encouragers of Art and exquisite Workmanship, will not think a Shilling ill bestow'd for the Sight of so extraordinary a Performance, and the Hearing of such excellent Musick, the whole exceeding by many Degrees, any Thing ever exhibited to publick View in any Nation, or by any Artist whatsoever. Removed over-against Cecil-Street in the Strand, where it is to be seen at One Shilling Each.⁴

Tune list: Allegro / Presto / Gigue / Sonata / Allegro / Air / Air / Air / Air

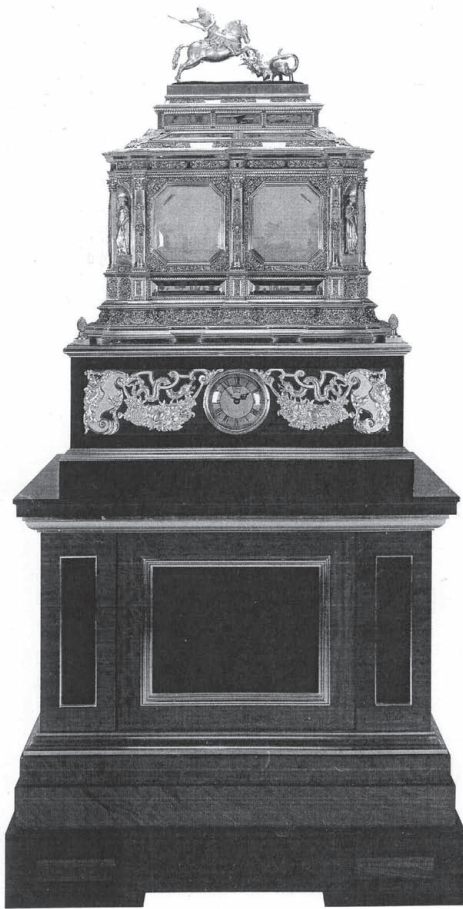


Fig. 1 Charles Clay's Temple and Oracle of Apollo, Country Life, 23 November 1995. The Royal Collection Trust, © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

ments when the clockwork music begins. The sides of the case are adorned with pierced and chased ormolu plates displaying foliate scrollwork, satirical masks, and ornamental trophies of musical instruments. These too are identical with the Naples and Beijing clocks. A small weight driven pipe organ is housed inside and is operated by a tune barrel, which is engraved as follows, 'Being the first/made in perfection/N: 1 Cha: Clay London Fecit.' The barrel was repinned in the Victorian era and now plays popular tunes of that period. The original repertoire still remains engraved on the scroll, which is held by the gilt bronze winged figure that surmounts the case. The right arm of the figure was used to select the tune. The scroll reads: Sonata / Traveste / Aria / Gavotta / Traveste / Arieta / Arieta / Traveste / Praelude.⁵ Evidence suggests that the original music shown on the scroll was written by Handel.

Further examples of Clay clocks have passed through the art market in the last fifty years and are recorded in Ireland, France, America, Australia, and Germany.

All but two of these tunes have been identified as Handel arrangements. A contemporary transcription of these arrangements is preserved in the British Library.

A Charles Clay spring-driven musical table clock survives in the Palace Museum, Beijing (Figure 2). The elaborate case of silver and wood includes reliefs modeled by John Michael Rysbrack, and a decorative painting by Jacopo Amigoni.

There is another spring-driven musical table clock by Charles Clay from the Royal Collection, Naples, dated 1730 (Figure 3). It is believed English-born Prime Minister of the Neapolitan Kingdom, Sir John Acton (1736–1810), bequeathed the clock to Maria Carolina, Queen of Naples between 1779 and 1798. The dial plate features a near identical relief to the Beijing Apollo clock.

BIRMINGHAM CLAY CLOCK

A Charles Clay clock in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery was acquired at Christie's sale of Lord Burnham's collection from Hall Barn House in Buckinghamshire, in September 1969. This clock is very similar to the clocks in Naples and Beijing. The clock stands 7 feet 7 inches high on its original pedestal. The japanned wood case is adorned with ormolu mounts. The small dial is an exact replica of the Naples and Beijing clocks, except the relief is in ormolu. The painted background is also slightly different.

Some of the members of the celestial orchestra and the figures of Apollo and Harmony have animated arms to play their instru-



Fig. 2 Charles Clay's *Temple of Apollo*, Beijing Palace Museum, Speelklok Museum, Utrecht, 2010

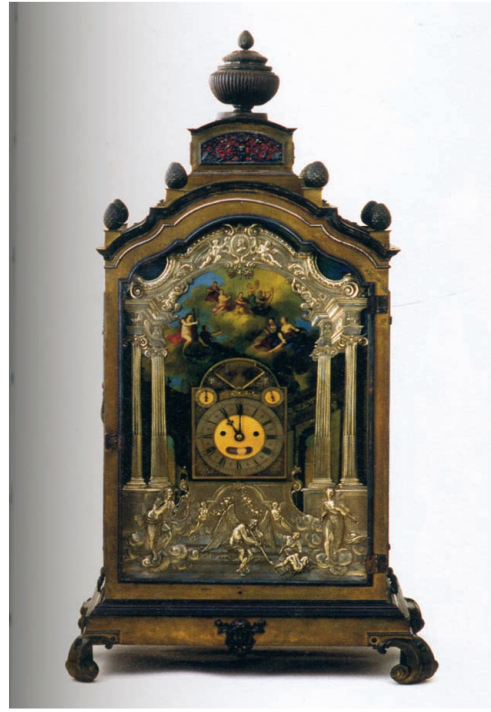


Fig. 3 Charles Clay's *Temple of Apollo*, Royal Palace, Naples, Quaderno di Palazzo Reale, Naples, 1994; *Macchine musicali al tempo di Haendel. Un orologio di Charles Clay nel Palazzo Reale di Napoli*, Olschki, Florence, 2012

JOHN PYKE

The Speelklok Museum recently held an exhibition of clocks from Beijing's Forbidden City. These were stored in depots for many years. One important example was a large musical organ clock. Once packed for transport it was transferred to the conservation workshops of the Utrecht museum. As it was dismantled and cleaned it began to bear an unmistakable resemblance to many works by Charles Clay. It is a near-replica of Clay's *Temple of Apollo*, but bears the signature of John Pyke, dated 1740. The clock plays seven melodies composed by Handel. Of the seven tunes, three have yet to be identified and three are arrangements of early Handel compositions. It plays 'A voluntary on a flight of Angels' which Handel mentions in two of his manuscripts. This song, composed for a musical clock, has not been found in any other clock.⁶

GEORGE PYKE

Born around 1725, George was apprenticed in 1739 to Henry Page, a member of the Clockmakers' Company about whom little is known. Immediately after finishing his apprenticeship in 1746, George deferred his membership of the Clockmakers' Company until 1753, claiming freedom by means of 'patrimony' (as his father was a freeman), and began work in his father's premises at Bedford Row.⁷ He was appointed clockmaker and organ builder

to the Prince of Wales and for many years father and son worked together fashioning clocks in the tradition of those made by Charles Clay. Clay's clocks reflect European influence, but the Pykes incorporated more traditional English work with their painted dials (some attributed to the artist Johann Zoffany) with automated scenes. The Pykes, father and son, worked together until John's death in 1762, after which George explored mechanical music and instrument making. An advertisement displaying the extent of his ability in *Lloyd's Evening Post* 19–22 March 1779, is quoted here in full:

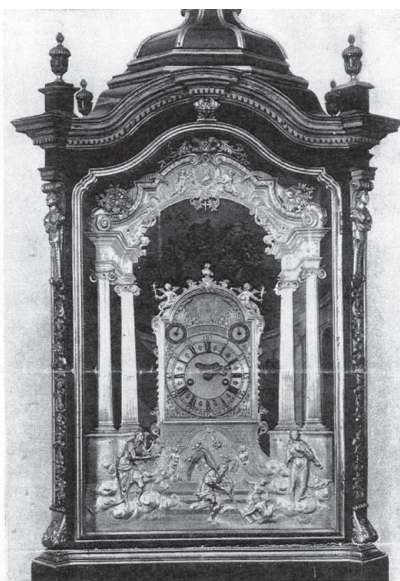
To be SOLD by AUCTION,
By Mr. RIDGEWAY,

On the Premises, by Order of the Executriz, on Tuesday
the 23rd Inst. at Eleven o'Clock,
The STOCK of ORGANS, HARPSICORDS, CLOCKS &c. the
Property of Mr. GEORGE PYKE, deceased.

