

The Furniture History Society

Newsletter 238

May 2025



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François Linke at Buckingham Palace

Fig. 1: A print taken from Linke's glass negative of a version of the finished commode, registre 720. © Christopher Payne/Linke Archives



Proudly showing amongst the three hundred exhibits at the new exhibition in The King's Gallery¹ at Buckingham Palace *'The Edwardians: Age of Elegance'* is a commode by the Czech-born Parisian maker François Linke (1855-1946).

In a reimagining of the Louis XV style, the commode is one of a pair supplied to the Royal Household at an unknown date prior to 1914, suggested here to be c.1910.² The first record of the model in Linke's daybooks is for one commenced in 1903 (Fig. 1).

Although very much in Edward VII's taste there are no records of the acquisition, and it bears the branded cipher 'G' below a crown on the oak backboard. A clue to the dating is the 'White Allom & Co' cold metal stamp on the leading edge of the top drawer of the commode (see Figure 2). White Allom was established in 1905 by Charles Allom (1865-1947) who was knighted in 1913 following his work remodelling rooms at Buckingham Palace under instruction from Queen Mary. Significantly one of



Fig. 2: The retailers' stamp of White Alлом & Company on the top of the upper drawer.
© Christopher Payne (November 2015)

the pair of commodes was used as a backdrop for King George V and Queen Mary, photographed in The Tapestry Room at Buckingham Palace in March 1914 and on the same occasion for the photograph of Edward, Prince of Wales and later King Edward VIII, subsequently Duke of Windsor (cover image).³ The series of formal portraits show the King in full uniform as Admiral of the Fleet, and the 20-year-old prince as a naval lieutenant.⁴ The images were taken for the long-established weekly international magazine, *L'Illustration*, but the exact purpose of the portraits is not clear.⁵ Despite the obvious importance of the commode to warrant an appearance in an official portrait, the companion piece was sold out of the collection in 1959 and its whereabouts is not presently known.⁶ Other examples of this commode have been recorded.⁷ One was reputedly supplied to King Fuad of Egypt and Sudan' who made a state visit to Great Britain in 1927. Fuad was by far Linke's biggest client between 1922 and 1936

and it might be assumed that he saw and admired the pair in Buckingham Palace during his formal visit.

The second volume of Linke's Blue Daybooks, written in pencil, appears to show the first commode in this style, titled '*commode dépouille lion*' as registre number 720, which was started in 1903 and finished in his workshop in 1905. The delay in completion suggests that the first was made speculatively by Linke, not as a commission. A second was made in 1907, an order for a Mr. Roffin. The retail price in 1907 was 6,000 French francs against a cost price in December 1907 of 2,758.60 francs, whereas the earlier example cost 3,307.10 francs to make. The cabinet making for both was by Knutsen who was paid 85 centimes per hour on each occasion, working 534 hours in 1903 but 60 hours less in 1907. It is interesting to note that Knutsen was able to save considerable time and consequently cost to his employer having worked out a quicker method of construction on the second occasion. This further suggests that the 1903-5 commode was the first, a prototype, and the cabinetmaker was later able to streamline his work. Linke's notes for the timber needed show a surprisingly large number of oak boards were required for such a project. Boards at over two metres in length including *quadrillé*, the more expensive quarter-sawn oak for the wide drawers, aided stability with the advantage of showing the decorative effect of the medullary rays. (Figure 4). In both instances the wood was costed out at a mere 150 francs. Linke was not always able to control rising costs for outside workers. The marquetry by Fauchon



Fig. 4: The oak drawer linings of the commode with the bois de violette capping on the uprights of the drawer sides used habitually by Linke and his mentor, Emmanuel Zwiener. In the best traditions of Belle Époque cabinet making, Linke has used expensive $\frac{1}{4}$ sawn oak for stability, exposing the beauty of the medullary rays. © Royal Collection Enterprises Limited 2025 | Royal Collection Trust

initially cost 175 francs, rising to 250 francs by 1907. Likewise, the fine quality mercury gilding '*mecur anc. pier*' [sic] for each cost 475 francs but a pencil note '*a revoir*' suggests that Linke subsequently argued the charge with Picard, another outside specialist. Mounting the gilt-brass sculpture was the highest paid work in the workshop. For the highly skilled work of applying the 40 kilos of freshly gilded mounts to the finished carcass the *monteur* Alexandre was paid 5 centimes per hour more than the cabinetmaker, the total

costing for this work being almost as much as that of the cost of the carcass. Other costs are carefully noted, in most cases with the craftsman's name. The 1905 and 1907 examples each had a *fleur de pêcher* marble slab, a colour much favoured by Linke, provided at just over 200 francs by Linke's habitual supplier, Huvé.

Despite the White Allom stamp on the Buckingham Palace commode there is no suggestion that the London firm made the pair, they merely supplied them. Allom may have ordered them directly from Linke or through a third party. Linke exhibited in 1908 at the '*Salon des Industries du Mobilier*' in Paris and simultaneously at the Franco-British Exhibition at the Palace of Decorative Arts in London, an exhibition in Shepherd's Bush that attracted 8 million visitors and where Linke was awarded the 'Grand Prix'. White Allom also exhibited at the Franco-British Exhibition and Charles Allom was chairman of the British section of the Decorative Arts Committee; doubtless he was curious to see Linke's interpretations of Adam-style English furniture.⁹ Another possibility is that Allom placed the order through the Paris and London decorators, Carlhian & Cie. In its earlier incarnation this had been Carlhian & Beaumetz, who had been recommended to the future Edward VII by the Duveen Brothers in the early 20th century. Carlhian supplied the six throne chairs made for the coronation of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra at Westminster Abbey in 1902, one pair now at Buckingham Palace.¹⁰ Anatole Beaumetz had been an early customer of Linke, who supplied almost three hundred items of furniture to the firm

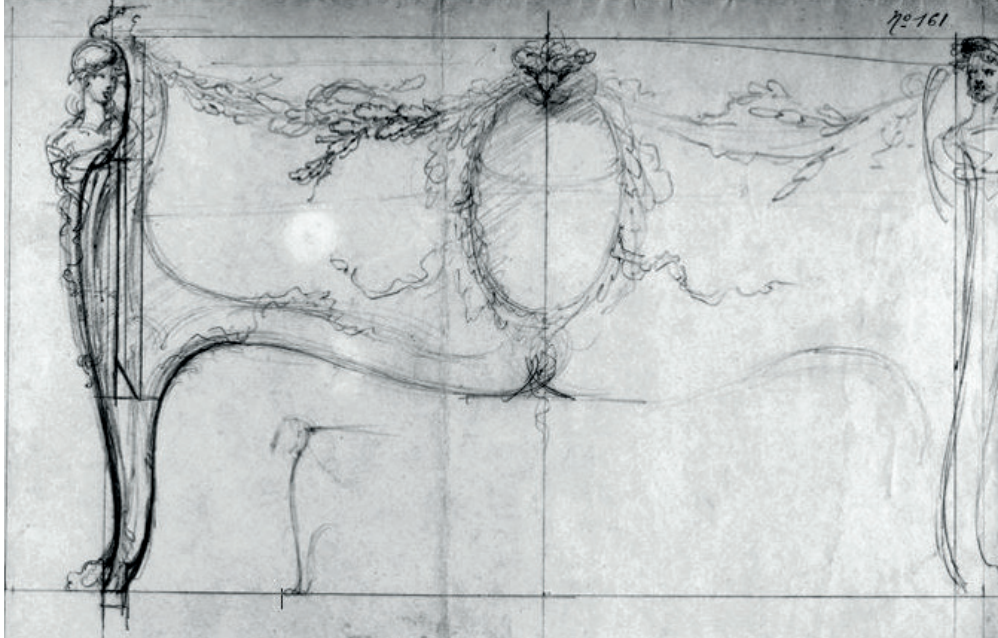


Fig. 5: A sketch by Messagé on the theme of the sides of the Oeben/Riesener bureau du Roi adapted as a commode substituting the lion pelt attributes of Hercules for Messagé's concept of caryatides. © Christopher Payne/Linke Archives

between 1888-1889.¹¹ Another possibility is that the order was through E. Kahn et Cie., likewise of Paris and London, who exhibited Linke's furniture at his East End of London premises. Edward Kahn had retired as a director of Carlhian & Beaumetz in 1886 to set up his own business. In such cases, as was the habit of the eighteenth-century *marchands merciers*, it is probable that the commissioning agent would not have wanted the usual Linke script signature to be engraved on the front surface of a gilt-bronze mount to be seen by all. The Buckingham Palace commode has a single throw English lock, not the habitual French lock by Linke's brother Clément, who made the 1905 and 1907 models. This confirms that the first two commodes by are not the royal

examples. If the royal commodes were indeed made to order in c. 1910, the year Clément Linke died, it would not be surprising that the locks were made in England.

