



THE FURNITURE HISTORY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

No. 192

NOVEMBER 2013

ON THE MOVE: A NEW HOME FOR ENGLISH HERITAGE'S
ARCHITECTURAL STUDY COLLECTION



Fig. 1 An example from the wallpaper collection taken from Brooke House, Hackney, c.1880, depicting pheasant-like birds within a floral design

The Architectural Study Collection, or the ASC as it is more commonly known, is made up of over six thousand objects, which tell the story of London's buildings. Consisting of a vast array of fascinating and illuminating architectural objects, the collection's particular strength is in tracing the development of London homes from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the early twentieth century, architectural elements were collected by professional building inspectors, many of whom worked for London County Council and later for its successor, the Greater London Council. A huge range of items were collected, salvaged from buildings at risk of demolition. The first records we have of collected objects are pieces of historic woodwork from seventeenth and eighteenth century buildings in Aldwych — chosen as the best examples of carving and turning from the period. Some of the salvaged pieces were later re-used in other historic buildings, but many items were retained for reference or study.¹

Collecting continued in a disjointed fashion into the 1980s when the Greater London Council appointed Treve Rosoman as the collection's first dedicated curator. When the Greater London Council was disbanded in 1986, English Heritage inherited the collection with Rosoman continuing in his role. In 1991, *The Times* reported Rosoman himself climbing a scaffold during a house renovation in Great George Street, W1, to remove a complete piece of 1820s cornice for the collection.²

Although there is slightly less drama today, the ASC continues to play a varied role in the work of English Heritage. From providing information to the Survey of London to furthering our understanding of London wallpapers, the collection still provides a wealth of interesting information and is often used to enrich exhibitions with fascinating evidence about architecture, fashions and life in London as told through its buildings.

The collection's origins may lie in Aldwych, but geographically it has spread across the city to include a huge range of building styles and types, from grand country houses in Hackney to terraces in Mayfair. The real strength of the collection lies in London's domestic buildings and well-known properties of considerable significance such as Holland House or Brooke House in Hackney. However, the collection also includes objects from a number of other building types from commercial areas such as Covent Garden — schools, pubs, almshouses and farms — as well as significant buildings such as St George's Hospital, Hyde Park Corner and St Mary at the Hill, Cheapside.

The ASC is divided into a number of categories including woodwork, metalwork, plasterwork, ceramics and wallpaper. The recent move has required extensive documentation which has created the opportunity to really appreciate the extent and strengths of the collection. For example, the collection has forty staircases, 219 mouldings, and almost a thousand wallpaper samples. The collection incorporates a fascinating group of wallpapers that have been removed from buildings before demolition and consist of layer upon layer of paper. Once separated, these wallpapers reflect the changing attitudes in fashion, taste, and design over the course of centuries. In many cases individual papers can be traced to a house and even to a particular room. Treve Rosoman's 2009 publication offers a fascinating insight into the collection that not only increases our understanding of individual papers, but also the wallpaper trade and manufacturing industry.³

The recent project has also allowed us to unearth some surprising survivals that may change people's assumptions about eighteenth and nineteenth century living. A pallet of assorted wood in a variety of colours of peeling paint, after much patience and rearranging

¹ Rosoman, Treve, *London Wallpapers: Their manufacture and use 1690–1840*, English Heritage, rev. ed. 2009, p. 1

² *The Times* Saturday March 30th 1991, "Elund Price 'The Snapper-up of considerable trifles'"

³ Rosoman, *Op. Cit.*, 2009



Fig. 2 Front of the store from the grounds of Wrest Park. This building was originally used by the Silsoe Institute for housing the agricultural machinery

was discovered to be an early example of eighteenth century fitted furniture. In another instance a cast iron basin supported by a frame was identified as part of a shower system from the second part of the nineteenth century previously belonging to the residents of 37 Craven Street, Charing Cross.

With the help of several lorries and hundreds of pallets, English Heritage's Architectural Study Collection has been installed at Wrest Park in Bedfordshire. As can be imagined, the logistics of moving such a collection presented several challenges. From the ten metre cast iron floor joists to the small decorated cast iron door knocker, each object has been carefully packed and tracked by English Heritage's conservation and documentation teams.