(Late Organ-BUILDER to his Majesty, and esteemed the first
Mechanic in that Branch of any in the Kingdom). At his
late House, the upper End of Bedford-row, Holborn.

Compromising a large Finger Organ, with a Swell;
a ditto with Finger Keys, which plays the Barrels by Hand;
Machine and Hand Organs, upright and other
Harpsichords, an Organ clock, and several others
&c &c.

To be Viewed two Days preceding the Sale, when
Catalogues may be had on the Premises; and at Mr.
Ridgeway's, Fenchurch-street. Note, the Business will be carried on by Mrs.
Pyke, widow of the deceased, and Mr. Holland his
late Apprentice and Nephew, who return their grateful,
Thanks to the Nobility and Gentry for their past Favours,
and solicit the Continuance of them, to merit which the
utmost Attention will be given.⁸



In addition to his notoriety in English clockmaking, he held the first position as organ builder to His Majesty. George's most prestigious work began at his father's side in 1760 and continued until his death in 1777; in his will he describes himself as a clockmaker and organ builder from Holborn, Middlesex.

Figure 5 shows a clock by George Pyke at Temple Newsam House, Leeds. The case, which houses the clock, automata dial, and barrel organ, is accented with ormolu rosettes on peninsular corners and banded with looking glass while supported by paired ormolu feet. The four brass columns at the corners of the case are spirally banded by a cascading floral trail. Each is surmounted with an urn finial adorned with leaves. Matching elaborately pierced and chased

Fig. 4 Charles Clay musical clock, Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, *Country Life*, 21 April 1950

gilt bronze panels of floral sprays, musical instruments, female masks, and flaming urns fill the arched side doors, which are lined with cloth. The organ is weight driven and signed George Pyke, 1765. A near identical clock is in the Museum of London. There are two clocks by George Pyke at Museum Speelklok, Utrecht.

CONCLUSION

The strong links between musical clocks made by Charles Clay, John Pyke and George Pyke are revealed in the identical castings, mounts, dials and paintings, and the strikingly similar mechanisms, tunes and cases. Their illustrious royal customers and the continuing associations between Charles Clay and John Pyke who both worked on The Temple of the Four Grand Monarchies, are indicative of their close professional relationship. The mechanisms were of the finest workmanship, the dials, cases, and the pedestals were of matching quality. Specialist trunk makers produced cases of wood and leather to ship these pieces abroad. Clay and the Pykes were working a generation prior to James Cox, who was producing fine automata clocks for the foreign market later in the eighteenth century. Further research on Clay's clocks may help to reveal a network of London craftsmen and a deeper understanding of complex international trade associations.

In November 2013 an exhibition at London's Handel House Museum, will explore the collaboration between Charles Clay and George Frideric Handel.

I would like to thank the Furniture History Society for their generous travel grant, which enabled the research for this article. I would also like to thank Rufus Bird, Martin Ellis, Ian Fraser, Richard Higgins, Luisa Mengoni, Tessa Murdoch, Annalisa Porzio, Matthew Read, Yan Zhang, and the staff of Museum Speelklok for their invaluable contributions to this on-going project.

Brittany Cox



Fig. 5 George Pyke musical clock, Temple Newsam House, Leeds

¹ William, Barclay Squire, Handel's Clock Music. *Musical Quarterly*, 1919, pp. 528–42.

² Webb, M. I. (1954), *Michael Rysbrack, Sculptor*, Country Life: Limited, London, pp. 137–38.

³ Roberts, Hugh, 'So Beautiful a Style', *Country Life*, 23 November 1995, pp. 58–59.

⁴ Murray, E. Croft, 'The Ingenious Mr Clay', *Country Life*, 31 December 1948, pp. 1378–80.

⁵ Croft, E. Murray, 'Musical Clocks by Charles Clay', *Country Life*, 21 April 1950, pp. 1112–13.

⁶ 'Treasures from the Forbidden City', Speelklok Museum, Utrecht, 2010, Catalogue No. 1, pp. 82–89.

⁷ Dawe, Donovan, 'The Mysterious Pyke, Organ Builder', *Musical Times*, January 1974, pp. 68–70.

⁸ Ibid.

LOST AND FOUND

A note in the catalogue of the recent New York Roentgen exhibition,¹ states that a Roentgen document, formerly in the Victoria & Albert Museum's Library, is lost. This loss was noted by Achim Stiegel in the 2007 catalogue of the earlier Berlin Roentgen exhibition, and in the 2009 collection of essays edited by Andreas Büttner and Ursula Weber-Woelk.² Because the document was illustrated in facsimile by Josef Maria Greber in 1980 and by Dietrich Fabian in 1996,³ its apparent disappearance was not a disaster for scholarship, but it was nonetheless very regrettable.

It is thus a pleasure for the present writer, who worked for over twenty-three years in the Victoria & Albert Museum, to report that he has recently re-discovered this document, misplaced long ago in a box-file containing photocopies of inventories (rather than in its recorded location in the Roentgen file), in the 'Archive' of the Department of Furniture, Textiles and Fashion. The document has now been transferred to the National Art Library manuscripts collection (press mark 86 ZZ 238) for safe-keeping, a copy being retained in the Department's Roentgen file.

The document is accompanied by a type-written transcription by Josef Maria Greber, and a note by the late Peter Thornton, then Keeper of the preceding Department of Furniture and Woodwork, recording comments made by Herr Greber during a visit in September 1966, and a recent English translation. The only other information, written on the binding, was that the manuscript had been 'Presented by Rev. J. V. Libbey'. Pursuit of the V & A's relevant Nominal File (MA/1/L1340) only produced a thank-you letter draft of October 1937 by John Roberts, Assistant Keeper, for the signature of the then Keeper, Ralph Edwards, with no extra information beyond Rev. Libbey's then address, 27 Onslow Gardens, N10.

Some further investigation revealed that the donor's name had been incorrectly recorded by Roberts and that he was in fact Rev. John Norman Libbey, Chairman of the Moravian Church Board,⁴ who had served as Principal of the Moravian College at Fairfield, Droylsden, now in Greater Manchester, of which he published a history, *The Moravian College, 1860–1910* (Fairfield, 1910). Born in 1866 Libbey, whose father, Rev. John Daniel Libbey (1830–92), was also a Moravian minister, was a committed historian of the Unitas Fratrum, the Moravian Church, and presented Moravian manuscripts and books to the John Rylands Library (University of Manchester) in 1910, 1937 and 1938, and left another large collection to that Library in 1946. In 1937 he also presented the 1744 diary of a Moravian stay-maker, Richard Viney, to the British Museum (Add. MS. 44935) as well as other Moravian material (Add. MS. 45366–368) including *Das Gemein Diarum* (1747–1764) of the central group round Count von Zinzendorf. Some of his benefactions were personal, some on behalf of the Fetter Lane Moravian Church and the Moravian Union. This new information on the provenance of the Victoria & Albert Museum's manuscript suggests that it was not a random escapee but a document with a direct Moravian provenance, probably English, although this cannot be certain as Libbey also carried out research in Neuwied.