The original concept for the commode, dating from the 1880s, was by Léon Messagé, either for Linke or the Zwiener brothers, or as Messagé was a freelance designer in the 1880s it may have been a speculative design (see figure 5). The Herculean lion pelt mounts on the Linke model, replacing the Messagé caryatids, do not have the same 'Art Nouveau' panache of those designed for Linke by Messagé and used on the furniture on his gold medal-winning stand at the 1900 Paris '*Exposition Universelle*', by which time Messagé was working exclusively

for Linke. Messagé died in 1901 and without his genius Linke adapted existing mounts; here the original concept of caryatid mounts at the sides has been substituted with the lion pelt, a celebrated and familiar model. It is directly taken from the Oeben/Riesener bureau du Roi of 1769, which was first reproduced in the nineteenth century for the Marquess of Hertford in c.1855 and subsequently for the Paris Exhibition of 1878.¹² In 1883 Ludwig of Bavaria ordered a copy of the bureau du Roi from the Zwiener workshop in Paris, and it is still in situ in the Writing Room at Herrenchiemsee. The association of the lion pelt mount with a piece of furniture made for the King of France would not have been lost on White Allom. The Nemean lion's skin rendered the wearer invincible and may have had particular significance at a time of impending crisis.

The Buckingham Palace commode has the deeply incised foundry identification mark 'Z N' for Zwiener on the back of a lion pelt mount and faint traces of an unusual Linke mark 'FL'. This suggests that Linke acquired the bronze model from Zwiener and added his own mark for identification purposes. The master models for the pelts would have been available to Linke when Emmanuel Zwiener, who was Linke's mentor, retired in 1896. Linke made his first copy of the *bureau du Roi* at the end of 1900, finished in 1902, and a second in 1910; he also made a copy of the 1789 Benneman *bureau plat* in 1907, which also used the lion pelt mounts, and completed a second example

in 1909. In Linke's registre the Oeben/Riesener desk is listed as number 710, the '*commode dépouille lion*' as 720, which further confirms a dating of c. 1908-10 for the Buckingham Palace commodes. Emmanuel Zwiener is not known to have made an example of this commode but his younger brother, Julius, made a much-enlarged example at an unknown date after he moved to Berlin.¹³ Linke later utilised the lion's pelt mount again, making a series of pieces with it including numerous pedestals and a *bergère*. The most elaborate use was a 2.75 metre bookcase supported by three conjoined commodes similar to the Buckingham Palace example, made for a client in Pittsburgh in 1912, a *pièce unique*.¹⁴

Despite the extraordinary depth of the Royal Archives and Linke's detailed but nevertheless incomplete records, there are no extant records for a specific royal commission. It is hoped that one day with further research more will become known.

CHRISTOPHER PAYNE

1 Every Thursday – Monday from Friday 11th April to Sunday 23rd November 2025.

2 RCIN 28726

3 Autochrome photographs by Jean Desboutin. (RCIN 2084611, 2084636, 2084644 & 2946198-2946200).

4 RCIN 2084637 shows the King and Prince of Wales together, three months before the prince's 21st birthday.

5 The *Entente Cordiale* was signed on 8th April 1904 and this portrait may have been to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the agreement at a time when Britain and France were making a further rapprochement to counter the expansion of the German fleet.

6 The companion pair was sold by Christie Manson & Woods 'Furniture and works of Art from Marlborough House', 1 & 2 October 1959, Lot 179. There is no attribution to a maker or a note of the supplier in the 1959 catalogue.

7 Christie's, London, 7 June 2016, Lot 161, reputedly

from the collection of King Faud I of Egypt and Sudan. Another with more profuse marquetry than either the royal example or the one sold in 2016, the lock not signed, sold Christie's, London, 25th February 1999, Lot 197. (This example currently with Jans Antiques, Los Angeles).

8 From the photograph it is probable that the Boulle-style clock on the commode is a circa nineteenth-century copy.

9 Christopher Payne, *British Furniture, 1820- 1920: The Luxury Market* (Woodbridge: ACC Artbooks, 2023) p. 470.

10 RCIN 2624.1&2.

11 Christopher Payne, *François Linke 1855-1946. The Belle Époque of French Furniture* (Woodbridge: ACC Artbooks, 2003) p. 232.

12 Reputedly made by Henry Dasson.

13 Meiner, Jörg, *Berliner Belle Époque*, 2014, p. 116

14 Payne (2003), pp. 224-5 (illustrated).

FHS Events Calendar

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

2025

9-11 MAY	UK Study Trip to Leeds
10 JUNE	Visit to Nick Wright, London
19 JUNE	Visit to Portmeirion
19-21 SEPTEMBER	UK Study Trip to Gloucestershire
2-4 OCTOBER	Overseas Study Trip to Turin

The Evolution of the British Villa: Architecture and Interiors 1600-1900.
Every Tuesday throughout June 2025.

FHS Events



The Portmeirion Hotel. Photograph © John Hammond

Visit to Portmeirion

MINFFORDD, PENRHYNDEUDRAETH,
GWYNEDD, LL48 6ER

THURSDAY 19 JUNE 2025

11.00 AM – 4.00 PM

This day visit to Portmeirion will concentrate on the Portmeirion Hotel, situated at the quayside of the village created by visionary architect Clough Williams-Ellis between 1926 and 1976, and will include other points of interest. In a previous life, the hotel was an extravagantly furnished marine villa in a place formerly known as Aber Iâ, built in the 1840s by Henry Seymour Westmacott. Rachel Hunt, Collections Curator will introduce us to the house and to recent research into its furnishings, particularly work by Johann Martin Levien. Two elaborately carved doors have recently

been identified as being the work of Levien, thanks to Serena Newmark (author of Levien's biography on BIFMO). Levien introduced New Zealand timbers into British furniture making, showcasing them in a prize-winning sideboard at the Great Exhibition of 1851. The sideboard was also acquired by Westmacott for Aber Iâ (though it was later sold). The Levien doors were probably commissioned to complement the sideboard, and had ornately carved frames, possibly by Westmacott's cousin, James Sherwood Westmacott.

We will then have a tour of other items of interest at Portmeirion including the early seventeenth-century 'Hercules' ceiling rescued in 1936 from the about-to-be-demolished Emral Hall, a behind the scenes look at a store of furniture and other objects, and two Eisteddfod chairs.

Members will be able to explore the rest of the village after the visit (closes 5.30 pm).

COST: £70 (INCLUDES LUNCH & AFTERNOON TEA) Travel and accommodation not included.

LIMIT: 18

Spaces still available. To express interest contact events@furniturehistorysociety.org

Visit to Nick Wright, London

TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2025

4.00 PM – 6.00 PM



André Dubreuil, Prototype 'Paris' chair, 1988.