Its new home of Wrest Park in the village of Silsoe is famed for its landscape gardens and for seven hundred years was home to the De Grey family. Whilst it might not sound like the most likely home for the ASC, the mansion and associated buildings includes an original stable yard and a number of early twentieth century industrial buildings that were built as part of the Silsoe Institute. Amongst these buildings, in a structure that previously housed agricultural machinery, English Heritage has created its new, all-purpose collections store.

The collections store has enabled English Heritage to breathe life into these redundant buildings, refurbishing them for their new purpose with complete environmental control to ensure the ASC is preserved for future generations. As well as regenerating this area of the estate, the collection is proving to be a fantastic addition to Wrest Park, with visitors showing a great interest in the collection's history.

The Architectural Study Collection is vital to our understanding and knowledge of buildings in central London, and in its new facility it has an increased, useable lifespan, has been fully catalogued and is now much more accessible to both researchers and the public. With this new exposure, the collection will be able to provide many more people today and in the future with a fascinating insight into the history of London as told by its buildings.



Fig. 3 Stair balusters from 55–56 Great Queen Street, c.1700, removed in the 1920s

The extensive cataloguing project has provided a unique opportunity to assess the wealth of the collection and is attracting attention from potential partners. A research framework has been devised with Dr Matthew Jenkins and Dr Kate Giles from the University of York to create an overarching strategy outlining future projects that seek to explore the ASC in new ways and open the collection up for further research by academics, professionals and other interested groups.

English Heritage's volunteering programme also enables the public to work with our collections, encouraging more engagement with the organisation's work and with the fascinating details of our history. Volunteering opportunities across the organisation are advertised on the English Heritage website. Every week a team of volunteers embark on a program of conservation cleaning and improving catalogue records, and a number of groups visiting Wrest Park this year have been offered tours of the collection store and given the opportunity to learn about the ASC and the work of English Heritage.

Visitors to the collections have been especially taken by our bell jacks from Columbia Market, Bethnal Green and the light bulb changer from Convent Garden, which shows how valuable the ASC can be to the public's understanding of our built heritage. The introductory tours have proved extremely popular, with 96% of visitors saying they were interested in the history of the collection and 94% saying they would recommend a tour of the collection to others.

This overwhelming response has shown us that the ASC needs increased public accessibility, which the new facility at Wrest Park can provide. From next year, the public will have the opportunity to tour the new store and learn about English Heritage's collections work behind the scenes. These tours will be available on the first Monday of the month and are bookable through the Wrest Park reception team. Special group bookings will also be available.

The next step for the ASC is to put the full collection online, and English Heritage is currently working on this project to make the collection even more accessible ... so watch this space!

Charlotte Newman
Curator (London & East)

MAJOR ACCESSIONS TO REPOSITORIES IN 2012 RELATING TO FURNITURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN

LOCAL

Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service: RS Litchfield, carpenter and wheelwright, Riseley: records 1933–65 (Z1485)

Berwick-upon-Tweed Record Office: Allan Brothers Ltd, joinery manufacturers, Berwick-upon-Tweed: minute books, register of members 20th cent. (BRO 1898)

Derbyshire Record Office: National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies, Cavendish Society: furnishing reports on Derbyshire churches incl. Bakewell, Baslow, Burbage, Darley Dale, Eyam, Hope and Youlgreave 1988–2012 (D3440)

Glamorgan Archives (formerly Glamorgan Record Office): Wintle Henry Rhys, cabinet-maker and undertaker, Bridgend: account book 1891–96 (D842)

Lancashire Archives: Calf Hall Shed Co. Ltd, property owners, Burnley: minutes 1889–1960 (DDX 1291)

Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester: Olivo & Bakirgian, textile merchants, Manchester: records c. 1881–1985 (2012.2)

Northumberland Archives: John Grey, joiner and carpenter, Warkworth: account books, letterbooks and personal papers 1879–1924 (NRO 07979)

