



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

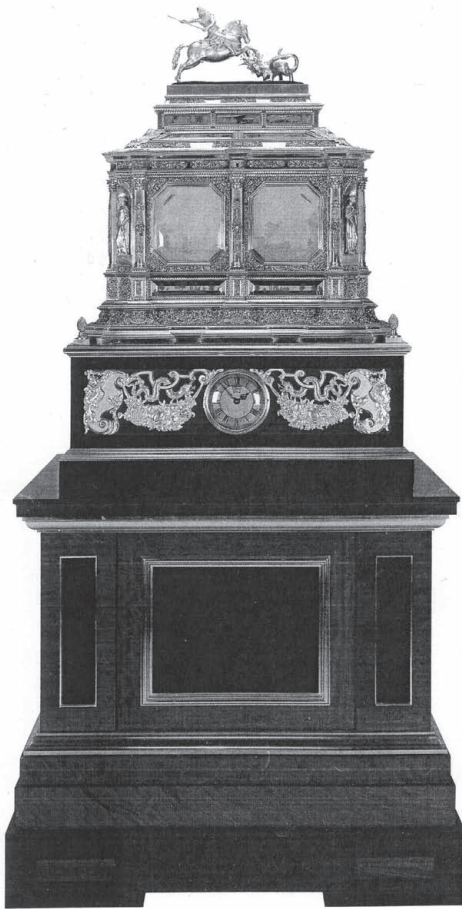


Fig. 1 Charles Clay's Temple and Oracle of Apollo, Country Life, 23 November 1995. The Royal Collection Trust, © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

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

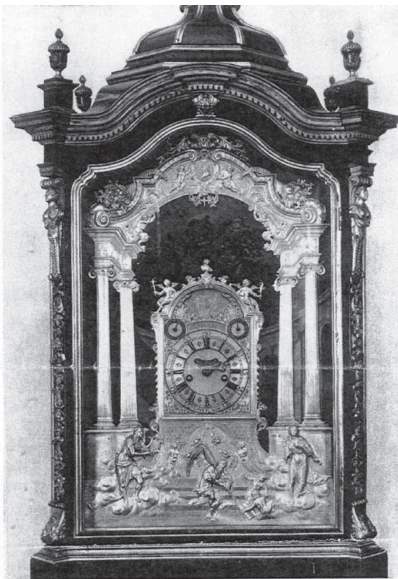
to the Prince of Wales and for many years father and son worked together fashioning clocks in the tradition of those made by Charles Clay. Clay's clocks reflect European influence, but the Pykes incorporated more traditional English work with their painted dials (some attributed to the artist Johann 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, HARPSICHORDS, 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 verfertigten 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@walpole.society.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/BLEU FORM ENVELOPE.











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







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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