Nick Wright, writer and furniture collector, has an important collection of postwar furniture including blueprint pieces by André Dubreuil. It is particularly strong in Italian postmodern pieces by Studio Alchimia, Ettore Sottsass and Alessandro Mendini presented at the Venice Biennales, the Alcantara exhibition, and mobile infinito, Materialidea. He is the co-author of *Cut and Shut: The History of Creative Salvage* with Gareth Williams,

former Head of Contemporary Art and Design at Bonhams.

He has previously lent objects to the V&A for their 2012 exhibition *Postmodernism: Style and Subversion 1970 - 1990*.

The collection is based in Haringey, London. We will have an informal tour of the collection followed by a Q&A.

COST: £20 (INCLUDES A GLASS OF WINE)

To express interest contact events@furniturehistorysociety.org

Visit to Handel Hendrix Museum

25 BROOK ST, LONDON W1K 4HB

TUESDAY 8 JULY 2025

3.00 PM – 4.30 PM

Handel Hendrix House cares for and presents to the public the homes of two great musicians. Our visit follows the completion of their Hallelujah Project in 2023, detailed in the talk given by Claire Davies, Deputy Director (Head of Learning and Curator) at the FHS's AGM in 2020, which restored the basement and ground floor and refurbished the upper floors.

Handel House occupies four floors of 25 Brook Street, the building in which the composer George Frideric Handel lived from 1723 until his death in 1759.

The restored historic rooms include his bedroom, and the dining room in which he rehearsed his musicians and singers and often gave informal recitals for friends and neighbours. The Hallelujah Project has restored the very much anticipated kitchen in the lower ground floor and the front and back parlours on the ground floor. Additional rooms in the adjoining

Rodmarton Manor.
Photo: CC3.0,
Robert Powell,
Wikimedia
Commons



house are used for temporary exhibitions which focus on aspects of Handel's life in Georgian London, his legacy and the baroque instruments that can be heard in his extensive body of work.

Hendrix Flat occupies the upper floor of the adjoining flat 23 Brook Street, in which Jimi Hendrix lived from July 1968 to March 1969. The main room of the flat where he lived, entertained friends, rehearsed and wrote new music, and gave numerous press and media interviews has been restored. A permanent exhibition introduces Hendrix's place in the musical and social world of 1960s London, his influences and his legacy. New rooms dedicated to Jimi's legacy and mesmerizing performances have been developed. His staircase, previously closed off to the public, has been reinforced and will be part of the visit.

COST: £30

LIMIT: 20

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS:
30 MAY 2025

Autumn UK Study Trip to Gloucestershire

FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER – SUNDAY 21
SEPTEMBER 2025

This two-night, three-day Study Trip is led by Dr Amy Lim, curator of the Faringdon collection at Buscot Park and Brompton Square and co-chair of the FHS Events Committee.

Staying in Cirencester, our visits will include Cirencester Park, the home of Earl Bathurst, a Georgian mansion with Regency furniture and historic portraits in an important landscape park; Berkeley Castle, a twelfth-century castle, still lived in by the original family, with medieval interiors, Tudor furniture and tapestries; Chavenage, an old stone house dating for the most part from 1576 and retaining much of its Elizabethan and Jacobean character, now used as a location for many TV and film productions. Sudeley Castle has been in and out of royal ownership throughout much of its existence. We will focus on the eclectic collection of art, furniture and

textiles – from Tudor treasures from Strawberry Hill to a complete William Morris bedroom - introduced by the Dent family, who carried out extensive restoration in the nineteenth century, and whose descendants still live there.

We will explore the leading role of the Cotswolds in the Arts & Crafts movement, with a visit Rodmarton Manor, one of the most complete examples of an English Arts & Crafts house, with interiors by Ernest Barnsley (a follower of William Morris) and local craftsmen. Rodmarton demonstrates a whole belief system put into practice and is still presented as it was completed, by the Biddulph family who commissioned it. The Gordon Russell Design Museum showcases the firm's pioneering ethos in twentieth-century furniture design and craft, followed by the Court Barn Museum, which tells the story of C.R. Ashbee's Guild of Handicraft in Chipping Campden. There will also be an opportunity to visit two of the most renowned of the Cotswold 'wool' churches.

For further details and an application form contact:
events@furniturehistorysociety.org

Overseas Study Trip to Turin

FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER – SUNDAY 4 OCTOBER 2025

The FHS is planning a two-night, three-day Study Weekend to Turin, historic capital of the Kingdom of Savoy, and Italy's first capital (1861-1865) following unification. Today it is the capital of the Northern region of Piedmont. Turin stands out for its Baroque architecture, owing

largely to the work of Guarino Guarini (1624–83) and Filippo Juvarra (1678–1736) and its furniture by the court cabinetmakers, Pietro Pifetti (1701-1777) and Giuseppe Maria Bonzanigo (1745–1820).

The trip will start with a visit to the Palazzo Reale built in 1660 and now containing the silver treasury, the Royal Armoury of Turin designed by the Italian painter and interior designer Pelagio Palagi (1775-1860), and the Archaeological Museum and the dynastic paintings collection in the Galleria Sabauda. Also within the Palazzo is the famous Chapel of the Holy Shroud (Sakra Sindone) c.1690 and a royal library. Nearby is the Palazzo Madama, official royal residence of the two Madames Reali from 1640, and famous for its seventeenth- to nineteenth-century interiors including the royal apartment and Chinese cabinet of Marie Jeanne Baptiste of Savoy-Nemours (1644-1724) decorated in the high baroque style by the Guidobono brothers and the monumental entrance staircase designed by Juvarra. It is now Turin's Museo Civico launched in 1863 as an arts and industry collection following London's South Kensington initiative. It contains an excellent collection of decorative arts, particular famous for its ceramics. At Palazzo Carignano, which was designed by Guarini and has a series of very fine seventeenth-century rooms, we will see the Museum del Risorgimento, which will provide context for Italy's recent history through objects and art. Around Turin we plan to include a visit to the royal hunting lodge, Palazzina Stupigni, built in 1729 and now home to an art and furniture museum, and Castello Racconigi started

First floor:
Chinese Cabinet,
Royal Palace of
Turin, Northern
Italy. Photo: CC
BY-SA 4.0,
Ambra75,
Wikimedia
Commons



by Guarini in 1676 and completed from 1755 by Giambattista Borra who later worked in England. We are also hoping to include visits to private collections.

This trip is led by Adriana Turpin, BIFMO Project Manager and Grants Chair of the FHS. To express interest, please contact the Overseas Events Manager: overseasevents@furniturehistorysociety.org.

Bookings

For places on UK visits please apply by email or letter to the Events Secretary,

Beatrice Goddard indicating that you wish to pay by card or online or providing separate cheques for each event. The email address is events@furniturehistorysociety.org, or telephone 0777 5907390. For online payments you will be provided with a link to a payment page and an event reference. Where possible, joining instructions will be dispatched by email, so please remember to provide your email address if you have one.

Applications should only be made by members who intend to take part in the whole programme. No one can apply for

more than one place unless they hold a joint membership, and each applicant should be identified by name. If you wish to be placed on the waiting list, please provide a telephone number. Please note the closing dates for applications printed in the Newsletter. Applications made after the closing date will be accepted only if space is still available. Members are reminded that places are not allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, but that all applications are equally considered following the closing date.

Cancellations

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

In many cases there is a wait list so please let the Events Secretary know even on the day if you are unable to attend in case the place can be offered to another member.

Online Events

We continue to arrange occasional online events, but we are sometimes unable to advertise them in the Newsletter owing to publication lead-in times. We let members know by email and send links to members about a week in advance. They will also be advertised on the FHS website, on Instagram and Facebook (@furniturehistorysociety).

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

Recordings of many of our past lectures are freely available to members via accessing My Account on the FHS website using the following link:
www.furniturehistorysociety.org/membership/account/login/

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

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

Opportunities for advertising

The Furniture History Society, a registered UK Charity, now accepts advertising in its quarterly Newsletter, a well-illustrated and informative publication with a broad reach of over 1,000 furniture-lovers. The Newsletter is published in February, May, August and November of each year.