Tyne and Wear Archives: N. H. Chapman Ltd, household furnishers and upholsterers, North Shields: memorandum and articles of association, press-cutting books and photographs c. 1920–97 (DT.CPM)

NATIONAL

Tate Gallery Archive: Robert Sielle, frame-maker, fine art: personal papers c. 1930–1979 (TGA 20124)

UNIVERSITY

Heriot-Watt University, Heritage and Information Governance: Donald Brothers Ltd, linen, canvas and furnishing fabric manufacturers, Dundee: embroidery template c. 1930 (DB)

SUBSCRIPTIONS 2013–14 YEAR

Subscriptions are now due from members who pay annually by cheque or credit/debit card. Members who have already paid by banker's order on 1 July 2013 should ignore this notice. Gift Aid Declarations are of great value to the Society in enhancing our funds and members who have not yet provided one are requested to do so. If you are uncertain if your subscription has been paid please contact the Membership Secretary. Card payments with the exception of American Express can now be made online by accessing the Society's website at www.furniturehistorysociety.org and using the Membership link. American Express card payments can still be accepted using post, telephone or fax to provide the details. A remittance form is enclosed for your convenience. Institutional members who require an order form to be provided before payment can be invoiced should send this NOW.

Dr Brian Austen, Membership Secretary, 1, Mercedes Cottages, St John's Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 4EH. Tel/fax 01444 413845.
Email brian.austen@zen.co.uk OR membership@furniturehistorysociety.org

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FURNITURE HISTORY FOR SALE

A member has kindly donated to the Society a run of *Furniture History* to be sold in aid of the 50th Anniversary Appeal. This consists of Vol XXII (1986) to XLVIII (2012) inclusive, plus the index '1980 to present' and a copy of 'Furniture History: Forty Years On'. If you would like to purchase, make an offer for the run or such volumes as you wish to acquire. All offers will be considered on 30 November. The volumes are currently in the Bath area and the purchaser would need to collect them or pay the cost of carriage.

Contact Brian Austen on brian.austen@zen.co.uk or tel/fax 01444 413845 or by post for further information.

NEW DATABASE OF LONDON UPHOLDERS

John Houston, formerly Hon. Archivist to the Worshipful Company of Upholders has developed a database of 760 (principally) London upholders ranging in time from the early 1400s to the late 1800s. The data has been collected from TNA, British Library, London parish registers (via Boyd's Index of the Inhabitants of London at the Society of Genealogists), and other sources. It should be noted that the database (1) is not computer based but manual, (2) concentrates on persons NOT otherwise listed in Karin M. Walton's 'The Worshipful Company of Upholders of the City of London' (*Furniture History* Vol. IX 1973) or in John Houston's 'Freedom Admissions to the Upholders' Company of London 1804–1923' (copy held by the FHS), (3) was one of the resources used in his writing of *Featherbedds and Flock Bedds: The Early History of the Worshipful Company of Upholders of the City of London*, 3rd edition 2010 (out of print but available through libraries), (4) includes some names not shown in the *DEFM*, (5) has a variable amount of information on each individual ranging from a couple of lines to a page. It includes Freeman and Liverymen of the Upholders' Company who worked as furniture makers and those who did not. It also includes those who are described as upholders or upholsterers but who do not appear to have been Company members.

FHS members will be well aware that historically the term 'upholder' embraced upholsterers, cabinet makers, soft furnishers, interior designers, chair makers, bed manufacturers and so on. It is also well known that as the nineteenth century progressed the proportion of the Upholders' Company livery who were furniture makers decreased as the number of merchants and businessmen increased.

Any member of the FHS who wishes to research a particular upholsterer, upholder or furniture maker is welcome to contact John Houston by e-mail at o39hare.john@yahoo.com giving as much information as possible.

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. There is no need to send an SAE if you provide a clearly written e-mail address as where possible, joining instructions will be despatched by e-mail.

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. Members are reminded that places are not allocated on a first come, first served basis, but that all applications are equally considered following the closing date for applications.