The document itself is written in black ink on two sheets of laid paper (each about 38.4 cm high by 23.3 cm wide). The main text is on three sides, while the fourth is inscribed 'Neuwied' (not noted before) in a different but apparently eighteenth-century hand, in a position which suggests that it served to identify the document when folded in four. The main text, entitled 'Beschreibung des zu Neuwied gefertigten Cabinets oder Schreib-Comode mit einem Aufsätze in welchem eine Spiel-Uhr befindlich' [Description of the Cabinet or Writing-Commode executed in Neuwied with a Top Section containing a Chiming Clock] clearly describes one of three similar cabinets made by David Roentgen, the first, now in Vienna, bought by Charles Alexandre of Lorraine in August 1776, the

second, which survives only in parts, bought by Louis XVI of France in February 1779, and the third, now in Berlin, delivered to the then Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia in December 1779. Because the three cabinets shared certain features, for instance the crowning gilt-bronze figure of Apollo and, originally, seven marquetry panels depicting the arts, designed by 'dem bekanten Maler [the well-known Painter] Januarius Zick', there has been some hesitation as to which the Victoria & Albert Museum document refers. However the Berlin example is the only one with the dome alluded to in the statement that 'ganz oben auf der Kuppel liegt der Parnassus, oder Musenberg, auf welchem der Apollo sitzt' [at the very top on the Dome is placed Parnassus or the Muses' mountain, on which Apollo sits]. In the text Roentgen refers to himself once by the personal pronoun, 'Ich', but the document seems to have been transcribed by a secretary. Its precise purpose is unknown, but it seems probable that it was a piece of promotional prose, for use when Roentgen was hawking the cabinet to Vienna and Berlin. Its claim that all the fire-gilded brass or bronze mounts were 'fleissiger und besser gearbeitet auch vergoldet also solche in Paris gemacht wird' [more diligently and better executed and gilded than those made in Paris] would not have been tactful to a French audience. Libbey might have obtained the document in Neuwied, as noted above (could it have been a file copy?), but it is tempting to suppose that it arrived in England in about 1779, as part of Roentgen's wider marketing campaign, using his Moravian contacts there, and that it has remained here ever since.

Simon Swynfen Jervis

¹ *Extravagant Inventions, The Princely Furniture of the Roentgens* (edited by Wolfram Koeppel, New York, 2012, p. 241, note 13 to Reinier Baarsen, 'A Unique Relationship: Charles Alexander of Lorraine and David Roentgen')

² *Präzision und Hingabe. Möbelkunst von Abraham und David Roentgen* (Berlin, 2007, p. 60, note 14: *David Roentgen Möbelkunst und Marketing im 18. Jahrhundert* (Regensburg, 2009, p.63, first page illus., and p. 66, note 28)

³ *Abraham und David Roentgen: Möbel für Europa. Werdegänge, Kunst und Technik einer deutschen Kabinett-Manufaktur* (Starnberg, 1980, Vol. 1, pp. 166–68; *Abraham und David Roentgen: Das noch aufgefundene Gesamtwerk ihrer Möbel- und Uhrenkunst in Verbindung mit der Uhrmacherfamilie Kinzing in Neuwied. Leben und Werk, Verzeichnis der Werke, Quellen*, Bad Neustadt an der Saale, 1996, pp. 354–56, doc. no. 2.191.

⁴ *Times*, August 19 1935, p. 7.

NEW FURNITURE ACQUISITION AT LEIGHTON HOUSE

The great tragedy of Leighton House remains the sale of its original contents immediately following Lord Leighton's death in January 1896. Over a period of eight days, Christie's auctioned the collections of fine and decorative art that Leighton had assembled over the previous forty years. In many instances, the form and decoration of the interiors of his house had been conceived to display particular objects, or groups of objects, to their best effect. With the exception of the extraordinary Arab Hall which contained Leighton's collection of Islamic tiles as part of the fabric, the sale broke this fascinating link between house and collections.

Amongst the greatest losses were the five pieces of furniture designed for the house by its architect, George Aitchison (1825–1910). Conceived to stand in specific locations through the interiors, these included a vast sideboard for the dining room and two bookcase cabinets for the studio. Ebonised and inlaid with the same distinctive motifs found incised into the door architraves of the house, none of this furniture has been traced or positively identified, despite numerous attempts to flush it out.

As part of the restoration and refurbishment of Leighton House in 2008–10, renewed effort went into returning some of the key paintings and objects to the building. Leighton's dining table had returned on loan some time before; an Italian inlaid chair was traced to the

Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro. It was brought back to join three other chairs that had been returned to the house much earlier in its history. Not until several months after the reopening were they to be joined by a new addition.

In 1997, the museum had received a letter and photograph from a collector in Australia who had recently bought a piece of furniture at Sotheby's in Melbourne. Described in the catalogue as 'An Unusual Italian Walnut, Ivory-inlaid and Marquetry Cabinet on Stand', no provenance was given. The letter described how the new owner had taken delivery of it at home and opened one of the drawers to discover the front page of the sale catalogue of Leighton's collections at Christie's on 8 July 1896. Somehow this significant piece of information had been overlooked by the auctioneer. The letter went on to ask if there was indeed a connection with the house. The piece was instantly recognisable; appearing in many photographs and illustrations of Leighton's studio, positioned between the two doors on the south wall. This information was duly passed on to the owner and the possibility that it might one day return to the house was raised.



Over a decade later, in the months following re-opening, the owner came to view the restoration. With more furniture in place and with the sense of the house as a 'home' now reinstated, she clearly could see how her piece could 'fit' and what it would contribute. An offer letter duly arrived and with the generous intervention of Mr John Schaeffer, a passionate Australian collector of Victorian art and great supporter of Leighton House, the cabinet was secured and it crossed the globe once more; returning to the precise spot it had vacated 115 years earlier.

The Christie's catalogue indicates that Leighton had at least seven cabinets on stands displayed through the drawing room, the studio and on the staircase landing. Lot 125 was described as 'A German Marqueterie Cabinet, with folding doors decorated with panels inlaid with double-headed eagle, pilasters, &c. inlaid with engraved ivory, enclosing fifteen drawers and small cupboard inlaid with St George and the Dragon — on stand with drawer and six column feet — early 17th century.' The eagles do appear to be South German in origin, possibly taken from a chest of the late sixteenth century and combined with elements that may have been part of an English chest of drawers of about a century later. The stand and carcass are clearly nineteenth-century and the piece may have been built in the present form not long before Leighton acquired it. Where and when he obtained it is not known and he may well have had it for some years prior to its appearance in a photograph of the studio published in 1882. The piece is a major addition to the collections, not least because it is so representative of what can be discerned of Leighton's taste for highly decorative 'antique' furniture of south European origin. The search to repatriate further items from his original collections continues.

Daniel Robbins
Snr. Curator Leighton House Museum



ANNOUNCEMENTS

SIR GEOFFREY DE BELLAIGUE (1931–2013)

We regret to announce that Sir Geoffrey de Bellaigue, GCVO, FBA, FSA, Surveyor of the Queen's Works of Art from 1972 to 1996, and Director of the Royal Collection from 1988 to 1996, died on 4 January 2013. An obituary will appear in the Annual Report and Accounts for 2012–13, later this year.