Current rates are £200 for a half page, £400 for a full page, and £600 for the inside back cover.

Further information, including deadlines for copy, is available from the co-Editor, Iain Stephens, via email:
iain.stephens@royal.uk

Call for papers

Furniture History Society Research Seminar

The Furniture History Society invites submissions from PhD students, post-doctorates, and early career museum scholars for a seminar dedicated to the history of furniture and interiors in Britain, Europe and the United States. This eighth Research Seminar for emerging scholars will take place in London in January 2026. The seminar aims to present current research by emerging scholars and provides an exceptional opportunity for them to share their research and ideas with curators, conservators, furniture makers and other members of the Furniture History Society while also contributing to the development of new research in the fields of furniture history, decorative arts and historic interiors.

Applicants are requested to send a current CV and a 300-word abstract outlining the topic of a twenty-minute paper to grants@furniturehistorysociety.org by 1 July 2025. For more information contact Jill Bace, Grants Secretary at the email address above.

Share upcoming events and news items on FHS social media

The Furniture History Society is now accepting member submissions of upcoming events or other news items to be shared on the Society's social media accounts. Please note that we may not be

able to accommodate all submissions.

Please send a brief summary of the news item and any available promotional images to our Social Media Manager, Maeve Diepenbrock, at maevediepenbrock@gmail.com.

Amy Lim to become co-Chair of Events

I am delighted that Dr Amy Lim, already a member of the Events Committee, has recently agreed to join me as co-chair. Together we support our Events Secretary Beatrice Goddard who plans and manages our programme of events, drawing on ideas and advice from the Events Committee. Amy is already a great asset with her deep knowledge of country houses and wide range of professional contacts. The subject of her doctoral thesis was aristocratic art patronage in late Stuart England. She is part-time Curator of the Faringdon Collection, Buscot Park, a freelance researcher, curator and lecturer, and a tutor at the Oxford University Department for Continuing Education. She has also lectured on recent online courses arranged by the BIFMO team.

Amy led a successful FHS study trip to Derbyshire in spring 2024 and is now working on a trip to Gloucestershire for autumn 2025. She will be academic lead for the 2026 Symposium, to be held in conjunction with the Silver Society. We are very grateful to her for joining the team.

KATE HAY

BIFMO UPDATE

British and Irish Furniture Makers Online

London Furniture makers in Early American Charleston

The opportunity to live the good life in upmarket and prosperous eighteenth-century Charleston must have been alluring. John Fisher,¹ William Lupton,² and Thomas Elfe³ did just that. The three were the sons of London furniture makers: two from Holborn and one from the City, due east of St. Paul's Churchyard. Given the close geographical proximity and manufacturing and retailing networks that constituted the early modern London furniture trade, the families were presumably acquainted though personal and/or trade relationships.

The story of these Londoners and their ventures across the seas to establish themselves in an Early American southern colony remains a work-in-progress. In a nutshell, they arrived in Charleston in the middle of the eighteenth century and setup cabinet-making and upholstery businesses.⁴ They established partnerships between themselves and American-born furniture makers, whereby in addition to personal relationships, they benefited from trade-related networks. They collectively purchased and imported trade-related materials and land, as well as acquiring and training apprentices and sharing skilled journeymen. All would have been familiar to these Londoners, with one exception: they also benefitted from a free

labour force, enslaved cabinet makers, upholsterers, carvers, turners and joiners.

One such example is illustrated in a 1767 advertisement placed by a fellow London furniture maker who also immigrated to Charleston. Peter Hall was apparently realising his assets and going home.

TO BE SOLD,
On Tuesday the 7th of April next, upon the spot, where PETER HALL, Cabinet-maker, now lives, in Queen-Street, at PUBLIC OUTCRY, to the highest bidder, upon Terms which shall be declared previous to the beginning of the said intended Sale;

FOUR very valuable NEGROES,
two of them good workmen at the cabinet-maker's business; one a good lawyer, and handles his tools so well in the coarser branches of that trade, as to be capable of making a tolerable country carpenter, and is very diligent and lively: The other a boy, used to house-work, and is alert and active. They are all young and healthy, and as orderly as Negroes generally are.

Also,
Sundry finished and unfinished pieces of cabinet work, cabinet makers tools and implements; planks of mahogany, and other kinds of wood.—Divers household furniture, and two large wooden shops as they now stand.

Any person inclined to become a purchaser, may inspect and view the articles, but nothing will be sold before the said day.

And as I am going to London early in May next, I humbly intreat such persons as are indebted to me, to pay off (in the mean time) their respective accounts, in order to save trouble to themselves, and to my own creditors.

PETER HALL.
March 6, 1767.

The South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal, Charleston, Tuesday 17 March, 1767

TO BE SOLD,
On Tuesday the 7th of April next, upon the spot, where PETER HALL, Cabinet-maker, now lives in Queen Street, at PUBLIC OUTCRY, to the highest bidder, upon Terms which shall be declared previous to the beginning of the said intended Sale:

Also **FOUR** very valuable NEGROES, two of them good workmen at the cabinet-maker's businesses, one a good sawyer, and handles his tools so well in the coarser branches of the trade, as to be capable of making a tolerable country carpenter, and is very diligent and lively. The other a boy, used to house-work, and is alert and active. They are all young and healthy, and as orderly as Negroes generally are.

Sundry finished and unfinished pieces of cabinet work, cabinet makers tools and implements; planks of mahogany, and other kinds of wood. – Divers household furniture, and two large wooden shops as they now stand.

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PETER HALL
March 6, 1767

The transfer of property, both land and human, helped to fuel Charleston's furniture industry and continued prosperity. This research is part of our continuing Migration and Craftmanship project. Initially generously funded by the Decorative Arts Trust's Failey Grant, we are delighted that this BIFMO project was recently featured in the Trust's online March Bulletin.

LAURIE LINDEY AND BRIDGET GARZA GRIFFIN

1 John Fisher, The London Archive (TLA), *London Church of England Parish Registers*, 21 May, 1721, St Bartholomew the Great, City of London.

2 William Lupton, TLA, *England, Births and Christenings*, 31 May, 1717, St Sepulchre, City of London.

3 Thomas Elfe, TLA, *England, Births and Christenings*, 13 August, 1721, St Martin Vintry, City of London.

4 Fisher, MESDA ID: 11614; Lupton, MESDA ID: 22298; Elfe, US Craftspersons file, MESDA ID: 10440.

Book Reviews

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

Publications

The Society is a leading publisher in the field of furniture history and a variety of publications are available for purchase to members and non-members. A list of available publications can be viewed here: www.furniturehistorysociety.org/publications/



A wardrobe with weight-driven clock, designed by André-Charles Boulle (1642–1732). F429, Wallace Collection, London.

The Early Career Development Group (ECD) group discuss the recent visit to the Wallace Collection

FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2025

Led by Alexander Collins, Curator of Decorative Arts, and Jürgen Huber, Senior Furniture Conservator, the ECD group

visited the 'Keeping Time: Clocks by Boulle' display at the Wallace Collection, London. This exhibition showcases five clocks from the collection in the Housekeeper's Room, isolated from the more lavish rooms where they usually reside. The aim is to present these clocks as sculptural works of art, highlighting the genius of André-Charles Boulle (1642–1732). The display features dramatic lighting, dark walls, and clocks raised to

eye level to enhance their artistic presence.

The first clock studied is veneered with *première-partie* brass and turtle-shell marquetry, it is adorned with gilt-bronze figures of Love Triumphant over Time (F52). The clock is attributed to Boulle, with a pedestal possibly by Alexandre-Jean Oppenordt and a movement by Jacques-Augustin Thuret. The collaboration between different artisans, from the marquetry, the gilt-bronze, the enamel to the escapement, is evident in this and other clocks in the display.