There is now an extra facility on the website for members to express interest in certain events and then pay, if assigned a place after the closing date (where this is applicable). These events are as follows: the AGM, the visit to the City & Guilds Carving Workshop on 26 November 2013 and the Annual Symposium. **This is a test of the new capability for on-line booking and is therefore limited to these events only at present but hopefully will be extended to all in the future.** The normal blue form should be used for booking other events until further notice. If you have no on-line facility or are uneasy about using this new procedure, please just use the blue form as usual, or you may simply e-mail events@furniturehistorysociety.org

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.

EXHIBITIONS, STUDY DAYS AND LECTURES

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

ARTS & CRAFTS JEWELLERY: THE WORK OF ARTHUR AND GEORGIE GASKIN Exhibition

10 October – 24 November 2013

Court Barn Museum, Chipping Campden, Glos.

This autumn Court Barn Museum will be showing a rare collection of the work of Arthur and Georgie Gaskin, designer-makers who worked as part of the Arts & Crafts movement, producing silver and enamel work, book illustrations and jewellery both independently and in partnership.

This is a unique opportunity to see a major collection of work, many pieces of which have not been on public display before. The main focus of the exhibition is their stunning and influential jewellery. It is appropriate that Court Barn Museum, set up to promote the legacy of craft and design in the north Cotswolds, should show the work.

The exhibition is sponsored Mallams and The Birmingham Assay Office.

For further information please contact Carole Reynolds, Administrator:

admin@courtbarn.org.uk,

tel: 01386 841951, www.courtbarn.org.uk



I JUST LIKE BEAUTIFUL THINGS (SIR ARTHUR GILBERT, 1913–2001)

Collecting decorative arts in the Twentieth Century — Study Day

Saturday 16 November 2013

Hochhauser Auditorium, Sackler Centre, V&A Museum

Over the course of three decades Sir Arthur (1913–2001) and Rosalinde Gilbert (1913–95) formed a collection of decorative arts that is among the finest in the world. Since 2008 the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection has been on loan to the V&A.

This study day explores the taste, inspiration and ambitions of the Gilberts in the context of collecting in the Twentieth century.

10.30 Registration

11.00 Welcome and introduction

A passion for beauty, Tessa Murdoch and Heike Zech, V&A

- 11.20 Great Jewish collectors in Britain in the 19th and 20th centuries
Charles Sebag-Montefiore, London
- 11.50 Collecting silver for the Gilberts: between private and public collection
Timothy Schroder, London
- 12.20 Discussion
- 12.45 Lunch provided
- 13.45 'Quite a creditable collection': Queen Mary as collector and curator
Kathryn Jones, London, Royal Collection
- 14.15 A dealer-collector as philanthropist — the Michael Wellby bequest to the
Ashmolean
Timothy Wilson, Oxford, Ashmolean Museum
- 14.45 Tea & Coffee
- 15.00 The silver collection of Alfred Pringsheim (1850–1941): Its formation, spoliation
and recovery
Lorenz Seelig, Munich
- 15.30 Discussion
- 16.00 Expert-guided gallery visit: The Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Galleries
(rooms 70 to 73)
- 17.00 End

£45, £35 concessions, £15 students

For tickets please telephone 020 7942 2711 or e-mail bookings.office@vam.ac.uk

THE TRIUMPH OF MUSIC OVER TIME: GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL AND CHARLES CLAY'S MUSICAL CLOCKS — Exhibition

20 November 2013 – 23 February 2014

Handel House Museum, 25 Brook Street, London W1

In the 1730s Handel provided music for a series of clocks created by watch and clockmaker Charles Clay. These beautiful machines, which incorporated automata, paintings, sculptures, furniture and gold and silver work by some of the finest artisans in London, also included chimes and pump organs that played musical excerpts from popular operas and sonatas.

This exhibition is an opportunity to see a Clay clock from the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery at Handel House as it would have been viewed in the clockmaker's own home. There will also be a recording of the music from a Clay clock where you can hear the earliest recordings of Handel's music made during his lifetime.