LOOKING AHEAD: THE FUTURE OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE

Conference papers from the Attingham Trust's 60th Anniversary Conference at the Royal Geographical Society, London, 12 and 13 October 2012 can be downloaded from the Attingham Trust Website: www.attinghamtrust.org. Black and white copies printed on demand (with colour cover) are available @ £12 each (not inclusive of postage) and can be ordered by contacting Rebecca Parker, email: rebecca.parker@attinghamtrust.org.

ONLINE RESOURCES FOR BRITISH ART HISTORY: A NEW GUIDE FROM THE WALPOLE SOCIETY

A new guide, the first of its kind, on British Art History Resources, has just been added to the website of the Walpole Society at www.walpolesociety.org.uk/art-history/art-history. It highlights the remarkable range of freely available resources for the study of British art history. Many of the sites are not as well known as they should be. The guide is divided into sections, Dictionary resources, Single artist sites, Thematic sites, Scholarly journals, Exhibition catalogues, Sale catalogues, Collection catalogues, Collection databases and Books and manuscripts. Some ninety resources are listed, ranging from the mediaeval period to the late twentieth century. Please provide feedback to editor@walpolesociety.org.uk. The cost of providing this guide has been generously supported by Lowell Libson.

FUTURE SOCIETY EVENTS

BOOKINGS

For places on all visits please apply to the Events Secretary, Anne-Marie Bannister, Bricket House, 90 Mount Pleasant Lane, Bricket Wood, St Albans, Herts, AL2 3XD (Tel: 07775 907390) enclosing a separate cheque and separate stamped addressed envelope for each event using the enclosed booking form. Booking certain events will eventually be possible via our new website as soon as the facility is fully implemented but for the time being please continue to proceed as above. WHERE POSSIBLE, JOINING INSTRUCTIONS AND ADVANCE EVENT INFORMATION WILL BE DESPATCHED 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 enclose a telephone number and email address where you can be reached. Please note that a closing date for applications for all visits is printed in the *Newsletter*. Applications made after the closing date will be accepted only if space is still available.



CANCELLATIONS

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

N.B. PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND SUFFICIENT STAMPED, SELF-ADDRESSED ENVELOPES FOR ALL APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING REQUESTS FOR DETAILS OF FOREIGN TOURS AND STUDY WEEKENDS. PLEASE ENSURE THERE IS SUFFICIENT POSTAGE ON YOUR SAE AS WELL AS YOUR APPLICATION/BLUE FORM ENVELOPE.

SUSSEX STUDY WEEKEND

Friday 6 to Sunday 8 September 2013

Based at West Dean, participants will have the opportunity to visit the restoration workshops for Furniture, Clocks and Metalwork with the expert tutors and see work in hand in addition to viewing the interiors and furnishings collected by Edward James. We will have the privilege of a private visit to Knepp Castle and also to Goodwood House led by the curator James Peill and curator emeritus Rosemary Baird, together with a private visit to Parham. We also hope to visit Petworth House. We will visit the Bishop's Palace, Chichester Cathedral with its spectacular painted Tudor ceiling and early English oak furniture, by kind permission of the Bishop of Chichester, the Cathedral Treasury with its fine collection of English medieval parish chests, and there will be an evening supper at Pallant House, Chichester. The weekend will be led by Tessa Murdoch, Victoria and Albert Museum and James Rothwell, National Trust.

Please contact the Events Secretary for full details and an application form.

Closing date for applications: 31 May 2013

For applications for grants from the Tom Ingram Memorial Fund or the Oliver Ford Trust please contact the Grants Secretary for a grants application form by 5 May 2013.

ANNUAL LECTURE

Plywood: the material that dare not speak its name Christopher Wilk

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

Monday 21 October 2013, 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm–7.45 pm lecture

Plywood, a type of laminated wood, has a complicated and largely undocumented history stretching back to the ancient world. It became highly visible in furniture design in the 1940s and 1950s, but its history and its use in furniture has been little explored. By the mid-nineteenth century it had been identified as a material of invention that could, through its strength and cheapness, be used as an alternative to solid wood, sometimes in extremely novel ways. By the early twentieth century it progressed along two apparently contradictory paths: firstly, as a cheap substitute for solid wood, its presence in furniture literally hidden and never mentioned to consumers; and secondly, as a proudly exposed material of design and structural innovation that would become, by the 1950s, widely accepted for furniture manufacture. This talk will offer an overview of the material through its use in



furniture, but will also consider the key role of aeroplane design in developing plywood technology. Particular attention will be paid to the shifting status of the material over the course of the twentieth century.

Christopher Wilk is Keeper of Furniture, Textiles and Fashion at the V&A. Plywood and laminated wood is his current area of research.

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

Numbers are limited to 90.

OCCASIONAL VISITS

HAMPTON COURT, SURREY — 'Secrets of the Royal Bedchamber' Exhibition

Wednesday 5 June 2013 10.00 am–3.30 pm

This event is now fully subscribed.

THE FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, Cambridge

Monday 17 June 2013, 10.00 am–4.30 pm

This event is now fully subscribed.

GORDON RUSSELL DESIGN MUSEUM, Broadway, Worcestershire WR12 7AP
& STANWAY HOUSE, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL54 5PQ

Monday 15 July 2013, 10.30 am–4.30 pm

A visit to the Gordon Russell Museum, in what was the original workshop, will give us a unique opportunity to view furniture, metalware, glassware and drawings produced over a period of sixty years, along with much graphic material, including film and pre-recorded recollections, not only by Gordon Russell, but also former craftsmen. Lunch is included. Built in the sixteenth century, Stanway was the summer residence of the Abbots of Tewkesbury and was re-modelled in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We will see a pair of mid-eighteenth-century couches in the Chinese style together with a Georgian exercise chair and a 23ft long oak shuffleboard table. We will also have time to see the famous garden fountain which is the tallest gravity-fed fountain in the world.

Cost: £50 (including tea/coffee on arrival, two-course lunch and afternoon tea)

Limit: 20 Members

Closing date for applications: 22 June 2013

WILTON HOUSE, SALISBURY, Wiltshire SP2 0BJ

Tuesday 17 September 2013, 10.30 am–4.30 pm

Following on from his presentation at the 2012 FHS AGM, architectural historian John Martin Robinson will lead us on a private tour of Wilton House. We will enjoy close inspection of the recently restored interiors and various pieces including a glazed, break-fronted mahogany bookcase by Thomas Chippendale with finely carved rococo decoration



which includes a trophy of musical instruments, considered to be one of the finest pieces of English Georgian furniture. In the King's Bed Chamber we will see pieces of Boulle furniture, collected by Catherine Woronzow, including a red tortoiseshell bureau Mazarin c. 1700 with decoration after Jean Berain and an ebony and pewter writing table by Gerrit Jensen, similar to one supplied to William III in the Royal Collection — plus a suite of William Kent furniture in the double cube room and other pieces of early English furniture.

£48 per person (including tea/coffee on arrival and lunch)

Limit: 20 Members

Closing Date for applications: 22 June 2013

OVERSEAS EVENT

AMSTERDAM, Autumn 2013

The Rijksmuseum is re-opening as this newsletter goes to print and the new display of its great collections is eagerly awaited. Dr Reinier Baarsen, Senior Curator of Furniture at the Rijksmuseum, has offered to lead a study visit in the autumn for FHS members. Details will appear in the August newsletter but members who register an interest with the Events Secretary will receive information on dates and cost as soon as they are available, although bookings will not open until late July/August. For those who might wish to do some homework on one important aspect of the Rijksmuseum Collections, it is worth noting that Yale have recently published Dr Baarsen's comprehensive study, *Paris 1650–1800. Decorative Arts in the Rijksmuseum*.