Another clock, featuring Venus, Cupid, and a shell, further demonstrates this collaboration, with a gilt-bronze shell beneath Venus showing intricate details, suggesting life casting was used (F93). The clock's dial with cherubs highlights Boulle as a collector of drawings, paintings, prints and sculptures as he was here inspired by Renaissance art, possibly drawing from Mantegna's frescoes in Mantua's Ducal Palace.

A striking centerpiece in the room is a wardrobe with a weight-driven clock (F429). This piece of engineering is held together by gravity and can be disassembled in hours. The clock's dial has small enamel plaques set into gilt-bronze ornamented with cherubs symbolizing the times of the day (night, dawn, day). The wardrobe's interior playfully uses various cuts of oak. The reverse of the doors presents later brass straps dated from 1915. The ebony strips along the borders are obscured due to later varnish application, but they would have once

made a beautiful contrast against the oak. The lower half of the wardrobe is unusual, with missing bun feet or a possible re-veneering of the original plinth.

The fourth clock in the display features a recumbent figure of Time, after a model by François Girardon (F41). This clock has suffered significant wear, with the movement cleaned multiple times, and with the loss of engraving and the surface's three-dimensional quality. The final clock, an impressive pedestal piece adorned with four figures representing the continents, may be a collaboration between architect Gilles-Marie Oppenordt and Boulle (F42).

During the visit, Jürgen Huber raised an important conservation dilemma. Many of these clocks have undergone repairs over time and have stood the test of time. Unfortunately they no longer keep accurate time due to worn parts in the suspension mechanisms, such as rods, screws, and springs. The question arises whether it is better to prioritize the clock's functionality or maintain its originality. The display at the Wallace Collection provides a fascinating opportunity to explore this issue while offering insight into the world of Baroque France, where art and science were closely intertwined in the pursuit of timekeeping.

ADÈLE BOURBONNE

Reports on FHS Events

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

Visit to Christopher Howe Showrooms

WEDNESDAY 13 NOVEMBER 2024

The Howe Showroom on Bloomfield Terrace is a beautiful open space, the perfect backdrop for the interesting antique and 'Made by Howe' furniture that we spent an enjoyable couple of hours reviewing under the expert guidance of Christopher Howe.

As part of the major transformation of the building, the now-listed Georgian cobbled entrance way had been exposed. Formed of deep Scandinavian pine blocks the once common road surface is a rare survivor. A marble column in George Bullock style, possibly of mona marble, sat at the end of this entrance way.

Christopher showed us his Gothic Revival style 'Strawberry Hill' chair made to the same design as those Michael Snodin commissioned for the Strawberry Hill House restoration project. The original chairs were designed by Richard Bentley and made by William Hallett. Of high Gothic design with Chinese influence showing in the stepped legs, the chair backs were exquisitely carved mirroring window tracery. Access to one of the originals from the V&A allowed Howe to produce faithful replicas embodying the spirit of the originals.



Strawberry Hill chair

Among the many pieces shown to us, a custom-made mahogany hall chair from the early nineteenth century was an oddity. Of unusual design, when turned around a section of the lower half could be pulled forward to be used as a boot jack.

The stunning Regency rosewood circular tilt top table on view with large scrolling bronze feet had chased decoration to the centre column of particularly high quality. This table provided an interesting contrast to a Swedish tilt top made by Sjölin, highlighting the differences in manufacturing to English tilt tops of a similar period (c.1780s). On an English table the stretchers are fixed by screws to the table top. Ingeniously the Swedish used dovetails cut into the underside of

the top so that the stretchers could slide into position avoiding the use of screws.

Other fine items on display included a Gillows cellarette, a large Holland and Sons table from the 1880s, a large seventeenth century mirror with Vauxhall glass in a later gilded frame topped with a stunning carved Ho-Ho bird, and a Grand Master's Freemasons chair.

We then moved to the Howe Showroom on Pimlico Road to look at a further selection of items including an Indian marble-topped plinth in Grecian style with columns and a pair of chairs – one old and one newly-made by Howe's looking identical! Lastly, we were shown a Dutch style 'independent heating stove' adorned with what looked to be seventeenth century Dutch tiles but which were actually replicas from the 1890s, a time when the Arts and Crafts movement looked back to the earlier period.

We are grateful to Christopher Howe and his team.

JENNY CASSON

Visit to the Chambers Medal Cabinet at the V&A

THURSDAY 23 JANUARY 2025

Members were pleased to meet at the Victoria and Albert Museum to see the enormous Chambers cabinet that occupied the medal room in the Dublin town house of the James Caulfield, 1st Earl of Charlemont, to hold his medal collection. This is now on loan to the V&A from the Samuel Courtauld Trust.

The Earl's town house had been designed by distinguished neo-classical architect Sir William Chambers in 1763. He

was also working on that seminal example of neo-classism, the garden pavilion or *casino marino* on his estate on the coast.

The Earl was clearly a patron and collector of refined taste, and in 1837 Samuel Lewis noted in his *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* that 'the private library of the Earl of Charlemont is highly worthy of notice. It is contained in a building attached to the town residence in Palace row: the entrance to it is by a long gallery ... which contains the works of antiquities and numismatics, and has in a recess the statue of Venus and eight busts of ancient and modern characters of celebrity... Attached to the library is a small museum, a medal room, and a smaller library of very elegant proportions, containing busts of the Earl of Rockingham and General Wolfe'.

Clearly a medal cabinet in this setting had to hold its own, it occupied one wall of the Library Pavilion, 444.5cm wide by 365cm high with fireplace opening 177.8cm x 143cm.

Though this particular suite of rooms no longer survives we are fortunate that three of Chamber's original designs for the case which were included in the purchase still survive. 1) design for ormolu plaque in right-hand cabinet; 2) section of chimney



Dr Jenny Saunt discussing the Chambers Medal Cabinet

side of study showing right half of cabinet; 3) and ornaments of the frieze, cornice and pilaster, and cross sections of the surface, pilasters and doors of cabinet.

The 1767-8 cabinet designed by Sir William Chambers with fine carvings by Sefferin Alken and gilt bronze interior by Diederich Nicolaus Anderson actually comprises two tall mahogany cupboards, each with three pairs of doors veneered in mahogany or satinwood with box, both surrounding a carved decorative central panel or overmantel representing Hercules Musarum. The top level of both cupboards held books, while the two levels below contained trays or drawers of coins and medals with some impressive ormolu name plates above with Latin inscriptions noting the contents below. The three parts are held together with oak struts. There is a reference to Chippendale in the documentation though it is not known in what context.

The cabinet was sold from the house circa 1870 and bought by the Courtauld Institute of Art for its home in Somerset House, Chamber's grand opus, in 1986. It replaces in the V&A the Croome Court bookcases (W.76-1975) by Chambers' rival Robert Adam which have moved to their original home in Worcestershire. One commends the ingenuity of the V&A staff in finding such a fine replacement to their carefully laid out primary galleries.

For some, it seems odd that the world's leading art history training department did not make this item central to a course on 18th century decorative arts. More pragmatically, the present writer knows a metal conservator who had to sort out the problems caused by storing historical medals in unseasoned oak.

Our thanks to Dr Jenny Saunt (Senior Curator of Furniture and Woodwork), Dr Kira d'Albuquerque (Senior Curator of Sculpture), Maude Willaerts (Assistant Curator, Furniture), Dr Simon Spier (Curator of Ceramics and Glass), John Williams (Assistant Curator, Furniture) and Paloma Ley (Assistant Curator, Sculpture) for facilitating our visit.

HOWARD COUTTS

Visit to John Hardy's Collection

SATURDAY 25TH JANUARY 2025

When I saw this visit advertised, it was a no brainer for me. I quickly responded requesting a place as numbers were limited and hoped I had managed to get in quick enough! Thankfully, I did and here is a little taste of a most magical event. On arrival on a cold January evening, I was greeted by John's daughter with a warm infectious smile and a glass of champagne. I thought, "what has happened to the wine which had been advertised?" But 'cheers', who doesn't love a glass of champagne on arrival?