A special lecture at the Society of Antiquaries on 6 February 2014 at 5.00 pm. 'The Triumph of Music over Time: George Frideric Handel and Charles Clay's Musical Clocks'. The latter is open to Fellows and their guests but if any keen horologist or musicologist or other member of FHS wishes to attend Dr Tessa Murdoch has offered to invite them as her guest: contact her by e-mail at t.murdoch@vam.ac.uk to secure a place.

JAMES WYATT, ARCHITECT TO THE CROWN AND DESIGNER OF
COMPLETE INTERIORS — Exhibition

19 November – 6 December 2013

Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler, 39 Brook Street, London W1K 4JE

This autumn, Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler in association with The Georgian Group are presenting an exhibition to mark the bicentenary of the death of James Wyatt.

Wyatt was one of the most accomplished and fashionable of late 18th-century English architects. He extensively remodelled Windsor Castle for George III, and other significant commissions included Fonthill Abbey, Goodwood House, Heaton Hall, Castle Coole and Heveningham Hall. The focus of the exhibition is the furniture that Wyatt designed specifically to complement the interiors he created at Heveningham. A selection of these pieces, which are not currently on public view elsewhere, will be on show together with other items designed for Heveningham, Wyatt's original working drawings and one of his spectacular architectural models. James Wyatt came from a distinguished family of builders and architects. His nephew and pupil was Jeffry Wyatt (later Sir Jeffry Wyattville) who altered and extended 39 Brook Street, where the exhibition is to be held, as his home and office. (The building is a rare surviving Grade II* example of a Regency architect's house). Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler moved to the premises in 1944 and in the late 1950s John Fowler redecorated Wyattville's upper floor gallery as a drawing room for Nancy Lancaster, who then owned the company. The resulting much celebrated Yellow Room is the setting for the exhibition. The curator of the exhibition is Dr John Martin Robinson, architectural historian and foremost expert on the Wyatt architectural dynasty.

Opening Hours: 9.30 am to 5.30 pm, Monday to Friday: Free Admission

Dr John Martin Robinson will give two evening lectures at 39 Brook Street on aspects of James Wyatt's architecture and furniture designs:

Tuesday 19 November James Wyatt Architect

Monday 25 November James Wyatt Furniture Designer

Charles Hind, RIBA curator, will give an evening lecture at 39 Brook Street on James Wyatt's work:

Thursday 21 November From Wyatt to Wyattville: an Architectural Dynasty

For lecture tickets at £20 each, to include a pre-lecture glass of wine, telephone Colefax Group Press Office on 020 7493 2231

(email: pressoffice@colexfax.com). Doors open at 6.30 pm each evening and lectures commence at 7.00 pm (on time).

BOULLE THE CONNOISSEUR: 'AN INCURABLE MANIA' — Lecture

27 January 2013, 5.30 pm

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

Mia Jackson will give a free talk about Boulle as a collector of old master drawings

For further information and booking details please visit the website:

www.wallacecollection.org

BOOK REVIEWS

Suggestions for future reviews and publishers' review copies should be sent to Simon Swynfen Jervis, 45 Bedford Gardens, London W8 7EF, tel. 020 7727 8739. e-mail ss.jervis@btopenworld.com

Sylvain Cordier, *Bellangé, ébénistes: Une histoire du gout au XIXe siècle*, (Mare et Martin, 2012), IV parts and catalogues raisonnés + 672pp, 420 col. 93 b.+ w. illus, ISBN 979-10-92054-00-2, €139 or £111.29.

This is a monumental work on the Bellangé dynasty of Parisian cabinet-makers, the research for which was partly funded by the Furniture History Society. The Bellangé family's initially neo-Classical and increasingly eclectic productions are set in the context of the turbulent period encompassing the Napoleonic Wars, the restoration and final extinction of the French monarchy, and the Second Empire. Sylvain Cordier distinguishes between the *oeuvres* of the Bellangés and the separate workshops of the two fathers and sons: Pierre-Antoine (1757–1827), his younger brother, Louis-François (1759–1827) and their respective sons, Louis-Alexandre (1797–1861) and Alexandre (1799–1863). They had to struggle to stay solvent, but despite the ups and downs, their output was both distinguished and varied. Documented and attributed furniture is reproduced in colour, together with the relevant coloured drawings by the Bellangé *atelier* and an exemplary illustrated catalogue of makers' stamps, plaques and trade labels.