FREE EARLY EVENING EVENTS FOR FHS EARLY STAGE CAREER DEVELOPMENT GROUP

VISIT TO V&A FURNITURE STORES, Blythe House, London W14

Thursday 23 May 2013, 6.15–7.45 pm

To study nineteenth- and twentieth-century furniture, including extraordinary Exhibition pieces, not currently on view in the main Museum galleries, with Christopher Wilk, Keeper of the Department of Furniture, Textiles & Fashion, and Max Donnelly, curator of nineteenth-century furniture.

GUIDED TOUR OF THE MASTERPIECE FAIR, Chelsea, London SW3

Monday 1 July, 6.00–7.30 pm

To inspect the 'crème de la crème' of furniture on view with leading dealers at this internationally renowned fair. The tour will be led by Chairman of Masterpiece, Philip Hewat Jaboor, who will give the group the benefit of his enormous expertise and scholarship of furniture, objets d'art and interiors, and also Adriana Turpin, Chairman of the FHS Grants Committee.

To apply for a place on either of these visits or to be added to the mailing list for these Early Stage Career Development events please apply to FHS Grants Secretary, Clarissa Ward, grants@furniturehistorysociety.org

LECTURES, COURSES AND CONFERENCES

Please note that the following are not organised by the Furniture History Society. Information/booking instructions can be found under individual items.

MA IN DECORATIVE ARTS & HISTORIC INTERIORS — Course

The University of Buckingham

The course provides a thorough academic and practical training for those seeking careers in the museum world, country houses, interior design, antique dealing or auctioneering or for those with a strong academic interest in the subject. Teaching is shared between the University's academic staff and distinguished visiting lecturers from organisations such as the Wallace Collection, English Heritage, Sotheby's and the Victoria and Albert Museum. With an emphasis on hands-on object-based learning, many of the classes take place in the Wallace Collection or the Victoria and Albert Museum and there are frequent study trips to country houses and a visit to Paris.

To apply for this September contact the course director, Jeremy Howard at jeremy.howard@buckingham.ac.uk or visit www.buckingham.ac.uk, from where you can download an application form.

'CREATING FROM FRAGMENTS: GEORGES HOENTSCHEL'S USE OF PERIOD PIECES FOR CONTEMPORARY INTERIORS 1890–1915' — Lecture

13th June, 2013 1.00 pm, Wallace Collection

Ulrich Leben will give a lecture on Georges Hoentschel, the Dealer/collector/decorator whose collection ended up in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. His talk draws on the main themes of the exhibition at the Gallery of the Bard Graduate Centre in New York, 'Salvaging the Past. Georges Hoentschel and French Decorative Arts from The Metropolitan Museum of Art', which runs from 4 April to 11 August 2013.

For further information and booking details please contact the Wallace Collection direct: www.wallacecollection.org

'EMERGING EMPIRES: MUSCOVY AND ENGLAND IN THE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES' — Conference

14 & 15 June 2013, Victoria and Albert Museum

In association with the Society for Court Studies

Friday 14 June 2013

Lydia and Manfred Gorvy Lecture Theatre, Victoria and Albert Museum

8.30–9.45 Early Viewing of V&A exhibition 'Treasures of the Royal Courts: Tudors, Stuarts and the Russian Tsars' with Natalia Abramova, Curator of Silver, Moscow Kremlin Museum, Angus Patterson, Curator of Armour, V&A, Richard Edgcumbe, Curator of Jewellery, V&A and Katie Coombs, Curator of Miniatures, V&A

10.00–10.30 Coffee and Registration

10.30 Welcome: Martin Roth, Director, (V&A)

- 10.40 Session One — Russia and England 1509–1685
Chair: Olga Dmitrieva, Deputy Director, Moscow Kremlin Museum
Russia in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries
Paul Bushkovitch, Professor of History, Yale University
Mikrephor Alphrey and Richard James, A Russian in England and An Englishman in Muscovy in the Seventeenth Century
Ralph Cleminson, Independent Scholar
- 11.45 Audience Discussion
- 12.15 Session Two — Trade and Diplomacy in the Early Seventeenth Century
Chair: Malcom Smuts, Professor of History, University of Massachusetts
The First Fifty Years of the Muscovy Company
Alexander Sotin, The Old English Court Museum, Moscow
- 13.00 Lunch (Not provided)
- 14.00 *The Culture of a Merchant Prince: Thomas Smith's Family Background and International Network*
Karen Hearn, Independent Scholar
Thomas Smith's Embassy to Muscovy in 1604
Sergei Bogatyrev, The School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University College London
- 15.00 Audience Discussion
- 16.00 Close
- Saturday 15 June**
- 10.00 Registration
- 10.15 Welcome: Beth McKillop, Deputy Director, (V&A)
- 10.25 Session Three — Russian Palace Architecture
Chair: Maurice Howard, Professor of the History of Art, University of Sussex
Architectural Semiotics and Iconography in the Reign of Ivan IV
Michael Flier, Professor of Ukrainian Philology, Harvard University
The Scottish Kremlin Builder
Jeremy Howard, Senior Lecturer, University of St Andrews
- 11.30 Discussion
- 11.50 Coffee
- 12.15 Session Four — Diplomacy
Chair: Peter Barber, Head of Map Collections, The British Library
The Illuminated Royal Correspondence in the Russian State Archives
Maija Jansson, Director Emerita, Yale Centre for Parliamentary History
- 13.00 Lunch (not provided)
- 14.00 *Silver Gifts Intended for Richard Bradshaw's Embassy to Moscow in 1650*
Kathryn Jones, Curator, Royal Collection
The Embassy to Moscow of Charles Howard, 1st Earl of Carlisle
Christopher Ridgway, Curator, Castle Howard, Yorkshire
- 15.00 Discussion
- 15.50 Tea

- 16.10 Session Five — Summing Up
 Chair: Tessa Murdoch, Deputy Keeper, Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass, V&A)
Political Culture and Diplomatic Ceremonial in Early Modern England and Russia
 Olga Dmitrieva, Deputy Director, Moscow Kremlin Museum
 Closing Remarks
 Malcom Smuts, Professor of History, University of Massachusetts
- 17:15 Close

This conference is supported by The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art
 £25, £20 concessions, £10 students

Book online or call 0207 942 2211.

LACQUER AND VERNIS MARTIN FURNITURE — Special Interest Day

29 August 2013, 10.30 am–4.00 pm, Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire

In the eighteenth century, the allure of lacquer, with its mysteriously exotic oriental origins, was huge for both patrons and craftsmen. Associate Curator of Furniture Ulrich Leben will examine the fashion for lacquer and look at some of the exquisite objects in the collection.

£73.00 or £55.00 for National Trust Members. Ticket will include morning coffee, two-course lunch with wine and afternoon tea and cakes.

To make a booking for this Special Interest Day, please phone the Booking Office on 01296 653226.