As the members arrived and filled the candle lit rooms enjoying the generous hospitality, the master of the evening, John Hardy, made his entrance. As most of you possibly know, one dresses for occasions and of course always for dinner. Well, John did that with so much style. His very smart Lincoln Green silk velvet jacket and silk cravat, along with his coiffed grey wig and beset with a crescent shaped jewel on the lapel of the jacket, was the personification of an English eighteenth-century gentleman.

Pictured:
Lennox Cato
and John Hardy

As a dealer, seeing the interior of a collector's house is always so exciting. I have known John for many years, but had never seen the interior of his house, so this was a first for me.

He made us all at ease by asking us to sit down while he proceeded with his entertaining lecture of the collection, which is so varied, from ancient works of art to Tracy Emin.

His personal history is amazing. Born in 1942, the family house was Radbroke Hall in Manchester which is now Barclays Technology Centre. John was educated at Eton College which enabled him to make many connections in the world of art and antiques. His godparents were recognized collectors, Lord Leverhulme of Port Sunlight and Francis Egerton, who was the Chairman of Mallett Antiques and headed their galleries in Bond Street and Bourdon House.

After a short time living in Paris, he returned to the UK and worked for Biggs of Maidenhead. This again exposed his knowledge. He later worked at the V&A, Christie's King St., and contributed to the saving of Erddig, Strawberry Hill and Spencer House and helped administer Osterley Park House and Ham House.

Inside it is a treasure trove. Memorable pieces that really stood out to me were a beautifully carved giltwood Chippendale period settee from Denton Park; a teapot once owned by King George III's wife Queen Charlotte; a copy of a Picasso painting (Blue Period); a most amusing large group painting *'The Reading of the Will'* by Charles Leslie which includes items at Petworth House and an exquisite green Sevres porcelain chimney ornament with gilt bronze mounts, made for Marie Antoinette.

So many items in John's collection have wonderful provenance, a chair in one of John's guest rooms is exactly the same as one in The Royal Collection from Carlton House.

The whole evening was truly inspiring, full of surprises and was brilliantly held together by John in his soft eloquent manner.

Thank you for sharing your knowledge John and your experience in collecting.

LENNOX CATO DL

Study Trip to Merseyside

TUESDAY 1 – WEDNESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2024

The Athenaeum, Liverpool

The Athenaeum, part subscription library, part newsroom, and part Learned Society, welcomed us through Dr Stephen Lloyd, one of the 'Proprietors.' Ascending an elliptical staircase, we gathered in the Library Reading Room. Here we saw furniture said to be from the earlier Athenaeum building. A round library table thought to be c.1830 had as its central pier a somewhat primitive Tuscan column and three lesser supports all sitting on a tripartite stretcher with its fat bun feet, a detail found to be in common with much other furniture, particularly pier tables.

The Committee Room contains a sixteen-feet long, eight-bay mahogany bookcase, the four central bays breaking forward with console brackets. The glazed mid-register had delicate glazing bar details, the squared-off profiles suggesting an architect's mind. Indeed, the original Athenaeum, founded 1797 and built 1799, was designed by John Foster Senior who was both architect and joiner. His second son, who succeeded him, was the noted

Greek Revival architect of the city, so the Smirkean taste of these cabinets could be his. (Note: John Foster II was the architect of the State Dining Room at Knowsley Hall).

Of three more workaday cabinets, one was labelled Roscoe and was generally Gillowesque. Another contained the books of the Spanish ex-priest Blanco White, who ended up in the Liverpool Unitarian church. The Committee table had few admirers, while its chairs labelled Blain (Blain was in business from c.1800-1925) were stained and grained neo-Hepplewhite. Two busts of Roscoe after Spence were seen, one bronze effect metal and the other in 'bronzed plaster', the latter stamped 'Published by Edward Flower Liverpool', modelled by Spence.

The stripped down twentieth-century classical style continued in the busy Newsroom, although marred by recent curtaining and crushed raspberry wall colourings. A massive piece of office furniture on plan-chest lines, but for daily newspapers, was also stamped 'From A. Blain & Son, Liverpool'. Lucy Wood added that the archives of this firm, including reference books and design drawings, were donated to the city and await cataloguing.

DR RORY O'DONNELL

Knowsley Hall

We were fortunate to visit both Knowsley houses. Knowsley Hall, huge and of many periods, has been the Stanley seat since the Civil War and is now run as a conference and events venue. The other, built by Claud Phillimore in 1964-67 and known as the New House, is where Lord and Lady Derby live.



An interior shot
of Knowsley Hall

Our tour began at Knowsley Hall where we also stayed in great comfort. Throughout the day we were accompanied by Dr Stephen Lloyd, Lord and Lady Derby's eloquent, knowledgeable and stimulating curator. We admired the boiseries of the Walnut Drawing Room, so crisply carved and convincing in their Régence detail that they have been taken for the real thing. They were installed in 1908-13 by the Paris interior design firm Carlhian for the architect W. H. Romaine Walker.

On the walls of the inner and outer halls hangs a remarkable group of early eighteenth-century views of Knowsley, three by Tillemans, two of which are illustrated by John Harris in *'The Artist and the Country House'*. Their frames are idiosyncratic, with wide recessed panels painted black, with raised gilt decoration. Two invoices dated 1726 and 1727 suggest that their maker was a Liverpool

carver and gilder, Richard Prescott.

On the steps of the New House we were warmly greeted by Lord Derby, who generously remained with us for the rest of the day and later joined us for dinner. In the dining room we saw a set of twenty-four walnut chairs of about 1730, their splats inlaid with panels of marquetry representing the Derby coat of arms. Lucy Wood suggested that some are old and the rest later copies. A similar set was once at nearby Croxteth Hall, seat of the Earl of Sefton, head of the other great South Lancashire landowning family, and now owned by Liverpool City Council. From that set there are two known survivors, one owned by the Walker Art Gallery and shown at Croxteth, the other in the V&A. We admired an elegant pale-mahogany sideboard of architectural form designed by David Linley, made in his workshops and supplied in 2005.

A contemporary piece of great presence and complexity is a circular table in the manner of Thomas Hope which dominates the Anteroom. Its square concave-sided base, carried on scrolled brackets and brass paw feet, is veneered in walnut, satinwood and amboyna with a brass egg-and-dart border. The beautiful scagliola top shows the Derby coat of arms set into a blue-john plaque, surrounded by panels depicting horses, houses and places dear to Lord Derby. This remarkable example of modern skill and craftsmanship was designed by Thomas Messel, the scagliola top made by Thomas Kennedy, the cabinet maker was Stuart Crowhurst of Jonathan Rose, Wiltshire, and the feet were modelled by Peter Walwyn and cast by Whiteway Craft, Gloucestershire.

In Lord Derby's study we saw a rosewood games table. Inside one of two little drawers it is stamped 'Gillow of Lancaster'. The top is inset with a marble panel representing a chessboard with the Derby arms at one end and at the other a personification of Carthage as a warrior beneath the word CARTHAGO. Jeremy Garfield-Davies, referring to an article in *Furniture History* Vol. LXVI, 2010 by Kate Hay, told us that this alludes to the proud belief of the Maltese that they are descended from the Phoenicians. Such tabletops were made in Malta by the firm of J. Darmanin & Sons.

In the staircase hall we examined a pair of carved giltwood candle-stands of the term form associated with Benjamin Goodison. A curious feature of the pair in question are wings which emerge from the putti heads and touch the tops

as if to assist in supporting them.

I have left to the end the star piece of the Knowsley furniture collection, the magnificent semi-circular marquetry commode designed by Robert Adam for Lady Derby's Dressing Room at Derby House, 23 Grosvenor Square, invoiced by Ince and Mayhew in 1775 for £84. Lucy described the circumstances in which the invoice was chanced upon by Hugh Roberts and then, with a flourish, produced it and read it to us with all the reverence due from a priest to a sacred text. This is one of the earliest and most elaborate semi-circular commodes known and is described and illustrated by Roberts and Cator in *'Industry and Ingenuity: The Partnership of William Ince and John Mayhew'* (2022).