Particularly significant commissions or acquisitions included (at home) those from Napoleon; royalty; the nobility; Marshal Berthier, prince de Neuchâtel; the museums of Paris and Versailles; and (abroad) for the White House, Washington from President Monroe; and from British francophiles *au courant* with Parisian taste, most notably George Watson Taylor. Much is revealed about the process of commissioning and manufacture including sub-contracting to *tapissiers* (for upholstery and top covers) and to *bronziers*, *fondeurs* and *ciseleurs* (for gilt bronze ornaments). The book sets the Bellangés' productions within a broad context: the changing needs of Empire and Crown, the activities of the Paris and London *marchands-merciers*, the international art market and the challenges posed by competitors and by international exhibitions.

Previously, the most accessible source for the Bellangés was in Denise Ledoux-Lebard's pioneering dictionary, *Le Mobilier Français du XIXe Siècle* (first edition 1984). Cordier pays tribute to his predecessors in Bellangé scholarship, while transcending their efforts on a vastly enlarged canvas. Much derives from patient study of original documents. The Bellangés' debt to contemporary designers is clarified: they were very much in the van of Percier et Fontaine and Thomas Hope, and for ornamental source material were subscribers to more *recherché* publications such as N.-X. Willemin's *Choix des costumes civils et militaires des peuples de l'Antiquité ...*, Paris 1798.

The saga opens with a telling image: Paul Delaroche's *Napoléon à Fontainebleau, 31 mars 1814* (1845; Musée de l'Armée, Paris). The despondent Emperor, having just abdicated, sits askance on a giltwood chair, covered in Empire crimson and gold silk, which is depicted precisely and identified here as by Pierre-Antoine Bellangé. Commissions from the French court were mainly for such functional palace furniture, usually polished, gilded or painted: chairs, sofas, stools, tables and side-tables. Charles X's throne-chair (by L.-A. Bellangé, 1825, Louvre, Paris) is depicted in a painting (1827) by F.-J. Heim (Louvre, Paris). Cordier describes the ritual and etiquette associated with this furniture, as well as the workings of the Garde-Meuble (succeeded by the Mobilier National).

Most interesting is the *ébénisterie*, some of the grandest of which, by Louis-François, is in the Royal Collection, representing George IV's acquisitions, originally intended for Windsor Castle, at the Watson Taylor sale (1825). The Bellangés' ineffably rich consoles, cabinets and stands inlaid with *pietre dure* or porcelain panels (Sèvres and Wedgwood) and mounted in finely chased gilt bronze, indicate that they were operating at the pinnacle of international quality and *grande luxe*. Later furniture in historicist or more fanciful taste maintained this superlative standard of invention and of craftsmanship in fine materials.

There is a degree of repetition in the book, some of which could have been avoided by firmer editing, but which is also inevitable in its structure, so that one jumps ahead to the 1840s in one chapter, only to return to the early part of the century in another. However, the chapter headings and sub-headings orientate the reader, while the catalogues raisonnés at the end allow one to visualise the chronological output of individual members of the Bellangé clan. The author has been very well served by his publisher in terms of the clear text, the generous layout and the number and quality of the illustrations. For anyone interested in the French decorative arts from the Consulate to the Second Empire, this book is essential reading and a definitive work of reference.