REQUESTS FOR HELP AND INFORMATION

Thomas Worboys believes his family owns Capability Brown's desk. It belonged to his grandfather Sir Walter Worboys who was an Industrialist, prominent in the design world; he was Chairman of the Council of Industrial Design from 1953 to 1960 and pivotal in the launch of the Design Museum in London. He was also Commercial Director of ICI amongst many other very senior positions. Mr Worboys is hoping the Society may be able to shed some light on what could be a historically important piece of furniture. If you think you may be able to help, please contact Thomas Worboys on 07989 511945 or email thomasworboys@btinternet.com



BOOK REVIEWS

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

Gail Caskey Winkler, *Capricious Fancy, Draping and Curtaining the Historic Interior, 1800–1930*, (The Athenaeum of Philadelphia: 2013), 292 pp., 325 col. illus., ISBN 978-0-8122-4322-2, \$85.00

This attractive book has been long in gestation but the wait has been worthwhile. The subject of an exhibition and symposium at the Athenaeum of Philadelphia in December 1993, the book draws on its collection of pattern books, manuals and trade catalogues, the core of which numbers more than 2,500 titles from the Samuel J. Dornsife Collection of The Victorian Society in America. Samuel J. Dornsife (1916–99) was a pioneer of authentic restoration and re-creation of nineteenth century interiors for museums and historic houses for some thirty 30 years from the 1960s. He was a keen collector of books, concentrating on those that had an important influence on continental European, British and American interiors to inform his profession as a designer and consultant. A fortuitous meeting on the 1966 Attingham Summer School with Roger Moss, Executive Director Emeritus of The Athenaeum in Philadelphia who has written the Foreword to this book, led to a lifelong friendship and the eventual gifting of his book collection to that worthy institution.

The wide variety of drapery designs available throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries reflected the capriciousness of fashion in the domestic home throughout Europe and America. There have been many articles written on the subject, including by the author herself, but the search for contemporary literature can often be arduous and many pattern books remain unknown. Now in one volume, arranged in chronological order, ninety-one of these contemporary publications, some very rare, are listed with an informed essay on each one accompanied by good-sized illustrations in colour, a short glossary and a bibliography. An Introduction explains the mechanisation and expansion of the textile industry from 1800, which encouraged the development of the pattern book and other such 'guides'. The appearance of retail establishments widened the domestic market and prompted new publications full of practical advice for the prosperous middle-classes. There is no attempt to match executed examples with the pattern books. Instead the four chapters focus on published sources from 1800–1839, 1839–1870, 1870–1900, 1900–1930 that provide a continuous thread in the development of curtains and drapery design, the appropriateness of style, and how to achieve the desired effect.

As the author stresses, the importance of France cannot be overstated and plagiarism was rife, international copyright not being acknowledged until 1891. This dependence is clear from the good mix of pattern books and manuals selected from France, UK and the US (four from Germany), some with well-known titles but many that will be new to the reader. French literature is evenly distributed throughout, starting with the highly influential *Recueil de decoration* by Percier and Fontaine of 1801, founders of the term 'interior decoration' and including the rare, exquisitely hand-painted Leopold Marsaux's, *Album de la tenture*. c.1850, considered by Dornsife as among the most beautiful pattern books of his collection. English publications are numerous up to the 1860s, with the author selecting illustrations rarely seen, after which, as to be expected, there is a strong representation of American literature such as A. and L. Streitenfeld's, *The Decorator's Portfolio* (1885), which demonstrates how quickly designs crossed international boundaries in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The entries conclude with an exceedingly rare Anglo-American

clothbound manuscript, *Original and Adapted Drapery Sketches*, by J. S. Stevens c. 1930, which provides an invaluable source for anyone wishing to recreate a 1920s or 30s interior.

This book, amply illustrating window curtains, bed hangings and other interior furnishings in colour combined with informative text, provides a vital link to our past and encourages a greater understanding of the plethora of competing and inventive styles enjoyed between 1800–1930. It will prove invaluable to heritage professionals, interior designers, museum and house curators, theatre and set designers and anyone with a keen interest in furnishing the historic interior or looking for ideas to introduce more variety in a contemporary scheme.

Annabel Westman

Adam Bowett, *Woods in British Furniture-Making 1400–1900, An Illustrated Historical Dictionary* (Wetherby: Oblong Creative Ltd, in association with Kew: Royal Botanic Gardens), XXXIII + 360pp, 620 col. illus, ISBN 978-0-9556576-7-2, £110 or €137.

This is a monumental work: of impressive size (330 × 245 mm) and lavishly illustrated in colour, it claims to be the first book ‘to be devoted to the history, sources and uses of the woods employed by British Furniture-Makers over five centuries’, and is undoubtedly the most comprehensive publication to date on the subject. It is clearly arranged, making it, despite its size, a very usable book, intended by the author ‘for anyone interested in the history of furniture-making’. A lengthy introduction provides an overview of the history of British timber production from earliest times, and the development of timber imports, especially from the mid-eighteenth century. The role of successive governments in controlling the timber trade, a subject with which the author has long been familiar, receives clear attention, and while the growth of the mahogany trade may be familiar to many furniture historians, the development of the import of less familiar woods from Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth century presents a new area of study for many of us. Nomenclature is explained and justified: the author employs names used either in the trade or colloquially, with Latin species appended, and he makes the point that this is a complex subject in which cross-referencing is essential. Undoubtedly, as he points out in his preface, even more names will come to light as a result of publication. A section on methods of cutting timber, and how woods can change in appearance, will be of particular use to students approaching the subject for the first time.

The core of the book consists of an alphabetical list of 500 species of timber used for all types of furniture-making, both structural and decorative. The list is divided into two sections, hardwoods (by far the largest) and soft woods (primarily cedars, deals, pines and yew), and many entries are illustrated with examples of historic furniture which cover a huge range, both in age and scale — from small decorative boxes sporting rare and exotic veneers, to monumental objects such as the three-decker pulpit made in 1816 for the Chapel at Gibside, constructed in cherry-wood. Names are often romantic and imaginative, giving the reader a sense of the once-immediate freshness of exotic timbers, whether for their texture, colour or odour: ‘Air-wood’, a name which preceded ‘Harewood’, ‘Partridge wood’, used for feathery banding on the edges of table tops, ‘Kangaroo-wood’, of which only one record of use has been found, ‘Bloodwood’, which appears in minute pieces in Tunbridge Ware, ‘Alligator-wood’, of which according to Hans Sloane ‘the smell is pleasant, and sweet like Musk or that of an Alleygator, whence the name’, ‘Snakewood’, ‘also called leopard wood, letterwood and speckled wood’. Many confusions of historic names, such as Brazil-wood, are cleared up in the clearly-arranged entries, which include descriptions of each timber’s physical properties, accounts of its historic use, import and significance, supported by documentary evidence, and excellent colour illustrations.



Extensive use is made of John Evelyn's writings on timbers, some of which are now rare (for instance, the *Sorbus* or Service tree, 'with which I have seen a room curiously wainscotted') and the detailed entries recorded in the Gillow archives. Practical explanations are very valuable: for many years, I wondered how tree-cutters in the West Indies felled those notoriously dangerous Manchineel trees, of which both sap and sawdust is highly toxic: the entry in this volume has enlightened me.

Although the exotic timbers used by leading London craftsmen may capture most attention, more serviceable native woods used over centuries are also respected: English ash, beech, elm and oak, as well as fruit woods used extensively by provincial cabinet-makers and turners. Alder, often used for pub settles, could take a good red stain and pass for mahogany, and black-stained pear-wood pass for ebony. To illustrate all the ways in which timbers change colour and texture over long exposure to light, heat, humidity and surface treatments would be beyond the scope of this publication, but the illustrations of more venerable pieces of oak furniture make the point.