The Society would like to record its appreciation of Lord Derby's generous hospitality and its gratitude to him and to the Derby Collection's Curator, Stephen Lloyd, the best of guides.

MARTIN DRURY

The Walker Art Gallery

We were privileged to begin our visit to the Walker Art Gallery before the public arrived, ably led by Fiona Slattery Clark and Nicola Scott, Decorative Art Curators for National Museums Liverpool. While the Walker Art Gallery is noted mainly for its fine art collection, it also holds a wealth of furniture.

We examined an 'Architect's Table', made in England c.1730. The table is decorated with sophisticated brass mounts and inlays, and incorporates elaborate mechanisms. These suggest an

Anglo-Germanic maker, the two most prominent in London at the time being Abraham Roentgen (who later settled in Germany) and John Channon, an Englishman whose family were apparently of Germanic origin. The tabletop had a brass front ledge, which suggested that it could be raised, and that the ledge would provide a support for papers or books. In the side drawers were fold-out brass arms, probably to hold candles. The label suggested it was made of Honduras rosewood, but since rosewood was imported from Honduras only after 1800, it is more likely from India or South East Asia. The table came from Ince Blundell Hall, built between 1720 and 1750 for Robert Blundell.

Another piece from Ince Blundell Hall was an oak cabinet inlaid with amber and ivory panels delicately carved with scenes suggesting love or marriage and a complex arrangement of drawers and doors inside. Made c.1700 in Gdansk, Poland, it is also signed by George Bullock (d. 1818) who spent five years in Liverpool and perhaps repaired the cabinet. Blundell was his most important Liverpool patron and probably helped to get his career off the ground.

There were, however, some pieces with a clearer link to Bullock. We examined a pair of Grecian-style candelabra designed by Bullock and made in his London workshop in 1814-18 which were perhaps part of the stock sale held after his death. Intended to hold bronze oil lamps or candlesticks, they are decorated with rosewood and brass marquetry in *première*- and *contre-partie* with ebonised wood mouldings and gilt metal mounts.

An early nineteenth-century brass chandelier from the period when Bullock was involved in decorating Cholmondeley Castle loosely related to Bullock's designs for chandeliers. The oil reservoir in the centre is disguised as a gothic tower, perhaps a conceit to combine the evocation of an old gothic castle with up-to-the minute modern convenience. An earthenware dressing-table set also supplied by Bullock and possibly made at the Liverpool Herculaneum pottery was originally intended for Napoleon's use in exile. However, this was considered unsuitable because of the decoration of laurel wreaths symbolic of victory, so Matthew Robinson Boulton bought it for Great Tew.

An Alfred Stevens drawing table of c.1865 was made for his own use in a grand renaissance style but constructed cheaply in stained pine with painted decoration. In contrast, a fine Roman pietra dura table of c.1600 had been purchased from Nostell Priory, where it had been acquired in the nineteenth century. We also saw a wide range of nineteenth-century chairs, including examples designed by A.W.N. Pugin, G.E. Street and one by E.W. Pugin for Scarisbrick Hall.

The final piece we looked at was an unusual transfer-printed earthenware table made in 1840 by Thomas Mayer for his brother Joseph Mayer, the celebrated Liverpool goldsmith and collector. Nicola Scott explained her recent discoveries about this remarkable object.

KATHRYN BARNES



The japanned cabinet held within the Lady Lever Art Gallery collection

The Lady Lever Art Gallery

Our visit was led by Lucy Wood as well as Fiona Slattery Clark and Nicola Scott, Decorative Art Curators, and David Moffat, Assistant Curator, National Museums Liverpool. Our thanks to them all for making our visit so informative and illuminating.

Lever's political admiration of Napoleon inspired him to collect furniture and objects associated with him. However, the 'Empire' bedroom suite was not, as Lever may have been led to believe, Napoleon's from Malmaison, but was manufactured in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

We examined chairs from the enormous giltwood suite designed by the Santi brothers and made in Rome in 1805-6 for Napoleon's uncle Cardinal Fesch. When in 1806 Napoleon recalled Fesch from his posting as ambassador to the Vatican, the

suite remained unfinished until George Watson Taylor had embroidered covers made c.1820.

Lever was a keen collector of Wedgwood, and three fireplaces inlaid with Wedgwood plaques are exceptionally rare. Also notable was Wedgwood's largest Jasper tablet depicting Diana visiting Endymion, and the four enamel paintings by George Stubbs fired on earthenware panels produced for him by Wedgwood, including Stubbs's self-portrait and two 'Haymaking' paintings.

From Wedgwood we turned to chinoiserie: Chippendale's Lady's Dressing Table is flanked by two china stands from the Linnells' 'Chinese' state bedchamber at Badminton House, which provoked some discussion as to what their original colour scheme might have been; the present japanned finish probably dating partly from the nineteenth century. John Linnell's drawing for the chairs belonging to the

suite showed a colour scheme of red, blue and yellow, which may originally have been applied to the whole suite.

Lucy's book on the upholstered furniture held by the gallery analysed the seven Parham chairs, *c.*1715-20, covered with what were once thought to be unique gilt leather chinoiserie covers made specifically for them. Subsequent research revealed that Ince & Mayhew recovered the original upholstery – without replacing it – with the leather covers probably cut-down from screen panels or wall hangings.

The doors to the white-japanned cabinet-on-stand (dated *c.*1690) were opened to reveal its vibrantly coloured interior where the white ground has since oxidised to a golden yellow (see photo). It is almost certainly painted by the same hand as the Witcombe Cabinet of *c.*1697 at the Holburne Museum in Bath.

Lucy Wood's 1994 Catalogue of Commodes describes and analyses the construction and provenance of forty-two commodes in the Lady Lever Art Gallery collection. No. 20 is Chippendale's marquetry commode of *c.*1775-80, given by the Duke of Wellington to his campaign chaplain. The external satinwood veneer has faded over time, but we marvelled at the intense colour of the East Indian rosewood drawer fronts within.

No. 6 was supplied by John Carrack and John Cobb to Sir John Delaval in 1776. John Cobb acted as the go-between for John Carrack and Sir John and it had been unclear why Carrack, a hosier and haberdasher, was involved in handling this commode. However, Lucy informed us of her recent discovery of a newspaper

article reporting the closure in 1768 of the varnishing business of John Carrack and John Chenu; the inference being that the commode was a remnant from that business.

Whilst studying the Christopher Fuhrloh commode of *c.*1772 (No. 9) with a marquetry panel depicting Diana in a landscape, Lucy pointed out that the scene must be based on a drawing by Angelica Kauffman, because an inscription on the companion commode, 'ANGELICA KAUFFMAN. R.A. PINXENT' (sic) and 'C. FUHRLOHG. FECIT. MDCCCLXXII' suggests that Fuhrloh obtained the drawings from Kauffman herself.

There are no surviving engravings after Kauffman conforming to these designs.

In contrast to the marquetry commodes, we viewed several with painted decoration including two attributed to George Brookshaw *c.*1785. These reminded us that marquetry decoration changed over time from the effect of UV light and oxidation, whereas painted decoration retained its colour for longer – and was less expensive – which increased the popularity of painted furniture in the late 1780s.

The Lady Lever Art Gallery is a fantastic repository of eighteenth-century furniture, but other periods are also represented: in the Tudor and Stuart Room a Nonsuch chest dated 1592 was given in memory of Percy McQuoid by his widow. In a small but touching manner, I felt this echoed Lever naming the gallery in memory of his late wife.

JANUSZ KARCZEWSKI-SLOWIKOWSKI

The Furniture History Society is extremely grateful to Lucy Wood and Dr Stephen Lloyd for leading this Study Trip.