Christopher Rowell

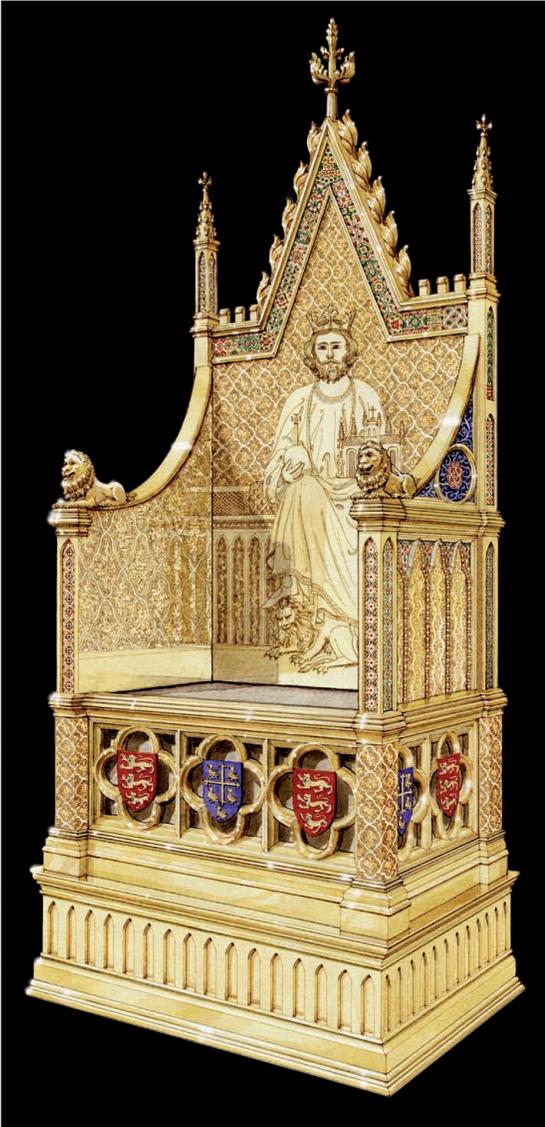
Karin Lohm (ed.), *The Forgotten History: upholstery conservation* (Linköping University), 2011, 288 pp. 252 col. and 14 bl. & w. illustrations, 66 diagrams. ISBN 978 91 7519 996 2, 350 SEK.

This publication, produced with the support of the Carl Malmsten Centre of Wood Technology and Design at Linköping University, serves to give wider public access to the papers given at a two-day symposium in Vadstena, Sweden in 2005. There is much useful material here, with many illustrations, although some suffer from the smallness of format. The seventeen papers include a number primarily addressed to practising conservators, with detailed discussions of techniques of investigation and of the conservation of individual pieces, but others explore topics of equal use to historians, curators and others with a general interest in furniture history. Heather Porter, writing on cushions and the use of feathers in upholstery, and in her paper on the early history of upholstery springs, (with Nancy Britton), deals with aspects of upholstery that can be useful in assessing early chairs. Nancy Britton, with Mark Anderson, gives an account of the evolution of early upholstery techniques in North America, while the same subject is viewed from the Swedish perspective by Matts Grennfalk. Other papers that will interest non-conservators as much as conservators, include Nicola Gentle's paper on nineteenth-century carriage trimmings in Britain and Anne Battram's paper on the use of slipcovers.

Sarah Medlam

Warwick Rodwell, *The Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone, History, Archaeology and Conservation*, Oxbow Books, Oxford and Oakville/Dean and Chapter of Westminster, 2013, xvi + 304pp., 270 col., 58 b. & w. illus. ISBN 978-1-78297-152-8. £29.95.

The present reviewer contributed a two-page article to *Newsletter* 125 (February 1997) entitled 'St Edward's Chair and the Stone of Scone', lamenting the 1996 decision by John Major, then Prime Minister (egged on, it emerges from *The Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone*, by Michael Forsyth, his Secretary of State for Scotland) to send the Stone of Scone back to Scotland, where it now rests, in an inappropriately secular setting in Edinburgh Castle, incongruous alongside sixteenth-century regalia, with which it has no historic connection. Major's reward for sundering this venerable relic from the reliquary of which



This recent drawing, by Stephen Conlin, presents a convincing reconstruction of the original appearance of the Chair. Based on research by Warwick Rodwell and Marie Louise Sauerberg, it was commissioned by Country Life and is reproduced in this Newsletter by their kind permission.

it had formed an integral part for seven hundred years was to lose every Conservative seat in Scotland. A judgment perhaps, but little consolation for an act of vandalism, if not sacrilege.

The Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone (a title to be carefully noted) is the record and culmination of the long process of research and conservation which preceded the re-display of the Chair in St George's Chapel, Westminster Abbey, to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of The Queen's Coronation. Given that a comprehensive account was published by Westby Percival Prescott in 1957 it might be supposed that there would be little to add or to revise. In fact the 2013 book completely supersedes its 1957 fore-runner, with more accurate and detailed physical analysis and description, and a solid and

thorough historiographical and historical background and chronicle, all of which spark new ideas or correctives to old ones, and demolish a few myths along the way. The focus inevitably and rightly is on the Chair, but for the first time there is a full description of the companion chair made for Queen Mary II's coronation as co-regnant with William III in 1689, while a coda traces something of the Chair's influence, taking in Pugin's throne for the House of Lords, an intriguing series of copies commencing with one made for Dr Oronhyatekha (1841–1907), a remarkable Canadian Mohawk doctor and public figure, now at Casa Loma, Toronto, and a trail of miniature souvenir models in various materials and of varying accuracy — and appeal.

The idea that the Stone of Scone (petrologically identified as sandstone quarried near Scone) is a fake or replica is resoundingly scotched, it being clearly demonstrated that the Stone was trimmed to fit its reliquary, and that its iron fittings were almost certainly fitted by its owner, the Abbot of Westminster, in about 1328 to secure it to the floor and prevent its removal by the Crown, and later, perhaps in the sixteenth century, adapted to assist in lifting. Originally it seems that the Chair itself could be lifted from its base to allow easy access to the Stone. (The temporary theft in 1950, often treated as a harmless student prank and praised by Alex Salmond in 2008, proves to have been the work of a relatively mature group, who had no serious plan, but damaged both Chair and Stone.) In 1957 the evidence seemed to point to an original 'ivory' and polychrome decorative scheme for the Chair and a subsequent gilt scheme with glass and enamel inserts, but now a careful review has established that the Chair was gilt with glass inserts from the beginning: a whole series of drawings, notably by S. Tracy (1863) and W. R. Lethaby (1900), and photographs reveal the superb quality of its much damaged punchwork decoration, architectural, figural and foliate. Indeed the plentiful and varied illustrations of *The Coronation Chair and Stone of Scone*, including a comprehensive range of colour-coded measured drawings, are a superb complement to its learned and lively text, which does not avoid firmness on occasion: 'the Stone did not come from Ireland, as myth and irresponsible antiquarianism would have us believe. Consequently, applying the name *Lia Fáil* ('Stone of Destiny' in English) to it is not merely incorrect, but is risible'.

As well as being a great mediaeval reliquary the Chair and Stone constitutes a noble, if battered, monument of court furniture of the Gothic period. The book includes a revealingly full account of its gentle conservation, which is generously non-judgmental about earlier interventions, the most radical ingredient being the provision of a new replacement front grille formed, on impeccable evidence, of three quatrefoils, reversible but serving at once to support the seat and to supply visual unity. Many a craftsman was involved, from Walter of Durham in about 1298, to Richard Roberts and Thomas Phill in 1727, John Fenn in 1761 (possibly a relation, see *DEFM*, of Thomas Fenn, an upholster recorded as active from 1719 to 1727), to Bailey and Saunders in 1821, when they supplied the footstool now in the V&A. Furniture historians would surely find it difficult to think of a more historic ensemble than the Chair and Stone. Warwick Rodwell's book is a worthy — and enjoyable — record of its creation and vicissitudes. Perhaps the time will come when the futile and ignorant political gesture which split Chair from Stone can be reversed. In the meantime this authoritative account is unlikely to be superseded.

Simon Swynfen Jervis

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 e-mail 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 December**. Copy should be sent, preferably by email, to Matthew Winterbottom m.winterbottom@bath.ac.uk or posted to Matthew Winterbottom, The Holburne Museum, Bath BA2 4DB.

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