A number of previous works on timbers for furniture have included either samples or photographs of principal woods in use. Appendix IV provides a comprehensive list of 149 wood specimens, many provided by Kew Botanic Gardens, and the author acknowledges the vital assistance of Mark Nesbitt, Curator of the Economic Botany Collection at Kew, in the preparation of this work. This new *Dictionary* is essential to our understanding of the raw materials of furniture history, and the Furniture History Society applauds the author's two decades of 'persistent but fitful research' which have resulted in a fine publication.

Lisa White

REPORTS ON THE SOCIETY'S EVENTS

Sincere apologies to Sharon Goodman who was not credited for the report on the afternoon segment of the FHS visit to Longleat (3 October 2012) in the February 2013 *Newsletter*.

APSLEY HOUSE, Thursday 14 February 2013

Apsley House was built between 1771 and 1779 to the designs of Robert Adam for the second Earl Bathurst, and takes its name from his title, Baron Apsley. In 1817 the house was bought by the first Duke of Wellington, who employed Benjamin Dean Wyatt to carry out renovations. These included a new staircase, the Waterloo Gallery on the west side, the cladding of the red-brick exterior in Bath stone, and the addition of a pedimented portico. The house was furnished by Thomas Dowbiggin & Co., and then Holland & Sons. By the Wellington Museum Act of 1947 the house and part of its contents were given to the nation, while the family retained certain apartments. When the Wellington Museum opened in 1952 it was administered by the V&A and since 2004 by English Heritage. We were therefore particularly fortunate to be guided by Josephine Oxley, Keeper of the Wellington Collection and Frances Collard, formerly Furniture Curator at the V&A.

We began, on the ground floor, with the Plate and China Room, its rosewood wall cases installed by the first Duke. Part of the spectacular Sèvres Egyptian Service (1812), made for the Empress Josephine who turned it down in her divorce settlement and acquired from the current Duke, is displayed in the centre, and nearby is the silver-gilt Wellington Shield, designed by Thomas Stothard (1822). Equally impressive — although not to Napoleon's liking — Antonio Canova's colossal nude Carrara marble statue of Napoleon Bonaparte (1806), presented to the first Duke by King George IV (when Regent) stands on the reinforced stairwell floor of Wyatt's cantilevered staircase. Upstairs, it became clear how



the Museum, opened in 1952 as a gallery of objects, has gradually been transformed with the help of surviving documentation (including partial inventories and pictorial sources such as watercolours of the main state rooms) and loans from the family. The design of the Wilton cut-pile carpet used throughout the main rooms during restoration in the early 1990s was based on a fragment of the original Brussels carpet discovered by the current Duke's archivist Mrs Wilson.

The Piccadilly Drawing Room, which retains its Adam apse, barrel-vaulted ceiling and chimney-piece was remodelled by Wyatt and decorated in fashionable Regency yellow-and-gold; an 1830s brass-founder's pattern book has been used to replicate the curtain poles. The Portico Room, which looks out through Wyatt's portico, was also remodelled by Wyatt, who designed the overmantel mirror, pier glasses and console tables. The Waterloo Gallery takes its name from the Waterloo banquets which were held there from 1830 to 1852. Also hung in yellow at the first Duke's wish (and firmly against the advice of Wyatt among others), it was hung by the second Duke in red damask. Today this latter colour scheme sets off the first Duke's magnificent collection of paintings, many of which had been captured at the battle of Vitoria in 1813 and subsequently presented to him by King Ferdinand VII of Spain. The most remarkable fixtures in the room are the eight huge sliding mirrored shutters which transform the gallery into a 'salle des glaces' at night. Wyatt's three mantelpieces each contain a gilded steel fender and firedogs, and a strip of fine parquetry flooring to his design runs along the west wall. Two imposing candelabra of dark grey Siberian porphyry, diplomatic gifts from Tsar Nicholas I to the first Duke, stand in the Gallery, and tables with malachite-veneered tops of similar provenance were noted elsewhere.

In the Yellow Drawing Room, with its striking tabouret walls, stand three mahogany display cases originally designed for the house, their lids lifting off with hooks to reveal glazed tops. Finally, in the dining room, we were very fortunate to be in the company of Christopher Hartop who described the background to the monumental silver and silver-gilt Portugese Service, made in Lisbon and presented to the first Duke by the Prince Regent of Portugal in 1816. As well as to Christopher and our guides, our thanks go to Anne-Marie Bannister for organising this fascinating visit.

Max Donnelly

NEW YORK STUDY WEEKEND, Saturday 1 to Tuesday 4 December 2012

The Museums

The impetus for the trip to New York was to see the exhibition, 'Extravagant Inventions: The Princely Furniture of the Roentgens' at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. We were extremely fortunate to be given an in-depth private tour there by the curator, Dr Wolfram Koepe, Marina Kellen French Curator in the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, accompanied by Mechtild Baumeister, a Conservator in the Museum. No previous exhibition of furniture had been such a scholarly and popular triumph; this was a tribute to Wolfram's remarkable efforts.

Wolfram began by underscoring the achievements of Abraham Roentgen, the father. We saw one of his 'state' desks, which were intended for the prince to impress and entertain guests. This one thought to be his most technically refined piece and now in the Rijksmuseum, had a superb exterior (including inlaid bucolic scenes taken from Netherlandish paintings), drawers and book rests inside, and a folding prayer stool. Other pieces were intended primarily for practical use but often had more than one function. A commode had a top which became a desk. The Harlequin table could be used as a side table, a lectern, a games table or a writing table; hidden within was a writing cabinet which could be raised.

A mahogany-veneered kneehole writing desk, with metal mounts from Birmingham, could be used as a reading stand.

David Roentgen took over his father's business at a time when it was in financial difficulties but he expanded it and developed an extraordinary royal clientele.

Some models were particularly successful, such as oval tables depicting Aeneas' flight from Troy (28 of them are documented, but there are variations in the use of wood and the materials used for mounts) and an architect's table (1780–95) which also was made with varying wood, mounts and mechanisms. At least 38 are known; 9 were sent to Russia in 1786 alone. A Chinoiserie secretary cabinet (1772–75) with Birmingham mounts was in a transitional style but included colourful marquetry.

The Berlin secretary cabinet was one of the most spectacular pieces. It was loaned on condition that it would be kept open so that visitors could appreciate the astonishing miniature interior which included detailed games tables and a chandelier. The secretary cabinet made for Versailles, and the most expensive piece of royal furniture there, was broken up at the Revolution. On display here were some of its marquetry panels and a table made from parts of it. An automaton of Marie Antoinette (*La Joueuse de Tympanon*) (1782–84), with mechanical works by Peter Kinzing, was also one of David Roentgen's brilliant marketing successes. It was veneered with acajou mouchete. The music was by Gluck, who taught the Queen in Vienna and was in fact the composer most often used by Roentgen for his mechanical clocks.

Like the Berlin secretary cabinet, the Chatsworth ensemble of roll top desk, swivel chair, dressing table and oval table (with gilt bronze *milleriaies* on all four sides of each leg) had not previously been exhibited outside the place for which it was bought. The mounts on the desk were interlinked piaster or nailed-coin ornaments, normally only found on princely pieces; the stepped drawers inside were of solid mahogany. The swivel chair was a type invented by David Roentgen. Others were made for Catherine the Great and were later copied for Monticello and Mount Vernon. Furniture made for the Russian market (e. g., the Stroganov desk) had to be represented by pieces which had earlier left Russia. These included a small roll top desk, described as a fairly simple piece and as Roentgen's 'bread and butter'. It was beautifully proportioned and had a *pau amarello* veneer which shimmered like gold in sunshine.