Discoveries and Research

Have you discovered or researched something that you would like to share with the Society? We welcome short articles on discoveries made on Society visits, or other discoveries and developments relevant to

furniture history. Please send suggestions to the Editor Iain Stephens, details on the back of this Newsletter. Articles should be about 500-800 words; a lead article 1000-1500; the Editor will send you our author guidelines.

Exhibition Reviews

Fait à Paris: The furniture of the Parisian cabinetmaker Jean-Pierre Latz (1691-1754) at the Dresden Court

RESIDENZSCHLOSS DRESDEN, STAATLICHE KUNSTAMMLUNGEN DRESDEN

19TH OCTOBER 2024 - 2ND FEBRUARY 2025

Jean-Pierre Latz was a leading cabinetmaker in Paris during the first half of the eighteenth century but has remained somewhat in the shadows of his more famous contemporaries, until now.

The exhibition *Fait à Paris* at the Residenzschloss in Dresden presented the first overview of the artist's work in the newly and sumptuously renovated State rooms or Paraderaume, originally created in 1719 for the marriage of Augustus the Strong's heir to the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor.

The exhibition opened with the dramatic juxtaposition of a monumental palm tree-shaped clock case made around 1750

set against a curved wall covered in a shimmering gold ground (Fig. 1). The ravaged silhouette of this impressive timepiece, almost lost in the devastating bombing campaigns of Dresden in February 1945, served as an evocative introduction of the artistic talents of Latz as well as the ambitions of the exhibition's organisers to revive his reputation as a pre-eminent cabinetmaker during the reign of Louis XV. In the following rooms, carefully-thought out displays focused on the Francophile tastes of Augustus the Strong and his minister Count Heinrich von Brühl, the variety of furniture made by Latz and his workshops as well as the reception of the artist's work in the nineteenth century provided ample material for audiences to acquaint themselves Latz's oeuvre and the appeal of his exuberant style to his lofty patrons.

The core of the exhibition consisted of a spectacular succession of clocks, which apparently constituted the main type of furniture produced by Latz and his workshop: an inventory compiled of his

Fig. 1 - View of the first gallery of the exhibition
© Kunstgewerbemuseum, SKD, Photo: Carina Sonntag.



shop during a *procès-verbal* in 1749 listed some 236 clock cases and parts. The clocks on view included a considerable range of shapes and sizes; from a delicate pendulum clock probably made for Louise-Élisabeth de France, Duchess of Parma, to an imposing longcase clock intended for the Stadtschloss in Potsdam. The most prevalent kind of clock in the exhibition was the pendulum clock on a high pedestal, often decorated with resplendent Boulle-type marquetry. At the court in Dresden, such clocks were sometimes ordered in pairs, while one pendulum clock crowned with the figure of the god Chronos was even ordered as a double pair: two in *première-partie*, and the other two in *contre-partie* with coloured horn, mother-of-pearl and selenite.

One of the most interesting clocks was the *pendule aux biches*, of which several versions were shown in the exhibition (Fig. 2). The original design, which shows the goddess Diana seated on a clock case pinning down the bodies of four deer, was probably made by the Franco-Dutch cabinetmaker Bernard I van Risemburgh (1660-1738), whose probate inventory lists a master model corresponding to this description. Latz must have acquired

Risemburgh's model at some point after his death, as one version of the clock included in the exhibition is stamped I.P. Latz twice, and this connection raises questions about the influence of the older artist on Latz's work. Not much is known about Latz before he arrived in Paris around 1719 from the region of the Electorate of Cologne, but it is possible that these *émigré* artisans may have known each other. This possibility is made more likely by the involvement of Risemburgh's son, the cabinetmaker famously known as BVRB, as an appraiser of Latz's widow's estate after her death.

Visitors got a sense of Latz's style, which could be found in the abundance of polychrome marquetry and the distinctive use of wave veneer, but also his distinctive style of bronze mounts. These are noticeable for their alternately naturalistic and sculptural qualities, and sometimes echo the sinuous shapes of the floral tendrils found in his marquetry. Latz made his own mounts, as evidenced by the *Procès-Verbal* of 1749, which saw the confiscation of his models and tools. Given their particular style, Latz may have designed his own mounts, like Charles Cressent (who was incidentally one of the

witnesses of his probate inventory). But if some of his designs are characterised by a bold, florid exuberance, others appear more conservatively classical, while in his inventory in 1754 there mention of 100 'very old-fashioned' cases. This variance between fashionable and conservative in Latz's work could be seen in the great hemicycle of pedestals and pendules that presented the culmination of the exhibition. Here visitors could study pairs of the same type to compare different variations of the same model as well the effect of different conservation treatments.

Latz's contemporary reputation as a cabinetmaker is further revealed by his links with another great German patron, namely Frederick the Great, who may first have encountered Latz's work first during his visits to the Saxon-Polish court during the Silesian wars between 1742-1746. Latz supplied some of the few Parisian pieces ordered by the king's agents for his

palaces in Potsdam (such as the cartonnier included in this exhibition), and at the time of his death, the cabinetmaker still owed money to Frederick's agents for works he had not yet completed.

This outstanding exhibition was the result of extensive art historical and technical research, some of which was presented at an international conference organised in Dresden in November. It may be hoped by all that a catalogue will be soon forthcoming, as the only modern study on Latz is the important article by Henry H. Hawley (1934-2019), published in *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* in 1970. This would not only represent an important step in re-establishing Latz's importance as an ébéniste of the early eighteenth century, but ensure that the scholarship underlying the exhibition reaches a wider audience.

ALEXANDER DENCHER,
Curator of Furniture, Rijksmuseum



Fig. 2 - Exhibition view, with the *pendule aux biches* stamped twice by Latz in the centre
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Grants

Calling All Scholars and Museum Professionals

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

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

Tom Ingram Memorial Fund

Grants are awarded from the Ingram Fund towards travel and associated expenses for the purpose of study or research into the history of furniture. These grants are offered, whether or not the applicant is a member of the Society, where travel could not be undertaken without funding from the Society; and only where the study or

research is likely to further the Society's objectives. Applications towards the cost of the Society's own foreign and domestic trips and study weekends are particularly welcome from scholars and museum professionals. Successful applicants are required to acknowledge the assistance of the Ingram Fund in any resulting publications and will be required to make a short report on completion of the trip.

Oliver Ford Trust

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

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

For further information or to download a grant application form, please go to the Grants page of the Society's website at www.furniturehistorysociety.org/grants/enquiries.

Enquiries should be addressed to the Grants Secretary, Jill Bace, at grants@furniturehistorysociety.org.

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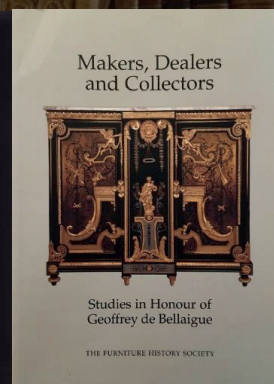
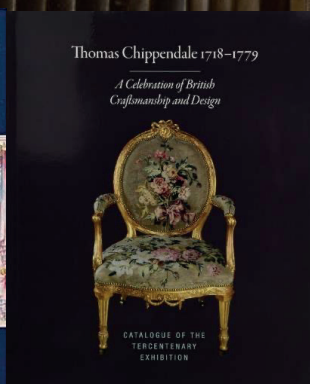
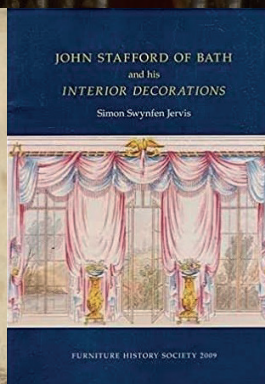
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Copy Deadline

The deadline for receiving material to be published in the next Newsletter is Thursday 5th June 2025. Copy should be sent by email to iain.stephens@royal.uk.

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