After a spectacular morning Wolfram treated us to lunch in the library of the European decorative arts department before handing us over to Morrison Heckscher, Chairman of the American Wing, and Peter Kenny, Curator of American Decorative Arts and Administrator of the American Wing. They gave us a masterly tour through the entire collection which had recently been refurbished to be a more sympathetic environment for the period of the objects. We began at the beginning, with mid-17th century joiners' furniture from Massachusetts, while Morrie emphasised the importance of understanding the regionalism which differentiates American furniture up to the late nineteenth century. The gallery of case furniture featured the work of painter-stainers who made japanned chests with cabriole legs and their displacement by craftsmen who made solid mahogany furniture, especially in Newport and in Philadelphia, the latter being more open to immigrants and to new styles. Hurricane Sandy had recently prevented Peter Kenny from flying to London to deliver the FHS annual lecture, so we were particularly lucky to benefit from his expertise of Duncan Phyfe, many of whose pieces are in the further period rooms devoted to 'American Empire' along with the Seymours of Boston and Lannuier. We ended with the Gilded Age, the shingle style and Prairie style interiors of Frank Lloyd Wright.

The next morning, before it opened to the public, we went to the Frick Collection, where Charlotte Vignon, Associate Curator of decorative arts, and Joe Godla, chief conservator, showed us in detail several 'problem' or modified pieces: two Boulle octagonal pedestals,



a bureau plat, two Boulle revival cabinet, two nineteenth century copies of the Trianon commodes, and a Riesener drop-front secretaire with floral and trellis marquetry which was made for Marie Antoinette. There were in addition a bed and work table with trellis marquetry in exotic woods by Martin Carlin (with a later shelf) and a *bleu turquin* side table with gilt bronze mounts of Gouthière made for the duchesse de Mazarin.

On the first day of the itinerary we visited the Merchant's House Museum, a 'time warp' collection: the house was built in 1832 and was bought by the Tredwell family in 1835 and lived in until 1933 when it was open to the public, with the family's mid-nineteenth-century possessions intact. The parlour contained an Aeolian piano and harp stool, a set of twelve chairs probably by Duncan Phyfe and a sideboard attributed to Joseph Meeks. The principal bedroom was furnished with New York pieces: a solid four poster bed, a mahogany armoire of the same period and a Federal style small bed with arched canopy and draped nets.

Three Galleries

We were fortunate to visit three galleries each of which had outstanding collections. Dalva Brothers specialises in French and other European furniture and decorative items. There were armoires, armchairs, commodes, cabinets, candelabra, chenets and chandeliers. We were especially interested in the Roentgen pieces, including a Louis XVI commode with a concealed secret drawer and a secretaire with exquisite marquetry containing a complexity of interior compartments. Other notable pieces were two Louis XVI chairs by Jacob, four armchairs and a sofa with a sphinx on the arm, a BVRB desk and two BVRB jewel cabinets, and finally a seventeenth century baroque wood and wrought iron sleigh in the form of a chimera with dolphin details, original paint and gilding which they have attributed to the Grand Dauphin for his children

Carlton Hobbs has superbly restored the last Vanderbilt house built in New York. After lunch in the former ballroom, Tessa Murdoch discussed the *verre eglomise* mantel glass surmounted by a framed painting of Apollo and the Muses (1705–6) which she has attributed to Thomas and Rene Pelletier. There were a number of other notable pieces: a pair of giltwood candle stands in the style of Thomas Hope almost certainly from Duchess Street, a pair of olive japanned desk and bookcases attributed to Giles Grendey, an ebony, ivory and tortoiseshell four poster bed (1820) from Warwick Castle, a royal porcelain and gilt bronze mounted side table from Carlton House, a small breakfront carved mahogany cabinet possibly by William Vile for Kew Palace, and a metamorphic secretaire à abattant with cork front possibly by Carl Joseph May with a mahogany interior reminiscent of his contemporary David Roentgen.

At Mallett, Henry Neville gave us a well thought-out tour including several pieces which were brought in for us. These included a cocuswood oyster veneered two door cabinet on spiral leg stand (1680) which featured on the inner aspect of the two doors needlework panels of outstanding quality, twelve carved padouk dining chairs (1720) of immense weight, a double-sided partners' desk by George Bullock (a model of which was supplied for Napoleon on St Helena), an Ackermann's patent reading chair, a Danish rosewood cabinet on stand with sliding tambour fronts by Ole Wansher (1950), and an Irish mahogany games table with hinged candle dishes which will appear in the upcoming Chicago exhibition on Irish decorative arts.

Private Visits

The itinerary included a number of other visits. The visit began in the loft apartment of Thomas Jayne and Rick Ellis in SoHo, a huge space divided into bedroom, living space,



kitchen and Cabinet Room, which contains their personal collection including Rick's unparalleled library of American cookery books — in fact Rick himself cooked for the group a delicious and decidedly American lunch. There was an American Secretary made in Michigan in 1875, a huge carved bedstead made in the Midwest for Thomas's grandparents, a fruitwood chest of drawers, the handles in the form of figs and pomegranates, a contemporary mirror by Oriel Harewood and two Chinese root wood chairs.

A tour of historic Harlem was led by Michael Adams, author of *Harlem Lost and Found*. He chose three contrasting houses: one of the grandest houses which is now being thoroughly restored (and brought back to residential use) and which retained Queen Anne/Renaissance style rooms with high quality woodwork; a private house full of books and objects including African art; and the collection of two interior designers and architects, who showed us American Empire furniture from the 1840s and aesthetic furniture in a classic townhouse of the period which has retained its features. The tour ended at the home of Philip Hewat-Jaboor and Rod Keenean, who have brought back to life a house that had been ready for demolition and turned into a splendid and comfortable home where the group and others who had been our hosts during the itinerary were treated to dinner.

After our day at the Met we were given drinks by FHS members in their apartment. We had a chance to inspect some interesting furniture including a goncalo alves cabinet with brass grills and marquetry drawers by George Bullock, a George III satinwood marquetry commode made by Mayhew and Ince, and a pair of mahogany and ebony serpentine chiffoniers with Chinese inspired paling.

Finally Robin Miller, a member of the group, welcomed us to William Somerville Inc and D. Miller Restorers Inc, the joinery and restoration companies which are run by her family. The operations manager, John Molinari, showed us through all the processes from the initial selection and preparation of materials to the final polishing of the finished objects, including computer controlled machines which scan the timber, fine machining and assembly and the veneering department, all using the most appropriate and accurate equipment skilfully controlled to produce the best results. Biagio Chirafisi, the chief restorer, demonstrated how he went about dealing with his latest project.

At every venue we were warmly received and often generously entertained. We are deeply grateful to the curators, conservators, owners and other hosts who made for a memorable study visit. I was proud to be the organiser and grateful to Cecilia Neal, Chris Overton, Donal and Jill Channer, Robert Wilson, Tessa Murdoch, John Schofield, Sally Payton, Melanie Doderer-Winkler, Mia Jackson and Alden Gordon who helped in the compilation of this report.

David Wurtzel

THE OLIVER FORD TRUST AND TOM INGRAM MEMORIAL FUND (FHS Grants)

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

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

FHS foreign and domestic tours and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Fund in any resulting publication and must report back to the FHS Grants Committee on completion of the travel or project. All enquiries about grant applications should be addressed to Clarissa Ward, Secretary FHS Grants Committee, 25 Wardo Avenue, London SW6 6RA, or email grants@furniturehistorysociety.org.

The FHS Grants Committee requests that applications for study trips/weekends be made well in advance of the deadline for booking with the FHS Events Secretary — preferably one month before.

COPY DEADLINE

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

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This issue edited by Elizabeth Jamieson

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